

# 4. Illustrative Plan + Sub-Areas

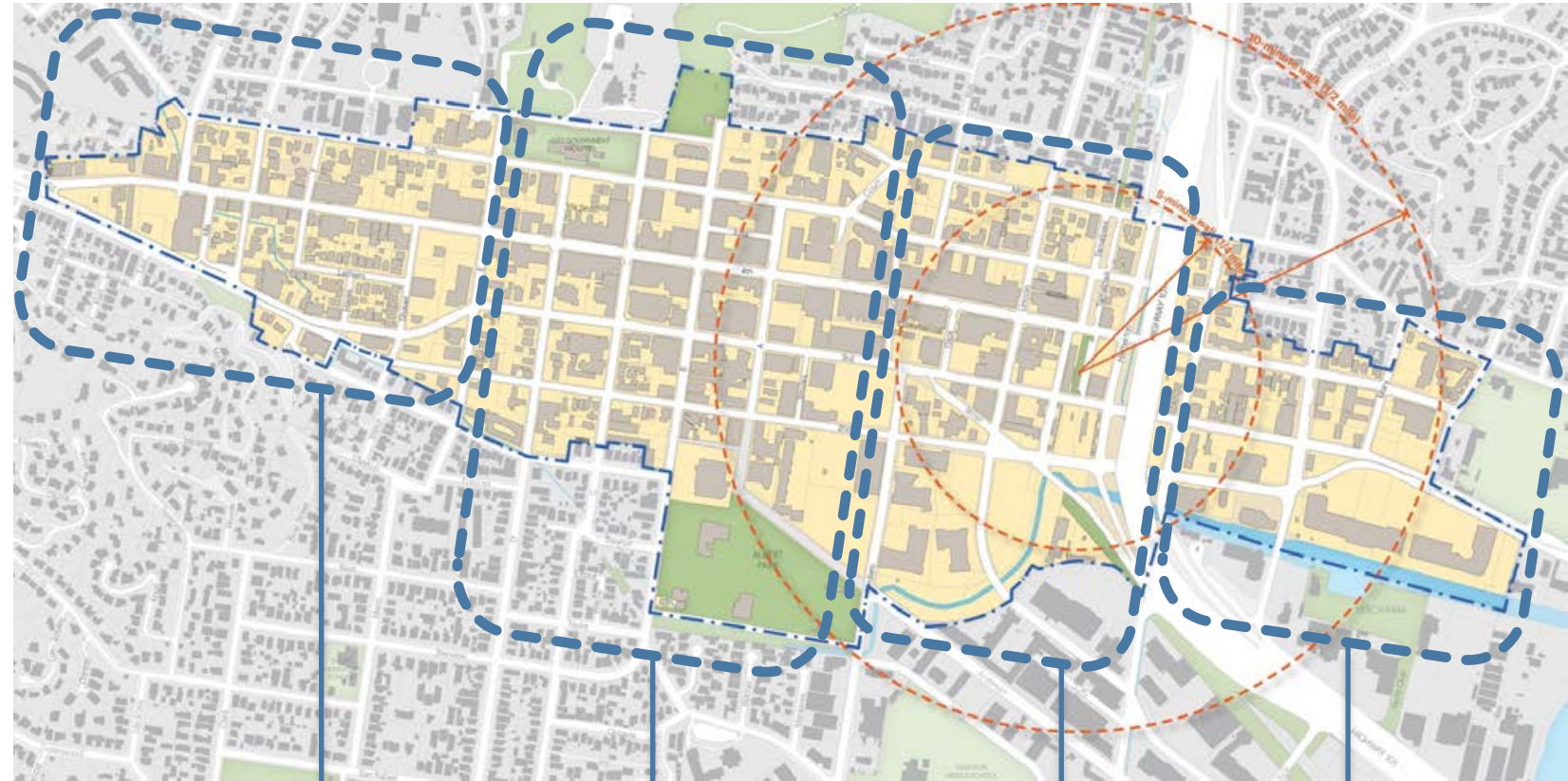


# Four sub-areas in Downtown

**Four Downtown sub-areas recognize differences in form and character, and suggest potential phasing for implementation.**

The vision for each sub-area has the following goals:

- Reinforce the existing character of various Downtown areas and their distinct roles within Downtown
- Create variety and interest while adding to overall Downtown identity
- Establish a hierarchy of form and intensity of use to improve wayfinding, reinforce a sense of place and protect views



**III. West End Village**

**II. Downtown Core**

**I. Transit Station Area**

**IV. Montecito Area**

# Downtown illustrative plan





# Sub-Area 1

## Transit Station Area



# Existing character



# Design intent



Form and use	
Building type	mostly block-form with some house-form
Heights	2-7 stories
Frontage	shopfront, gallery, arcade
Building use	vertical mixed-use with ground floor retail
Open spaces	plaza, pocket park
Parking	subterranean, podium
Potential (new) program	
Residential	908,250 sf (865 units)
Non-residential	143,500 sf (410 jobs)



Note: Program calculations do not assume any change in existing zoning or heights

# Illustrative plan



General study area for relocating Bettini Transit Center. Several design options are currently under review



1. Transit-oriented development integrates historic Whistlestop building
2. New SMART station public plaza extends north till 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, links to the new 4<sup>th</sup> Street Shared Street; wayfinding strategies for orienting visitors
3. Bettini Transit Center relocation: several options currently under review
4. Traffic calming and enhanced bicycle facilities improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets
5. New mixed-use buildings with active ground floor uses enliven sidewalks and the new transit center plaza
6. Small-lot infill development provides additional housing close to transit
7. Podium and detached buildings fill in Ritter Street and provide a direct connection from BioMarin to downtown



# Built form comparison





# Transit Plaza (existing)



Today, the SMART station area lacks sufficient public open space to accommodate transit riders and others entering downtown. Although the area is an entry point for both traffic from the highway and those using SMART and the bus depot, its built form does not currently provide a gateway experience.

Underutilized land along the rail lines and south of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street provides an opportunity to envision infill development that could support a more vibrant activity node at this location.

The transit station area sits between the 4<sup>th</sup> Street corridor and the neighborhoods east of Highway 101, including the Canal District. Currently, there is poor pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between these neighborhoods and districts. The transit station area offers an opportunity to address this lack of connectivity.



# Transit Plaza (proposed)



The proposed Transit Plaza includes the following components:

1. A public space adjacent to the rail line, extending from the SMART station across 4<sup>th</sup> Street, integrating the historic Whistlestop building as an iconic feature
2. An activity node with with amenities, streetscape improvements, and space for community activities that serves as a gateway feature at a major entrance to Downtown
3. New mixed-use development with active ground floor uses
4. Traffic calming and bicycle facilities along 4<sup>th</sup> Street, transformation of the existing street to a Shared Street





# Sub-Area 2

## Downtown Core



# Existing character



# Design intent



Form and use	
Building type	block-form and house-form
Heights	2-6 stories
Frontage	shopfront, gallery, arcade, terrace
Building use	vertical mixed-use with ground floor retail, residential
Open spaces	plaza, paseo, pocket park
Parking	podium, surface
Potential (new) program	
Residential	708,750 sf (675 units)
Non-residential	169,750 sf (485 jobs)



Note: Program calculations do not assume any change in existing zoning or heights

# Illustrative plan



1. A portion of 4<sup>th</sup> Street is reconstructed with a paving pattern designating it as a pedestrian-friendly, traffic-calmed shared street, extending from the transit plaza to the downtown core
2. Pedestrian-friendly design promotes north-south connectivity across 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
3. New ground-floor development lines existing parking garages, providing active ground-floor uses
4. Pipeline projects and additional proposed development on opportunity sites throughout the downtown core provide new employment opportunities and housing options
5. Small-lot infill development integrates a variety of building types suited to Downtown's context



# Built form comparison



# Downtown Core (existing)



Currently, the Downtown core has the potential to introduce new housing, both to take advantage of proximity to amenities and transit and to help enliven the area. Vacant and underutilized parcels offer promising opportunity sites for new development.

Pedestrians and cyclists currently face obstacles in unsafe or uncomfortable crossings at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets.

The Downtown core has an opportunity to strengthen its identity as the main destination for residents in the surrounding neighborhoods.





# Downtown Core (proposed)



The proposed improvements to the downtown core include the following components:

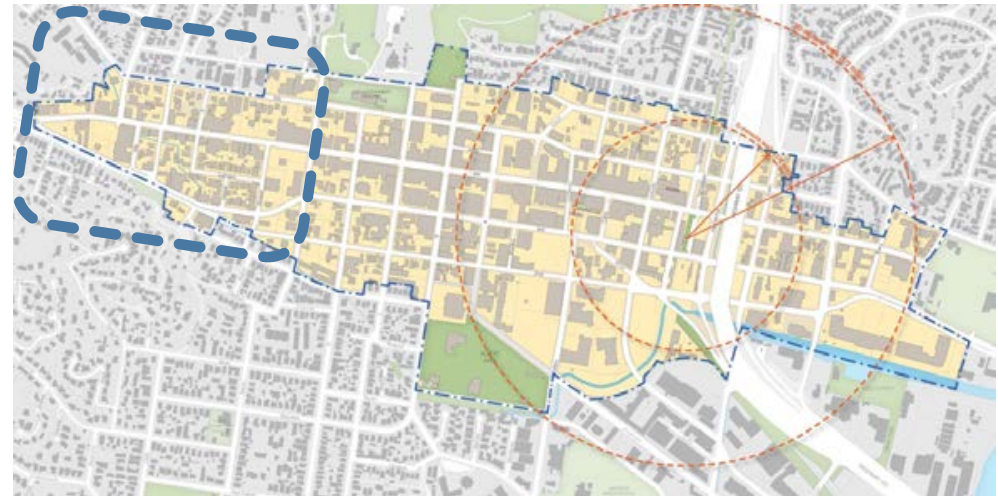
1. Improved public space along 4<sup>th</sup> Street that includes a network of open spaces along a shared street environment
2. New mixed-use development to support the active environment along 4<sup>th</sup> Street, enlivening the pedestrian realm and serving the retail and service needs of residents and visitors
3. Streetscape enhancements, including wide sidewalks, street trees, and public art
4. 4<sup>th</sup> Street transformed into a Shared Street





# Sub-Area 3

## West End Village



# Existing character



# Design intent



Form and use	
Building type	house-form and block-form
Heights	2-4 stories
Frontage	shopfront, porch, stoop
Building use	vertical and horizontal mixed-use with ground floor retail, residential
Open spaces	pocket park, paseo, playground
Parking	podium, surface
Potential (new) program	
Residential	378,000 sf (360 units)
Non-residential	70,000 sf (200 jobs)



Note: Program calculations do not assume any change in existing zoning or heights

# Illustrative plan



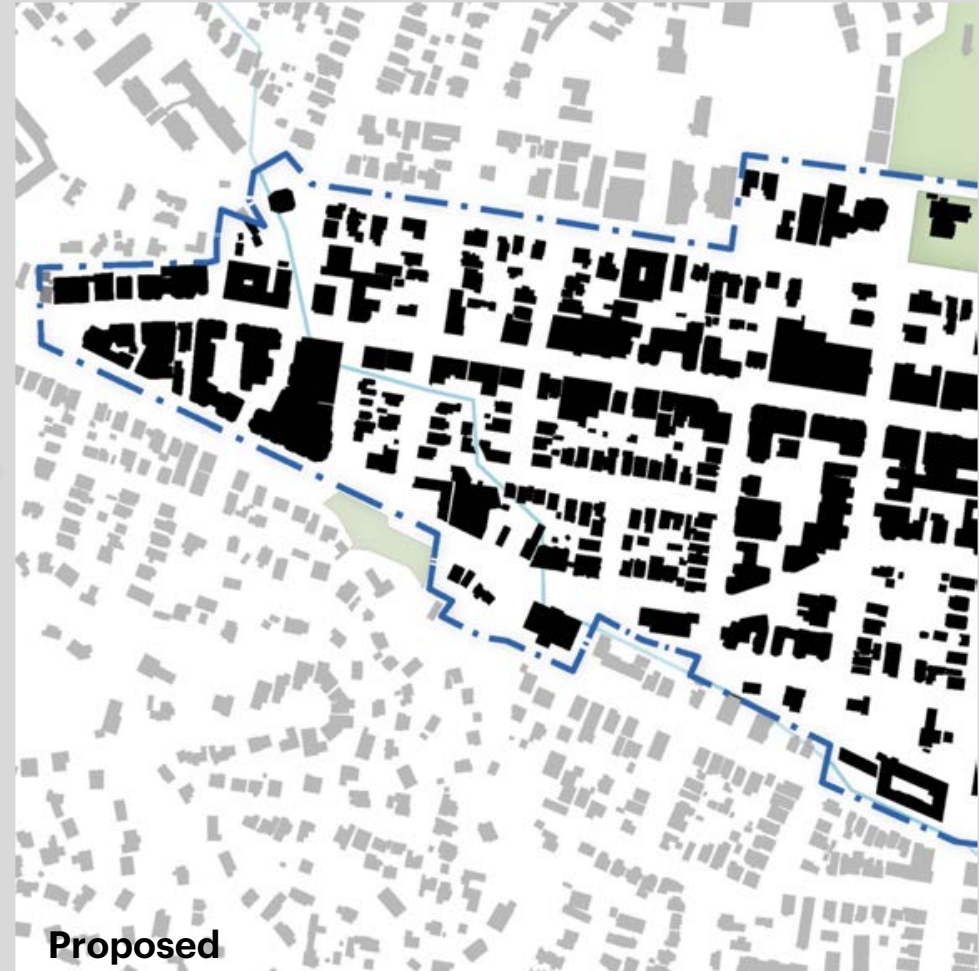
1. New residential development includes a variety of housing types that reinforce the unique identity of the West End, responding to the existing form and scale of the neighborhood while providing additional housing choice
2. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements prioritized on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets help connect this area to the Downtown core and Transit Station area
3. New development at the western edge of downtown helps create a gateway experience that indicates a special downtown environment
4. New neighborhood-scale public space, such as a pocket park, serves surrounding residents and activates the 4<sup>th</sup> Street corridor



# Built form comparison



Existing



Proposed

# West End Village (existing)



The current streetscape has “missing teeth”, where the sidewalk is not spatially contained or met with active uses.

The West End Village contains a residential neighborhood between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets with a unique character in downtown. The neighborhood lacks small-scale public outdoor gathering places to serve these residents. While larger parks are nearby, neighborhood-scale amenities are missing.

Some parcels are used for purposes that are not the highest and best use of land in this location, such as surface parking lots and a retail center with parking in front. This area is not very well served by transit, and will need future improvements; with some parking provisions in the near term.



# West End Village (proposed)



The proposed improvements to the West End Village include the following components:

1. New mixed-use buildings with active ground floor uses
2. Streetscape improvements and sidewalk amenities like street furniture, outdoor seating for restaurants and cafes, awnings and canopies for shade, and bicycle storage
3. A neighborhood-scale public open space such as a pocket park
4. Improved bicycle facilities along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Street







# Sub-Area 4

## Montecito Area



# Existing character



# Montecito Area (existing)



The Montecito area is located between the canal, San Rafael High School, and Highway 101. The western blocks adjacent to the highway contain retail and services and some housing. The eastern blocks contain large-scale auto-oriented uses, including a Whole Foods Market and Montecito Plaza, a large shopping center that is set back from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street up to 250' behind a surface parking lot.

A new bicycle and pedestrian bridge at Grand Avenue connects this area to the Canal District and other neighborhoods. However, the area lacks active frontages and adequate bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure that would contribute to connectivity within the Montecito area.

The waterfront is minimally engaged by Montecito Plaza. Two pedestrian passages between buildings provide access to the canal, and there is a publicly accessible path along most of the water, but currently the buildings of Montecito Plaza use this path for service functions and it is not attractive or welcoming for the public.



# Design intent



Form and use	
Building type	block-form
Heights	2-6 stories
Frontage	shopfront, gallery, arcade, porch, stoop
Building use	vertical mixed-use with ground floor retail, residential
Open spaces	plaza, pocket park, paseo
Parking	podium
Potential (new) program	
Residential	367,500 sf (350 units)
Non-residential	134,750 sf (385 jobs)

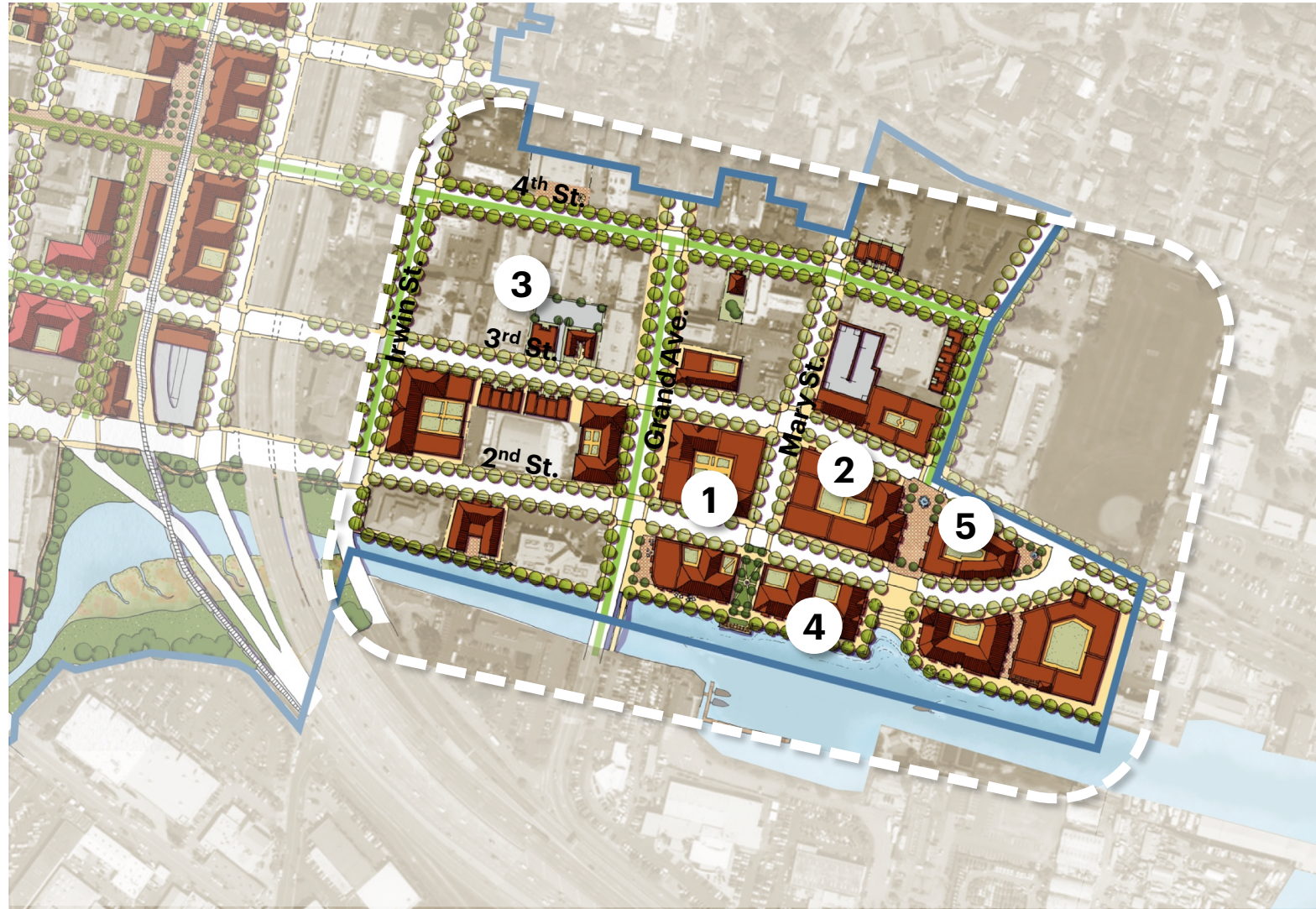
Note: Program calculations shown in this table do not include potential future redevelopment of the Montecito shopping center, since this is a longer-term proposal.

Note: Program calculations do not assume any change in existing zoning or heights

# Illustrative plan



1. Extension of street network into the existing Montecito Plaza, subdividing shopping center into a series of streets and blocks
2. New block-form mixed-use buildings with active ground floor uses provide housing and employment options in proximity to the transit center
3. Smaller-scale infill with Missing Middle building types (multi-family units in house-form buildings) on smaller opportunity sites
4. Buildings adjacent to the canal are oriented towards the water and an improved waterfront promenade resilient to sea-level rise
5. New public space includes a new public plaza framing a view of the canal, with an opportunity for canal improvements, water access, and water-related recreation



# Built form comparison



Existing



Proposed

# 5. Multimodal Street Framework

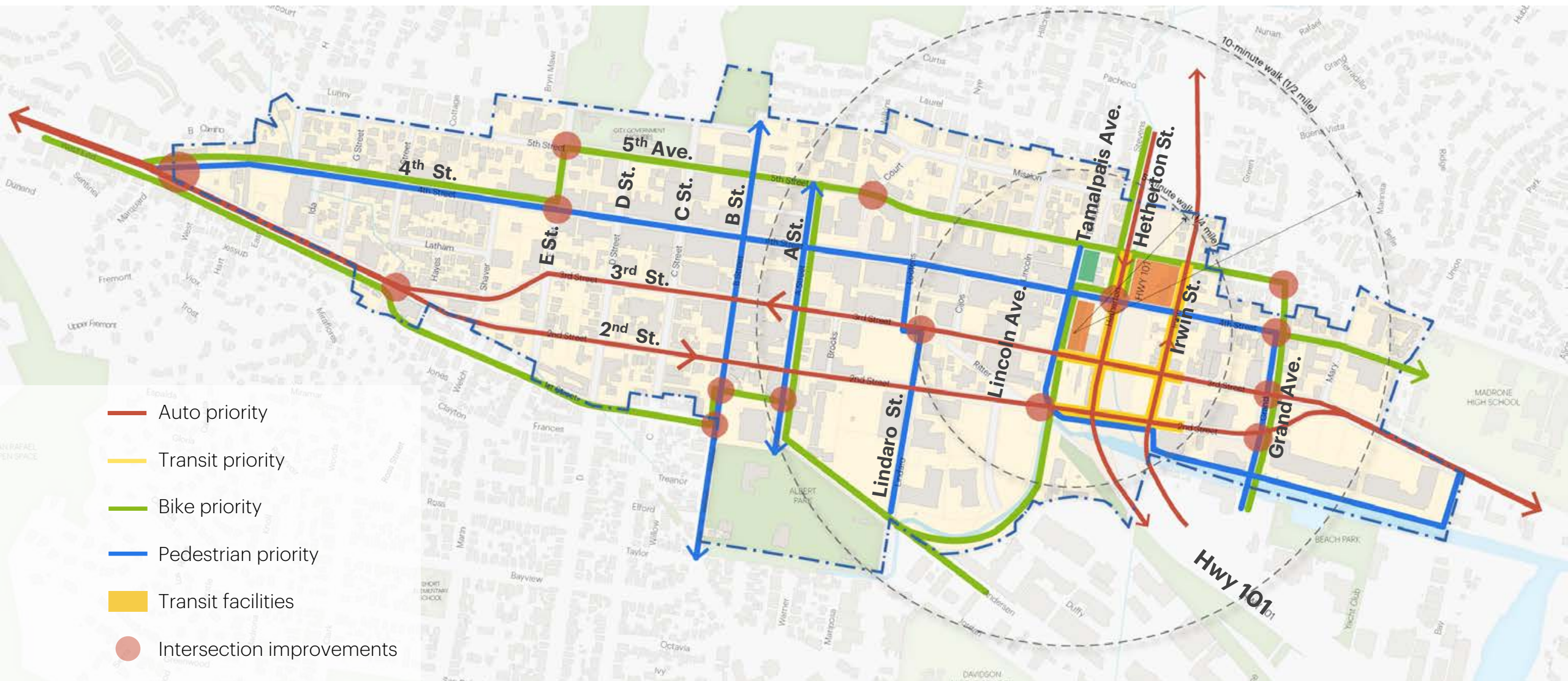




# Street Prioritization

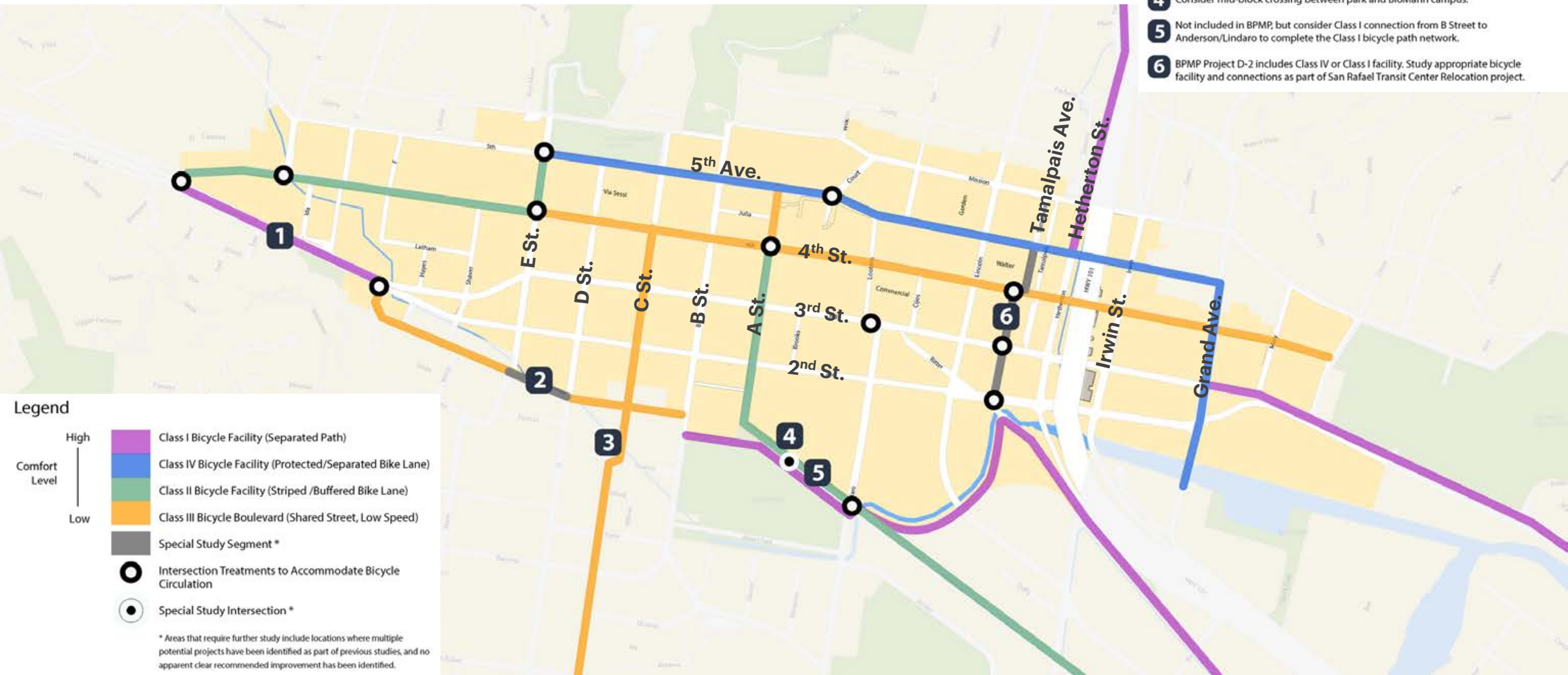


# Street framework + prioritization



# Bicycle priority network

- 1** BPMP Project C-6 recommends conversion to Class I multi-use path with retaining wall, or two-way protected cycletrack with parking removal
- 2** BPMP Project C-14 recommends conversion to one-way eastbound and installing a contra-flow bike lane or maintain one-way westbound and install advisory bike lanes.
- 3** BPMP C-12 recommends study to determine feasibility of one-way cycle track couplet on C and D Street, or Bicycle Boulevards on both streets. Due to auto volumes and connectivity, DPP recommends Bicycle Boulevard on C Street only with considerations for Class III signage and wayfinding on D Street.
- 4** Consider mid-block crossing between park and BioMarin campus.
- 5** Not included in BPMP, but consider Class I connection from B Street to Anderson/Lindaro to complete the Class I bicycle path network.
- 6** BPMP Project D-2 includes Class IV or Class I facility. Study appropriate bicycle facility and connections as part of San Rafael Transit Center Relocation project.



**Legend**

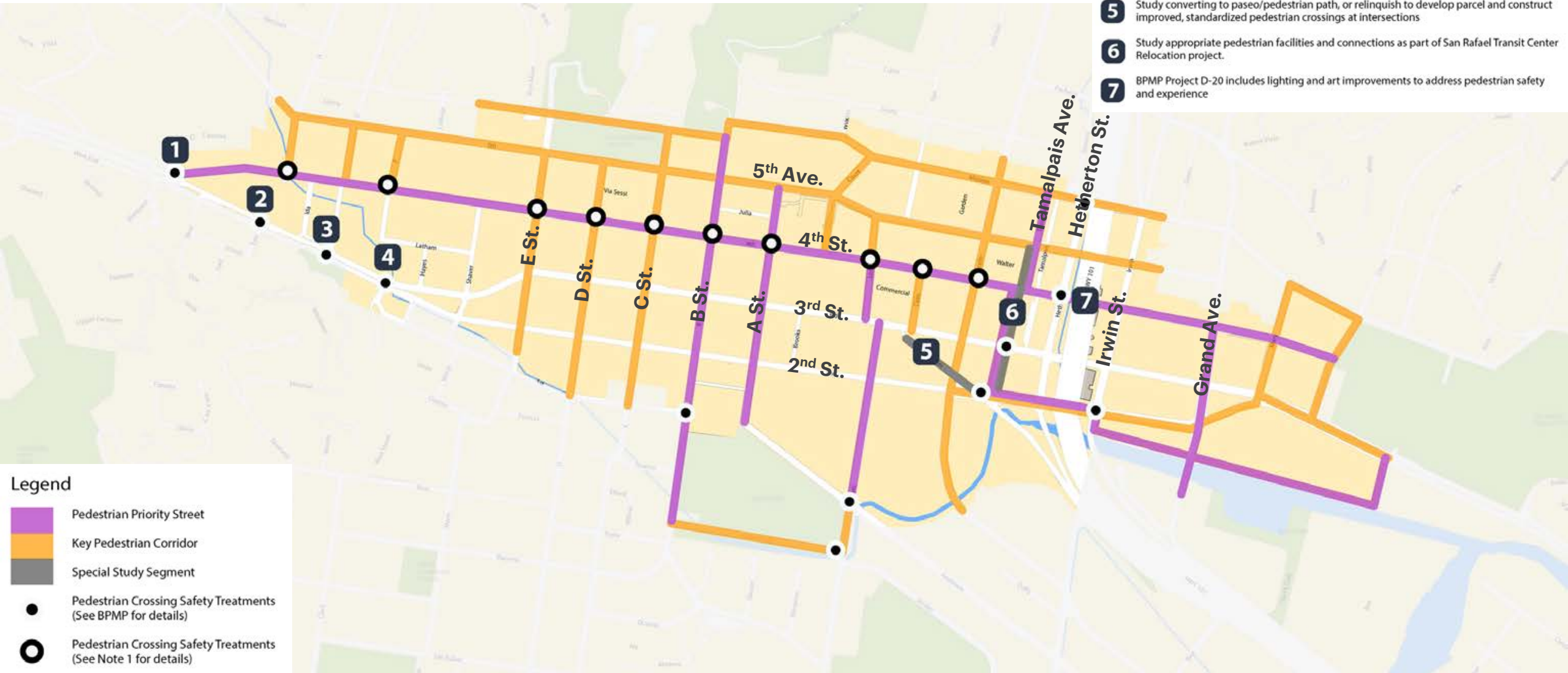
High  
Comfort Level  
Low

- █ Class I Bicycle Facility (Separated Path)
- █ Class IV Bicycle Facility (Protected/Separated Bike Lane)
- █ Class II Bicycle Facility (Striped /Buffered Bike Lane)
- █ Class III Bicycle Boulevard (Shared Street, Low Speed)
- Special Study Segment \*
- Intersection Treatments to Accommodate Bicycle Circulation
- Special Study Intersection \*

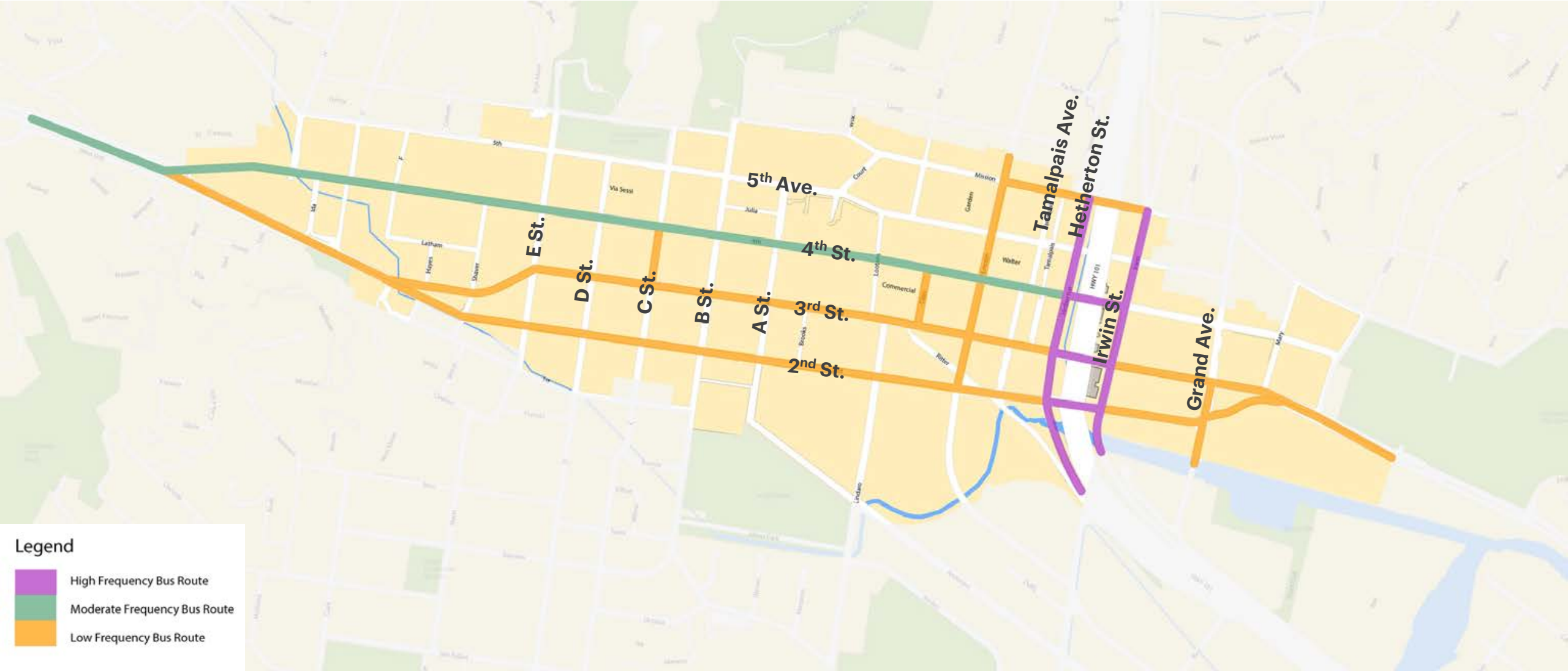
\* Areas that require further study include locations where multiple potential projects have been identified as part of previous studies, and no apparent clear recommended improvement has been identified.

# Pedestrian priority network

- 1** BPMP Projects C-2, C-3, C-5, C-7, C-8 include intersection reconfiguration, channelization, and pedestrian crossing improvements
- 2** Study pedestrian crossing improvements. BPMP Project C-8 includes installation of a raised crosswalk, which is likely infeasible given speeds, volumes, priorities for 2nd Street traffic
- 3** BPMP Project C-10 includes study of pedestrian intersection improvements at G Street & Ida Street
- 4** Study pedestrian crossing improvements. BPMP Project C-9 includes installation of a raised crosswalk, which is likely infeasible given speeds, volumes, priorities for 2nd Street traffic
- 5** Study converting to paseo/pedestrian path, or relinquish to develop parcel and construct improved, standardized pedestrian crossings at intersections
- 6** Study appropriate pedestrian facilities and connections as part of San Rafael Transit Center Relocation project.
- 7** BPMP Project D-20 includes lighting and art improvements to address pedestrian safety and experience



# Transit priority network



- Legend**
- High Frequency Bus Route
  - Moderate Frequency Bus Route
  - Low Frequency Bus Route

# Vehicular priority network

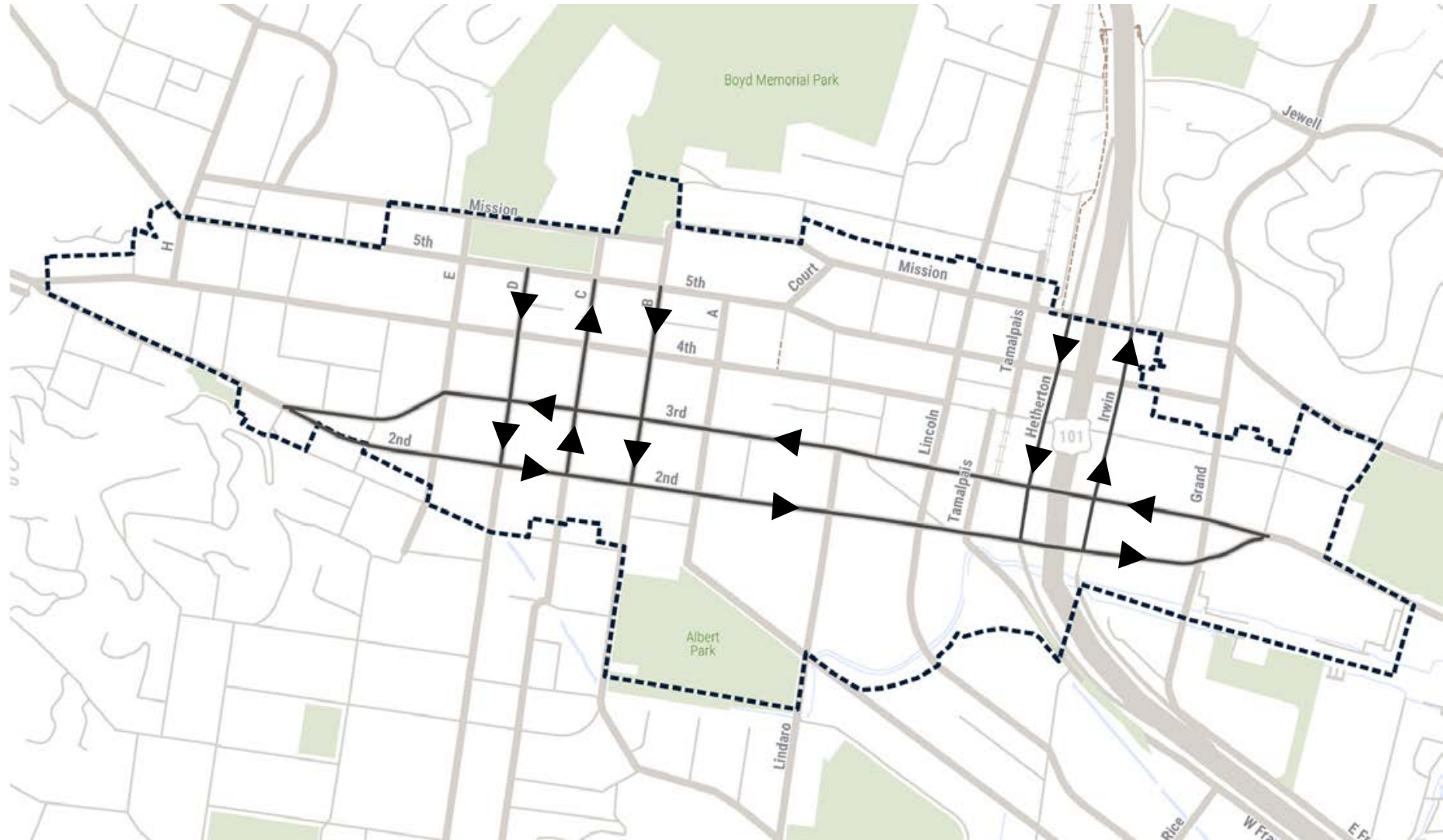


# One-way streets

The primary east-west vehicular traffic is on the **Second and Third Street** couplet.

**Hetherton and Irwin Streets** also act as a one-way couplet feeding US-101.

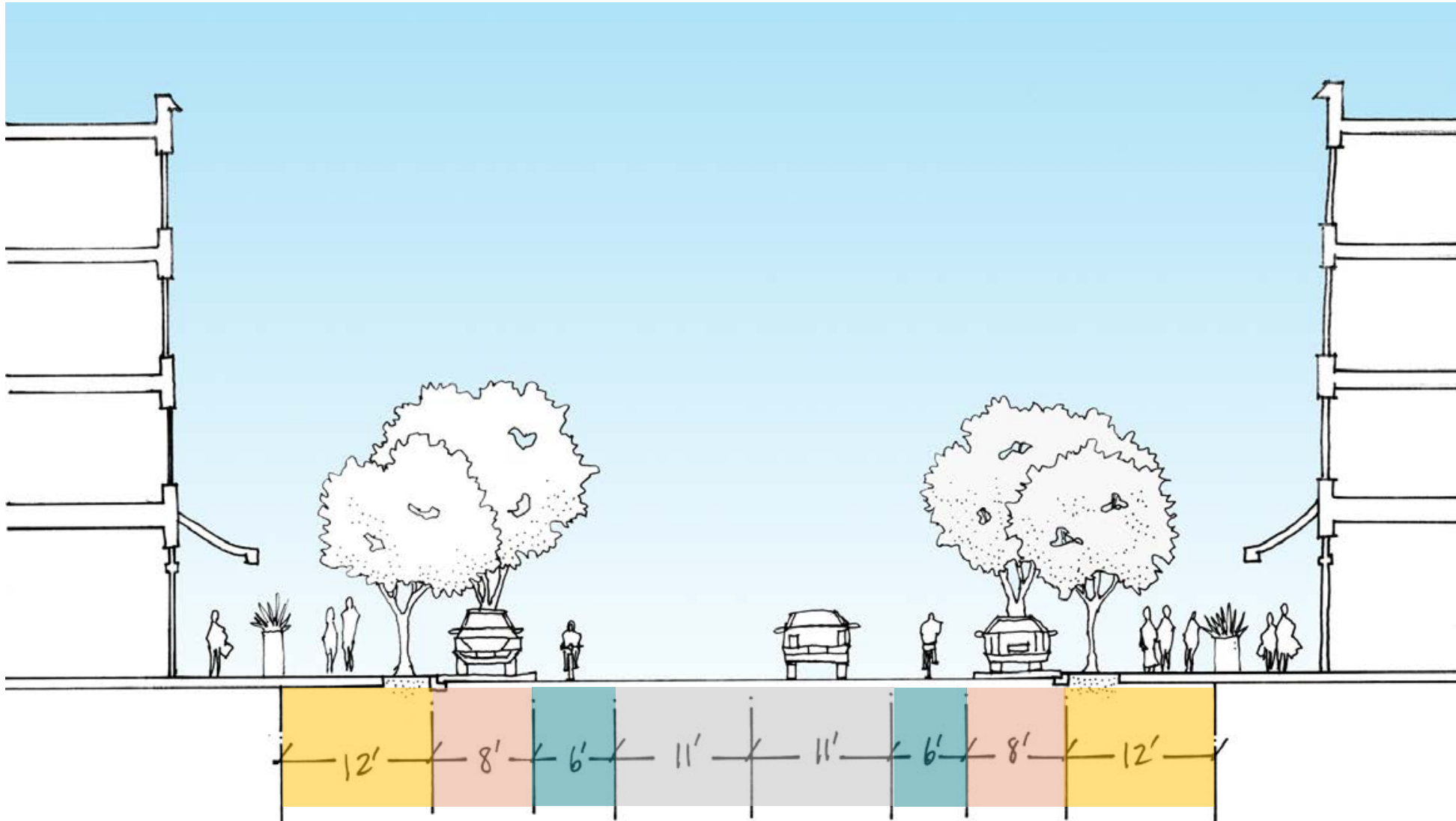
Within Downtown, **B, C and D** are north-south one-way streets that can be converted to two-way, for better circulation and wayfinding.





# Preliminary Street Sections

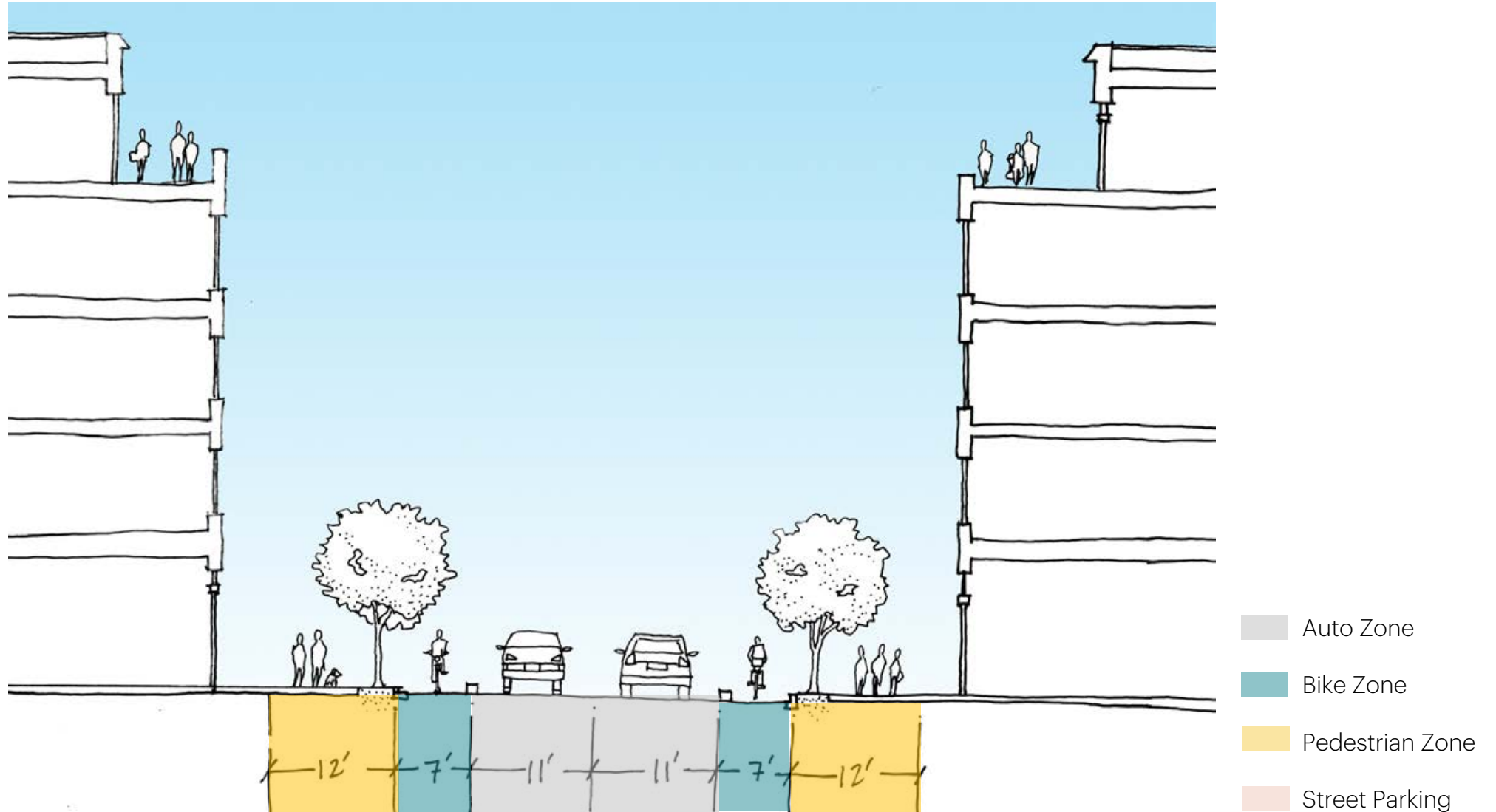
# Fourth Street



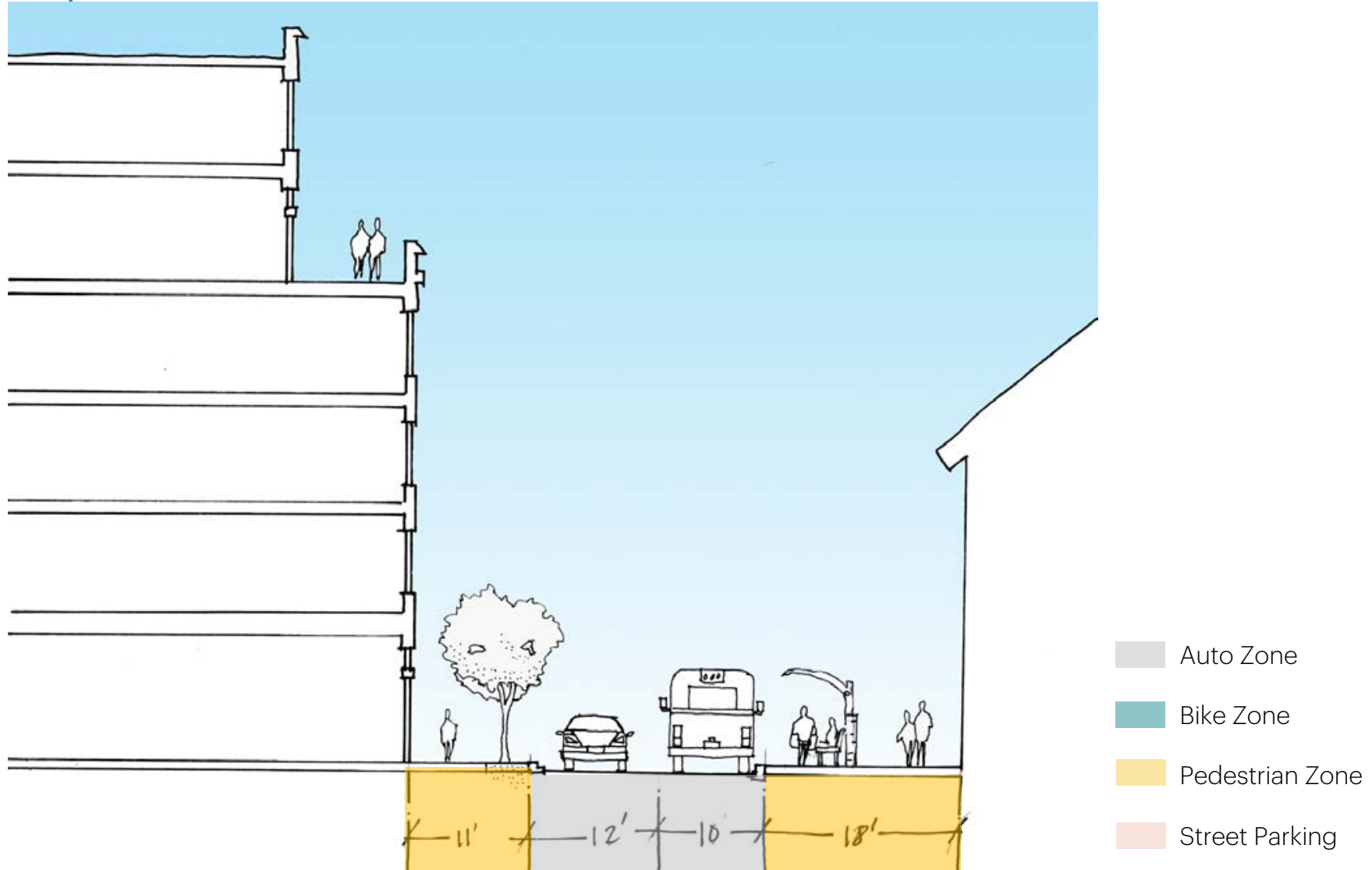
- Auto Zone
- Bike Zone
- Pedestrian Zone
- Street Parking



# Fifth Avenue



# Tamalpais Avenue



# Grand Avenue



# 6. Program + Phasing





# Development Program

# Target housing + jobs (from ABAG)

## Development program

- 1,007 new dwelling units
- 900 new jobs

## Affordable housing targets

- 181 new moderate income units
- 268 new low and very low income units

**The Precise Plan is an opportunity to meet RHNA and jobs targets for San Rafael for the 2015 – 2023 period**

**Table 1: San Rafael Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) 2015-2023**

Income Level	Percent of AMI*	Units	Permits Issued 2015-2018	Pipeline Residential Units	Remaining RHNA Need
Very Low	0-50%	120	3	95	22
Low	51-80%	148	46	99	3
Moderate	81-120%	181	11	18	152
Above Moderate	120%+	438	149	415	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,007</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>177</b>

Source: Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) 5th Cycle [RHNA](#).

\* AMI: Area Median Income for Marin County

# Incremental development on infill sites

## Program testing

- Infill sites were identified in the project area
- These opportunity sites were tested with a range of building types suitable for downtown
- Pipeline projects were mapped and included in the program estimates



# Development capacity

## Residential

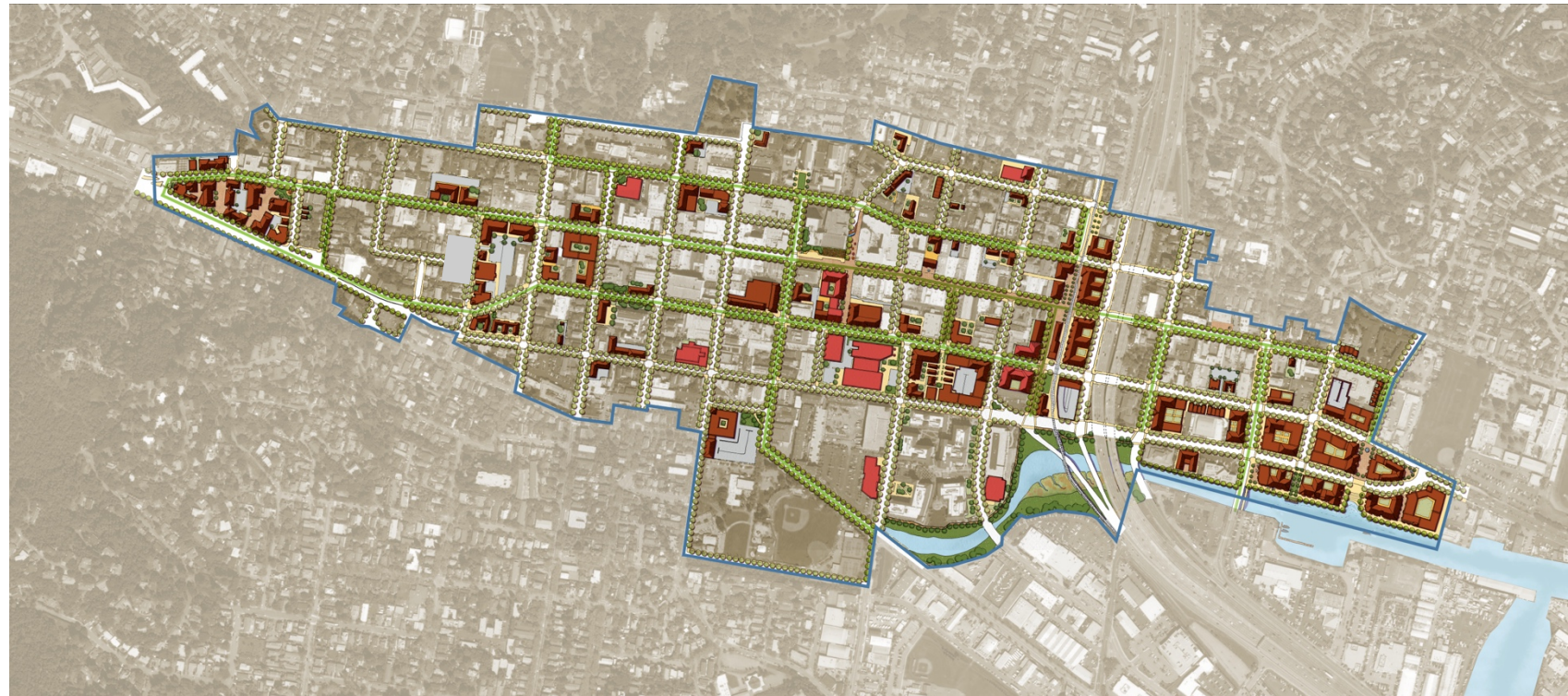
**2,362,500 sf** potential new residential BUA

**~2,250 new DUs** @ 1,050 sf average unit size

## Non-residential

**518,000 sf** potential new non-residential BUA

**~1,480 jobs** @ 1 job per 350 sf (gross BUA)



**West End Village**  
378,000 sf res.  
**360** new DUs  
70,000 sf non-res.  
**200** new jobs

**Downtown Core**  
708,750 sf res.  
**675** new DUs  
169,750 sf non-res.  
**485** new jobs

**Transit Station Area**  
908,250 sf res.  
**865** new DUs  
143,500 sf non-res.  
**410** new jobs

**Montecito Area**  
367,500 sf res.  
**350** new DUs  
134,750 sf non-res.  
**385** new jobs



# Program + phasing: things to consider

## 1. How much development should the Plan recommend?

<b>ABAG projections</b> <b>Target jobs-housing numbers from ABAG</b> ~1,000 new units ~900 new jobs	<b>Current analysis</b> <b>Lot testing of opportunity sites in Precise Plan area</b> ~2,250 new units ~1,480 new jobs	<b>PDA analysis</b> <b>Match development to site capacity</b> ~1,325 to 2,800 new units ~1,300 new jobs
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## 2. How quickly should development happen?

Should the phasing focus on the near-term (0 – 10 years) or incrementally (0 - 20 years)?

## 3. Where should development happen across different phases?

Should initial phases focus on development at certain opportunity sites, or be distributed proportionally across the Study Area?

## 4. Should certain areas be more employment-focused than others?

Current policy direction envisions mainly office around the SMART Station. Should the Plan include residential development in addition to office, to create a mixed-use center?



# Phasing Approach: One Build- Out Scenario



# Phasing approach: one scenario

Assume four phases, five years each

Initiate development around Transit Station Area, then spread out east and west

Time development with infrastructure improvements

Strategic catalyst projects initiated by City + incremental infill

Pipeline projects within each phase stimulate continued development

For long-term projects, consider initial demonstration projects to test viability, convert to pilot projects as funding becomes available

Explore grants, public-private partnerships, assessment districts, etc. for funding



# Phase I: years 0 - 5

## **Create a mixed-use node and downtown gateway at the SMART station**

- SMART Transit plaza with new mixed-use/ commercial development + Whistlestop improvements
- New mixed-use development + pedestrian plaza on block north of 4<sup>th</sup> Street at Tamalpais
- Transit Center relocation (assumed under US-101 north-east of SMART station)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street shared street between Lincoln and Irwin connecting SMART Plaza to Bettini Transit Center
- East-west bike-ped improvements + connection to Hetheron Class I route

# Phase I: years 0 - 5



# Phase II: years 6 - 10

## **Extend sense of arrival to heart of downtown, establish a new central focus at downtown core**

- Development expands south of SMART station area to create new mixed-use development and a parking structure at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Hetheron Streets
- New development at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets frame southern gateway to downtown; traffic calming and mixed-use development start to balance out commercial nature of 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Street corridor
- Pipeline projects in key locations including 703 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, 999 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
- Shared street increased further west on 4<sup>th</sup> Street to connect to City Center plaza and Courthouse Square improvements to create a cohesive central gathering place
- Incremental infill on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets fills in missing gaps

# Phase II: years 6 - 10



# Phase III: years 11 - 15

## **Continue momentum of initial phases to extend incremental development and public realm improvements towards West End and Montecito Area**

- Pipeline projects + incremental infill projects extend development east and west, including missing middle building types + potential garage conversions to mixed-use in key locations
- Bike-ped network and improvements expand to on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, A Street, Grand Avenue
- Shared street on 4<sup>th</sup> completed, along with new public spaces in downtown core
- Improvements to San Rafael Canal, to create bike-ped connection to downtown
- An urban wetland created south of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street on an underutilized site to provide flood protection and new habitat; Irwin Creek potentially widened/ deepened to link better to this area



# Phase III: years 11 - 15

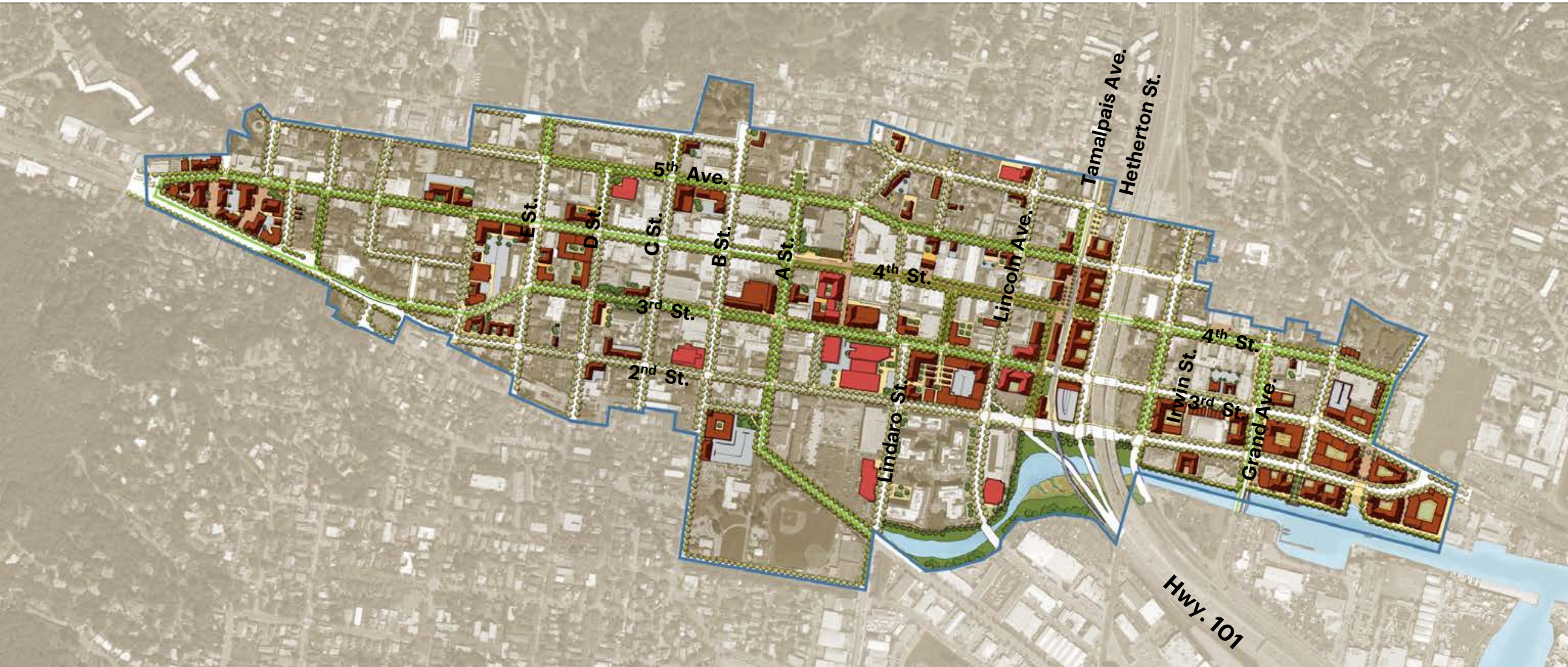


# Phase IV: years 16 - 20

## **Development at west and east ends to create gateways, cohesive public realm created with streetscape improvements and new public spaces**

- New mixed-use development at West End create the west gateway to downtown
- Montecito commercial area redevelops into a mixed-use node oriented to the canal, creating a sense of arrival from the east. Canal improvements enable placemaking, and potentially a new way to access downtown
- Bike-ped network completed within downtown, extending to adjacent areas. Street hierarchy established through street prioritization and improved connectivity in both north-south and east-west directions

# Phase IV: years 16 - 20





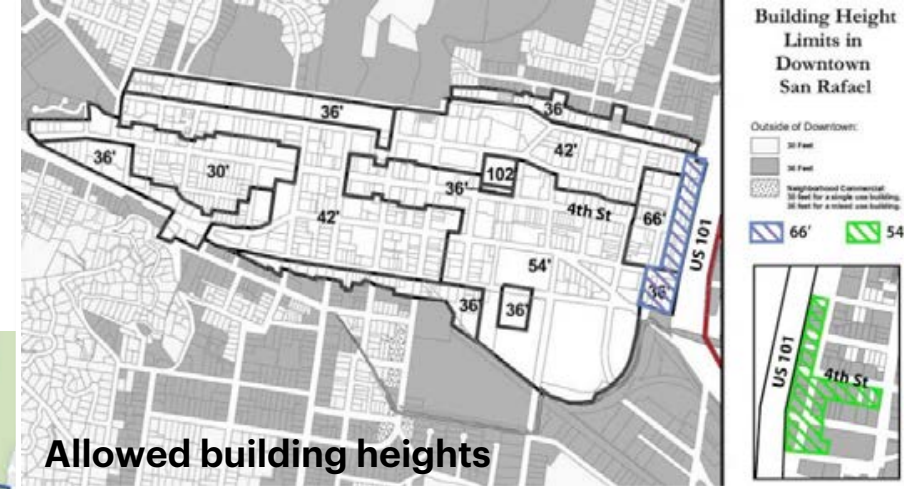
# Other Topics to Consider

# Urban form

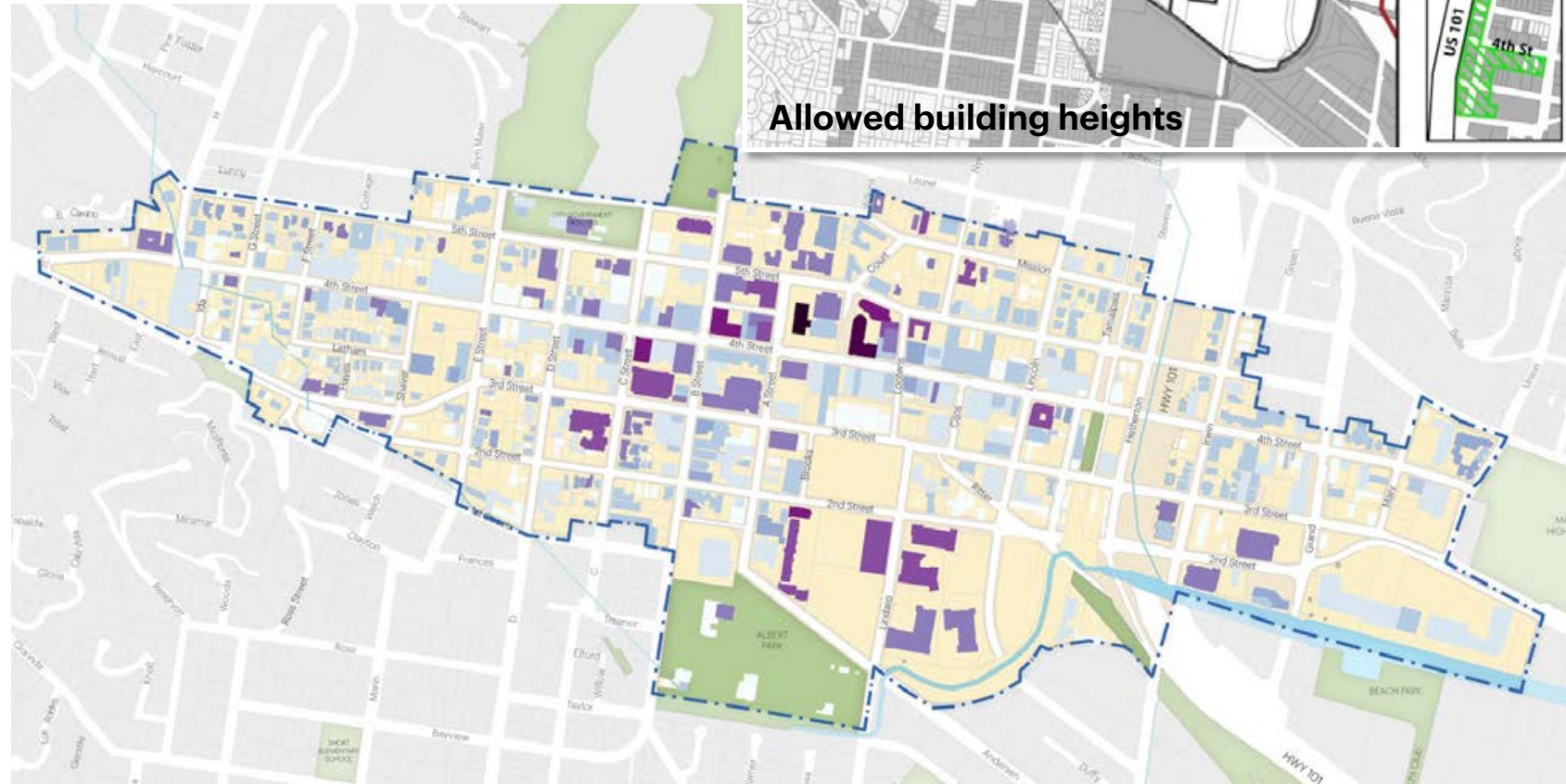
## Building heights and density bonus

Observed building heights in most of downtown are lower than maximum allowed by right. Additional height allowed as a density bonus is seen in a few cases only.

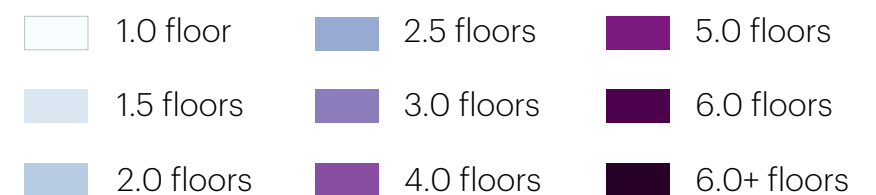
*Should the Plan reconsider allowed heights in order to 'up-zone' key sites, or should it be a uniform 'maximum height' envelope for each zone/ sub-area?*



**Allowed building heights**



**Observed building heights (number of floors)**

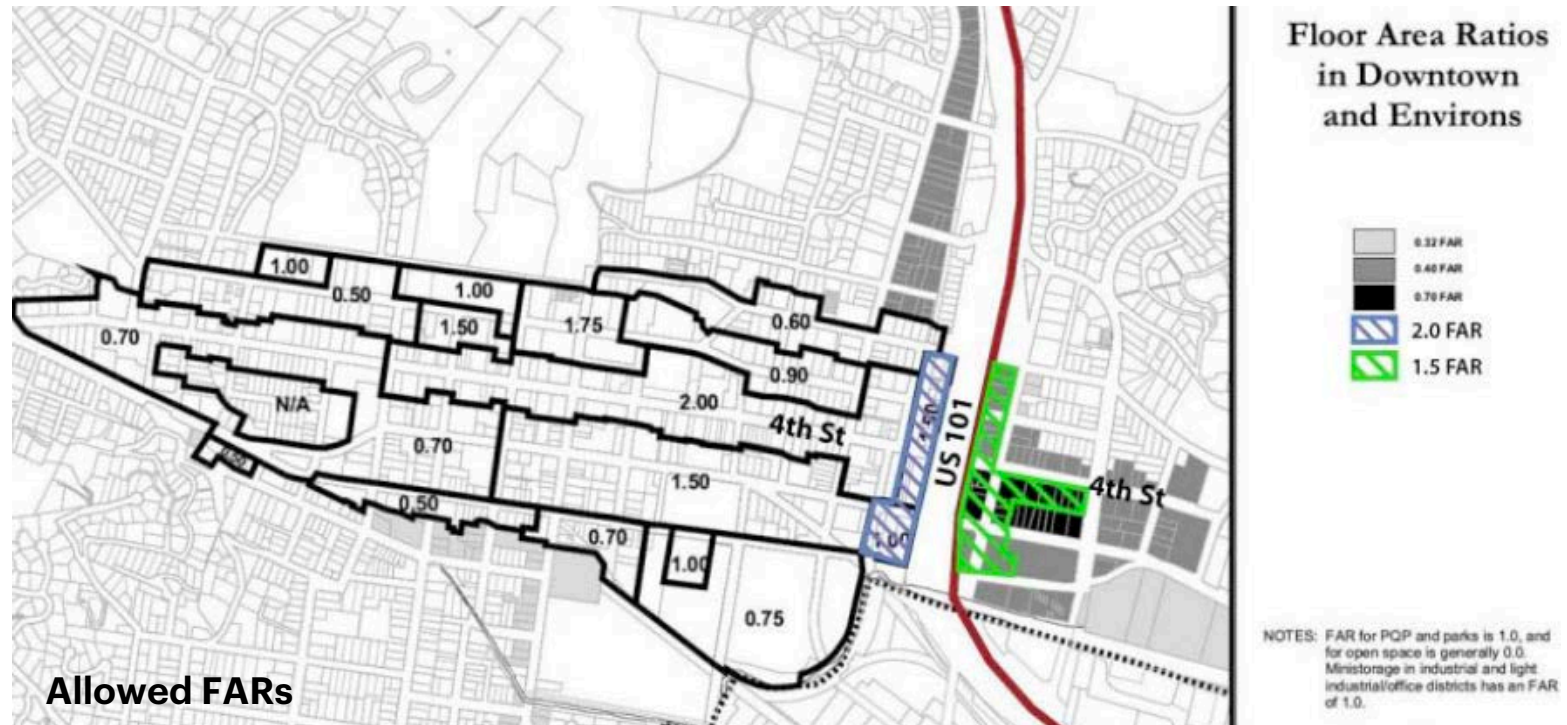


# Urban form

## Floor area ratio (FAR)

The maximum permitted FAR for Downtown has been set as 2.0 in the Draft General Plan 2040 Land Use Categories.

Initial testing of opportunity sites suggests that this envelope will not be exceeded even by the most aggressive development program option.



### Downtown San Rafael (Maximum FAR 2.0)

This category corresponds to properties in Downtown San Rafael. It includes the highest development densities and intensities in the city, and contains a mix of housing, office, retail, service, and public land uses. Development in this area is guided by the Downtown San Rafael Precise Plan, which identifies a series of Downtown subareas, each with its own set of development standards and land use guidelines. The maximum FAR of 2.0 applies only where shown in the Downtown Precise Plan; lower FAR limits apply on most parcels within the Precise Plan boundaries. In addition, some of the zoning districts within the Downtown Mixed Use designation (characterized by existing residential uses) may be subject to maximum density standards rather than FAR standards. Properties with this designation may also be subject to *minimum* FAR and density requirements, to ensure that land is used efficiently and that the City's housing and economic development goals may be achieved.

## General Plan 2040 Draft Land Use Categories

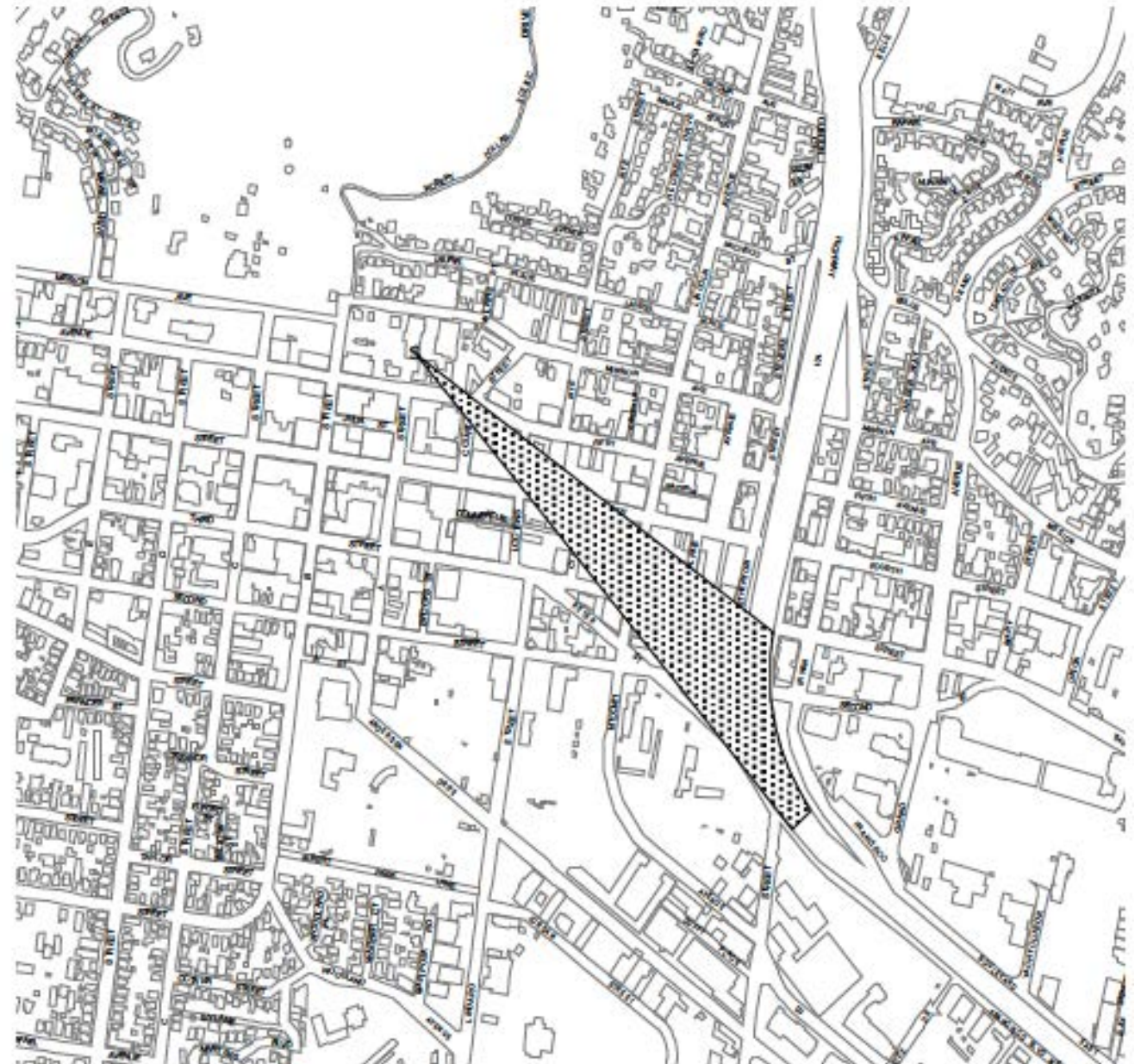
# Urban form

## View corridors

Downtown design guidelines suggest a view analysis to avoid obstructing views of St. Raphael's church spire from US-101.

Any redevelopment around the SMART station and current Transit Center parcels is likely to be impacted by this requirement.

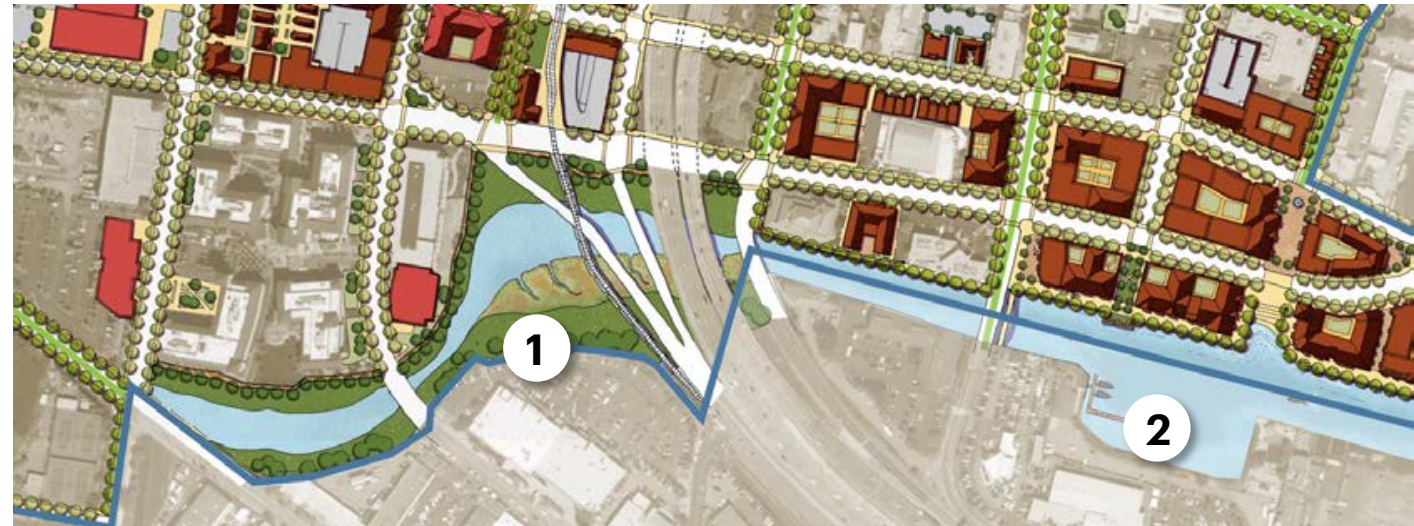
*Should the Precise Plan rethink view corridors – not simply from the highway, but from key downtown streets?*



# Climate change + sea level rise

Downtown is susceptible to both flooding and sea-level rise, requiring a range of short-term and long-term adaptation strategies. Recommended design strategies (to be analyzed for feasibility):

1. Wetland restoration on an underutilized site (if feasible) to alleviate flooding, provide habitat
2. Dredging and other improvements to San Rafael Creek to increase navigability and decrease flooding; explore opportunities to increase capacity of Irwin and Mahon creeks and connect to new urban wetland
3. Shared street on 4<sup>th</sup> can be designed with permeable paving and underground tanks to temporarily store runoff during severe storm conditions and improve runoff quality



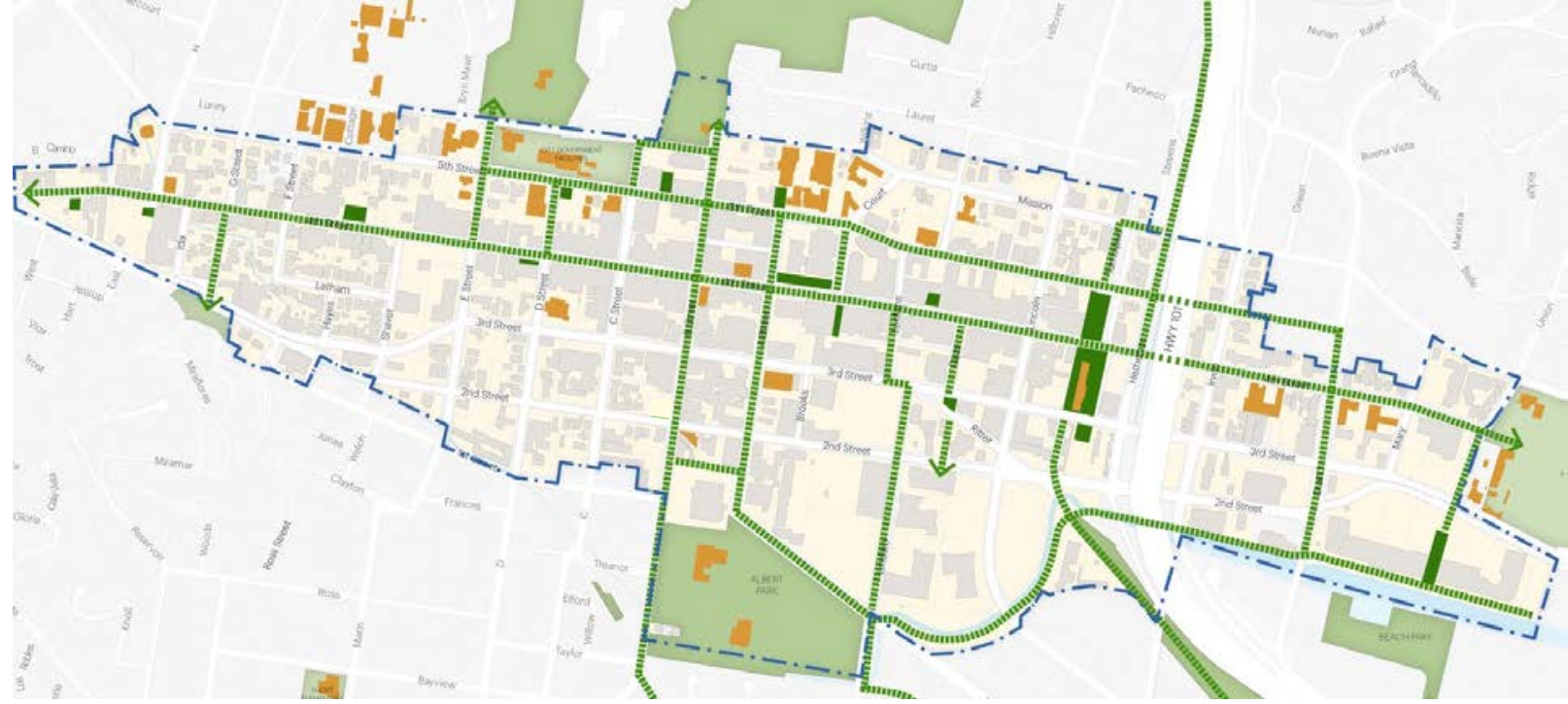


# Open space

## Privately owned, publicly used spaces

This strategy is recommended to create new public spaces within existing downtown conditions which is largely built, with few vacant parcels.

Suitable incentives need to be provided to encourage the provision of such spaces, and standards established for the design, degree of access and allowed uses. Mechanisms such as creating a Community Facilities District/ other Special Assessment Districts need to be considered for implementing and maintaining such spaces.

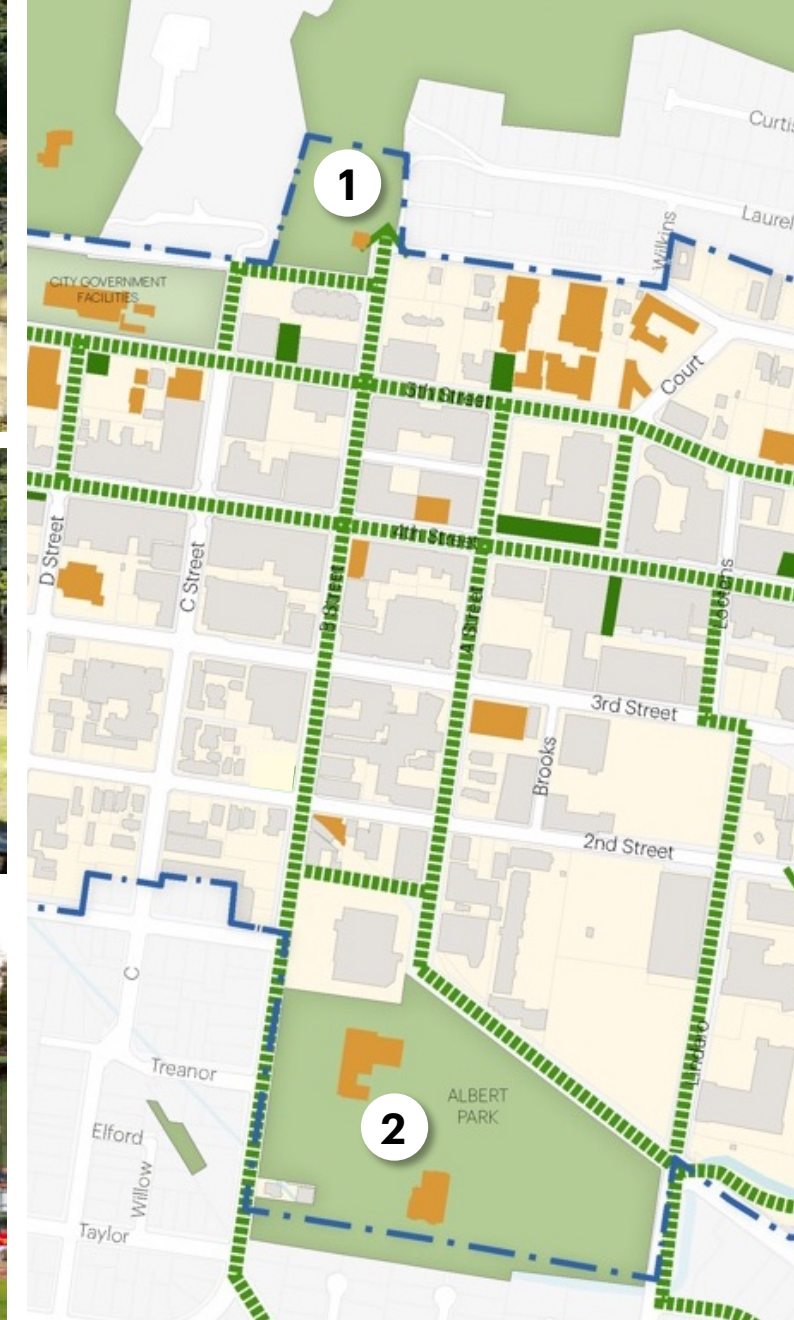


*Illustrative examples of new privately owned, publicly accessible open spaces in downtown.*

# Open space

## Boyd Park – Albert Park connectivity

Downtown has two major open space amenities: Boyd Park to the north, and Albert Park to the south. Both parks are key attractions and offer diverse recreation opportunities. B Street offers a direct connection between the two open spaces. Streetscape improvements including public realm, landscaping, street trees and wayfinding improvements, can be used to emphasize and improve this connection.



Boyd Park (above, middle) and Albert Chan (below)

# Open space

## Transit Plaza

The SMART Station area provides an opportunity to design a new public plaza for station access as well as community gathering.

Extending the existing small plaza fronting the Whistlestop building to north of 4<sup>th</sup> Street can create an attractive new public space at a key location, framed by new mixed-use buildings with active ground floor uses. Activities can be temporary such as a Farmer's Market or permanent such as kiosks or a Market Hall.



Illustrative of Transit Plaza (left, top right) and Del Mar Station, Pasadena (bottom right), a precedent.

# Open space

## Shared Street

4<sup>th</sup> Street is the established Main Street for downtown and its role can be further enhanced through traffic calming and public realm improvements. The Plan proposes its transformation to a Shared Street that would accommodate all modes but will prioritize pedestrian movement.

Improvements such as removing curbs and repaving will enable the street to function as a flexible public plaza. Permeable pavers can help in absorbing stormwater runoff, and potentially drain to underground cisterns for storage.



Shared Streets in Asheville (top), Massachusetts (bottom left) and Halifax, Nova Scotia (bottom right)

# Historic resources

## Historic preservation, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse

A survey of Downtown properties is underway that might result in additional historic resource sites being added to the Downtown inventory

The Plan needs to consider a balanced approach between preservation and adaptive use to protect Downtown's built heritage and character while not encumbering new development



**Opportunity sites that are potentially eligible for historic status**

- No condition/ No listed address or construction date
- Listed in survey

- Needs re-evaluation
- Pre-1969 construction but not listed in survey

# 7. Next Steps





# What's Next

**Study session with Planning Commission** – September 10<sup>th</sup> 2019

**Study session with City Council** – October 6<sup>th</sup> 2019

**Steering Committee Meeting: Downtown Options** – October 9<sup>th</sup> 2019

**Precise Plan and Code Approach Memo** – October 2019

**Draft Downtown Precise Plan and Code** – Early 2020

Thank you!

