



Looking south on Western Avenue at Palos Verdes Drive N



2.1 What is the Corridor?

Western Avenue is the primary corridor of the South Bay, Palos Verdes Peninsula, and San Pedro communities. This study focuses on a two-mile stretch from Palos Verdes Drive on the north to Peck Park on the South. This segment of Western Avenue has historically provided services, amenities, connectivity, and residential opportunities to the region.

The study area constitutes a small segment of Western Avenue, one of the longest streets in Southern California. At 27.5 miles, it could well host the Los Angeles Marathon with room to spare. It is also the only corridor in the region that connects the mountains (at Griffith Park) to the sea (at White's Point). In its long journey to the bluffs of San Pedro, Western Avenue traverses some of the most iconic neighborhoods and communities in the region, successively adopting their identities, and serving as a lasting symbol of Southern California's diversity and vitality. The cities that host Western Avenue include Los Angeles, Westmont, Gardena, Torrance, Lomita, and Rancho Palos Verdes, as well as the unincorporated communities of Westmont and West Athens.

Western Avenue has an anachronistic name. Early in the twentieth century it did indeed serve as the western boundary of the city of Los Angeles. The city and the region have, since, decisively blown through the frontier it represented, and Western Avenue today finds itself occupying the heart rather than the periphery of the metropolitan region. It has become the pre-eminent north-south boulevard of the region, and the only one that matches the iconic significance of the region's celebrated east-west boulevards – Sunset, Hollywood, Wilshire, Venice, Pico and Olympic.

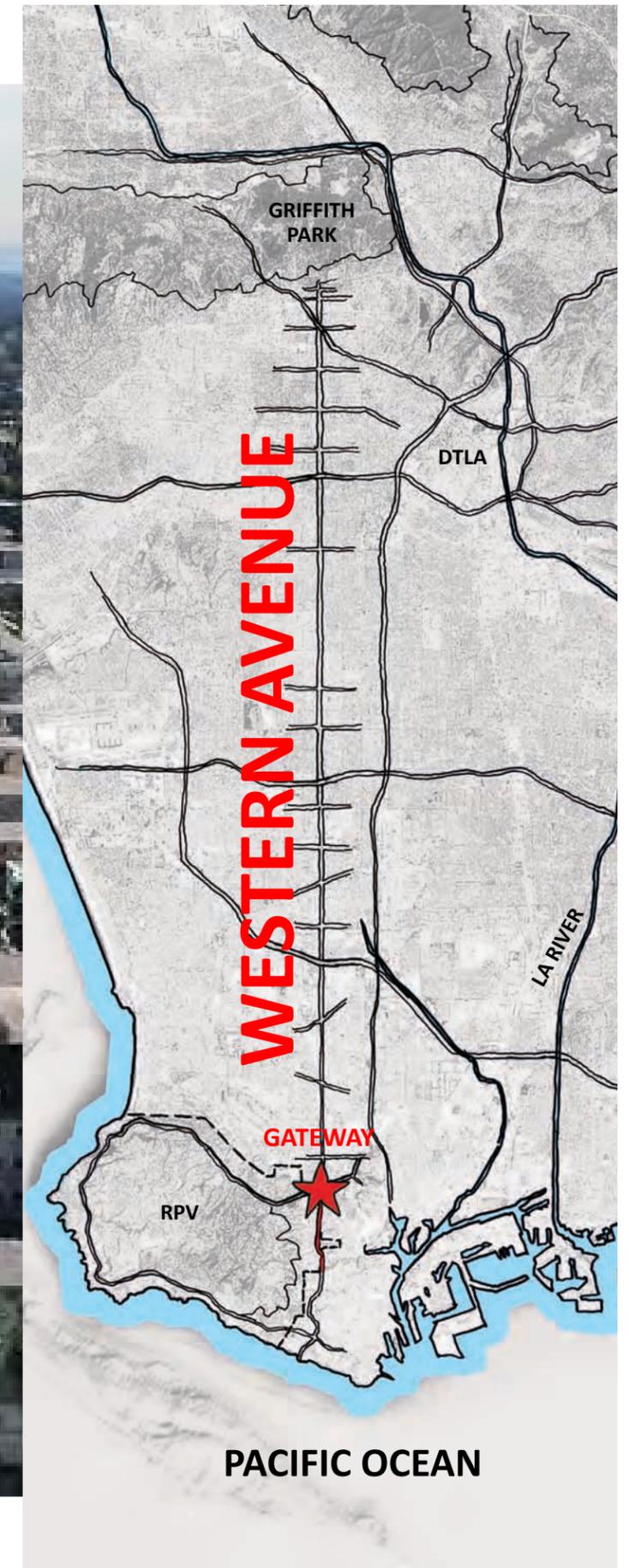
The study corridor constitutes the municipal boundary between the cities of Rancho Palos Verdes (on the west) and Los Angeles (on the east). It provides a diversity of uses with commercial being concentrated on the south, a mix of commercial and residential uses between Toscanini and John Montgomery Drives, and institutional uses located at the northern end. Western Avenue is by no means homogenous. It provides a multitude of amenities to a multitude of users.

The study area has not seen any significant new development for several years. Consequently, the patterns of development reveal dated building types and intents. But the corridor is also not so old that it displays any sense of historic, pre-automobile development. A further challenge

Western Avenue is the preeminent mountain-to-ocean boulevard. At 27.5 miles, it could well host the Los Angeles Marathon with room to spare. It is also the only corridor in the region that connects the mountains (at Griffith Park) to the sea (at White's Point).



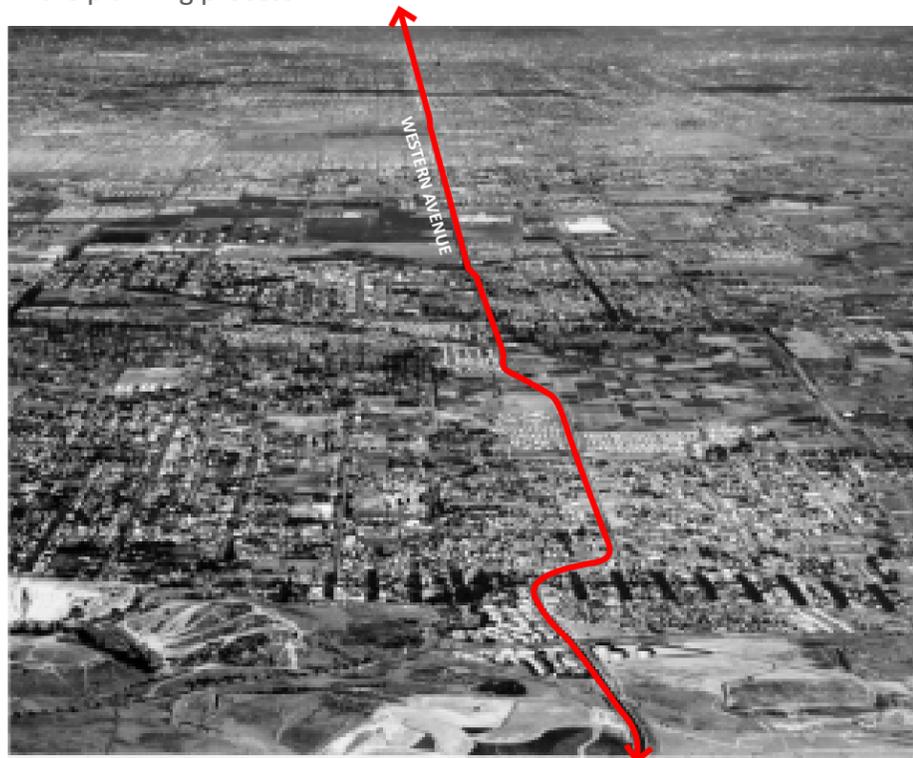
Looking south on Western Avenue at Wilshire Boulevard



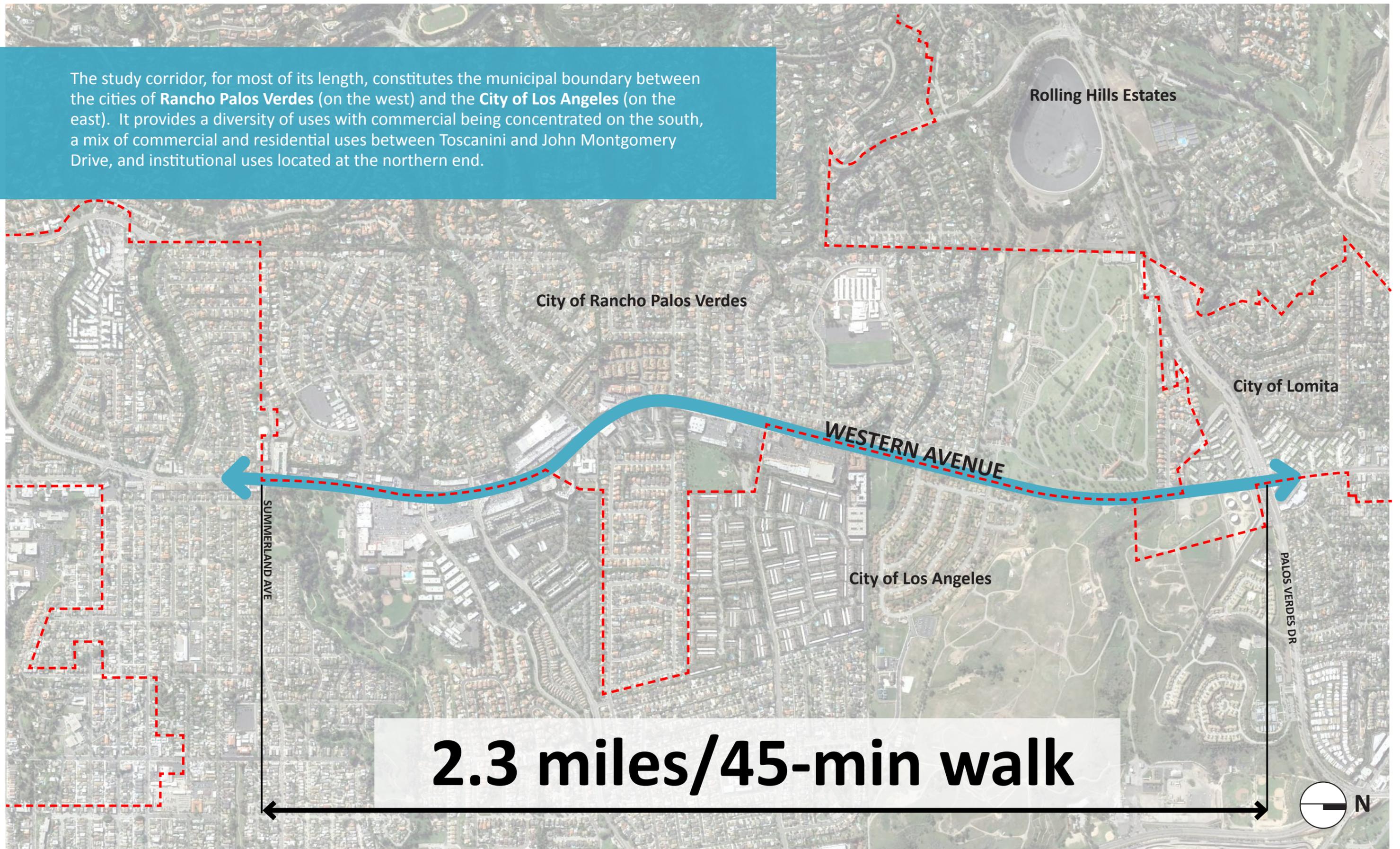
in establishing a shared vision for the corridor is the complexities of jurisdictional boundaries. Caltrans owns and maintains the right of way. City of Rancho Palos Verdes is located on the west (except for one block where it jumps across to the east). The City of Los Angeles is located on the east, while the City of Lomita has jurisdiction of the key intersection with Palos Verdes Drive North. What all stakeholders – both private and public – should strive to avoid is the typical fate of such streets - the neglected frontier, shared by all but claimed by none. This SCAG-funded effort, and indeed others that will follow, provide a unique opportunity (and perhaps the only avenue) by which Western Avenue can be looked at holistically (with both sides and the right-of-way being treated as equals).

The corridor exhibits dated development patterns. The commercial cluster on the south end of the study area is auto oriented; with a notably poor pedestrian experience. The residential uses in the middle and north segment turn their backs to the street and do not contribute to the street's vitality. Neither commercial nor residential developments would be considered best or acceptable today.

Certain significant parcels along the corridor will have uses that are never going away and will never house active, visitor-serving uses. The vision efforts need to work around them and sensitively include their constraints in the planning process.



The study corridor, for most of its length, constitutes the municipal boundary between the cities of **Rancho Palos Verdes** (on the west) and the **City of Los Angeles** (on the east). It provides a diversity of uses with commercial being concentrated on the south, a mix of commercial and residential uses between Toscanini and John Montgomery Drive, and institutional uses located at the northern end.





At Palos Verdes Drive N and Western Ave

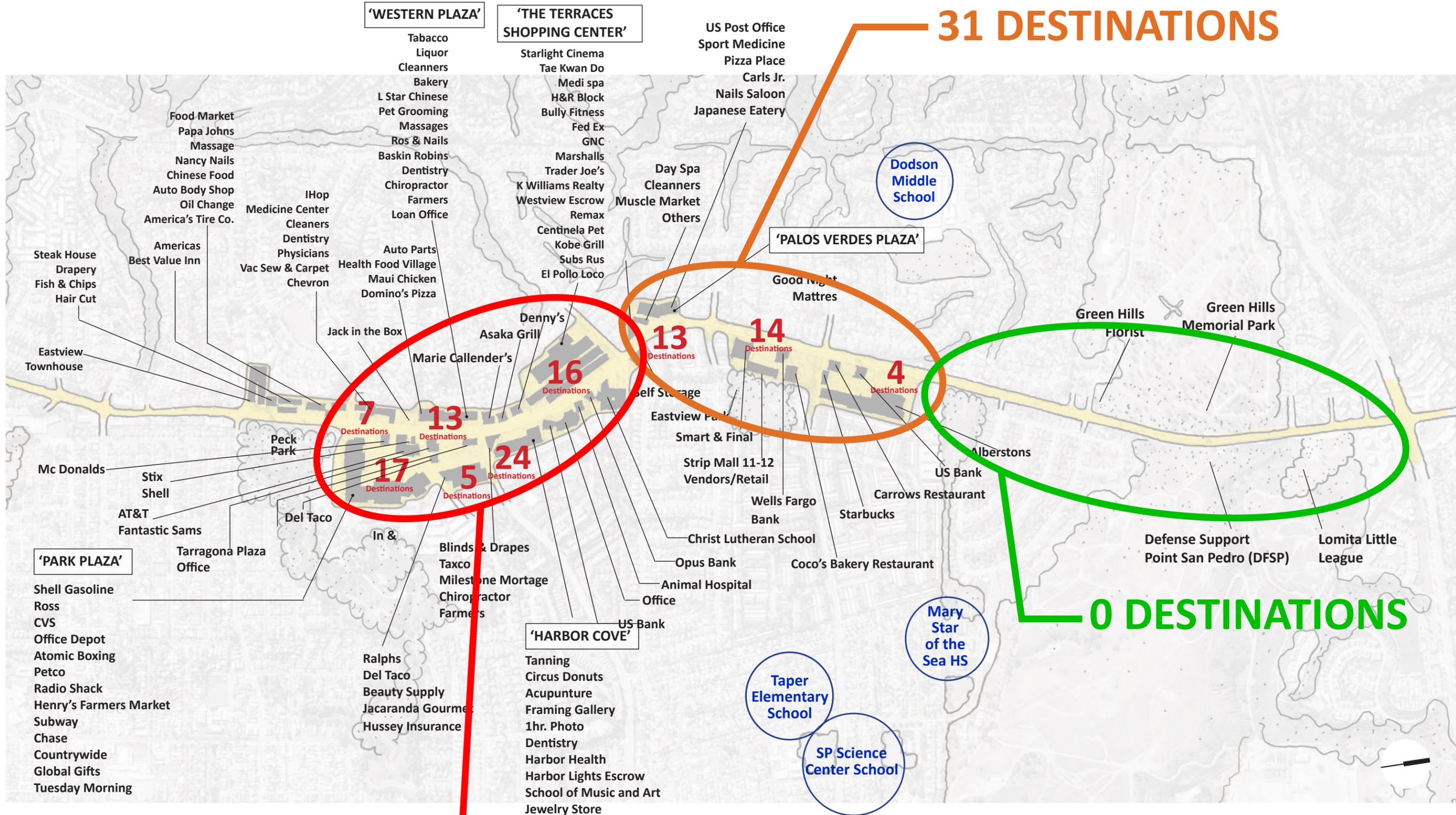


At Summerland Drive and Western Ave



Retail destinations typically attract the highest numbers of visitors on a regular basis. An analysis of destinations along the corridor illustrates a sharply skewed distribution. The densest cluster of retail establishments is located south of Caddington, with commercial uses located on both the sides of the Avenue. A moderate cluster is located mid-corridor where residential uses are located on one side and commercial uses on the other. The northern most segment of the corridor has no destinations that attract regular visitors (Green Hills Memorial Park Cemetery on the west and inaccessible fuel storage on the east). This distribution of destinations creates three clear natural segments of the corridor.

31 DESTINATIONS



80 DESTINATIONS

0 DESTINATIONS

Northern Segment



Middle Segment



Southern Segment



SOUTHERN SEGMENT

active, visitor serving edges
0.75 miles / 15 minute walk

MIDDLE SEGMENT

one active, visitor serving edge / one inactive edge
0.9 miles / 20 minute walk

NORTHERN SEGMENT

inactive edges
0.6 miles / 10 minute walk

Summerland Drive

“the heart of Western Avenue”
active cluster of businesses
surface parking lot at street edges

Caddington Drive

one-sided street
active businesses on east
backyard of homes on west

John Montgomery Drive

auto-oriented experience
inactive street edges on both sides

Palos Verdes Drive N



2.2 Economics and Demographics

Business Snapshot

Active Businesses : 312

Sales Volume: \$367 million

Average sales performance: \$175 per square foot

Establishment Overview

Retail:

Accounts for 19% of business establishments, 40% of total sales, and ranks 1st in overall sales performance on a per-square-foot basis

Food Services and Accommodation:

Account for 14% of establishments, 7% of total sales, and ranks 9th in overall sales performance on a per-square-foot basis. 44 of 45 businesses in this category are full or limited service restaurants, coffee shops, and other food service venues. Estimated sales performance is fairly weak compared to what would be expected for full- and limited-service restaurants.

Other Services:

Account for 17% of establishments, but only 6% of sales and ranks 10th in overall sales performance on a per-square-foot basis. These are primarily nail and beauty salons and laundry/dry cleaning businesses.

Finance and Insurance:

Account for 12% of establishments, 8% of sales, and ranks 3rd in overall sales performance on a per-square-foot basis.

Note: Sales volume, employment, and sales per square foot are based on ranges and may not match other data sources in this report

Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2012/InfoUSA



Industry	Businesses (No)	Sales Volume (\$millions)	Sales PSF (\$/PSF)	Sales PSF Ranking
Retail Trade	60	\$148.0	\$340	1
Other Services (except Public Administration)	52	\$20.3	\$135	8
Accommodation and Food Services	45	\$27.4	\$140	7
Finance and Insurance	38	\$30.1	\$245	2
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	24	\$35.5	\$215	6
Health Care and Social Assistance	20	\$17.0	\$230	4
Construction	13	\$22.1	\$245	2
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	10	\$5.9	\$65	9
Educational Services	10	\$3.4	\$40	10
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	9	\$27.1	\$230	4
Other	31	\$30	\$50	11
Total	312	\$367.0	\$175	9

Sales PSF rounded to nearest \$5

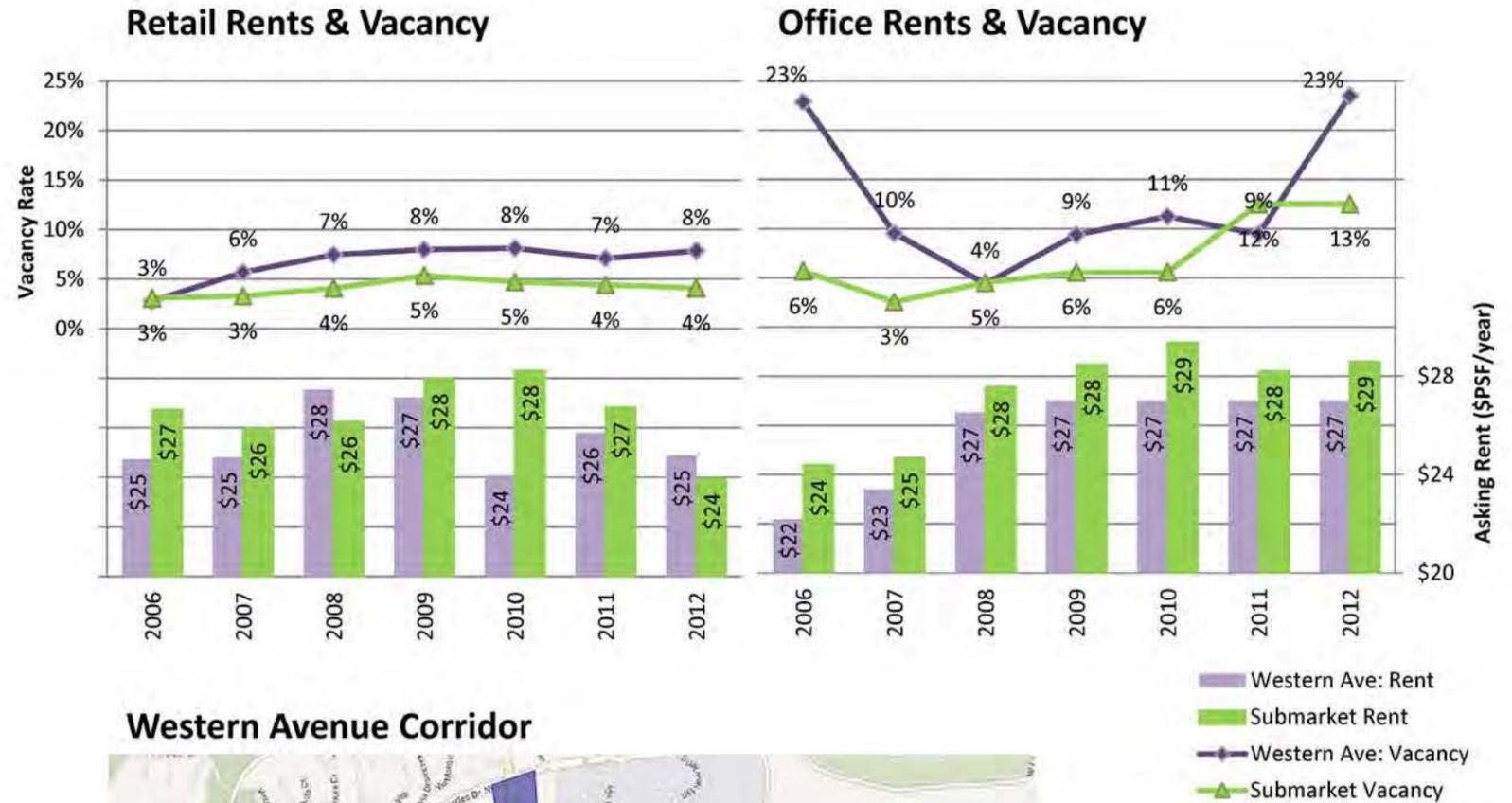
Snapshot of Commercial Building Performance

Retail:

366,000 SF of rentable space along the corridor
 7.9% vacancy rate in 2nd quarter 2012
 \$24.90 annual offering rent (triple net basis)

Office:

50,000 SF of rentable space along the corridor
 23% vacancy rate in 2nd quarter 2012
 \$27.00 annual offering rent (full-service gross)



Market Overview

Retail:

The Western Avenue corridor shows mixed performance compared to local submarket – vacancy rates are nearly double, but still below 10%; rents are higher than the submarket, likely reflecting a lack of anchor stores; total inventory along the corridor accounts for approximately 4% of total retail inventory.

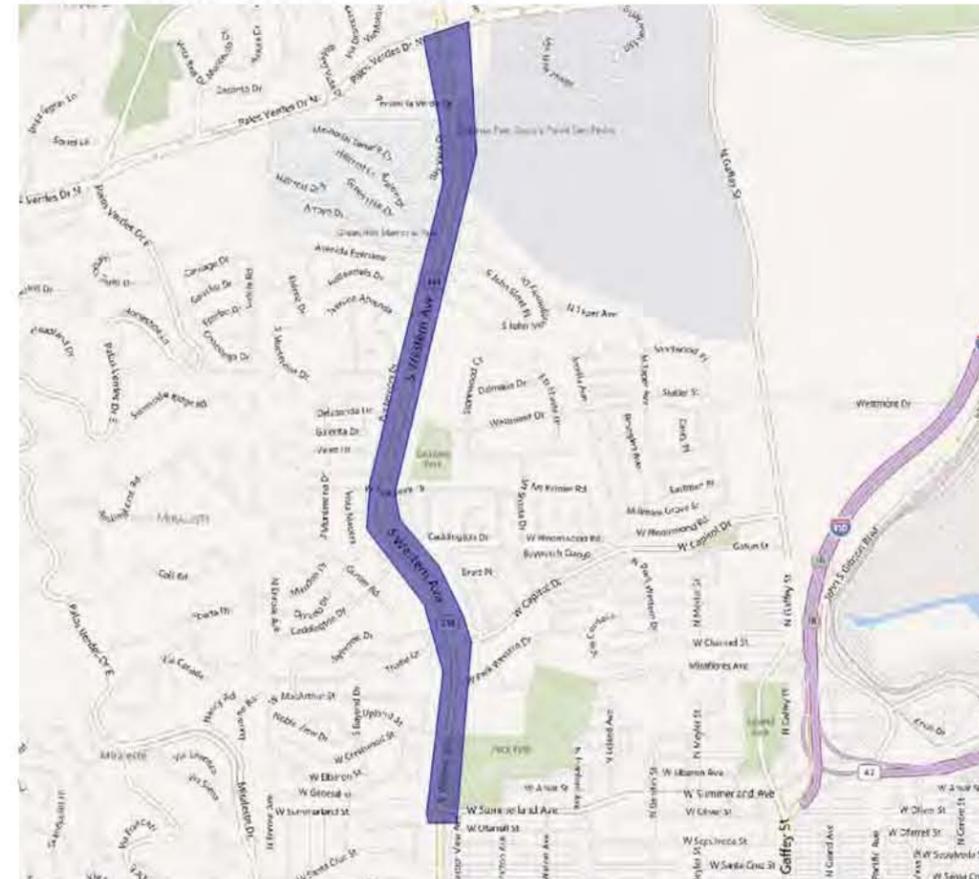
Office:

The corridor shows poor performance compared to local submarket – nearly double the vacancy rate with lower asking rents. Few properties on the market along Western Ave (3 recorded in database) account for less than 1% of total inventory.

Submarket:

The local submarket is defined as the Palos Verdes and Beach Cities coastal communities and is based on market boundaries provided by CoStar, a reputable provider of office and retail performance data.

Western Avenue Corridor



Beach Cities Submarket



Note: Retail and office properties fronting Western Avenue
 Source: CoStar Property Analytics, 2Q 2012

Parcel Snapshot

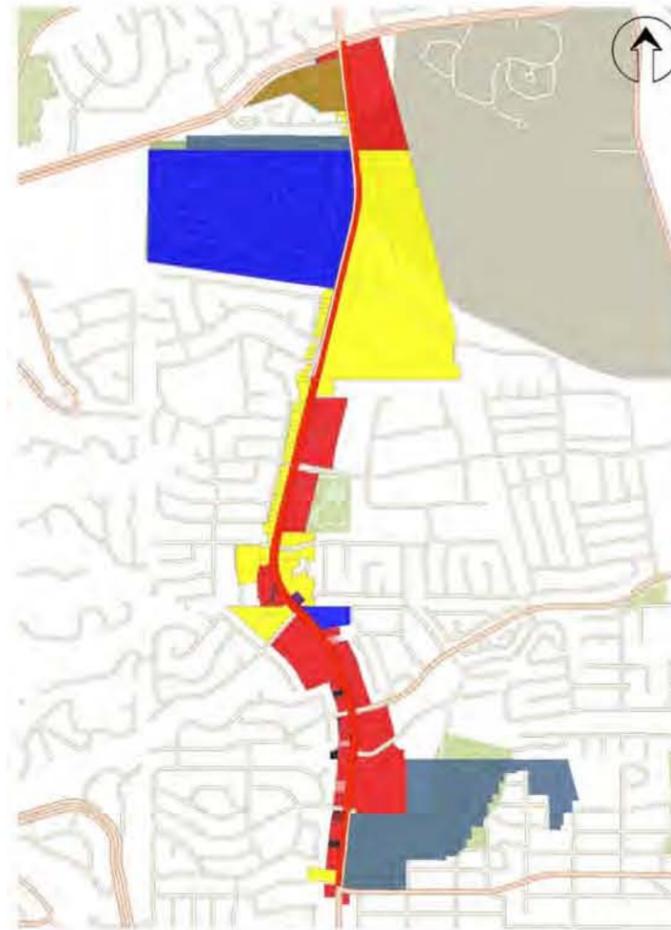
Parcels with Frontage along Western Avenue: 475
 Parcel Area: 1,353 acres
 Total Assessed Value: \$392 million (2010)
 Total Building Area: 766,000 SF

Land Use

Residential: 80% of land along the Western Avenue corridor is dedicated to single family residential lots, with a median assessed value of \$256,000 for a 1,200 SF home on a 1.8 acre lot.

Commercial: 6% of land along the corridor is used for commercial purposes, with a median assessed value of \$1.0 million for a 1,000 SF main building on a 0.6 acre lot.

Park & Religious: 6% of land is dedicated to park and religious uses (114 acres).



Turnover

Residential:

7.5% annual turnover rate from 2000-2009
 315 properties changed ownership over the 10-year period

Commercial:

7.6% annual turnover rate from 2000-2009
 28 properties changed ownership over the 10-year period

Note: Median values are those that fall in the exact middle of the data set, where half of values lie above and half below. Medians are typically a more accurate representation of data than average value calculations which can be overly influenced by outliers. Building area does not include secondary structures or other out-buildings, so commercial/retail properties are likely to be significantly undercounted compared to other data sources

Source: LA County Parcel Map & Assessors Local Roll 2010

Land Use	Parcels (No)	Land Area (Acres)	Assessed Value (\$)	AV Land (\$)	AV Improvmts (\$)	Building Area (SF)
Commercial	37	84	\$166,070,000	\$94,220,000	\$71,850,000	74,900
Industrial	1	1	\$3,333,000	\$435,000	\$2,898,000	59,600
Institutional	2	114	\$6,545,000	\$5,017,000	\$1,528,000	-
Mixed Use	2	1	\$2,804,000	\$1,544,000	\$1,259,000	14,100
Municipal/Utility	3	75	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000	\$0	-
Office/Professional	3	1	\$3,296,000	\$2,308,000	\$988,000	12,500
Parking Lot	5	1	\$572,000	\$502,000	\$70,000	36,800
Residential 1 Unit	421	1,064	\$207,484,000	\$155,923,000	\$51,561,000	568,600
Residential 5+ Units*	1	12	\$0	\$0	\$0	-
Total	475	1,353	\$391,852,000	\$261,698,000	\$130,154,000	766,400

* Property owned by LA County Housing Authority; AV and building square footage not available

Resident Demographic Snapshot

Within one-half mile of the corridor:

Residents: 17,000

Households: 6,800

Median Household Income: \$77,000

Homeownership: 75% of homes are owner-occupied

Median age: 44

Race: 68% White, 12% Asian, 6% Black

Ethnicity: 27% Latino/Hispanic of any race

Buffer Zones

Residents are divided among three zones, those living within:
 1/2 mile of the Western Avenue corridor (walking distance)
 1/2 to 1 mile of corridor (just outside walking distance), and
 1-3 miles of corridor (an easy drive)

More than 180,000 people live within 3 miles of the corridor. A majority are white, over the age of 35, and own their homes. The average household size is approximately 2.8 persons.

Of nearby residents (within 1/2 mile), more than 50% of households earn more than \$75,000 per year. Household incomes fall as distance from the corridor increase, but remain high compared to the larger Los Angeles region.

Note: All data is based on Census 2010 and ACS.
 Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2012

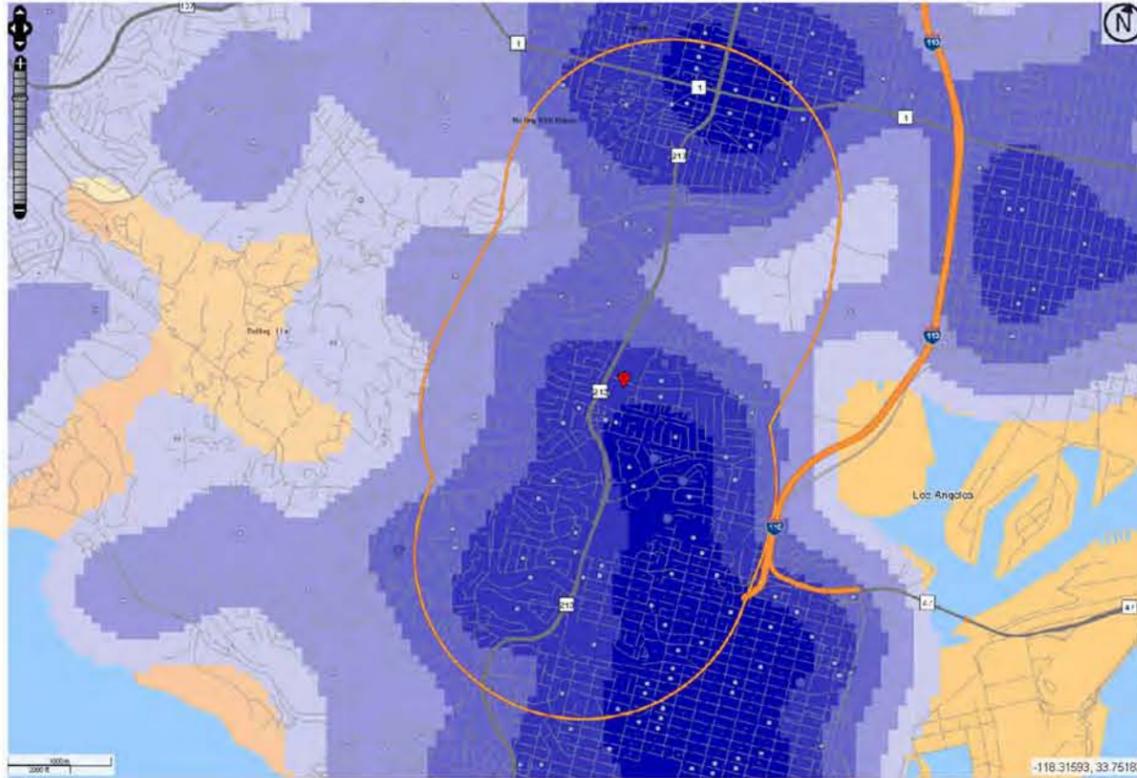
Demographics by Distance	0 - 1/2 Mile	1/2 to 1 Mile	1 - 3 Miles
Summary			
Population	17,000	23,400	141,600
Households	6,800	8,700	49,400
Average Household Size	2.48	2.66	2.83
Median Age	44.1	40.1	36.4
Median Household Income	\$77,300	\$60,300	\$49,800
Race and Ethnicity			
White	67.7%	62.3%	54.5%
Black	5.5%	6.3%	6.1%
American Indian	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%
Asian	12.5%	10.6%	10.7%
Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.4%	0.7%
Some Other Race	7.9%	13.8%	21.3%
Two or More Races	5.6%	5.8%	5.9%
Hispanic Origin (of any race, % of total population)	26.8%	37.9%	49.2%



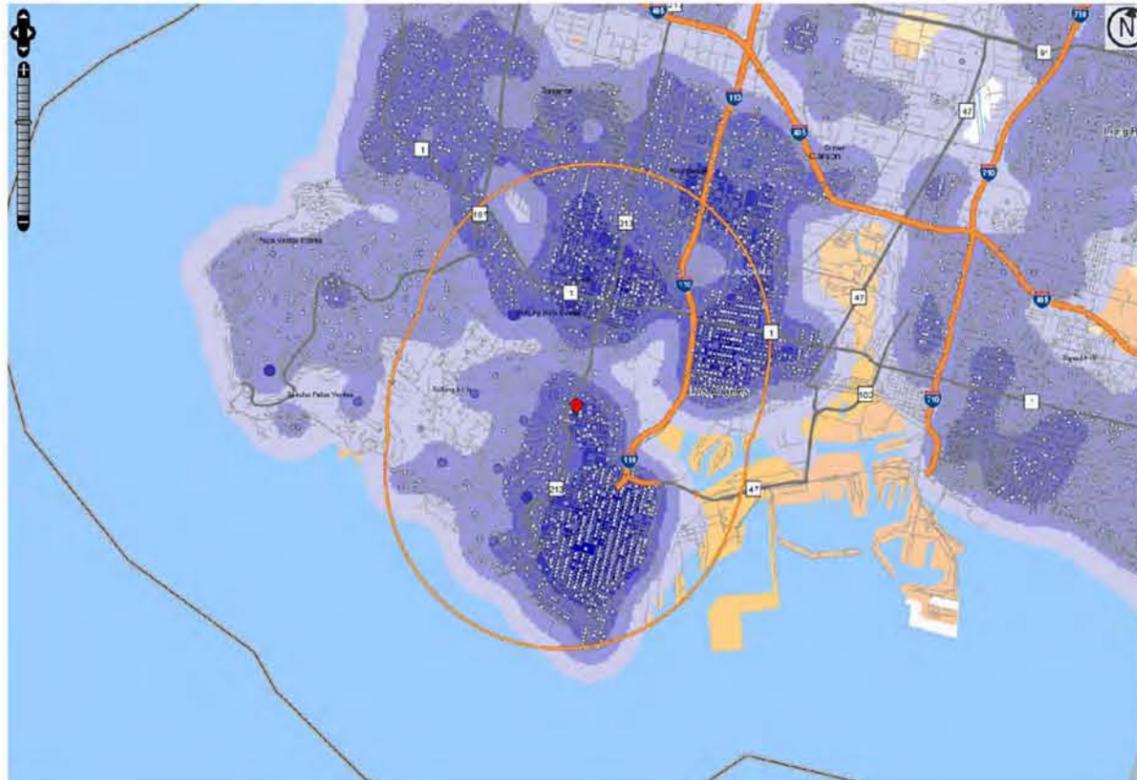
Household Income by Distance from Corridor



Job Density: 1 mile



Job Density: 3 miles



Employment Snapshot

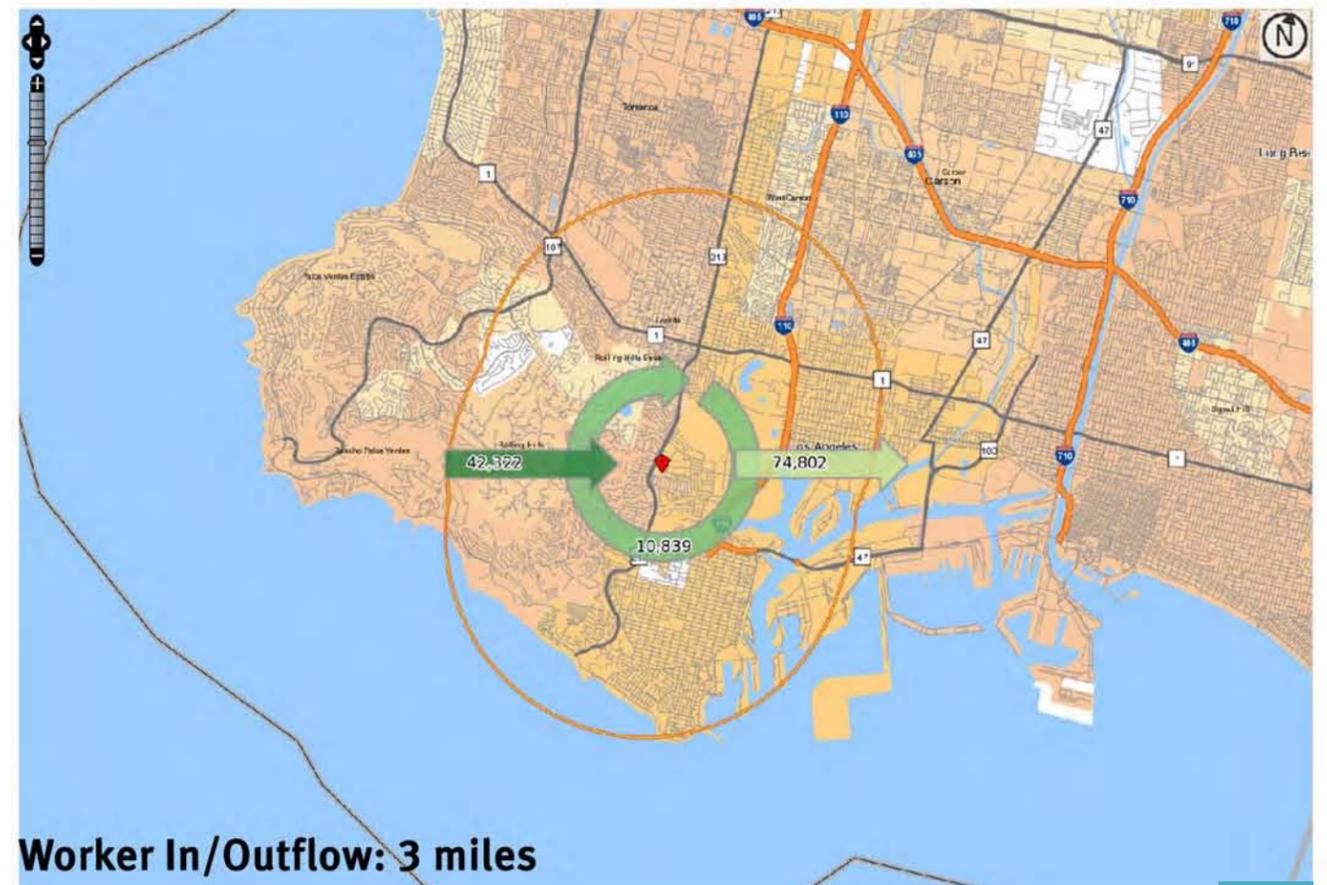
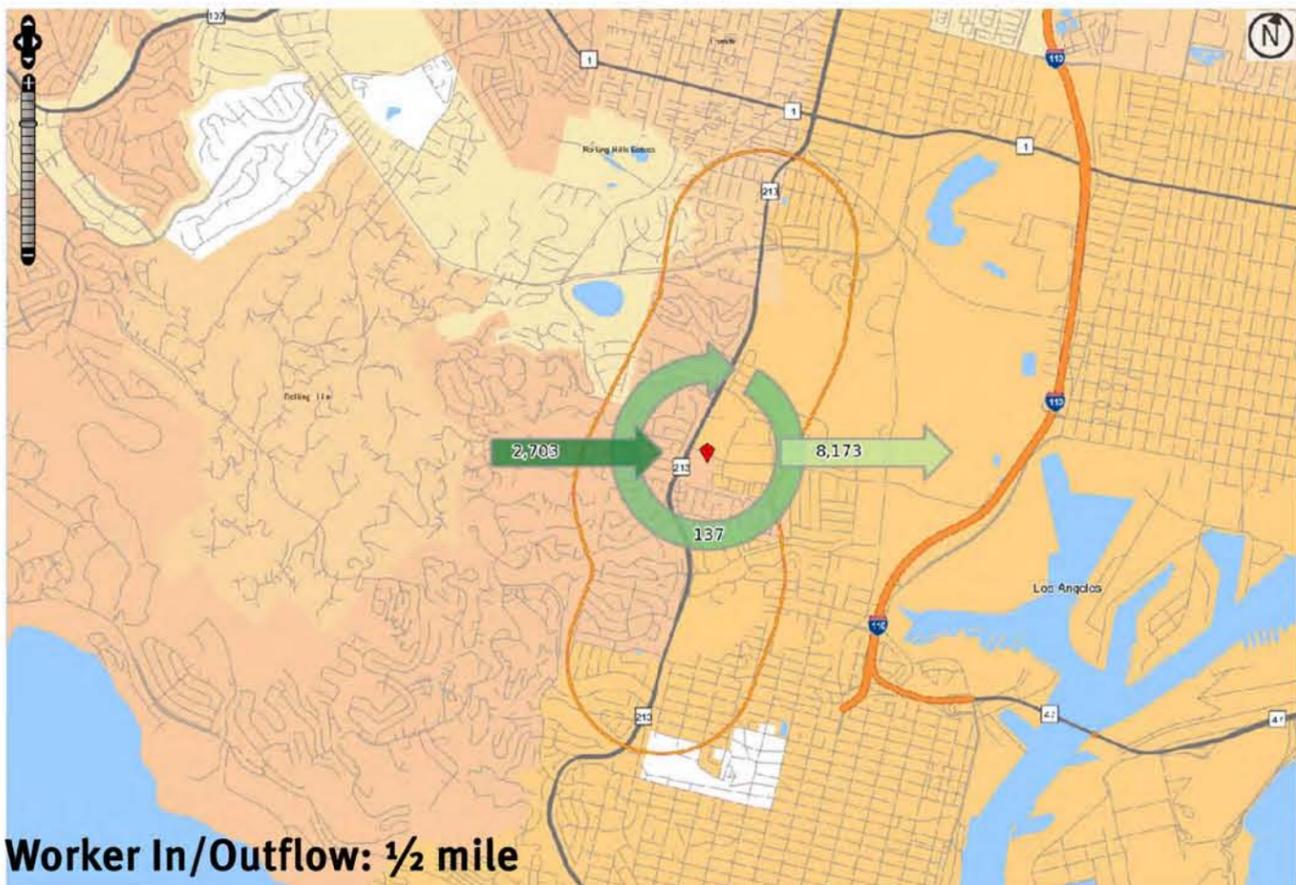
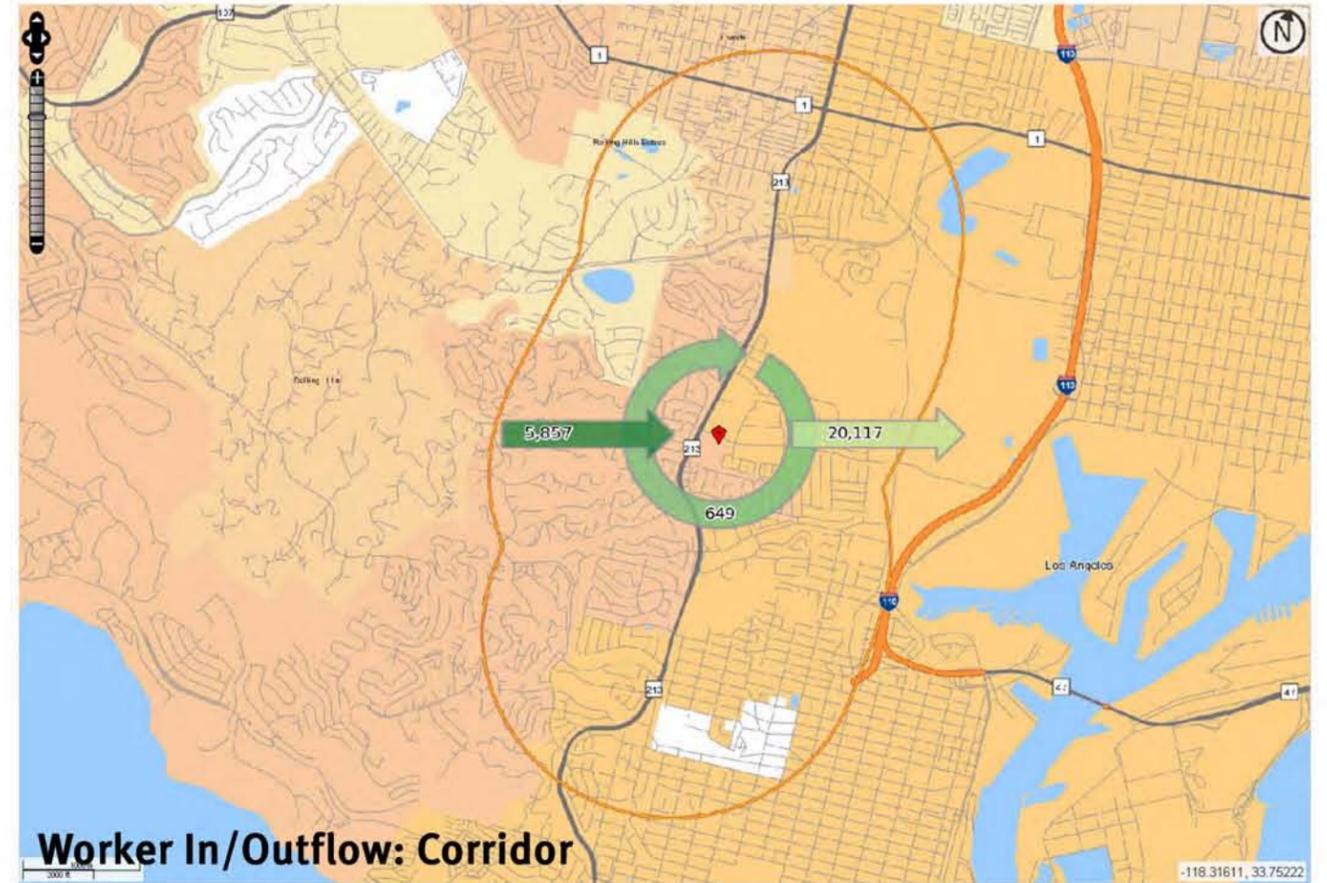
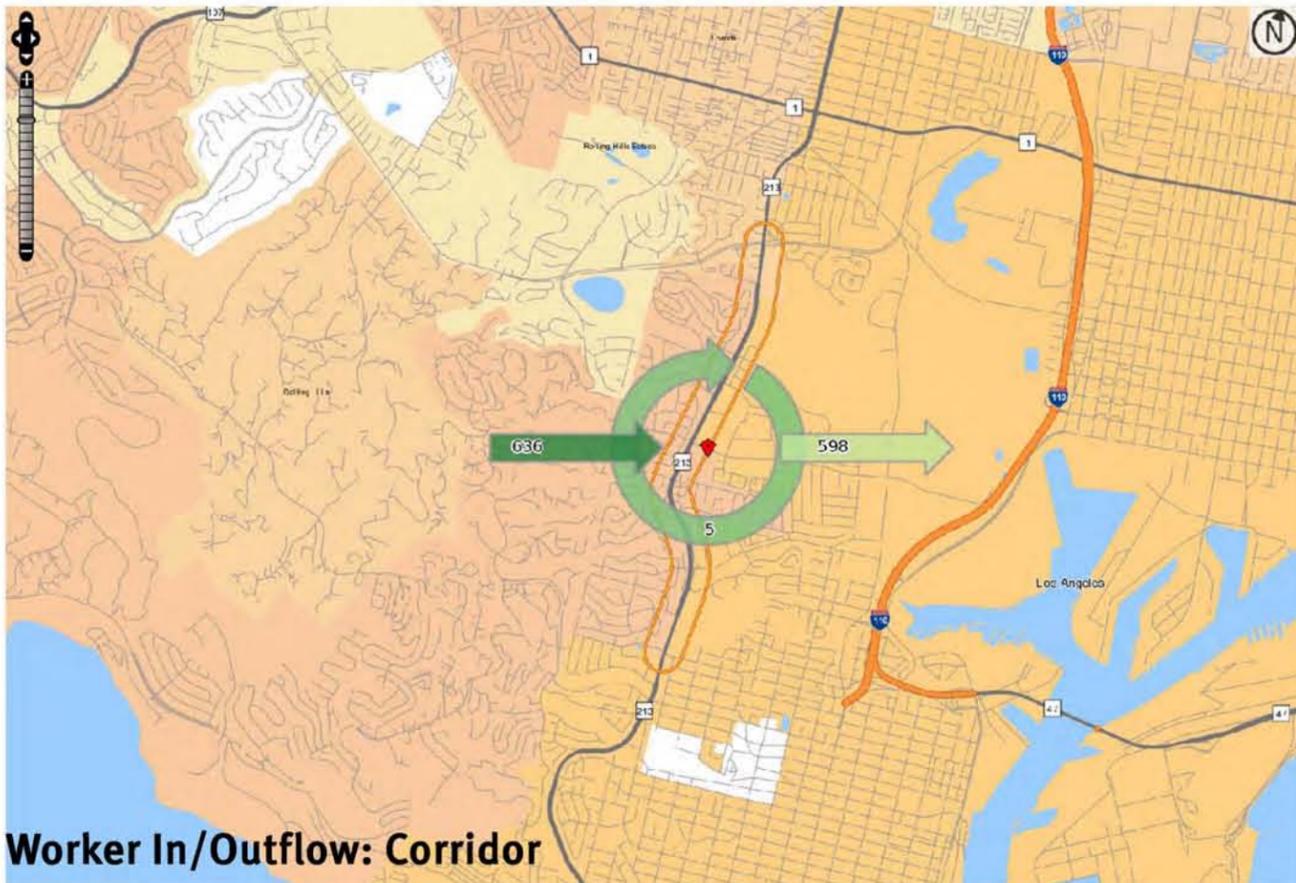
- 640 jobs directly located along the Western Ave corridor**
- 2,800 jobs within 1/2 mile (including those on Western Ave)**
- 6,500 jobs within 1 mile**
- 53,000 jobs within 3 miles**

90% or more of working residents leave the area each day; local jobs are primarily filled internally by in-commuters (more than 80% of local jobs are held by non-residents of the area)

Local job centers are located directly north and northeast of the corridor and to the southeast in San Pedro

Source: US Census via OnTheMap Longitudinal Employer Household Survey.

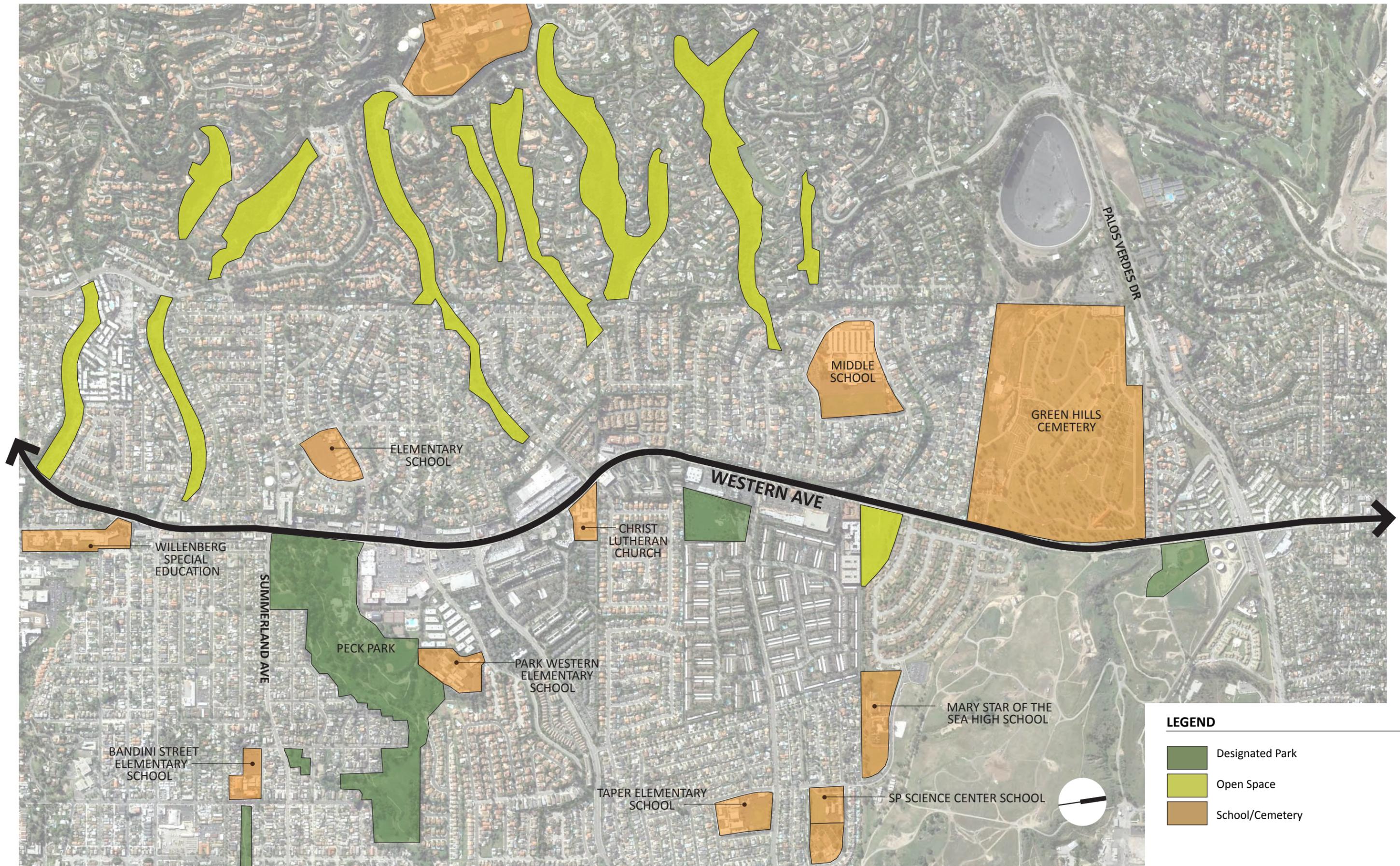
	Corridor	1/2 Mile	1 Mile	3 Miles
Primary Jobs	640	2,800	6,500	53,200
Retail Trade	34%	26%	21%	14%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	20%	10%	10%	6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	12%	6%	5%	5%
Health Care and Social Assistance	11%	12%	13%	20%
Accommodation and Food Services	10%	14%	13%	8%
Construction	2%	5%	8%	4%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	2%	5%	5%	4%
Manufacturing	1%	1%	2%	17%
Transportation and Warehousing	0%	1%	2%	4%
Educational Services	0%	7%	9%	7%
Other	8%	14%	12%	13%
Labor Force In/Out Flow				
Living and Employed in the Study Area	5	137	649	10,839
Living in the Study Area but Employed Outside	600	8,200	20,100	74,800
Employed in the Study Area but Living Outside	640	2,700	5,900	42,300



2.3 Public Realm and Streetscape

Western Avenue evolved and grew in that window of urban history where the automobile was king and pedestrians were irrelevant. The legacy of its origins are clearly manifest today in the poor quality of pedestrian experience and places and an exuberant accommodation of automobiles on surface lots with prime street frontage. While the corridor is clearly attractive as a place to conduct business (there are over 110 retail destinations in the southern segment), it is being held back from even greater success due to the lack of a sense of place, identity, and pedestrian amenities.





LEGEND

- Designated Park
- Open Space
- School/Cemetery

An abundance of surface parking.



MATCHLINE



LEGEND

 Surface Parking (3,421 total)

 Street Parking (530 total)

NOTES

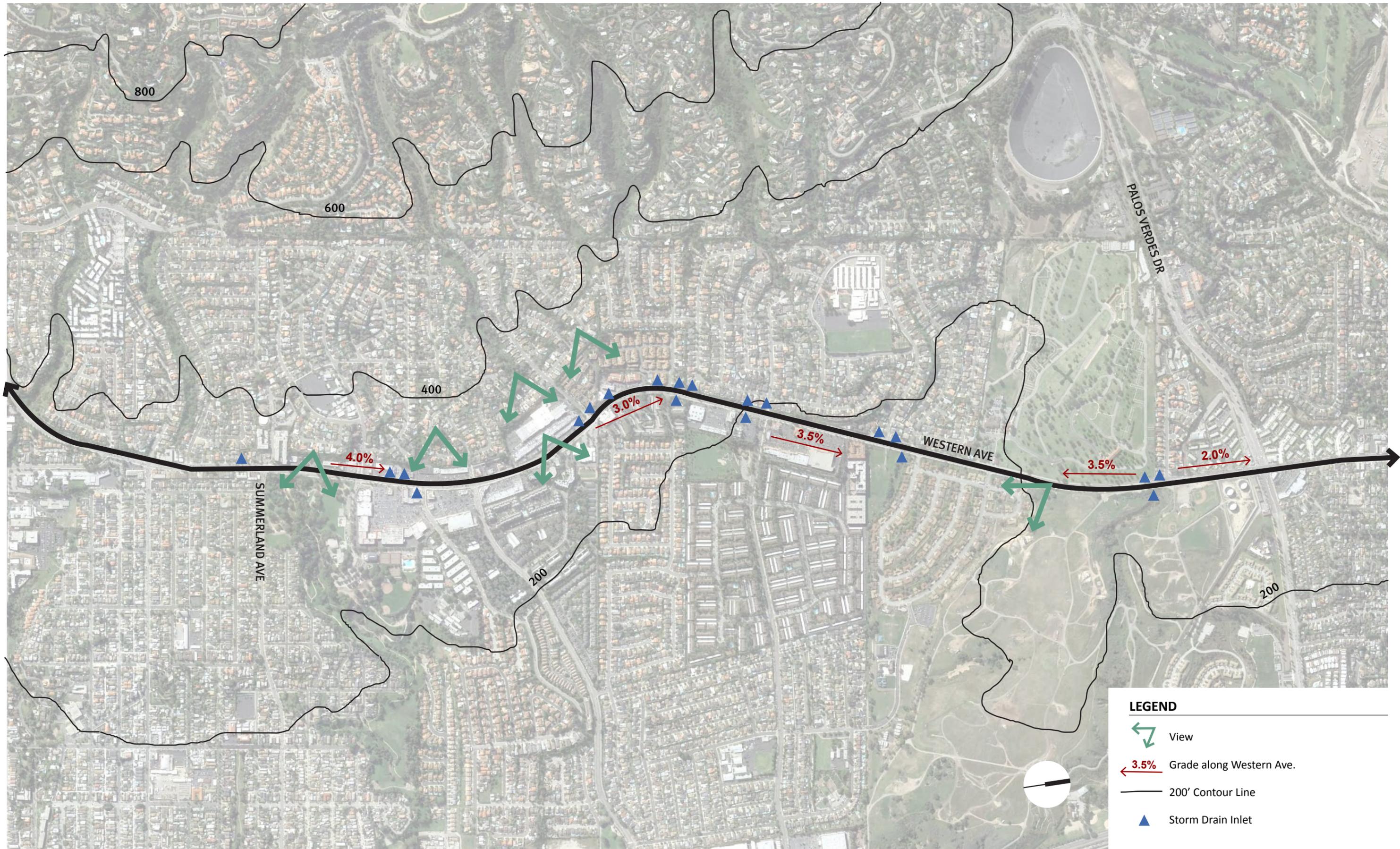
1. Quantities represent surface lots only and do not include subsurface or covered parking.
2. Quantities shown are estimated based on aerial photography.

“Protect, enhance and perpetuate views available to property owners and visitors because of the unique topographical features of the Palos Verdes Peninsula. These views provide unique and irreplaceable assets to the City and its neighboring communities and provide for this and future generations examples of the unique physical surroundings which are characteristic of the City.”

-- Purpose Section I.a. from the 2004 City of Rancho Palos Verdes “Guidelines and Procedures for Preservation of Views Where Structures are Involved.”



Looking north on Western Ave at Fitness Dr



LEGEND

-  View
-  3.5% Grade along Western Ave.
-  200' Contour Line
-  Storm Drain Inlet

An inconsistent canopy of trees along the corridor.



● Phoenix dactylifera



● Washingtonia robusta



● Tristania conferta



● Lagerstroemia indica



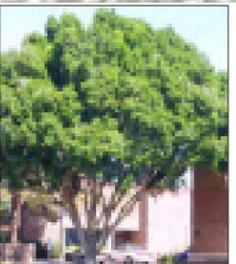
● Pyrus kawakamii



● Pittosporum spp.



● Pinus spp.



● Ficus spp.



● Species Unknown



● Species Unknown

MATCHLINE



LEGEND

- Location of street tree

NOTES

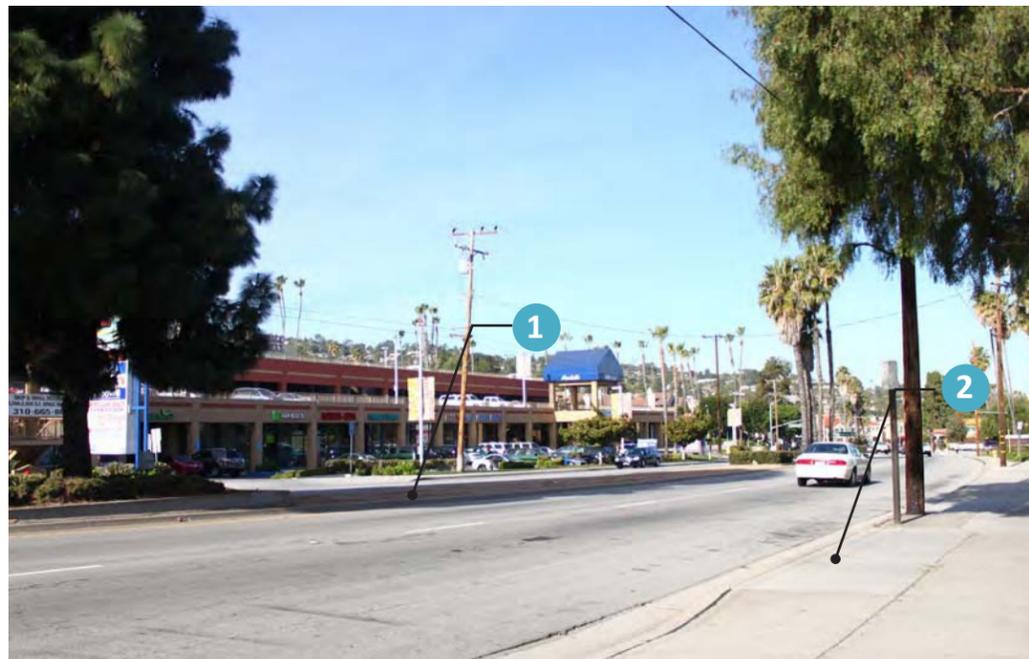
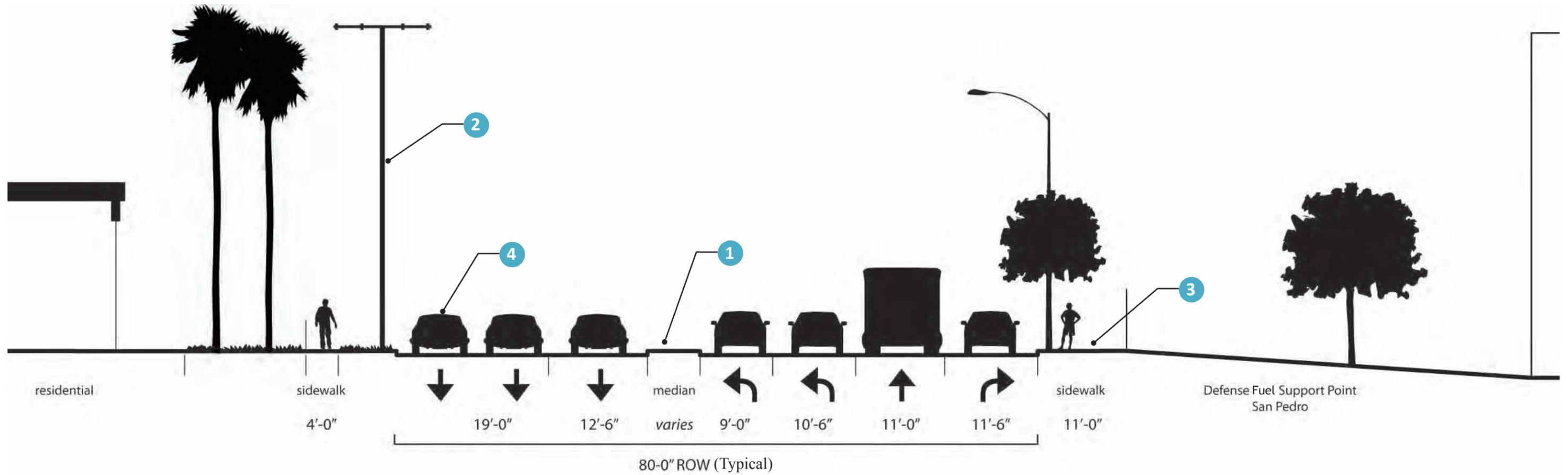
1. Quantities shown are estimated based on aerial photography.



Looking south on Western Avenue at Palos Verdes Dr N



Looking north on Western Avenue at Peninsula Verde Dr



Streetscape Opportunities

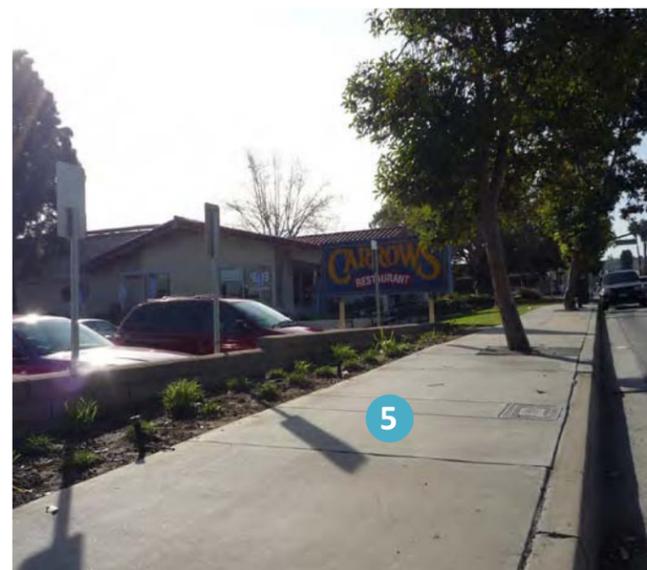
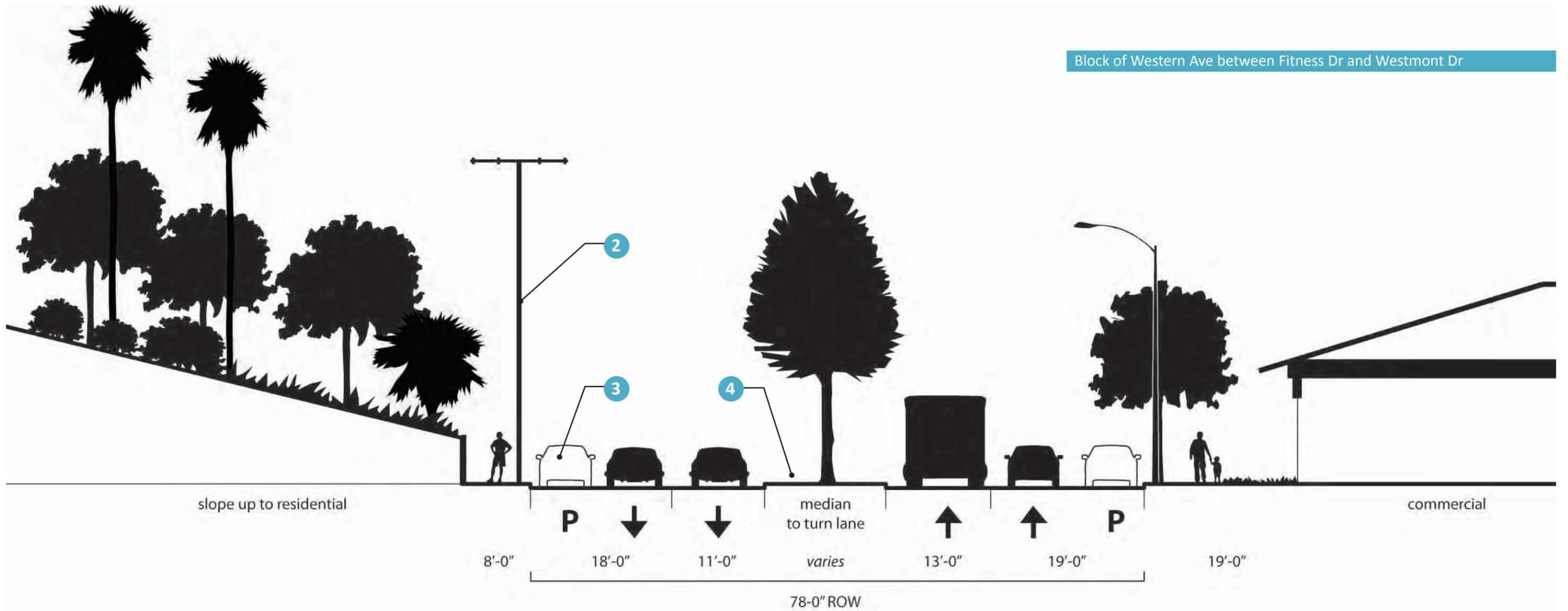
- 1 Low planting can be added to median while preserving views
- 2 Portions of seldom used sidewalk can be used for stormwater bioretention
- 3 Often-used street parking should remain



Looking north on Western Avenue at Fitness Dr



Looking north on Western Avenue at Westmont Dr



Streetscape Opportunities

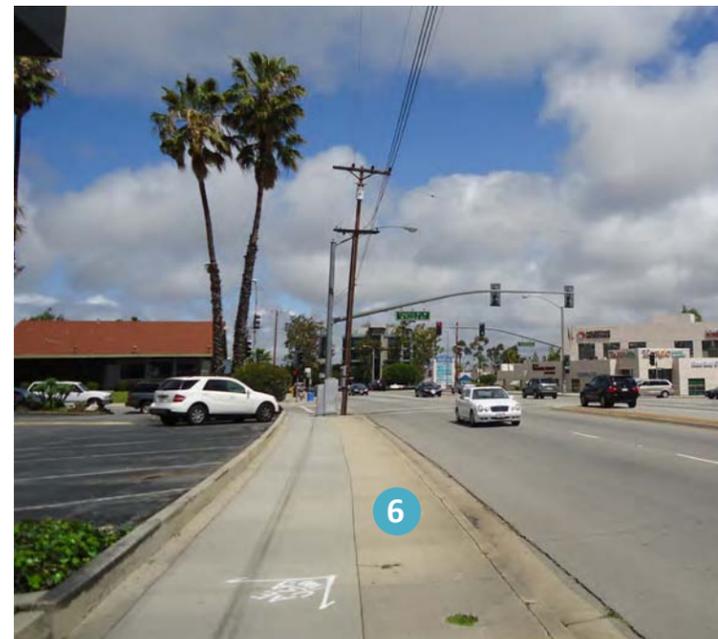
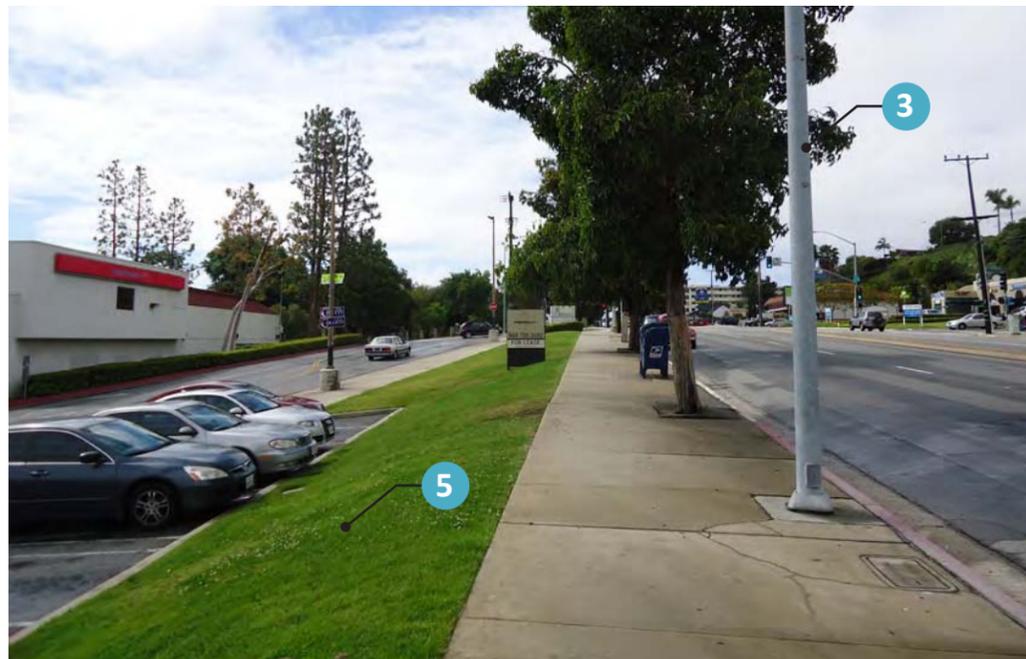
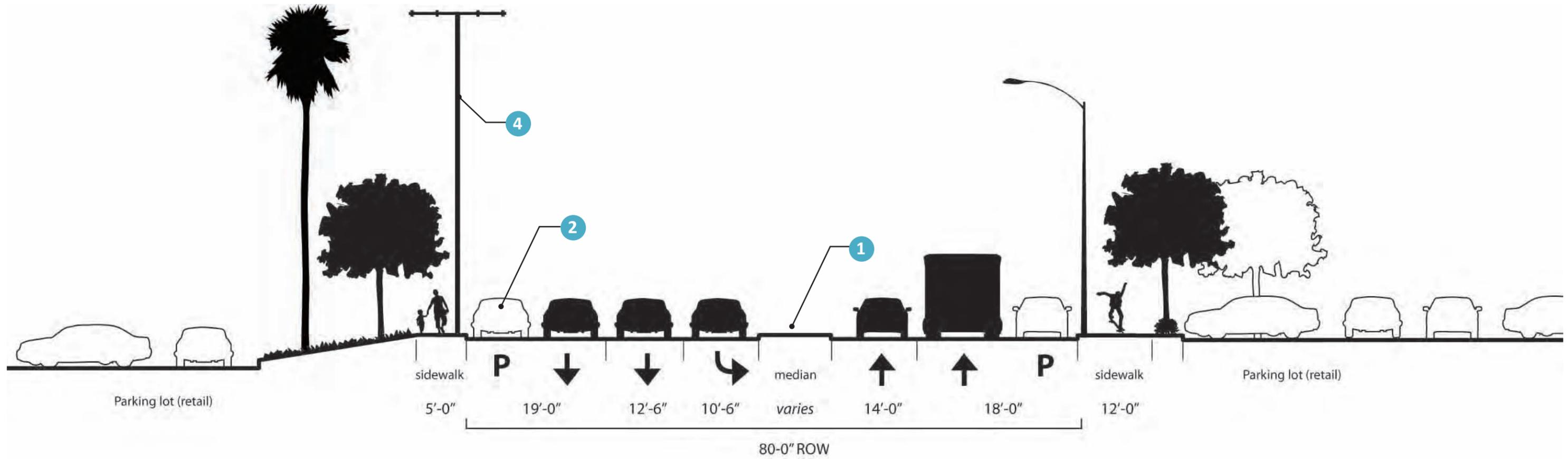
- 1 Take advantage of existing trees for branding & identity
- 2 Utility lines can be moved underground to relieve visual clutter
- 3 Seldom-used street parking on the west can be converted to other uses
- 4 Median planting can be refreshed to establish unity and color
- 5 Decorative street lighting can be added to increase safety and promote identity
- 6 Street trees can be added along west side of street



Looking south on Western Avenue at Caddington Dr



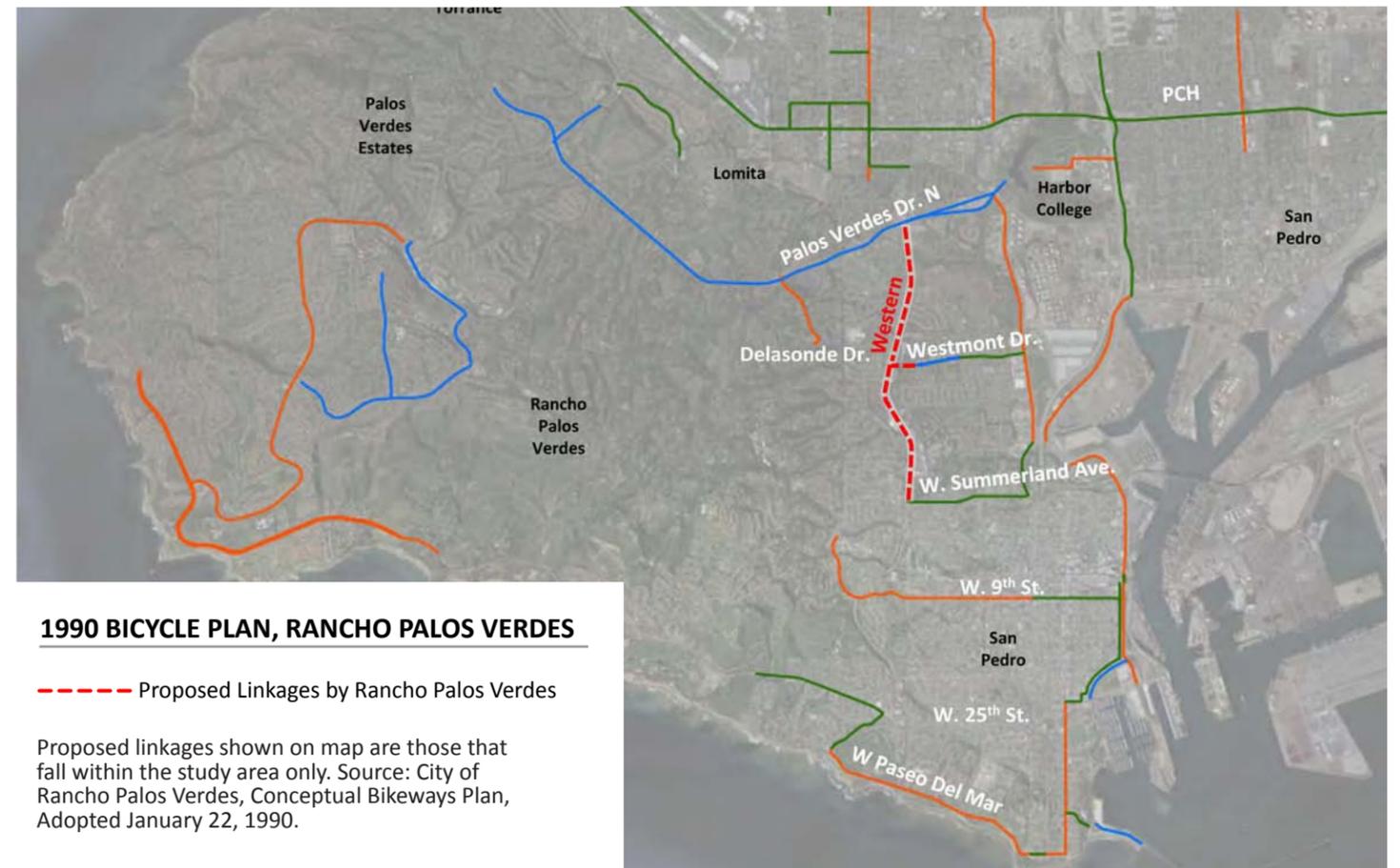
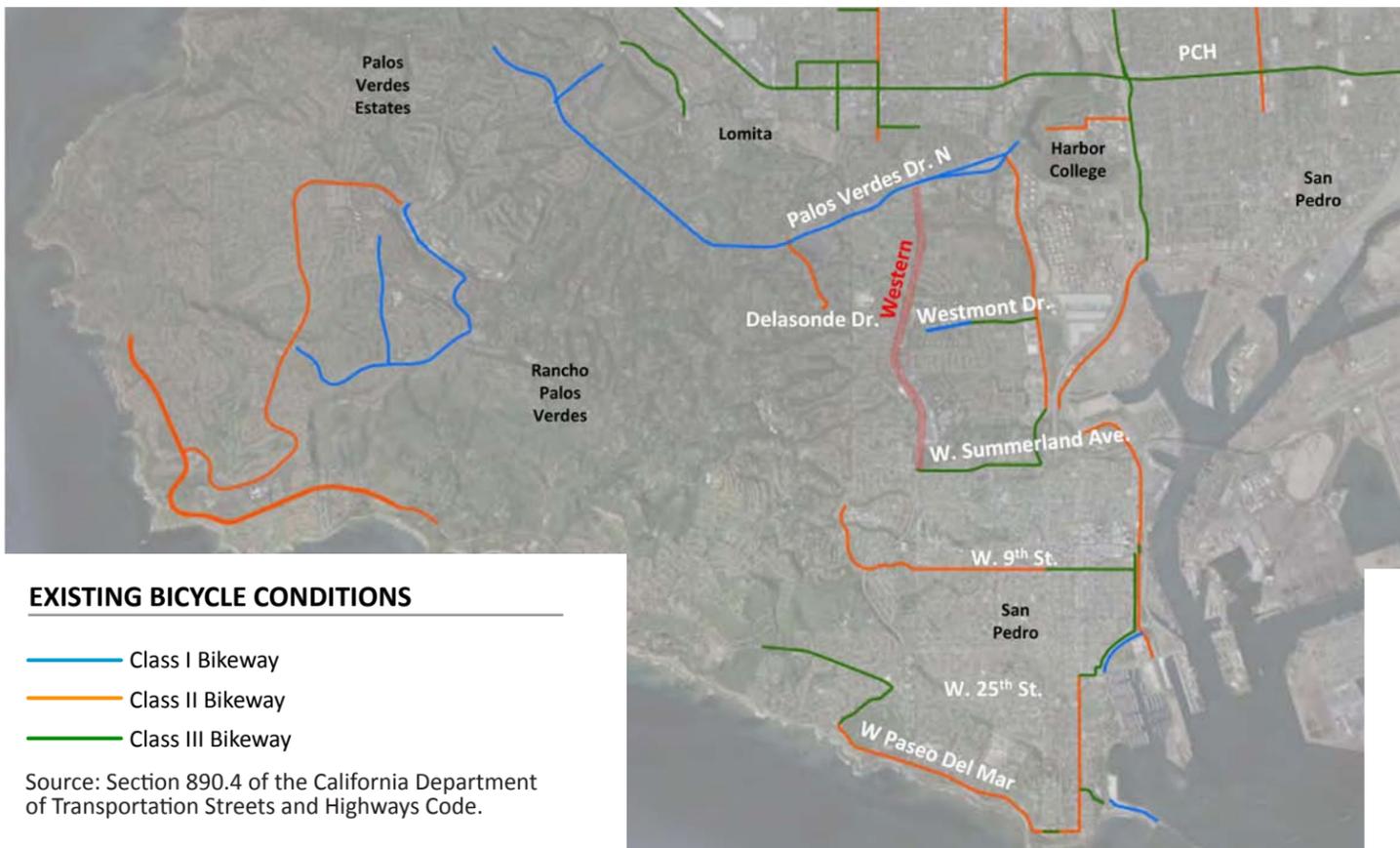
Looking north on Western Avenue at Capitol Dr



Streetscape Opportunities

- 1 Median presents opportunity to establish consistent rhythm of trees/identity
- 2 Street parking lane can be converted into bump-outs at corners or bike lane
- 3 Standard cobra street lights can be replaced, enhanced, or added where none exist today to promote district identity
- 4 Utility lines can be moved underground to relieve visual clutter
- 5 Low planting can be installed to soften parking lots
- 6 Portion of paved parkway can be converted to buffer planting or bioretention strip

2.4 Mobility (Bicycle and Transit)



Existing Conditions (all modes)

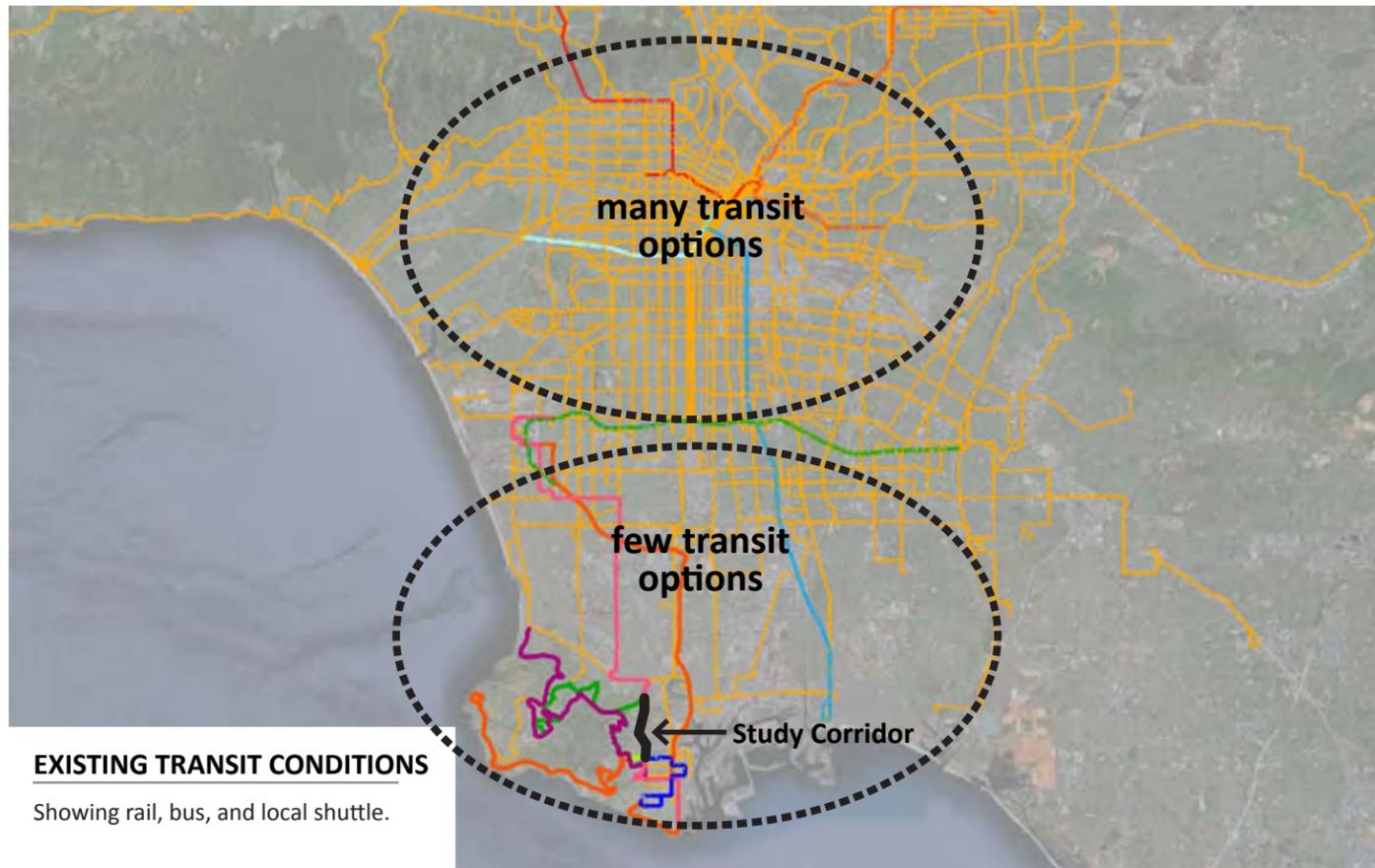


The corridor is served by local and regional bus transit, but there is **no fixed-rail transit access** and the corridor presently does not appear on any improvements in Metro's 30-year plan. Also, there exists **no bus rapid transit access** and there are no plans to provide such access in the future. Regional transit is provided by two service providers: **Metro and MAX (Municipal Area Express)**. However, there is a general lack of access to regional transit in the South Bay area. There are insufficient transit options for the existing local customer base to access the corridor – especially from San Pedro. This has ingrained an **over-dependence on the automobile** for even the shortest of trips. Moreover, the South Bay and Peninsula are disproportionately low on benefiting from future County-wide transit projects.

Regional Transit Access (Metro Bus)

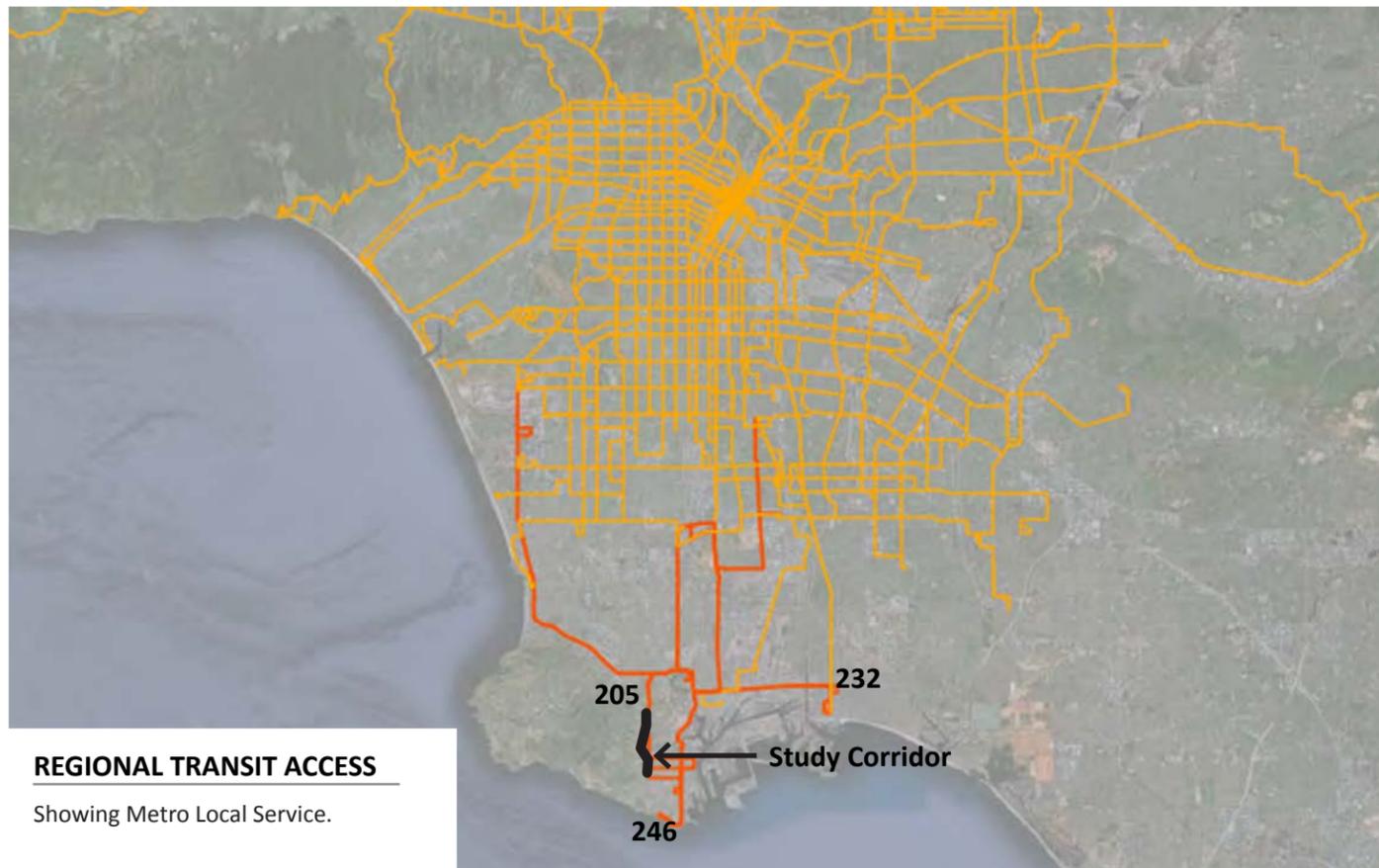


METRO BUS 205 connects San Pedro to the Blue Line/Green Line station at the 105 Freeway in Willowbrook, providing access to the regional transit system. **METRO BUS 205** connects San Pedro to the Blue Line/Green Line station at the 105 freeway (In Willowbrook), providing access to the regional transit system. **METRO BUS 205** has headways of approximately 25 minutes on weekends and hourly on the weekend. **METRO BUS 246** provides the next closest access down Pacific Avenue in San Pedro. It's too distant to serve the corridor **METRO BUS 232** provides access along PCH connecting LAX to Long Beach



EXISTING TRANSIT CONDITIONS

Showing rail, bus, and local shuttle.



REGIONAL TRANSIT ACCESS

Showing Metro Local Service.

Regional Transit Access (MAX)



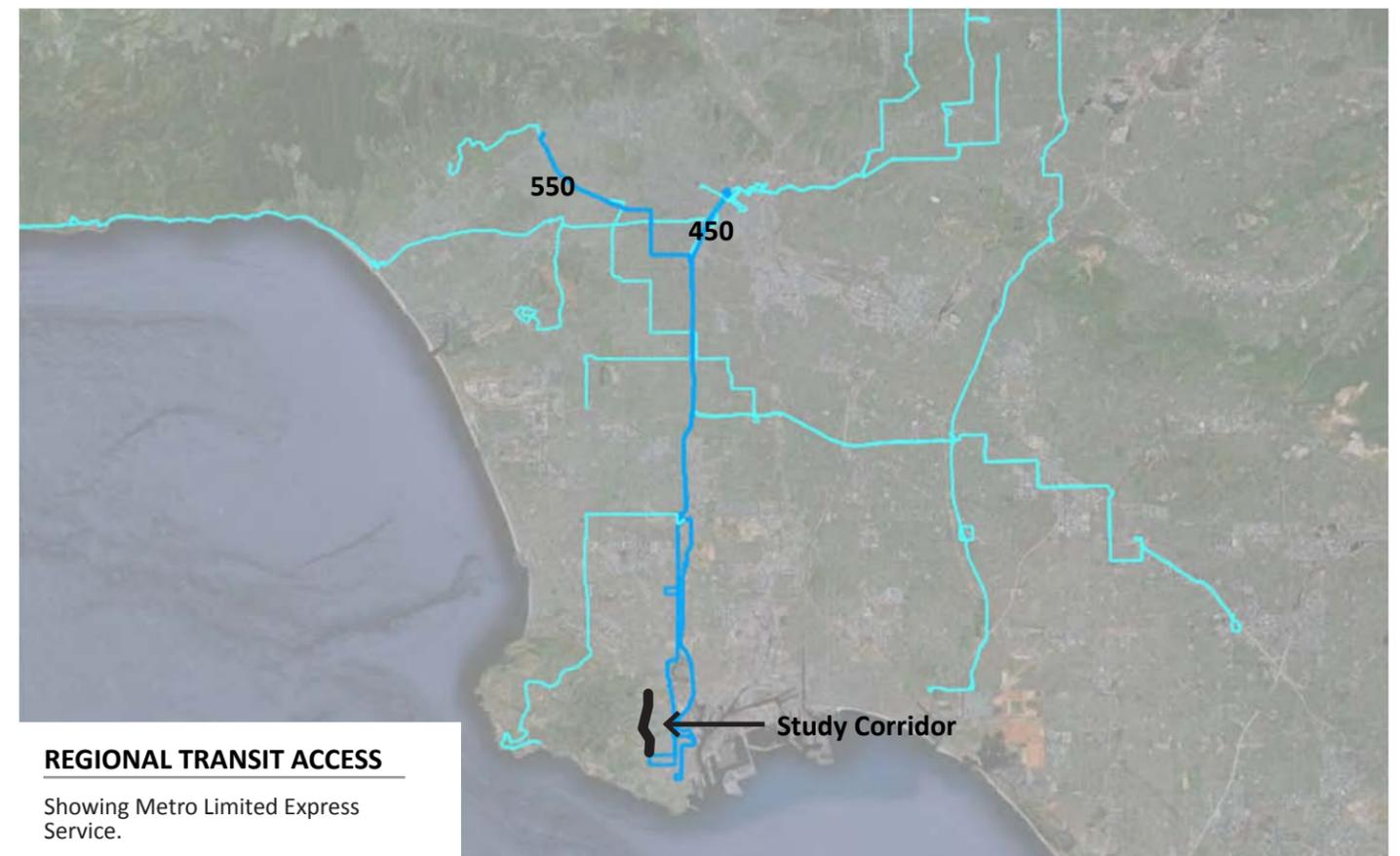
MAX was specifically designed to “address the commuting needs of South Bay residents who work in the El Segundo employment center.” **MAX offers three routes** through the South Bay and operates during the morning and afternoon peak commuting hours. Torrance Transit acts as the lead agency for MAX. **Route 3** connects South San Pedro via Western Avenue to El Segundo. **Route 3x** connects South San Pedro via the 110 and 405 freeways to El Segundo. Both route 3 and 3x provide **four ride options**, each in the morning and afternoon rush hours. The likelihood of future collaboration may be uncertain as “The City of Rancho Palos Verdes has decided to withdraw from the MAX program effective 6/30/2011.” As a result, **Line 2** that provided service to the interior of the peninsula, was truncated at Pacific Coast Highway.



Regional Transit Access (Metro Limited Express)



Metro operates two **LIMITED EXPRESS** bus routes in the vicinity of the Corridor. Although primarily targeting rush-hour commuters, both services operate throughout the day (not rush hour only). **ROUTE 550** connects West San Pedro, south of the corridor, to the Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood. **ROUTE 450** connects south San Pedro to downtown Los Angeles. **Neither the 450 or the 550 provide any kind of access to the heart of the corridor.**



Local Transit Access (PVPTA)

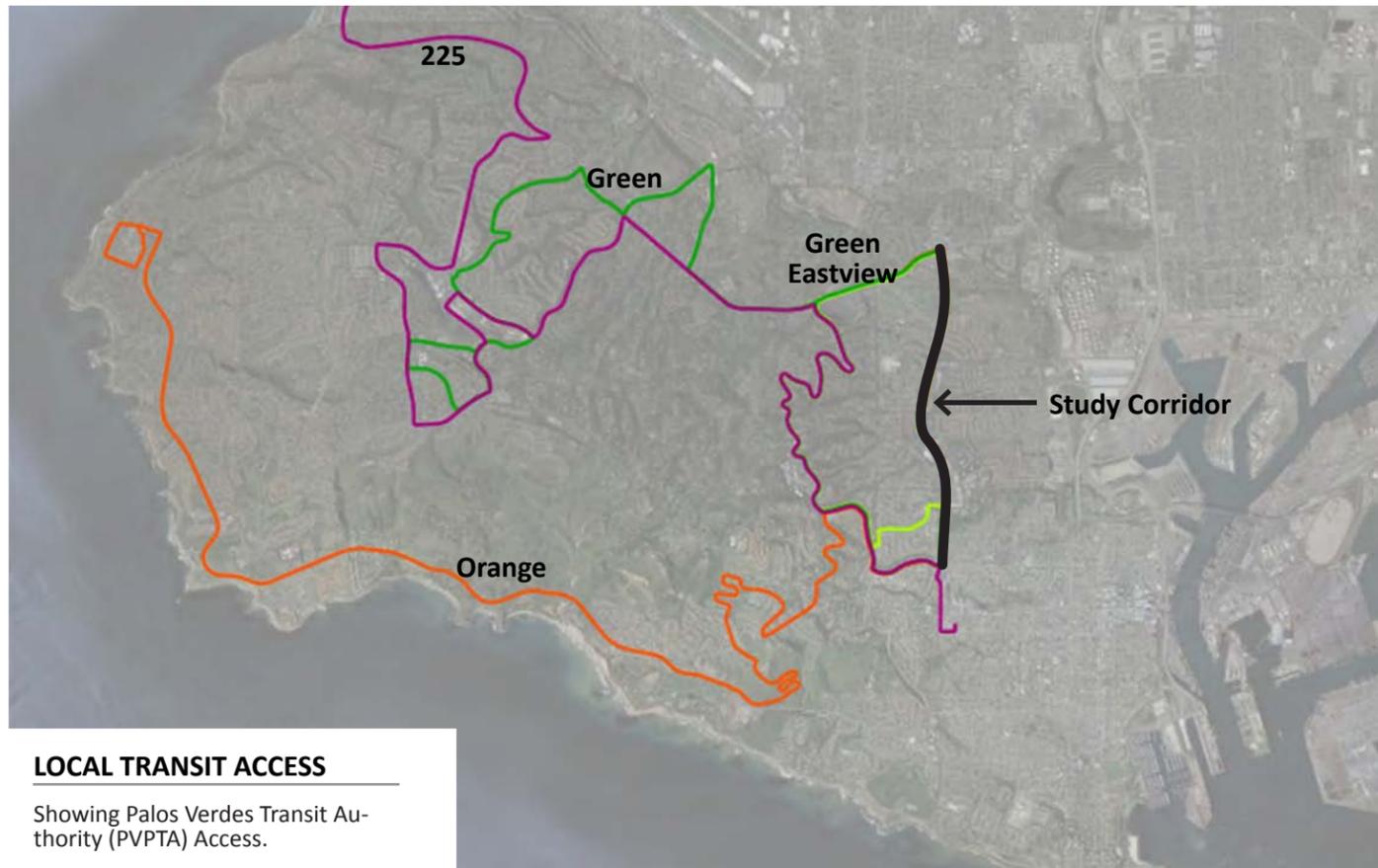


PVPTA provides **weekday service** to local destinations in the Palos Verdes Peninsula. **4 routes** of PVPTA provide service to the corridor – Orange, Green, Green Eastview, and 225. **Orange route** provides morning and afternoon service specifically targeting peninsula schools. **Green Eastview** operates on a loop in the morning and afternoon connecting Western Ave to Miraleste Plaza. **Green Route** operates throughout the weekday providing access to several destinations in the interior of the peninsula. **Route 225** provides all-day service connecting the corridor to the north-eastern end of the peninsula and destinations along the interior.

Local Transit Access (DASH)

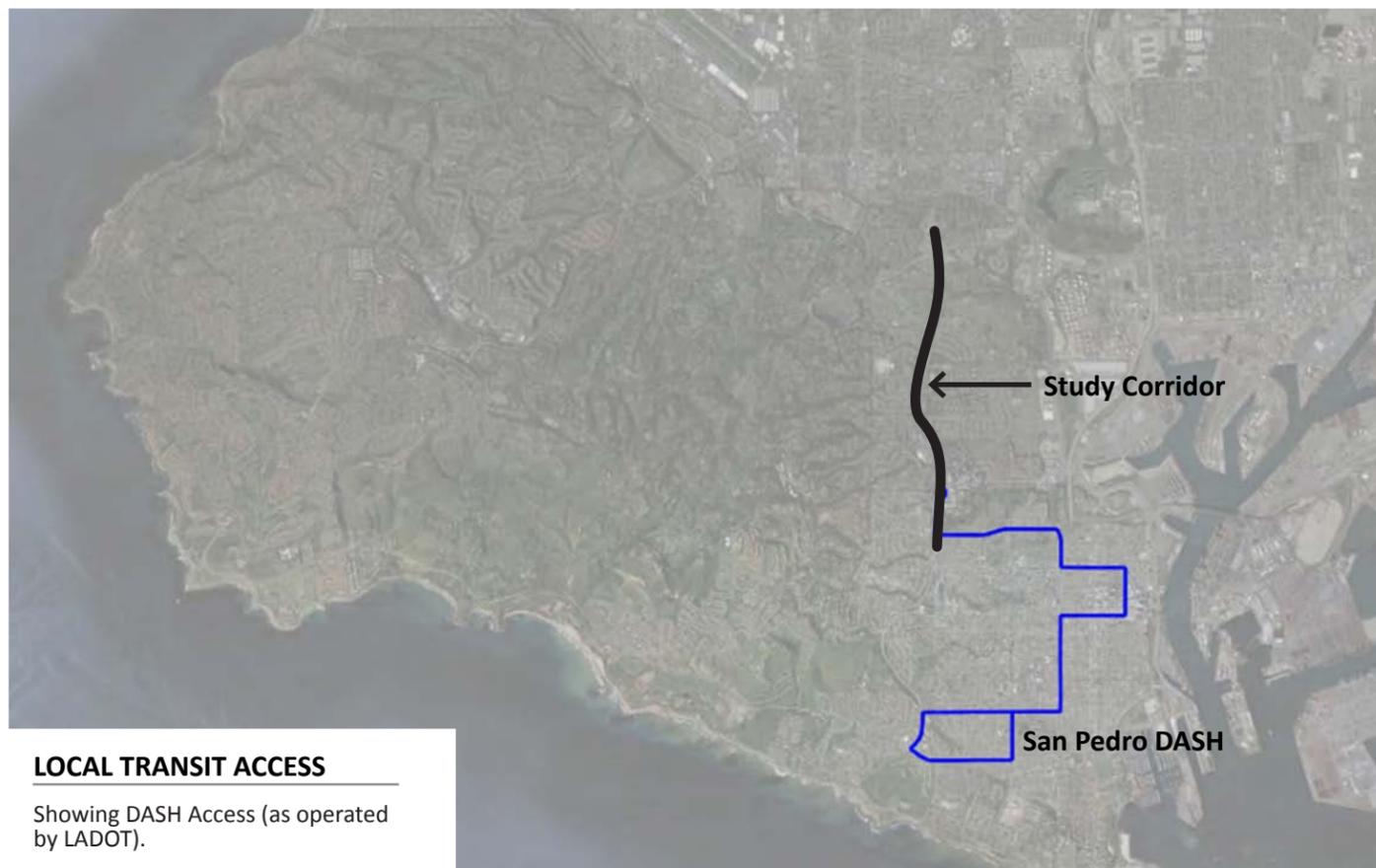


DASH is operated by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT). DASH San Pedro provides **daily service** including holidays connecting the southern end of the corridor to south and downtown San Pedro.



LOCAL TRANSIT ACCESS

Showing Palos Verdes Transit Authority (PVPTA) Access.

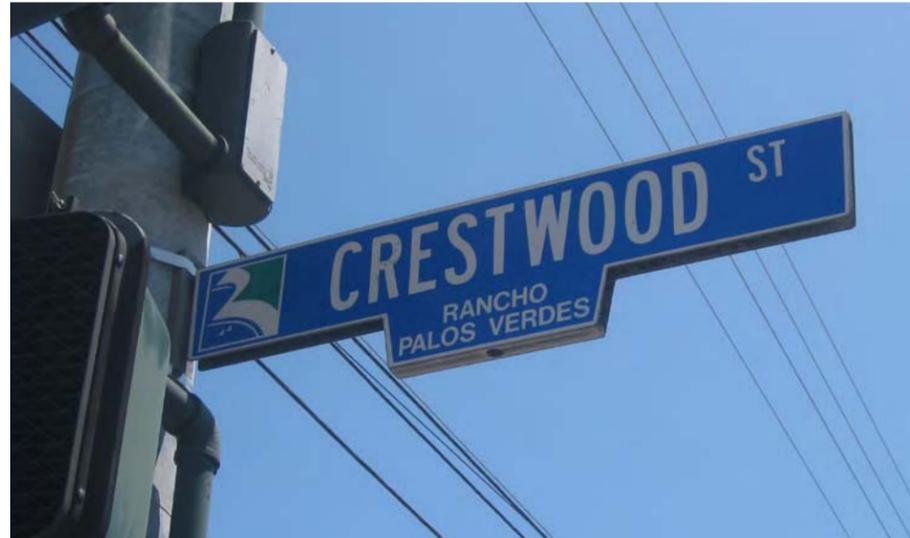


LOCAL TRANSIT ACCESS

Showing DASH Access (as operated by LADOT).

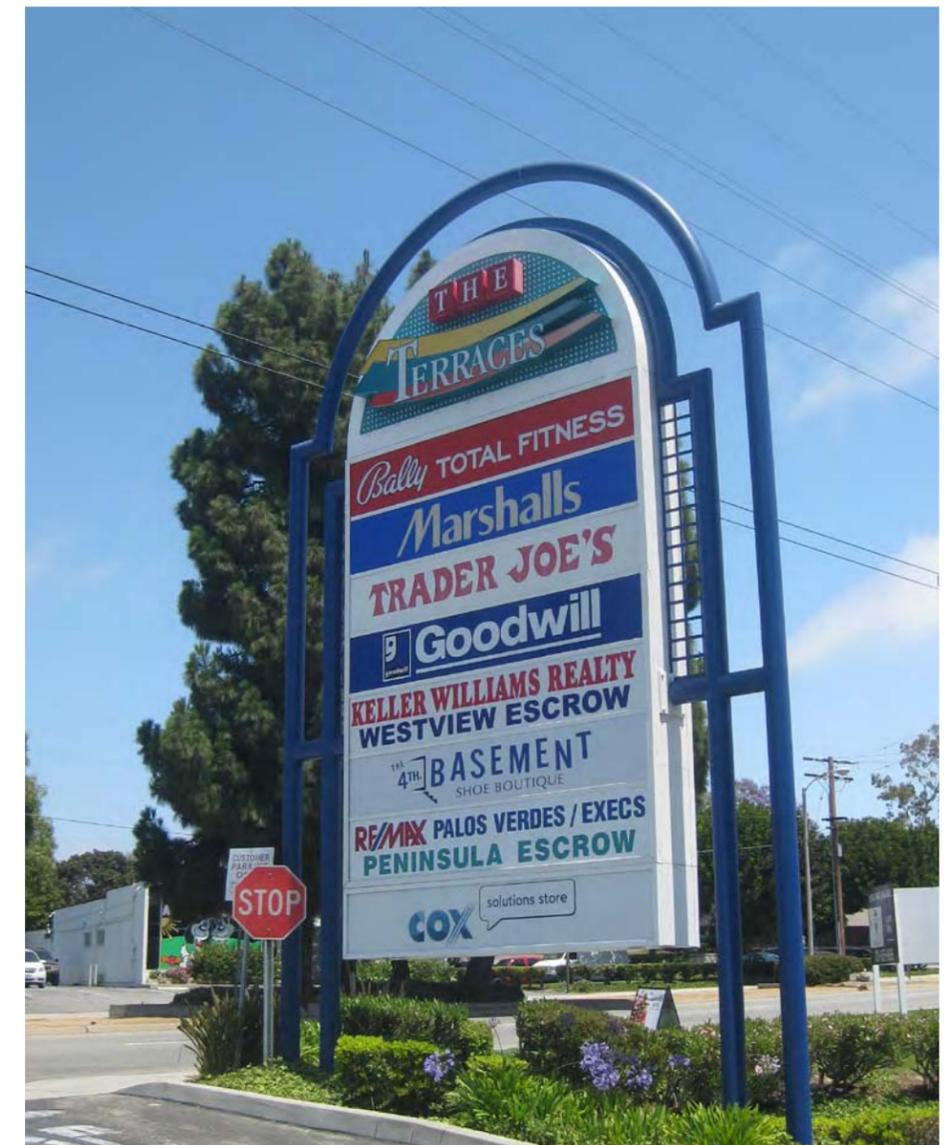
2.5 Branding and Signage

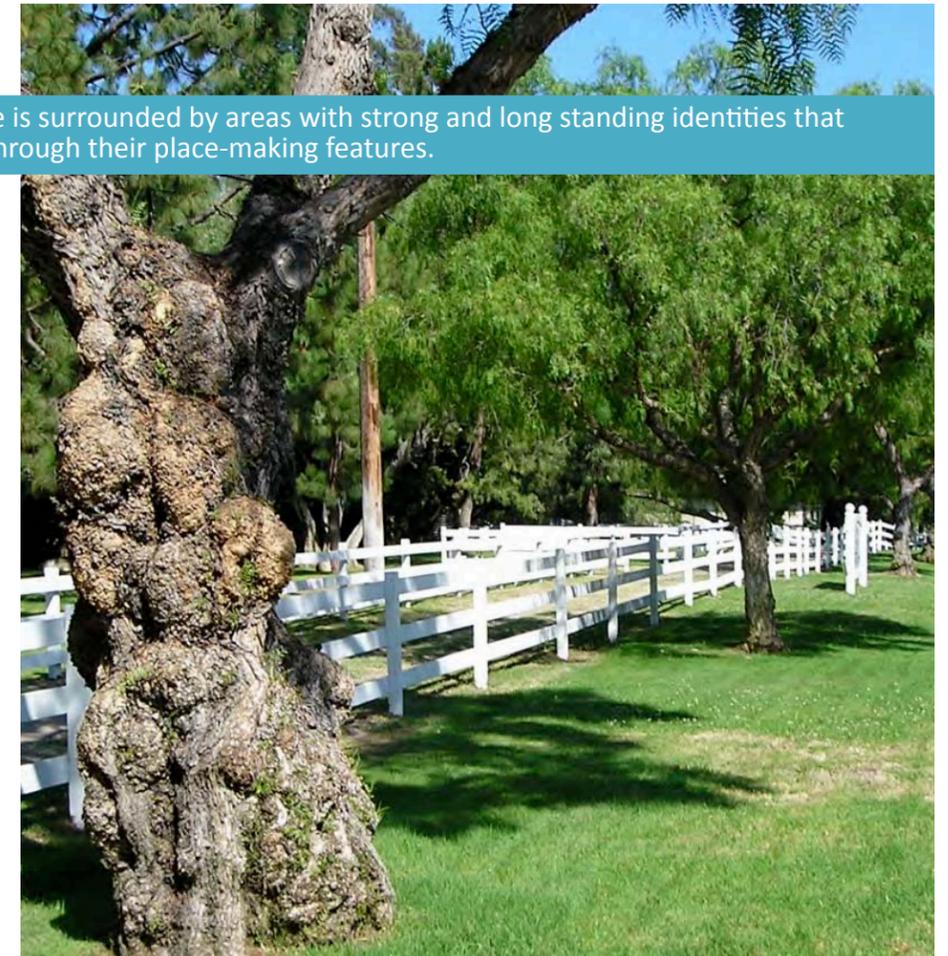
Western Avenue has little announcement of arrival into the commercial district (southern segment). Vehicular signage and pedestrian signage are rudimentary and do not provide any answers to the typical questions that visitors have, “Where should I go?” and “How do I get there?” The identity of Western Avenue should reflect the diversity and energy of its destinations and adjoining communities. Rancho Palos Verdes’ adjoining communities provide a range of design references. Rolling Hills has a rustic and equestrian feel. The quiet sophistication of Spanish colonial is found in high Palos Verdes. San Pedro is imbued with a nautical ambience. From this milieu will emerge an identity for the corridor that is both unique and immediately recognizable. South Lake Avenue in Pasadena has taken dramatic steps to brand an entire corridor along a theme, complete with its own website and marketing materials (www.southlakeavenue.org). The operational structure of a Business Improvement District can facilitate these programs.



One stakeholder on the vision committee romantically referred to Western Avenue as the “Boulevard of Blue Dreams.” This theme can build on the larger story of Western Avenue – the only street in the region that connects the mountains to the ocean – and provide the framework for a comprehensive corridor-wide identity.

Public art is another opportunity that can pay quick dividends in creating a themed identity for the corridor. The northern segment, which is necessarily auto-oriented, can play host to art installations that are monumentally scaled to engage quick-moving automobiles. The southern segment can have public art installations strategically located within the planned network of special places. Chapter 3 provides additional concepts on public art, both temporary and permanent.





Western Avenue is surrounded by areas with strong and long standing identities that are reinforced through their place-making features.

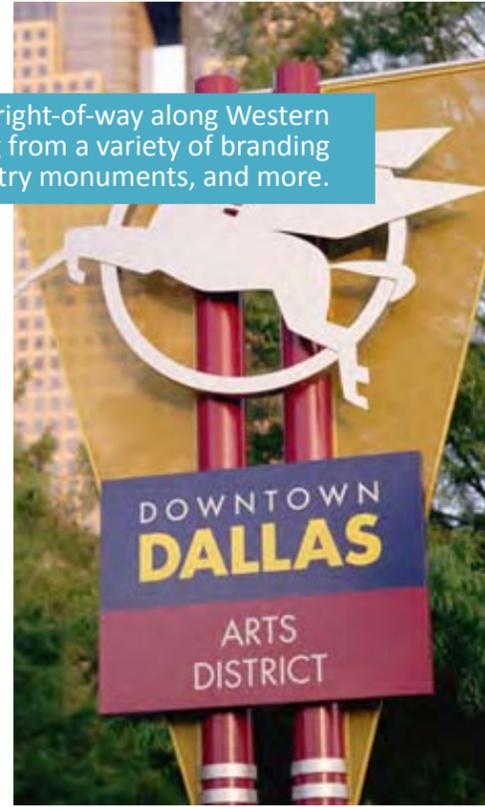
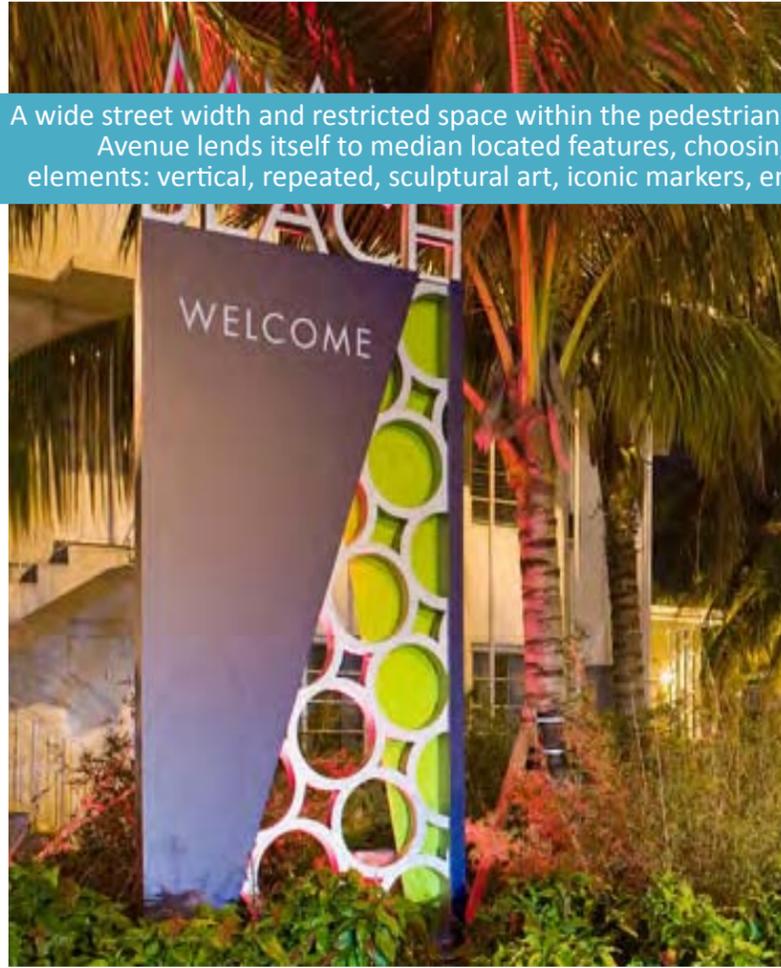


Palos Verdes Estates: Mediterranean/Spanish

San Pedro: Nautical/Maritime

Rolling Hills Estates: Equestrian

A wide street width and restricted space within the pedestrian right-of-way along Western Avenue lends itself to median located features, choosing from a variety of branding elements: vertical, repeated, sculptural art, iconic markers, entry monuments, and more.





To create a memorable and lasting identity for Western Avenue, a series of placemaking features such as signage and streetscape elements needs to be introduced.





1 Western Avenue at Summerland Avenue, view north



2 Western Avenue at Crestwood Street, view north



3 Western Avenue at Capitol Drive, view north



4 Western Avenue at Caddington Drive, view south



1 Summerland Avenue at Western Avenue, view west



2 Crestwood Street at Western Avenue, view east



3 Capitol Drive at Western Avenue, view west



5 Western Avenue at Toscanini Drive, view south



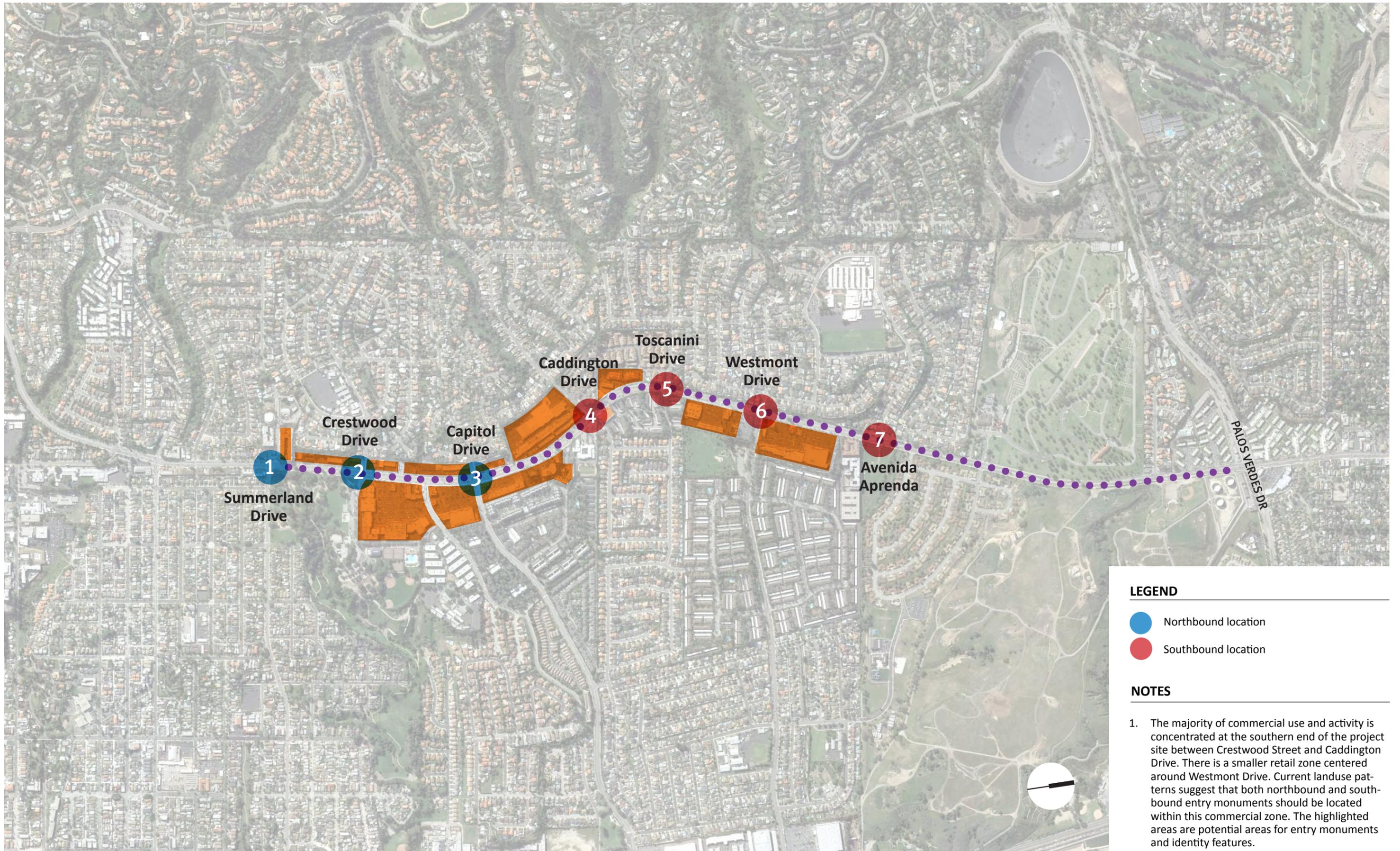
6 Western Avenue at Westmont Drive, view south



6 Westmont Drive at Western Avenue, view west



7 Western Avenue at Avenida Aprenda, view south



LEGEND

- Northbound location
- Southbound location

NOTES

1. The majority of commercial use and activity is concentrated at the southern end of the project site between Crestwood Street and Caddington Drive. There is a smaller retail zone centered around Westmont Drive. Current landuse patterns suggest that both northbound and southbound entry monuments should be located within this commercial zone. The highlighted areas are potential areas for entry monuments and identity features.



1. At Palos Verdes Drive N and Western Ave



2. At Summerland Drive and Western Ave



LEGEND

- ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● Project Area
- ➔ Regional Access
- - - ➔ Neighborhood Access

NOTES

1. There is little sense of arrival or identity for the City of Rancho Palos Verdes at any of its regional or neighborhood access points.



MATCHLINE



2.6 Precedents of Great Streets and Places

Great boulevards do not arise in a vacuum. They evolve as a consequence of their own unique context, the lessons they learn from others, and most importantly the proactive and deliberate intentions of stakeholders who have an aspirational vision of the future. Toward that end, our approach toward recommending improvements along Western Avenue stressed two primary themes:

Integrate with and enhance what already exists. Learn from precedents and past experience.



The team analyzed and reviewed several successful corridors in the region to help understand what made them appealing. In almost all cases the following five characteristics emerged as the qualities that made these boulevards special:

1. Strong Street Walls

A street wall is the implied “wall” which is created when buildings are built right up at the front property edge along the street. The street-facing walls of the individual buildings collectively give rise to a street wall, and this element of a street’s experience is usually the most defining memory of a street. The boulevards that were analyzed all had strong street walls that clearly defined and engaged the public realm.



2. Active Ground Floors

Vibrancy of street life always correlates to the presence of active ground floor uses in buildings located along the street. These uses draw visitors and provide the foot traffic that is critical to a successful boulevard. Usually, these ground level activities are retail-oriented (or food venues), but do not always have to be. Galleries and theatres are good examples of non-retail active uses.

3. Special Places

All corridors we studied at had a clear network of special places. These were plazas or parks or paseos that served as the heart of a cluster of destinations. They provided places of rest, pause, and community, and served as the fulcrum of activity. Special places provide a sense of discovery and respite from the busy street.

4. Enhanced Quality of Public Realm

The public realm of a place, at its most basic, is its outdoor experience and the memories it creates. It is the spaces between buildings, the milieu in which the built environment grows and evolves. It is its streets, plazas, parks, alleys, and informal gathering spaces. It is what gives a place its character and its identity. Successful corridors and places make efforts to elevate the quality of the public realm and pedestrian experience beyond the ordinary (via signage, vegetation, hardscape, street, furniture, lighting, among others).

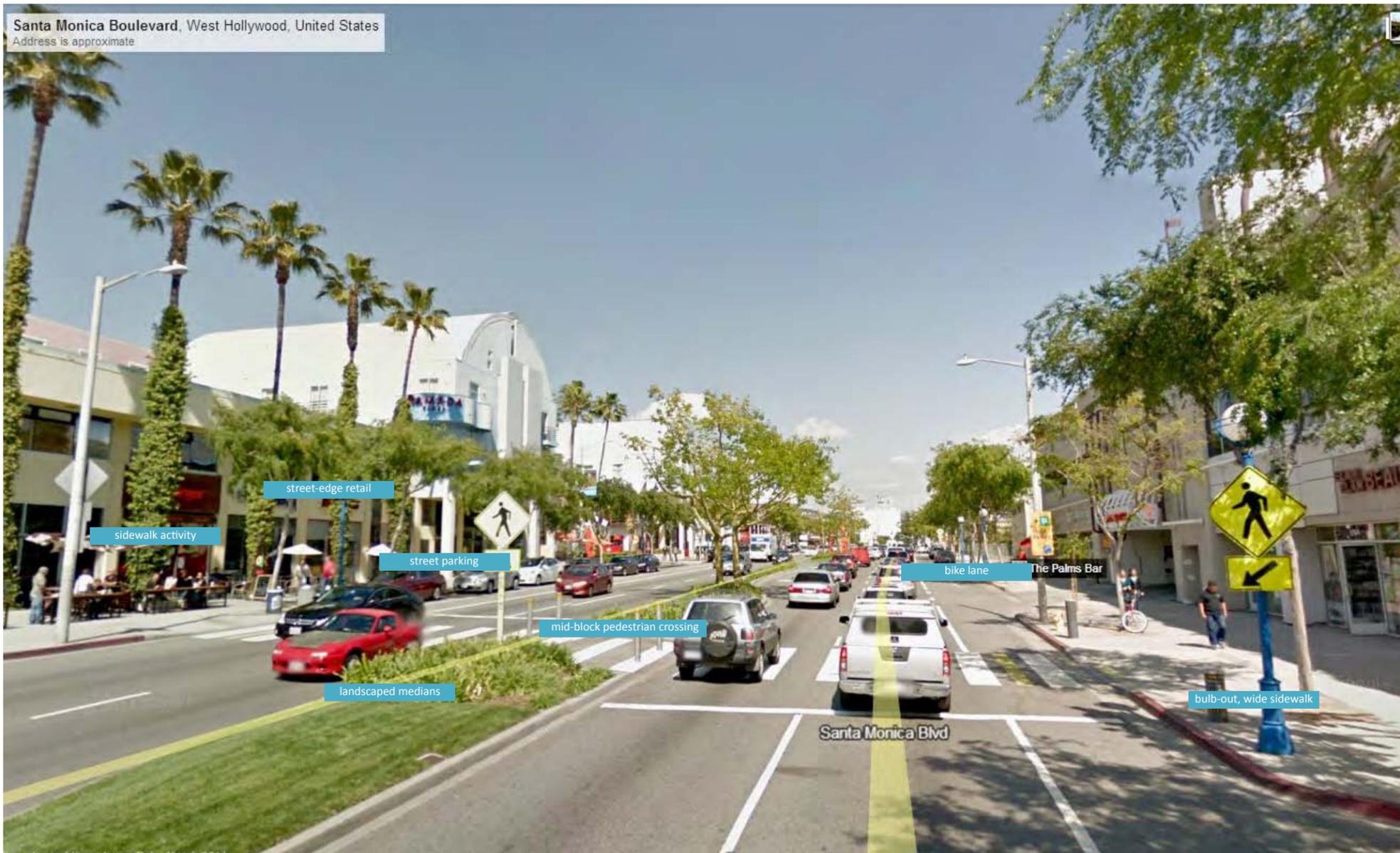
5. Pedestrian Experience is Primary

The experience of the pedestrian in the precedents studied outranked all others. This approach is critical for commercial corridors because foot traffic is the economic engine that drives street businesses. Every opportunity to improve the pedestrian experience was sought and achieved (by widening sidewalks, introducing crosswalks at corners and mid-block locations, public art, and signage).





Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, United States
Address is approximate



street-edge retail

sidewalk activity

street parking

mid-block pedestrian crossing

landscaped medians

bike lane The Palms Bar

bulb-out, wide sidewalk

Santa Monica Blvd

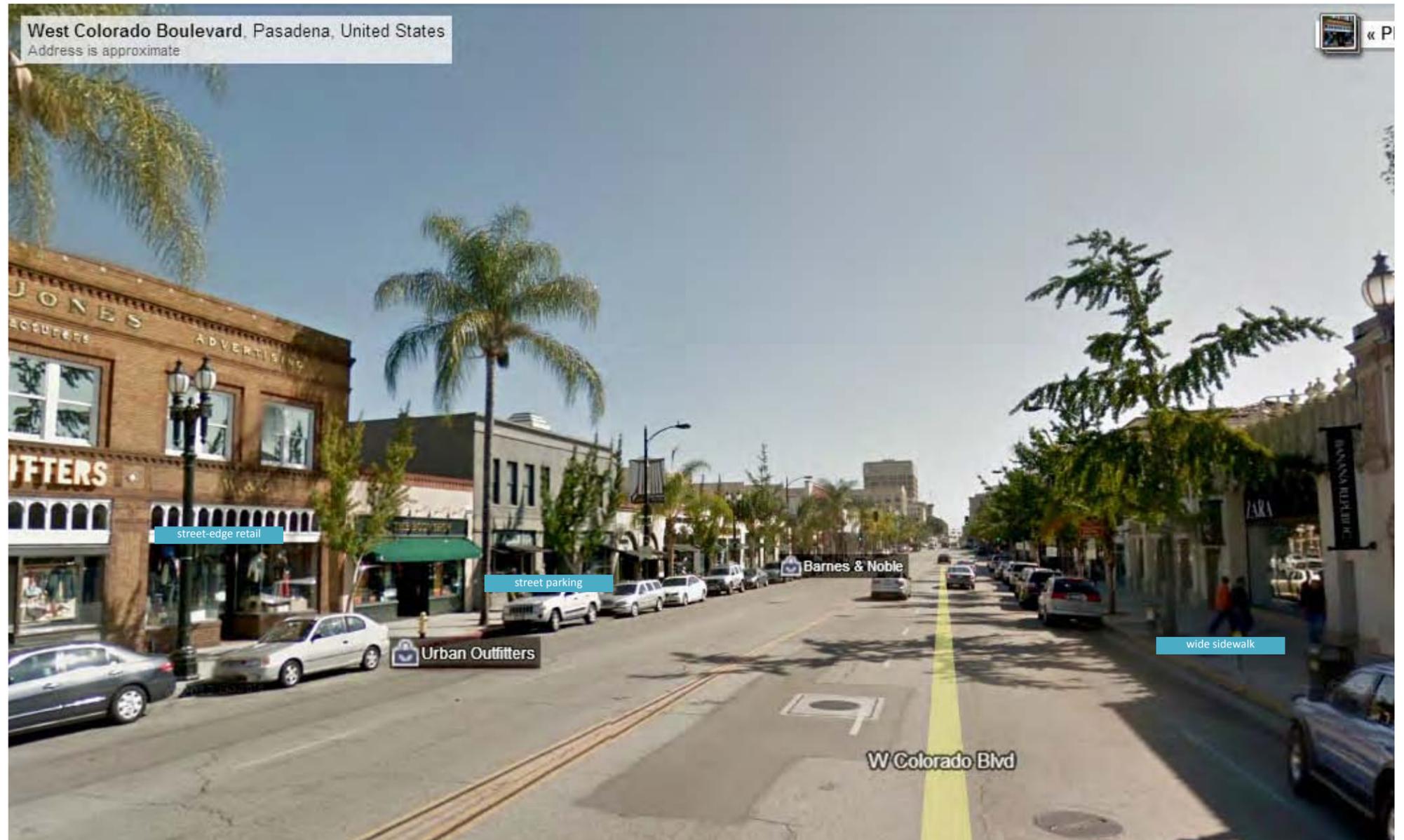
Santa Monica Blvd, West Hollywood, CA

High-density, multi-family housing surrounds boulevard, providing large consumer base. Proposed transit overlay zone encourages mixed-use development along boulevard. Dedicated bicycle lanes exist along boulevard's west end; bike parking throughout. Landscaped medians feature drought-resistant plants; street trees planted with gap-graded soil that allows roots to grow and access air and water without lifting sidewalks. The boulevard's medians used to showcase sculptures.



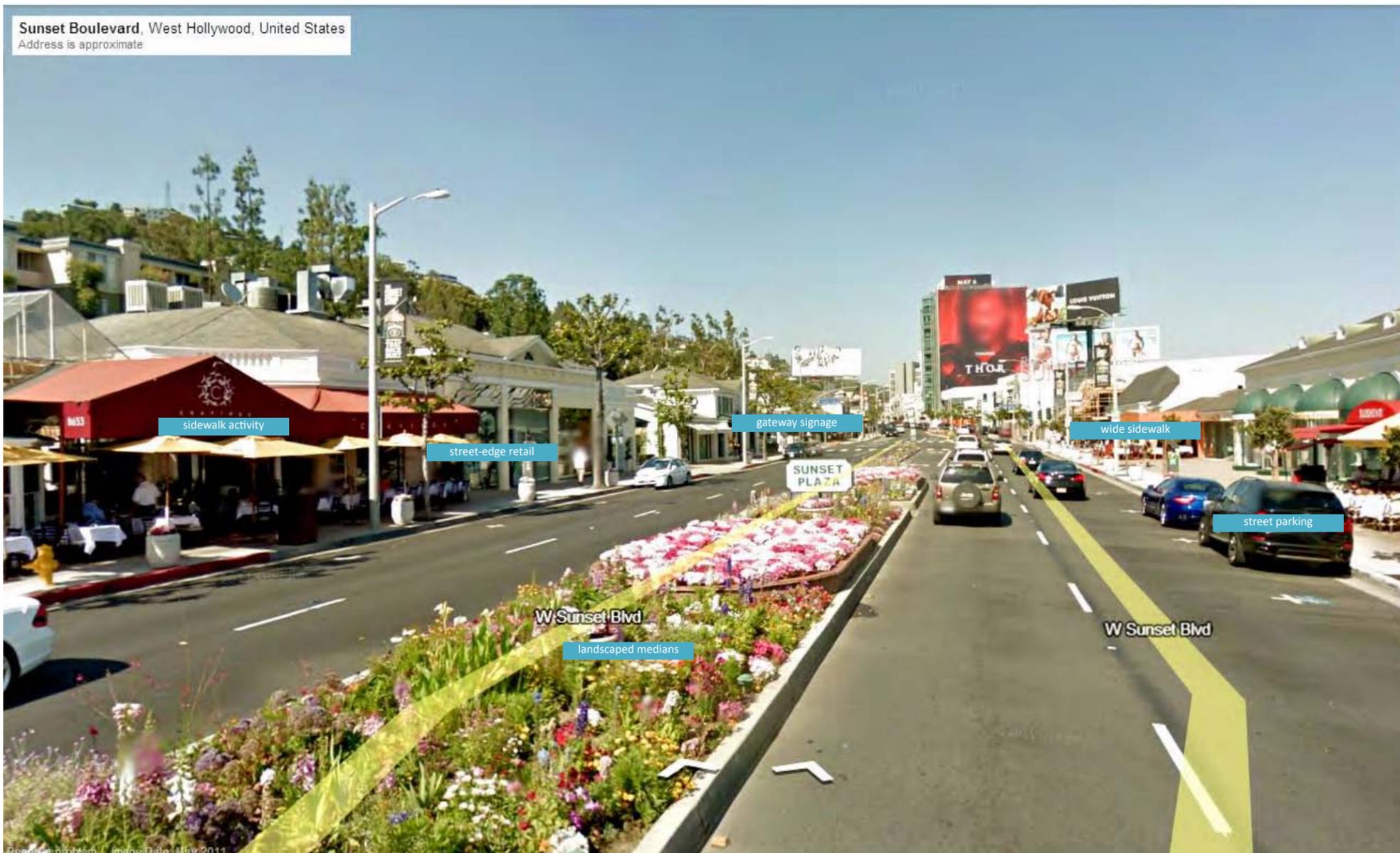
Colorado Blvd, Pasadena, CA

Old Pasadena has seen great success in recent years with a multi-pronged approach to activating Colorado Boulevard and its adjoining alleys. The boulevard displays a strong street wall with a mix of historic and contemporary buildings. A strategic parking strategy has eliminated the need to provide on-site parking and instead consolidates this in public garages built on the blocks behind the boulevard. Unlike Western Avenue, Colorado Boulevard in Old Pasadena has no surface parking located on prime street frontage.





Sunset Boulevard, West Hollywood, United States
Address is approximate



sidewalk activity

street-edge retail

gateway signage

SUNSET PLAZA

wide sidewalk

street parking

W Sunset Blvd

landscaped medians

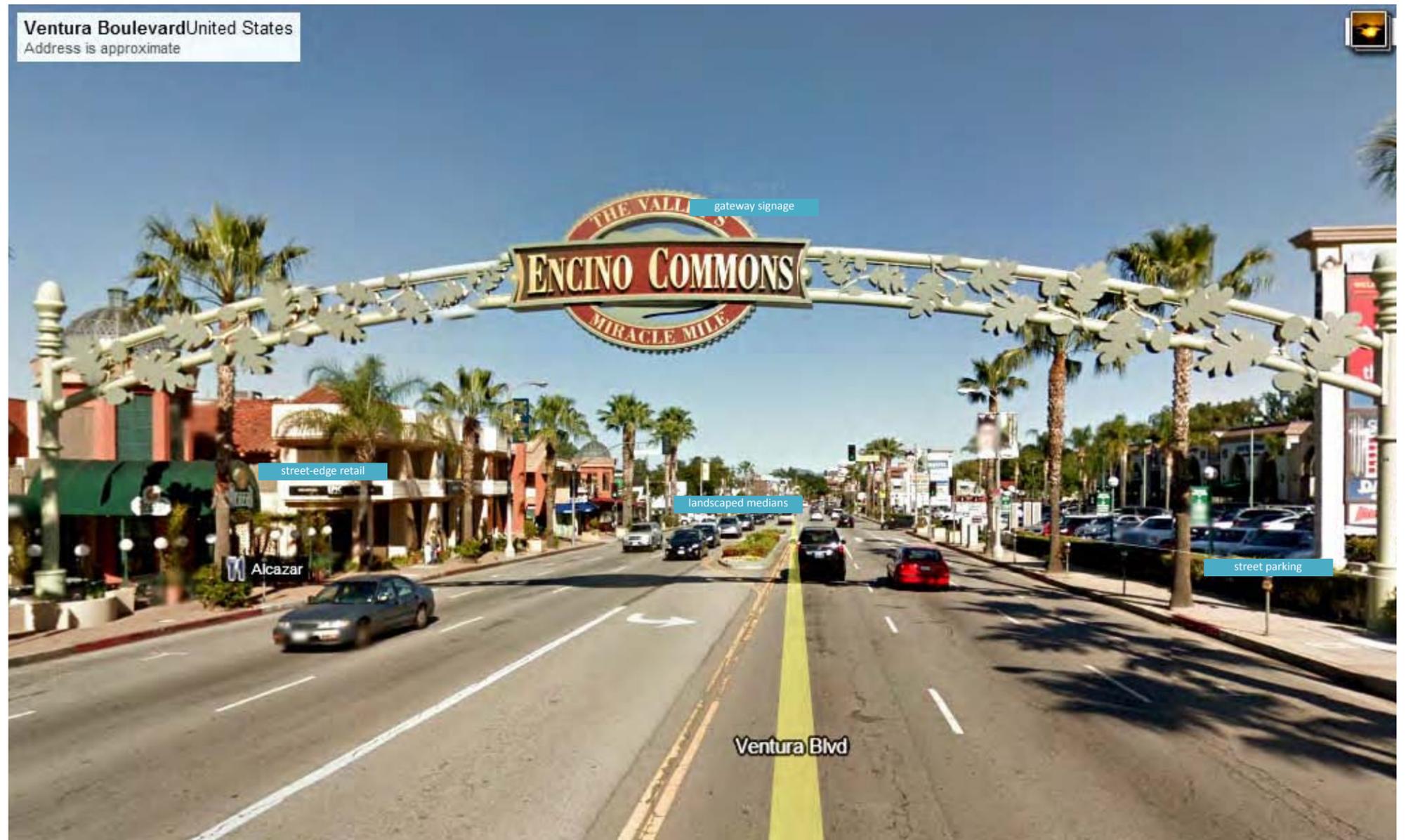
W Sunset Blvd



Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA



Ventura Boulevard United States
Address is approximate



Ventura Blvd, Encino, CA



594 Pine Avenue, Long Beach, United States
Address is approximate



branding/signage

mix of uses along street

RadioShack
bulb-out, wide sidewalk

street parking

W Cereza Way



Pine Ave, Long Beach, CA

Significant investments have been and continue to be made in the public realm of the Avenue. These have improved streetscape, signage, lighting, and infrastructure. These improvements have in turn set the stage for private reinvestment in the corridor, with several recent mixed-use developments coming online (housing above ground level retail).