



Appendix 8 South of Laurel Area

Public Review Draft - January 2025



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*Conceptual Rendering of Spruce Street Plaza,
connecting Pacific Avenue and the Santa Cruz Riverwalk.*

8.1 Introduction

This appendix describes the development policies and objectives for the South of Laurel area (the SOLA), the fifth district of the Santa Cruz Downtown Plan. It includes policies, development standards, and design guidelines to guide future planned public space improvements including circulation for cars, bikes, and pedestrians, streetscape and open space, beach connectivity and implementation. Development of housing and commercial structures on private property is governed by the standards, policies and design guidelines for the South of Laurel Area found in Chapter 4 of the Downtown Plan.

8.1.1 Context and Background

As shown in [Figure 8.1-1 South of Laurel Area District](#), the area consists of approximately 29 acres in downtown Santa Cruz and is generally bound by Laurel Street, the San Lorenzo River, Front Street, and Center Street. This neighborhood is located in the Coastal Zone and was formerly part of the Beach and South of Laurel Plan Area.

South of Laurel contains a variety of commercial and multi-family residential land uses. This includes the temporary Kaiser Permanente Arena, various ground-floor commercial retail, food service, and entertainment uses, multi-family housing, and at-grade paved parking lots with associated areas of landscaping.



Figure 8.1-1 South of Laurel Area District





The SOLA is also located adjacent to residential uses to the west, including the multi-family Sycamore Street Commons, which are located in the Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District (NCOD, Santa Cruz Municipal Code Chapter 24 Part 31).

Being located between the downtown and the Beach Area, the neighborhood serves an important role in linking these two areas. This link includes Front Street and Pacific Avenue, the Laurel Street Extension, and the steps to Beach Hill from the Santa Cruz Riverwalk toward Cliff Street and down to the Beach Area (including the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, Main Beach, the Santa Cruz Wharf, the Beach Flats, and the neighborhood of Beach Hill).

The San Lorenzo River bends from a southerly to easterly direction here providing particularly scenic views of the San Lorenzo River, the Laurel Street Bridge, the San Lorenzo Riverside Gardens Park and the surrounding neighborhood on the east side of the San Lorenzo River.

Relevant City planning documents that influence future development in this southern-most neighborhood of the Downtown:

- General Plan 2030 (2012)
- Local Coastal Program (1994)
- Downtown Site Furnishing Standards (2022)
- Community-wide Climate Action Plan for 2030 (2022)
- San Lorenzo Urban River Plan (2003)
- Riverfront and Lower Pacific Design Guidelines & Development Incentives (2010)
- City of Santa Cruz Active Transportation Plan (2017)

- Santa Cruz Municipal Code
- Various infrastructure master/management plans



South of Laurel Today

8.1.2 South of Laurel Area Objectives and Guiding Principles

The following objectives provide the basis for guiding the future development in the SOLA, consistent with the City's General Plan.

- Increase the total number of housing units that can be built in the City by adding capacity for multi-family housing.
- Better connect downtown with the San Lorenzo River and Beach Areas, in order to:
 - Give the community better access to the river and beach.
 - Help visitors see more of Santa Cruz, including its local businesses and entertainment destinations.
- Work with the Santa Cruz Warriors to establish design standards and use allowances that accommodate potential development of a permanent arena.
- Generate new tax revenue for the City.
- Create new economic opportunities for local businesses and workers.
- Create opportunities for public amenities and infrastructure including parks, the Santa Cruz Riverwalk trail, or other spaces for community use.



A street-width plaza is envisioned.

Based on community and stakeholder feedback, the following guiding principles are designed to re-enforce and further articulate these objectives.

1. Create an active, inviting, safe and comfortable place for residents and visitors of all ages.
2. Encourage the development of affordable housing to the greatest extent feasible.
3. Through creative urban design, distinctive architecture, high-quality urban amenities, and appropriately scaled public gathering spaces, support change in the South of Laurel Area to create a regional destination for residents and visitors.
4. Maximize opportunities for outdoor dining and ground floor retail uses, particularly along Pacific Avenue and Spruce Street.
5. Create an integrated bike and pedestrian network with appropriate wayfinding throughout the neighborhood, helping visitors and residents access the Beach, San Lorenzo River, and downtown.
6. Create a neighborhood with well-designed public spaces and amenities that enhances the pedestrian experience and complements and integrates with the greater downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.
7. Plan for a total of 1,600 residential units.
8. Provide 20% of the total number of units (320 units) built as permanent below market-rate affordable housing, inclusive of a 50% density bonus.
9. To accommodate the City's future affordable and market-rate housing needs, support and accommodate the construction of higher-density building elements on Blocks A, B, C and D that are strategically designed to relate to the riverwalk and public spaces and create an interesting and varied skyline.
10. Preserve view corridors in building layout and landscaping, particularly in relation to the San Lorenzo River.
11. Use distinctive architectural and design features at key nodal points and gateways to the SOLA.
12. Create vitality in design that integrates and encourages pedestrian and bicycle connectivity with the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
13. Create building transitions, setbacks, landscaping, and other design features to minimize development impacts on existing residential uses in the Neighborhood Conservation Zone.
14. Encourage the use of a development agreement, memorandum of understanding, or other contracts between developers and the City on development applications that include larger parcels and/or more than one block, to help guide future development requirements and plan for community benefits.
15. Maintain and/or improve existing infrastructure commensurate with future development.

8.2 South of Laurel Area Development Plan

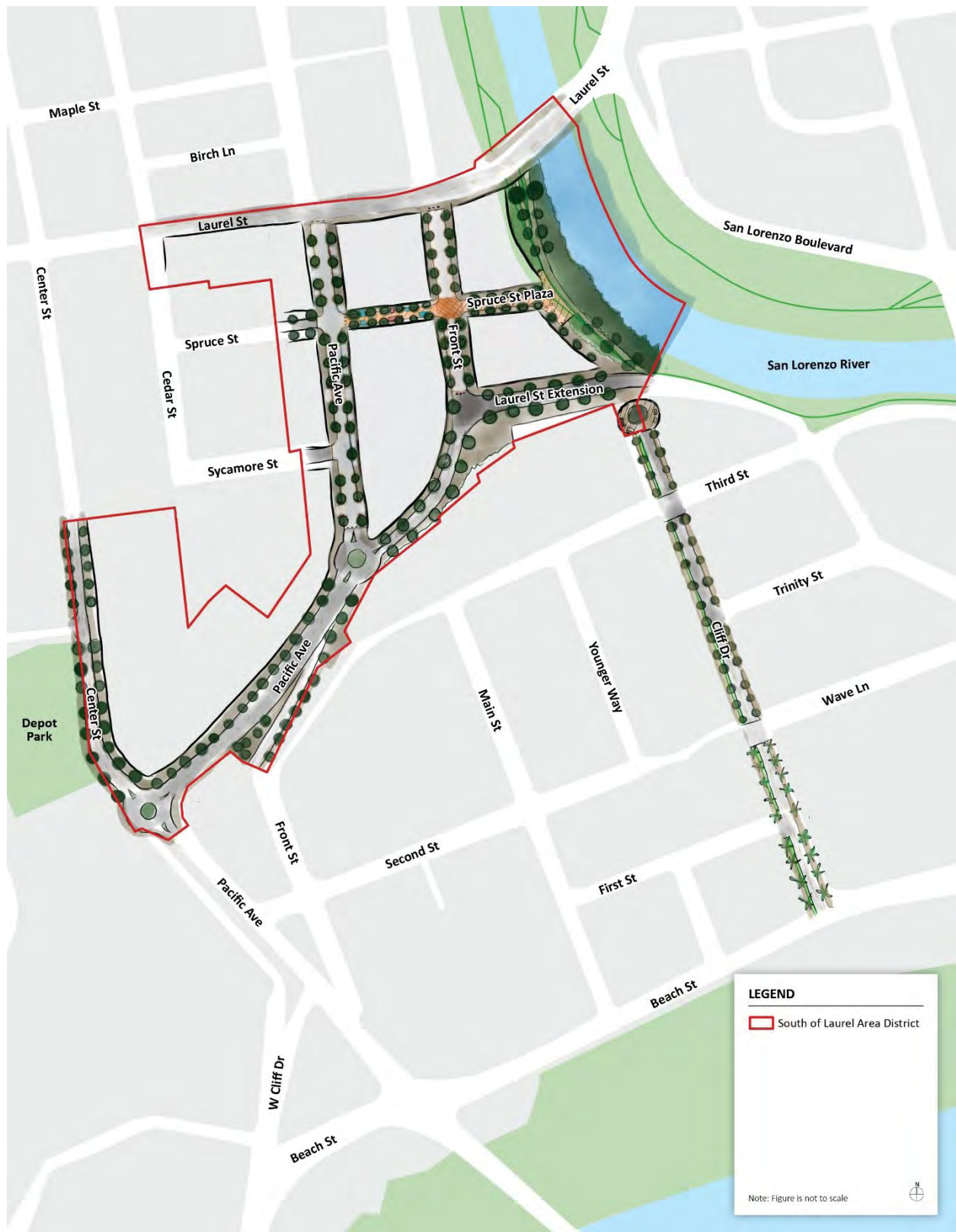
8.2.1 Development Plan Overview

As stated in the Guiding Principles above, the SOLA can be redeveloped over time to achieve community goals relating to housing, mobility, economic development and recreation.

As further described below and illustrated in [Figure 8.2-1 SOLA Conceptual Plan](#) and [Figure 8.4-2 Existing and Proposed Circulation](#), redevelopment of the SOLA creates the opportunity for the realignment and reconfiguration of the circulation pattern to improve connectivity to the Santa Cruz Riverwalk and San Lorenzo River, create an enhanced public streetscape, and improve connectivity to the Beach Area.



Figure 8.2-1 SOLA Conceptual Plan



As an anchor to this neighborhood, a new arena for the Santa Cruz Warriors is envisioned on Block C between Front Street and Pacific Avenue or on Block D between Front Street and the Santa Cruz Riverwalk, both south of Spruce Street (See [Figure 8.2-2 SOLA Redevelopment Blocks](#)). This arena will have a capacity of approximately 3,200 fixed seats for sporting events and approximately 4,000 fixed and temporary seating for other events such as musical concerts or shows. Ancillary uses include a practice court, locker/team support facilities, food service/merchandising, and administrative support services. Complimenting and supportive of the new arena, a series of public realm improvements are envisioned that will create new significant community gathering spaces, particularly along Spruce Street, Pacific Avenue, and the Santa Cruz Riverwalk.

This concept requires closing Spruce Street to vehicular traffic from Front Street if the arena is developed on Block D, and from Pacific Avenue if the arena is developed in Block C, to the Santa Cruz Riverwalk to create a public plaza (Spruce Street Plaza). This would coincide with relocating the Laurel Street Extension to the south, along the base of Beach Hill. Additionally, to strengthen the connection between the downtown and the beach, a number of mobility improvements are identified, including rebuilding the steps from the Santa Cruz Riverwalk up to Cliff Street and improving the streetscape (sidewalks, street trees, lighting) from the top of Cliff Street south to the Beach Area.



A pedestrian plaza connects commercial and residential uses.

8.2.2 SOLA Redevelopment Parcels

Redevelopment potential is typically understood to be a result of existing building age and intensity of use, parcel size, ownership status. Based on these factors, and to help communicate future development principles and concepts, Blocks A through H have been identified as likely to redevelop within the next 15 to 25-years, as shown in [Figure 8.2-2 SOLA Redevelopment Blocks](#). This plan does not dictate the timing of any specific development, and the City cannot require the development of specific uses on specific sites. This plan sets the parameters under which redevelopment may take place and creates allowances for the types of uses and levels of vitality the City wants to encourage.

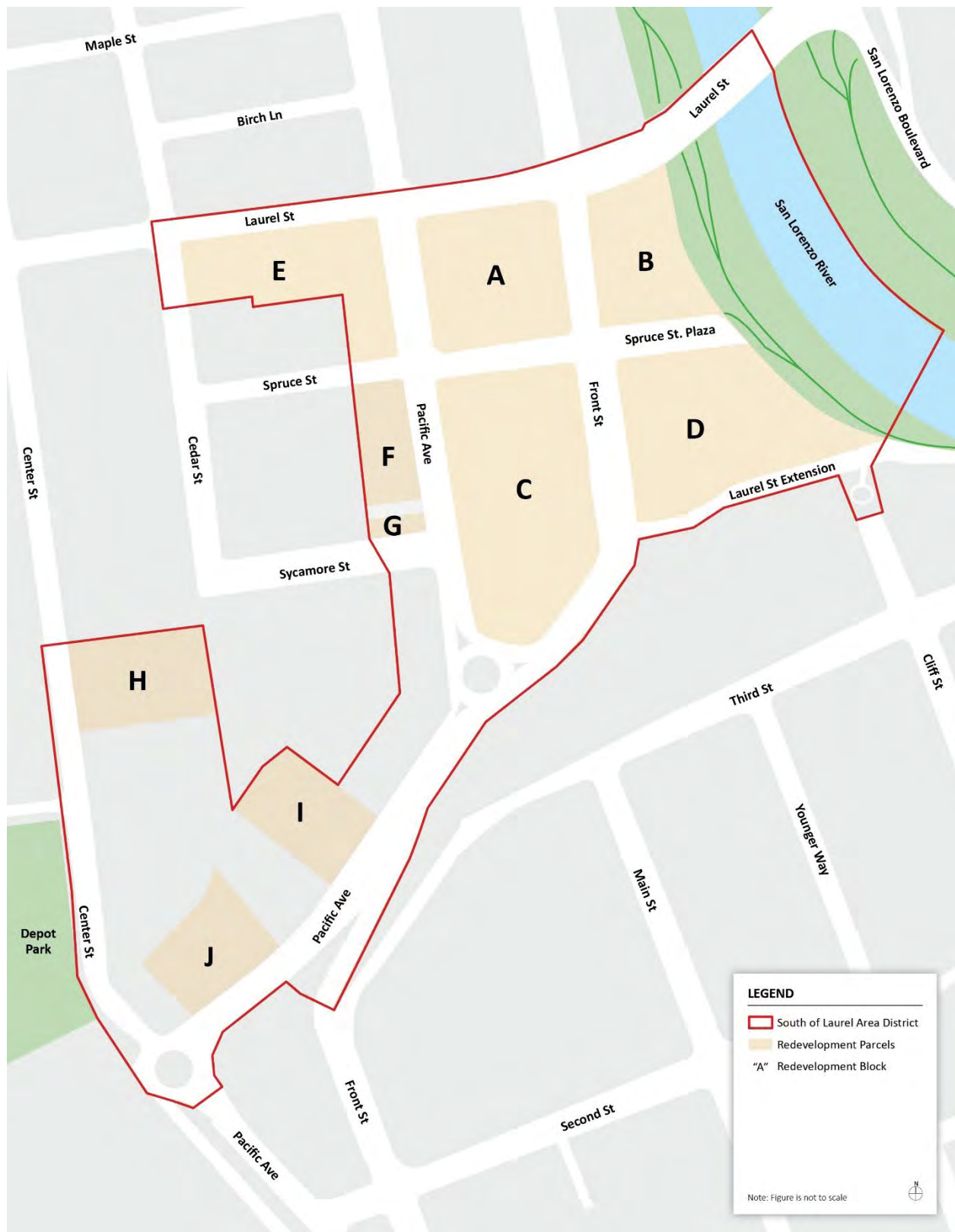
The amount and type of development allowed in this neighborhood has been planned consistent with the Objectives and Guiding Principles found in Section 8.1.2 of this Appendix. Increasing the amount of housing and commercial space that can be created, as well as identifying sites appropriate for the development of a multiuse arena are the defining features of private property development in this area. The development regulations that will govern the private development in the area are addressed in [Section 8.3 - Private Property Development](#).



Outdoor gathering spaces.



Figure 8.2-2 SOLA Redevelopment Blocks



8.3 Private Property Development

8.3.1 Introduction

Development of the area's Private Realm will be shaped by the following form-based design standards and design guidelines, defining building form first by maximum height. Setback regulations, followed by a variety of mass reduction strategies shall be used to further define building form. Wide sidewalks are required in building setbacks where active ground floor uses occur to contribute to a neighborhood with vibrant pedestrian zones and gracious, well-framed community spaces.

8.3.2 Allowed Uses

For a description of Prohibited Uses, Accessory Uses, Temporary Uses, and Additional Regulations – Ground Floor Uses, see [Chapter 4 Development Standards and Design Guidelines, Section A: All Central Business Districts Land Uses](#).

8.3.3 Development Standards and Design Guidelines

All buildings shall conform to the development standards and design guidelines as described in [Chapter 4 Development Standards and Design Guidelines](#).

8.3.4 Anti-Displacement Policy

The City is working to expand anti-displacement policies such as the current local preference policy in SCMC 24.16.045 consistent with all relevant state and federal laws, as expanded by SB 649 (2022) with a focus specifically on households at elevated risk of displacement, and development proposals will be subject to those standards from the time they take effect following future City Council action. Additionally, state regulations (i.e., California Health and Safety Code - Section 17975-17975.10 :: Article 2.5. Tenant Relocation Assistance and California Civil Code – Section 1946.2) require one-to-one replacement of existing housing units currently or recently occupied by lower income households, in conjunction with relocation expenses and first right of refusal requirements for existing tenants.

8.3.5 Downtown Density Bonus

For a description of the Downtown Density Bonus available to properties in the SOLA, see [Chapter 4 Development Standards and Design Guidelines, Section K: South of Laurel Area Development Standards](#).

8.4 Public Spaces

8.4.1 The Role of Public Spaces

The community's development fabric is composed of two distinct, yet inter-related components: public spaces and private property development. The public spaces consist of the publicly owned street rights-of-way and open space such as parks (i.e., the San Lorenzo Riverfront), and public plazas, courtyards, and alleys. The private property is made up of privately-owned areas, in large part developed with buildings and associated improvements, and can be more limited in accessibility to the public.

Public spaces set a stage on which community life unfolds. The design of streets, the plaza, and other public spaces will help determine much of what this neighborhood becomes over time. With thoughtful design and careful programming, streets and public spaces can address complex challenges relating to mobility, economic vitality, greening strategies, and community activities.

From the perspective of community identity, enhanced public spaces provide a way to establish this area as a neighborhood that is an integral component of the greater downtown. The public spaces and private property development interact and relate to one another, and both components are necessary to create successful, lively, engaging places to meet community needs.



Appropriately scaled pedestrian pathways with landscaping.

Public space plays a critical role in the SOLA's character and function, serving overlapping roles, including:

- **Circulation and Access.** The public street rights-of-way provide for circulation within and through the community – accommodating pedestrians, bicycles, and buses, in addition to vehicles.
- **Development Framework.** The public street rights-of-way provide the fundamental structure that contains and organizes incremental redevelopment into a cohesive whole.
- **Public Open Space.** In addition to parks and plazas, public street rights-of-way, including public sidewalks, can play an important role as public open space—allowing for light, air, landscaping within developed areas, and serving as the “living room” for community life—places where people meet, interact, and linger.
- **Visual Character.** The physical design of the public realm and the design elements such as landscaping, art, and infrastructure is critical in generating a sense of place and creating a welcoming atmosphere for all users.



Multi-use plaza for community events.

For the SOLA, the following section covering ideas and requirements for the public realm is organized accordingly; Community Spaces, Streetscape and Circulation.

8.4.2 Community Spaces

Introduction

Community spaces in this neighborhood include existing and planned public streets and the Santa Cruz Riverwalk, all designed to accommodate public gatherings and events such as pre- and post-arena events, holidays and festivals events, and informal gatherings. As shown in [Figure 8.4-1 Community Spaces](#) and described below, primary community spaces include Spruce Street (the Spruce Street Plaza), the Santa Cruz Riverwalk, and Pacific Avenue. Secondary community spaces include Front Street, the Laurel Street Extension, the Pacific Avenue / Front Street Roundabout, and the arena.

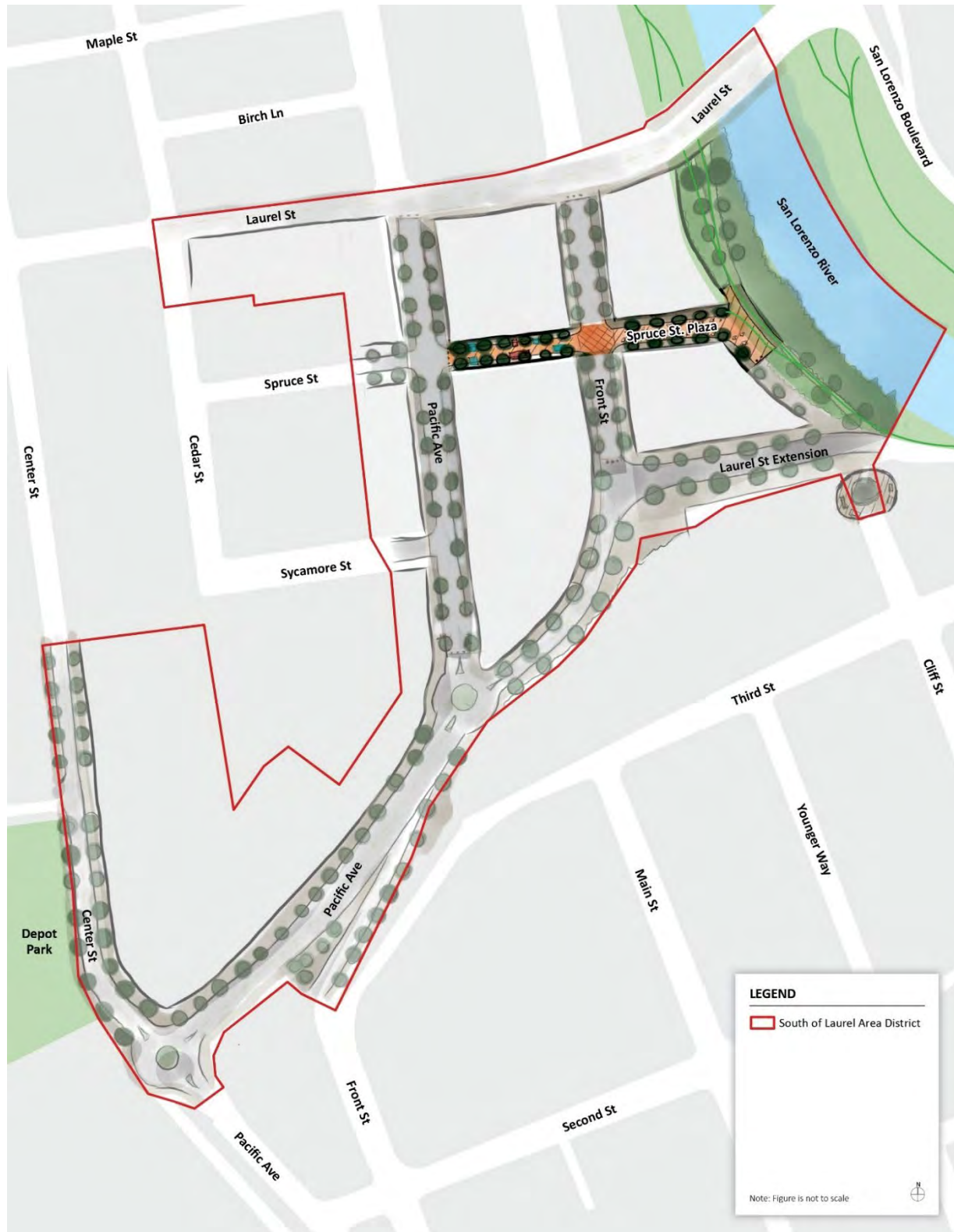
Cross-sections for the public rights of way are described and shown in [Section 8.4.3 Streetscape and Circulation / Street Types](#).



Activated and inviting public spaces.



Figure 8.4-1 Community Spaces

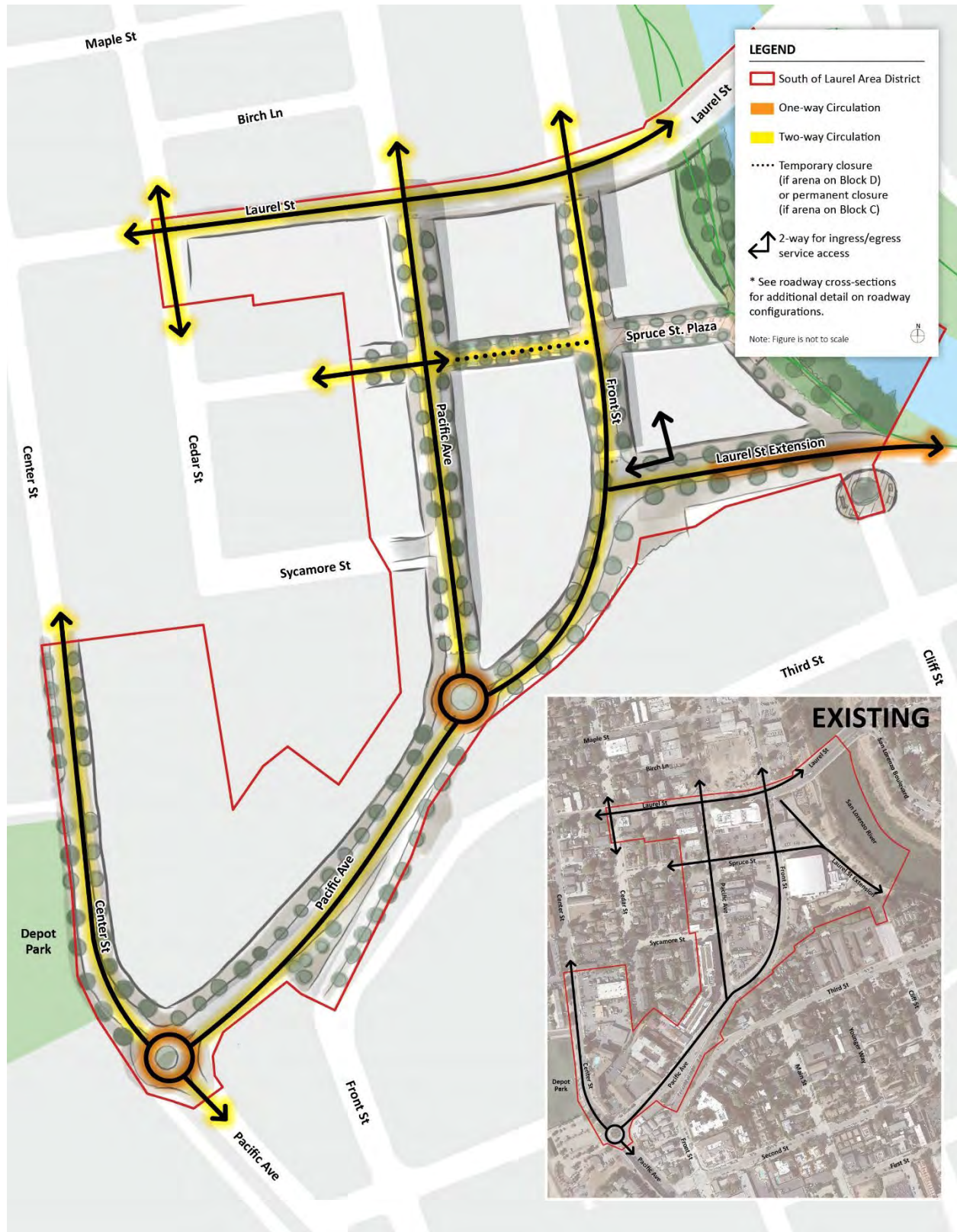


As shown in [Figure 8.4-2 Existing and Proposed Circulation](#), the following roadway changes are envisioned as part of the creation of the community spaces as shown in [Figure 8.4-1 Community Spaces](#):

- Create a new Spruce Street Plaza along Spruce Street by permanently closing Spruce Street to vehicular traffic east of Front Street to the Santa Cruz Riverwalk. Emergency, maintenance, and delivery vehicle access shall be maintained through the use of removable barriers or bollards.
- To create better opportunities for the public to engage with the San Lorenzo River, realign the connection to Laurel Street Extension to the base of Beach Hill, just north of the Cliff Street stairs. This improvement can only be initiated after existing residents and support facilities have been relocated, consistent with City policies and State law.
- Consider removing the existing surface parking and northern end of the existing Laurel Street Extension, creating a more developable Block B. Permanent access to the City Pump Station No. 1 will be maintained at an alternative location to ensure adequate access.
- Construct a new roundabout and associated pedestrian and bicycle improvements at the southern convergence of Pacific Avenue and Front Street.
- As redevelopment proceeds, the City will further evaluate and discuss with the community the possibility of closing Spruce between Pacific and Front Street to auto traffic.

A discussion of these public improvements follows. The narrative discussion and associated polices for each area shall be considered in association with the streetscape polices described in [Section 8.4.3. Streetscape and Circulation](#), below.

Figure 8.4-2 Existing and Proposed Circulation



Spruce Street Plaza

Spruce Street is envisioned to become an active public plaza for community gathering, outdoor dining, and a non-vehicular connection to the Santa Cruz Riverwalk. It will also serve as an important “front door” to the permanent arena. As new development takes place, and as soon as the roadway realignment of Laurel Street Extension is completed, Spruce Street will be closed to automobile traffic east of Front Street and reserved for pedestrians and bicycles.



Public space for pre- and post-arena events.

This concept requires closing Spruce Street to vehicular traffic from Front Street if the arena is developed on Block D, and possibly from Pacific Avenue if the arena is developed in Block C, to the Santa Cruz Riverwalk to create a public plaza (Spruce Street Plaza). This would coincide with relocating the Laurel Street Extension to the south, along the base of Beach Hill. Improvements should include enhanced paving, clustered seating areas, one or more sculptural art features, street trees, bike racks, high-quality trash and recycling receptacles, permanent and removable bollards, and wayfinding signage. If feasible, the Spruce Street Plaza will be designed to meet the top of the levee at grade. Amenities will be incorporated to accommodate outdoor dining and include appropriately spaced electrical outlets and other features supportive of civic activities such as vendor kiosks, tree lighting, etc.



Ground-floor retail that activates the public realm.



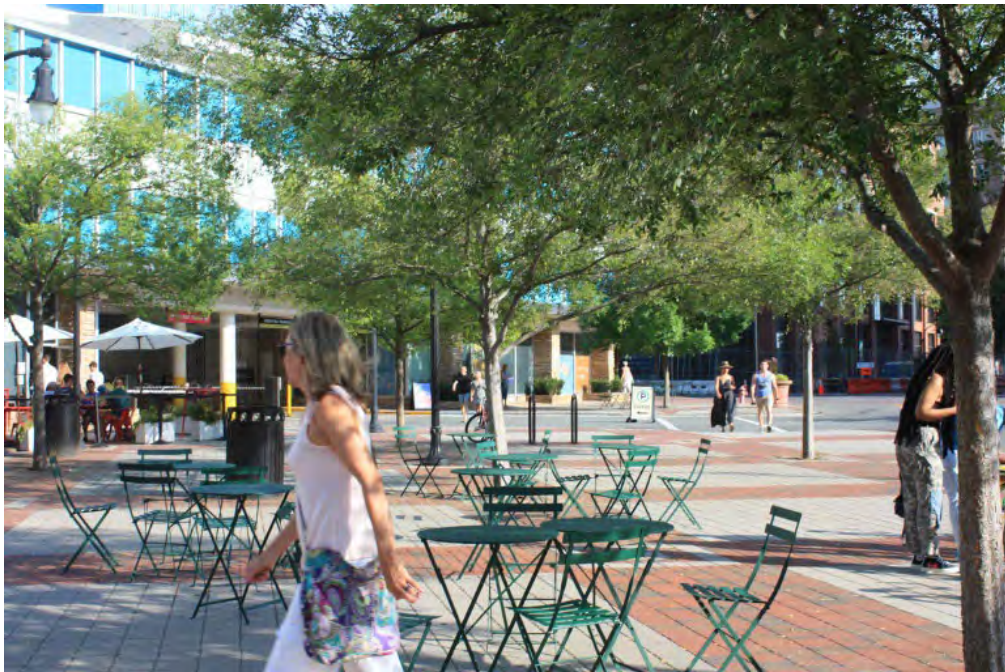
Conceptual rendering of Spruce Street Plaza looking east from Front Street.

The following policies shall apply to future development of the Spruce Street Plaza:

- Utilize the public right-of-way and building setbacks to create a seamless and unencumbered pedestrian connection on Spruce Street from Front Street (and potentially from Pacific Avenue if the arena is constructed on Block C) east to the Santa Cruz Riverwalk that is permanently closed to vehicular through traffic. Where not permanently closed, allow temporary street closures for special events.
- When the street has been closed to through traffic, create a dynamic public space suitable for pre- and post-arena events and informal congregation, as well as community events such as seasonal festivals and celebrations, outdoor markets, food-truck gatherings, etc.
- When the street has been closed to through traffic, incorporate high-quality hardscape materials and finishes such as pavers or bricks, extensive seating, special lighting, an interactive art feature(s), and other entertainment-focused amenities.
- Prior to development of the Spruce Street Plaza and improvements to the Riverwalk, the City and any adjacent private developers shall collaborate with the community to develop a specific landscape design plan for the plaza and riverwalk in this area,

identifying location and design of all relevant infrastructure elements and finishes, as well as the location of any significant features and spaces intended to engage visitors to the space, and assigning maintenance responsibility for all elements.

- Include public art in a meaningful way by working with the City Arts Commission. Spaces for performing arts, as well as the installation of interactive art, should be considered as part of a design plan, to be prepared prior to build-out of the Spruce Street Plaza.
- Require greater building setbacks at the intersections of the plaza and Front Street and Pacific Avenue to increase the amount of ground-level public gathering space.
- Because the intersections of Spruce Street with Pacific Avenue and Front Street serve as important gateways, special design features and space for art could be incorporated at both of these intersections. See also [Section 8.4.3. Streetscape and Circulation / Gateways and Nodes](#), below.
- Incorporate appropriate infrastructure (i.e., electrical outlets) located to support a variety of event functions.
- Whether publicly and/or privately maintained, portions of the plaza space shall be made available for private outdoor restaurant use.



Informal and flexible gathering spaces.

- Ongoing maintenance of the plaza and any considerations around access control shall be addressed between the relevant City Departments and any adjacent property owners prior to development entitlements.
- Building massing on Spruce Street and adjacent streets could be designed to accommodate special lighting effects (e.g., 3-D image projection) and well as large-screen illumination / projection. As an extension to this theme, the incorporation of interactive lighting through sculptural features, streetscape lighting and furniture, etc. is strongly encouraged.
- The City shall retain maintenance access to underground utilities in the existing Right-of-Way. Landscaping, art elements and programming described in the design plan must accommodate needs for sufficient clear space for entry, exit, and operation of necessary equipment for maintenance of these underground utilities.



An appropriately sized plaza that supports community events.

Santa Cruz Riverwalk

Located at the eastern terminus of Spruce Street, the Santa Cruz Riverwalk provides an important public access linkage for non-vehicular access north to the rest of the downtown, and south to the Beach Area.

The policies below guide future redevelopment fronting the Santa Cruz Riverwalk to promote river-oriented mixed-use development that is activated with restaurants, public gather spaces, benches, and other public amenities, and provides direct pedestrian access to the Santa Cruz Riverwalk.

New development adjacent to the Santa Cruz Riverwalk should be consistent with recommendations identified in the *River/Front & Lower Pacific Design Guidelines & Development Incentives* (May 2010), and the *San Lorenzo Urban River Plan* (2003), and comply with any applicable U.S. Army Corps of Engineers requirements.

To improve access and better utilize land adjacent to the Santa Cruz Riverwalk, the City's surface parking lot north of Spruce Street (Block B) and the Laurel Street Extension south of Spruce Street (east side of Block D) should be vacated as part of any future development. This will allow a higher and better use of the land and improve visual and physical connections to the San Lorenzo River.

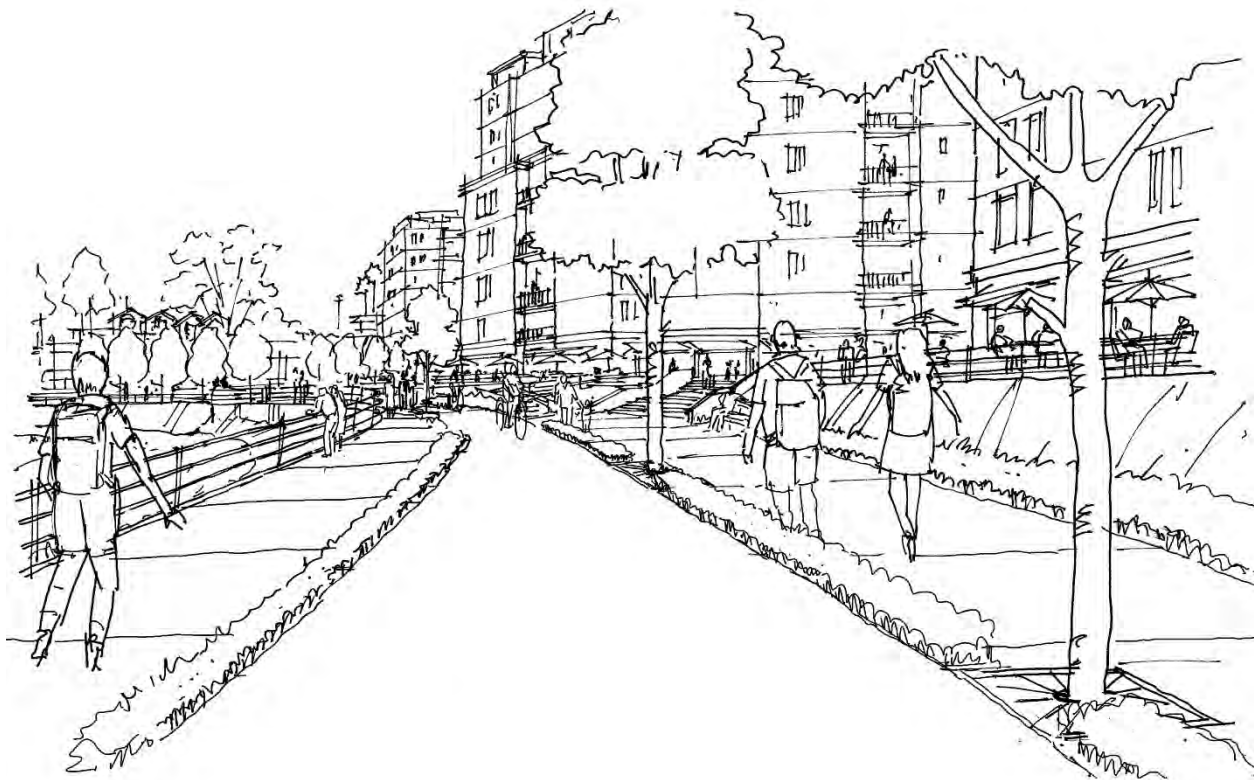
Creative design solutions should also be considered to create a public space at the northern end of Block B while maintaining equipment access to the crucial infrastructure that is City's Pump Station No. 1. This could include cooperation between private developers on the southern portion of the block and the City, to negotiate an exchange of land that will allow access to the



Santa Cruz Riverwalk today.

pump station from the northern end of the block on the Front Street frontage, in exchange for some portion of the existing City parking facility on the east side of the block, the creation of additional public space which accommodates maintenance access as part of the gateway treatment at the corner of Laurel and Front, enhanced landscaping, murals and other artistic treatments of the equipment, and educational signage about the City's flood control systems. Furthermore, building design and pedestrian connection to the adjacent Laurel Street Bridge should be distinctive to create a positive gateway experience into the downtown.

Improvements to the Riverwalk could include enhanced sidewalk paving, viewpoints showcasing the San Lorenzo River, extensive seating, and low-profile landscaping with an emphasis on native plants. Improvements should be designed in coordination with the adjacent private property owners and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide a coordinated design response with the appropriate level of public benefits and amenities.



Conceptual rendering looking south along the Santa Cruz Riverwalk.

The following policies shall apply to redevelopment of the Santa Cruz Riverwalk:

- Incorporate hardscape and landscape amenities along the Santa Cruz Riverwalk that are inviting and attractive. Features should include seating areas, a small public gathering space at the intersection of the Riverwalk and Spruce Plaza, or adjacent to a new arena (if arena is built on Block D), artwork, and interpretive signage (referencing local history and culture).
- Provide pedestrian access to the Santa Cruz Riverwalk from adjacent buildings.
- Maintain solar access to the Santa Cruz Riverwalk to the greatest extent feasible.
- Through interpretive signage and other means, create awareness and education regarding the natural habitat features of the San Lorenzo River corridor.
- Telecommunications and energy utilities shall be located underground. Where other utility structures must be located above ground (i.e., pump station), incorporate aesthetically appropriate screening (e.g., wood fencing, stone wall, etc., no chain link fencing) to minimize their visual presence.
- Incorporate wayfinding signage, landscaping, paving and consistent design treatments along the Santa Cruz Riverwalk to create a visual and physical connection to the planned Spruce Street Plaza. See also [8.4.3 Streetscape and Circulation / Signage](#) below.



Conceptual rendering looking west from the east side of the San Lorenzo River.

- Prior to development of the Spruce Street Plaza and improvements to the Santa Cruz Riverwalk, the City and any adjacent private developers shall collaborate with the community to develop a specific landscape design plan for the plaza and riverwalk in this area, identifying location and design of all relevant infrastructure elements including pavers, railings, planters, landscaping materials, benches or other seating, bike, pedestrian, and wheelchair-accessible paths of circulation; location of any significant features such as performance space, water features, sculpture, play equipment, or other elements intended to engage visitors to the space, and assigning maintenance responsibility for all elements.
- Reconstruct the stairs and adjacent open space connecting the Santa Cruz Riverwalk and Beach Hill, exploring options for possibly incorporating public art, improving stability on the stair surface, adding pedestrian scale lighting as necessary, and exploring options for seating taking advantage of the public view from the top of the stairs.



An example of an activated riverfront adjacent to an urban area.

Pacific Avenue

Serving as an extension to the existing Pacific Avenue retail and entertainment corridor north of Laurel Street, Pacific Avenue is envisioned to be an active and vibrant mix of retail, entertainment and residential uses that serves as linkage between the downtown and the Beach Area and serve as an anchor to the permanent arena and the greater SOLA neighborhood.

The following policies shall apply to future redevelopment of Pacific Avenue:

- Incorporate traffic control features (e.g., removable bollards, “curb less” or “flush” curbs) to allow Pacific Avenue to be periodically closed for community events, outdoor dining, and other civic activities.
- Incorporate a “shared curb space” on the west side of Pacific Avenue to accommodate drop-off / pickup vehicles (particularly if the arena is located on Block C).
- Design sidewalks to accommodate outdoor restaurant use.
- Streetscape improvements should include enhanced sidewalk paving, street trees including planting beds surrounded by decorative fencing (as currently present at the north end of Pacific Avenue) benches, bike racks, and high-quality trash and recycling receptacles.

See also [Section 8.2.2 Community Spaces / Arena](#) discussion below if the arena is developed on Block C.



An example of sidewalk dining.



Pacific Avenue today.

Front Street

Front Street shall be maintained as a street that accommodates through traffic for automobiles, transit, bicyclist, and trucks travelling between downtown and the Beach Area, with a greater focus on automobile traffic in contrast to the proposed changes to Pacific Avenue.

The following policies shall apply to future redevelopment of Front Street:

- Ground floor commercial uses are envisioned to include uses that service the adjacent residents and community at large.
- A curb management program should be instituted to provide shared curb space that accommodates drop-off/pickup vehicles near the arena.
- Vehicular access to buildings shall be consolidated to locations where turn lanes are available. (see cross section)

See also [Section 8.4.2 Community Spaces / Arena](#) discussion, below.



Existing arena and Front Street today.

Laurel Steet Extension

Laurel Street Extension shall be re-aligned to the south end of Block D along the toe of Beach Hill prior to reconstruction of the Spruce Street Plaza. This new street will maintain one-way access from Front Street to Beach Hill and Beach Flats; and will provide “back of house” two-way access to any new development on this block, either the new arena or other mixed-use buildings.

The following policies shall apply to future development of the Laurel Street Extension:

- The re-alignment shall occur only after the relocation of residents and closure of the Front Street Residential Care facility (owned by Santa Cruz County and managed by Front St. Inc.), located at 126 Front Street, consistent with all relevant City and state regulations.
- At such time that the Front Street Residential Care facility has been successfully relocated, the City and the County shall conduct an interagency transfer to establish the Laurel Street Extension right-of-way, making the remainder public parcel less than one-half acre in size and thereby exempting it from the surplus land act.
- Improvements should include sidewalk paving on the north side of the street, street trees, and appropriate lighting.
- In coordination with Beach Hill residents and business owners, the City will periodically review options for limiting cut-through traffic from the downtown to Beach Hill.

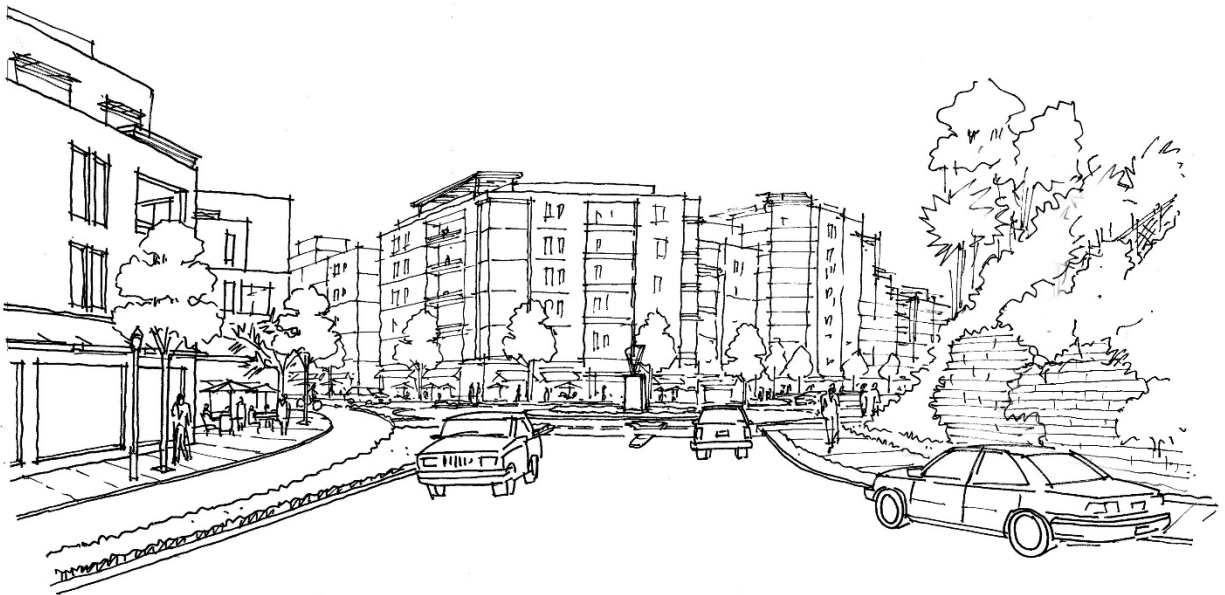


An example of a narrow one-way street that is amenable to vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Pacific Avenue / Front Street Roundabout

A new roundabout is envisioned for the intersection of Pacific Avenue and Front. The following policies shall apply to its design and construction:

- Provide separated one-way bike lanes and pedestrian crossings.
- As a gateway to the SOLA and downtown, incorporate a significant art sculpture, tree, or other monument as a centerpiece of the roundabout.
- Incorporate pavers, landscaping, and other design features to create a memorable gateway experience into the SOLA.
- The City shall work with adjacent affected private landowners regarding a land dedication trade for the additionally needed right-of-way.
- Construction of the new roundabout is envisioned to occur concurrently with redevelopment of the southerly end of Block C, or as Capital Improvement Planning allows.



Conceptual rendering looking north toward proposed Pacific Avenue / Front Street Roundabout.

Arena

As an anchor to the neighborhood a new multipurpose sports and entertainment arena is envisioned on Block C between Front Street and Pacific Avenue and south of Spruce Street or Block D, between Front Street and the Santa Cruz Riverwalk, the site of the current temporary arena . While privately owned and operated, the arena is included as a “public space” based on its unique land use and function.

The new arena is planned to have the capacity of approximately 3,200 fixed seats (e.g., for basketball games), and approximately 4,000 fixed and temporary seating for other entertainment events such as musical concerts. Ancillary uses include a secondary practice court, locker/team support facilities, food service/merchandising, and administrative support services. This would replace the existing 35,000 sf. temporary arena with 2,475 fixed seats and 3,100 fixed and temporary seating for other entertainment events.

The Santa Cruz Warriors will be the main tenant. There will be additional college, high school and youth sporting events and tournaments (e.g., basketball, volleyball etc.), and other similar competitive sport uses.

The new arena may also host the Santa Cruz Symphony as well as other entertainment performances (i.e., musical concerts, comedy shows, etc.). The arena will also have the capability to host conventions, corporate events, trade shows, galas, community and civic events, and other similar events.



Santa Cruz Warriors basketball game.

The new arena is envisioned as a marquee building opening onto a new Spruce Street Plaza and incorporates durable, high-quality materials (e.g., brick, stone, steel, glass, etc.) to serve as a distinctive architectural landmark to the downtown area. The Santa Cruz Warriors could consider the use of large-format digital screens and/or image projection on the arena building façade to promote sporting and other entertainment events. The developers of the arena will be encouraged to incorporate interactive art sculpture(s) located in the Spruce Street Plaza near the entrance of the arena as a component of community engagement. Finally, the arena building should evaluate options for curving, chamfering, or stepping back a corner of the arena building to create a larger public space at the adjacent intersection with either Pacific Avenue Front Street, or the Santa Cruz Riverwalk, to emphasize that space as a destination and gateway.

As a part of event programming, consider opportunities to collaborate with community organizations such as the Bike Church to provide bicycle valet service, in addition to public bike racks adjacent to the arena facility.

See also [Section 8.4.2 Community Spaces / Spruce Street Plaza](#) discussion, above, as well as *Downtown Plan Chapter 4 Development Standards and Design Guidelines*.



*An example of an arena using high-quality materials and finishes.
(Washington Mystics Entertainment and Sports Arena)*

8.4.3 Streetscape and Circulation

Introduction

The streetscape and pedestrian realm is the community public space where people of all ages move and interact. It is a critical space that supports the pedestrian access to/from the SOLA neighborhood, supports the entertainment and retail focus, and makes it easy for people to navigate the area.

The Downtown Plan area north of Laurel Street, particularly along Pacific Avenue, has a strong sense of place and an appealing pedestrian environment that has been created through streetscape elements like lighting, street trees, wide sidewalks, seating, and outdoor eating areas. The concept for the SOLA is to extend these existing features and create a lively mixed-use neighborhood, with a focus on entertainment and visitor uses, that is anchored by a new arena with a high-quality streetscape that is based on the familiar and beloved elements of Pacific Avenue. These tried and tested street features will help to meet the objective of creating an integrated (inside/outside) entertainment experience that will attract visitors at all times of day, and whether or not they are attending a specific event at the arena. The aim is to create family-friendly environments where users of all ages feel safe and welcome.



Wide pedestrian sidewalk with seating and landscaping.



Urban density with pedestrian- and bike-friendly public realm.

The streets will be designed to be safe and comfortable for walking, bicycling, and shared mobility; will provide for convenient access to transit and local destinations; and to support community activity. Ample sidewalks will be created that provide continuous path of pedestrian travel and provide space for trees, outdoor dining, bicycle parking, and landscape, as appropriate. Traffic lanes will be designed to accommodate yet slow traffic flows, reduce pedestrian crossing distances, and create human-scaled environments, maintaining ease of flow for all mobility modes and civic activities.

Design of the streetscape will incorporate a “complete streets” approach that prioritizes creation of a truly multi-modal transportation system. This is consistent with the City’s General Plan goals and policies that encourage providing infrastructure and design features into street design that are safe, comfortable, and convenient for walking, bicycling and public transportation.

The following policies apply to all streetscape features:

- Assure that new development along Front Street supports transit use and work with Santa Cruz Metro to ensure that roadway improvements are transit compatible.
- Accommodate shuttles and ride-share pickup and drop off zones that promote shared-transit options such as shuttles, car share, rideshare, and/or other alternative-mobility options by incorporating designated places for pick-up and drop off, aka shared curb space.
- Install high visibility crosswalks on Laurel Street, Front Street, and Pacific Avenue to make the crosswalks more visible to both pedestrians and motorists.
- Service driveways should be screened from view from public roadways to the greatest extent possible but of sufficient width and vertical clearance to allow for large vehicle access, such as garbage trucks and delivery vehicles. Driveways are not allowed along Pacific Avenue or within the Spruce Street Plaza east of Front Street.

See also the latest version of the City’s *Downtown Site Furnishing Standards*.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

Redevelopment of private property in the SOLA will expand and significantly enhance opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle circulation that is integrated within the broader circulation network.

As shown in [Figure 8.4-3 Existing Bike Circulation](#), the existing bike network consists of bike lanes on the arterial streets with the exception of Pacific Avenue which is designated as a bike route.

As shown in [Figure 8.4-4 Proposed Bike Circulation](#), the bike network within the SOLA will be expanded to include separated bike lanes on Laurel and Front Streets, the Laurel Extension, along Pacific Avenue (south of the new Front/Pacific roundabout), and Center Street.

As shown in [Figure 8.4-5 Proposed Pedestrian Circulation](#), sidewalks will be widened through SOLA, including the creation of a new sidewalk and multi-use path along the realigned Laurel Street Extension. A portion of Spruce Street will become a public plaza, and the Santa Cruz Riverwalk will be improved with wider pathways and gathering spaces to support users of all ages.

Design elements like on-street parking, curb bulb-outs, and lane markings (e.g., sharrows, bike boxes) will encourage safe, mixed vehicle and bike movement.



Examples of pedestrian and bicycle improvements and amenities.

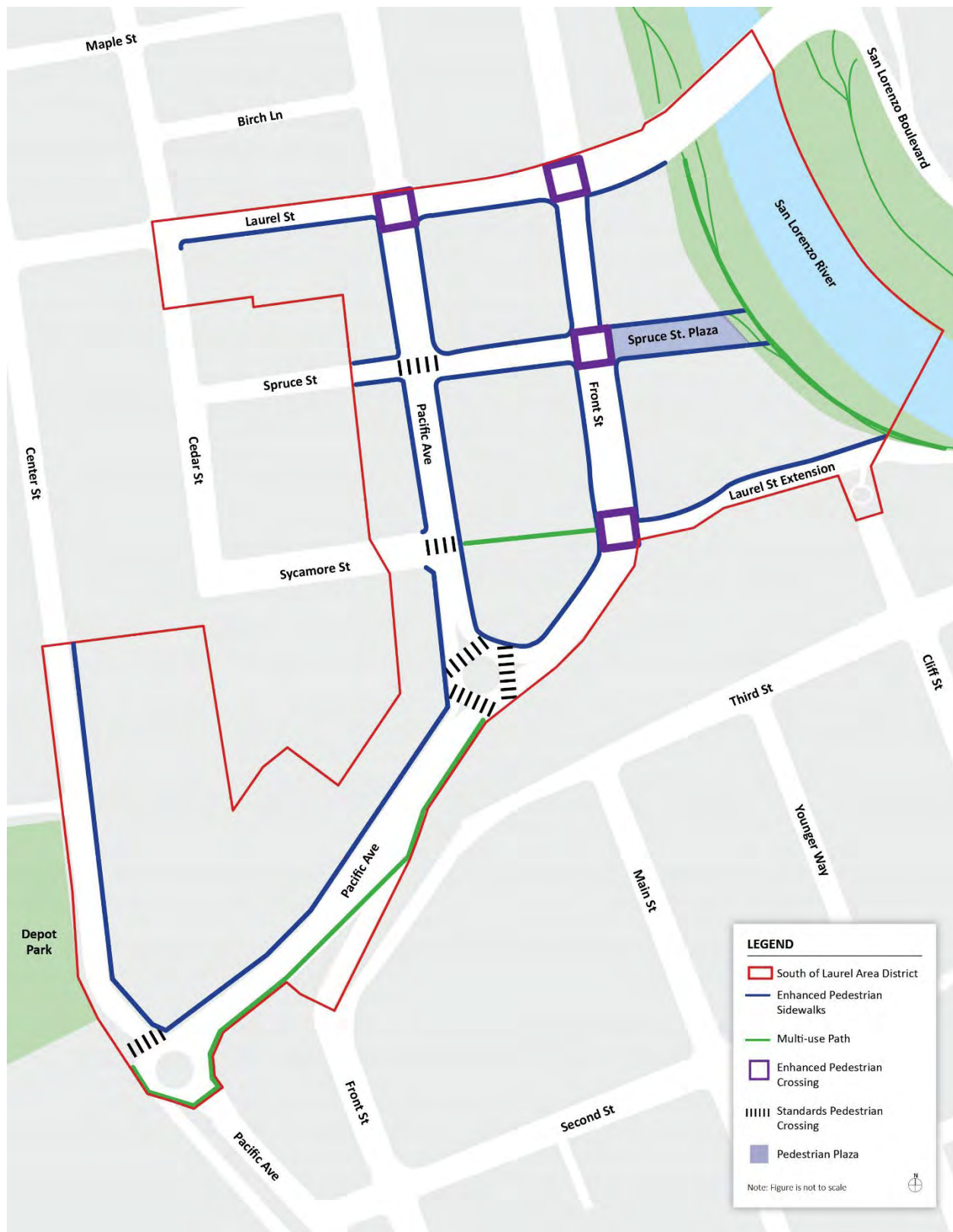
Figure 8.4-3 Existing Bike Circulation



Figure 8.4-4 Proposed Bike Circulation



Figure 8.4-5 Proposed Pedestrian Circulation



The following policies apply to pedestrian and bicycle circulation:

- Provide a network of connections for pedestrian and bicyclist including sidewalks, crosswalks, separated bike lanes, bike lanes, and multi-use consistent with that shown in [Figure 8.4-4 Proposed Bike Circulation](#) and [Figure 8.4-5 Proposed Pedestrian Circulation](#).
- Facilitate pedestrian circulation within and adjacent to the SOLA to minimize automobile trip generation.
- Improve walkability by Incorporating mid-block crossings where block length exceeds 300'.
- In the event of significant redevelopment on redevelopment Block C, incorporate a pedestrian lane connecting Pacific Avenue and Front Street , in line approximately with Sycamore St and the relocated Laurel Street Extension.
- Provide short-term bicycle parking at grade level that is conveniently located near key destinations to serve bicyclists.
- Provide long-term bicycle parking in parking lots and parking structures that serve employees and others who generally stay for longer periods of time.
- Consider options for event-based bike valet service, potentially in collaboration with local community organizations such as the Bike Church.
- Create a bike circulation network connected to the existing and planned greater downtown bicycle network.
- Dedicate sufficient space to rights of way to support sidewalk-separated bike lanes where appropriate, as indicated in the roadway cross sections below. Additional dedication may be required at intersections.
- Create and seamless connection between the levee path and roadway bike and pedestrian facilities. Ensure that bikes and pedestrians can pass one another in a safe manner.



Example of a separated bike lane.

Streetscape Design

In addition to community spaces policies described above, the following streetscape design policies are required to make streets suitable for pedestrians and bicyclists with the same care given to motorists. They shall be incorporated where appropriate as part of future development projects or through the City's Capital Improvement Program.

Streetscape treatments and street furnishings should be designed to create a sense of place and encourage public gathering and interaction. Streetscape furnishings on Pacific Avenue and Front Street will follow the recommendations identified in the City's *Downtown Site Furnishing Standards*. Furnishings, lighting, and landscape elements in the Spruce Street Plaza may also conform to these existing standards or may incorporate other furnishings to create a unique identity; based on review and approval by the City.

As shown in the respective street sections described below in [Street Types](#), the use of curb zones shall be incorporated into the streetscape. The curb zone is generally a four-foot-wide buffer on the sidewalk at the curb edge. In addition to accommodating streetscape infrastructure such as light poles, seating, signage, trash receptors, landscaping, etc., they provide a buffer from vehicles and thereby improve pedestrian safety, while also creating a sense of enclosure to the roadway, potentially helping to calm automobile traffic and reduce speeds.

The curb zone also provides room for vehicular driveways to slope up gradually from the street to the sidewalk without the use of accessibility ramps in the sidewalk.

ADA parking standards shall be required for all public streets, consistent with City standards.



Example of a curb zone (Matthew Thompson Architect).

The following policies shall apply to all streetscapes:

Street Furnishings

- Locate street furnishings in the curb zone and adjacent to buildings to maintain a minimum 8-foot pedestrian clear zone for walking.
- Outdoor dining shall be permitted in outdoor extension areas in the sidewalk and/or curb zone, in accordance with the allowances of SCMC 24.12.192.
- Use removable outdoor dining furnishings that are coordinated in their design and are made of durable high-quality materials that can withstand constant use and exposure to the elements. Furnishing may include, but not limited to; seating, tables, trash/recycle receptacles, service carts and pedestrian barriers.
- Umbrellas and outdoor heating devices are permitted on sidewalks provided they do not obstruct pedestrian mobility.
- Use high quality free-standing planters that will withstand adverse weather and attempts at vandalism.
- Bicycle parking should be placed frequently and located to avoid conflicts with pedestrian flow.

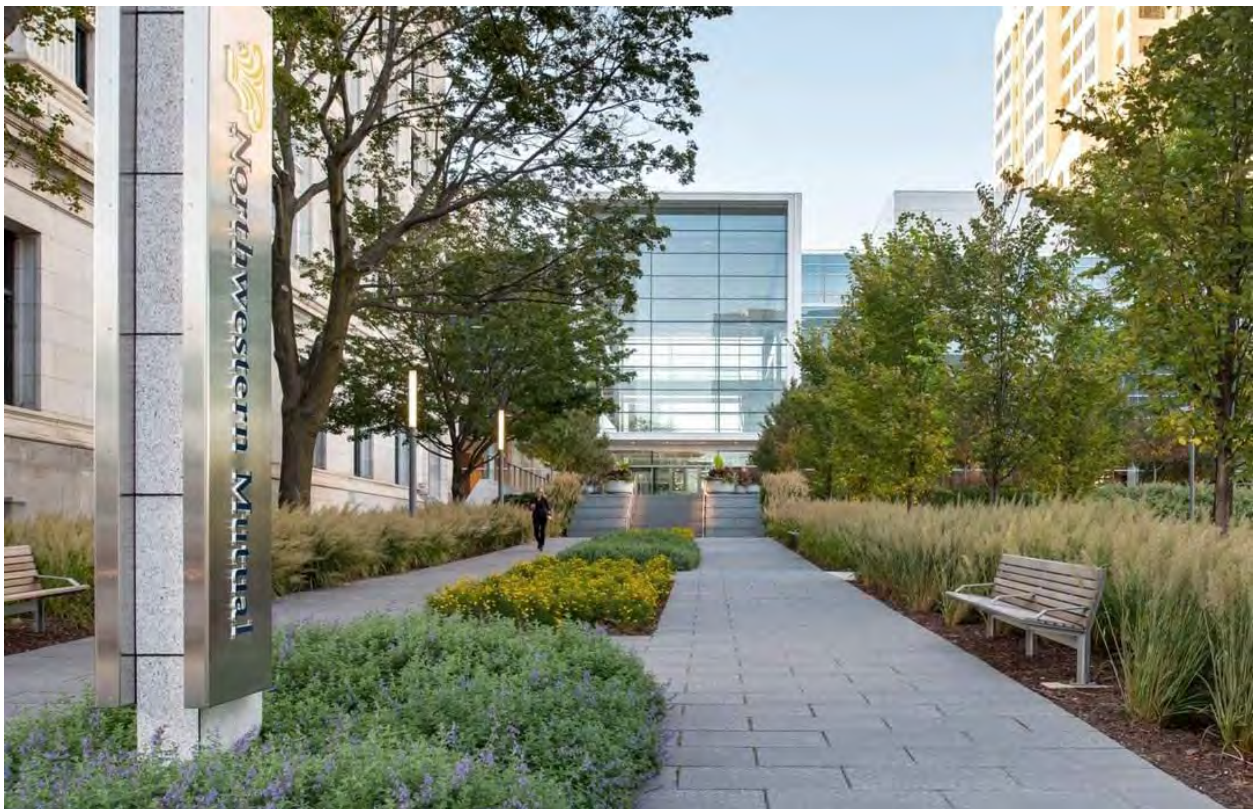


Example of raised landscape planter on Pacific Avenue today.



Examples of traditional wood & steel, wood slat, and metal powder coated benches.

- Provide innovative, efficient, and attractive designs for bike parking areas such as stacked racks etc.
- Evaluate the efficacy of porous pavers, pervious paving techniques, or other viable Low Impact Development (LID) techniques for stormwater infiltration in this neighborhood.
- In compliance with the *Street Tree Master Plan*, provide adequate soil volume in all tree planting spaces to foster healthy root growth for street trees. Innovative use of subgrade structural elements and suspended paving is encouraged to provide sufficient soil volume while accommodating pedestrian traffic.
- Consider use of accent paving to highlight important places such as building entrances, tree planting spaces, pedestrian street crossings, and separation between bicycle and pedestrian uses.
- Construct ground-level utility access doors using accessibility compliant, slip resistant surfaces that are flush with adjacent paving and attractively incorporated into the design of the pavement.
- Streetscape features, including street trees, furnishings, etc. should be constructed consistent with the design standards as described in the City's *Downtown Site Furnishings Standards* and the *Street Tree Master Plan and Approved Street Tree List*, or as otherwise permitted by the City.



Example of high-quality pedestrian pathway with pavers, seating, landscaping and signage.

Landscaping

Adjacent to public roadways landscaping should generally be limited to street trees and raised or protected permanent planting beds. Tree Species should be selected from the City's Approved Street Tree List or governing Area Plan. In general, landscaping should include the following objectives:

- Provide appropriate shade according to solar orientation, seasonality, and streetscape function.
- Require minimal maintenance.
- Be native to the Santa Cruz region, and/or drought resistant.
- Be consistent in height and tree canopy spread with other street trees in the downtown.
- Consistent with City standards, incorporate Low Impact Development (LID) techniques for sustainable stormwater management such as pervious pavement and bioretention or biofiltration planters, where site conditions allow.

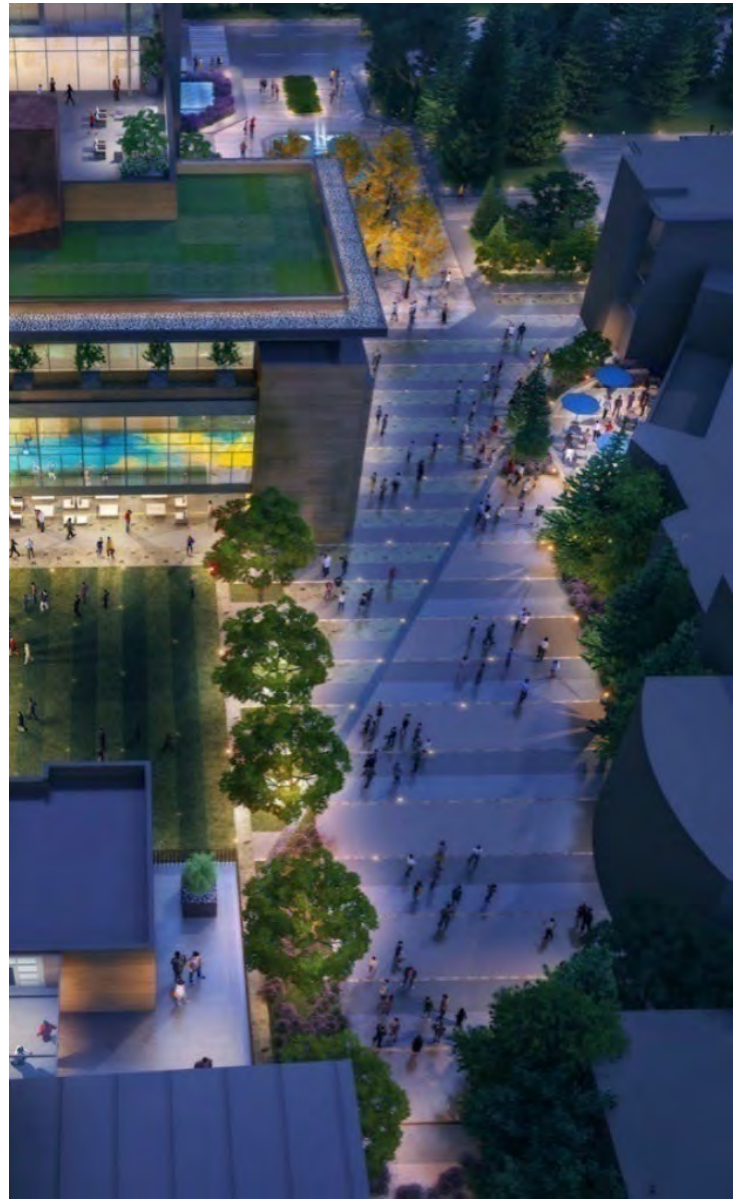
All landscaping plans shall be approved by City staff (including the Parks and Recreation Department) prior to installation.



Example of a high-quality sidewalk with pavers, hard-edge landscaping, and outdoor dining.

Lighting

- Lighting fixtures should direct illumination downward to minimize light impacts on surrounding areas. Up-lighting, spot-lighting, and decorative color lighting may be appropriate for prominent buildings, signage, landscaping, and other features.
- Marquee lighting, digital screens, etc. are allowed so long as they do not cause excessive glare or spillover into adjacent areas.
- As determined by the City in consultation with adjacent neighborhoods, it may be appropriate to limit the luminosity of certain lighting or signage, and/or provide structural or vegetative screening from sensitive uses.
- Incorporate special low-intensity lighting (possibly with programable functionality) along key pedestrian corridors (e.g., the Santa Cruz Riverwalk, Pacific Avenue, Front Street, and Cliff Street) that serve to improve pedestrian safety and create visual wayfinding cues that link the downtown to the Beach Area.



Conceptual image of pedestrian-friendly lighting suitable for an entertainment district.

- Bollard lighting is encouraged to illuminate walkways and gathering spaces, while avoiding spillover into adjacent areas.
- Consider opportunities to incorporate site lighting into hardscape elements such as steps, railings and paving to illuminate the pedestrian areas.
- Seasonal lighting (e.g., holiday display) is allowed on Pedestrian-Oriented Streets (defined below), including the Spruce Street Plaza, Pacific Avenue, and the Laurel Street Extension.



Example of appropriately-scaled bollard lighting along pedestrian pathway.



Example of an interactive illuminated art installation.

Artwork

- Include public art installations, including interactive sculpture features, as part of public spaces and the streetscape.
- Foster opportunities to extend existing art and culture festivals by incorporating options for lighting, electrical outlets for performances/ amplification and space for art installations and events, (e.g., MAH's *Frequency: A Festival of Light, Sound & Digital Culture*) in the SOLA that serves as a draw for residents and visitors.
- Consider options to incorporate interactive art features, night-sky compatible low-intensity illumination, three-dimensional image projection, and other means to create opportunities for public engagement and entertainment.
- The City should work with the Arts Commission and local artists to encourage various and emerging forms of art including digital media, sculpture, painting, murals, digital displays, performance art, and other forms of artistic expression.
- Locate art in prominent places within primary pedestrian corridors such as the Spruce Street Plaza, the Santa Cruz Riverwalk, and Pacific Avenue.
- Public art may include a historical display or local historical interpretive works.



Signage

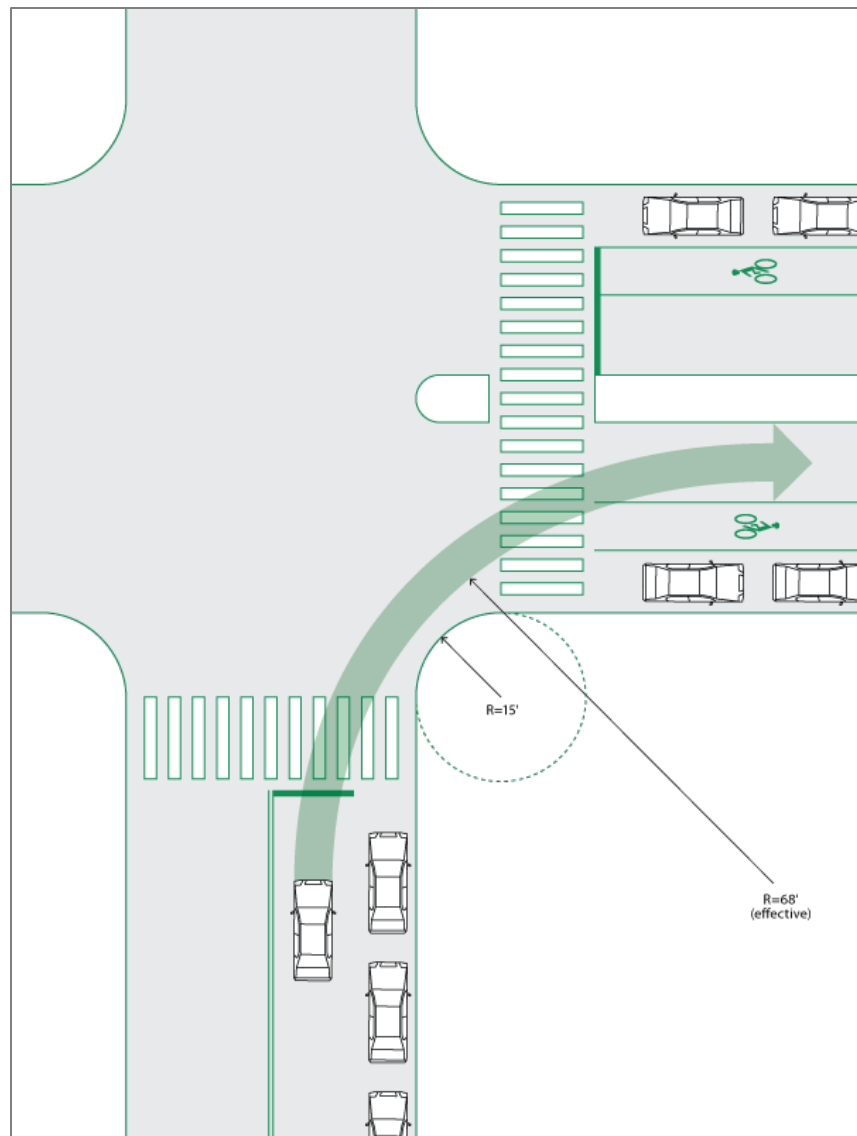
- All signage should be designed consistent with the wayfinding signage system utilized throughout the City or should be graphically complementary to the architectural aesthetic of the environment.
- Signage shall be implemented through compliance with Municipal Code Chapter 24.12 Community Design, Part 4 Advertising Devices, Signs, and Billboards, which includes a Master Sign Program under Section 24.12.317 Master Sign Program.



Intersections

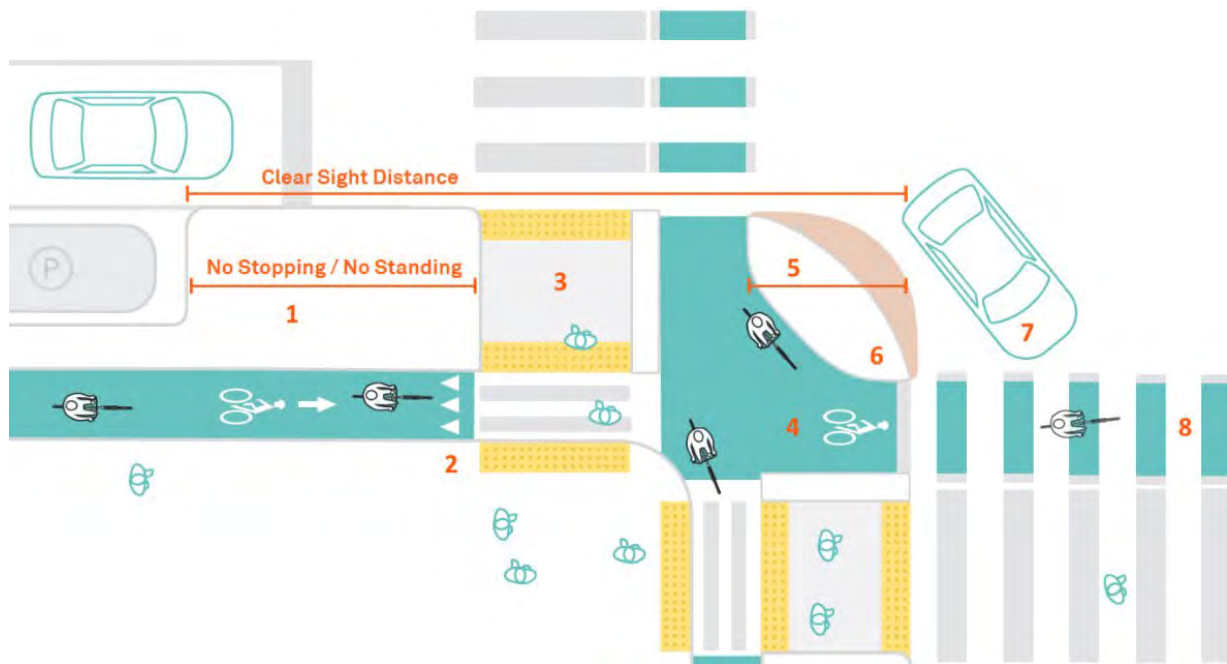
Intersections are a critical aspect of street design as the point where motorist, bicycle, and pedestrian movements converge. Successful intersection design should address all mobility and safety goals and enhance the public realm.

Corner radii directly impact vehicle turning speeds and pedestrian crossing distances. Minimizing the size of a corner radius is critical to creating compact intersections with safe turning speeds (15 mph or less). Where existing intersections are reconstructed, or for new intersections, the corner radii should not exceed 15 feet, where appropriate.



*Illustrative example of appropriate intersection geometry
(NACTO, Urban Street Design Guide)*

- Major Intersections will be designed with pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity, convenience and safety by including design guidance from NACTO. Intersection features may include leading pedestrian intervals, accessible pedestrian signals, protected intersections, and pedestrian scrambles among other appropriate interventions.
- On east-west side streets and Pacific Avenue use raised intersections or crosswalks to prioritize pedestrians.
- Consider enhanced paving or other visually distinctive features to highlight the pedestrian connections across Front Street, where raised intersections would interfere with bus transit.



*Illustrative example of appropriate intersection geometry
(NACTO, Urban Street Design Guide.)*

Gateway and Nodes

A gateway is an entrance or gathering place which acts as a transition between different spaces. It typically signifies the arrival point at a destination. The goal of a gateway is to create a sense of arrival and a positive image of the place.

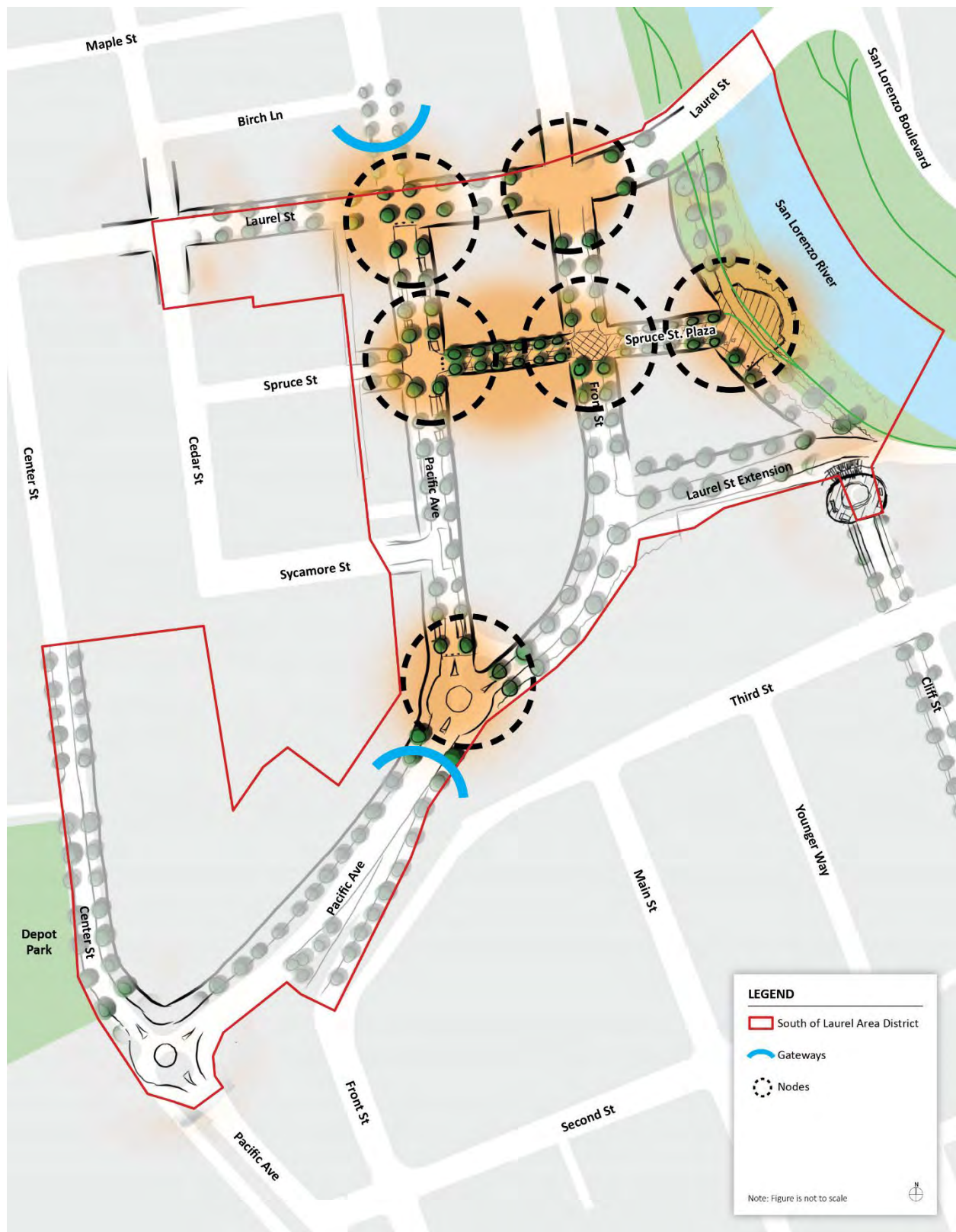
As shown in [Figure 8.4-6 Gateways and Nodes](#), a significant gateway is recommended at the intersection of Pacific Avenue and Spruce Street, as well as the newly proposed roundabout at the convergence of Pacific Avenue and Front Street. Visual methods to create the gateway could include an arch or vertical column element, landscaping, special pavement treatment, etc.

As shown in [Figure 8.4-6 Gateways and Nodes](#), nodes are spaces that are designed to create a sense of place and are effective in wayfinding. They can include signage, sculptural art features, special lighting, benches, etc. Recommended nodal points include the intersections of Pacific Avenue and Front Street, the Santa Cruz Riverwalk at the terminus of the Spruce Street Plaza, and at a point along the re-aligned Laurel Street Extension adjacent to the rock hillside of Beach Hill. A node is also identified at the lookout at the top of stairs and northerly terminus of Cliff Street.



Example of district gateway signage.

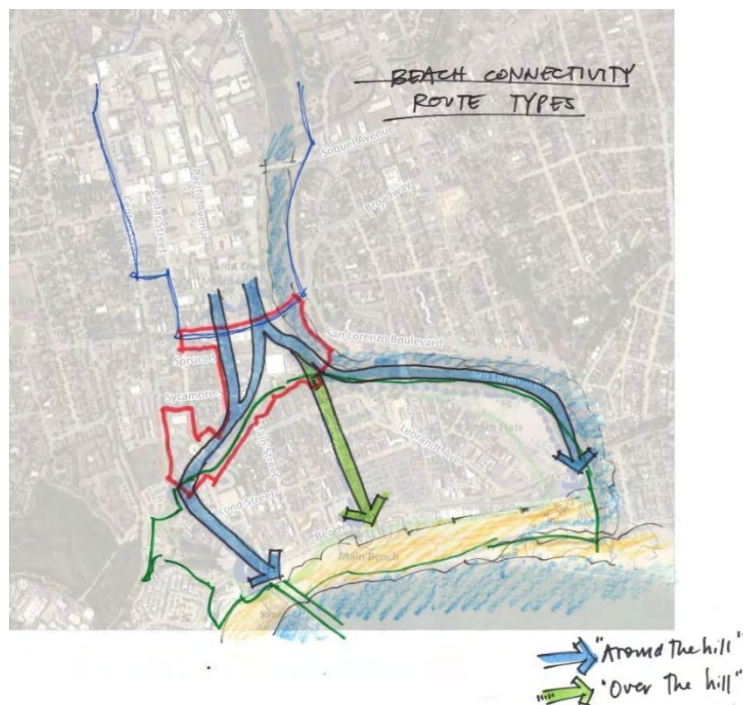
Figure 8.4-6 Gateways and Nodes



Beach Connectivity

One of the primary objectives of the Downtown Plan is to improve connectivity between the downtown and the beach. This linkage is important for economic reasons as a significant number of visitors come to the Beach Area, but do not frequent the downtown. Additionally, better pedestrian and bicycle linkages can help to reduce traffic congestion, especially during the busy summer tourist season.

Given the topography, pedestrians and bicyclists must either go over or around Beach Hill. The multi-use Santa Cruz Riverwalk provides access to Liebrandt and Riverside Avenues to the Santa Cruz Boardwalk. Pacific Avenue also provides pedestrian and bicycle access to the beach and Municipal Wharf. However, both routes, while flat, are circuitous and not pedestrian/bike friendly.

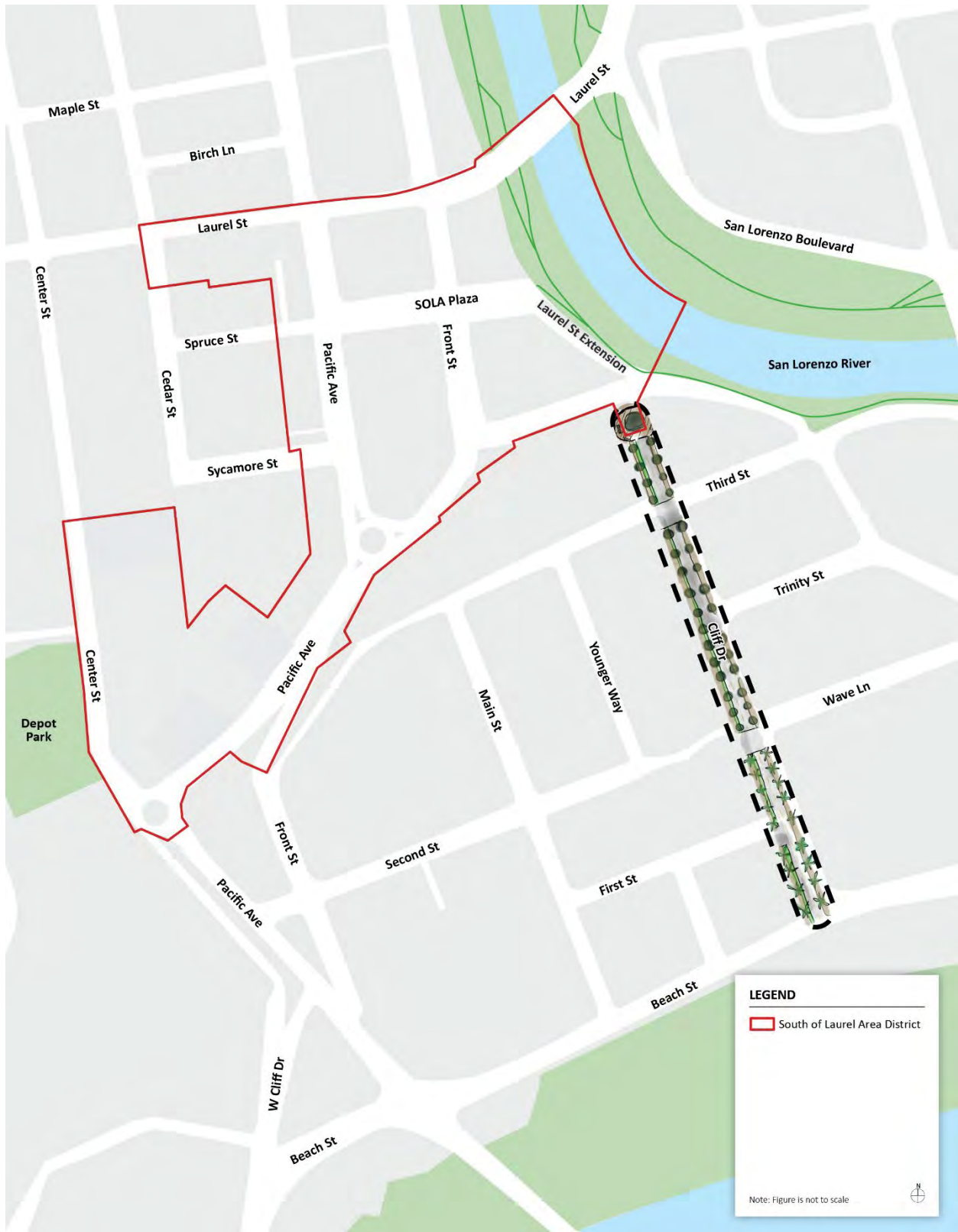


To improve non-vehicular connectivity, this plan recommends re-construction of the Cliff Street stairs, creating a new vista lookout at the top of the stairs and improving Cliff Street from the lookout to Beach Street. See [Figure 8.4-7 Beach Connectivity Conceptual Plan](#).



Looking north from the top of Cliff Street stairs.

Figure 8.4-7 Beach Connectivity Conceptual Plan

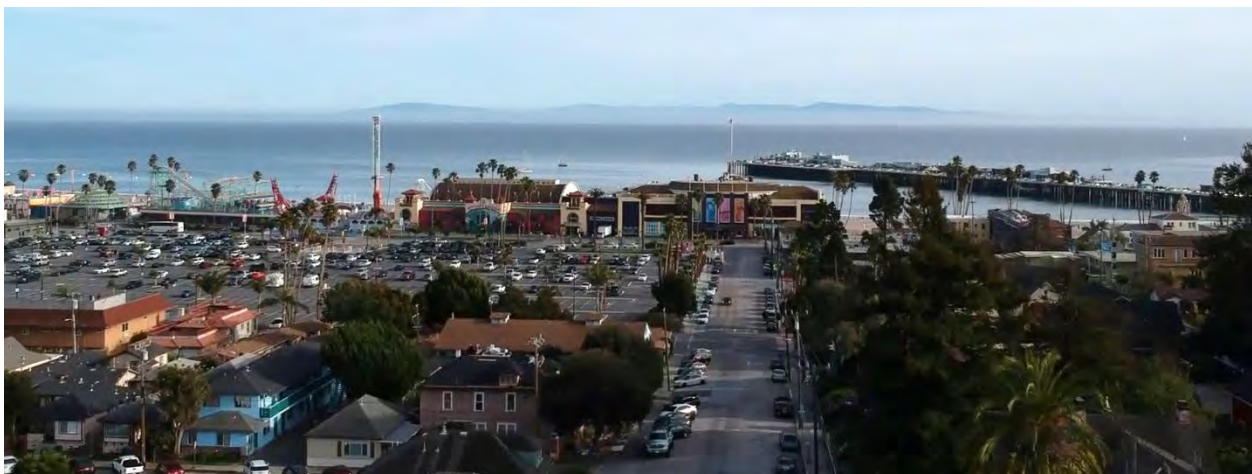


The following policies shall apply when designing and constructing new infrastructure to improve beach connectivity.

- Redesign the Cliff Street stairs and adjacent public property with a new stairway, lighting, landscaping, and signage to encourage pedestrian and bike access (e.g., a bike ramp on the stairs) to Cliff Street and the Beach Area.
- Create a new public viewpoint at the northern end of Cliff Street that capitalizes on views of the San Lorenzo River, downtown, and the Santa Cruz Mountains.
- Prepare a streetscape plan for the Cliff Street corridor that considers the following:
 - Reconfigure the roadway travel lanes and parking configuration on Cliff Street to create a more consistent and safer circulation pattern.
 - Construct “bulb-outs” or other similar traffic calming methods to enhance pedestrian safety along Cliff Street at the intersections of Third, Trinity, Second, and First Streets.
 - Install street trees with similar stature and form and a consistent landscape palette along Cliff Street to create a “boulevard” effect and thereby improve the street’s visual appearance.

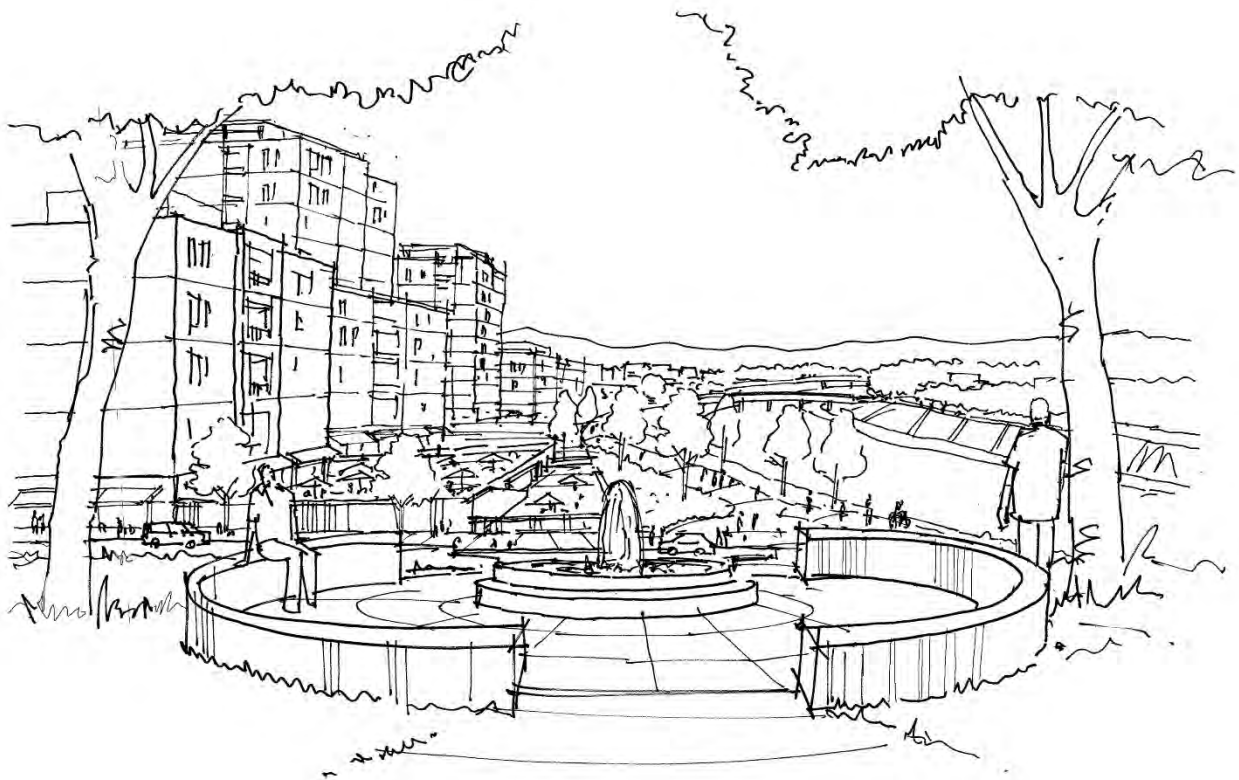


Cliff Street stairs.



- Incorporate signage and street lighting to improve pedestrian wayfinding and safety.
- Underground the dry utility services.

Work with property owners to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation along lower Pacific Avenue (south of Front Street). Improvements should include reducing the number of curb cuts, improving sidewalks and crosswalks for safer pedestrian mobility, landscaping, installing street lighting on the east side of lower Pacific Avenue (south of Depot Park), and landscaping.



Conceptual rendering looking north from the top of the Cliff Street stairs.

Street Types

Defining the character and configuration of public streets within the SOLA t will help to establish a high-quality public realm that accommodates all types of mobility create high-quality public spaces and enhance wayfinding.

Two street types are described below, namely: 1) Multimodal Streets and 2) Pedestrian-Oriented Streets. Cross-sections for each street type are shown below, and their locations are identified in [Figures 8.4-8 Cross-Sections Key Map](#).

The following roadway cross-sections used to determine the required dedications for public rights of way when new development or redevelopment is proposed within the SOLA. The allocation of space within the established right of way width may shift over time and along the length of a given roadway section based on evolving community needs and shifts in travel behavior. Additional dedication for right of way may be required at intersections.



Example of wide sidewalk with seating.

Figure 8.4-8 Cross-Sections Key Map



Multimodal Streets

Through corridors support higher volumes of vehicular traffic and transit while also accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists. Within the SOLA these include Laurel Street, Front Street, Lower Pacific Avenue, and Center Street. These roadways generally incorporate separated bike lanes, 6'-12' sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting. Conceptual cross sections for each street are shown in [Figures 8-4-9 through 8.4-14](#).



Pedestrian-Oriented Streets

Pedestrian-oriented streets generally support one lane of traffic in each direction, parking, and wide sidewalks. Within the SOLA, these include portions of Pacific Avenue, Spruce Street, and Cliff Street, as well as the Santa Cruz Riverwalk. With lower and slower traffic volumes, these roadways may use paint-only bike lanes, sharrows, 6'-16' sidewalks with space for outdoor dining and retail extension areas where appropriate, and additional street furnishing as appropriate. Conceptual cross sections are shown in [Figures 8.4-15 through 8.4-20](#).



Santa Cruz Riverwalk

The Santa Cruz Riverwalk supports non-vehicular travel along the San Lorenzo River. A cross-section of the Santa Cruz Riverwalk within the boundary of this portion of the Downtown Plan Area is shown in [Figure 8.4-21](#).



View looking southeast of Santa Cruz Riverwalk and Laurel Street Extension.

Figure 8.4-9 Laurel Street Between Cedar Street and Pacific Avenue (1)

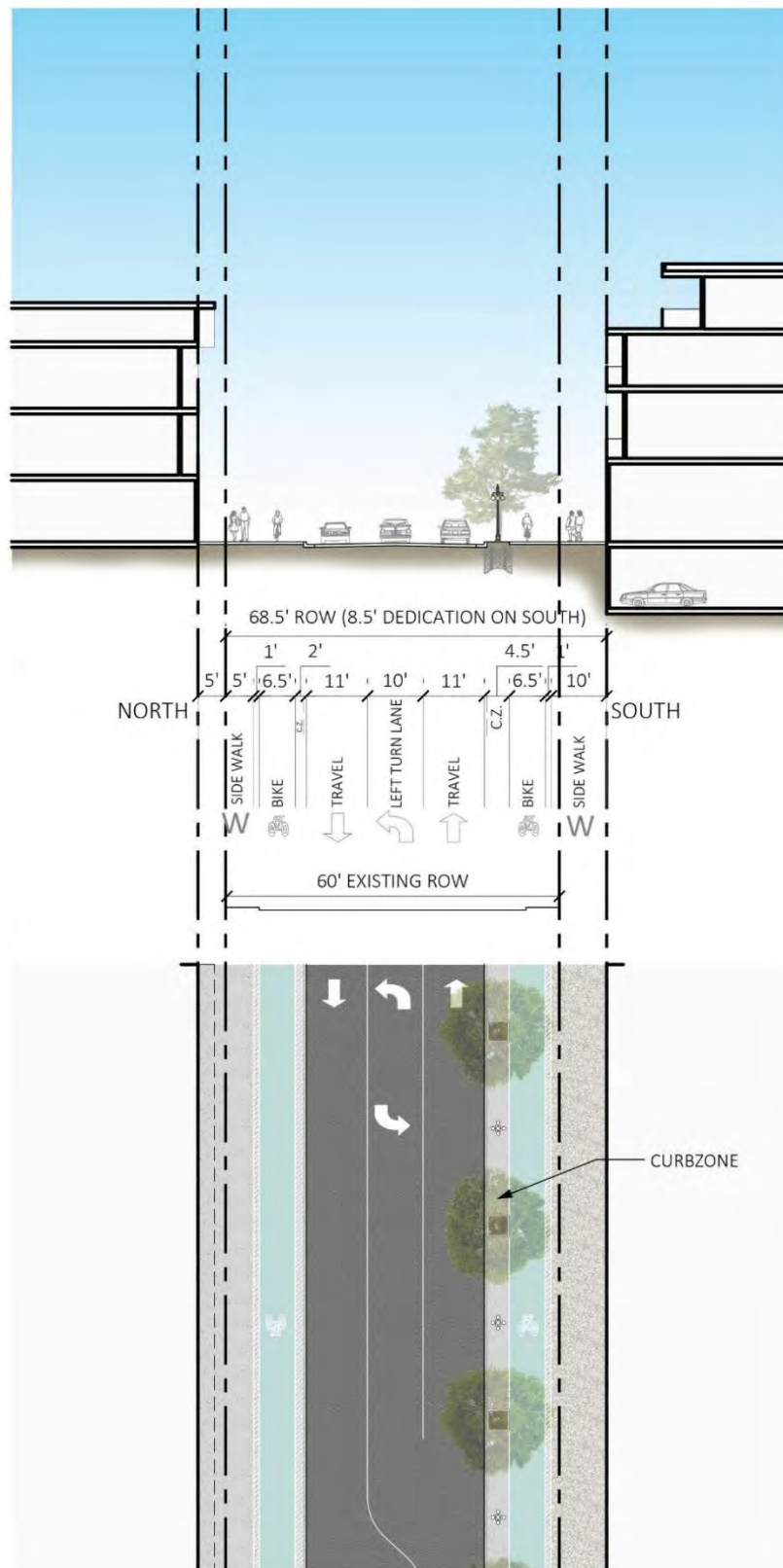


Figure 8.4-10 Laurel Street Between Pacific Avenue and Front Street (2)

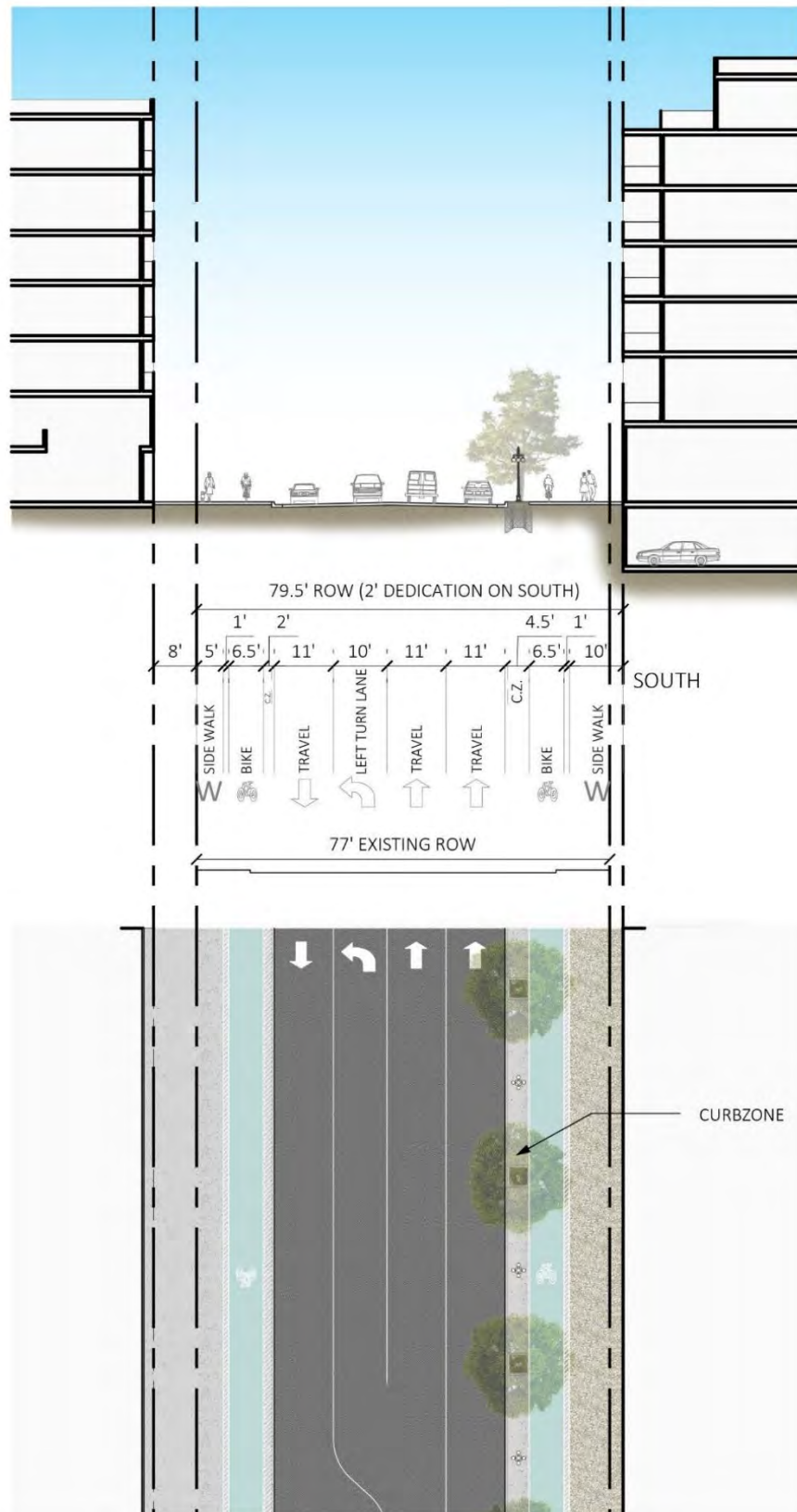


Figure 8.4-11 Front Street Between Laurel Street and Spruce Street (3)

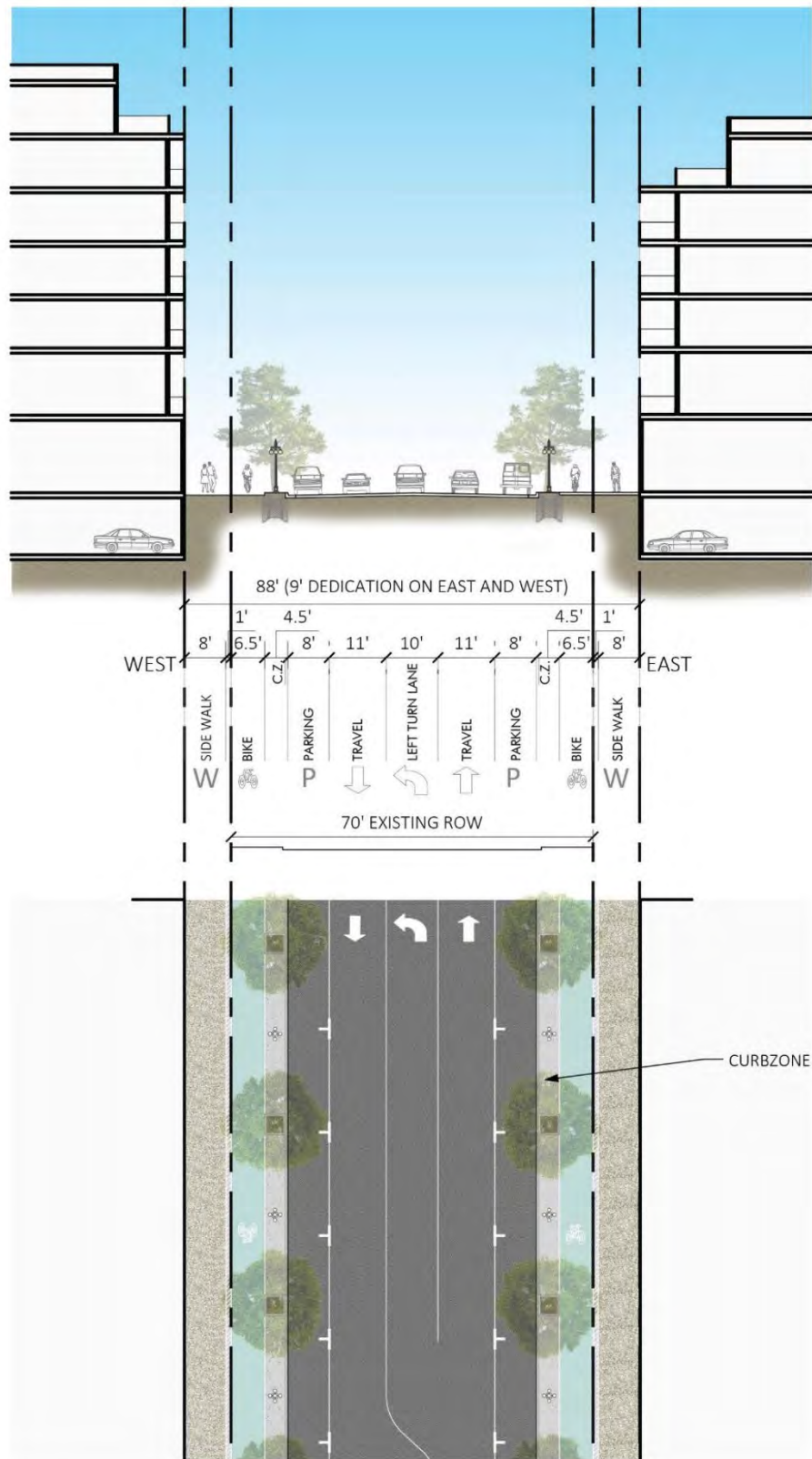


Figure 8.4-12 Front Street Between Spruce Street and Laurel Street Extension (4)

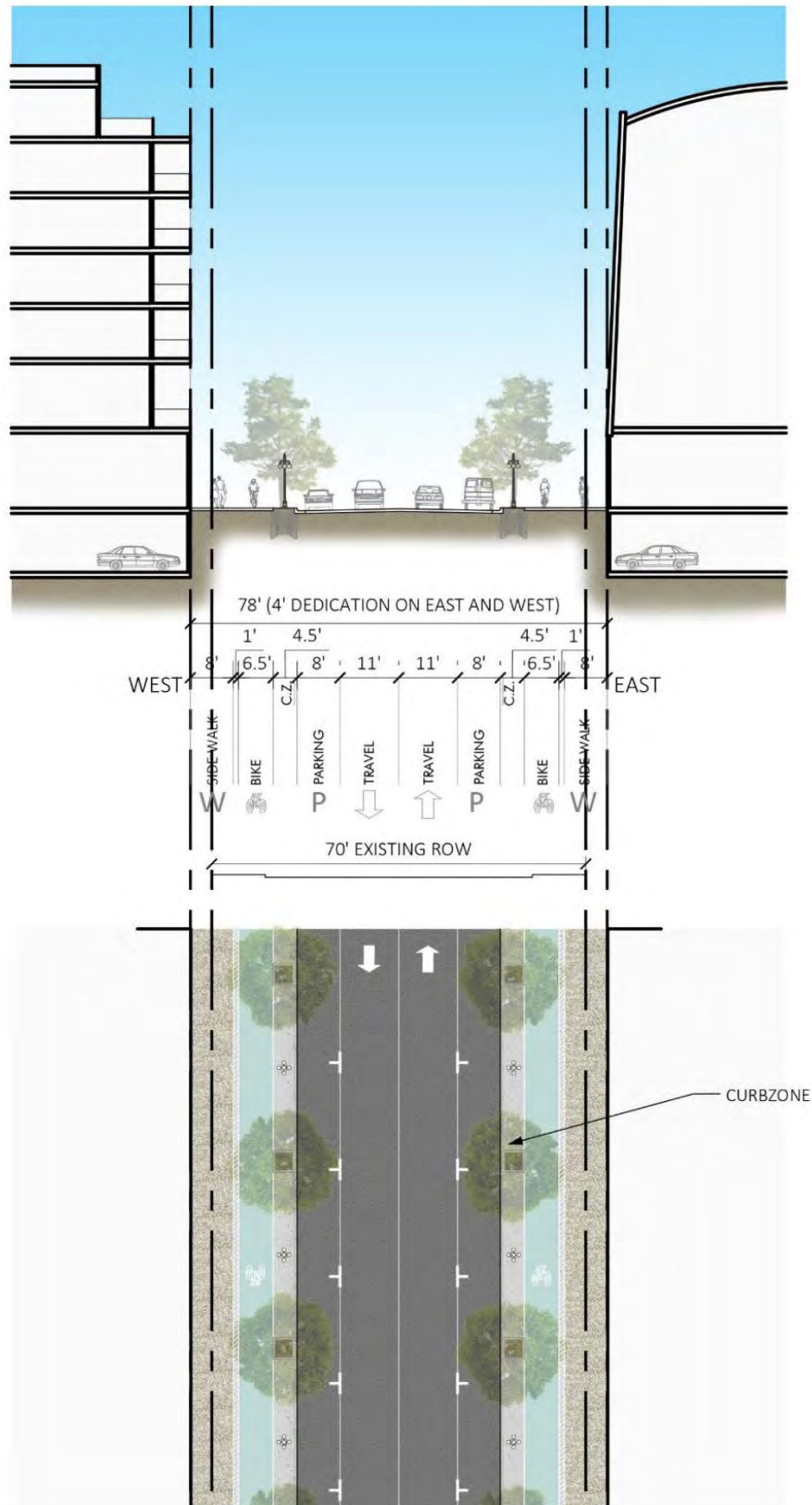


Figure 8.4-13 Pacific Avenue at Hill (5)

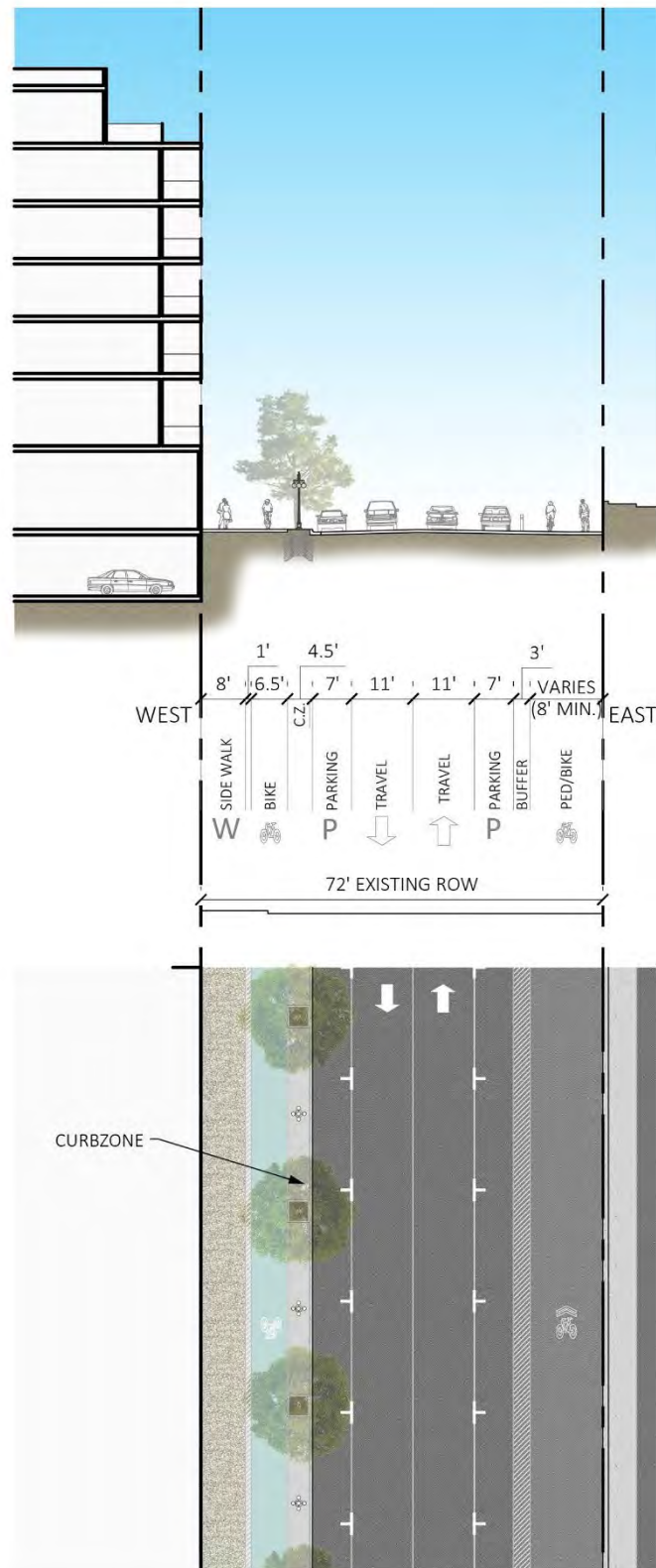


Figure 8.4-14 Center Street at Depot Park (6)

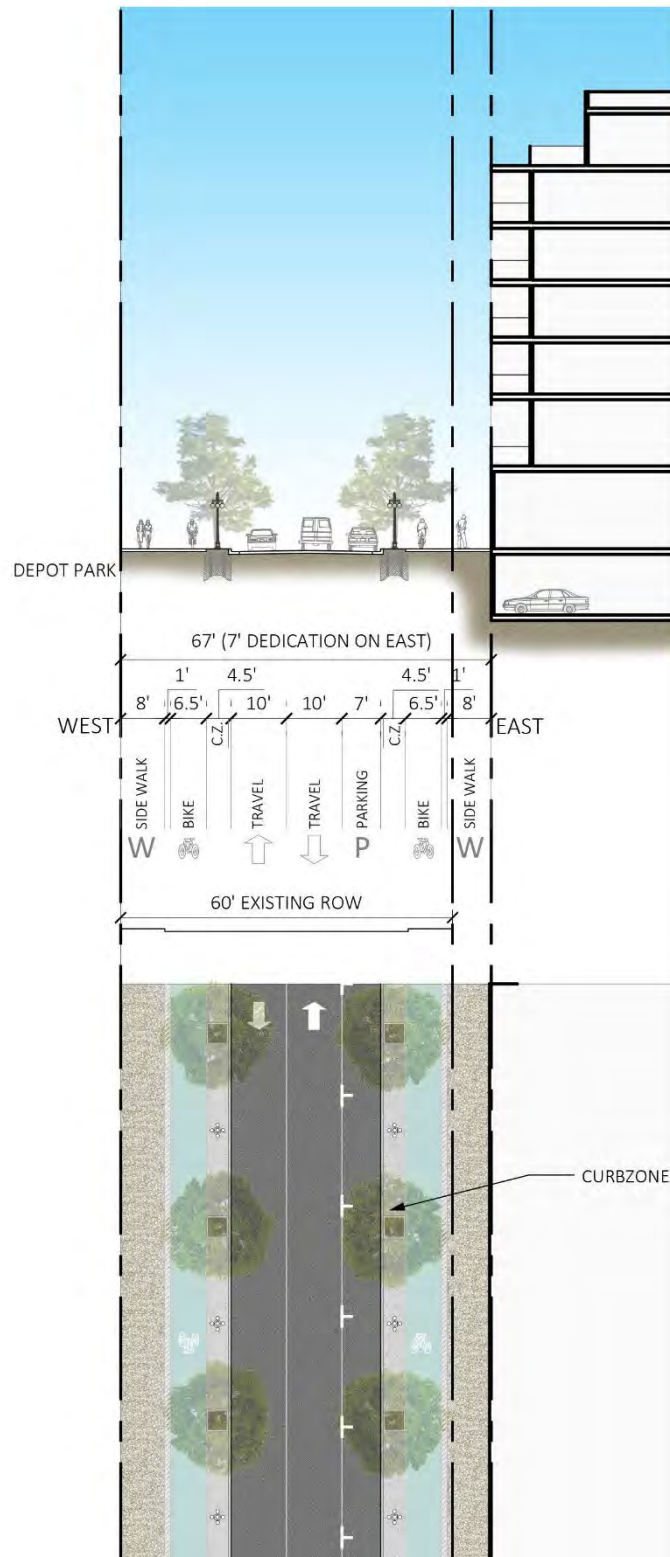


Figure 8.4-15 Pacific Avenue South of Laurel Street (7)

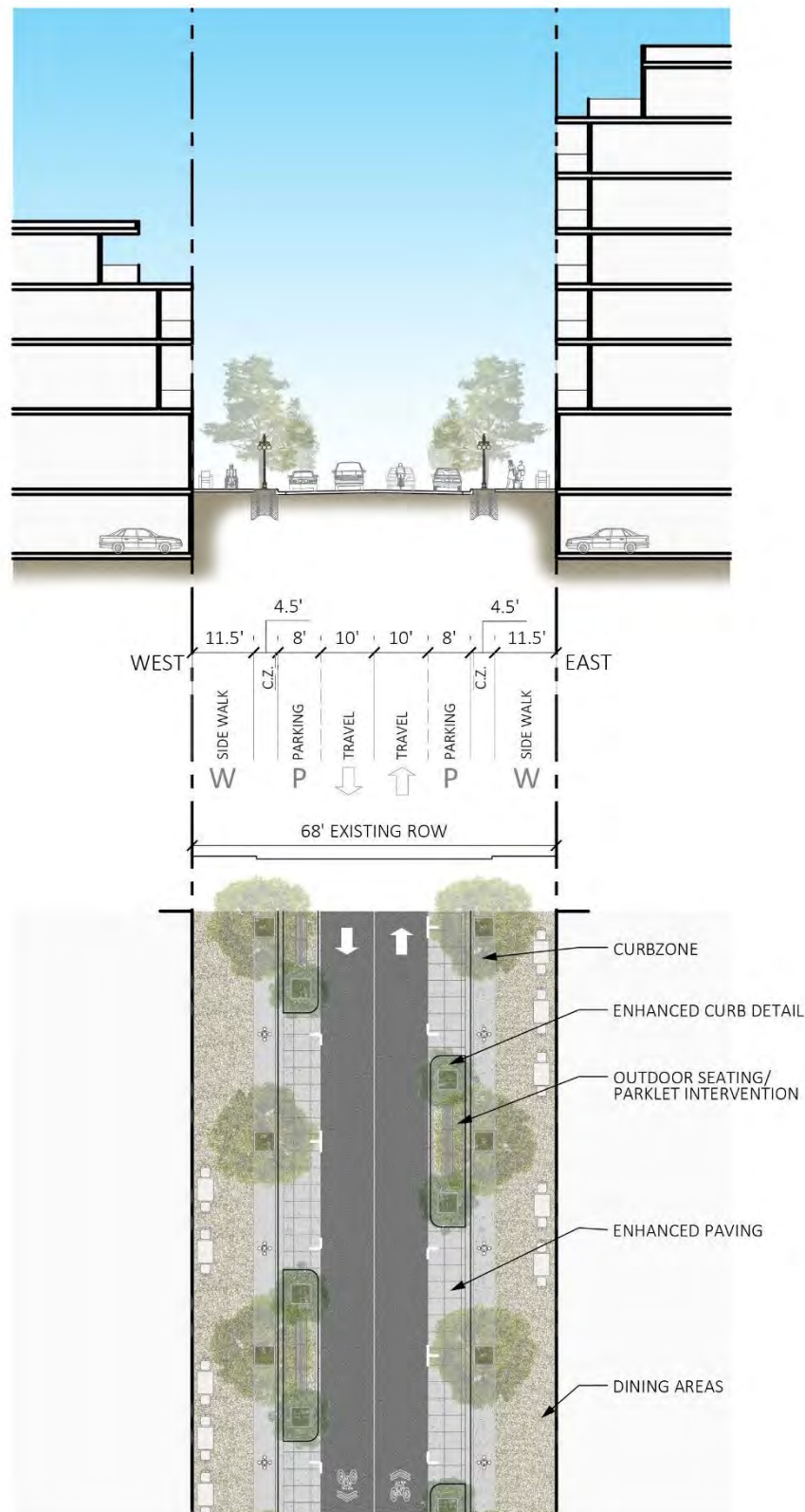


Figure 8.4-16 Spruce Street Between Pacific Avenue and Front Street (8)

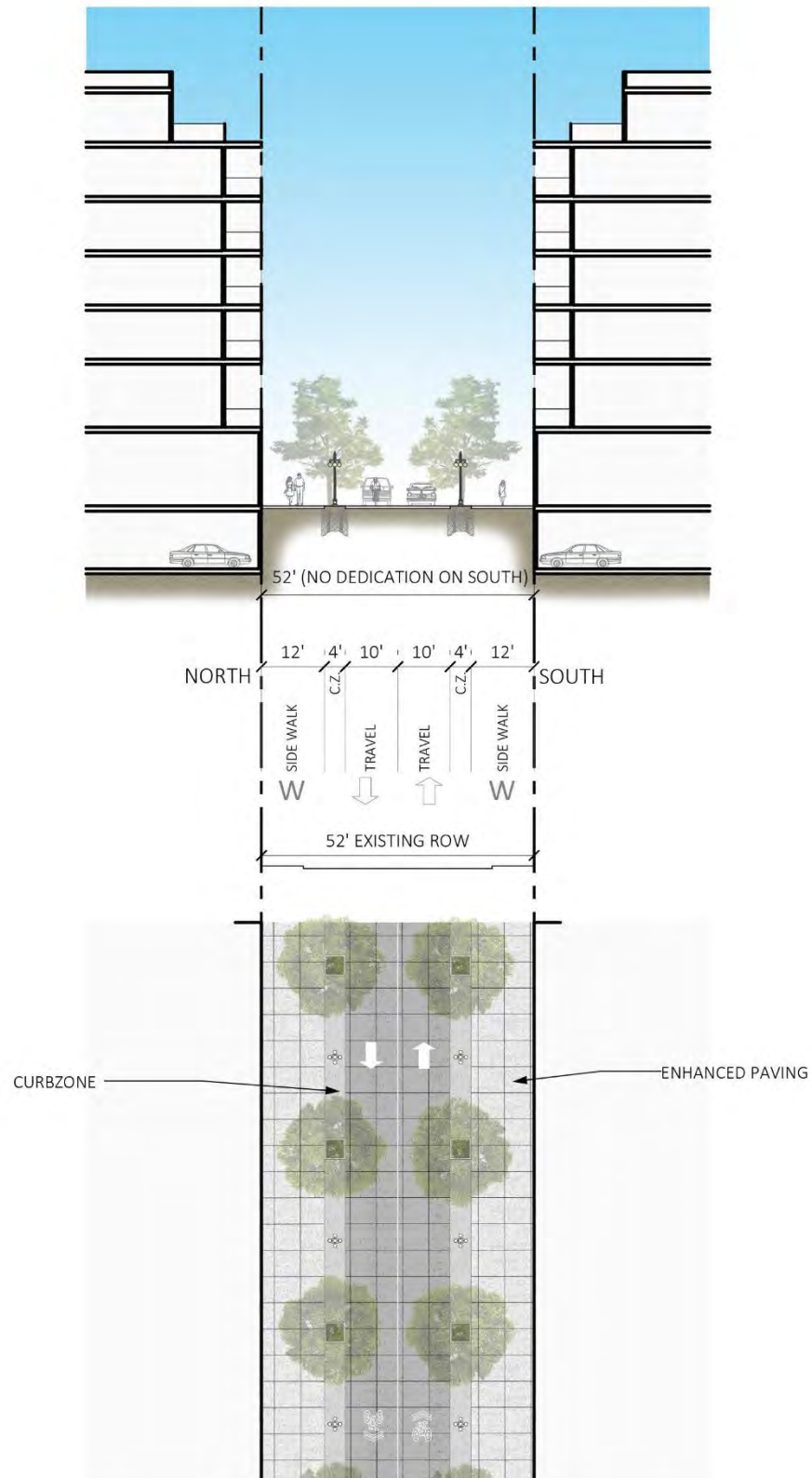


Figure 8.4-17 Spruce Street Plaza (9)

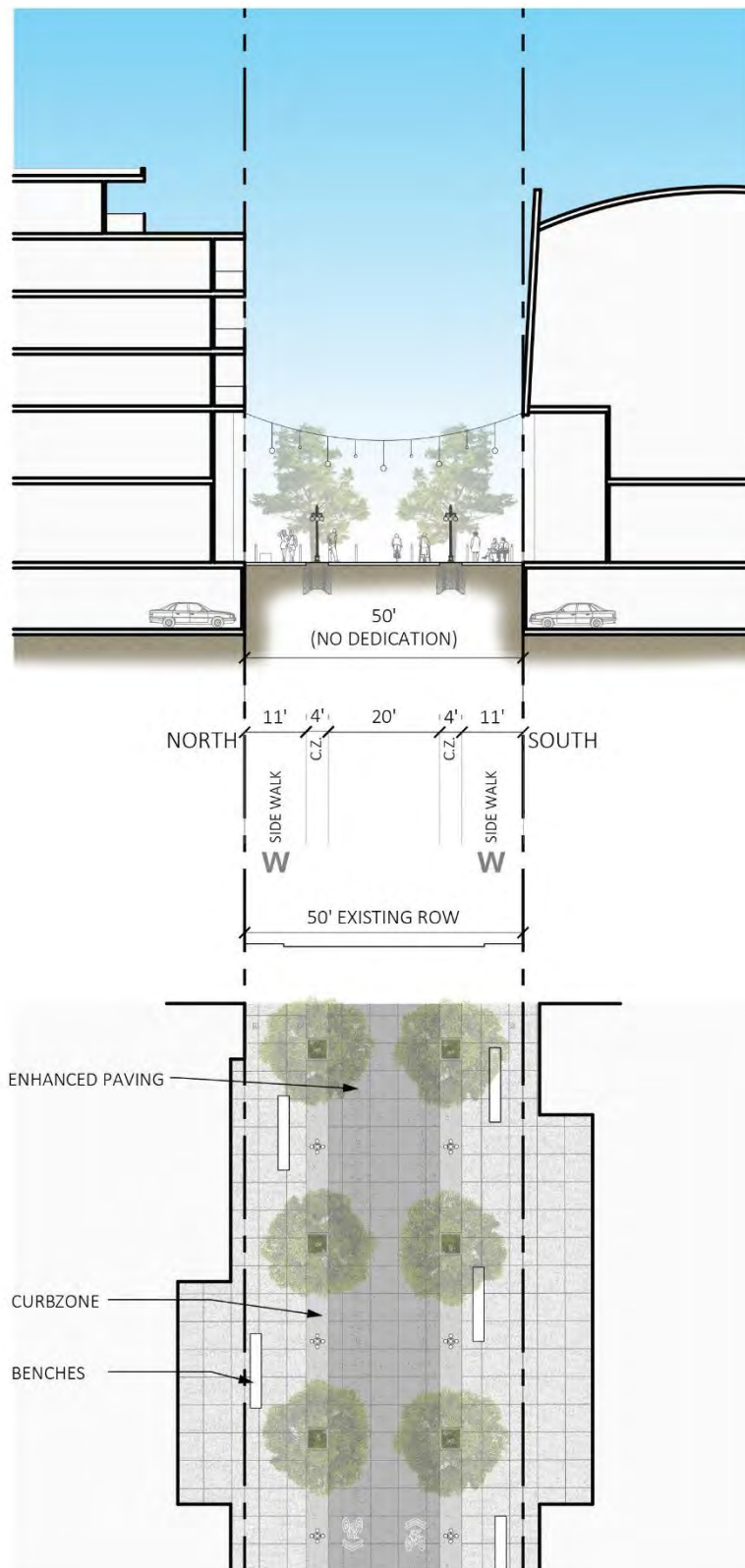


Figure 8.4-18 Laurel Street Extension (10)

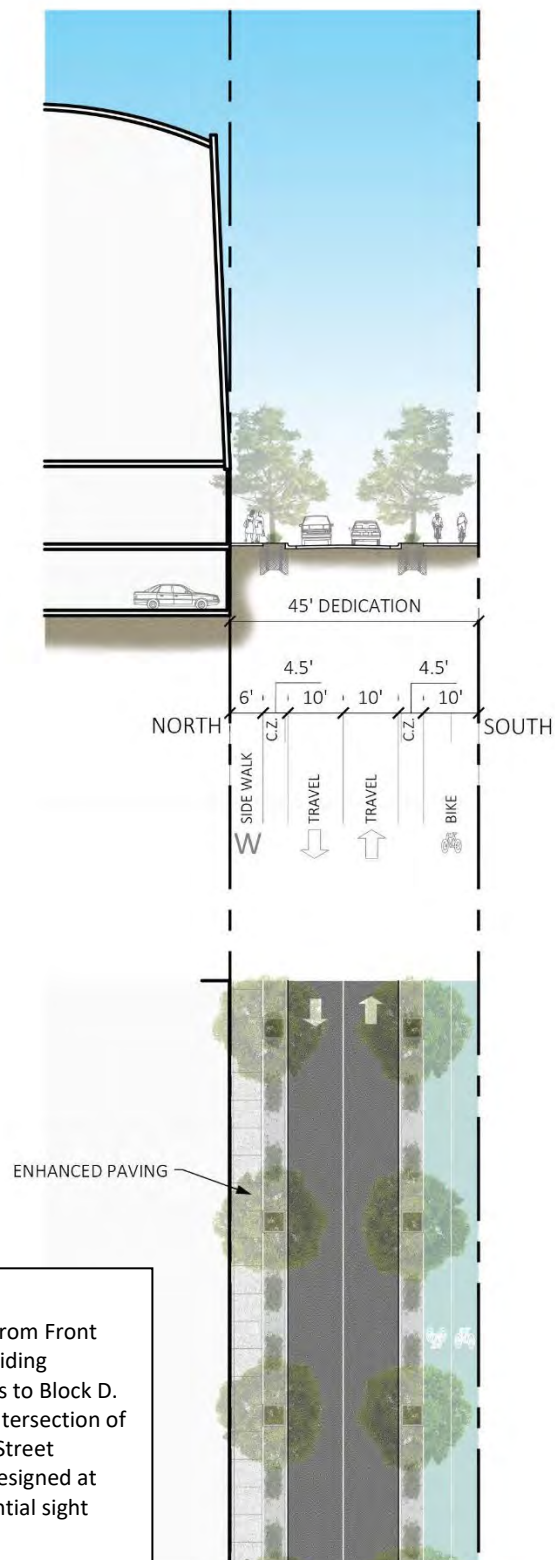


Figure 8.4-19 Cliff Street Between Third Street and Trinity Street (11)

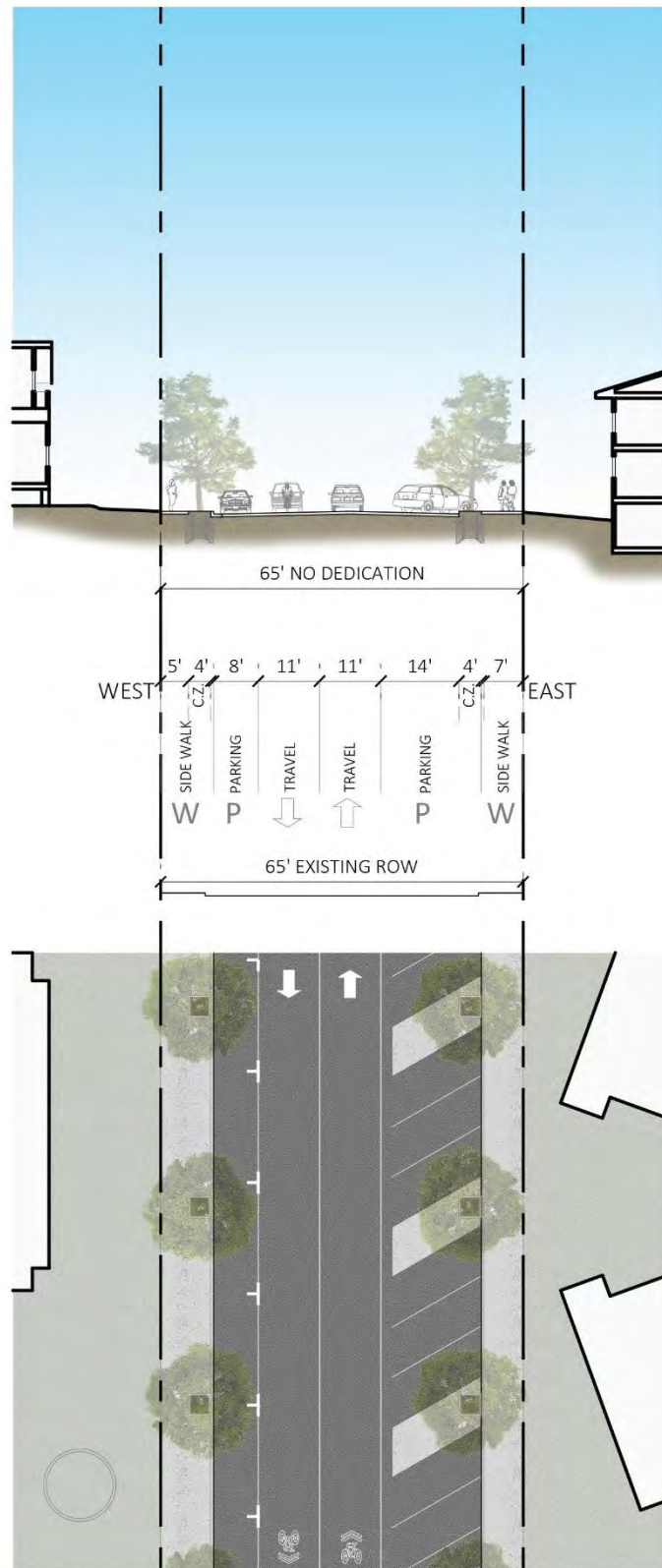


Figure 8.4-20 Cliff Street Between First Street and Beach Street (12)

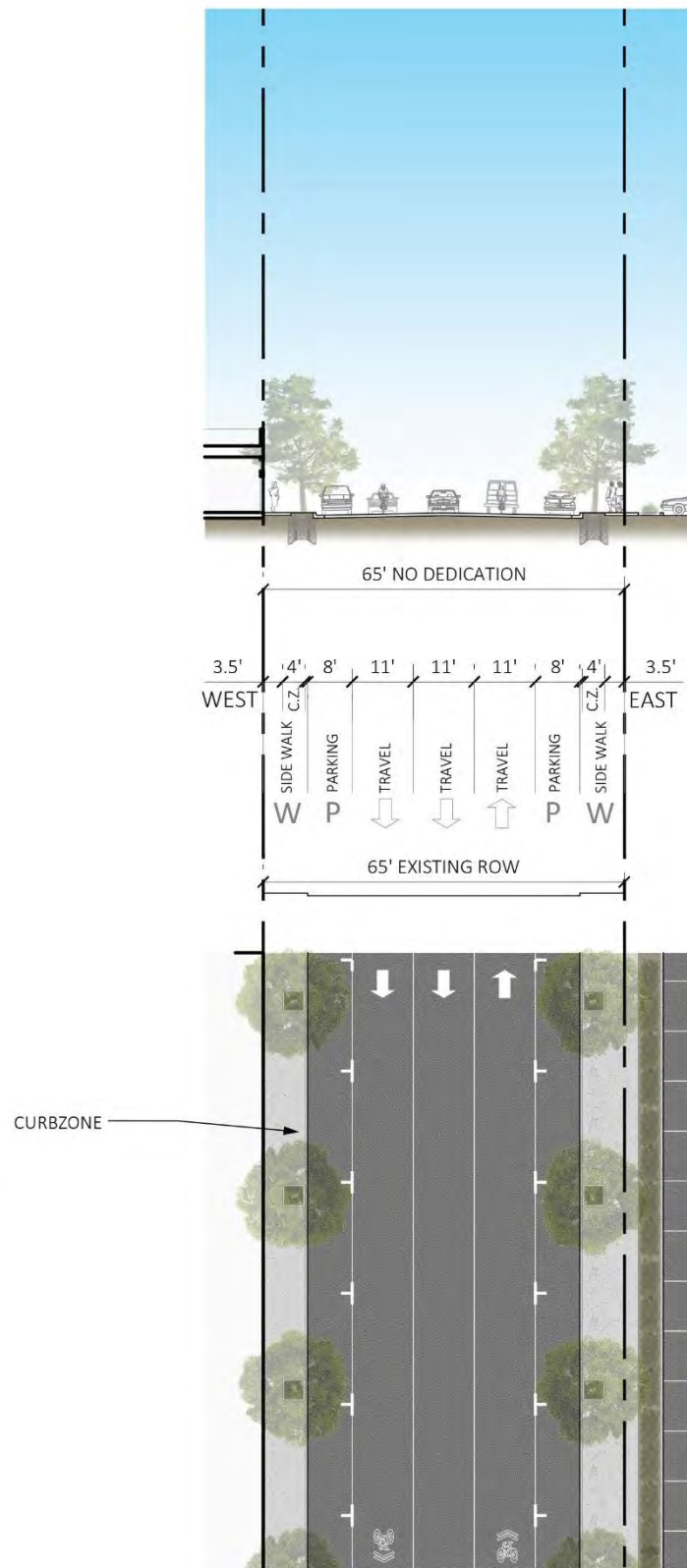
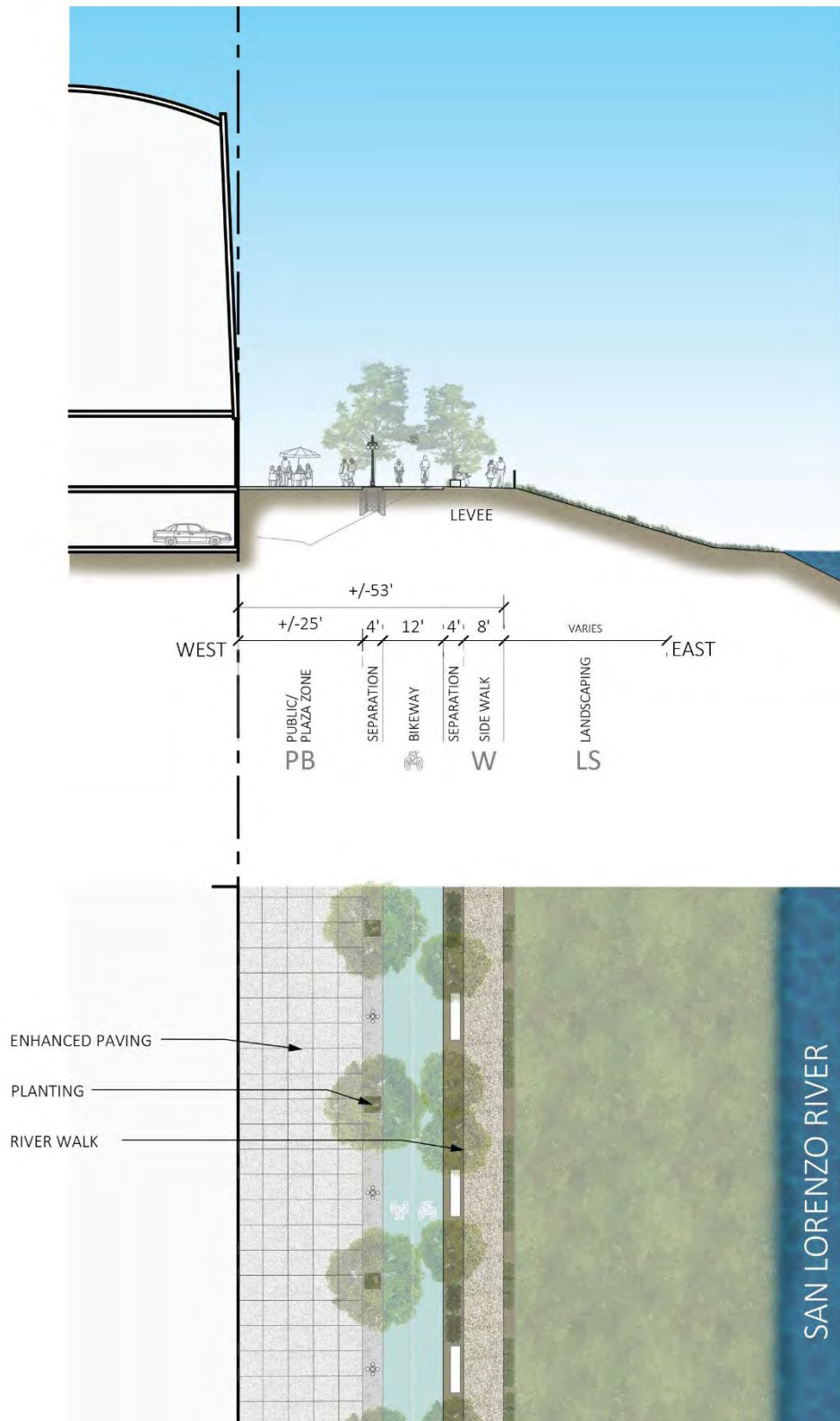


Figure 8.4-21 Santa Cruz Riverwalk (13)



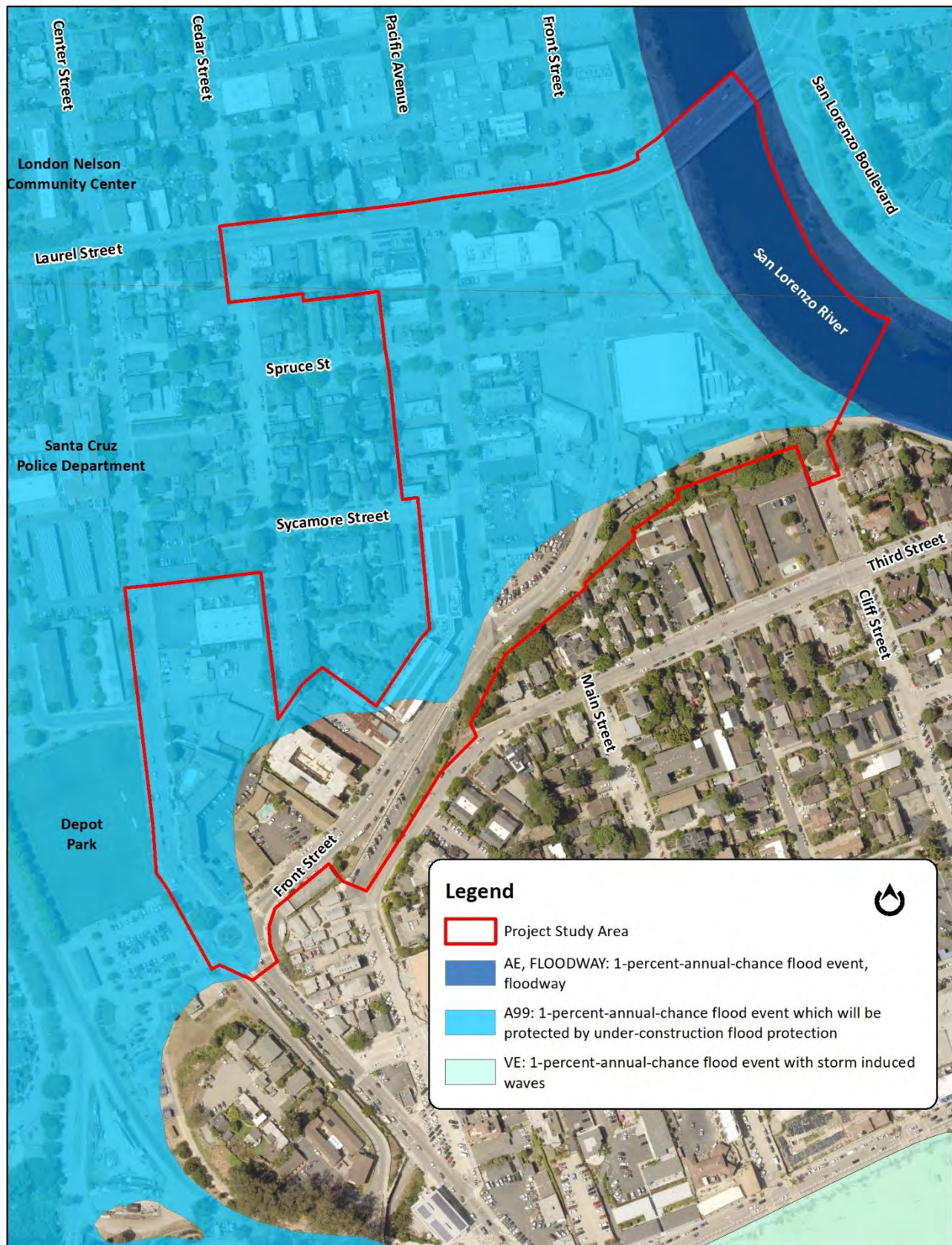
8.5 Sustainability and Resiliency

Consistent with the City's General Plan, Community-wide Climate Action Plan for 2030, and other policy documents including the requirements of the CALGreen Building Standards Code and the City's Green Building Program, future development in the SOLA will incorporate a range sustainability features intended to reduce energy and greenhouse gas emissions, promote water-use efficiency, and minimize waste. The area will also be built as required to withstand the potential for inundation, since the project area, like much of the Downtown, is located within the flood areas mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as shown in [Figure 8.5-1 FEMA Flood Hazard in the SOLA](#). All new development in this area will be required to comply with the standards for floodplain development as established by the California Building Standards Code and the most updated mapping data published by FEMA.

Being located adjacent to the San Lorenzo River, future development will also need to carefully consider and minimize any potential adverse biological and hydrologic effects including water quality, aquatic and riparian plant and animal species, and migratory birds. The Environmental Impact Report will carefully evaluate the potential for any such effects and mitigation measures will be incorporated as necessary.



Figure 8.5-1 FEMA Flood Hazard in the SOLA



8.5.1 Sustainability and Resiliency Policies

The City of Santa Cruz has a long-standing commitment to environmentally sound development and many existing policies and plans support the City's long-term resilience to a changing climate. The 2030 General Plan includes this statement regarding sustainability of Land Use choices in the City:

Environmental quality, land uses, and development are inexorably linked. By providing for the city's continued economic growth and high quality of life without compromising the needs of future generations, sustainable land uses respond to environmental values widely held in the community.

At the heart of [the City of Santa Cruz 2030 General Plan] is sustainable development. In its broadest sense, it promotes harmony among people and between humanity and nature. Also, because development cannot subsist on a deteriorating environmental or economic base, sustainable development maintains or enhances economic opportunity and community well-being, while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people and economies depend.

Consistent with these sentiments and City of Santa Cruz policy, all new development in the South of Laurel Area shall be consistent with relevant and applicable City plans and policies. Those relevant policies include, but are not limited to:

Citywide Plans

- The *Community-wide Climate Action Plan for 2030* (2022, as amended)
- The *Citywide Creeks and Wetlands Management Plan* (2006, as amended)
- *Local Coastal Program* (1992, as amended)

Santa Cruz Municipal Code Sections

- Green Building Program, as codified in SCMC Chapter 24.15
- Water Waste Prohibition, as codified in SCMC Chapter 16.02
- Water-Efficient Landscaping standards, as codified in SCMC Chapter 16.16
- Bird-Safe Building Design standards, as codified in SCMC Subsection 24.12.127
- Environmental Resource Management including specifically Drainage Control standards and Floodplain Management regulations as codified in SCMC Chapter 24.14

8.6 Infrastructure and Public Services

Implementation of the SOLA plan will require the construction of infrastructure and provision of public services and utilities in accordance with the development program described in [Section 8.2 SOLA Development Plan](#).

As shown in [Figure 8.6-1 Existing Infrastructure](#), the City of Santa Cruz owns and operates potable water, sanitary sewer and storm drainage in the SOLA. The City of Scotts Valley and the Santa Cruz County Sanitation District also own and operate underground sanitary sewer utilities that pass through this area. Dry utilities (e.g., electrical, natural gas, communications) are provided by the respective utility providers.

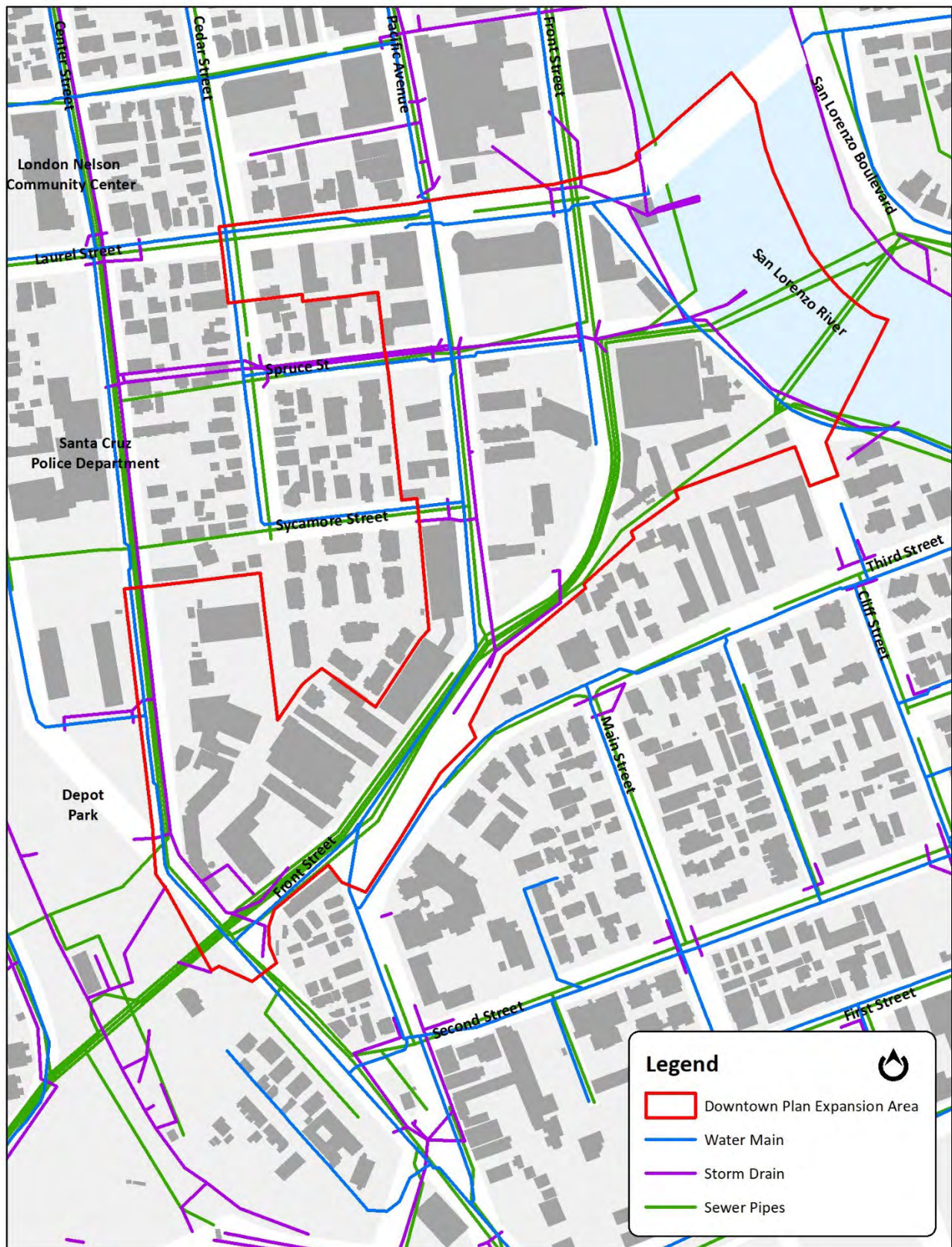
Redevelopment in the SOLA will create additional demand for water, sewer, electricity, gas and communications services. Infrastructure, services and utilities should be designed to meet the standards of the City of Santa Cruz and other utility agencies with oversight authority.

Following the approach described in [Section 8.7 Implementation](#), the City and respective property owners and developers shall collaborate to fund and implement infrastructure improvements. Underground utilities should be included as part of street development where feasible. Specific requirements regarding timing and sizing of some infrastructure, such as on-site electrical needs, will be determined by the City as part of the development review process for each development application.

In particular, a significant amount of underground infrastructure extends along the ROW on Spruce Street. This includes a stormwater pump station at the easterly edge, adjacent to the San Lorenzo River which importantly provides stormwater drainage for the entire Downtown, as well as significant sanitary sewer facilities belonging to the City of Scotts Valley and to the Santa Cruz County Sanitation District.

Relevant public services, including police and fire protection, are provided by the City of Santa Cruz. Any increased demand on public services associated with implementation of this Plan shall be financed through development fees and the payment of annual property taxes associated with new development.

Figure 8.6-1 Existing Infrastructure



8.7 Implementation

This section addresses the actions that are necessary to support the desired features of this plan by the City of Santa Cruz, other agencies, and future project applicant(s) to achieve the goals and objectives as described above.

8.7.1 Financing Plan

Public improvement costs will be funded through a variety of funding mechanisms and resources. Appropriate funding sources will reflect the specific nature of the public improvement required as well as funding availability, timing, beneficiaries, and other factors.

New development will be required to make contributions that improve public infrastructure in ways that promote alternative transportation modes (walking, biking & transit), promote environmental sustainability (green infrastructure and green building performance), and provide for orderly and attractive change within the SOLA over time.

New development is expected to improve adjacent streets, dedicate land for the creation of new streets and public spaces, make fair-share contributions through the methods mentioned in the following sections or others, or possibly pay infrastructure impact fees for downtown improvements to create and improve streets and public spaces.

Specifically, development will contribute toward build-out of community amenities such as:

1. Spruce Street Plaza from Front Street to Riverwalk
2. New Roundabout at Pacific Avenue/Front Street/Third Street
3. Raised crossings on Pacific Avenue
4. Utility Upgrades
5. Existing and required new traffic signal equipment
6. Spruce Street Plaza from Pacific Avenue to Front Street ¹

Unless otherwise negotiated with the City, for example as part of a fair share contribution towards future improvements, development projects will be required to include build-out of improvements on all public frontages, specifically:

1. Sidewalks
2. Bike Facilities

¹ This section of roadway may or may not be built out as a public plaza, depending on future development and the location of the Arena.

3. Riverwalk Improvements
4. Utility upgrades or relocations
5. Undergrounding of any aerial utilities

8.7.2 Potential for Special-Purpose Financing Districts

The City retained the consulting firm Kosmont Companies to evaluate the feasibility of various forms of financing districts to assist in addressing existing and potential future infrastructure needs. One specific tool that was evaluated in detail was enhanced infrastructure financing districts (EIFDs).

EIFDs can employ tax increment financing (TIF) as a form of value capture, where a lead agency (such as the City) designates a boundary around specific parcels (i.e., the “TIF district”) positioned for new development or investment. The assessed property value within the TIF district is “frozen” at the time of formation as the “baseline” of assessed value for the TIF district. Over time, as new development or investment occurs and new property value is added to properties within the TIF district, participating taxing entities such as the City and County can dedicate all or a portion of the new incremental property tax from values above the baseline (“property tax increment”) to the TIF district with a dedicated purpose, such as of funding infrastructure. The property tax increment may be used on a pay-as-you-go basis or leveraged in the form of bond issuances.

Very importantly, TIF districts do not create a new or increased tax, nor do they encumber any existing agency revenues or resources. Much of the potential benefit for the City in utilizing TIF as part of an EIFD would be to potentially attract matching funding from another taxing entity such as the County, increase scoring for third party grant funding, and to induce private sector funding for infrastructure that can be partially or wholly reimbursed by the EIFD. EIFD’s can fund a variety of infrastructure and public improvement costs, such as mobility improvements, utility capacity enhancements, flood control, parks and open space, and other infrastructure.

If the City ultimately implements an EIFD, an Infrastructure Financing Plan would be prepared that outlines the specific funding arrangement, targeted facilities to be funded, relevant fiscal impacts, and other details. The Infrastructure Financing Plan would be noticed publicly and then a series of public meetings and hearings would be convened to vet the proposed plan, including an opportunity for public protest. The typical formation process for an EIFD is approximately 12 to 18 months.

8.7.3 Ongoing Funding for Public Services and Facilities

The primary source of ongoing funding for the City’s public services and facilities is tax revenue that accrues to the City’s General Fund. This revenue comes from property taxes, user fees, sales taxes, and transient occupancy taxes, among others.

If the City determines that additional funding is required to support non-standard features such as plazas, stormwater treatment facilities, pedestrian-oriented lighting, special paving, wayfinding signage, and others, these features should be privately funded and maintained through a maintenance agreement as a condition of approval.

Financing districts such as EIFDs (discussed above) would additionally have capacity on an ongoing basis to fund maintenance of public facilities, in addition to initial capital expenditures. In some cases, funding capacity for ongoing maintenance and services are augmented with tools such as community facilities districts (CFDs) and business improvement districts (BIDs). Such tools are not being contemplated at this time, but would involve a public outreach and hearing process, including approval by relevant landowners and/or businesses.

8.7.4 Land Dedication for Public Realm and Utility Infrastructure

The creation of new or expanded public streets and open spaces will rely on the dedication of land by property owners, including the City, typically as part of development.

Property Owner Coordination

- The City should work diligently with the respective property owners and developers for orderly creation of street rights-of-way and public space, while maintaining development feasibility on adjacent parcels. During the development review process, the City will contact affected property owners to discuss land dedication expectations and potential for land development on the remaining parcel.
- The City will work with property owners/developers to adjust property lines or assemble land, where the location of public streets, in-ground infrastructure, flood control infrastructure, and public spaces might result in parcel remnants that are too small to develop effectively.

Timing of Dedication

- Land for future streets and public space shall be dedicated as a condition for development approval, as determined above and as shown on the respective street cross-section as shown in [Section 8.4.3 Streetscape and Circulation / Street Types](#)
- The location of private alleys and walkways with public access and the option to place utilities in a public access easement if needed shall also be established at the time of development approval.
- Interim improvements should be provided within established easements for public access. The City may purchase additional easements, where such an access or utility easement is not already present and where the City finds that an interim improvement is essential to downtown's circulation network. The phasing of the roadway network may also require interim roadway measures to be constructed to ensure viable emergency vehicle access.