



**↓ DOWNTOWN**  
**↑ TOGETHER**  
SAN CARLOS DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN



City Council  
Public Hearing  
November 24, 2025



# Project Team

## City Staff – Core Team

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# Project History

## 2021

- City Council Strategic Objective

## 2023

- Survey
- DTAC mtgs
- Workshops
- 700 Block Laurel St Closure (Ordinance 1605)

## 2025

- DTSP Study Sessions
- DTAC mtgs
- Adopt Streetscape Master Plan

## 2022

- Project Kickoff
- Stakeholder mtgs
- DTAC mtgs
- Workshop

## 2024

- Stakeholder mtgs
- All Commissions Joint Mtg
- Survey
- Council endorsed street designs
- Engineering drawings Phase 1A

## November 2025

- 11/3 – PTC recommended adoption
- 11/24 – CC public hearing

# Project Context

## Tonight's Focus



## Specific Plan

## Adopted April 28, 2025



## Streetscape Master Plan

## Underway



## Implementation

- ✓ Design Approved June 9, 2025
- ✓ Construction Drawings Approved Nov. 10, 2025
- ✓ Construction Begins Spring 2026

# Agenda

1. Planning and Transportation Commission Recommendation
2. Presentation
3. Questions and Answers
4. Public Input
5. Discussion
6. City Council Action / Direction

## 01 Introduction

02 Vision, Principles, and Framework for Urban Design and Policy | 40

## 03 Land Use and Urban Design

04 Prosperity and Economic Development | 108

## 05 Mobility and Connectivity

06 Parking and Transportation Demand Management | 130

## 07 Public Realm

08 Public Art

## 09 Sustainability and Resiliency

10 Infrastructure and Utilities

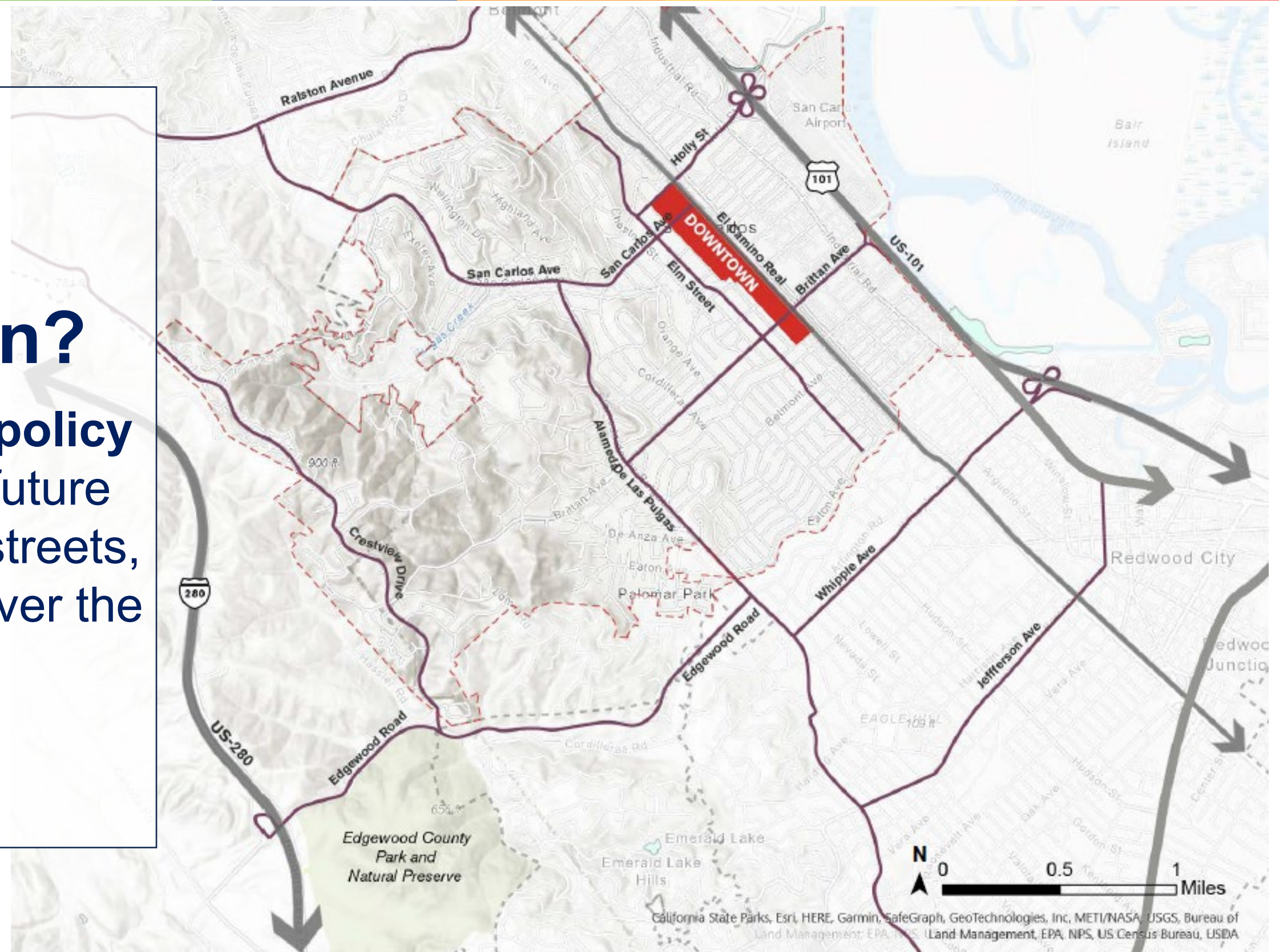
11 Administration and Implementation

# Consideration of Four Legislative Measures

1. Adopt a Resolution approving the **Addendum** to the 2045 General Plan Reset Environmental Impact Report (**EIR**)
2. Adopt a Resolution amending the San Carlos General Plan **Land Use Map, Land Use Element, Circulation and Scenic Highways Element**
3. Introduce an Ordinance amending the San Carlos **Zoning Map and Municipal Code, Title 18, Zoning Ordinance** to Codify the Downtown Specific Plan
4. Introduce an Ordinance adopting the San Carlos **Downtown Specific Plan**

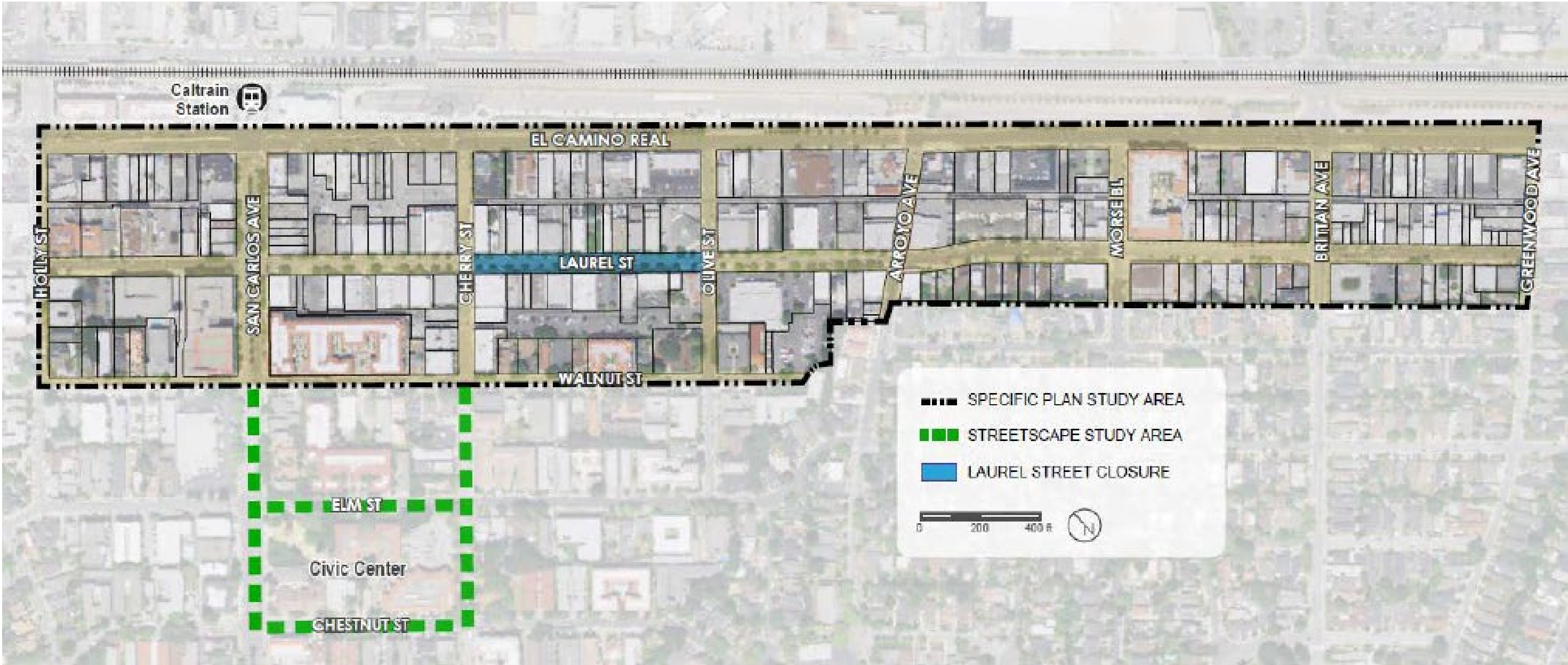
# What is the Downtown Specific Plan?

A legal regulatory policy document to guide future development, new streets, and programming over the next 20 years.



- Legends**
- Regional Connections
  - City Connections
  - Transit Connections
  - City of San Carlos Boundar
  - Plan Area

# Downtown Specific Plan Area



# Civic Engagement:

Since 2022...  
*an integrated and diversified strategy.*

DTAC

Community Workshops

Online Surveys

Stakeholder Meetings

## Specific Plan



Two Interconnected Documents

## Streetscape Master Plan



# Civic Engagement - What We Heard

- More restaurants.
- More outdoor seating and furnishings.
- Support for multi-purpose plazas.
- Diverse mix of retail (more shops) and restaurant, including more affordable, quick-eat options.
- Adding small parks/gathering spaces.
- More lighting in the area to prioritize safety of pedestrians.
- Short-term parking zones to accommodate restaurants.
- Support for closure of the 700 Block permanently.
- Attract visitors and residents to downtown.
- More bicycle and pedestrian pathways in the area, including El Camino Real.
- More public art, music events, cultural exhibits.
- Ensure public safety, comfort. Enhance crosswalks.
- More wayfinding to direct drivers to use available parking garages.
- Outdoor seating options that can be flexible and serve multiple purposes.
- El Camino Real developed with professional office, retail, and mixed-use buildings.
- Harrington Park - support for a stage for small events, and to enhance visibility.
- Support for restrooms in downtown.
- More shade-giving canopy trees, landscaping.
- More lighting in alleys
- Better organization of parking in the alleys.
- Support for roller/ice-skating rinks, street festival areas, designated informal eating areas, and pop-ups for start ups with rotating businesses.

# Civic Engagement - Concerns

- Losing parklet space - some businesses rely on parklets to provide outdoor dining experience.
- How to integrate different transportation modes, ensuring seamless and safe movement throughout the downtown area.
- Parallel parking could slow down traffic, creating congestion.
- Concern for retail stores' struggles, need for a mix of retail and restaurant offerings to support local businesses.
- Concern for safety and accessibility.
- Support for 700 block closure, though some felt the idea would be detrimental to businesses in the area.
- Ppotential [traffic] congestion along Laurel St.
- Some felt Laurel St. should return to pre-pandemic parking and vehicle access due to heavy traffic.
- Concerns about fiscal feasibility and impact on local businesses.

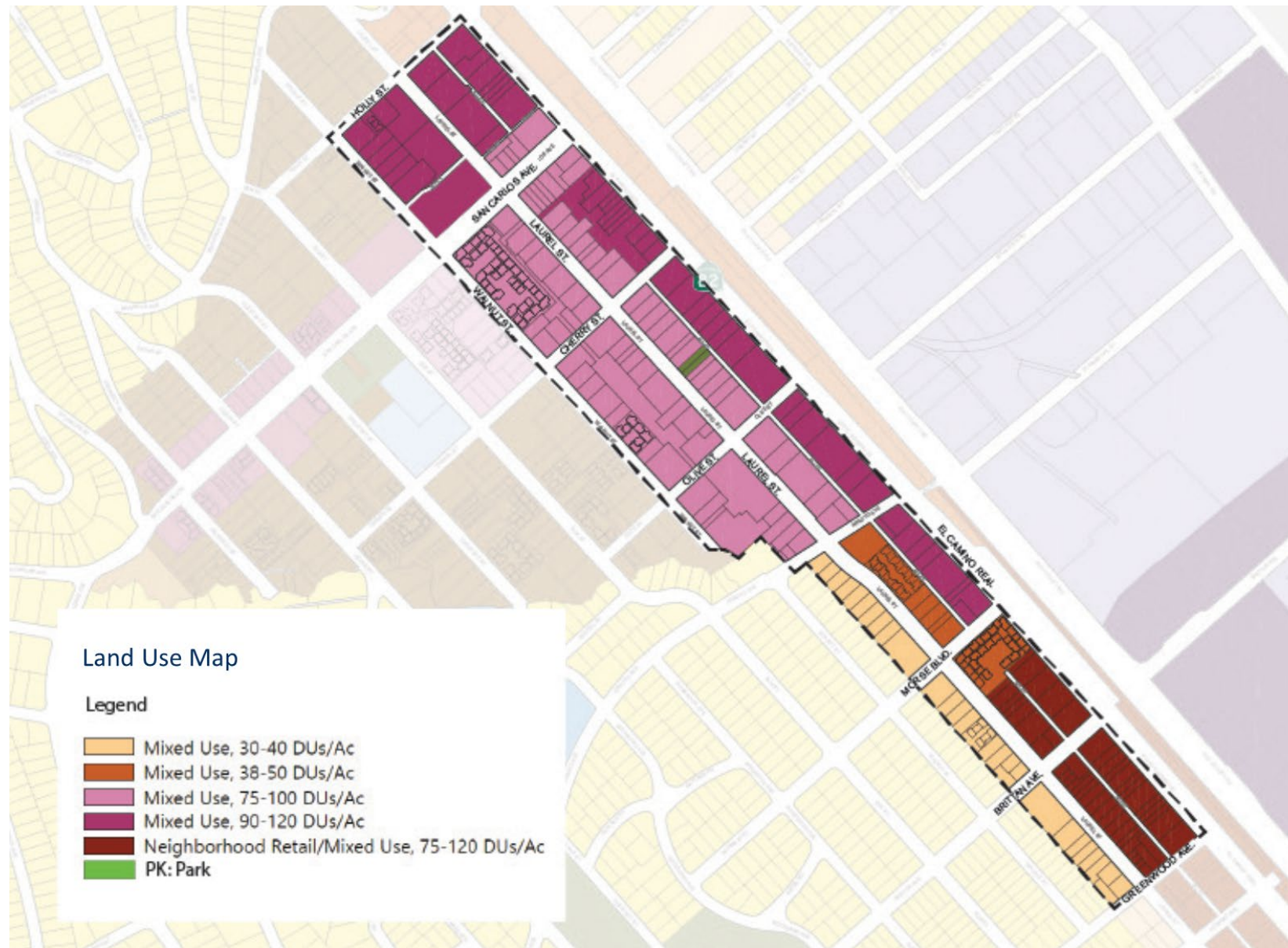
# Planning and Transportation Commission

## Recommendations (Attachment 9, packet pgs. 738 – 747)

1. Fix MU-N-40 building height typo
2. Add policy: parking impacts during construction
3. Add policy to monitor equitable use of programs
4. Ensure infrastructure adapts to evolving technology
5. Embolden the discussion of the Ohlone people
6. Regular updates to funding/financing strategy
7. Modify policies for future climate change conditions (IU-7A and 7C)
8. Explicitly state what measures will be taken to minimize parking spillover during streetscape construction
9. Clarify whether generators will be allowed until permanent power source is provided (PR-28)
10. Remove redundancy between PTDM 5 and 7 and PTDM 2A and 2B

# Downtown Specific Plan Plan Overview

# Chapter 3: Land Use and Urban Design

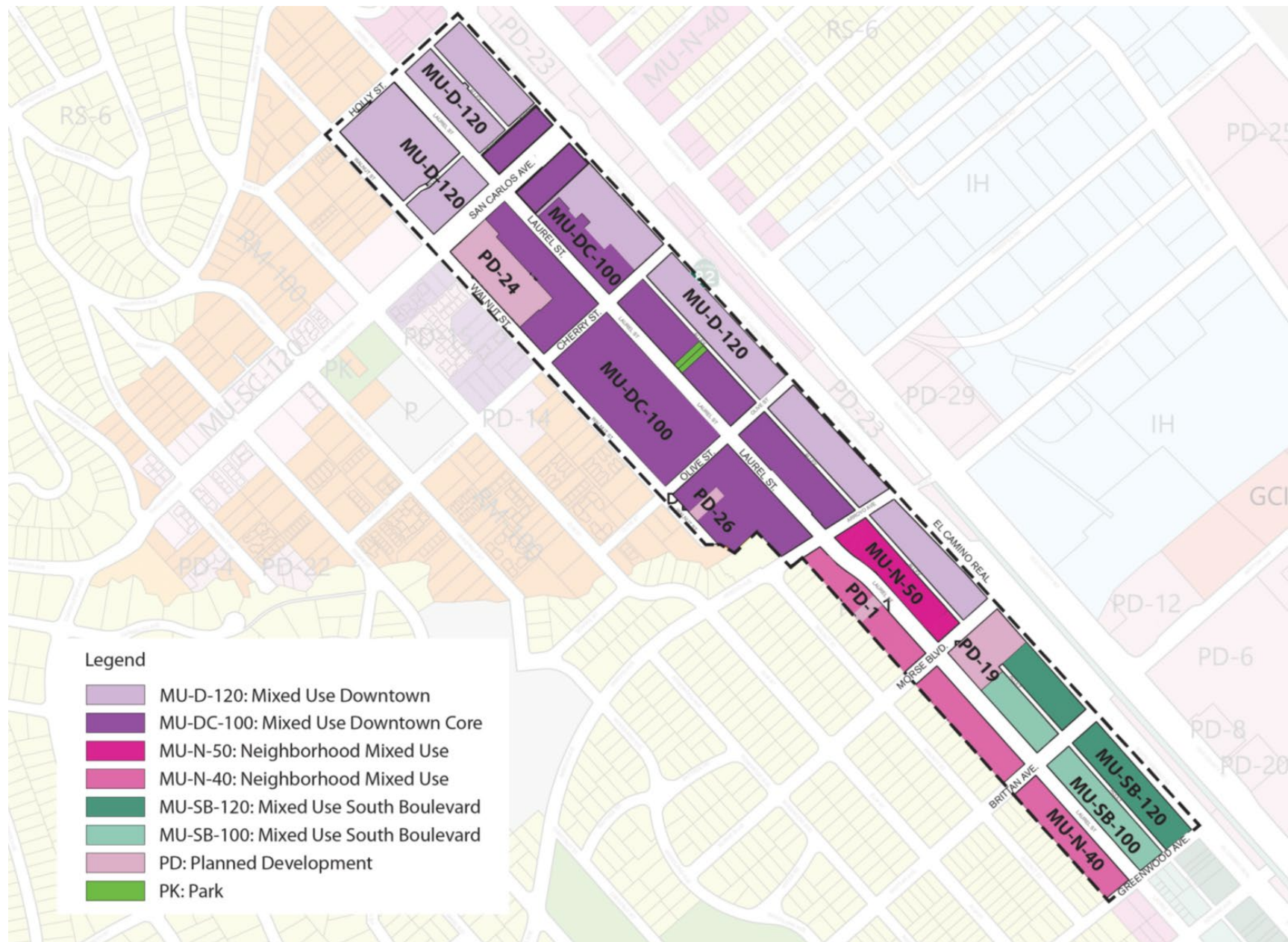


## No changes to Land Use:

- ✓ Same intensity (density, FAR)
- ✓ Same overall building height
- ✓ Minor adjustments to land use provisions

*One exception...*

# Chapter 3: Land Use and Urban Design



## No changes to Zoning:

- ✓ Same intensity (density, FAR)
- ✓ Same overall building height
- ✓ Aligns with recently adopted Objective Design Standards

*One exception...*

# Land Use Change (1250 San Carlos Ave)



**1250 San Carlos Avenue**  
(APN: 050-072-380)

From: **Mixed Use 75-100 DUs/acre**


To: **Mixed Use 90-120 DUs/acre**

-  Mixed Use 75 -100 DUs/acre
-  Mixed Use 90 -120 DUs/acre
-  Multi-Family 75 -100 DUs/acre
-  Downtown Specific Plan Boundary

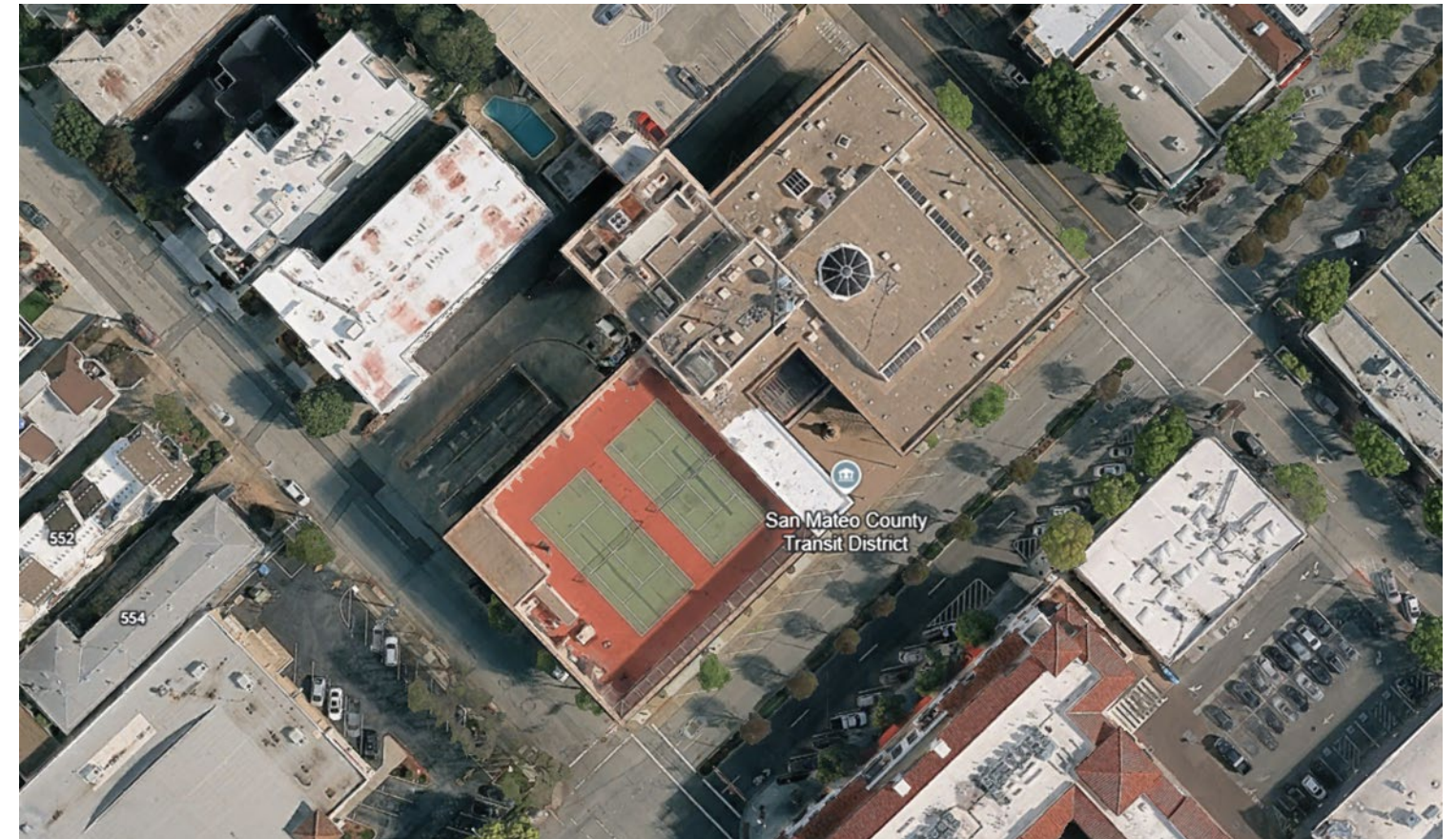
**Policy LU-5:** Coordinate with **SamTrans** to align the redevelopment of its headquarters parcel with a mix of land uses including housing, services, public space, and other community-serving amenities.

# Zoning Change (1250 San Carlos Ave)



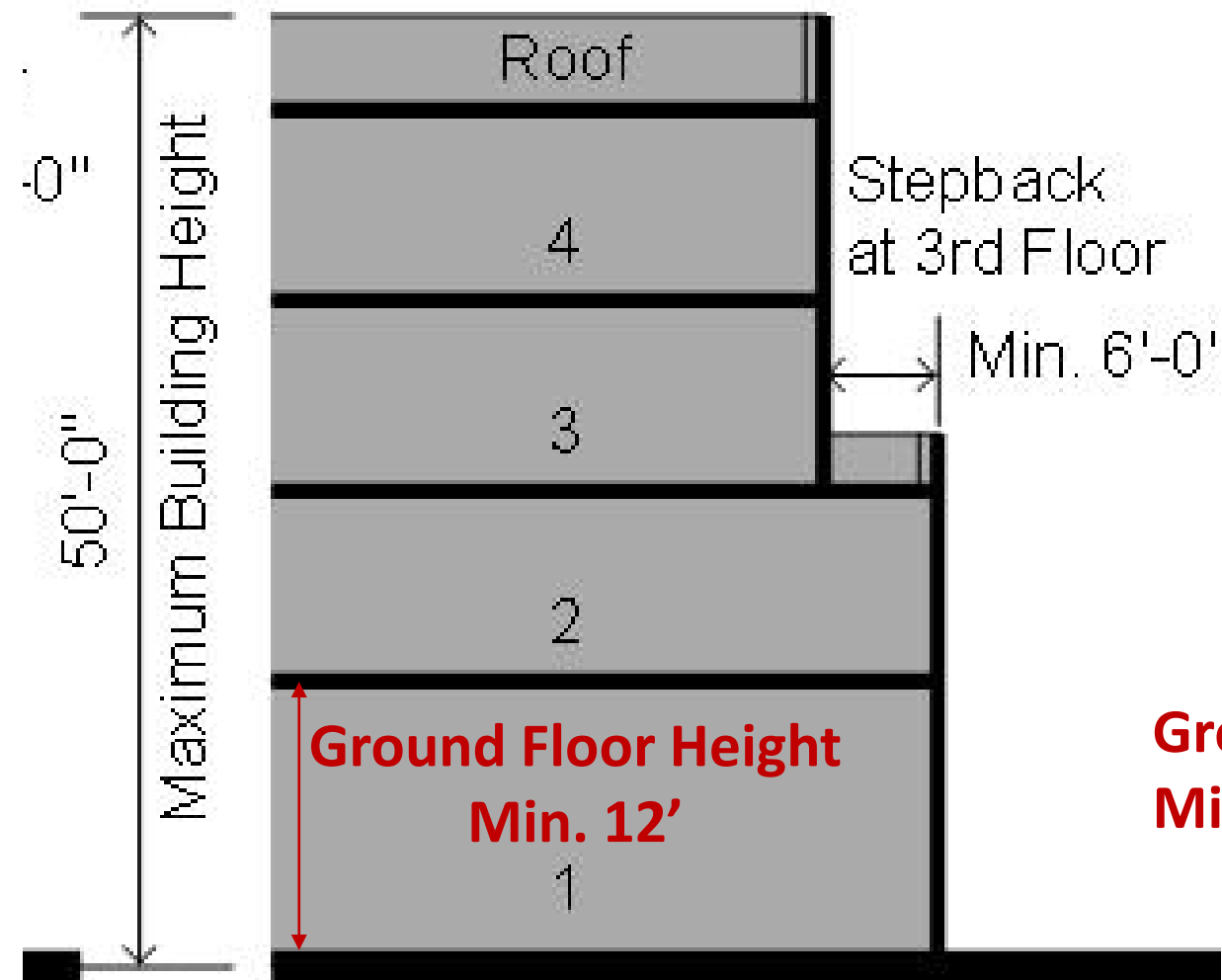
  
**1250 San Carlos Avenue**  
(APN: 050-072-380)  
From: **MU-DC-100**  
To: **MU-D-120**

-  **MU-D-120** - Mixed Use Downtown
-  **MU-DC-100** - Mixed Use Downtown Core
-  **MU-SC-120** - Mixed Use San Carlos Ave
-  **PD** - Planned Development
-  **RM-100** - Multi-Family, Medium Density
-  Downtown Specific Plan Boundary



# Building Height, Stepbacks, Ground Floor

Laurel Street (Downtown Core, 600, 700, and 800 blocks)

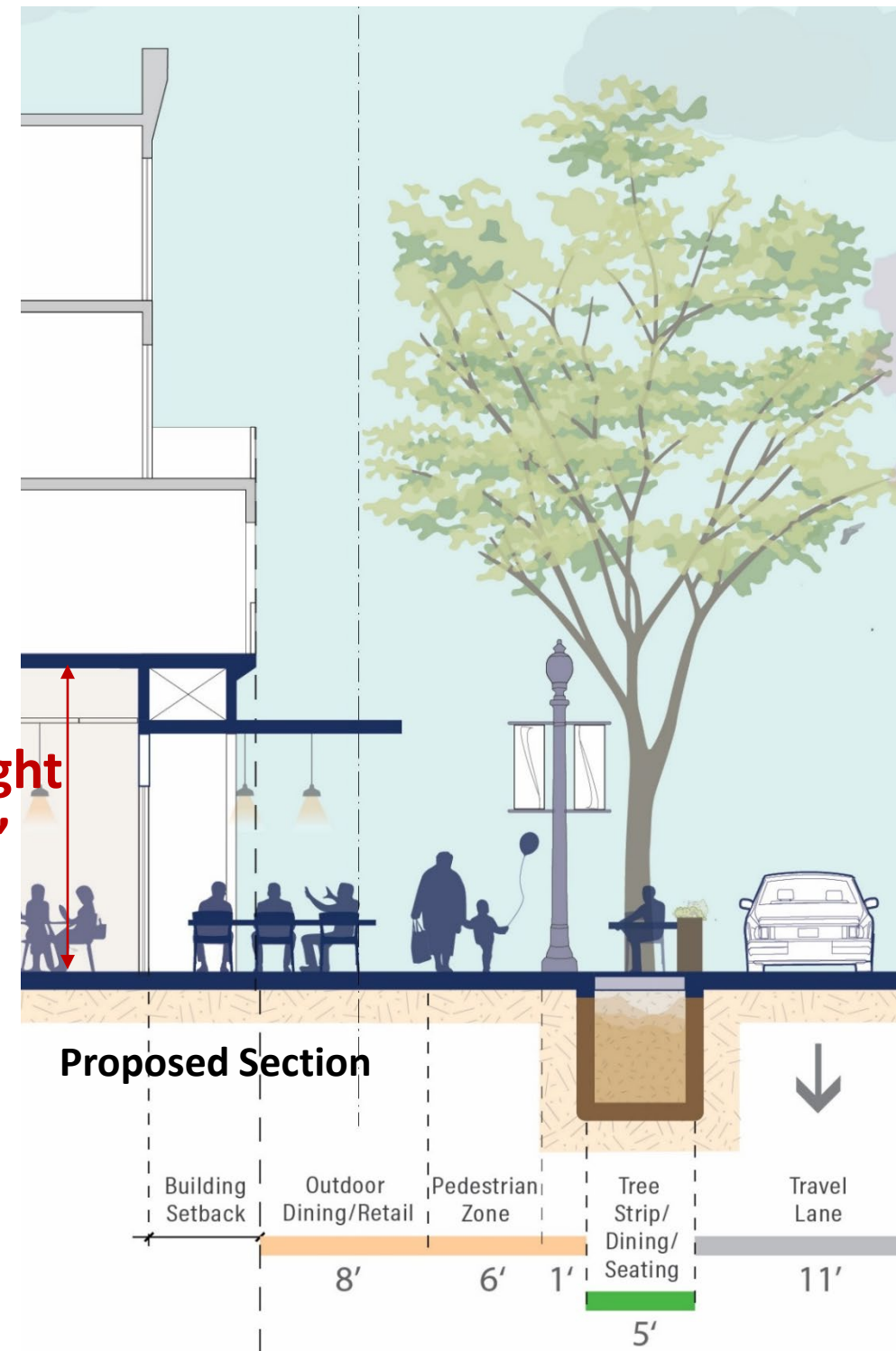


**Ground Floor Height  
Min. 14' - Max. 16'**

Current Code Requirements

4 stories; 50 ft. max

No changes, except for ground floor height



# Building Heights and Building Stepbacks

1200 Block San Carlos Avenue  
(Looking towards Caltrain Station)

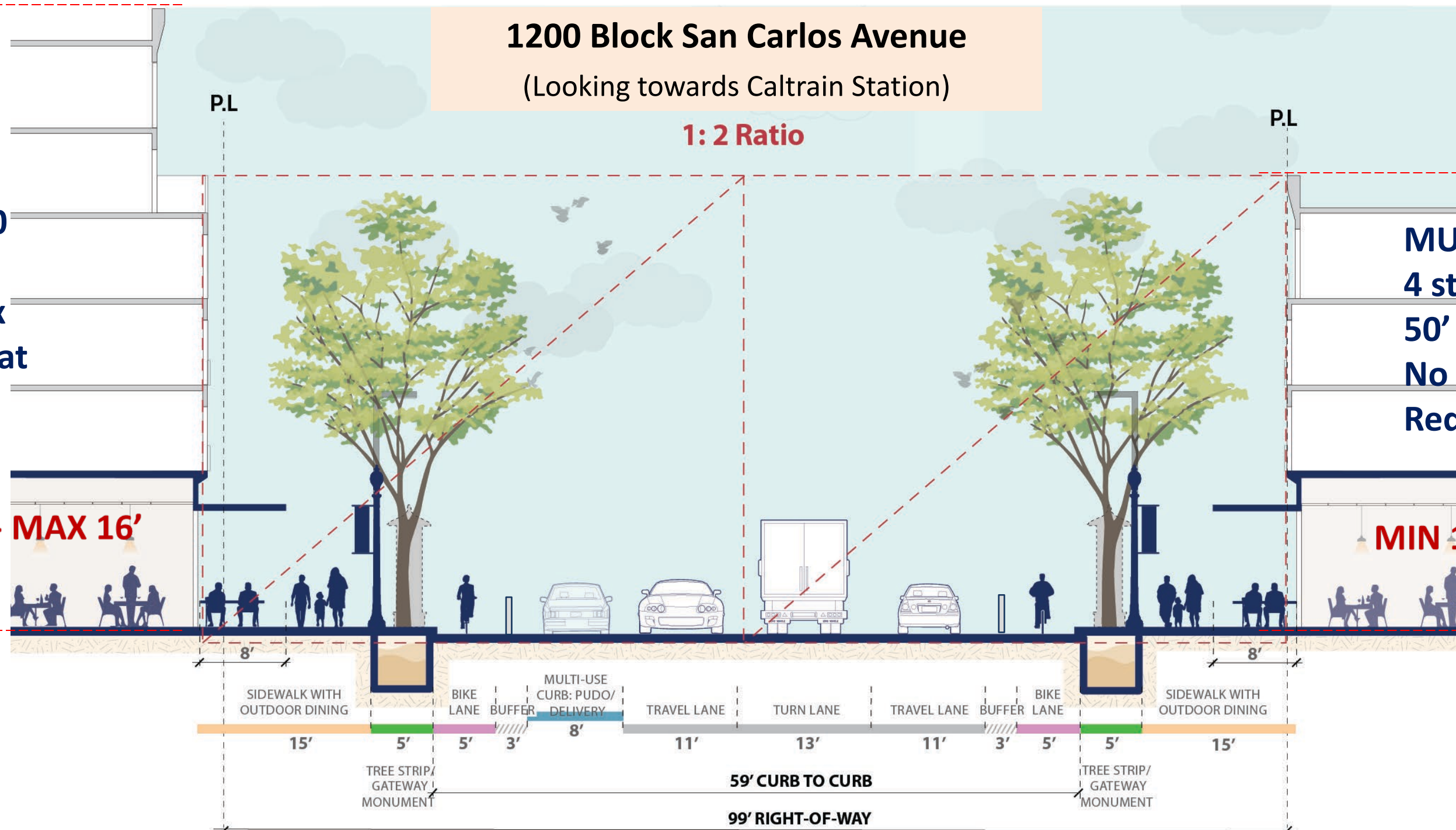
1:2 Ratio

SAM  
TRANS  
PARCEL  
MU-D-120  
6 Stories  
75' ft. Max  
Stepback at  
5<sup>th</sup> story

MU-DC-100  
4 stories  
50' ft. Max  
No Stepback  
Required

MIN 14' - MAX 16'

MIN 14' - MAX 16'



# Chapter 3: Land Use Policies

**LU-14: Prioritize ground-floor activation** (through food and beverage, retail and other activating uses) along the 600, 700, and 800 blocks of Laurel Street and the 1100 and 1200 blocks of San Carlos Avenue and at key intersections of El Camino Real with Arroyo Avenue and Brittan Avenue.

**LU-16:** Encourage **high-performing retail spaces on the ground floor** that support successful retail activity and the economic stability of the Downtown area.

**LU-4:** Encourage mixed-use development that fosters day- and night-time **activation**

**Action LU-6A:** To ensure the Downtown remains vibrant with a mix of businesses and offerings for the San Carlos community, conduct **additional research and evaluation of the City's Formula Business Ordinance** and consider removing constraints

**LU-12:** Enhance the experience along El Camino Real through infill development with **active ground-floor uses**

**LU-14: Prioritize ground-floor activation** (through food and beverage, retail and other activating uses)

**LU-16:** Encourage high-performing retail spaces on the **ground floor**

**LU-17:** Ground-floor public spaces to create inviting, human-scaled and comfortable spaces that **activate** the Downtown core.

# Chapter 3: Land Use Regulations

## Minor Amendments

- **Residential** allowed on ground floor, except downtown core (consistent with ODS), but with certain limitations
- Downtown Core: Community Assembly (**community centers**, etc) less than 3,500 sq. ft. allowed (not permitted in current code)
- Downtown Core: **Instructional Services** now allowed with pickup drop off plan (previously MUP)
- **Pet Stores, Govt Offices, and Cultural Institutions** – maintain CUP, but allow for in the downtown core
- **Automobile, vehicle sales and leasing** – do not allow in downtown core (currently permitted in the downtown core)

# Minor Amendments to Land Use Regulations (DTSP)

Land Use Classification	Existing	Downtown Specific Plan
Residential, Ground Floor	MU-DC: Not allowed MU-D-120: P (CUP for El Camino Real) MU-SB-120: P (CUP for El Camino Real)	MU-DC: Not allowed MU-D-120: Permitted* MU-SB-120: Permitted*
Community Assembly less than 3,500 sq. ft. (i.e. community centers)	MU-DC: Not allowed	MU-DC: Allowed
Instructional Services (i.e. personal growth/development such as music, martial arts, vocal, fitness, dance)	MU-DC: Minor Use Permit	MU-DC: Allowed (pick-up/drop-off plan required)
Pet Stores	MU-DC: Not allowed	MU-DC: Conditional Use Permit
Government Offices (i.e. public contact offices)	MU-DC: Not allowed	MU-DC: Conditional Use Permit
Cultural Institutions (i.e. performing arts for theater, music, dance, events)	MU-DC: Not allowed on Laurel St or San Carlos Ave	MU-DC: Conditional Use Permit
Automobile, vehicle sales and leasing	MU-DC: Allowed	MU-DC: Not allowed

\* Per City Attorney

# ***NEW*** Preservation of Ground Floor Commercial Uses

(Attachment 10, packet pgs. 748-751)

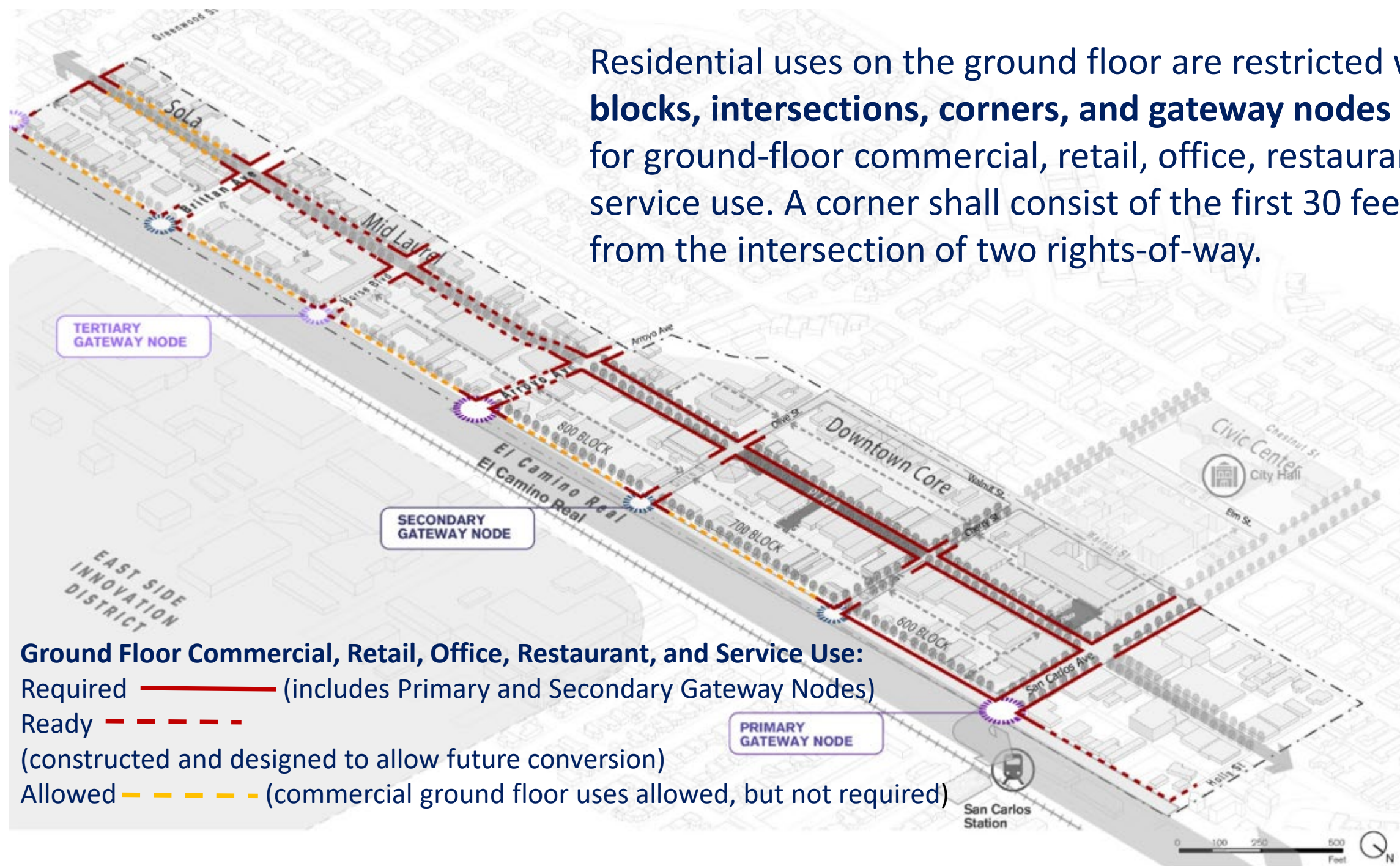
## **Suggestions for Council Consideration:**

- ✓ Add a statement to elevate the City's goal to preserve ground-floor commercial uses.
- ✓ Add a policy to incentivize ground floor retail and commercial services.
- ✓ Add an action to consider creating an overlay zone.
- ✓ Adopt further land-use regulations to clearly signal the City's priority of preserving ground-floor commercial uses.

# NEW Preservation of Ground Floor Commercial Uses

(Attachment 10, packet pgs. 748-751)

Residential uses on the ground floor are restricted within the **blocks, intersections, corners, and gateway nodes** designated for ground-floor commercial, retail, office, restaurant, and service use. A corner shall consist of the first 30 feet extending from the intersection of two rights-of-way.



# Chapter 4: Prosperity and Economic Development

**PED-1:** The Downtown core will be **activated** through **zoning amendments**, a **mix of land uses**, and **placemaking strategies**, fostering entrepreneurship, infrastructure improvements, arts and culture initiatives and promoting equity and inclusivity for all members of the community.

**PED-2:** Provide support, streamline communication, and take a **proactive, business-friendly approach** to help businesses start, operate, and grow— strengthening the economic vitality of Downtown San Carlos.

**PED-3:** The City shall position the **Downtown Core as a distinctive and vibrant destination** by implementing a coordinated **branding and marketing strategy**, and by supporting the planning and **programming of community events, cultural activities, and public gatherings** that enhance its identity and attract residents, visitors, and businesses.

**PED-4:** Reinforce economic prosperity by providing an **inviting, vibrant, safe, comfortable, and easy-to-navigate** Downtown experience for all users.

**PED-5:** Explore the feasibility to develop a comprehensive Downtown **wayfinding system** to improve navigation and reinforce the Downtown brand.

**PED-6:** Provide spaces for pop-ups to **encourage small local business start-ups** and to provide affordable food and beverage options for the community. Spaces, such as the new public **plaza on the 600 block of Laurel Street**, will include **electrical outlets** so that gas-powered generators can be prohibited. The City will develop mechanisms for reviewing and approving pop-up businesses taking into account considerations such as location, business type, and design quality.

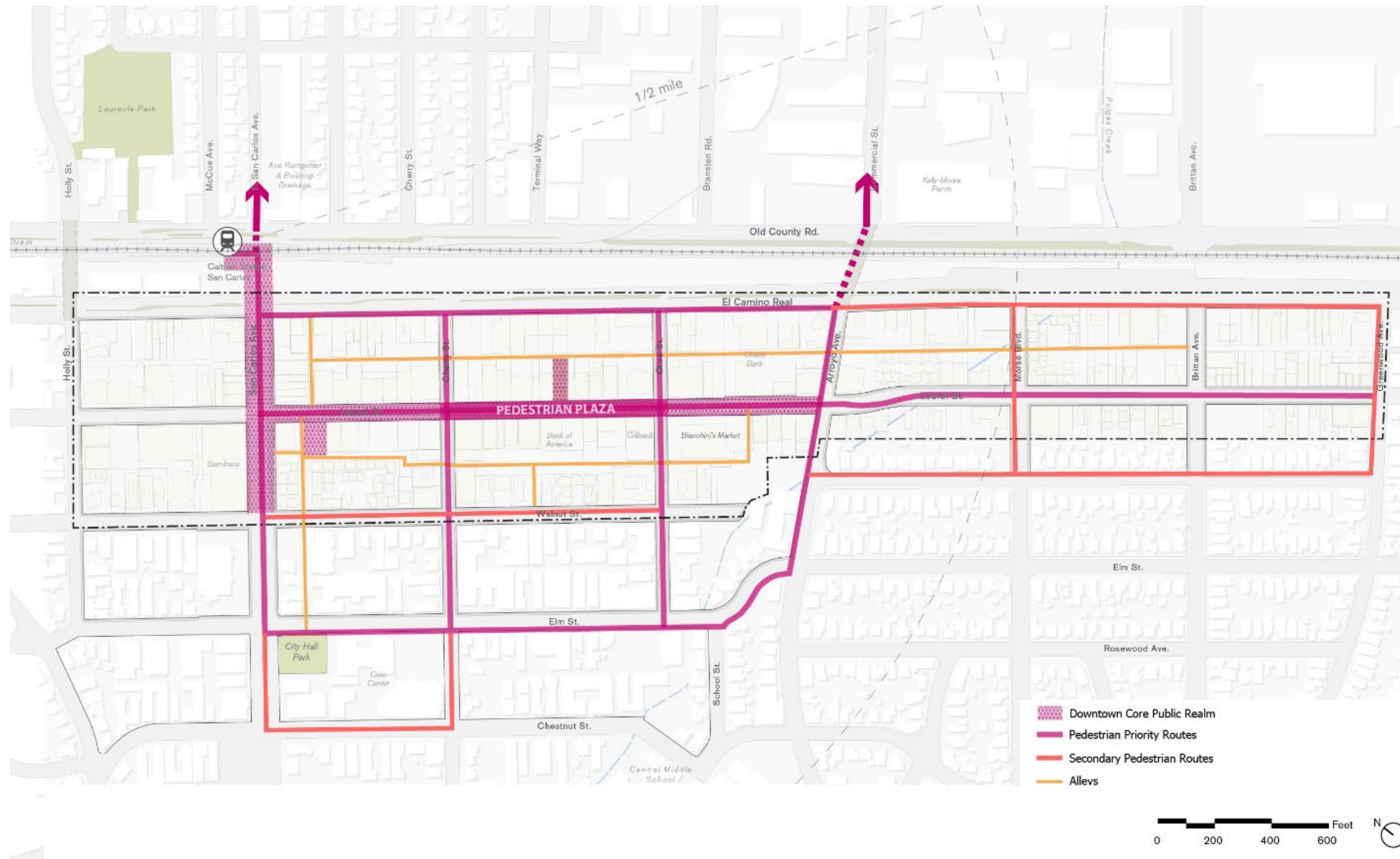
# Chapter 5: Mobility and Connectivity

## Example Policies

- Improve street designs with wider sidewalks, high visibility crosswalks
- Incorporate ADA-compliant infrastructure
- Protected bicycle lanes
- Enhance function of alleys



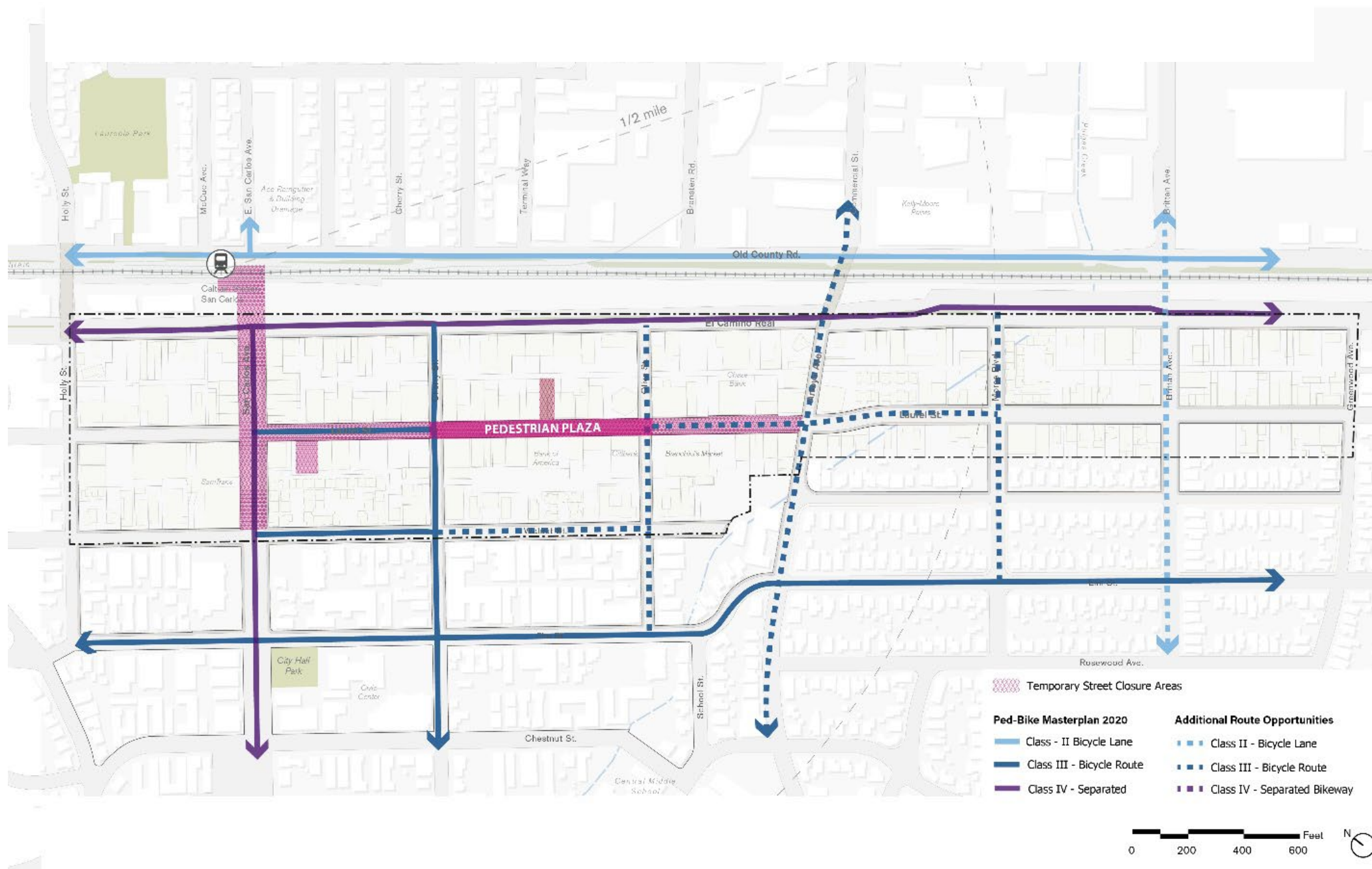
# Chapter 5: Policies for Pedestrian Experience



**M-1:** Prioritize development of the **700 block of Laurel Street** as a **pedestrian-only plaza** and dismount zone, supporting vitality, vibrancy and equity for all users.

**M-2:** Prioritize the **pedestrian experience** and corresponding street character for all streets within the **Downtown core:** 1100 and 1200 blocks of San Carlos Avenue; 600, 700, and 800 blocks of Laurel Street; and the 1100 and 1200 blocks of Cherry and Olive Streets; and the 1100 and 1200 blocks of Arroyo Avenue.

# Policies for Biking Experience



**M-4:** Promote safe and visible bicycle infrastructure by incorporating **protected bicycle lanes with vertical buffers, green striping for high visibility, and ample bicycle parking** along primary corridors including San Carlos Avenue, El Camino Real, Brittan Avenue, Arroyo Avenue, and Laurel Street.

**M-6:** Develop **bicycle hubs** at the 700 block entrance points that include secure bicycle stands and supportive amenities (i.e. bicycle repair tools) to encourage active transportation and support the 700 block of Laurel Street as a pedestrian-only zone.

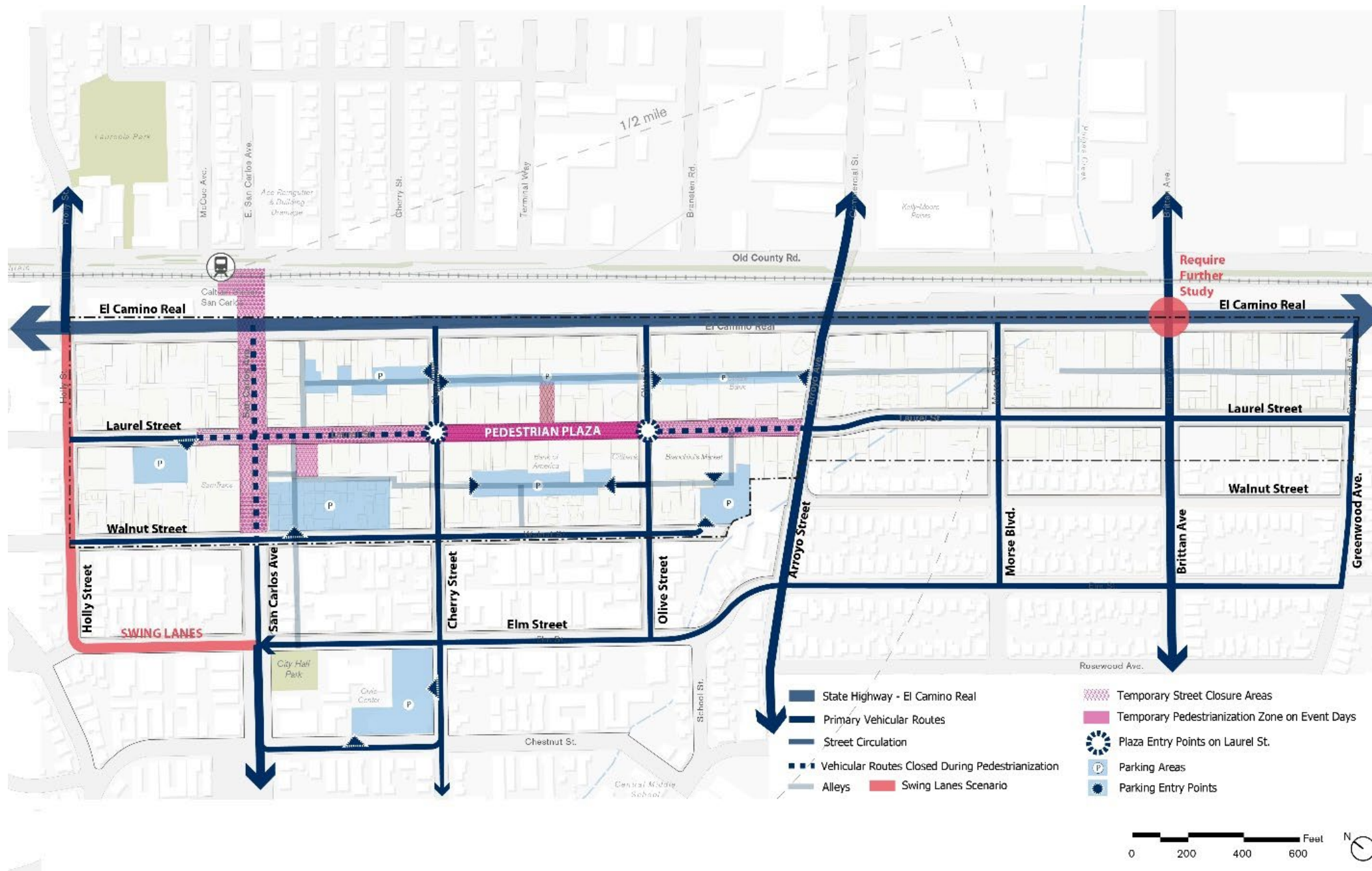
# Policies for Transit Experience



**M-5:** Actively pursue public transit connectivity by **enhancing bus stops** and **improving first- and last-mile connections** to Caltrain and bus services through **implementation of active transportation** infrastructure.

**M-7:** Design bus stops to **safely interface** with bike lanes by using features like boarding islands, curb extensions, and clear signage, as specified in **SamTrans' Bus Stop Design Guidance**.

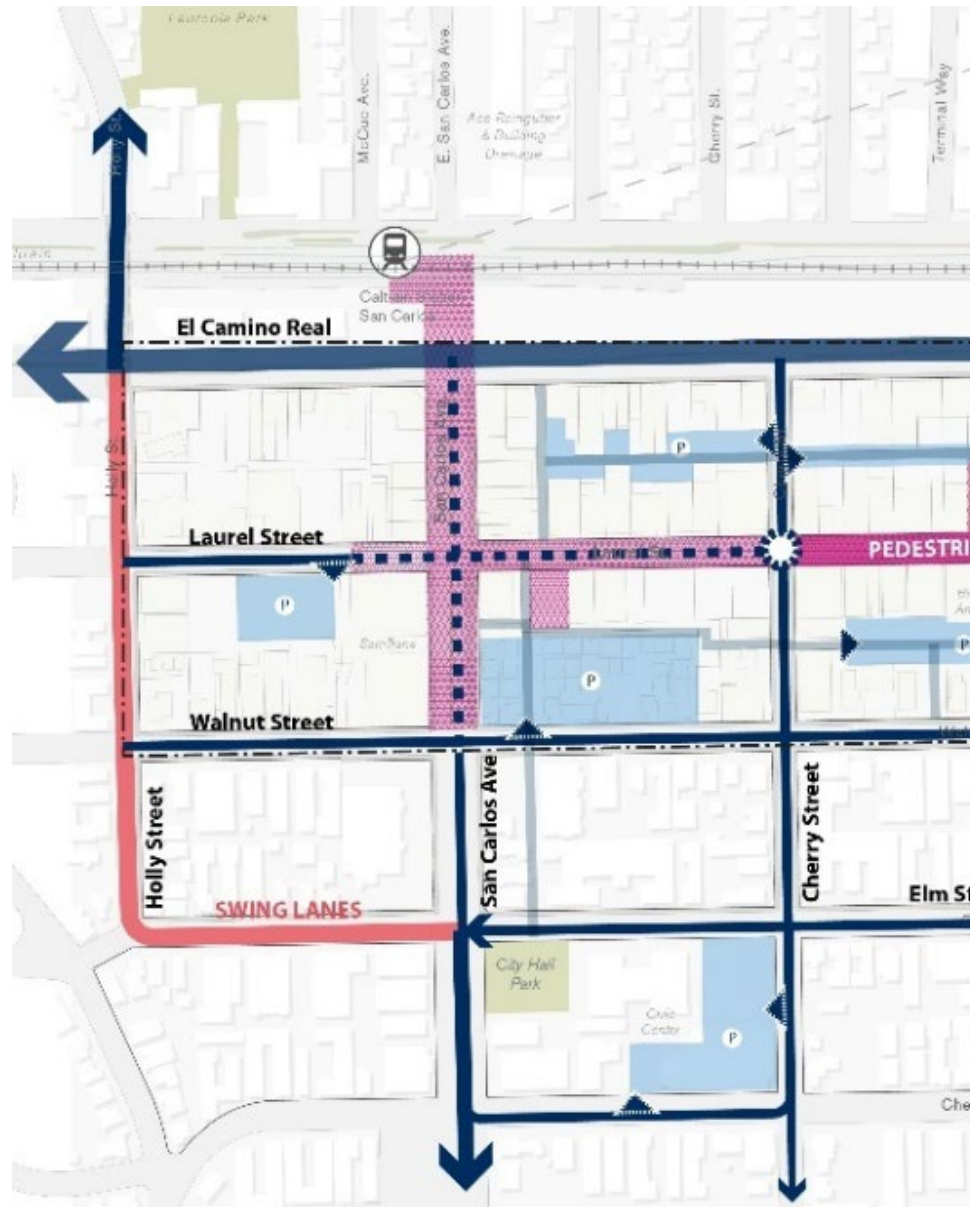
# Policies for Balanced Network



**M-13:** As the Downtown grows and as conditions warrant, **evaluate long-term vehicular traffic modifications, including Holly Street swing lanes, emerging transportation technologies, and congestion mitigation strategies** to further support the goals and policies for a vibrant and safe pedestrian-oriented Downtown.

**M-14:** Collaborate with SamTrans, Caltrans, and the Grand Boulevard Initiative to plan and **implement coordinated improvements along El Camino Real** that enhance the quality of the streetscape for the comfort and safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit riders, consistent with the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan.

# Mobility and Connectivity: Holly Street Swing Lanes



- To address peak traffic on **Holly Street**, convert parking lanes into **reversible swing lanes if needed**.
- Allows **parking lanes to function as travel lanes** in one direction during the AM peak and the opposite direction during the PM peak

# Chapter 6: Parking and Transportation Demand Management

## Example Policies

- AB2097 applicability
- Require unbundled parking
- Require shared parking for nonresidential developments
- Comply with TDM Ordinance (amendments in-progress)
- Allow flexible use of curb space



# Chapter 6: Parking, Transportation Demand Mgmt



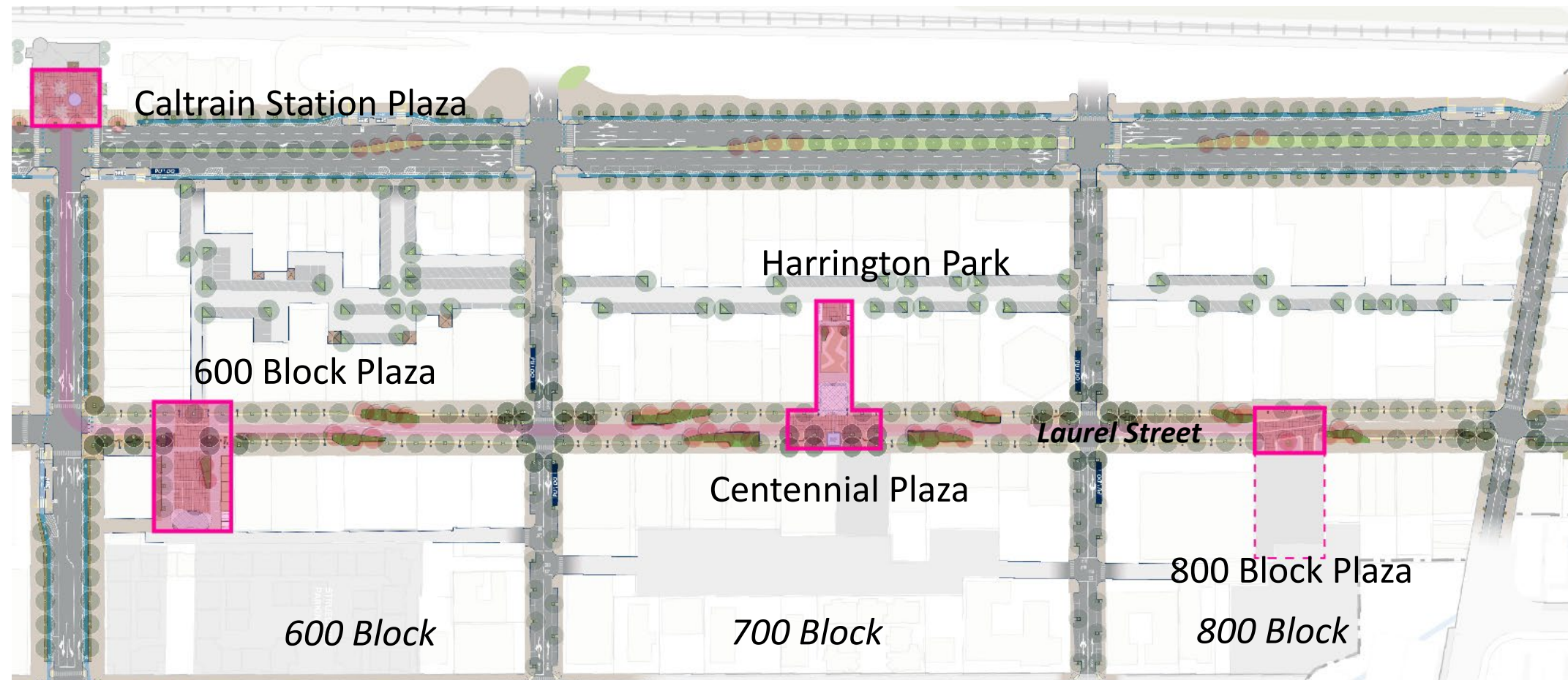
## Future conditions

The combination of significant development growth and no minimum requirement to provide parking (AB2097) necessitate more active management

**PTDM-1:** Manage parking resources as a coordinated, shared system...

- Shared Parking
- Modified Regulations
- Mobility Information
- Upgraded Enforcement

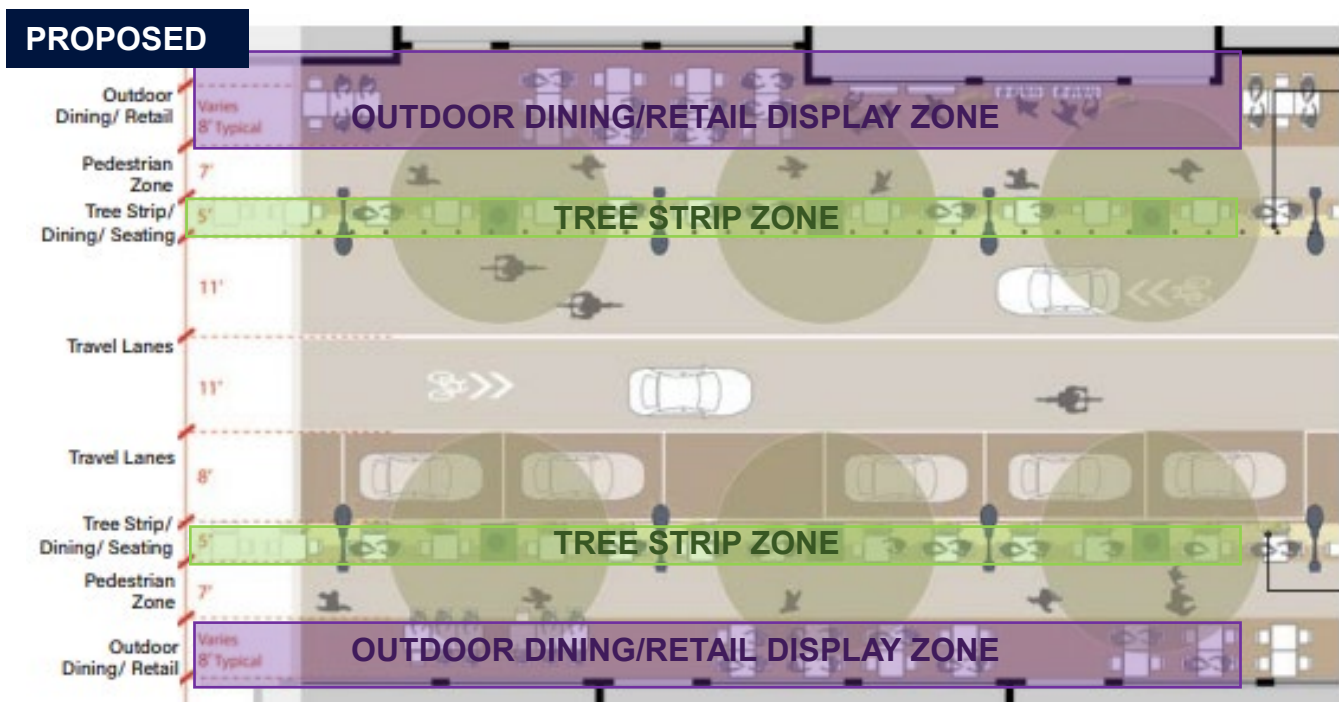
# Chapter 7: Public Realm



**PR-1:** To ensure the success of the Downtown as the heart of the city, **implement the adopted Downtown Streetscape Master Plan as funding becomes available.** Establish a well-defined streetscape connecting the Downtown core and the civic center to foster synergy and activation between the two areas.

**PR-2:** Expand and **enhance public plazas within the Downtown core,** including the **pedestrian plaza** along the full span of the **700 block** of Laurel Street (Centennial Plaza), the **new plaza on the 600 block** of Laurel Street, and Harrington Park, to create **vibrant community gathering spaces.**

# Outdoor Dining and Retail Display Locations



Location	Existing	Proposed
600 Block, Laurel St	Permitted between building face and the first red brick in the sidewalk paving	8* ft from building face
700 Block, Laurel St		9* ft from building face
800 Block, Laurel St		8* ft from building face
1100 Block, San Carlos Ave		8* feet from building face
1200 Block, San Carlos Ave		8* feet from building face
El Camino Real	Maintain four-foot clear path for pedestrians	Min 5* feet from building face
Elsewhere		Maintain four-foot clear path for pedestrians*

**Up to 5 additional feet may be allowed in the tree strip zone in the Downtown Core**

# Outdoor Dining Operation & Maintenance

EXISTING	PROPOSED
No amplified sound or live music/entertainment	Same
No outdoor cooking or open flames	
No bussing stations or trash storage	
All portable appurtenances shall be removed at the end of each business day	Portable appurtenances may remain in the outdoor dining zone overnight
Business shall maintain area, adjoining street and gutter in neat, clean, orderly condition	Same
Dining activities shall not interfere with pedestrians, parking, or traffic	
Furniture must be kept in good condition; umbrellas shall be kept secure in windy conditions and shall be fire-treated	
-	Outdoor dining area may not be subleased to another business

# Outdoor Dining Design



## EXISTING

Furniture shall be durable; no plastic chairs or tables

Barriers allowed; may use planter boxes or wrought iron fencing

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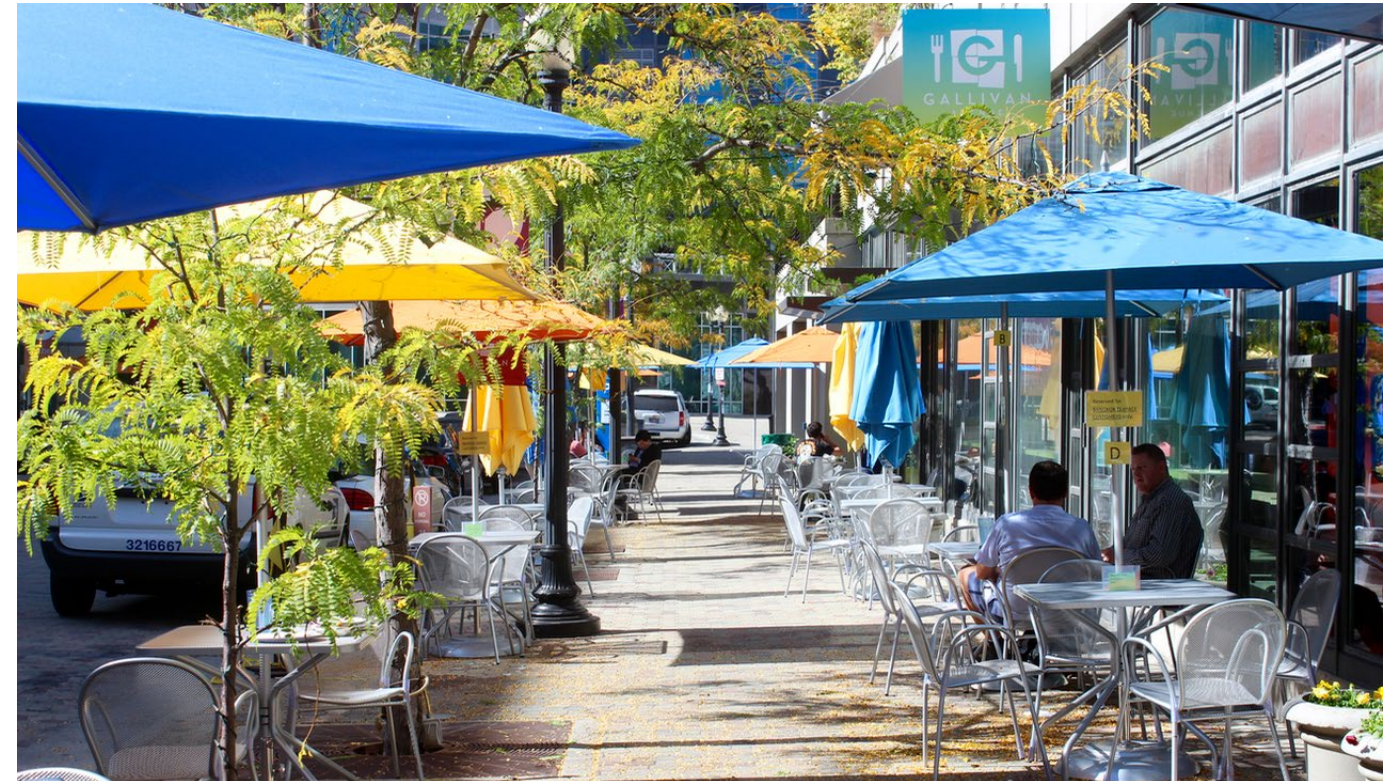
## PROPOSED

Same

Barriers allowed, with a maximum four feet in height; may not use jersey barriers, ropes, or metal crowd barriers

No platforms or floor coverings

# Outdoor Dining Design



## EXISTING

No permanent attachments or shelters; awnings shall be retractable

Umbrellas and awnings shall be a solid color; no generic advertising or signage is permitted

## PROPOSED

No permanent attachments or shelters

Awnings may be solid or patterned; umbrellas shall be a solid color (from the City of San Carlos color palette); no generic advertising or signage is permitted

# Outdoor Dining Design Standards



## EXISTING

-

## PROPOSED

Street-facing awnings may include retractable windscreens; retractable curtains are permitted perpendicular to the building

# Outdoor Retail Operation & Maintenance

EXISTING	PROPOSED
May only display in front of own storefront	Same
Merchandise displayed outdoors must be same type as sold inside	Same
Display appurtenances shall be removed at the end of each business day	Display appurtenances may remain in the outdoor retail display zone overnight
Business shall maintain area, adjoining street and gutter in neat, clean, orderly condition	Same
Display/sales shall not interfere with pedestrians, parking, or traffic	Same
Furniture must be kept in good condition	Same
-	No amplified sound
-	No open flames
-	Outdoor retail display area may not be subleased to another business

# Outdoor Retail Design Standards



EXISTING	PROPOSED
Display elements must be durable and commercial-grade	Same
Display elements must be between two and six feet in height	Same
Umbrellas and awnings shall be a solid color; no generic advertising or signage is permitted	Awnings may be solid or patterned; umbrellas shall be a solid color (from the City of San Carlos color palette); no generic advertising or signage is permitted

# Outdoor Retail Design



## EXISTING

The display and sales area shall not exceed 25% of the width of the frontage of the associated business storefront

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## PROPOSED

Removed; outdoor retail display may utilize full zone for parity with outdoor dining

No platforms or floor coverings

No mannequins/outdoor display figures

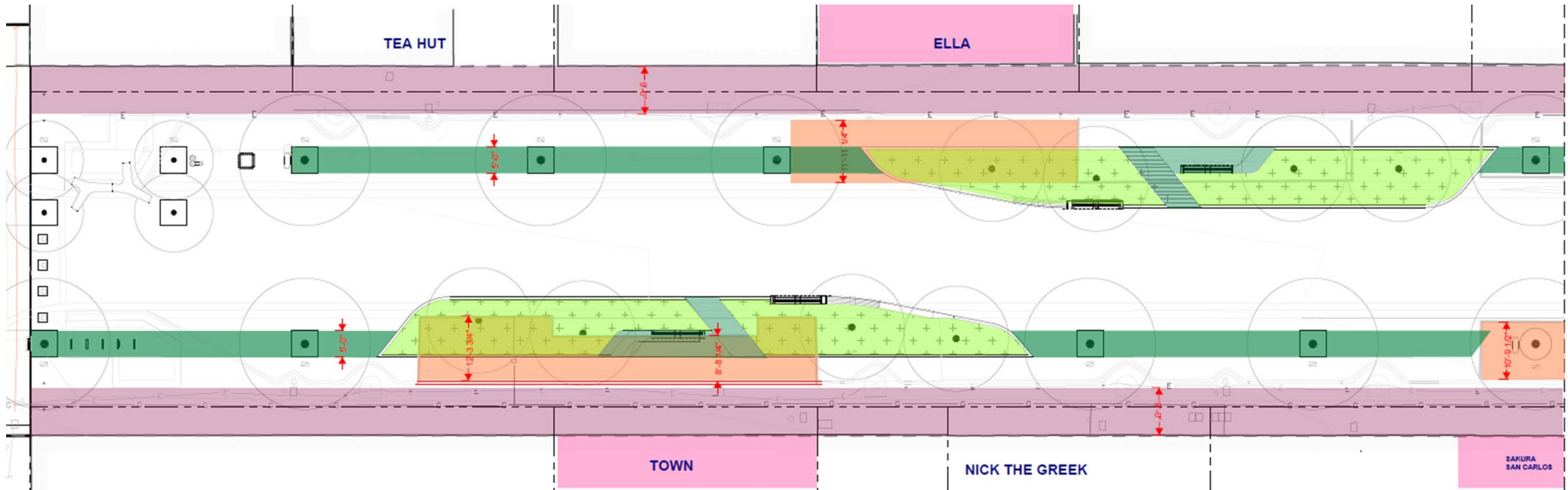
# Tree Strip Standards

- Provide **five-foot buffer** between contiguous seating areas to allow for pedestrian access
- Keep tables and chairs **four feet clear** of utility access panels, survey monuments, and manholes
- Maintain a **3-foot setback** from fire hydrants and Fire Department Connections
- Maintain a **2.5-foot setback** from curb face or bollard for passenger loading/unloading at parallel parking spaces
- At ADA parking spaces, ensure a **3-foot clear** path for each vehicle door
- **Tables and chairs** in the tree strip zone **must match** those in the outdoor dining zone and shall be brought into the business or business' outdoor dining zone overnight
- **Portable heaters are prohibited**
- Electrical lines or lighting **may not be strung** between businesses and the tree strip zone



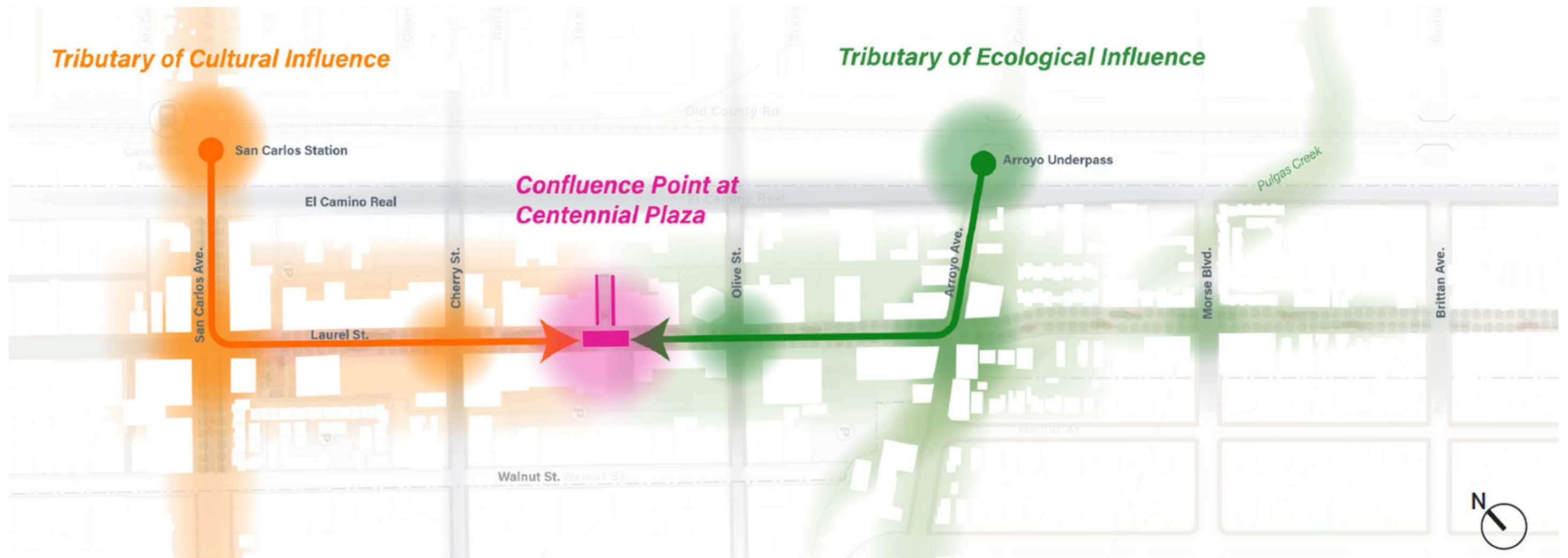
# Response to Additional Outdoor Dining Space

- insert



# Chapter 8: Public Art

**Goal:** Create a culturally rich and dynamic Downtown through public art that reflects San Carlos' cultural and ecological heritage to foster placemaking and inspire both residents and visitors.



# Public Art Policies



**PA-1:** Strengthen community identity and enhance the public realm by **integrating art into the Downtown streetscape, alleys, plazas, and civic spaces**, and **encourage art in private development.**

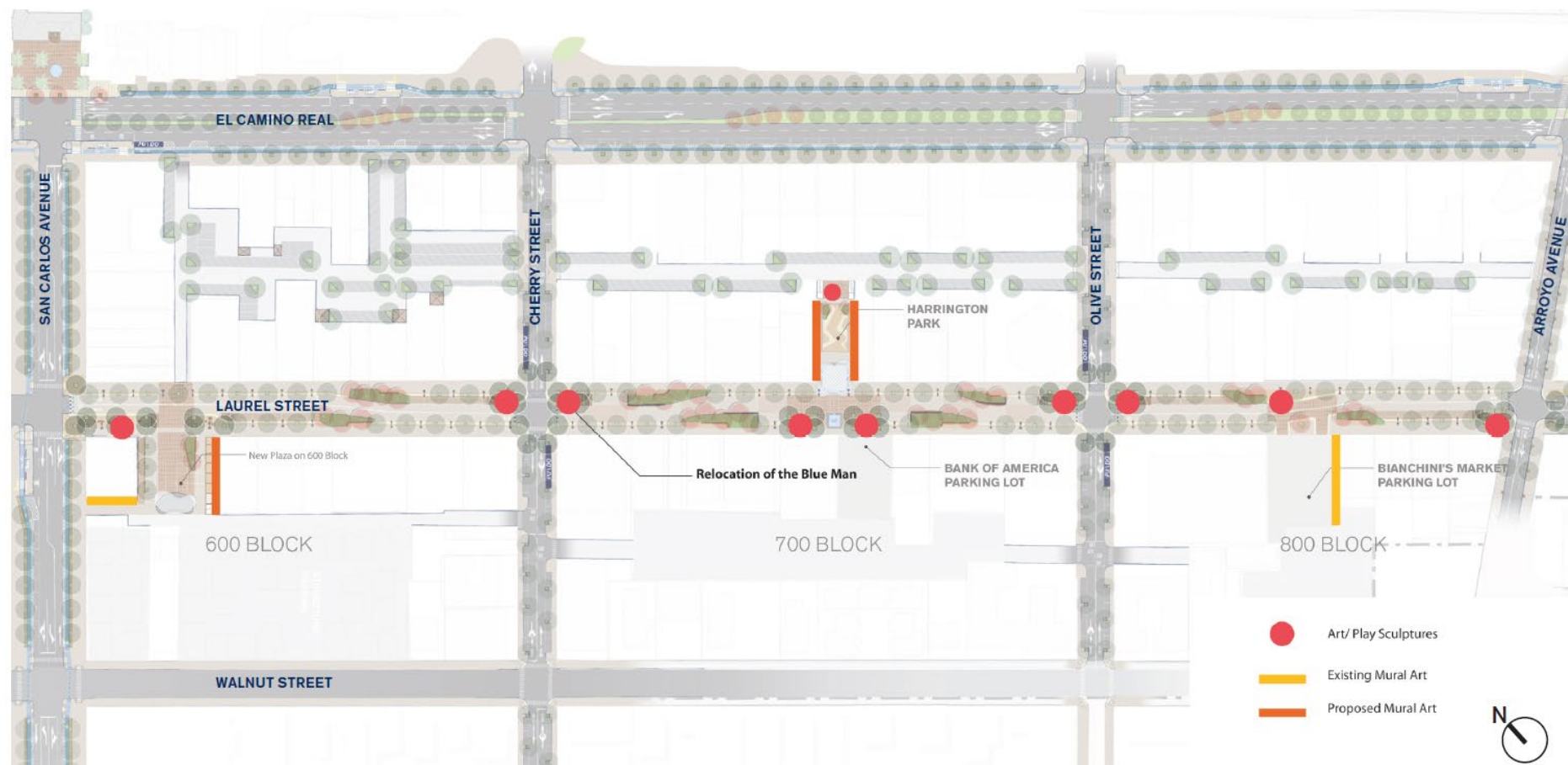
**PA-2:** Express community **cultural and ecological heritage** through public art.

**PA-3:** Maintain and preserve existing public art that holds community significance, such as the “Balancing Act” (Blue Man) sculpture and the murals on the 800 block of Laurel Street and along the Sister City Alley.

**PA-6:** Support the **creation of permanent site-specific artworks and temporary exhibits** along the 700 block of Laurel Street/ Centennial Plaza, the new public plaza on the 600 block of Laurel Street, and the gateway to Downtown at San Carlos Avenue and El Camino Real, to enrich the Downtown core with vibrant cultural expressions.

**PA-8:** Adhere to the City of San Carlos’ **Public Arts Master Plan** and consider updating it as needed to meet Downtown and citywide objectives.

# Public Art Opportunities



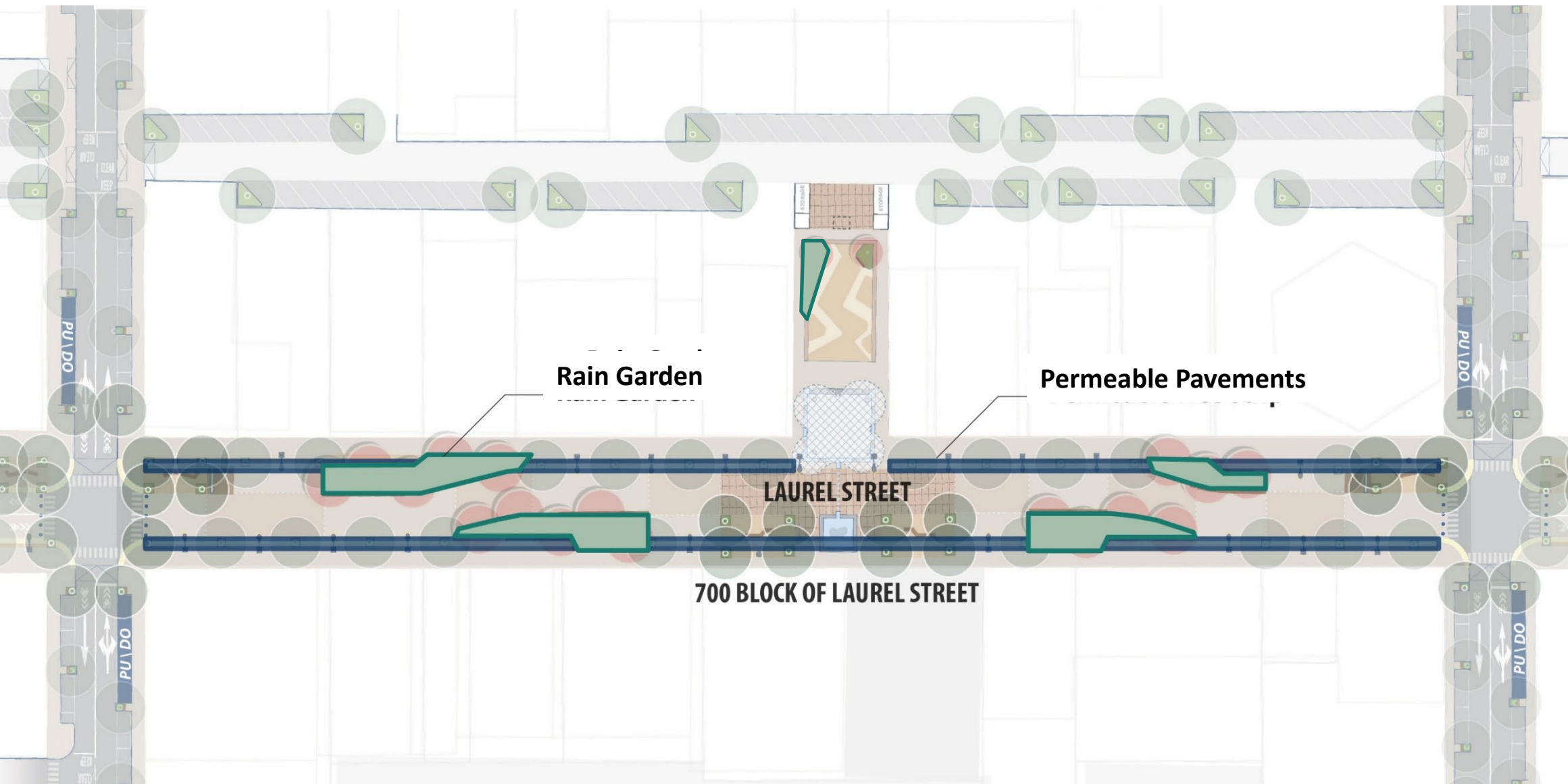
**PA-9:** Provide opportunities for **local artists** and designers to exhibit their work in **seasonal art installations** throughout Downtown to enhance the cultural vibrancy of the area while showcasing local talent.

**PA-11:** Support the installation of **larger sculptures and monuments at key gateways and intersections**, such as the area across from the San Carlos Caltrain Station at El Camino Real and San Carlos Avenue, **as well as within Centennial Plaza**. These installations can serve as significant landmarks and enhance the aesthetic appeal of these vital pedestrian-oriented areas.

# Chapter 9: Sustainability & Resiliency

**SR-1:** Integrate **resilient infrastructure and climate-responsive strategies** to mitigate the impact of environmental challenges and ensure the sustainability of the Downtown area for future generations.

**SR-2:** Implement **green infrastructure** through raingardens, permeable tree strips, green roofs, and low-impact development strategies to reduce runoff and improve water quality.

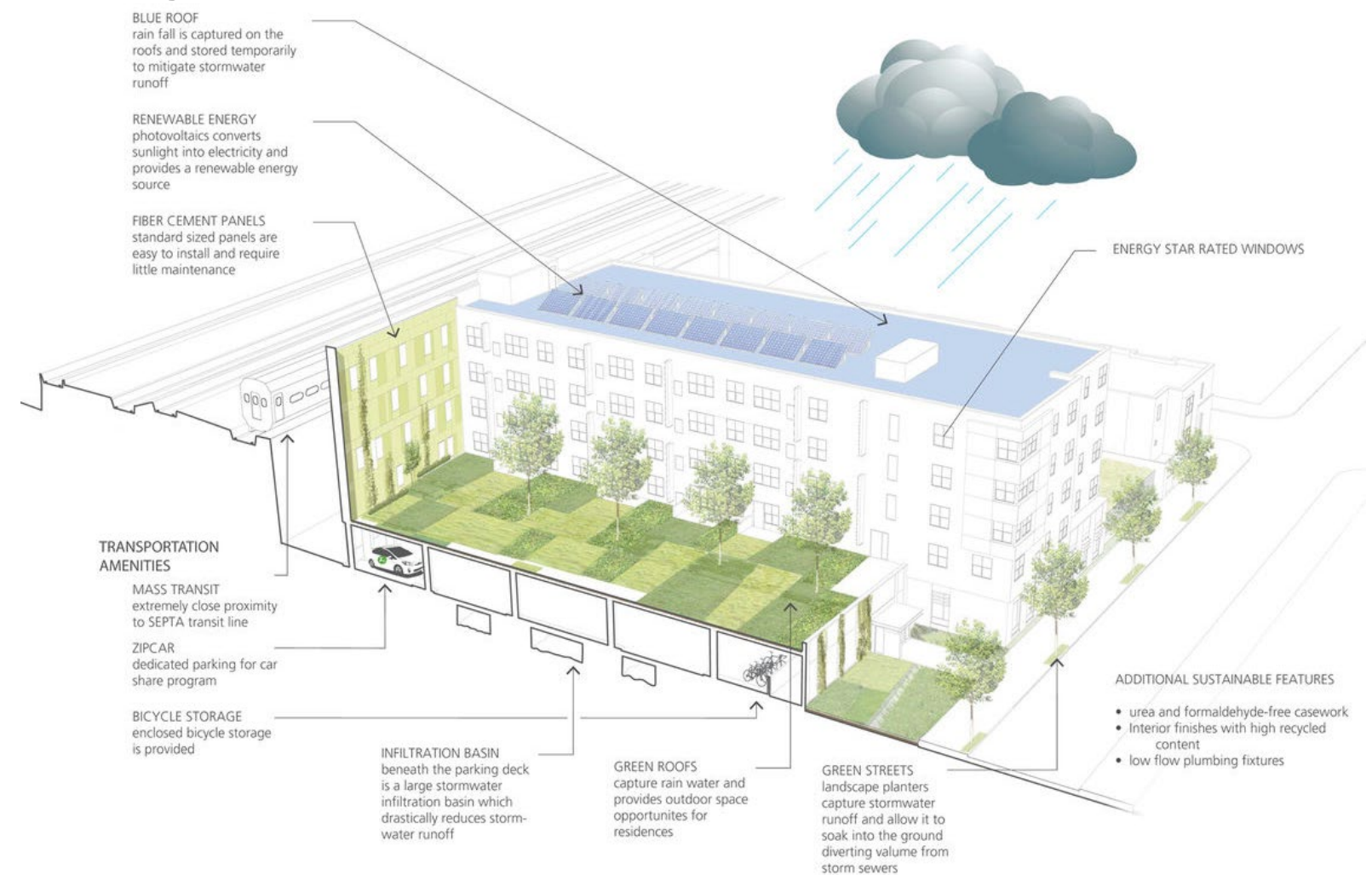


# Chapter 9: Sustainability & Resiliency

**SR-3: Require new developments to incorporate green building standards and energy-efficient design.**



**SR-4: Promote sustainable mobility and support the adoption of clean energy transportation options throughout Downtown.**



# Chapter 10: Infrastructure and Utilities Policies

## Infrastructure and Equity

**IU-1:** Invest in **modern infrastructure**, embracing innovative **technologies**, and promoting **sustainable practices** to create a resilient Downtown that can effectively accommodate future development and improve the overall urban experience.

**IU-2:** Ensure equitable access to community services, including emergency services for all Downtown residents, workers, and visitors.

## Public and Private Utilities

**I-U3:** **Partner with California Water Service (CalWater)** and other utility providers to **align infrastructure upgrades with Downtown Streetscape Master Plan projects**, ensuring seamless coordination, minimizing disruptions, and optimizing project efficiency.

**I-U4:** The City shall **coordinate with public utility providers** serving the Plan Area to identify existing capacity deficiencies and anticipate demands from future development.

# Chapter 10: Infrastructure and Utilities Policies

## Water and Sewer Systems

**IU 7:** Upgrade water, storm water and sewer systems to meet growing demands and incorporate water-saving technologies in new developments and public infrastructure.

**IU-8:** Individual project developments are **encouraged to utilize onsite alternative water sources**, regardless of whether recycled water infrastructure is extended to the Downtown in the future.

## Waste Management

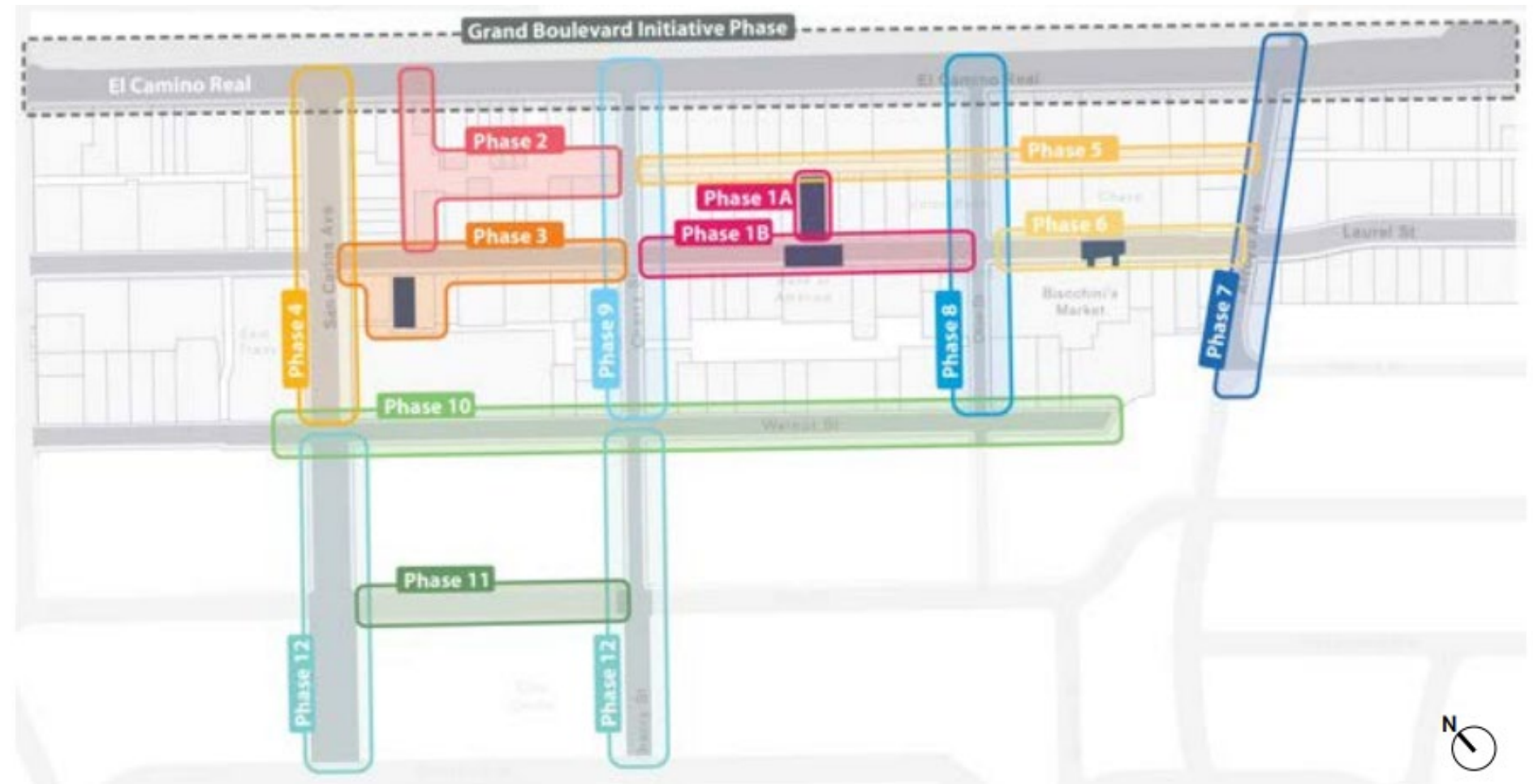
**IU-10:** Develop a waste management strategy that prioritizes **reduction, recycling, and composting**, emphasizing circular economy practices.

## Telecommunications

**IU-9:** Evaluate the feasibility of offering free **public Wi-Fi service within the Downtown district**. This evaluation will include an assessment of technical requirements, costs, funding sources, potential partnerships, and long-term maintenance responsibilities. As part of this process, ensure that future streetscape improvements consider the infrastructure necessary to support public Wi-Fi and related digital connectivity initiatives. Where feasible, conduit, fiber, or other supporting facilities shall be incorporated into construction phases to minimize costs and maximize efficiency.

# Chapter 11: Administration and Implementation

Implementing improvements includes a strategic, step-by-step phasing plan. Due to the scale and complexity of the project, a total of **13 different segments** were identified and designed to minimize disruptions while ensuring continuous community access. The **precise sequencing** of the phases, or segments, will **ultimately be decided by the San Carlos City Council** and **based on funding availability**.



# Chapter 11: Administration and Implementation

**AI-1:** During Downtown streetscape implementation, the City of San Carlos shall minimize disruptions while ensuring continuous access for the community.

**Action AI-1.** *The City shall proactively inform, communicate, and collaborate with Downtown businesses and the broader community throughout construction. Outreach will include sharing schedules, timing, and phasing details; providing clear points of contact; and offering support resources to reduce impacts during construction.*

# Chapter 11: Administration and Implementation

Infrastructure improvements within the Downtown Specific Plan Area shall be supported through a **diversified funding strategy** that includes public-private partnerships, developer impact fees, grant programs, and other alternative financing models.

All projects shall be evaluated for **long-term cost-effectiveness** and sustainability, with **funding mechanisms coordinated across city departments and stakeholders** to ensure timely and efficient implementation.

Secure funding through **public-private partnerships** and other models to implement sustainable and cost-effective infrastructure improvements.

# City Council Questions

**01 Introduction**

**02 Vision, Principles, and Framework for Urban Design and Policy | 40**

**03 Land Use and Urban Design**

**04 Prosperity and Economic Development | 108**

**05 Mobility and Connectivity**

**06 Parking and Transportation Demand Management | 130**

**07 Public Realm**

**08 Public Art**

**09 Sustainability and Resiliency**

**10 Infrastructure and Utilities**

**11 Administration and Implementation**

# City Council Discussion

**01 Introduction**

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**07 Public Realm**

**08 Public Art**

**09 Sustainability and Resiliency**

**10 Infrastructure and Utilities**

**11 Administration and Implementation**

# Planning and Transportation Commission's Recommendation

1. Adopt a Resolution approving the **Addendum** to the 2045 General Plan Reset Environmental Impact Report (**EIR**)
2. Adopt a Resolution amending the San Carlos General Plan **Land Use Map, Land Use Element, Circulation and Scenic Highways Element**
3. Introduce an Ordinance amending the San Carlos **Zoning Map and Municipal Code, Title 18, Zoning Ordinance** to Codify the Downtown Specific Plan
4. Introduce an Ordinance adopting the San Carlos **Downtown Specific Plan**

# Next Steps

Pending tonight's City Council action or direction:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, December 8, 2025
- Specific Plan effective on January 7, 2026



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

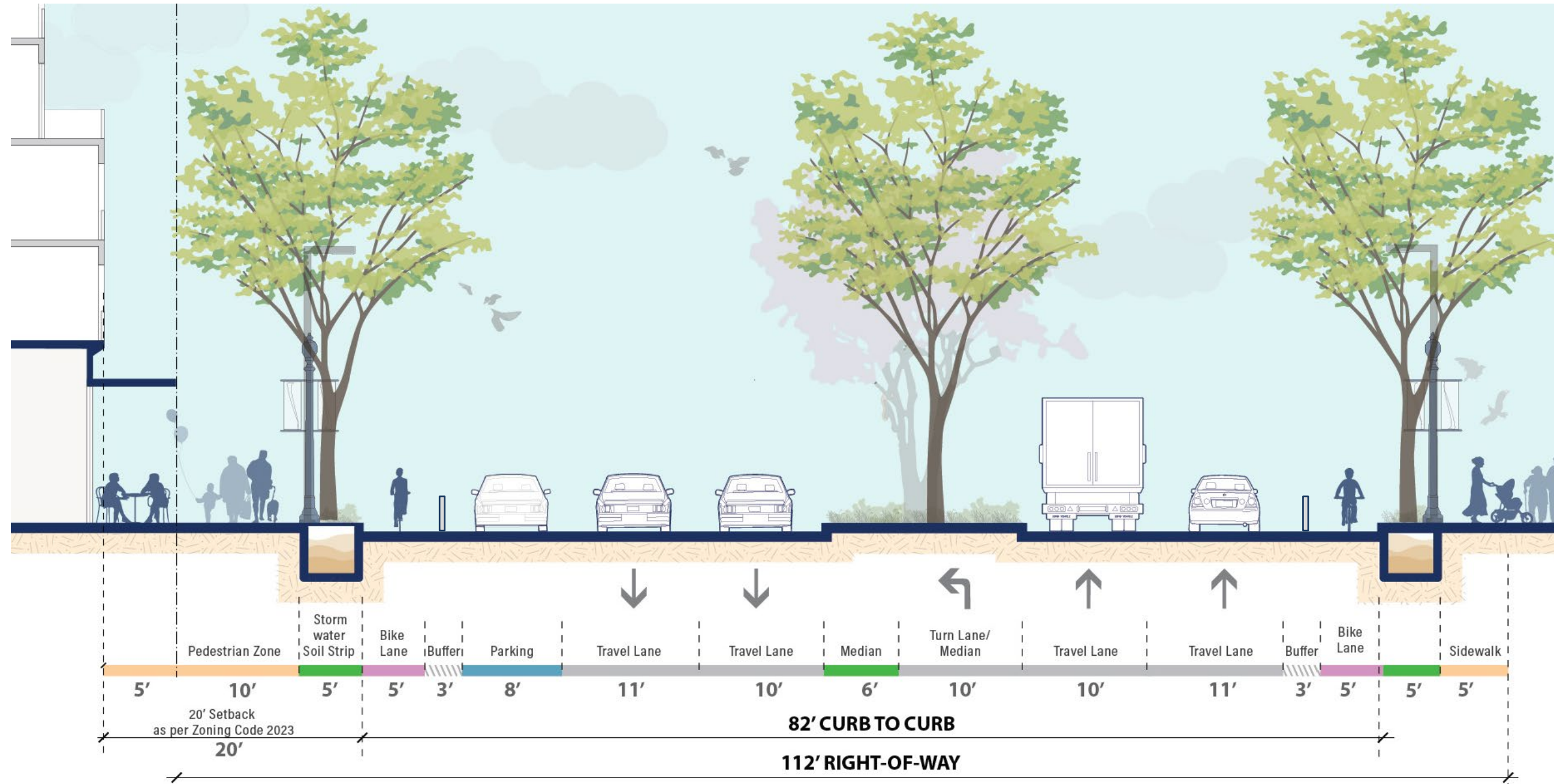


[AdvancePlanning@cityofsancarlos.org](mailto:AdvancePlanning@cityofsancarlos.org)



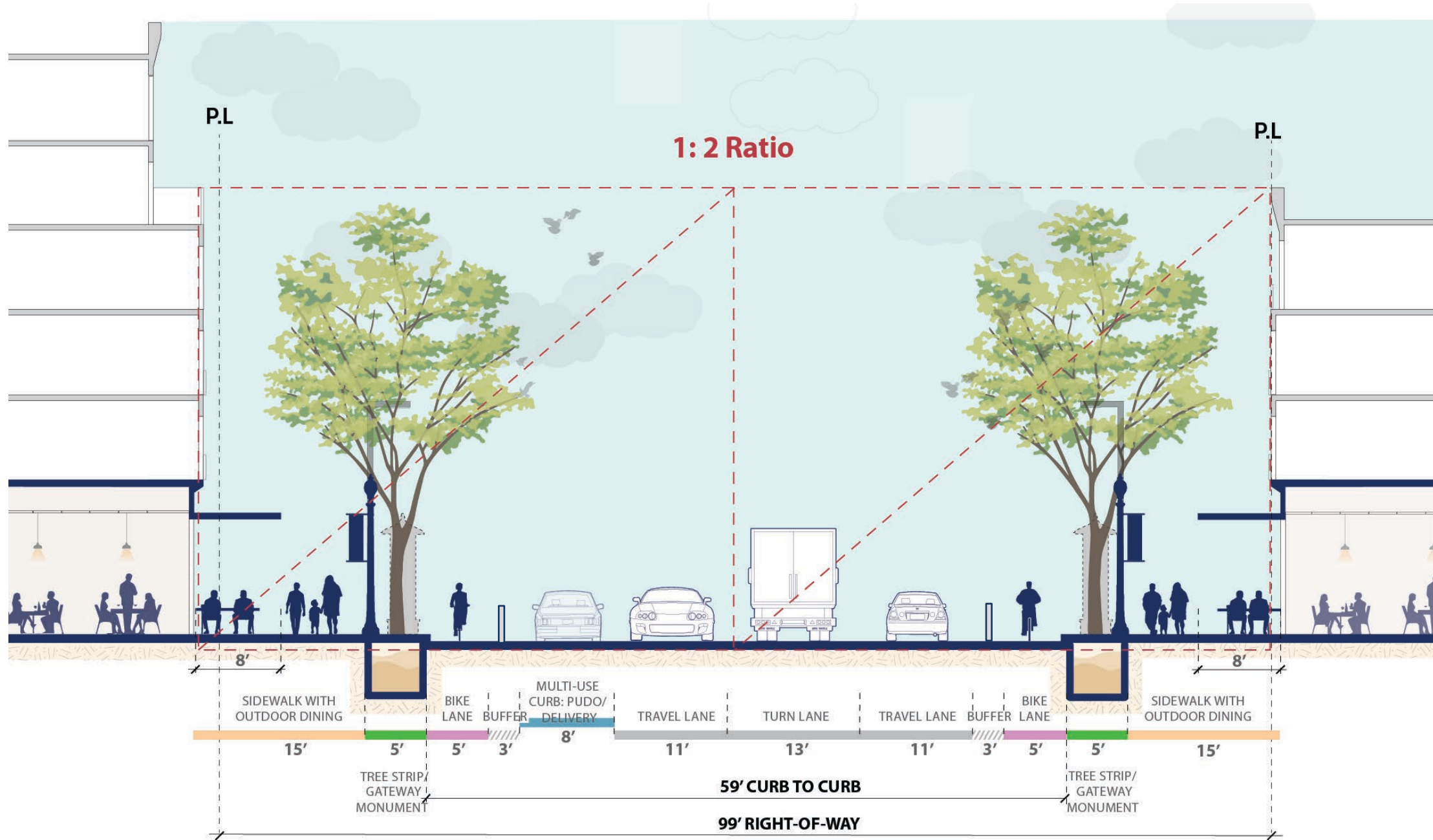
# Backup Slides

# Mobility and Connectivity Standards



El Camino Real  
(Looking North)

# Mobility and Connectivity Standards

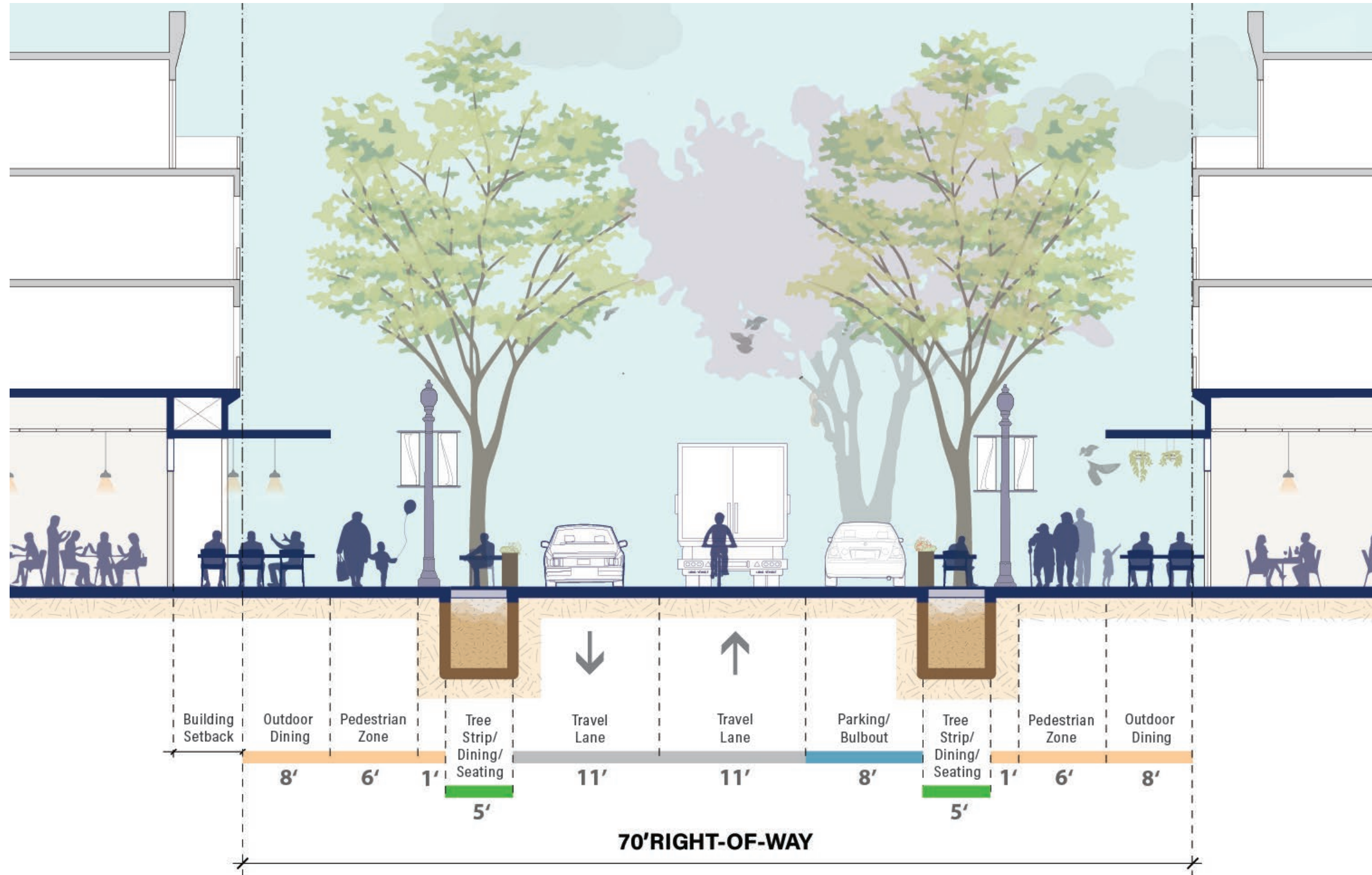


San Carlos Avenue-1100, 1200 Block  
(Looking towards Caltrain Station)

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 and Connectivity Standards



**Laurel Street 600 and 800 Block**

(Looking South)

# Existing Standards Zoning Ordinance

# Existing Outdoor Dining Standards

## 18.23.140

Eating and drinking establishments with outdoor dining areas shall be located, developed, and operated in compliance with the following standards:

A. Application Information. Applicant shall submit a site plan and description of the proposed outdoor dining area. The plan shall be drawn to scale showing the location of buildings and structures and in the case of dining in the public right-of-way, the location of street furnishings and trees, curb and on-street parking, adjacent to the proposed outdoor dining. The plan shall show locations, number and the arrangement of planters, fencing, umbrellas, sun screens, tables, chairs, and other portable or affixed appurtenances proposed. Colors and commercial grade materials shall be specified. An electrical plan, when applicable, shall include any lighting and electrical connection proposed including specification of fixtures, type and location. In addition to any other application materials required, an application for an outdoor dining area shall state the anticipated periods of use during the year, and the proposed hours of daily use, including Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays; and whether any liquor will be sold or consumed in the area to be covered by the permit.

B. Hours of Operation. Hours of operation shall be limited to the hours of operation of the associated eating and drinking establishment and shall be open for a minimum of two service periods per day, except when the establishment is open for only one service per day.

# Existing Outdoor Dining Standards

C. Permits and Licenses. The applicant shall obtain a City of San Carlos zoning clearance/minor architectural review approval and an annual business registration. The applicant shall also obtain approval from the San Mateo County Health Department. In the case of outdoor dining in the public right-of-way, an annual City of San Carlos encroachment permit is required pursuant to Chapter 12.36. As applicable, a current and valid liquor license issued by the California Department of Alcoholic Beverages Control is also required.

D. Outdoor Dining Area in the Public Right-of-Way.

1. Encroachment Permit Required. An encroachment permit approved by the City Engineer is required for any outdoor dining area located in the public right-of-way. No part of an outdoor dining area shall be permanently attached to the building, public right-of-way or sidewalk.

2. Minimum Clearance. For outdoor dining in the MU-DC zoning district, the outdoor dining area may be located no further than the extent of the brick demarcation line that is closest to the front property line. For all other areas, a minimum of four feet of unobstructed sidewalk must remain available for pedestrians. For purposes of the minimum clear path, parking meters, traffic signs, trees, tree grates and all similar obstacles shall constitute obstructions within the sidewalk area.

# Existing Outdoor Dining Standards

- a. **Adjacent to Street.** Where the outdoor dining area is located adjacent to a street, an eighteen-inch clearance shall be maintained from the face of the curb to the outdoor dining area unless there is parking parallel to the street, in which case a two-foot clearance is required.
  - b. **No Obstructions.** Minimum width of access opening shall be forty-four inches. No outdoor dining area shall obstruct any points of building ingress and/or egress.
  - c. **Corner Lots.** On a corner lot, the outdoor dining area shall not be located within the area bound by the extensions of the corner building walls between the building and the curb.
  - d. **Vertical Clearance.** Vertical clearance of seven feet shall be maintained.
3. **Design.**
- a. **No Permanent Attachments.** Roofs, awnings or umbrellas may be used in conjunction with an outdoor eating area, although permanent shelters over an outdoor eating area are prohibited. Awnings shall be adequately secured, retractable, and shall comply with the Building Code.
  - b. **Barriers.** The outdoor dining area may be delineated by an edge perpendicular to the sidewalk, but is not required, by the use of barriers such as planter boxes or wrought iron fencing.
  - c. **Design.** The design of all improvements and furniture shall be of a quality to sustain weather and wear, and shall be of commercial grade materials.

# Existing Outdoor Dining Standards

- i. Furniture shall be of durable materials such as wrought iron, wood, steel, or cast aluminum. Tables shall be a size suitable for seating of two to four patrons. Plastic chairs and table and vinyl or plastic tablecloths are not permitted.
  - ii. Planter boxes shall be of quality materials such as finished wood, precast concrete, terra cotta, or other pottery.
  - iii. Umbrellas and awnings shall be solid color canvas. Sun screens shall be a durable fabric and retractable. No generic advertising or signage is permitted.
4. Operation.
- a. Noise Limits. No entertainment or use, operation, or playing of any musical instrument, loudspeaker, sound amplifier, or other machine for the production or reproduction of sound is permitted in the outdoor dining area.
  - b. No Outdoor Cooking or Open Flames. No electrical appliances, heating or cooking of food or open flames shall be allowed in the outdoor dining area. Use of portable heating devices may be permitted with approval from the Fire Marshal.
  - c. No Storage. No structure or enclosure to accommodate the serving or clean-up stations, storage of trash or garbage shall be erected or placed on, adjacent to, or separate from an outdoor dining area on the public sidewalk or right-of-way.

# Existing Outdoor Dining Standards

- d. Parking. Outdoor dining areas are exempt from the parking requirements of Chapter 18.20, Parking and Loading.
  - e. No Overnight Use. All umbrellas, tables, chairs and other portable appurtenances shall be removed from the outdoor dining area at the end of each business day. No storage in the public right-of-way shall be permitted.
5. Maintenance.
- a. The permittee and the property owner shall maintain the outdoor dining area and the adjoining street, curb, gutter and sidewalk in a neat, clean and orderly condition at all times, regardless of the source of the refuse and litter.
  - b. Activities involving the outdoor dining area shall be conducted in a manner that does not interfere with pedestrians, parking or traffic.
  - c. If necessary, the permittee or the property owner shall clean the surface of the sidewalk by washing or buffing to remove any stains, marks, or discoloration and in accordance with prevailing stormwater and water quality regulations.
  - d. Furniture and appurtenances shall be kept clean and in good condition. Umbrellas shall be kept secure in windy conditions, and fire-treated. (Ord. 1480 (Exh. C (part)), 2015; Ord. 1438 § 4 (Exh. A (part)), 2011)

# Existing Outdoor Retail Sales Standards

## 18.23.150

Outdoor retail sales shall be located, developed, and operated in compliance with the standards of this section.

A. **Temporary Outdoor Display and Sales.** The temporary outdoor display and sale of merchandise shall comply with Section 18.23.240, Temporary uses, and Chapter 18.31, Temporary Use Permits. An encroachment permit is required for any temporary outdoor display and sales within the public right-of-way; reasonable conditions of approval of such permits may be imposed to ensure unobstructed pedestrian movement in a minimum clear zone and to maintain clean sidewalks.

B. **Downtown Outdoor Display and Sales.** Outdoor display and sale of merchandise in downtown districts shall comply with this section and Title 12. Outdoor display and sale of merchandise is permitted on private property in the MU-DC, MU-D, MU-N and the MU-SB. Outdoor display and sale of merchandise is permitted on public property and in the right-of-way in the MU-DC, MU-D with frontage on Laurel Street and San Carlos Avenue, MU-N with frontage on Holly Street, MU-N south of Arroyo Avenue and the MU-SB with frontage on Laurel Street. The display area shall not encroach in a public right-of-way, street, alley, sidewalk or other public property without first obtaining an encroachment permit.

# Existing Outdoor Retail Sales Standards

1. General Requirements.
  - a. Application Information. Applicant shall submit a site plan and description of the proposed outdoor display and sales area. The plan shall be drawn to scale showing the location of buildings and structures. In cases where outdoor sales are proposed for location in the public right-of-way, the site plan shall include the location of street furnishings and trees adjacent to the proposed outdoor display and sales area. The plan shall show locations, number and the arrangement of portable appurtenances proposed. Colors and commercial grade materials shall be specified. In addition to any other application materials required, an application for an outdoor display and sales area shall state the anticipated periods of use during the year, and the proposed hours of daily use, including Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.
  - b. Hours of Operation. Hours of outdoor display and sales shall be limited to the hours of operation of the associated commercial establishment.
  - c. Permits and Licenses. The applicant shall obtain a City of San Carlos zoning clearance/minor architectural review approval and an annual business registration. In the case of outdoor display and sales in the public right-of-way, an annual City of San Carlos encroachment permit is required.

# Existing Outdoor Retail Sales Standards

## 2. Outdoor Retail Sales Standards.

### a. Design.

- i. The design of all improvements, sales racks and furniture shall be of a quality to sustain weather and wear, and shall be of commercial grade materials. Vinyl or plastic tablecloths are not permitted.
- ii. The merchandise in the outdoor display and sales area including but not limited to the display racks, tables and stands shall not exceed a height of six feet and in no case be lower than two feet.
- iii. Display and sales area fixtures and appurtenances shall be stable and secure in all wind and weather conditions. Umbrellas and awnings shall be solid color canvas. Sun screens shall be a fabric and retractable. No generic advertising or signage is permitted.
- iv. The display and sales area shall not exceed twenty-five percent of the width of the frontage of the associated business storefront.

### b. Operation.

- i. Outdoor display and sales conducted by a business shall be located in front of the associated business storefront.
- ii. All merchandise or services displayed outdoors shall be of the same types ordinarily sold indoors at the business conducting the sale. All sale transactions shall be conducted indoors.

# Existing Outdoor Retail Sales Standards

- iii. Outdoor display and sales areas are exempt from the parking requirements of Chapter 18.20, Parking and Loading.
- iv. All display and sale merchandise, furniture and fixtures and other portable appurtenances shall be removed from outdoors at the end of each business day. No outside storage shall be permitted.
- c. Maintenance.
  - i. The permittee and the property owner shall maintain the outdoor display and sales area and the adjoining street, curb, gutter and sidewalk in a neat, clean and orderly condition at all times, regardless of the source of the refuse and litter.
  - ii. Activities involving the outdoor display and sales area shall be conducted in a manner that does not interfere with pedestrians, parking or traffic.
  - iii. If necessary, the permittee or the property owner shall clean the surface of the sidewalk by washing or buffing to remove any stains, marks, or discoloration and in accordance with prevailing stormwater and water quality regulations.
  - iv. Furniture, fixtures and appurtenances shall be kept clean and in good condition.

# Existing Outdoor Retail Sales Standards

3. Outdoor Retail Sales in the Public Right-of-Way.
  - a. Encroachment Permit Required. An encroachment permit approved by the City Engineer is required for any outdoor display and sales located in the public right-of-way. No part of an outdoor display and sales area shall be permanently attached to the building, public right-of-way or sidewalk.
  - b. Minimum Clearance. For outdoor retail sales in the MU-DC zoning district, the outdoor retail sales area may be located no further than the extent of the brick demarcation line that is closest to the front property line. For all other areas, a minimum of four feet of unobstructed sidewalk must remain available for pedestrians. For purposes of the minimum clear path, parking meters, traffic signs, trees, tree grates and all similar obstacles shall constitute obstructions within the sidewalk area.
    - i. Where the outdoor display and sales area is located adjacent to a street, an eighteen-inch clearance shall be maintained from the face of the curb to the outdoor retail sales area unless there is parking parallel to the street, in which case a two-foot clearance is required.
    - ii. Minimum width of access opening shall be forty-four inches. No outdoor display and sales area shall obstruct any points of building ingress and/or egress.
    - iii. On a corner lot, the outdoor display and sales area shall not be located within the area bound by the extensions of the corner building walls between the building and the curb.
    - iv. Vertical clearance of seven feet shall be maintained.

# Existing Outdoor Retail Sales Standards

C. Ongoing Outdoor Display/Sales. The ongoing outdoor display of merchandise, except for automobile/vehicle sales and leasing, which is subject to Section 18.23.050, Automobile/vehicle sales and services, requires approval of a conditional use permit in accordance with Chapter 18.30, Use Permits, and shall comply with the following minimum standards:

1. Location. Outdoor sales shall be located entirely on private property outside any required setback (or landscaped planter in zoning districts that do not have required setbacks), fire lane, or fire access way. A minimum setback of fifteen feet from any public right-of-way is required.
2. Screening. All outdoor sales and activity areas other than vehicle sales lots, produce stands, and nursery product sales shall be screened from adjacent public rights-of-way and residential districts by decorative solid walls, solid fences, or landscaped berms.
3. Location of Merchandise. Displayed merchandise shall occupy a fixed, specifically approved and defined location that does not disrupt the normal function of the site or its circulation and does not encroach upon parking spaces, driveways, pedestrian walkways, or required landscaped areas. These displays shall also not obstruct sight distances or otherwise create hazards for vehicle or pedestrian traffic. (Ord. 1480 (Exh. C (part)), 2015; Ord. 1438 § 4 (Exh. A (part)), 2011)