

4.0 - Making the Public Realm

Cities are realized by the deliberate assembly of streets, blocks and buildings. In this act of making a place, space is allocated for both public and private use - for buildings and for open spaces. Public bodies, citizens, and entrepreneurs slowly generate streets, squares, and parks. Single buildings incrementally introduced into blocks eventually determine the character of the open spaces. It is at this most elemental scale that architecture and urbanism define each other. In city-making parlance this is called the public realm. It is the shared space in society which brings people to gather together, to relate to one another and/or to be separate.

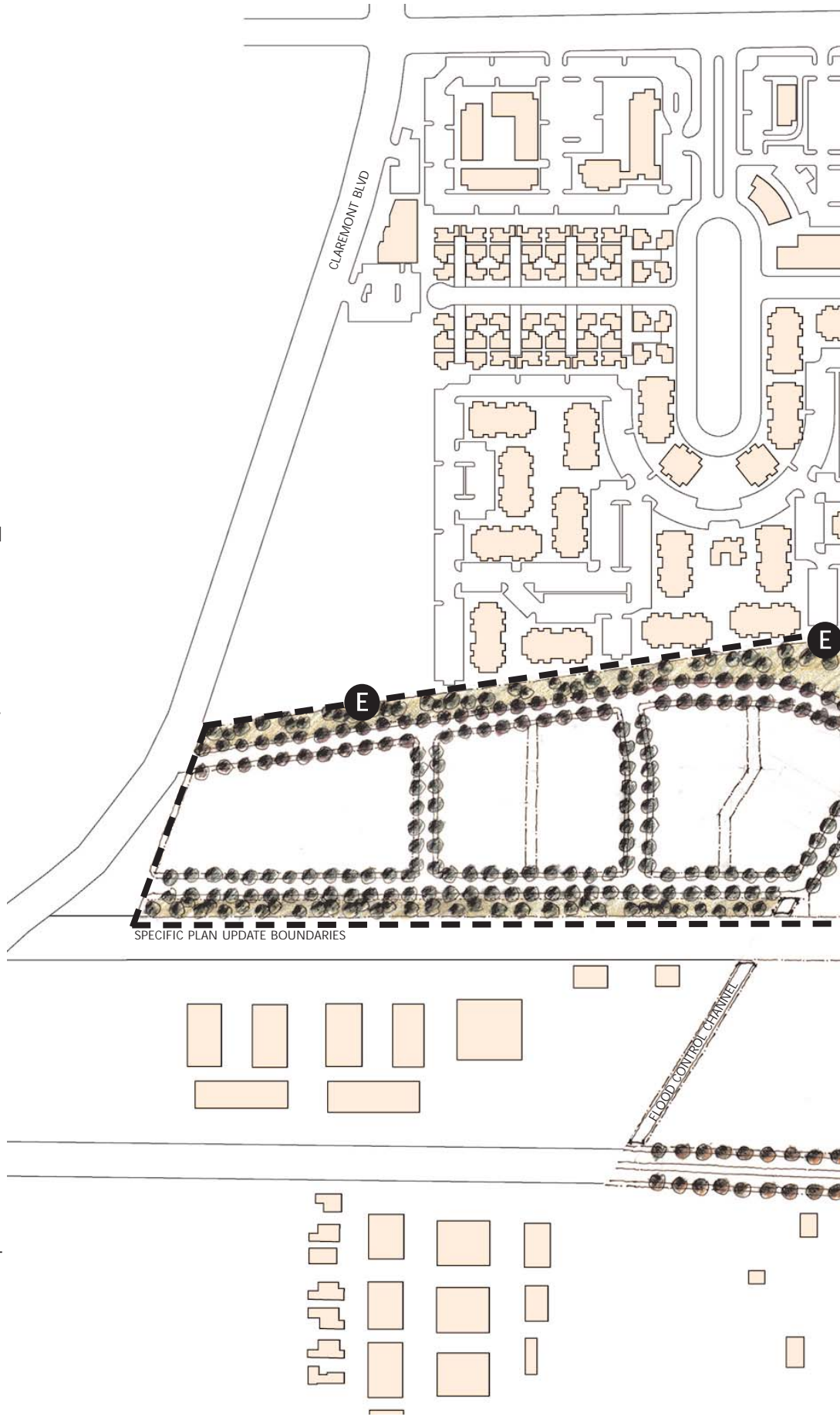
The creation of open space is a key to allowing pedestrians to comfortably move through the city. One traditional method of representing city spaces is an analytical plan diagram which depicts only public open spaces. The advantage of such depictions is that they clearly distinguish large and small public spaces, and most importantly, they clearly render the links between them. Such maps tend to highlight the gathering power of public space. Although one may typically think of a city in terms of its buildings only, its depiction as a network of open space provides a very clear indication of its potential as a well-formed realm of public space that allows citizens to interact in a free and open manner. In fact, the network of public space is a better indication of pedestrian-friendliness and memorable character of an urban place, than the mere description of its building fabric.

The locus of a district's public life is its center. The district center is a public place, which may be a plaza, square, park, or an important street intersection, and is frequently associated with a public building and commercial activity. The combination of such a focus contributes to the social identity of the people that inhabit it.

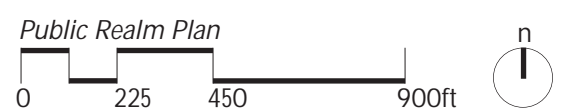
In North Montclair, the obvious center is the combined Metrolink / Gold Line station. Although the Montclair Plaza shopping mall and associated big box retail will continue to be the commercial center of the City, a public square at the train station can be of the proper physical scale and size to become an intimate social and community gathering place, appropriate for outdoor sidewalk dining, festivals, and public art. As the surrounding residential neighborhoods develop, the trains will attract an increasing amount of foot traffic. A dignified public square facing a simple train station will both encourage this pedestrian activity and provide focus to neighborhood-oriented retail activities.

Additional locations should be dedicated to public space within the residential neighborhoods - sites for locally-oriented activities, such as playgrounds, dog runs, basketball courts, and open lawns for informal picnics, family ball games, and sunbathing. To reinforce the neighborhood character of these smaller parks, minor civic buildings, such as community centers, should be located on sites facing these parks.

The following pages describe a typology of public open space.



- A: Town Square
- B: Piazza / Plaza
- C: Neighborhood Square
- D: Neighborhood Park
- E: Greenway





ARROW RTE

MONTE VISTA AVE

CENTRAL AVE

RICHTON ST

POLICE DEPT SITE

JOHN'S INCREDIBLE PIZZA

ARROW HWY

FIRE DEPT

BEST BUY

TARGET

MORENO ST

MONTE VISTA AVE

MACY'S

MONTCLAIR PLAZA

SEARS

NORDSTROM

JC PENNEY

CENTRAL AVE

1-10 FWY



Great Station and Square: Forest Hills Gardens, Queens NY

4.2.010 - Public Spaces

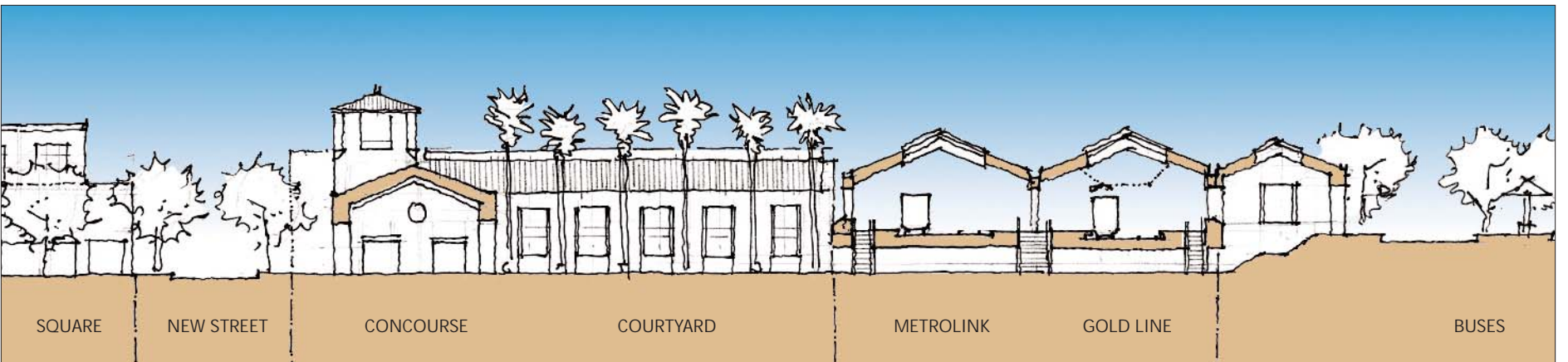
A. Town Square and Station - If streets are outdoor rooms that happen to be longer than they are wide, squares are larger and more dimensionally balanced "living" rooms within the overall public realm. Squares are public spaces, seldom larger than a block, located at the intersection of important streets. The landscape of squares consists of paved walks, lawns, trees, and civic buildings formally disposed and requiring substantial maintenance. Squares are circumscribed spatially by surrounding buildings that clearly define its edges. The spatial qualities of the squares are emphasized by the strong, continuous and simple "street wall" that is formed by the buildings; without this interrelationship, the public space loses its definition and places between buildings lose their intimacy. A small, village-sized train station featuring ticket sales and transit information can provide a civic anchor to the square.



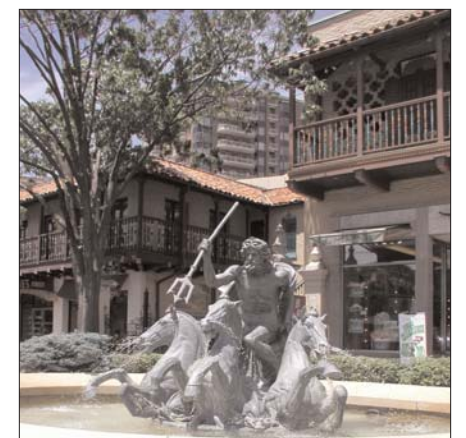
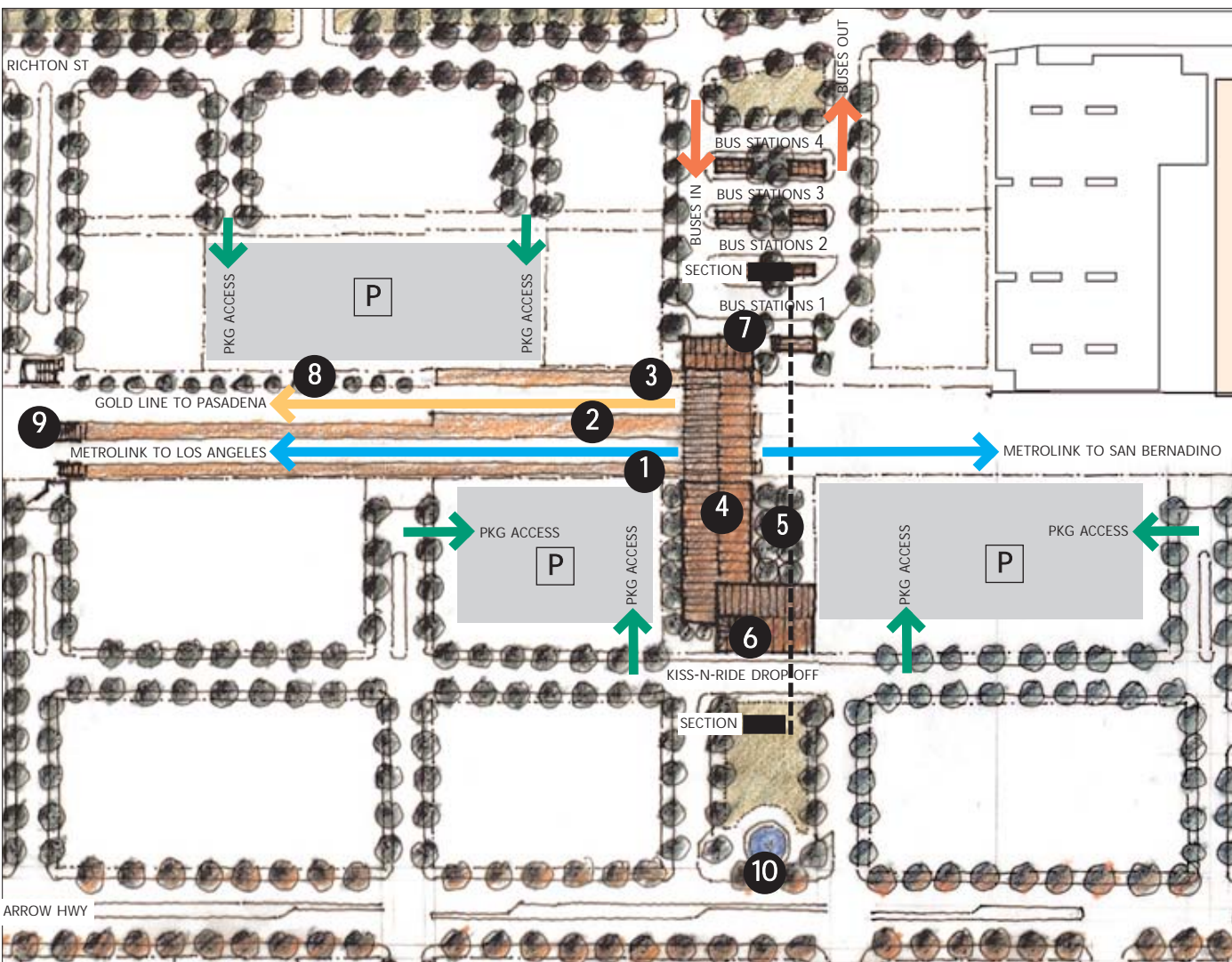
Great Square: Sonoma CA



Great Station: Paso Robles CA

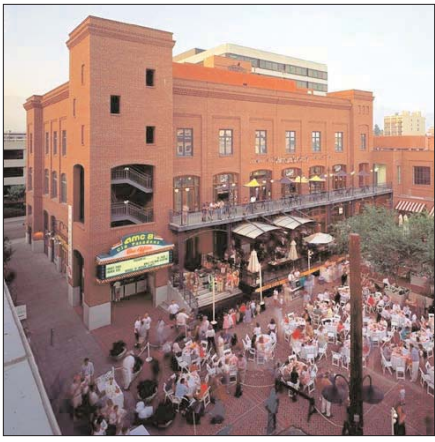


Section



Fountain

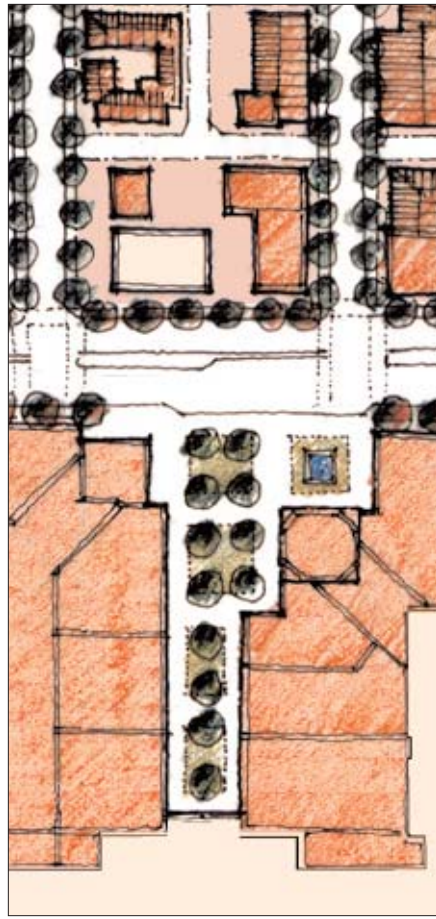
- KEY**
- 1: West-bound Metrolink platform
 - 2: Shared Metrolink / Gold Line platform
 - 3: East-bound Gold Line platform
 - 4: Concourse to existing tunnel access, with ticket sales, transit info and other services
 - 5: Day Care with Courtyard
 - 6: South Entry
 - 7: North Entry
 - 8: Landscaped walk to east-bound Gold Line
 - 9: West tunnel access (new)
 - 10: Fountain
 - P: Commuter Parking



Piazza



Piazza



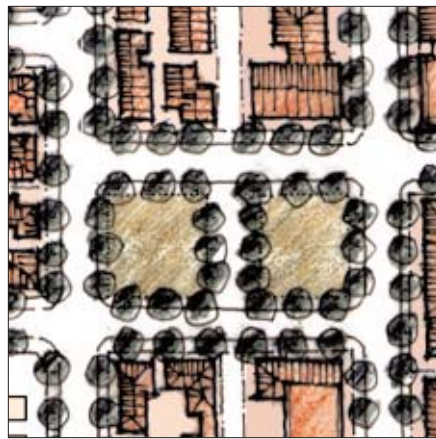
Piazza

B. Piazzas and Plazas - Piazzas and Plazas are public spaces generally set aside for commercial purposes and activities, and located at the intersection of important retail streets. A plaza is circumscribed by building frontages; its landscape consists of durable pavement for parking and trees requiring little maintenance. It may be the site for civic events such as farmers' markets, dances, outdoor film screenings, and other minor performances by street artists and actors.

C. Neighborhood Squares - Neighborhood squares are well maintained and cultivated civic parks of an urban character that provide places of public participation, recreation and relaxation in the center of the community. They constitute the nucleus of the neighborhoods and help provide identity to those areas. The design of these squares tends to be ordered and semi-formal, and circumscribed by surrounding building facades. Minor monuments, gazebos and fountains, may be located in the center of such squares. Locally-oriented civic buildings - such as community centers for youths and/or seniors - should be located on sites facing neighborhood squares.



Neighborhood Square

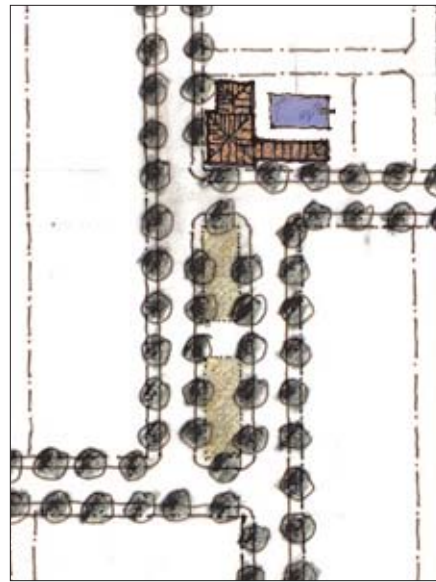


Neighborhood Square

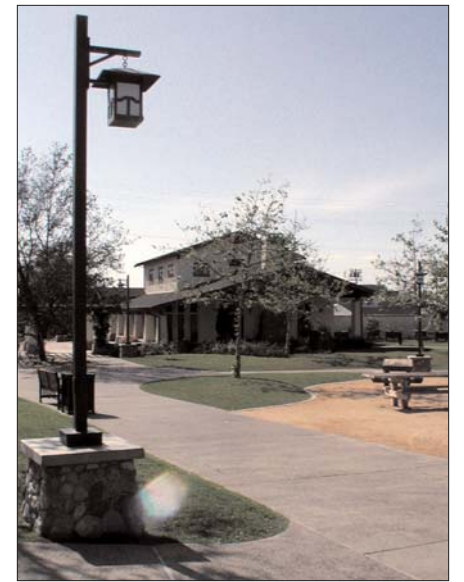


Neighborhood Square

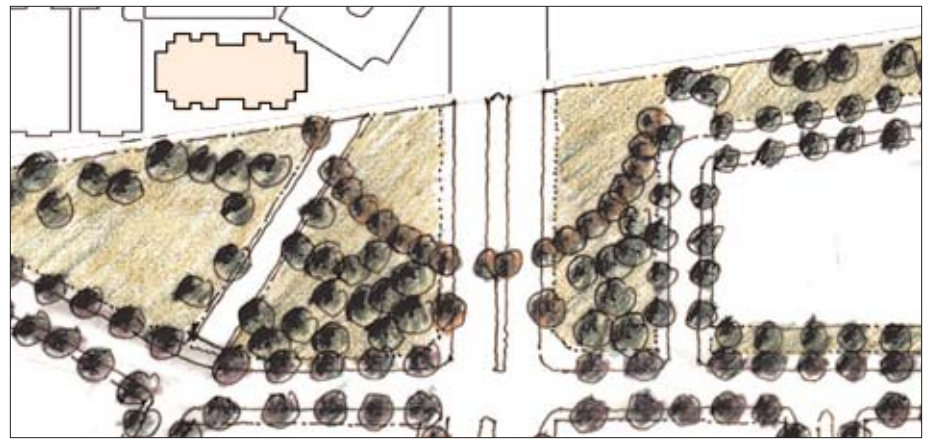
D. Neighborhood Parks - Neighborhood parks are medium-sized public spaces available for unstructured recreation, with a landscape consisting of grassy areas and trees, naturalistically disposed and requiring only limited maintenance. Such parks are appropriate locations for playgrounds, dog runs, and other family-oriented activities, and may be more suburban in character than neighborhood squares. Like neighborhood squares, a minor civic building - such as a neighborhood-oriented community facility or shared pool/recreation center - should be located on a prominent site facing the local park. Unlike neighborhood squares, the definition and boundary of neighborhood parks is characterized less by surrounding buildings and more by its own landscaping.



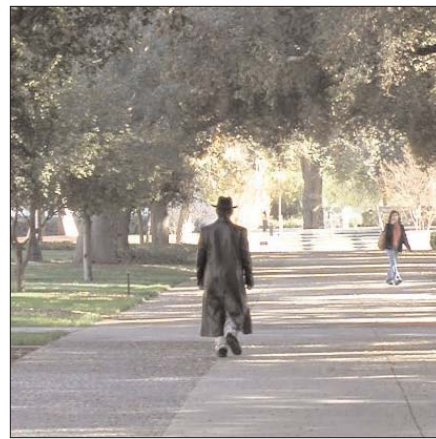
Neighborhood Park



Neighborhood Park



Greenways



Greenways



Greenways

E. Greenways - Greenways are linear corridors encompassing a trail for bicycles and pedestrians. A greenway should follow a natural trajectory which is transformed to its purpose. Typically, these are riverfronts (riverwalk) or abandoned tracks (the rails-to-trails). Landscaping along greenways may be either formal, or informal, relaxed and rural in character.

4.2.020 - Blocks and Streets

In American urban tradition, the creation of a street grid is the first presence of urban structure in the landscape. This very simple American city-making model has been virtually abandoned in recent years. For the last half century, the building of the public realm has been handled with little sense for those it serves and for the quality of life that it generates.

Buildings, blocks and streets are interdependent. Each one contains to some degree the ingredients of all the others. Any decision to design streets in a particular manner seals the formal fate of blocks and buildings. Blocks of a specific character determine correspondent streets and buildings. Buildings of particular qualities dominate the blocks that contain them and the streets that surround them.

Blocks

Blocks are the field on which unfolds both the building fabric and the public realm of the city. A versatile, ancient instrument, the traditional block allows a mutually beneficial relationship between people and vehicles in urban space.

Size - Blocks are square, rectangular or irregular in their shape. In their historical dimensions, they vary between a minimum of 250 and maximum of 650 feet. This dimensional range allows single buildings to easily reach the edges of blocks at all densities. It also forces parking to be located away from the sidewalk, either underground, in the middle of the block, or in the street.

Configuration - Independent of shape, city blocks are to be lotted so that all of their sides can define public space. A variety of widths and depths of individual lots determine the range of building types and densities that will eventually establish the intended city fabric. Alleys absorb parking and servicing loads and allow the outer faces of blocks to become more intensely pedestrian.

Frontage - The predominant visual character of all districts and neighborhoods depends on several attributes of their buildings: height, setbacks and projections define the enclosure of the street. Setback lines and the percentage build-to at their edges establish the fundamental rhythm between open space and built form on each block. Threshold elements at the setback line such as arcades, porches, stoops, balconies, loggias, chimneys, doors and windows, are the means by which buildings interface with and determine the life of the street. Within each block, major ground floor interior spaces such as lobbies and public gardens of all kinds and sizes are to be understood as an extension of the public space of the city.

Parking - The omnipresence of cars within the public realm threatens the vitality of cities. Accommodating the pedestrian is the first order of priority for parking. Cars are best accommodated in the middle of blocks or underground. Parking garages are acceptable as long as their ground floors at the sidewalk are occupied by pedestrian-related uses. Parking garages are regular buildings, and as such, need significant public faces and the built-in spatial redundancy necessary for a future use other than parking. Where parking lots are inevitable they should double up as significant public gardens.

4.2.030 - Great Streets

The notion that an effective design of streets helps create vibrant civic life is fundamental to both traditional cities and North Montclair. "Great Streets" elevate the needs of pedestrians and cyclists to a state of balance with other modes of transportation within the right-of-ways of residential and commercial thoroughfares. We call such an approach a "Pedestrian First" strategy because it suggests that favoring pedestrian movement is the most important ingredient in the design of traditional neighborhoods. Such a focus allows a friendlier, more inviting environment of the public way. As a result, walking and shopping opportunities increase, adding greatly to the economic vitality of a place. Increased options for movement through the city [walking, riding, streetcars, autos] enhances the variety of the street as well. All these elements combine to create a much higher trip quality for citizens and visitors, whether walking or driving.

Most visitors, workers and residents will likely arrive at the the project in wheeled vehicles, but at some point they will enter the realm of the pedestrian, who moves at no more than four miles per hour. As pedestrians, they need to circulate safely and conveniently to whatever their destination.

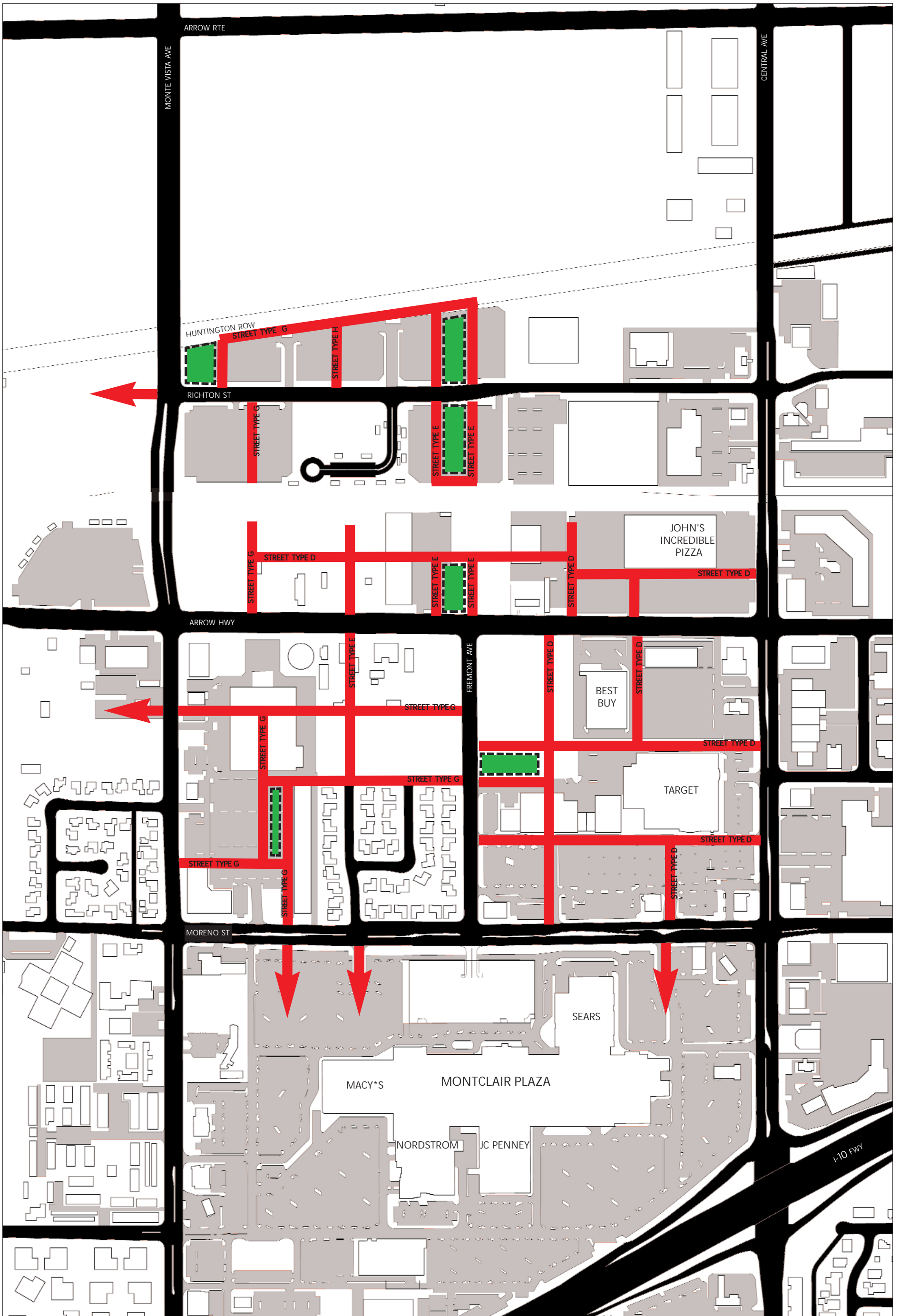
In order to create a pedestrian friendly environment, it is important to note the difference between street design for a Pedestrian First project as compared to a conventionally designed project. Conventional, wide streets and arterials can be very unsafe for pedestrians because cars travelling faster require greater braking distance. Narrower streets whose turning radii are reduced encourage pedestrians both because the streets are safer and the streets feel more comfortable. The result is that proper street design is a significant contributor to creating a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented public arena.

In response to such concerns, North Montclair's proposed street network includes carefully considered design strategies. First, it is hierarchical, as it is composed of various street types, their widths calibrated to the building types and uses each is meant to service. Second, it is lean, as it is set up to operate using the minimum width possible for each thoroughfare. Third, it is interconnected, as it provides for a variety of alternative paths of movement. Fourth, it is spatial, as carefully calibrated standards for each thoroughfare establish their individual sense of enclosure and contribute to the character and place within the district. Fifth and finally, it is varied, as individual thoroughfares are incorporated into specific zones within the plan, assigned character according to use. The integration of these organizational strategies and care in creating safe design widths are key components in the Pedestrian First approach.

Detailed street design standards aim to slow traffic down within the neighborhood and along the corridor, while allowing for the smooth operation of emergency vehicles and keeping the same capacity for vehicular flow. Limited lane widths, two-way traffic, on-street parking, tighter curb radii, narrow street crossings, ample sidewalks and generous streetscapes are all key elements of a walkable, Pedestrian First strategy. For each street type, these standards prescribe both a geometric profile as well as a performance level. The standards were established to balance the needs of people walking, parked cars, and moving cars, and to generate a quality of place and a character that varies from place to place. The look and performance of thoroughfares can then become a powerful influence on the design of buildings within adjacent blocks and on the overall quality of life within each neighborhood.

By utilizing this transportation framework, residents will have access to all buildings and uses within the neighborhood in a manner that supports the kind of casual social interaction that is at the heart of all great Town Centers.

Each recommended street type is illustrated in detail on the following pages.



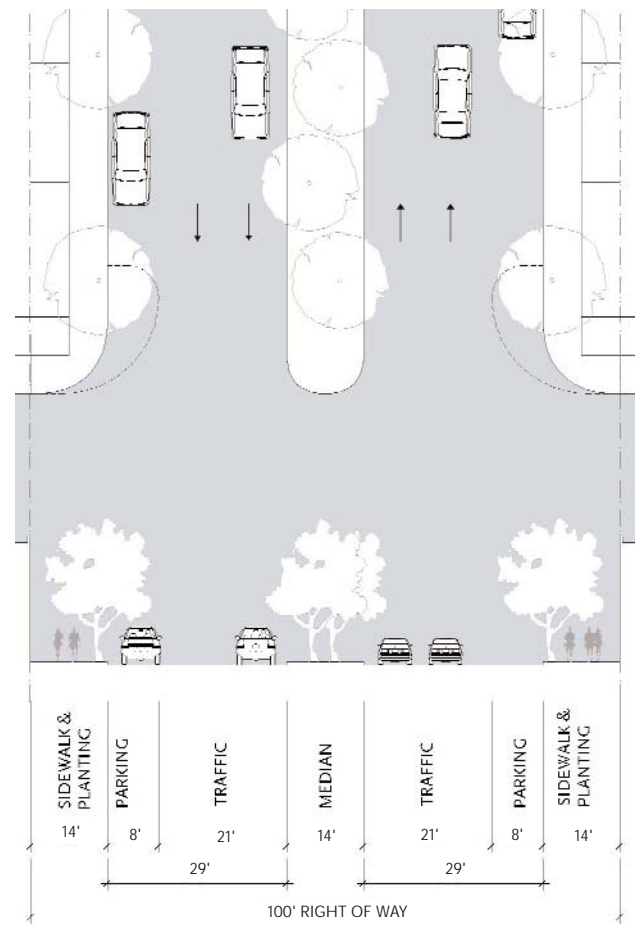
 Proposed Parks
 Proposed Streets



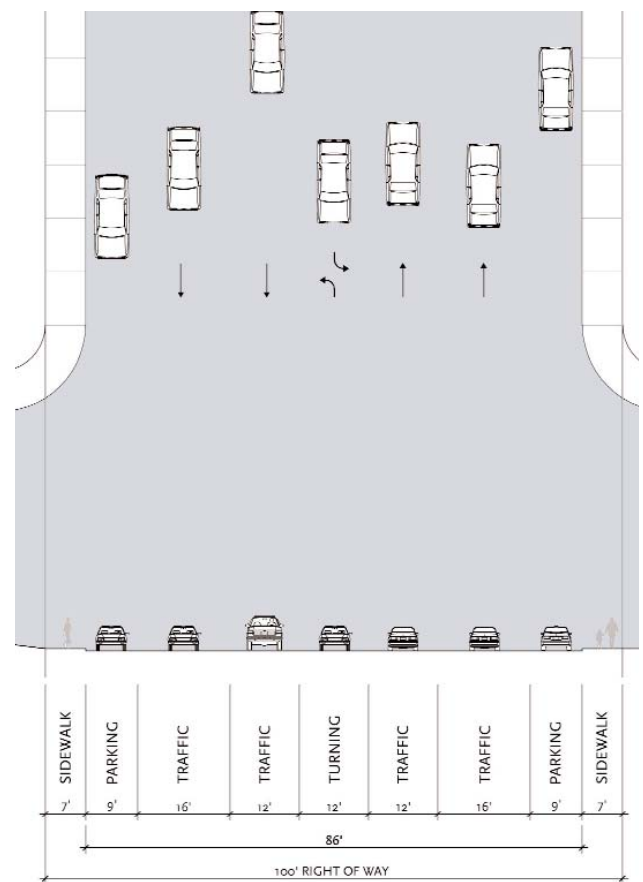
A.1. Arrow Highway



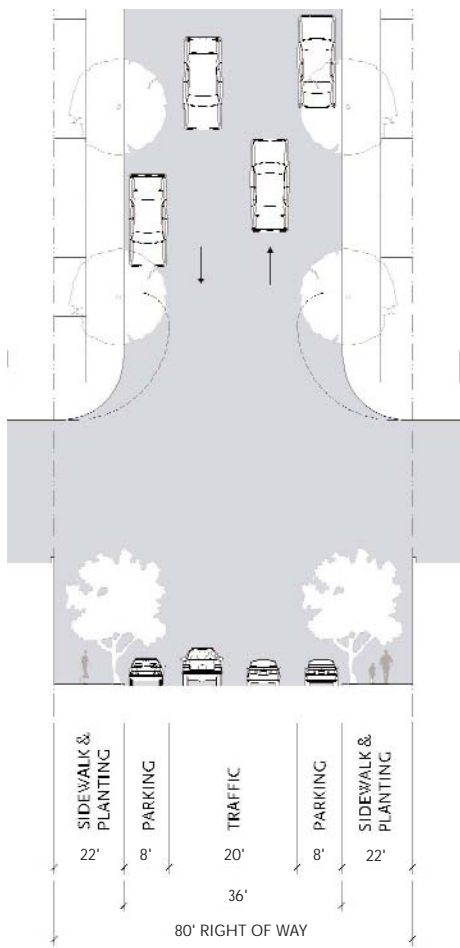
- MOVEMENT / SPEED Free / 35 mph
- CROSSING TIME 21 seconds
- ROW WIDTH 100 ft
- TRAFFIC LANES 2 in 21 ft each
- PARKING Both sides
- CURB TYPE vertical
- CURB RADIUS 10 ft typical or 15 ft with bulb-outs
- SIDEWALK WIDTH 6 ft
- PLANTER WIDTH 8 ft
- PLANTER TYPE Continuous
- PLANTING 30 ft - 40 ft on center
- PLANTING TYPE consistent with City wide standards



A.2. Arrow Highway Existing

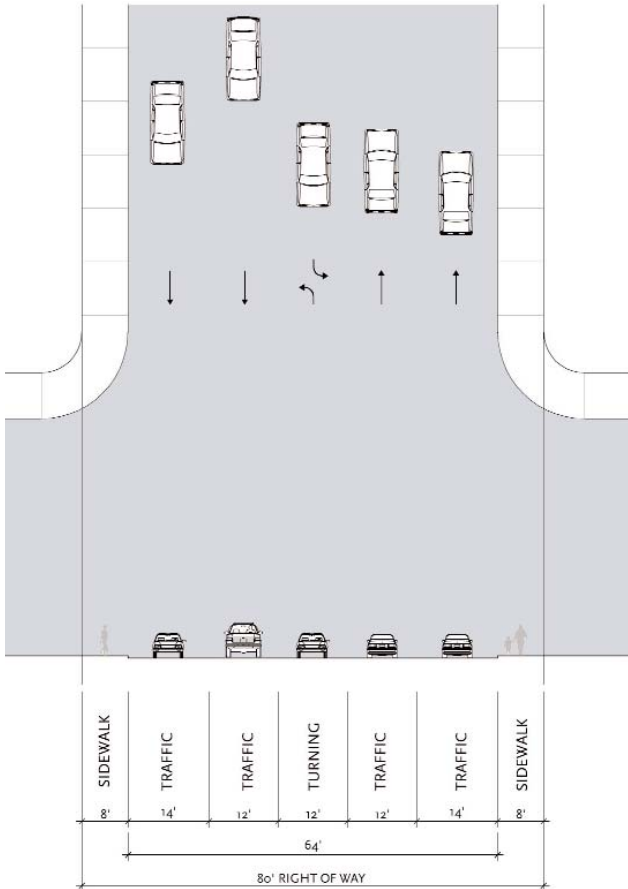


B.1. Richton Street



- MOVEMENT / SPEED Free / 20-25 mph
- CROSSING TIME 12 seconds
- ROW WIDTH 80 ft
- TRAFFIC LANES 2 in 20 ft
- PARKING Both sides, not striped
- CURB TYPE vertical
- CURB RADIUS 10 ft typical or 15 ft with bulb-outs
- SIDEWALK WIDTH 5 ft
- PLANTER WIDTH 6 ft
- PLANTER TYPE Continuous
- PLANTING 30 ft - 40 ft on center
- PLANTING TYPE consistent with City wide standards

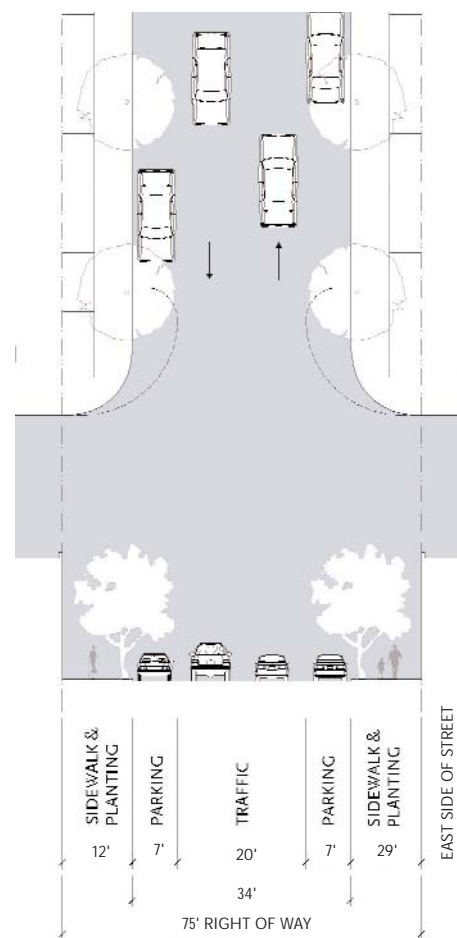
B.2. Richton Street Existing



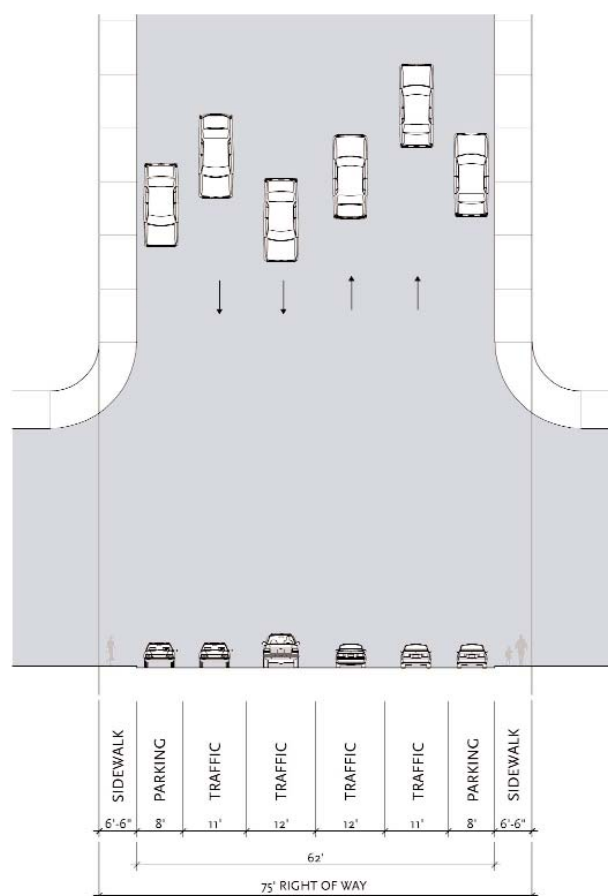
C.1. Fremont Avenue



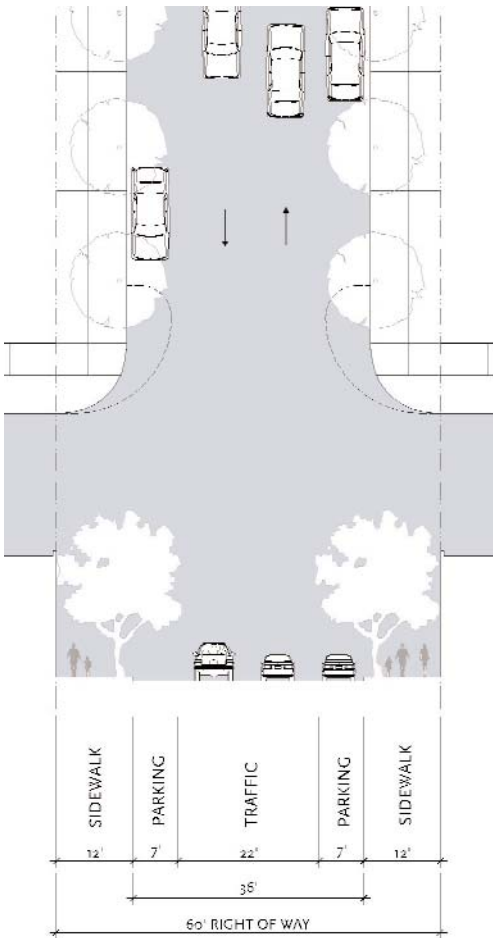
- MOVEMENT / SPEED Free / 20-25 mph
- CROSSING TIME 12 seconds
- ROW WIDTH 75 ft
- TRAFFIC LANES 2 in 20 ft
- PARKING Both sides, not striped
- CURB TYPE vertical
- CURB RADIUS 10 ft typical or 15 ft with bulb-outs
- SIDEWALK WIDTH 5 ft
- PLANTER WIDTH 6 ft
- PLANTER TYPE Continuous
- PLANTING 30 ft -40 ft on center
- PLANTING TYPE consistent with City wide standards



C.2. Fremont Avenue Existing

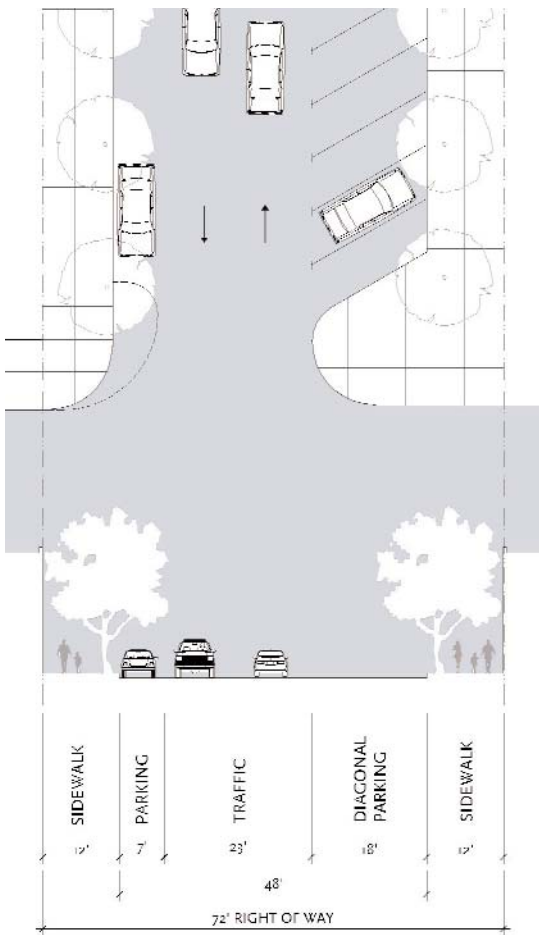


D. Mixed-Use / Retail Main Street (Parallel Parking)



- MOVEMENT / SPEED Free / 20-25 mph
- CROSSING TIME 12 seconds
- ROW WIDTH 60 ft
- TRAFFIC LANES 2 in 22 ft
- PARKING Both sides, striped
- CURB TYPE vertical
- CURB RADIUS 10 ft typical or 15 ft with bulb-outs
- SIDEWALK WIDTH 12 ft
- PLANTER WIDTH in wells
- PLANTER TYPE continuous
- PLANTING 30 ft on center
- PLANTING TYPE consistent with City wide standards

E. Mixed-Use / Retail Main Street (Mixed Parking)



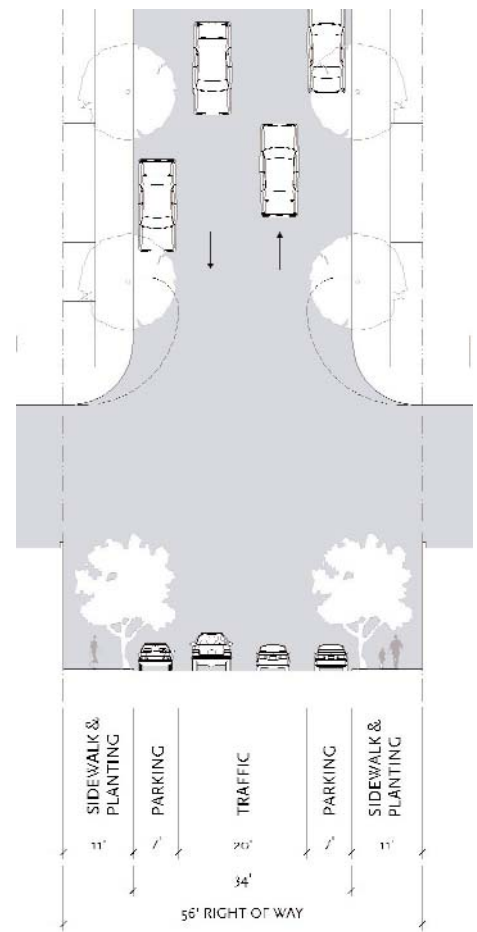
- MOVEMENT / SPEED Slow / 20 mph
- CROSSING TIME 12 seconds
- ROW WIDTH 72 ft
- TRAFFIC LANES 2 in 23 ft
- PARKING Both sides, striped
- CURB TYPE vertical
- CURB RADIUS 10 ft typical or 15 ft with bulb-outs
- SIDEWALK WIDTH 12 ft
- PLANTER WIDTH in wells
- PLANTER TYPE continuous
- PLANTING 30 ft on center
- PLANTING TYPE consistent with City wide standards

CHAPTER 4 : GREAT SQUARES & STREETS
STANDARDS FOR THE PUBLIC REALM

F. Residential Street (Free-Flow)



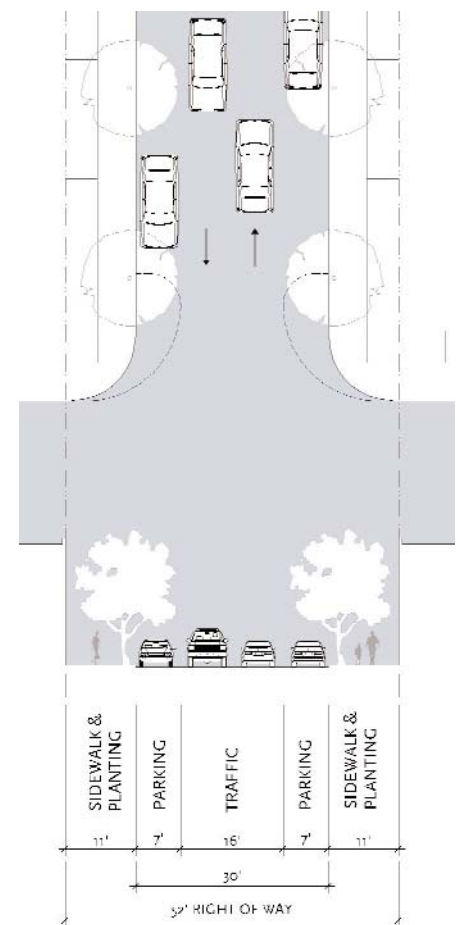
- MOVEMENT / SPEED Free / 20-25 mph
- CROSSING TIME 12 seconds
- ROW WIDTH 56 ft
- TRAFFIC LANES 2 in 20 ft
- PARKING Both sides, not striped
- CURB TYPE vertical
- CURB RADIUS 10 ft typical or 15 ft with bulb-outs
- SIDEWALK WIDTH 5 ft
- PLANTER WIDTH 6 ft
- PLANTER TYPE Continuous
- PLANTING 30ft - 40 ft on center
- PLANTING TYPE consistent with City wide standards



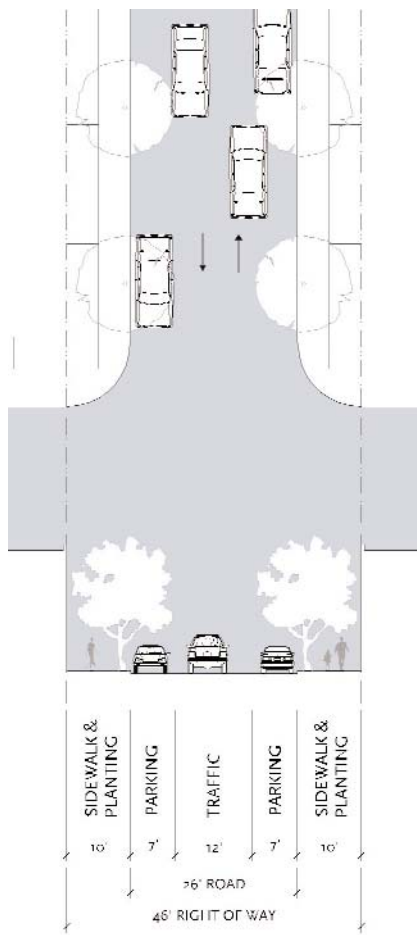
G. Slow Residential Street



- MOVEMENT / SPEED Slow / 20 mph
- CROSSING TIME 11 seconds
- ROW WIDTH 52 ft
- TRAFFIC LANES 2 in 16 ft
- PARKING Both sides, not striped
- CURB TYPE Vertical
- CURB RADIUS 10 ft typical or 15 ft with bulb-outs
- SIDEWALK WIDTH 5 ft
- PLANTER WIDTH 6 ft
- PLANTER TYPE Continuous
- PLANTING 30 ft - 40 ft on center
- PLANTING TYPE consistent with City wide standards

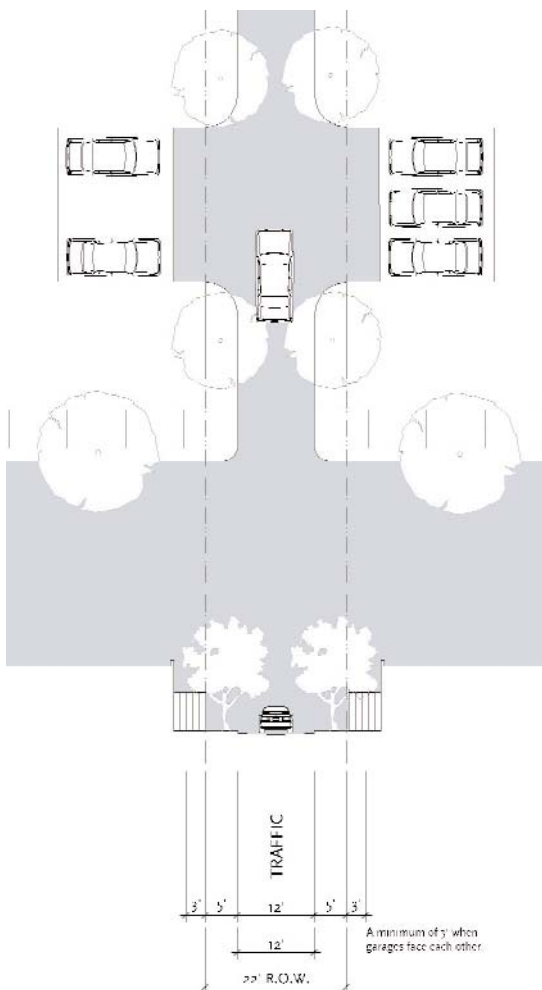


H. Yield Residential Street



- MOVEMENT / SPEED Yield / 20 mph
- CROSSING TIME 9 seconds
- ROW WIDTH 46 ft
- TRAFFIC LANES 1, shared in 12 ft
- PARKING Both sides, not striped
- CURB TYPE Vertical
- CURB RADIUS 10 ft typical or 15 ft with bulb-outs
- SIDEWALK WIDTH 5 ft
- PLANTER WIDTH 5 ft
- PLANTER TYPE Continuous
- PLANTING 30 ft - 40 ft on center
- PLANTING TYPE consistent with City wide standards

I. Alley



- MOVEMENT / SPEED Yield / 10 mph
- CROSSING TIME N/A
- ROW WIDTH 22 ft
- TRAFFIC LANES 1 in 12 ft
- PARKING Not allowed
- CURB TYPE None
- CURB RADIUS N/A
- SIDEWALK WIDTH N/A
- PLANTER WIDTH 5 ft
- PLANTER TYPE Between garages
- PLANTING N/A