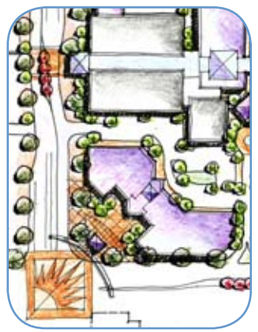

Katella + Los Alamitos
COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS PLAN

JUNE 30, 2010

COMPASS BLUEPRINT PROGRAM

This is a project for the City of Los Alamitos with funding provided by the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) Compass Blueprint Program. Compass Blueprint assists Southern California cities and other organizations in evaluating planning options and stimulating development consistent with the region's goals. Compass Blueprint tools support visioning efforts, infill analyses, economic and policy analyses, and marking and communication programs.

The preparation of this report has been financed in part through grant(s) from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) through the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) in accordance with the provisions under the Metropolitan Planning Program as set forth in Section 104(f) of Title 23 of the U.S. Code.

COMPASS BLUEPRINT STRATEGY

In 2001, SCAG started a visioning process that culminated in a regional strategy to accommodate the coming growth. This strategy, called "Compass Blueprint" promotes a stronger link between region wide transportation and land use planning and encourages creative, forward-thinking, and sustainable development solutions that fit local needs and support shared regional values. The strategy is broadly based on the following four key "Compass Principles."

Principle 1: Improve Mobility

Principle 2: Foster Livability in All Communities

Principle 3: Enable Prosperity for All People

Principle 4: Promote Sustainability for Future Generations

Beginning in 2005, SCAG initiated the implementation phase of Compass Blueprint and began partnering with jurisdictions in Southern California to realize this growth vision on the ground. To date, over 50 demonstration projects have been conducted that exemplify the goals shared by the Compass Blueprint and local communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was a collaborative effort involving the City of Los Alamitos, SCAG, and the consultant team. Additionally, representatives from the following organizations and jurisdictions participated in one or all stages of this demonstration project:

- Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)
- Rossmoor (unincorporated community)
- Los Alamitos Medical Center
- Los Alamitos Chamber of Commerce
- Los Alamitos Museum
- Residents, employees, and businesses who live and work in the City

This report is the product of their efforts and interests to make the City of Los Alamitos a better place to live.

PRIMARY CONTACTS

Southern California Association of Governments
818 W. Seventh Street, 12th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017 | 213.236.1800
Contact: Pria Hidisyan, Senior Regional Planner

City of Los Alamitos
3191 Katella Avenue
Los Alamitos, CA 90720 | 562.431.3538
Contact: Steve Mendoza, Community Development Director

The Planning Center
1580 Metro Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626 | 714.966.9220
Contact: Colin Drukker, Senior Planner/Project Manager

Fehr & Peers Transportation Consultants
15707 Rockfield Boulevard, Suite 105
Irvine, CA 92618 | 949.859.3200
Contact: Jeff Heald, PE, PTOE, Senior Associate

Katella + Los Alamitos

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Katella
Los Alamitos

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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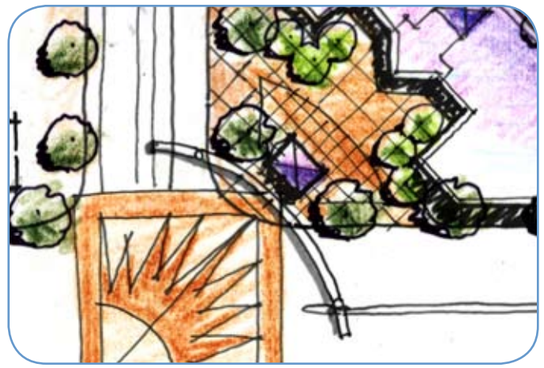
Katella + Los Alamitos

1. Executive Summary



LOS ALAMITOS CORRIDORS

The Katella and Los Alamitos corridors have the bones of great corridors. Key civic, institutional, and commercial anchors dot the corridors. The rights-of-way are of sufficient width to accommodate multiple modes of transportation while preserving efficient travel for the large volumes of traffic that use the corridors to access local destinations, adjacent cities, and nearby freeways. Additionally, OCTA is planning transportation investments that could influence development and activity along the corridors.

PROJECT GOALS

Through this demonstration project, Los Alamitos has the opportunity to revitalize the two corridors and grab control of the City's future. This demonstration project analyzes and outlines actions the City can take to capitalize on the forthcoming Bus Rapid Transit routes/stations, stimulate new private investment and redevelopment, and ultimately create great places in Los Alamitos.

In addition to the Compass Blueprint Principles (see inside cover), the demonstration project is driven by six specific project goals:

1. Enhance the City's sense of identity along the corridors and at key gateways.
2. Create a central, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly place for those who live, work, learn, and shop in Los Alamitos.
3. Create a reason for people to turn left or right from Katella Avenue onto Los Alamitos Boulevard.
4. Consolidate scattered office, medical, retail, and service uses into logical districts and nodes.
5. Develop strategies for the reuse of key commercial centers and other underutilized parcels and incentivize lot consolidation.
6. Maximize the multimodal nature of the corridors and capitalize on future BRT investments.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The future of the Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard corridors will be determined largely by those who live, work, learn, and invest in Los Alamitos. The businesses, residents, developers, students, City staff, and City decisionmakers have the ability to change how these corridors look and function over the next 20 years.

As part of this demonstration project, the City interviewed key stakeholders, spoke with residents and others at the City's 50th Anniversary celebration, and conducted a public survey to learn about how people experience the corridors today and what people would like to see in the future. Additional outreach and public discussion took place at meetings with the Planning Commission, General Plan Committee, Stakeholders, and City Council.

CORRIDOR VISION

Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard are attractive corridors that bring people into Los Alamitos. The two streets host some of Southern California's most attractive and dynamic places to shop, work, live, and have fun.

The look and feel of the buildings, landscaping, signs, and spaces reflect the City's small town character while supporting successful businesses, a world-class medical center, unique shops and services, wonderful restaurants, and a wide range of places to live. The businesses provide the City with a diversity of tax revenue and fiscal support, helping ensure Los Alamitos is economically sustainable.

The streets are safe for everyone and every form of transportation—be they children, families, workers, or customers who walk, bike, ride transit, or drive along the corridors. Traveling by bicycle is easy and safe along Los Alamitos Boulevard and throughout much of the City. The corridors attract a large number of commuter and recreational riders living and working in Los Alamitos and those traveling along the nearby San Gabriel River Trail.

Katella Avenue offers landmark gateways that signal passage into and out of Los Alamitos. The uses are organized into attractive and logical clusters enabling the region's and City's residents to easily find what they want.

Los Alamitos Boulevard provides a central place for the residents, workers, and students of Los Alamitos to meet friends, stroll, enjoy great food, and shop. The Boulevard forms a downtown with walkable streets, great design, a mix of highly desirable uses, slow traffic, and plenty of parking concentrated in central lots or structures. It is the place that defines the popular image of Los Alamitos.

DESIGN CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

To achieve the vision for the Los Alamitos Commercial Corridors, a number of concepts and strategies are recommended.

STRATEGY #1: A PEDESTRIAN- AND BUSINESS-FRIENDLY BOULEVARD (see concepts to the right)

A redesign of the Los Alamitos Boulevard right-of-way recaptures the spaces dedicated to the car and gives it back to the pedestrian. Enlarged parkway and sidewalk areas create safe and inviting walking environments and creates opportunities for outdoor dining. A reduction in roadway space maintains the existing travel lanes while slowing down the speed of vehicular traffic along the Boulevard.

Slower traffic will not only create a safer environment, but will also give local businesses greater exposure to the passing cars. The narrowed roadway will connect businesses and spaces within the corridor while creating a town center and distinct identity for those who live, learn, work, and play in Los Alamitos.

STRATEGY #2: NEW CORRIDOR DISTRICTS

The creation of a new series of districts along Los Alamitos Boulevard, and especially along Katella Avenue, would help the City define itself internally, brand itself to those outside of Los Alamitos, and enhance the economic synergy amongst related land uses.

STRATEGY #3: PLAN FOR BUS RAPID TRANSIT

OCTA is planning a BRT line and two stations along Katella Avenue that will offer a combination of quicker, more frequent service and a large service area, to attract not only the transit-dependent rider, but also many discretionary riders (those who could easily travel by car) who work at or visit major employment centers such as the Medical Center.

STRATEGY #4: IMPROVE BIKEWAY SYSTEM

Improving bicycle connections to the San Gabriel River and Coyote Creek Trails, introducing new bikeways, and enhancing wayfinding signage and bike racks will create a comprehensive bike system that allows commuters, families, and students to safely and conveniently ride their bikes in Los Alamitos.

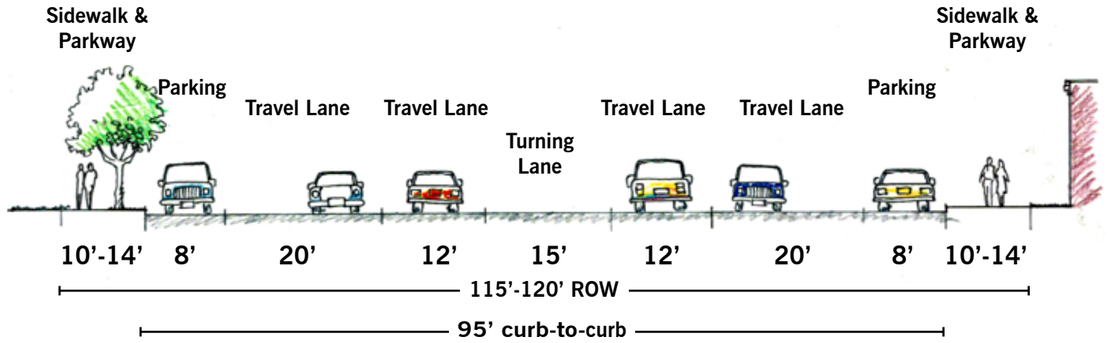
STRATEGY #5: PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES

The introduction of pedestrian bridges along the corridors could provide safe routes to school, alleviate traffic congestion points, and bolster the City's identity.

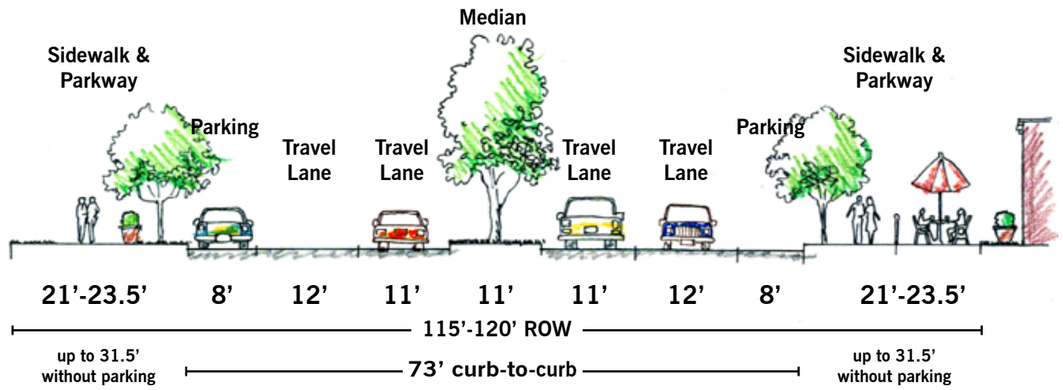
STRATEGY #6: REDESIGN AND REDEVELOP

The development and analysis of two conceptual plans for key sites along the corridor revealed that the existing property owners are in the best position to explore new development opportunities. Current commercial and office lease rates are too low to justify the construction of new development and acquisition of land by a brand new developer.

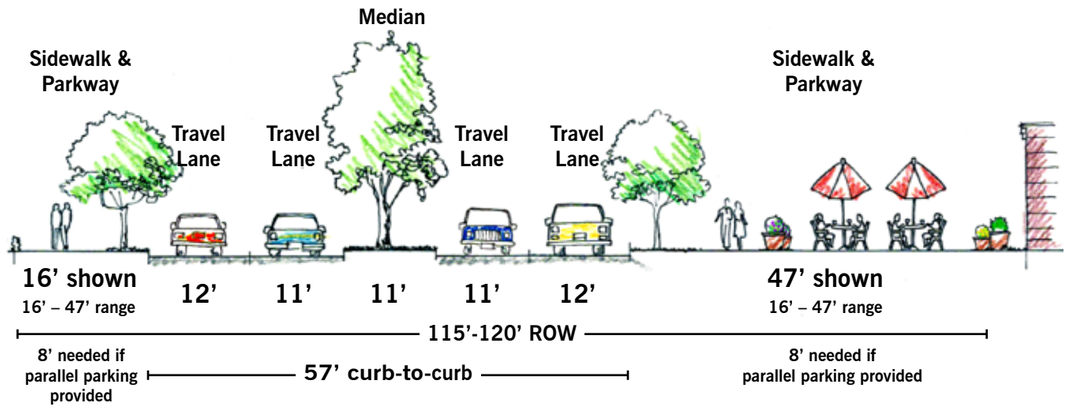
As the market improves, areas along the corridors could be redesigned and redeveloped to take advantage of the proposed roadway improvements. New uses and designs envision outdoor plaza and dining space; and new commercial, office, and potential hotel uses that leverage the existing homeware/hardware market niche and nearby medical center.



Los Alamitos Boulevard: Existing ROW



Los Alamitos Boulevard: Concept 1 - "Straight"



Los Alamitos Boulevard: Concept 2 - "Curvilinear"

Los Alamitos Boulevard Conceptual Cross-Sections

COMMERCIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

Existing architectural styles and building designs found in Los Alamitos represent an eclectic blend of architectural expressions, primarily characterized by a variety of "franchise modern" or "builder style" influences from the past 50 years. From the City's early days of incorporation, growth has resulted in no singular or dominant authentic architectural style. Instead, a variety of semi-Mediterranean architectural designs have gained a foothold, characterized by stucco-clad facades and red tile roofs.

The City desires to have a more cohesive image along the two corridors, particularly for their commercial buildings. But the City also wants to maintain flexibility and allow the property owner or developer to express their vision.

A set of commercial design guidelines is provided to expand upon the City's existing architectural design guidelines and demonstrate the art of building composition using pictures. Their primary function is to provide prospective architects, builders, and developers with a clear statement of the appropriate design direction for commercial development within the City of Los Alamitos. These guidelines address 11 different aspects of a commercial development's structure, appearance, layout, and function.

The guidelines can and should be implemented in any new construction. These guidelines also apply to existing development and should be implemented as improvements (incremental or comprehensive) are made to private and public buildings and spaces. The intent is to encourage creative individual architectural statements that, when viewed as a whole, produce an equally outstanding commercial district.

1. Massing and Form

2. Structure

7. Streetscape

8. Signage

3. Facade Components

4. Transitional Elements

9. Storefront Display

10. Building and Parking Location

5. Storefront Elements

6. Materials

11. Urban Open Space

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Los Alamitos would need to initiate two types of economic development strategies to implement plans for Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue: funding strategies and economic activity strategies.

FUNDING STRATEGIES AND OPTIONS

These strategies provide funding to construct and maintain public and private improvements and to provide incentives for developers and property owners to develop buildings and sites that implement the plans.

1. Community Redevelopment Agency
2. Assessment District
3. Specialized Assessment District
4. Business Improvement District
5. Landscaping and Lighting Maintenance District
6. General Fund
7. Grants

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY STRATEGIES

These strategies are the activities and actions—the "doing" part of economic development—that can be undertaken by City staff and the City's partners to increase economic activity along the two corridors.

1. Special Events
2. DIY Home Improvement
3. Branding and Marketing
4. Business Development and Attraction
5. Medical Services as an Anchor
6. Parking Strategy

NEXT STEPS

To realize the vision for the Los Alamitos commercial corridors and the City as a whole, this report recommends a series of steps and activities that should be taken within the next few years.

1. Incorporate the Corridors Report into the General Plan Update

The City of Los Alamitos will initiate a general plan update in the Fall of 2010. The principles and concepts contained in this report should be incorporated into the update process, specifically regarding the citywide vision, policies, and land use and circulation plans.

2. Adopt Commercial Design Guidelines

The City should adopt (by resolution) the commercial design guidelines on a citywide basis and apply them to all commercial and office properties.

3A. Meet with Property and Business Owners

The City should meet with property and business owners within the Boulevard District about the possibility of forming assessment and/or improvement districts. Once a certain amount of consensus is reached, the City could then form a Town Center Committee.

3B. Obtain Consumer Input

At the same time, the City could work with the existing businesses and others to obtain information about why people shop and dine in Los Alamitos and what they would like to see in a future town center.

4. Establish a Town Center Committee

Either as part of the general plan update or as a separate effort, the City should convene a Town Center Committee to guide changes to Los Alamitos Boulevard and its role as a town center. The Town Center Committee could also form the nucleus of a future business improvement district or similar entity.

5. Prepare an Area Plan, Revised Zoning District, or Specific Plan

Implementing the changes envisioned in this report could ultimately lead to the preparation of a targeted planning effort exclusively focused on the corridor(s). These efforts could take the form of an area plan, a revised zoning district, or a specific plan.

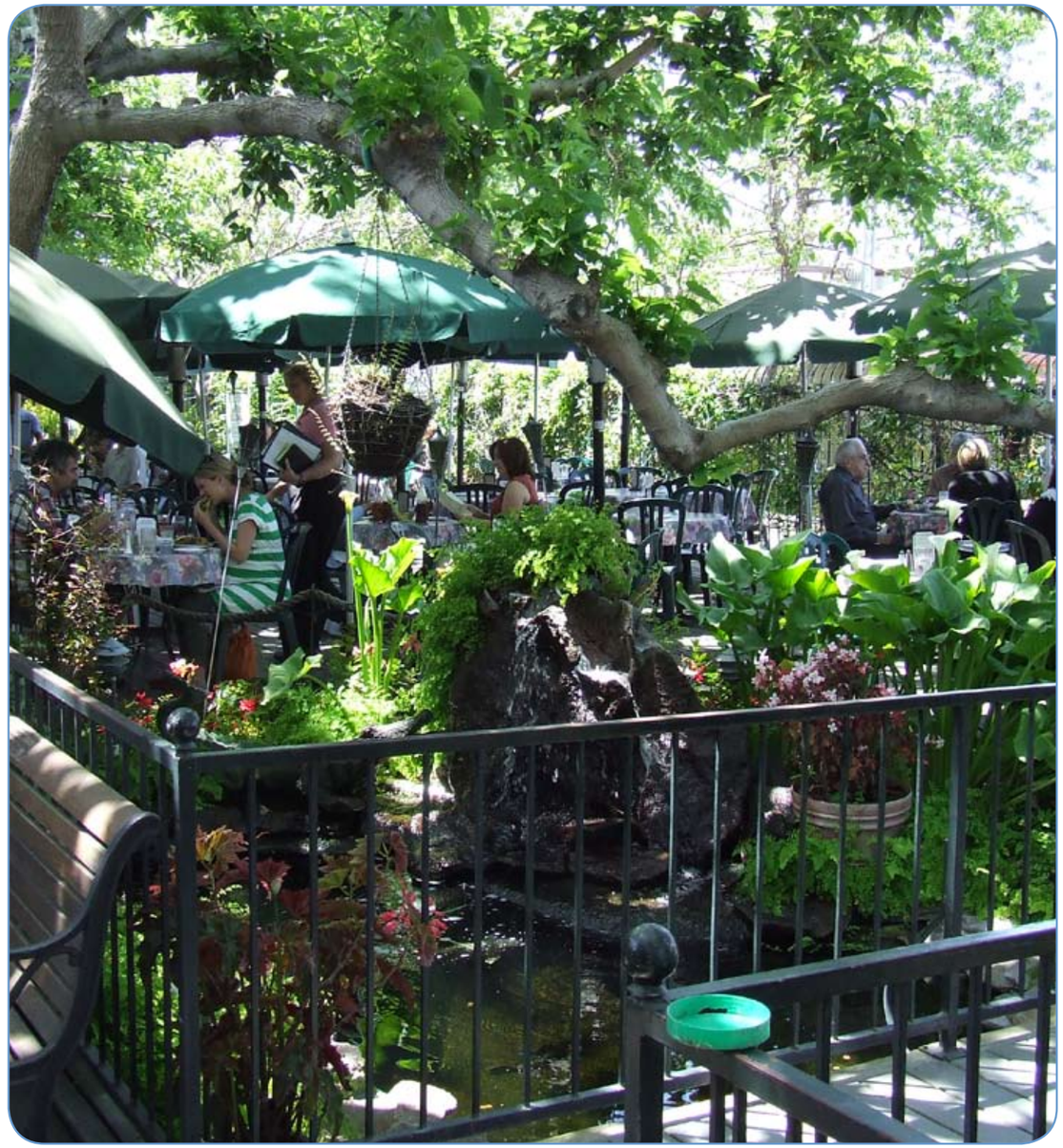
Area Plan. As part of the General Plan update, the City could develop an area plan or community plan for the Boulevard District or other parts of the corridors. An area plan would consist of refined policies and design guidance focused on a specific part or community of Los Alamitos. The area plan could contain specialized designations and a recommended land use plan.

Revised Zoning District. The City could, in place of or in addition to an area plan, revise and expand its Town Center Overlay (TC Overlay) District to the Boulevard District or a larger area along the corridors. Revisions to the district could include the removal of its overlay status, and instead the new district could replace the existing districts that are currently applied to the corridor areas.

Specific Plan. A specific plan is a kind of hybrid between an area plan and zoning district. It provides both the policy foundation of an area plan and the regulatory authority of a zoning district. The analysis that accompanies a specific plan is also usually more comprehensive and conclusive than that which is associated with an area plan or zoning district.

6. Form an Assessment and Improvement Districts

After the City receives direction through the previous steps, the assessment and/or improvement districts should be established.



Katella
Los Alamitos

2 INTRODUCTION

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2. Introduction

THE CITY OF LOS ALAMITOS

The City of Los Alamitos celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2010. In 1960, the City was, like much of Orange County, largely undeveloped. Over the next 50 years, Los Alamitos grew from approximately 3,400 residents to just over 12,000, never losing its small-town character. Despite being the second smallest city in Orange County, Los Alamitos contains a wide range of land uses, provides recreation spaces and services for nearly 50,000 individuals annually, and has developed not only one of the best school districts in Southern California, but also one of the best medical centers. The City's identity is founded on its high quality of life, excellent education, and a love of recreation.

The past 50 years has also seen large commercial areas annexed into other cities, leaving Los Alamitos with fewer revenue-generating opportunities and fewer places to gather. Additionally, the Joint Forces Training Base (originally commissioned as a Naval Reserve Air Base in 1942) consumes half of the land area in the City and cuts off any north–south connection east of Los Alamitos Boulevard and most east–west connections between Katella Avenue and Interstate 405.

LOS ALAMITOS CORRIDORS

As the City and surrounding region grew, two corridors—Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard— widened to serve the growing automobile traffic. Katella Avenue served primarily as a major inter- and intracounty east–west transportation corridor and Los Alamitos Boulevard provided key north–south connections to and from Interstates 405 and 605. Today, the intersection of these two corridors processes up to 123,000 automobiles per day. The corridors continue to be auto-oriented arterials and, despite hosting nearly all of the City's commercial development, offer few central nodes or gathering places for the residents, students, and workers of Los Alamitos.

The Katella and Los Alamitos corridors have the bones of great corridors. Key civic, institutional, and commercial anchors dot them. The rights-of-way are of sufficient width to accommodate multiple modes of transportation while preserving efficient travel for the large volumes of traffic that use the corridors to access local destinations, adjacent cities, and nearby freeways. Additionally, other agencies are planning transportation investments that could influence the corridor study area.

PROJECT GOALS

Through this demonstration project, Los Alamitos has the opportunity to revitalize the two corridors and grab control of the City's future. This demonstration project analyzes and outlines actions the City can take to capitalize on the forthcoming Bus Rapid Transit routes/stations, stimulate new private investment and redevelopment, and ultimately create great places in Los Alamitos.

In addition to the Compass Blueprint Principles (see inside cover), the demonstration project is driven by six specific project goals:

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4. Consolidate scattered office, medical, retail, and service uses into logical districts and nodes.

5. Develop strategies for the reuse of key commercial centers and other underutilized parcels and incentivize lot consolidation.

6. Maximize the multimodal nature of the corridors and capitalize on future BRT investments.

Figure 1. Regional Location

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Katella
Los Alamitos

SITE CONTEXT 3

3. Site Context

A comprehensive understanding of the corridors' context is essential to creating plans and strategies that will lead to meaningful and sustainable improvements. One must understand what it means to be in the City of Los Alamitos before one can plan what it will become. The analysis of the corridors' context is presented in eight categories.

1. **History and Culture**
2. **Project Boundaries and Context**
3. **Existing Land Use Patterns**
4. **Regulatory Setting**
5. **Mobility and Circulation**
6. **Public and Social Infrastructure**
7. **Community Structure**
8. **Economics and the Market**

HISTORY AND CULTURE

130 YEARS AGO: Bixby and Sugar Beets

In 1878, John Bixby acquired Rancho Los Alamitos and established great farming and ranching enterprises. Bixby's dream of developing a city one day was brought to fruition by the passage of the McKinley Act in 1890, which spurred on the growth of a sugar industry in the United States.

In 1896, the Los Alamitos Sugar Company was formed and constructed the first sugar beet factory in Orange County.

The Bixby Land Company laid out the town of Los Alamitos as support for the factory and paid for a rail line from west Anaheim and a railroad station where Ganahl Lumber now stands.

The first church in Los Alamitos was built in 1897 and stood for over 60 years at the corner of Pine Avenue and Church Street (Church Street was later renamed Katella Avenue).

In later years, the sugar factory built worker housing and a clubhouse for social and recreational activities on Myrtle Street, which was renamed Los Alamitos Boulevard.

75 YEARS AGO: A Quake and the Navy

In 1933, the 6.4 magnitude Long Beach Earthquake shook Los Alamitos, damaging many structures, including St. Isidore Catholic Church. The church was originally built in 1922 on the City's Main Street and still stands in the same location on what is now known as Reagan Street.

The sugar beet factory operated until 1926, when an area-wide nematode infestation depleted the soils of their nutrients. The factory complex changed hands many times until 1960, when all but two of the buildings were torn down. The sugar warehouse is the only remaining building and is next to the post office.

In 1942, the Naval Air Station moved from Terminal Island in Long Beach to Los Alamitos. By the 1950s, Los Alamitos became the largest Naval Air Reserve in the nation. In 1973, the station was designated as an Armed Forces Reserve Center and was renamed the Joint Forces Training Base in 2000. The base provides support and training for military units and other federal, state, and local organizations.

50 YEARS AGO: Cityhood

During the 1940s and 1950s, the Chamber of Commerce acted as the quasi town government until its members decided to seek incorporation. The City incorporated in 1960 with a population of 4,312. The current population is just over 12,000 residents (est. 2010).

Around the time of cityhood, several roads were fully constructed and improved, providing Los Alamitos with access to neighboring communities. Katella Avenue was finally connected to Willow Street in Long Beach, making it a major east–west thoroughfare.

The City is best known for its schools and its hospital. Over the years, several different school buildings stood at the corner of Katella and Los Alamitos Boulevard. This first school site, now on a busy thoroughfare, was sold for a commercial development known as "Los Alamitos Plaza" as schools were built elsewhere.

Today, all of the City's comprehensive schools have been honored as National Blue Ribbon Schools and/or California Distinguished Schools. Additionally, many of the schools host athletic fields and boast a history of successful community and high school sports teams.

In 1968, the Los Alamitos Medical Center was founded to meet the health care needs of a growing community. The medical center has grown from a community hospital to a comprehensive medical campus.

TODAY:
A Modern Small Town

The City remains a peaceful, tree-lined community that has preserved much of its original small-town image and maintained a culture of great schools, community sports and activities, and healthy living.

Strategically situated at the junction of the 605, 405, and 22 freeways, Los Alamitos boasts a diversified economic base consisting of light industrial, manufacturing, and commercial businesses, as well as many restaurants.

PROJECT BOUNDARIES AND CONTEXT

CORRIDOR STUDY AREA

The study area encompasses approximately 240 acres in the City along both Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard. It extends along Los Alamitos Boulevard from Cerritos Avenue to the Vons center past Farquhar Avenue (~0.9 miles), and along Katella Avenue from Interstate 605 to Walker Street (~2.4 miles).

Although the acreage in the study area represents just 5 percent of the land in the City (about 10 percent when the training base is excluded), these two corridors exert a significant influence over life in Los Alamitos. Nearly all of the City's retail, restaurant, office, and public uses are located along these two corridors. This includes places such as City Hall, the Los Alamitos Medical Center, all of the City's restaurants, and Von's grocery store.

Additionally, over 50,000 cars travel along each corridor on an average day. Whether these cars are traveling to or through the corridors, the image of Los Alamitos is shaped by the view seen through car and bus windows.

JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES

The jurisdictional boundaries of Los Alamitos mean that portions of the corridors fall within other jurisdictions. This is important to know because jurisdictions can only control what is within their boundaries. The majority of the corridor study area is wholly within the City of Los Alamitos. There are, however, a few exceptions.

West of Los Alamitos Boulevard and south of Katella Avenue sits the unincorporated community of Rossmoor. While jurisdictional boundaries are typically split in the center of roadways, the Los Alamitos city boundary actually extends south of the roadway centerline to the edge of the Rossmoor wall along Katella Avenue. Along Los Alamitos Boulevard, south of Katella Avenue, the Los Alamitos City boundary includes only the eastern half of Los Alamitos Boulevard, with the western half within Rossmoor and under control of the County of Orange.

East of Los Alamitos Boulevard, the north and south sides of Katella Avenue are wholly within the City of Los Alamitos until one reaches Lexington Drive (just before Cottonwood Church). After Lexington Drive, only the south side of Katella Avenue is within the City of Los Alamitos; the north side falls within the City of Cypress.

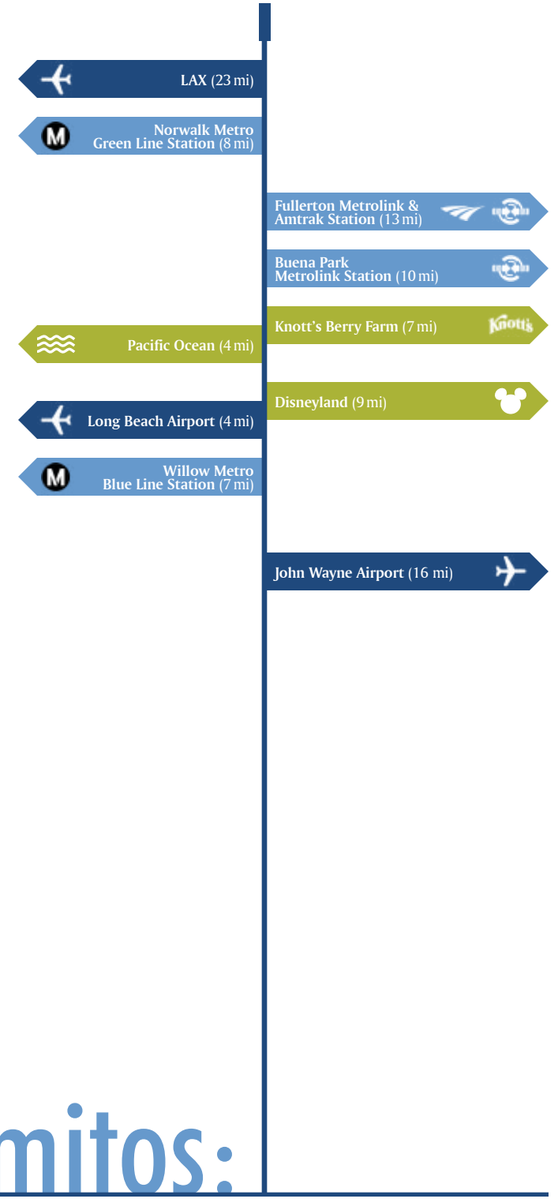
While the corridor study area may not include areas outside of the City of Los Alamitos, any analysis of and plans for the corridor study area will still consider and be influenced by these areas.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The City of Los Alamitos is in northern Orange County and is surrounded by five jurisdictions. To the east are the cities of Cypress and Garden Grove. The City of Seal Beach and the unincorporated community of Rossmoor abut the southern and western borders. To the north, across the county line, is the City of Long Beach in Los Angeles County.

The City and study area enjoy access to the 605, 405, and 22 freeways. Los Alamitos Boulevard turns into Norwalk Boulevard north of the City and travels approximately six miles until it ends in the City of Norwalk. South of the City, Los Alamitos Boulevard turns into Seal Beach Boulevard, intersects with the 405 and 22 freeways, and travels approximately four miles until it ends at Pacific Coast Highway in Seal Beach.

Katella is one of the longest continuous local roads in California (approximately 43 uninterrupted miles). Traveling west of Los Alamitos, Katella Avenue turns into Willow Street, Sepulveda Boulevard, and finally Camino Real, terminating just one-half mile from the Pacific Ocean in the City of Torrance. East of Los Alamitos, Katella Avenue runs for over 20 miles, turning into Villa Park Road, Santiago Canyon Road, and finally Jamboree Road until it terminates into the Eastern Transportation Corridor (SR-261) in the City of Irvine.



from Los Alamitos:

3. SITE CONTEXT

Figure 2. Project Boundaries and Context

EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS

EXISTING USES WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

Land within the corridor study area was historically zoned for commercial uses (such as retail and office businesses), which benefit from the exposure to passing cars along Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue—the two largest roadways in the City. The land use patterns have changed little since incorporation and the corridor study area currently contains a large number of retail, restaurant, service, office, and medical uses.

Uses along Los Alamitos Boulevard are primarily retail, restaurant, and service in nature. Home improvement–related stores surround Ganahl Lumber building at the northern end of the study area. A variety of retail and service establishments are located along the roadway, with a concentration of uses in two-story buildings near the intersection of Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue.

Restaurants are found all along Los Alamitos Boulevard; those south of Katella Avenue are fast-food establishments while those north of Katella Avenue are a mixture of take-out and sit-down restaurants. The Vons supermarket is one of the most visited uses south of Katella Avenue.

Uses along Katella Avenue range from City Hall on the western edge, medical institutions and offices between Cherry Street and Bloomfield Street, light industrial uses between Bloomfield Street and Lexington Drive, and single family homes and neighborhood-serving commercial at the eastern edge. A wide variety of retail and general office can be found all along the southern edge of Katella Avenue. The Los Alamitos Medical Center is the dominant use along Katella Avenue and can be seen from over a mile away.

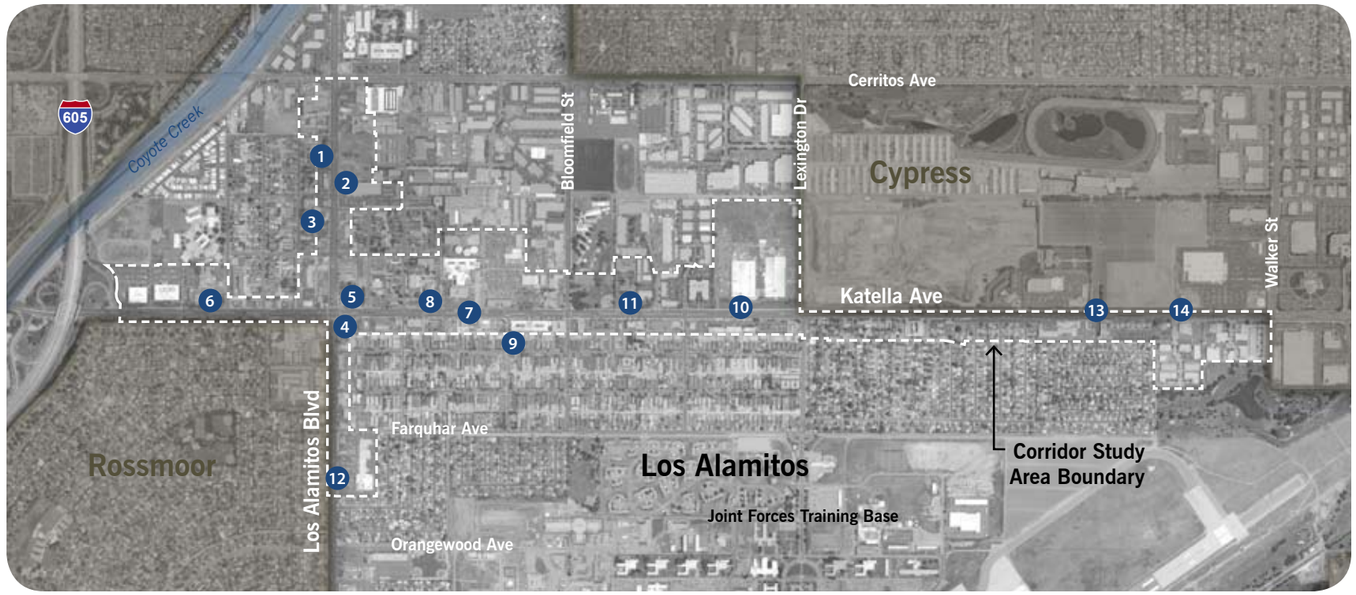
EXISTING USES AROUND THE STUDY AREA

The areas immediately surrounding the corridor study area are largely residential west of Los Alamitos Boulevard and south of Katella Avenue. Many of the residential properties in Los Alamitos were originally single family detached homes but have intensified over the years and now reflect a mixture of single family detached homes, townhomes, and some apartments.

Recent new residential construction has consisted of high quality townhomes just one block from the corridor study area. Rossmoor was developed in the 1950s and remains largely the same as originally constructed, although the individual homes have increased in size, with some remodels approaching 6,000 square feet.

Los Alamitos High School is one of the uses that is located outside of the corridor study area but exerts a strong influence on the corridors. Not only is the school a destination point for families throughout the City and surrounding communities, the school is a gateway to the City and the study area. Additionally, for three to four hours each day (morning arrival and afternoon departure), several thousand students and some parents travel through the study area. Congestion is particularly acute at the intersection of Los Alamitos Boulevard and Cerritos Avenue.

On the north edge of Katella Avenue in the City of Cypress, new power centers have developed in the last three years and include large local and regional uses such as the 24-Hour Fitness club, Costco, the Los Alamitos Race Course, and the 31-acre Cottonwood Church.



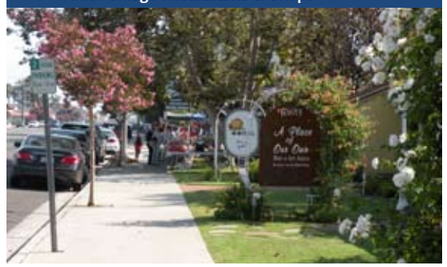
7 Medical District along Katella Ave

8 New townhomes

9 Los Alamitos Towne Square

10 Arrowhead and Cottonwood Church

1 Arbor Village Restaurants & Shops



2 Ganahl Lumber

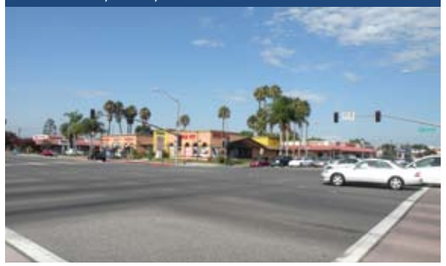
3 Alleys behind the corridors

11 Vons Shopping Center

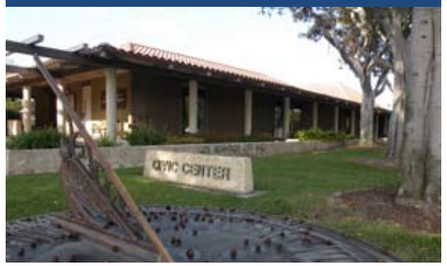
12 Southern Gateway

4 Service and office uses on the SE corner

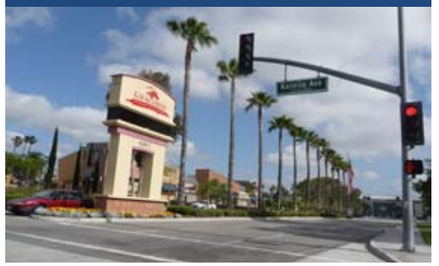
5 Retail, office, and restaurants on the NE corner



6 Civic Center



13 Entrance to the Los Alamitos Race Course



14 Former Zero 1 Motors building

Figure 3. Existing Uses Within and Around the Study Area

3. SITE CONTEXT

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY

With the exception of the hospital buildings (3 to 8 stories tall) and some office buildings (3 to 5 stories tall), most buildings within the corridor study area are 1 or 2 stories high and are close to one another and the street. This gives the corridor an image that is simultaneously urban and suburban: the 1- and 2-story heights and wide expanses of roadway are normally associated with lower intensity suburban styles of development. And the close placement of buildings on the street and with little separation from adjacent uses, as well as the placement of parking behind or to the side of the building, are more consistent with an urban style of development.

This unique blend of suburban and urban styles indicates that new projects and redevelopment efforts could introduce mixed-use concepts and clustered development projects while remaining completely compatible with existing uses.

Residential development immediately adjacent to the corridor study area west of Lexington Drive consists largely of townhomes. East of Lexington Drive, single family homes are located on or just behind the study area. Densities generally range from 5 to 9 units per acre for single family detached home, 10 to 25 units per acres for townhomes, and 20 to 28 units per acre for apartments.

EXISTING BUILDING CONDITIONS

Nearly all of the buildings within the corridor study area are in good condition. While the majority (~85 percent) are over 30 years old and a handful are over 70 years old, periodic facade and structural improvements have been conducted to maintain a consistent and slightly updated appearance. The most recent improvements were made over the past 5 years to various uses along the east side of Los Alamitos Boulevard south of Katella Avenue. Given the age of most buildings, however, improvements will likely be needed throughout the study area over the next 10 to 15 years.

VACANT LAND AND BUILDINGS

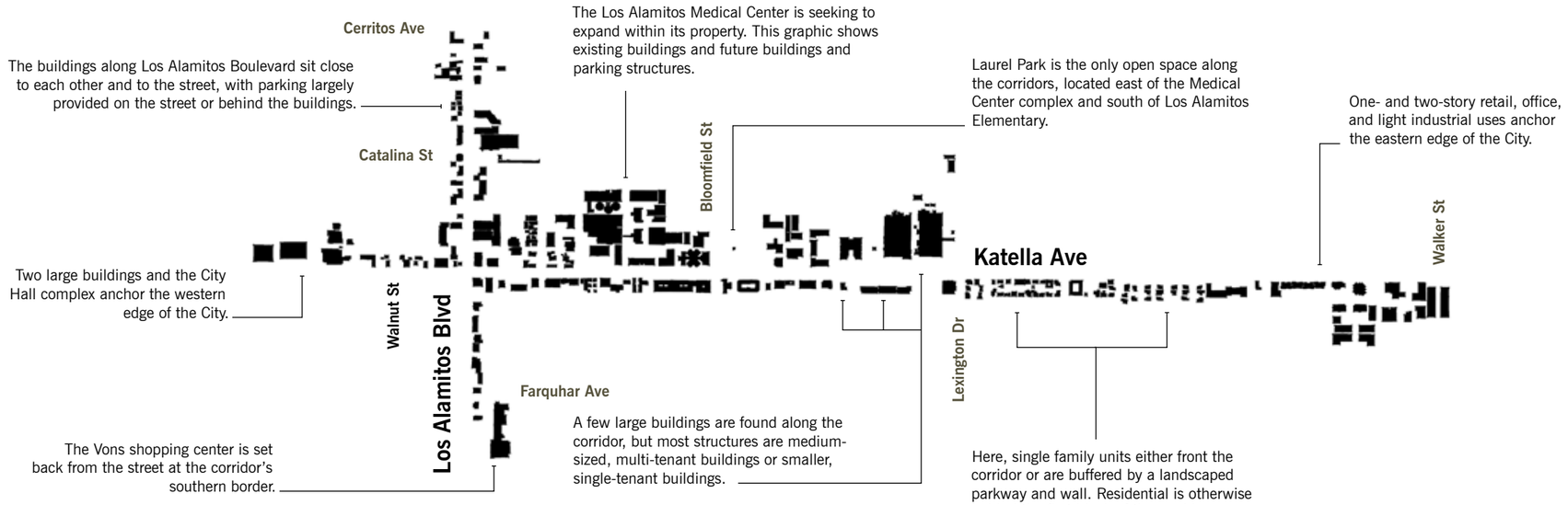
There are few vacant parcels throughout the entire City and only one vacant lot in the corridor study area. A 2.25-acre parcel on the east side of Los Alamitos Boulevard at Briggeman Street has been vacant for over a decade. Interim uses ranged from a Christmas tree lot to a small carnival. This lot is directly adjacent to Center Plaza across Serpentine Drive. Just east of the vacant parcel are some new light industrial buildings and, farther east, the Los Alamitos branch of the US Post Office.

While some buildings have vacant space available for lease, only a few buildings are completely vacant of any tenants. Two buildings that sit across from the Medical Center at Katella Avenue and Cherry Avenue have been vacant for only a couple of years.

While both buildings were originally constructed more than 50 years ago, they have been maintained in decent condition. Both sites rely on surrounding on-street parking and offer little or no off-street parking. Contrasting their constraints is their prominent location along Katella Avenue and across from a major employment center and public facility. If these sites were combined with surrounding parcels, the potential new building(s) could retain some of the existing uses and attract new tenants.

Another vacant building can be found at the far eastern edge of the corridor study area at the intersection of Katella Avenue and Winners Circle. The building was most recently the home of Zero 1 Motors and has been vacant for about a year. The parcel is approximately 1.3 acres in size and enjoys a corner location that faces Costco and other retail and food establishments in the new shopping center across the street in Cypress. The site is also adjacent to light industrial uses that form the eastern edge of the City of Los Alamitos north of the Joint Forces Training Base. Accordingly, the site may be best reoccupied or redeveloped as retail or light industrial.

BUILDING PATTERNS



BLOCKS

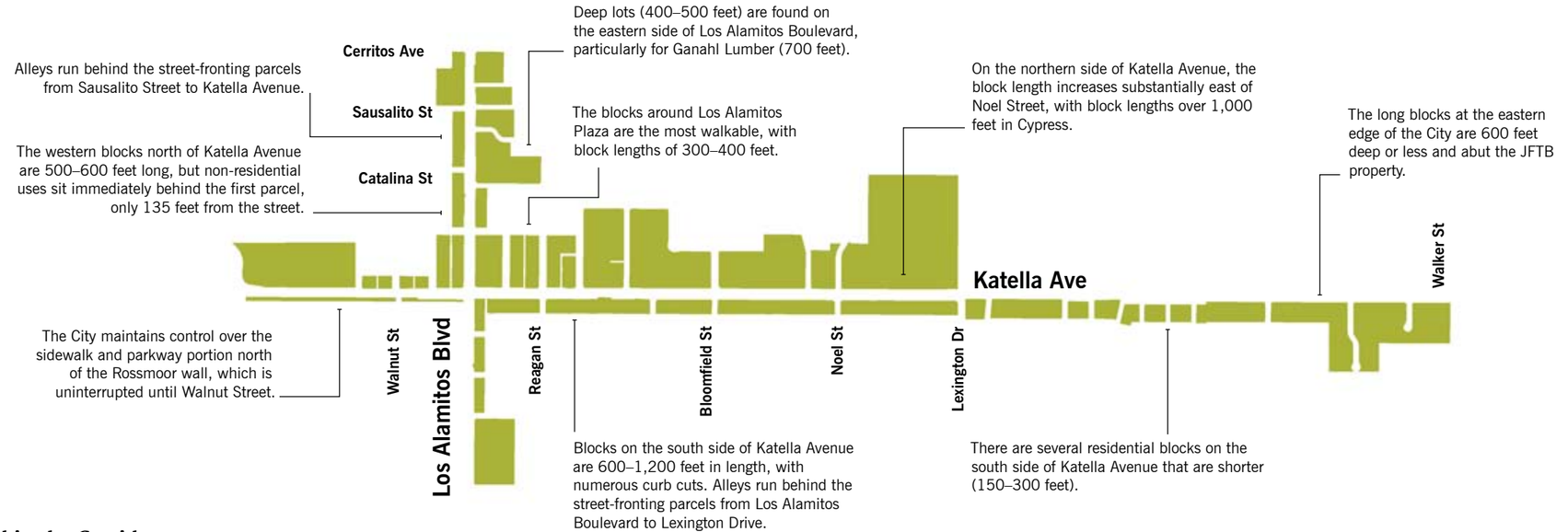


Figure 4. Building and Block Patterns within the Corridors

Figure 5. Parcelization Patterns within the Corridors

PARCELIZATION PATTERNS

There are over 200 parcels within the study area and nearly all 200 front onto either Los Alamitos Boulevard or Katella Avenue. A few dozen parcels are larger than 20,000 square feet (0.5 acre), but the vast majority range from 4,000 to 12,000 square feet (0.1 to 0.25 acre). Additionally, many parcels have a frontage width of 50 feet or less. All parcels have a parcel depth of at least 130 feet, with the majority measuring a depth of 160 to 200 feet. In the graphic to the left, you can see the pattern and dimensions of parcels just east of the intersection of Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard. This pattern of small-lot ownership and parcelization was established decades ago during the City's early years.

As a result, the dozens of businesses along the corridors developed in an incremental or piecemeal fashion. When parcels and buildings develop in this manner, they tend to focus more on the exposure of and access to their individual uses and less on how they relate to surrounding uses. Fortunately, the majority of blocks within the study area benefit from a rear alley, and the number of driveways that take access directly off the corridors is minimized. As one travels along the corridors, however, the appearance of most uses is somewhat inconsistent, both in building treatment and site design.

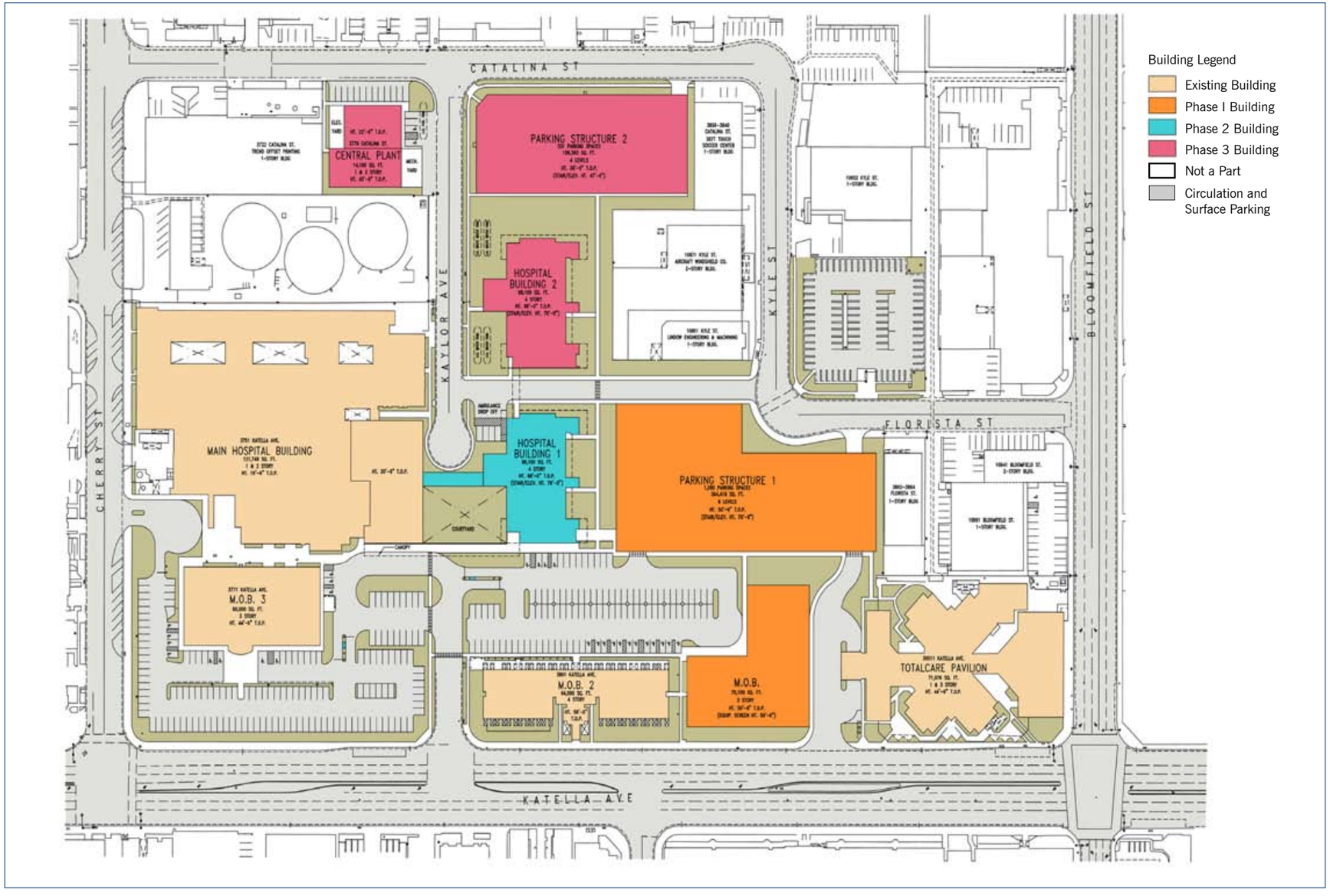
Additionally, as the community and corridors age, some uses underperform and cannot survive economic downturns such as the current period. These uses could be redeveloped into new projects and uses. As a general rule of thumb, however, successful redevelopment efforts need parcels that are at least 20,000 square feet and 130 feet deep. While the majority of lots enjoy a parcel depth of at least 130 feet, many are too small to allow for redevelopment opportunities by themselves. Instead, they must be acquired and/or consolidated with adjoining lots, which can be difficult along a corridor where the existing uses are largely well-performing businesses that would have little incentive to sell, remodel, and/or redevelop.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

A number of known prospective projects will affect future development along the corridors. The Los Alamitos Medical Center is considering an expansion of its current facilities within its property. The graphic to the right is from the February 2010 draft of the Los Alamitos Medical Center Specific Plan and shows the existing buildings and future expansions divided into three phases. The construction of Phase 3 buildings is expected to be completed by 2025.

The expansion could intensify the area along Katella Avenue with the addition of new buildings and structures. This expansion could also generate a large influx of new employees and visitors, which could be a boon to the local commercial and office uses.

In the City of Cypress, the remaining vacant land on the north side of Katella Avenue next to Cottonwood Church remains zoned for big box retail development. As the retail market returns to health, this area (located in a redevelopment project area) would likely be attractive to new big box tenants.



Source: Los Alamitos Medical Center Specific Plan, DRAFT, February 2010, Exhibit 5

Figure 6. Los Alamitos Medical Center Expansion Plans

REGULATORY SETTING

CITY COUNCIL GOALS 2009/2010

The City Council adopts its major goals and values for the City of Los Alamitos with the input of the City Manager. This process is important in setting priorities, objectives, and work plans for the benefit of the community. The following reflects some of the goals set by the City Council for the 2009/2010 period.

Future Growth: Revenue and General Plan (Long Term)

Create plan to maximize potential commercial development of Idearc [now SuperMedia] property and Civic Center Property.

Initiate process for potential annexation of the southeast corner of Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard.

Determine viability of forming Joint Powers Authorities (JPA) for potential provision of local services on a regional scale.

Examine potential of selling or developing City-owned property adjacent to the CIF Building.

Manage staff process for the consideration of the Los Alamitos Medical Center Specific Plan process.

Develop procedure to update the City's General Plan with regard to commercial development along Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard, pre-zoning the Joint Forces Training Base, and potential inclusion of unincorporated Rossmoor area.

Revenue Growth (Short Term)

Develop process to place an issue on the ballot regarding creation of a Los Alamitos Redevelopment Agency.

Create Retail Business Attraction Plan for Los Alamitos.

GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

Land in the City of Los Alamitos is governed by a General Plan, which provides a comprehensive set of goals and policies to guide the development and operation of the City. The corridor study area must adhere to the goals, policies, and overall land use plan in the General Plan.

Some of the most relevant goals and policies found in the currently adopted 1997 General Plan are listed here.

ELEMENT:
Land Use

Goal One: Preserve and promote land uses which reflect Los Alamitos' small-town character with due regard for economic development and future growth potential.

Goal Three: Promote and upgrade the quality of the City's commercial, industrial, and open space areas.

Policy 1-2.1: Promote development of a town square or town center in the vicinity of the Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue intersection.

Policy 1-3.2: Encourage consolidation of substandard commercially- and industrially-zoned parcels whenever feasible.

Policy 1-6.1: Develop and implement land use programs which address and promote the architectural and site design characteristics associated with small town character.

ELEMENT:
Conservation

Goal Four: Identify and encourage the preservation of significant architectural, historical, and cultural resources.

Goal Five: Encourage the conservation of energy.

Policy 2-1.1: Encourage the use of drought tolerant landscapes in new developments and encourage the replacement of existing water consumptive landscapes.

Policy 2-1.7: Promote the use of reclaimed water for groundskeeping in parks, golf courses, recreation areas, commercial and industrial uses, and schools.

Policy 2-3.1: Continue to provide and/or support alternative modes of transportation such as mass transit, dial-a-ride, rail systems, dedicated roadways, and conventional buses.

Policy 2-3.3: Provide safe and efficient facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, integrating these with the County-wide system.

Policy 2-3.6: Maintain and improve traffic signal synchronization and provisions for constant traffic flow on all major arteries throughout the city and as extensions of other programs of neighboring cities.

Policy 2-4.1: Encourage the adaptive reuse of buildings and structures of significant historical or cultural value.

Policy 2-5.1: Promote State energy conservation guidelines, which require the incorporation of energy-saving designs and features into new and refurbished buildings.

Policy 2-6.3: Encourage developers to incorporate mature and specimen trees and other significant vegetation, which may exist on a site into the design of a development project for that site.

ELEMENT:
Open Space & Recreation

Goal One: Develop and maintain an accessible and quality system of public parks and recreational facilities.

Policy 4-1.1: Encourage preservation of Los Alamitos' existing system of parks, recreational facilities, and bikeways.

Policy 4-1.2: Promote access to parks and recreational facilities for all Los Alamitos residents, including disabled persons.

Policy 4-1.5: Utilize vacant, undeveloped, or surplus lands, easements, or rights-of-way of public utilities or governmental units or agencies that become available for open space and recreational facilities.

Policy 4-3.1: Research funding and grant opportunities for the acquisition and purchase of a park to serve the Carrier Row and New Dutch Haven neighborhoods.

ELEMENT:
Circulation

Goal One: Provide an efficient network of streets, bikeways, and pedestrian areas which promote the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

Goal Two: Provide adequate off-street parking and loading facilities for businesses and public facilities throughout the City.

Policy 5-1.1: Maintain a Level of Service "D" or better on all City arterials and at intersections.

Policy 5-2.1: Protect and preserve residential neighborhoods from the intrusion of cut-through traffic.

Policy 5-3.1: Where feasible, utilize underdeveloped, vacant, or surplus railroad rights-of-way lands for through street extensions.

Policy 5-4.1: Encourage walking and bicycling as attractive alternatives to vehicular transportation.

Policy 5-4.2: Adequately illuminate and landscape City sidewalks and public areas to encourage pedestrian-oriented activities.

Policy 5-4.3: Support alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle use.

Policy 5-5.1: Encourage owners of substantially remodeled commercial and industrial centers to provide adequate on-site parking.

Policy 5-5.2: Provide adequate on-site parking at civic facilities (parks, City Hall, Los Alamitos Community Center, etc.).

ELEMENT:
Economic Development

Goal One: Enhance the fiscal viability of Los Alamitos by promoting retention and expansion of existing revenue bases, and development of new City revenue sources.

Goal Two: Identify economic strengths and incentives unique to Los Alamitos.

Goal Three: Promote revitalization of existing commercial centers.

Goal Four: Promote a healthy economic mix among retail, office, and industrial uses.

Policy 7-1.1: Provide an environment attractive to business.

Policy 7-1.2: Actively promote expansion and retention of existing businesses.

Policy 7-2.1: Employ alternative mechanisms for promoting economic growth.

Policy 7-2.2: Market the benefits of locating in Los Alamitos.

Policy 7-3.1: Actively pursue alternative uses for economically and functionally obsolete buildings.

Policy 7-3.2: Consider economic incentives, except tax-increment financing, to promote retail center rehabilitation.

Policy 7-4.1: Promote re-use of functionally obsolete office buildings.

The City's residents, businesses, and governmental policies support creating a stronger sense of identity and central places to shop, dine, relax, and have fun. This includes outdoor dining opportunities such as the one pictured here from the Arbor Village Restaurant & Shops.

ZONING REGULATIONS

The City's Zoning Code provides specific land use direction and development standards for each parcel and land use in the City.

The City of Los Alamitos is unique in that approximately half of the land within its boundaries is occupied by the Joint Forces Training Base (JFTB). While the JFTB is within the City boundary, the land is legally under the jurisdiction of the United States Army and is not controlled by the City's General Plan or Zoning Code. The General Plan and Zoning Code can, however, be used to convey the City's desired current and/or future uses of the Base, which is currently designated with the Community Facilities land use designation. If the Base is closed at some time in the future, the property would be subject to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process.

The remaining half of the City outside the JFTB comprises a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, public/quasi-public uses, streets, and flood control facilities. This is the land that almost all residents, employees, and visitors of Los Alamitos use on a daily basis.

Whereas residential uses are the predominant use throughout the non-JFTB portion of the City, the corridor study area is primarily general commercial, office, light industrial, and community facilities. This makes sense, as Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue are two of the City's four large roadways. Commercial uses prefer to develop along and are most compatible with arterial roadways.

ZONES: Residential

Citywide

Approximately 414 acres of the City (32 percent of the non-JFTB land area) are zoned for residential development. An additional 39 acres of land are zoned for residential development but are within the JFTB property. The Zoning Code employs four residential zoning categories that permit mobilehome parks and single family and multiple family housing options at densities up to 30 units per acre.

Corridor Area

In comparison, less than 3 percent of the corridor study area contains residentially zoned properties. The residentially zoned properties are almost exclusively zoned for single family homes (R-1) and are at the far eastern edge of the corridor study area and City along Katella Avenue.

- R-1 Single Family
- R-2 Limited Multiple Family
- R-3 Multiple Family
- M-H Mobile Home

ZONES: Commercial and Industrial

Citywide

Two commercial zoning categories permit a range of office and retail businesses, and a zone for planned industrial uses permits light industrial and manufacturing uses. The commercial uses comprise only 7 percent of the non-JFTB land area while planned industrial land comprises 16 percent.

Buildings within these zoning categories can be constructed up to five stories or 60 feet in height (reduced down to one to three stories when within 75 feet of residentially-zoned property). The buildings can also cover up to 40 or 50 percent of the lot for office and industrial uses and up to 90 percent of the lot for retail uses. These standards for building height and lot coverage are conducive to a wide range of development options, including both conventional and more progressive mixed-use product types.

Corridor Area

Almost two-thirds (62 percent) of the corridor study area is zoned for either general commercial or office uses. The land zoned for general commercial uses includes nearly all of the parcels along Los Alamitos Boulevard, while land zoned for office is largely located along the southern side of Katella Avenue. A little over a quarter of the corridor study area is zoned for planned industrial uses, all of which is located well east of Los Alamitos Boulevard.

- C-G Commercial General
- C-O Commercial Office
- P-M Planned Light Industrial

ZONES: Open Space & Community Facility

Citywide

Open areas and community facilities each have their own zoning category to permit and plan for a range of special uses. The Open Area designation addresses the unique open space conditions surrounding the Coyote Creek Channel and 605 freeway and covers approximately 11 percent of the non-JFTB land area.

The Community Facilities designation permits public/quasi-public uses such as parks, city offices, hospitals, churches, utilities, and schools. The Community Facilities designation covers approximately 12 percent of the non-JFTB land area.

Corridor Area

Some of the City's most prominent public and quasi-public uses are located along the corridors. Just under 7 percent of the land area within the corridor study area is zoned for community facilities and includes City Hall, portions of the Los Alamitos Medical Center, and Laurel Park.

- C-F Community Facilities
- O-A Open Area (Waterway)
- O-A Open Area (Freeway)

ZONES: Town Center Overlay

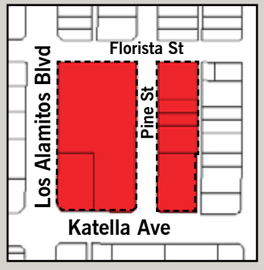
Citywide and Corridor Area

The Zoning Code also includes one overlay zoning district: Town Center. An overlay district is a zoning district that is assigned to a parcel in addition to its underlying zoning designation. The overlay district enables the parcel to be developed using the standards of the underlying district or the standards of the overlay district.

The City currently applies the Town Center overlay to 5.7 acres of land at the northeast corner of Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue (see call-out below). The Town Center overlay district is intended to identify areas where unique characteristics of a traditional, mixed-use downtown area are to be protected or enhanced through the application of a broader range of allowed uses or special design standards to those areas only.

The overlay district permits commercial uses on the first or second floor and multiple family residential uses on the second floor and higher. Buildings within the Town Center overlay district can be constructed up to five stories or 60 feet in height (reduced down to one, two, or three stories when within 75 feet of residentially zoned property). To date, the Town Center overlay district has not encouraged new development. The district may need to be revised and applied differently to generate new activity.

TC - Town Center Overlay



ZONES: Street Rights-of-Way & Easements

Citywide

A large portion of land within any city is dedicated for circulation and utility easements. Public streets and easements represent 22 percent of the non-JFTB land area in Los Alamitos.

Corridor Area

Due to its corridor nature, public streets represent over a quarter (27 percent) of the study area.

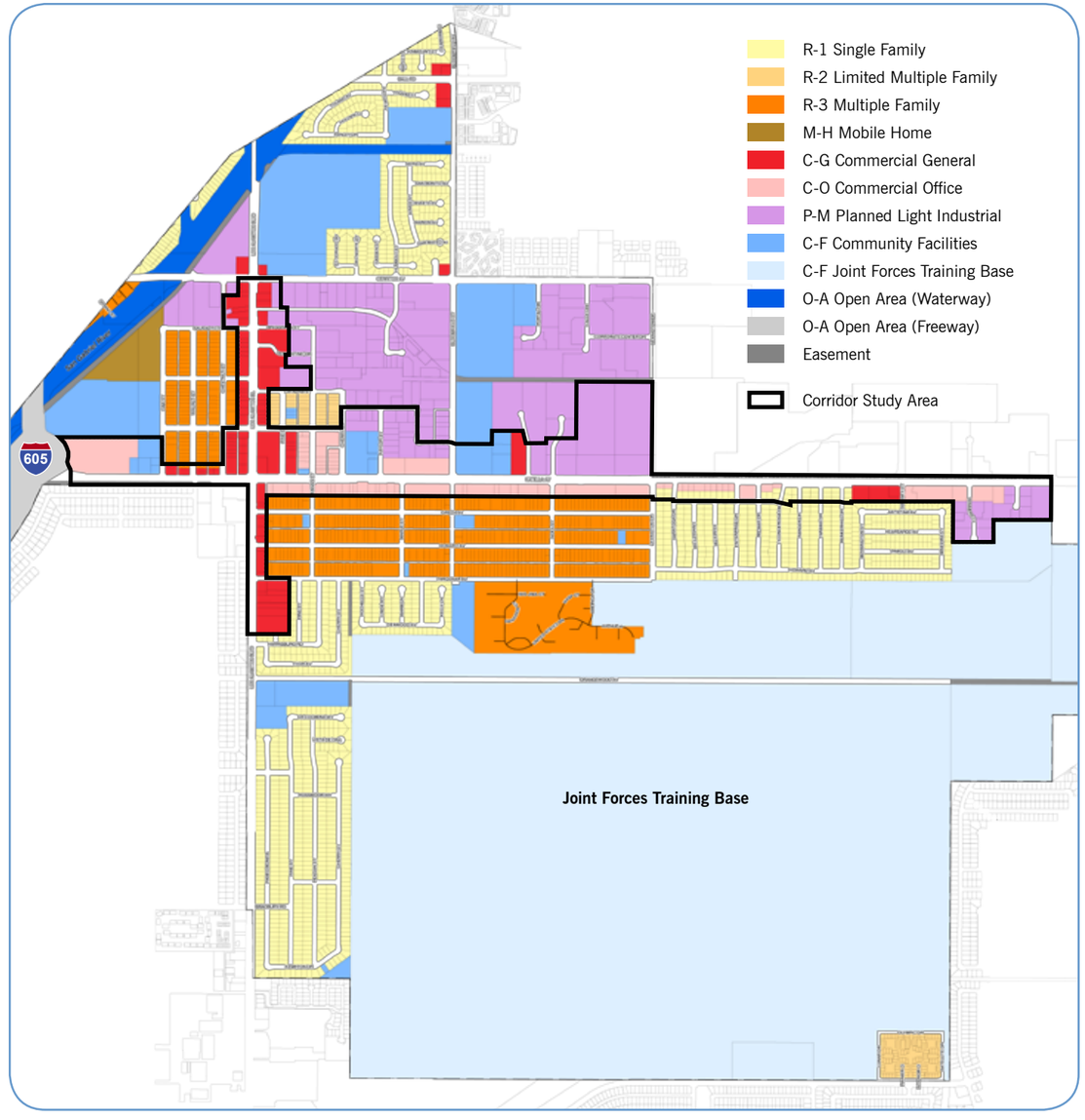


Figure 7. Los Alamitos Zoning Map

PUBLIC AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

SCHOOLS

Los Alamitos Unified School District contains six elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, and one school that operates as a continuation high school and adult school. The high school, two middle schools, and the Los Alamitos Elementary School are within City boundaries. The City is also home to a private K–8 school and the continuation/adult school. McGaugh Elementary is in the City of Seal Beach and the remaining four elementary schools are in Rossmoor. Enrollment numbers are shown as of the 2008–2009 school year according to the latest school accountability report card. As of 2009, all of the District's comprehensive schools had been honored as National Blue Ribbon Schools and/or California Distinguished Schools.

Within the City of Los Alamitos:

- Los Alamitos Elementary (612 students)
- Oak Middle School (1,006 students)
- McAuliffe Middle School (1,280 students)
- Los Alamitos High School (3,219 students)
- Laurel High School (117 students) (Continuation/Adult)
- Saint Hedwig Catholic (465 students) (Private)

Outside the City of Los Alamitos:

- Francis Hopkinson Elementary (643 students)
- Richard Henry Lee Elementary (628 students)
- McGaugh Elementary (733 students)
- Rossmoor Elementary (627 students)
- Weaver Elementary (596 students)

PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

A combination of active and passive parks are dotted around the City in addition to the recreational space adjacent to school facilities. Within the corridor study area, Laurel Park offers 4.5 acres of tennis courts, lighted active play fields, and picnic and barbecue areas. Laurel Park is located along Katella Avenue and could be emphasized as an important pedestrian destination on the corridor.

There are an additional nine parks and recreation facilities outside of the corridor study area. Just north of the study area, the fields and facilities at Oak Middle School can also be used by the community as parkland. The school offers 14 acres of lighted softball and soccer fields, a track, and lighted volleyball and basketball courts. The school's fields also host "Friday Night Lights," which is a flag football league for children in kindergarten through 8th grade. Over 500 children participate in the league, which started in 2006.

Little Cottonwood Park is adjacent to the Joint Forces Training Base and includes 6 acres of active play area, a tot lot, and picnic shelters. Arbor Park, located on the Joint Forces Training Base, provides over 8 acres of space where people can walk and play with their dogs. Orville Lewis Park offers 1.7 acres of play area, a basketball court, a softball diamond, and picnic and barbecue areas at the southwestern edge of Los Alamitos.

Another five smaller parks can be found throughout the City and include Labourdette Park (0.25 ac), Roberts Park (0.50 ac), Soroptimist Park (0.25 ac), Stansbury Park (0.75 ac), and Sterns Park (0.25 ac).

CIVIC CENTER COMPLEX

The Civic Center Complex along Katella Avenue near the 605 interchange is home to all City offices, including the Police Department, Parks and Recreation, Community Development, and Public Works.

In addition to the City departmental offices, the Civic Center Complex is home to the Los Alamitos Community Center and the Los Alamitos Youth Center. The Community Center is an 11,326-square-foot facility with rooms and kitchen facilities that serves as a focal point for recreational activities and community services. The Community Center is also home to the Los Alamitos Senior Citizens' Club. The Los Alamitos Youth Center is a private, not-for-profit, community-based organization that has served the families and children of Los Alamitos, Rossmoor, and Seal Beach since 1952. The Youth Center provides social, recreational, and educational programs for youth, with special emphasis on middle and high school students.

The Los Alamitos Police Department employs 25 sworn officers, 4 reserve officers, and numerous full-time and part-time civilian employees.

Partially as a result of the Civic Center's current location at the far western edge of the City near the on- and off-ramps of the 605 freeway, the Center's visibility is minimized. It is usually only seen as one travels along Katella Avenue and/or to the 605 freeway. The Civic Center Complex could be moved to a more prominent location in an enhanced area within the corridor to provide a landmark building and additional intensity. Another location may be selected within the City if the Civic Center Complex property is identified for redevelopment.

CHURCHES

Numerous churches are located around the City. One of historical significance is St. Isidore Church, built in 1922 (and rebuilt in 1933) located on Katella Ave at Reagan Street. This building, along with other adjacent facilities, is now called the St. Isidore Plaza and operates as a nondenominational chapel open to the public.

Future planning efforts should seek to preserve and improve this historic City landmark. The church's proximity to the Los Alamitos Medical Center provides an opportunity to create a stronger and safer pedestrian connection along the corridor to allow residents and patients from the hospital to visit the plaza.

LOS ALAMITOS MUSEUM

The Los Alamitos Museum is housed in a building that originally served as the Los Alamitos volunteer fire station. The museum is on Los Alamitos Boulevard just north of Green Avenue.

In the late 1940s, the volunteer firemen began earning money to purchase the land for the station. The County of Orange then built the firehouse, which is made of adobe bricks, and the Los Alamitos volunteers finished the interior. The station operated on a completely volunteer basis until the Los Alamitos fire station was moved. The Los Alamitos Museum was dedicated in 1975 and opened with exhibits in early 1976.

LOS ALAMITOS FIRE STATION

The local fire station in Los Alamitos is just outside the corridor study area at the intersection of Green Avenue and Reagan Street. The fire station houses one paid engine company with an additional engine company manned by a 25-man volunteer crew.

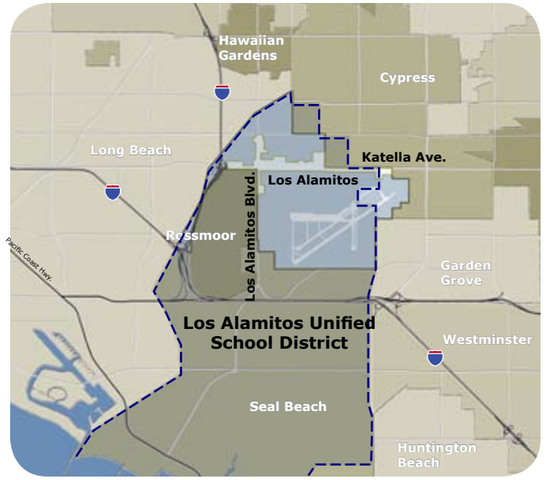
LOS ALAMITOS POST OFFICE

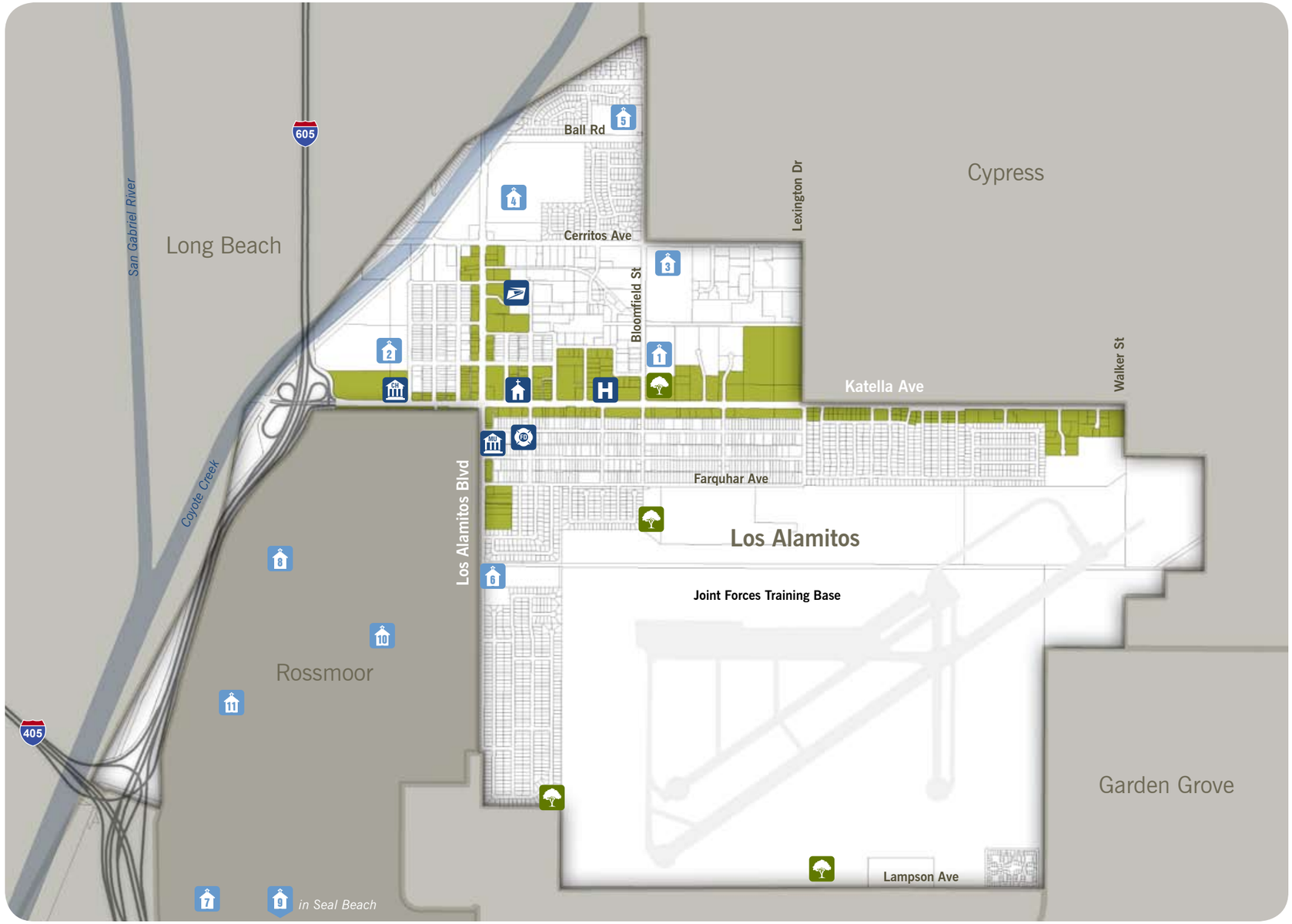
The Los Alamitos branch of the US Postal Service is also located just east of the corridor study area on Reagan Street north of Serpentine Drive. This building was constructed in the 1990s when the Post Office moved from its previous location on Pine Street just north of Katella Avenue, which now houses offices for the California Interscholastic Federation.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

The City of Los Alamitos plays host to a number of seasonal and annual community events that take place at the Civic Center Complex, City parks, and the Joint Forces Training Base. These events include the annual Easter Egg Hunt and Spring Carnival, the annual 4th of July Fireworks Spectacular, Band in the Park, and the Los Alamitos Race on the Base.

The Los Alamitos Unified School District covers almost all of Los Alamitos and Seal Beach.





Public and Social Infrastructure

- Los Alamitos City Hall
- Los Alamitos Museum
- Los Alamitos Post Office
- Los Alamitos Fire Station
- Los Alamitos Medical Center
- St. Isidore Church
- Parks and Recreation Areas

Schools Within the City of Los Alamitos:

1. Los Alamitos Elementary
2. Oak Middle School
3. McAuliffe Middle School
4. Los Alamitos High School
5. Laurel High School
6. Saint Hedwig Catholic

Schools Outside the City of Los Alamitos:

7. Francis Hopkinson Elementary
8. Richard Henry Lee Elementary
9. McGaugh Elementary (*in Seal Beach, not shown on map*)
10. Rossmoor Elementary
11. Weaver Elementary

Figure 8. Public and Social Infrastructure Map

3. SITE CONTEXT

MOBILITY AND CIRCULATION

ROADWAY NETWORK AND TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Katella Avenue

Role in the City and Region

Katella Avenue is a key regional arterial in the east–west direction across Orange County and provides regional access from Los Alamitos to the 605 freeway to the west and to the Cities of Stanton, Anaheim, and Garden Grove to the east. Katella Avenue also continues to the west as Willow Street into the City of Long Beach, eventually terminating in the City of Torrance after passing through many other Los Angeles County cities under different names (Sepulveda Boulevard and Camino Real).

Katella Avenue is identified as a Major Arterial on the Orange County Master Plan of Highways and as a Smart Street in the City's General Plan Circulation Element. It provides between three and four lanes in each direction with turn lanes at all key intersections in the study area. Landscaped medians are already in place at mid-block locations.

Katella Avenue carries cars and trucks into and through the City at posted speed limits of 35 to 40 miles per hour (with actual traffic speed of 35 to 50 miles per hour). The public right-of-way—the area defined by the roadway, median, parkway, and sidewalk—varies between 120 and 140 feet throughout the corridor study area. The width of the roadway itself—the area measured from curbside to curbside—varies from 102 to 106 feet. With a combination of high vehicle speeds and large roadway widths, pedestrians can safely cross Katella Avenue only at signalized intersections where a formal crosswalk is provided.

Parking

On-street parking is restricted along Katella Avenue from the 605 freeway past Los Alamitos Boulevard to Reagan Street. East of Reagan Street, a minimal number of on-street parking spaces are available on the north and south curbs that serve small businesses fronting Katella Avenue. Approximately 200 spaces of on-street parking are available along Katella Avenue, located primarily between Reagan Street and Lexington Drive.

Off-street parking is accessible for the majority of businesses along Katella Avenue, although a few businesses appear to be constrained and generally rely upon on-street parking for their customers. Some businesses indicate a shortage of parking during their peak hours of operation. Approximately 5,000 spaces of off-street parking are provided on lots within the corridor study area. Over 1,500 of these spaces are associated with the Los Alamitos Medical Center and the industrial businesses around Arrowhead Products.

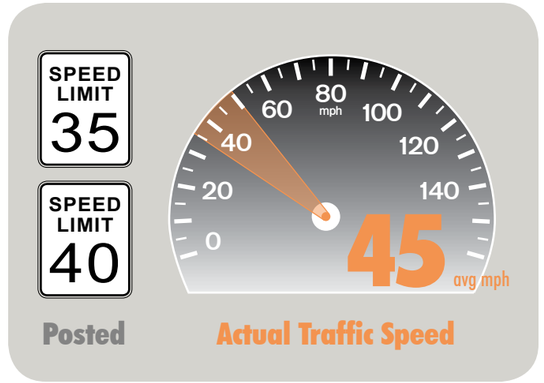
Traffic Volumes and Level of Service

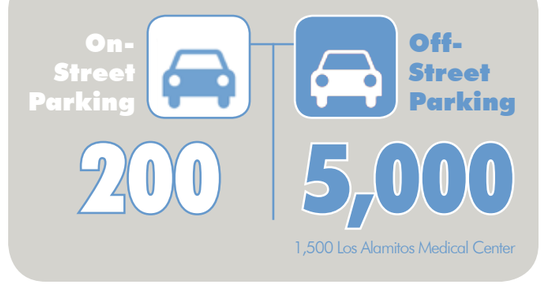
In 2005, traffic volumes (both directions) along Katella Avenue ranged from 63,300 daily trips near the 605 freeway interchange to 44,500 daily trip at the City's eastern border. Data collected in January 2010 in the study area indicate that daily traffic volumes have not increased significantly, if at all, from 2005 levels. In 2009, as part of the OCTA Congestion Management Program, AM and PM peak hour volumes turning movements were collected and analyzed at the Katella Avenue/Los Alamitos Boulevard intersection. Based on the analysis, this intersection was operating at a level of service B during the AM peak hour and level of service C during the PM peak hour.

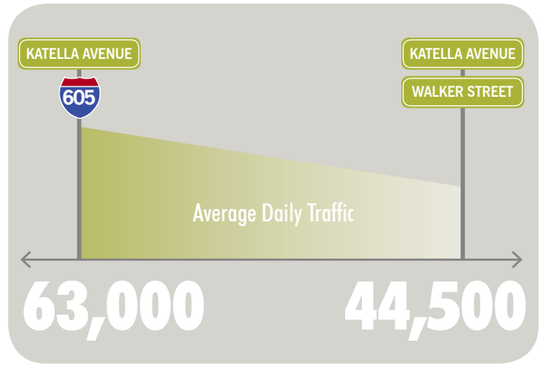
Smart Street

In 1996, Beach Boulevard was the first roadway that was designated as a Smart Street by OCTA. Katella Avenue is another designated Smart Street. The intent of the Smart Street concept is to improve vehicular capacity and traffic flow along key county corridors. Traffic flow improvements could include the use of traffic signal synchronization, bus turnouts, intersection improvements, and the addition of travel lanes by removing on-street parking and consolidating driveways.

OCTA is currently in the process of improving the traffic flow along key corridors through traffic signal synchronization. These projects will improve progression and decrease driver delay and vehicular emissions. Katella Avenue is included in OCTA's traffic signal synchronization program in future years (date to be determined).







Los Alamitos Boulevard

Role in the City and Region

Los Alamitos Boulevard is a primary north–south arterial and provides access from the City of Seal Beach to the south and southeast Los Angeles County to the north, terminating six miles north in the City of Norwalk (under the name Norwalk Boulevard).

Los Alamitos Boulevard is identified as a Major Arterial on the Orange County Master Plan of highways and as a Major Highway in the City's General Plan Circulation Element. South of Florista Street, Los Alamitos Boulevard provides three lanes in each direction with turn lanes at all key intersections in the corridor study area.

North of Florista Street, although the curb-to-curb street width is similar, Los Alamitos Boulevard provides two lanes of travel in each direction, with turn lanes at key intersections. The extra width is available for a potential third travel lane in each direction if additional capacity is desired by the community and warranted by traffic volumes. Landscaped medians currently exist on Los Alamitos Boulevard at mid-block locations south of Katella Avenue.

Los Alamitos Boulevard operates as a large street south of Katella Avenue, carrying cars and trucks into and through the City at posted speed limits of 35 miles per hour (with actual traffic speed of 35 to 45 miles per hour). North of Katella Avenue, Los Alamitos Boulevard remains a large street in size, but the traffic volumes—even with the reduction in travel lanes—decrease significantly and vehicular activity is less intense. The public right-of-way varies between 105 feet north of Cerritos Avenue outside the corridor study area to 140 feet south of Katella Avenue. The roadway width varies between 93 and 112 feet. Due to the wide roadway, pedestrians can safely cross Los Alamitos Boulevard only at signalized intersections where a formal crosswalk is provided.

Parking

On-street parking is allowed on the west curb of Los Alamitos Boulevard from the northern limits of the corridor study area to Hedwig Road. South of Hedwig Road, parking is not allowed on the west curb. On the east curb, a small number of parking spaces are striped in mid-block locations to serve local businesses.

Approximately 150 spaces of on-street parking are available along Los Alamitos Boulevard, located largely on the western (southbound) side of the street.

Off-street parking appears to be sufficient for the majority of businesses along Los Alamitos Boulevard, although some indicate a shortage of parking during their peak hours of operation. Most businesses provide parking in the front of their businesses and also rely upon on-street parking for their customers. Some businesses provide parking behind their businesses, relying upon alley access for their customers in addition to on-street parking. Businesses on the two blocks on the northeast corner of the Los Alamitos Boulevard/ Katella Avenue intersection use an internal central parking plaza in addition to parking fields on their lots.

Approximately 1,700 spaces of off-street parking are provided on lots within the corridor study area. The Vons shopping center contains over 300 parking spaces, and the parking areas on either side of Pine Avenue offer another few hundred spaces.

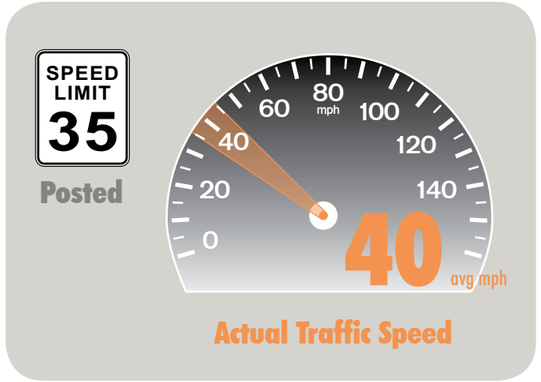
Traffic Volumes and Level of Service

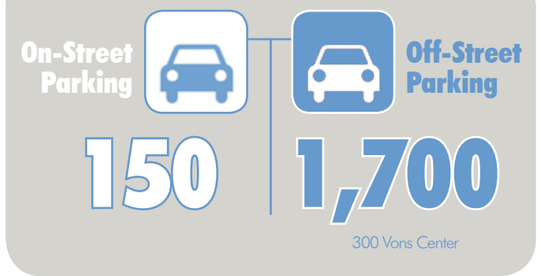
In 2005, traffic volumes (both directions) along Los Alamitos Boulevard ranged from 60,000 daily trips just south of the intersection with Katella Avenue to 23,400 daily trips at the City's northern border. Of particular interest is the sharp drop-off in traffic volumes north of Katella Avenue, indicating a significant number of turning movements to and from Katella Avenue to the south along Los Alamitos Boulevard. The volumes north of Katella Avenue are almost half of the volumes south of Katella Avenue.

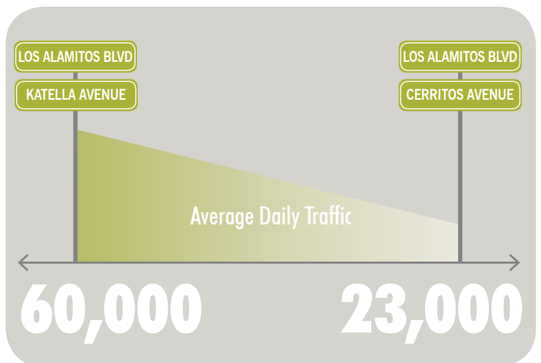
Daily traffic volumes were collected on Los Alamitos Boulevard at three locations in January 2010 when local schools were in session. The data indicates that the traffic volumes have actually decreased slightly since 2005 north of Katella Avenue along Los Alamitos Boulevard.

Additionally, these volumes confirm that the number of vehicles traveling on Los Alamitos Boulevard between the northern city limits and Katella Avenue is significantly less than those traveling on Katella Avenue or on Los Alamitos Boulevard south of Katella Avenue (based on the 2005 data).

Los Alamitos Boulevard is not currently designated a Smart Street by OCTA and is not currently planned for the traffic signal synchronization program.







TRAFFIC SAFETY

Traffic Accidents

Discussions with the City of Los Alamitos regarding accidents along Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard indicated no significant trends in types or severity of accidents on Katella Avenue in the corridor study area. The City has installed video cameras on both the east and west approaches of Katella Avenue at Los Alamitos Boulevard to assist in enforcement of illegal turning movements.

Curb Cuts

Curb cuts are driveways that occur along a roadway to provide access to individual residences or businesses. Cars slowing down to turn into these driveways, or cars turning onto the roadway from these driveways, will cause ongoing traffic to slow down. When excessive curb cuts are found along a corridor, traffic flow can be significantly impeded, and the potential for accidents can increase dramatically.

In the study area there are 67 curb cuts along Katella Avenue and 37 along Los Alamitos Boulevard. In some places, the number of curb cuts is excessive, with a curb cut occurring as often as every 100 feet along portions of both roadways. Vehicles traveling 40 miles per hour cover 100 feet in about two seconds. Additionally, the grid pattern of the streets within the study area means that cars also encounter 24 different intersections along Katella Avenue and 10 along Los Alamitos Boulevard.

According to discussions with the City police department, however, traffic accidents are not prevalent at any particular intersection or curb cut. Nevertheless, curb cuts can be potential conflict points between cars and pedestrians or bicyclists. The potential to consolidate access points for parcels or block off street access to the corridor may be desirable at key locations within the study area to minimize conflict points, encourage a more walkable environment, and create greater efficiency in land use and transportation.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Overall, the study area provides the basic infrastructure for pedestrians along the corridors. In some places, the walking environment is relatively pleasant even with the larger roadway widths and high traffic volumes.

Sidewalks are provided throughout the extent of the two corridors. Some locations provide a larger sidewalk with comfortable (occasionally landscaped) space between the sidewalk and the roadway edge. Other areas provide a sidewalk directly adjacent to the roadway (also known as a curb-adjacent sidewalk).

The primary intersection of Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue provides 12-foot crosswalks with colored pavement across the intersection. The use of distinctive colors and paving materials highlights the crosswalk area for motorists and pedestrians. Other signalized intersections contain striped crosswalk areas and serve as the primary pedestrians routes for crossing either roadway.

Based on a reasonable walking speed of 3.5 feet/second (a little more than 2 miles per hour or the equivalent of a 26-minute mile), pedestrians can reach destinations up to 1,000 feet away from the corridor boundaries within a 10-minute walk.

When you map the areas within 1,000 feet of the corridor study area boundaries (sometimes referred to as a pedestrian shed), Figure 9 illustrates that pedestrians can walk to or from as far south as Howard Street and as far north as Catalina Street from Katella Avenue and as far west as Walnut Street and as far east as Reagan Street from Los Alamitos Boulevard. With the City's grid system, pedestrian access is generally unimpeded by cul-de-sacs, walls, or other path obstructions.

Figure 9. Pedestrian Access Map

Figure 10. Intersections and Curb Cuts Map

BUS AND RAIL SERVICE

Local and Express Bus Service

Four bus routes operated by OCTA provide service along Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue: 42, 46, 50, and 701. Ridership information for 2009, including the number of boardings and departures at stops within the borders of the City of Los Alamitos, was obtained by OCTA surveys conducted between 2007 and 2009.

On a typical weekday, these four routes serve over 10,000 people who travel throughout Orange and Los Angeles counties. A little over 500 of these people get on or off within the City.

Routes 42, 46, and 50 are local serving routes, while Route 701 is an intercounty express bus service that travels between Huntington Beach and downtown Los Angeles.

Additionally, a park-n-ride facility at 4655 Lampson Avenue on the southern edge of Los Alamitos serves Routes 164, 211, and 701. Route 164 is a community-serving route that travels between Westminster Mall and Leisure World in Seal Beach. Route 211 is an intracounty express route that travels between the Irvine Metrolink Station and Leisure World in Seal Beach. Both of these routes stop in Los Alamitos only at the park-n-ride area.

42 **Route 42** runs along Los Alamitos Boulevard from Seal Beach and connects to the City of Orange along Lincoln Avenue. Stops along Los Alamitos Boulevard typically occur every quarter mile. There are seven northbound and six southbound bus stops along Los Alamitos Boulevard, typically located at major intersections.

Typical weekday headways (the waiting time between buses at a bus stop) are approximately 45 minutes, although supplementary bus service is provided when Los Alamitos High School is in session. OCTA ridership information indicates that Route 42 serves approximately 4,740 people on a typical weekday. Approximately 234 of these people get on or off (or both) in the City of Los Alamitos. The two most heavily used stops are located along Los Alamitos Boulevard at Katella Avenue and Cerritos Avenue.

46 **Route 46** primarily operates along Ball Road, but loops around Los Alamitos High School via Los Alamitos Boulevard, Cerritos Avenue, and Bloomfield Road. This route connects Los Alamitos to the City of Orange with bus stops in the study area at the high school. Headways are generally 60 minutes and there is only one bus stop on Los Alamitos Boulevard that serves Route 46 near Cerritos Avenue.

OCTA ridership information indicates that Route 46 serves approximately 2,155 people on a typical weekday. Use of the route in Los Alamitos is very low—OCTA ridership information indicates only 5 of these people get on or off at the stop in the City.

50 **Route 50** runs primarily east–west along Katella Avenue between Cal State Long Beach and the City of Orange. Stops along Katella Avenue typically occur every quarter mile. There are nine eastbound and nine westbound bus stops along Katella Avenue, typically located at major intersections in addition to a few that are present between the signalized intersections.

Headways range from between 30 minutes to an hour depending upon the time of day. This line is a part of OCTA's Night Owl program and provides bus service 24 hours a day.

OCTA ridership information indicates that Route 50 serves approximately 3,340 people on a typical weekday. Approximately 279 of these people get on or off (or both) at stops within the City of Los Alamitos. The two most heavily used stops were the Los Alamitos Boulevard and Siboney Street stops.

701 **Route 701** runs primarily north–south from the Goldenwest Transportation Center in Huntington Beach to Union Station in downtown Los Angeles. This is an express bus route that serves commuters between Los Angeles and Orange counties. Route 701 operates only three buses in the early morning commute hours and two buses in the evening commute hours, with nine stops in Orange County.

In the corridor study area, this route travels on Los Alamitos Boulevard from the 405 freeway north to Katella Avenue and on Katella Avenue west to the 605 freeway. There is only one bus stop in each direction for this route in the City, at Katella Avenue and Walnut Street/Wallingsford Road.

OCTA ridership information (supplemented by a survey by The Planning Center) indicates that Route 701 serves approximately 51 people on a typical weekday. About 3 to 7 of these people access the bus at the stop in Los Alamitos.

Light Rail and Commuter Rail

There is currently no light or commuter rail service in the City of Los Alamitos. While OCTA Route 701 does provide express bus service to downtown Los Angeles and stops at the Pico Boulevard Metro Blue Line station in Los Angeles, neither OCTA nor Metro offer bus service to local rail transit stations along either the Metro Blue Line or Green Line.

The closest Metro stations are the Willow Blue Line Station (7 miles to the west in Long Beach) and the Norwalk Green Line Station (8 miles to the north). The closest Metrolink stations are the Buena Park Metrolink Station (10 miles to the northeast) and Fullerton Metrolink/Amtrak Station (13 miles to the northeast). Without some type of bus connection, all of these stations are likely too far away from Los Alamitos to qualify as viable or desirable alternatives to driving for those who live or work some distance from the City.

BICYCLE NETWORK

According to the 2009 OCTA Commuter Bikeways Strategic Plan, there are approximately 121 bicycle commuters in Los Alamitos, with an estimated potential for another 79 based on future growth and the addition of enhanced bicycle facilities.

Bikeways are broken down into three classes.

Class I: Off-street paved bike path on a separate right-of-way from roadways, usually shared by bicyclists and pedestrians.

Class II: On-street bicycle lane that uses painted stripes, stencils, and signs to delineate the right-of-way assigned to bicyclists and motorists and provide for more predictable movements by each.

Class III: On-street shared-lane signed bicycle route that accommodates vehicles and bicycles in the same travel lane. For safety purposes, signed bicycle routes are often found on streets with lower speeds and traffic volumes.

The following bikeways can be found within or around the City of Los Alamitos.

- A Class I bike path known commonly as the Coyote Creek and/or San Gabriel River trail, with a connection on the north side of Oak Middle School to Catalina St.
- Class II bike lanes along Bloomfield St. and Lampson Ave.
- Class III bike routes along Cerritos Ave. and Walnut St.

The Class III bike route along Walnut Street connects to the Class II bike lane that travels down Wallingsford Road and Foster Road, passing several LAUSD elementary schools in Rossmoor.

The Bikeways Strategic Plan provides recommendations for future bikeways in Los Alamitos and vicinity. Los Alamitos Boulevard is designated by OCTA as a proposed Class II bike lane within the City limits. Additionally, the following bikeways and improvements are suggested by OCTA in the vicinity of the study area:

- A Class I bike path along the Carbon Creek Channel from Los Alamitos Blvd. to Bloomfield St. (0.51 miles).
- Class II bike lanes along Ball Rd. from Kaylor Ave. to Bloomfield St. (0.24 miles), along Catalina St. from Oak St. to Los Alamitos Blvd. (0.23 miles), along Cerritos Ave. from Spring St. to Lexington Dr. (1.26 miles), and all along Los Alamitos Blvd. (1.93 miles).

TRUCK ROUTES

The City of Los Alamitos General Plan designates Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue as the City's only two truck routes. The boundaries of the JFTB preclude other north–south streets from being alternative truck routes.

Bus Routes and Rail Access

- 42 City of Orange (via Norwalk) to Downtown Seal Beach
- 46 To City of Orange
- 50 Long Beach/Metro Rail Blue Line to City of Orange
- 164 Leisure World to Westminster Mall
- 211 Leisure World to Irvine Station
- 701 Downtown Los Angeles to Westminster Mall
- P Park & Ride

Bus Stops Within and Adjacent to the Project Area:

- Bus Stop along Route 701
- Bus Stop along Routes 42, 46, and 50

Bus Route and Service Information:

Route	b/a	ADR	Route Service
42	234	4,740	Local serving
46	5	2,155	Local serving
50	279	3,340	Local serving
164	n/a	n/a	Community serving
211	n/a	n/a	Intracounty express
701	3	51	Intracounty express

b/a: Boardings and Alightings
ADR: Average Daily Riders

Figure 11. Bus Routes and Rail Access Map

3. SITE CONTEXT

Image 1: The Class I path starting at Oak Street

The Coyote Creek Trail connects to the San Gabriel River Trail just one mile south of the Class I path that runs along the northern border of Oak Middle School (shown below in the images).

Image 2: The path as it approaches the bridge across to Coyote Creek

Image 3: The Class I path looking northeast back to the bridge to Oak Middle School

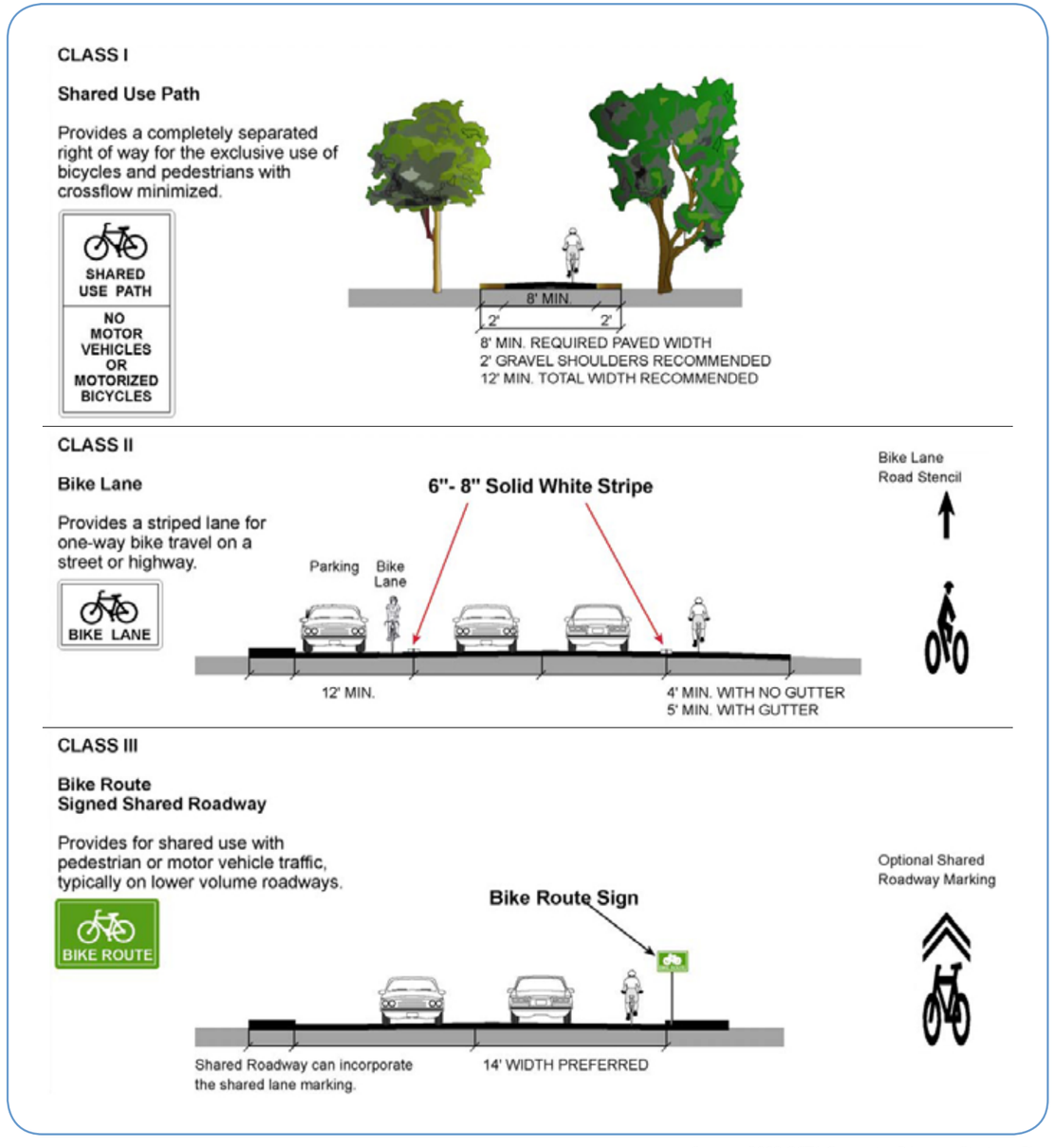


Figure 12. Bicycle Facility Types

Sources: 2009 OCTA Commuter Bikeways Strategic Plan

Bikeways

- Corridor Study Area
- Class I Existing
- Class I Proposed
- Class II Existing
- Class II Proposed
- Class III Existing
- Class III Proposed
- Connection to Coyote Creek Trail

Note: Bikeways shown as proposed according to the OCTA 2006 Commuter Bikeways Strategic Plan

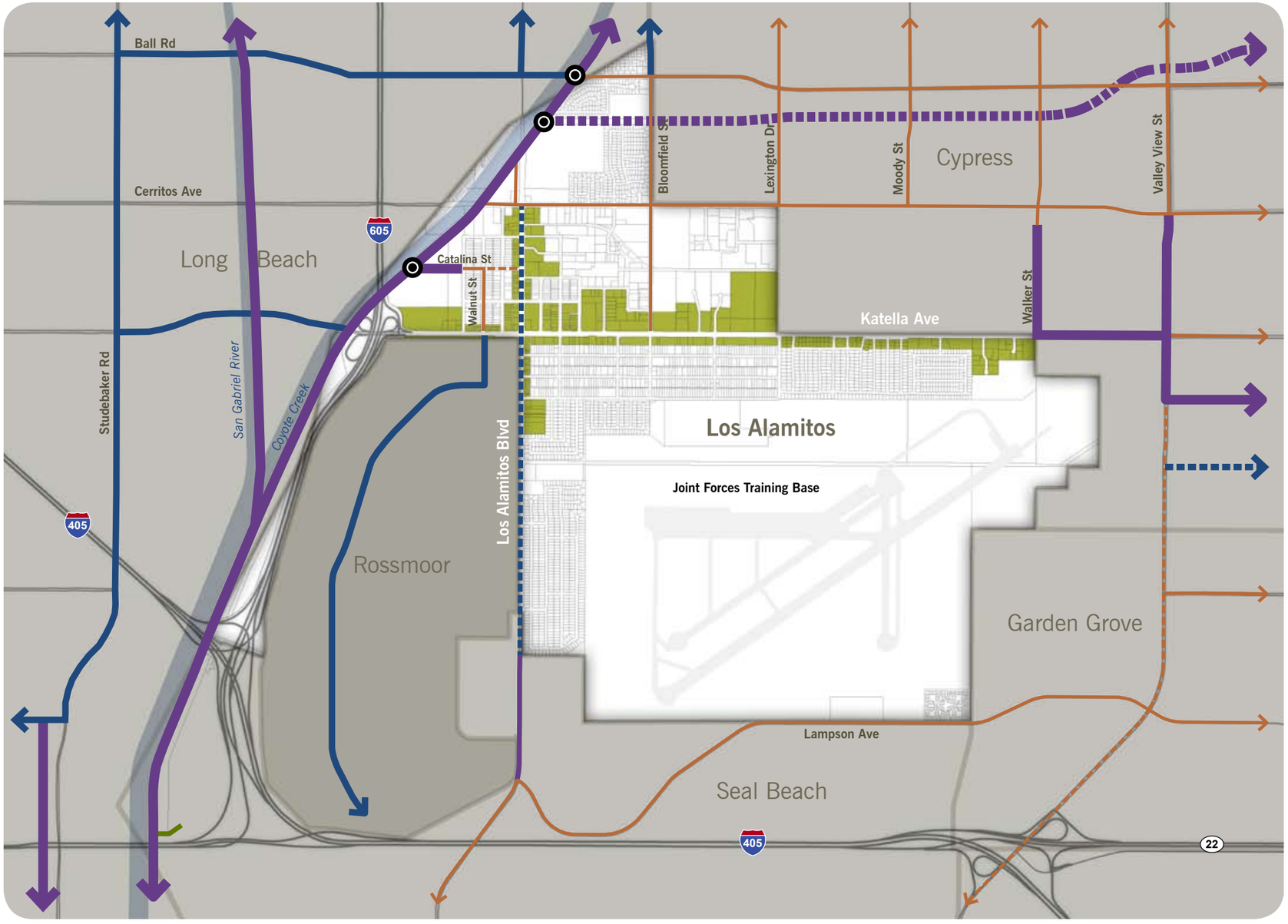


Figure 13. Bicycle Network Map

Sources: 2009 OCTA Commuter Bikeways Strategic Plan and the City of Long Beach

COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

Urban designers, city planners, sociologists, and many others have researched how people perceive cities and their community's structure. Among those practitioners and academics was Kevin Lynch, an urban planner who theorized that a city is made up of five different elements.

Each element is separate yet connected to the whole—one cannot exist without the other. These elements are: paths, edges, districts, gateways/nodes, and landmarks. These elements are sometimes augmented and adjusted to be appropriate for each community.

Collectively, these five elements influence a community's sense of place and identity. The City of Los Alamitos has a strong identity as a small town with values based in healthy living, high quality education, and community activities. Yet Los Alamitos lacks an overall sense of place. Few locations serve as central gathering places, and the roadways primarily serve to carry cars through the City. Its most prominent locations are the medical center and public schools.

To better understand the community structure of Los Alamitos and identify areas where a stronger sense of place and identity could be forged, the following text and graphics break down the City's paths, edges, districts, gateways/nodes, and landmarks.

ELEMENT:
Paths

Paths are the routes and trails along which one customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves throughout the community, defined in part by the mode of transportation.

The JFTB and its restricted access precluded the formation of north–south paths south of Katella Avenue between Los Alamitos Boulevard and Valley View Street, creating more vehicular pressure for Los Alamitos Boulevard as a southern route to the 405 and 22 freeways.

The majority of the City of Los Alamitos was planned with a grid pattern of roadways that allows adequate pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access perpendicular to the corridor. The grid pattern provides alleys that divide corridor-adjacent uses with the land uses behind them, eliminating the abundance of walls that typically dominate a corridor environment. The alleys also provide an opportunity for secondary pedestrian or bicycle circulation with simultaneous and uninhibited access to the corridor.

Despite the City's advantageous grid pattern and abundance of sidewalks, the pathways throughout the corridor study area lack a rich, distinct, or consistent feel and look. Pathways in key areas of the corridor study area could be significantly enhanced through relatively minor improvements such as upgraded landscaping, signage, and lighting.

Additionally, the City's proximity to the multipurpose trails along the San Gabriel River offer bicycle and pedestrian paths that connect the City and corridor to the surrounding cities and region. Connections to the San Gabriel River trails could be strengthened to provide more access to and from the corridor areas, with a particular focus on Los Alamitos Boulevard north of Katella Avenue.

ELEMENT:
Districts

Districts are the medium to large sections of the City that are dedicated to a common or focused land use or activity. The City of Los Alamitos consists of a series of residential, military, medical, office, industrial, and retail districts defined by similar land uses and character.

A number of distinct residential districts occur throughout the City, each with its own feel and character.

A military district is formed by the boundaries of the Joint Forces Training Base, which is under the jurisdiction of the US Army and serves as the City's dominant southern and eastern boundary. This district is off-limits to the majority of Los Alamitos' residents, employees, and visitors. Nevertheless, it exerts a strong influence over the City's community structure and sense of identity.

A medical district is created by the Los Alamitos Medical Center and the medical office buildings along Katella Avenue between Reagan Street and Bloomfield Street. The individual private medical offices can benefit from a concentrated location and provide service to those being treated by or living near the medical center.

A number of medical offices, however, can also be found along Katella Avenue east of Bloomfield Street, resulting in a somewhat disjointed pattern of medical office, general office, retail, and residential uses. Encouraging existing and future medical office uses to locate within the medical district could strengthen the district and create new development opportunities elsewhere in the City.

An office and industrial district is formed around the site of the current Arrowhead Products facility. To the north and west of Arrowhead Products, the uses are predominantly light industrial, while on the south side of Katella Avenue, the uses transition to office.

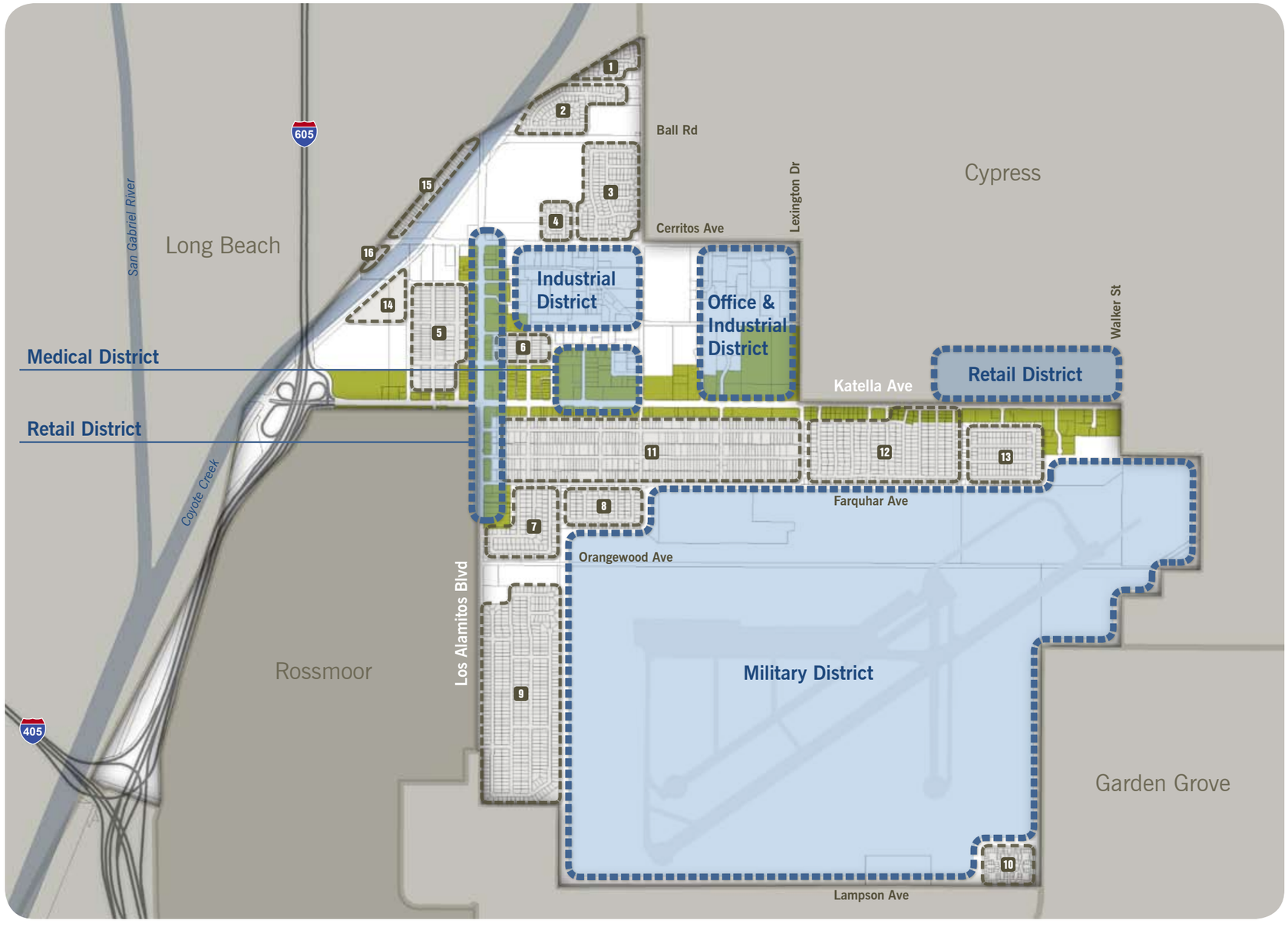
ELEMENT:
Districts

Another industrial district picks up west of Bloomfield Street in the northern portion of the city. This large employment center could provide a daytime population to the village district.

A retail district is created along Los Alamitos Boulevard, starting at Cerritos Avenue to the north and the Vons shopping center to the south. This corridor provides the main concentration of retail within the City and should be intensified to create a strong destination for the City of Los Alamitos.

Another retail district is located along the northern side of Katella Avenue, east of Lexington Drive in the City of Cypress.

This area contains many big box retail stores and small service and food storefronts that could influence the amount and type of commercial uses that could locate within the retail district along Los Alamitos Boulevard.



Districts/Residential Neighborhoods

Corridor Study Area

Districts within the City of Los Alamitos

Residential Neighborhoods within the City of Los Alamitos:

1. Country Square
2. College Park North
3. Greenbrook
4. Old Town West
5. Old Town East
6. Old Dutch Haven
7. Suburbia
8. Highlands
9. Parkewood
10. Apartment Row
11. Carrier Row
12. New Dutch Haven
13. Royal Oak Park
14. Woodcrest
15. El Dorado Park Estates East
16. The Bungalows

Figure 14. Existing Districts/Residential Neighborhoods Map

Community Structure

- Corridor Study Area
- Gateways
- Nodes
- Landmarks
- Edges
- San Gabriel River / Coyote Creek Trail
- Corridor Adjacent Alleys

Other Nodes within the City of Los Alamitos:

- Los Alamitos Medical Center
- Schools

Figure 15. Existing Community Structure

ELEMENT:
Landmarks

Landmarks function as a point of reference, but not necessarily at places where one enters a community or district. Landmarks are unique visual points of references that indicate one's location or proximity. They are usually large and/or tall, but can also be smaller, distinctive structures or buildings.

The City contains two distinct landmarks, both in the corridor study area. One is the antique band saw displayed in front of the Ganahl Lumber Store along Los Alamitos Boulevard. This 20-ton saw, which once cut logs up to 10 feet in diameter, can be seen from many vantage points along the Los Alamitos corridor.

The five-story hospital building along Katella Avenue is the second strong visual landmark in the City. The brick building is massive in scale, distinctive in appearance, and can be seen immediately on the horizon as one exits or passes under the 605 freeway overpass on the western edge of the City. From the east, the hospital building can be seen as one reaches Laurel Park.

Overall there is a lack of identifying features or landmarks in Los Alamitos that visually set it apart from adjacent communities. Visual statements such as community art and iconic buildings or structures at key points along both corridors could enhance the City's image and sense of identity.

ELEMENT:
Gateways & Nodes

Gateways or nodes are points or strategic spots in a community in which one can enter or gather. They are often the first and/or last points of reference, not only for residents, but for visitors and those who travel through the City. Nodes can also be areas where there is a concentration of employment or shopping. These points play a key role in forming the image of a community. Several key nodes occur along the Katella and Los Alamitos corridors.

Few areas exist within the City and corridor study area for gathering, with the exception of the park areas. The medical center is a significant employment node, with over 1,500 employees, patients, and visitors coming to the medical facilities each day.

The schools are the City's other major nodes of activity, with over 10,000 students, teachers, and other school employees coming to school on the weekdays during the school year.

A public plaza space could be introduced near the intersection of Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue and provide a place for people to gather, make a strong visual statement at a key gateway, and contribute to the sense of place for the corridor and City. Additional plazas and gathering areas should be strategically placed along the corridor to encourage pedestrian activity and build a sense of identity.

Northern Gateway: The northern end of the corridor area is anchored by the Los Alamitos High School and the retail and food businesses at the intersection of Cerritos Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard. The northeastern corner of this intersection (outside of the corridor study area) has been undeveloped for over a dozen years and hampers the image of this northern gateway. A large number of students and parents visit this intersection 180 to 360 times per year.

ELEMENT:
Gateways & Nodes

Southern Gateway: The City's southern gateway and node is the Vons shopping center. This center recently underwent facade renovations and includes a wide variety of uses and building types. This gateway is slightly diluted, however, by the fact that the unincorporated community of Rossmoor represents the western edge of Los Alamitos Boulevard south of Katella Avenue.

The City's perceived southern gateway is closer to the intersection of Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue. This is the most prominent intersection in the City and one of the largest in the surrounding communities. The intersection, however, lacks any distinct features, buildings, uses, or design to provide a sense that one has entered or is within the City of Los Alamitos.

Eastern Gateway: The City's eastern gateway is also diluted due to the boundary split along Katella Avenue between the cities of Los Alamitos and Cypress. At the moment, the new retail development in Cypress dominates the eastern entry point.

Visitors and even residents could easily mistake the Los Alamitos Race Course as a sign that they have entered the City of Los Alamitos even though the racecourse is in Cypress. Los Alamitos does not control both sides of Katella Avenue until Lexington Drive. Lexington Drive also serves as the entry point to the Joint Forces Training Base. Accordingly, the City may wish to enhance the gateway areas near Katella Avenue and Walker Street and Lexington Drive.

Western Gateway: At the western edge of the corridor study area and City boundary is the civic center and 605 freeway interchange, where vehicles pass through at high speed to/from either the City of Long Beach or the 605 freeway. The main view for vehicles traveling through this area is either the intersection of Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue (traveling east) or the 605 overpass (traveling west).

ELEMENT:
Edges

Edges are the linear elements that serve as the borders or boundaries between one area and another, such as between districts or cities. Natural edges include rivers, mountains, and open spaces; man-made edges include roads and drainage channels.

Typical corridors are physically separated from the surrounding neighborhood by block walls, storm drainage channels, large roads, and other barriers that prevent direct access from homes to the corridor areas. Hundreds of homes may be within a quarter mile of a corridor, but pedestrians, bicyclists, and even cars may have to travel a half mile or more to navigate around such barriers.

For example, the separation between Rossmoor and Los Alamitos is defined by the Rossmoor wall that cuts off direct access to most of the homes in Rossmoor from Los Alamitos Boulevard. As a result of this wall, vehicle speeds naturally increase due to the absence of intersections and activity on this length of the road.

In other areas of the corridor study area, the commercial and office uses along Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard separate many of the City's residential neighborhoods from activity along the corridors. However, unlike typical corridors, the uses along these roads are separated only by small alleys. The existing grid pattern provides quick and direct access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and cars.

ELEMENT:
Edges

The non-residential buildings along the corridors are also visually blended with the adjacent residential neighborhoods, as the homes that sit one or two blocks back can be seen by those traveling along the corridors through the small access streets that run perpendicular to the corridor roads.

Stronger edges are felt at the western and northern limits of the City, where the 605 freeway and San Gabriel River/ Coyote Creek identify the City and county boundaries (although the City boundaries technically extend beyond the channel). The Joint Forces Training Base serves as an edge distinguishing the areas accessible only to military personnel from those accessible to all.

ECONOMICS AND THE MARKET

Economic factors will influence what the community can accomplish by revitalizing the Katella and Los Alamitos corridors. This section describes the opportunities and constraints revealed through an analysis of local economic conditions.

RETAIL MARKET DEMAND

Retail market demand is the difference between the amount of retail building space that current spending can support and the amount of existing retail building space. These factors are usually calculated based on trade area, and trade areas vary by the types of goods or services in question.

For convenience goods and services—items that are purchased on a regular basis, such as groceries, prescriptions, and hair care—people tend to travel about 1.5 miles to get to stores and shops.

For comparison goods and services—items that are purchased infrequently, such as electronics, clothing, and furniture—people often travel 3 to 5 miles to get to locations with a concentration of stores selling similar products or to big box outlets that stock most if not all brands for a particular good.

Figure 16 shows the project study area and the areas within 1.5-, 3-, and 5-mile radii from the intersection of Los Alamitos and Katella Boulevards, as well as the location of existing national retail chain stores. A large portion of Los Alamitos' trade area includes parts of Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Center and the Seal Beach Naval Weapons Stations. Because these facilities include little to no residential population, the City's trade areas support less retail space than one finds in comparable communities.

The location of many national retail chains in and near the City's trade area further limits the support for more retail development in Los Alamitos. While some chains are not represented in the trade area, the trade area contains at least one store location in most retail categories. The effects of the national retailers' locations are quantified in Table 1.

While project resources did not permit a full market analysis (which would quantify the amount of existing retail building space with a field survey), a basic market study using existing data sources does provide an understanding of current market conditions.

Table 1 shows the amount of additional retail building space (in square feet) that current household spending in various trade areas could support. For each type of store, Claritas, the leading national provider of marketing data, calculates the difference between the estimated total amount of household spending in each trade area and the estimated amount of sales by businesses in each trade area. The analysis translates this leaked spending into square footage using average annual sales per square foot for each store type based on data from the Urban Land Institute.

The results of the analysis suggest several retail market demand opportunities and challenges for revitalizing and enhancing the study area. Although the following descriptions discuss the market demand for additional businesses, the results do not necessarily represent the potential success of any single business. Even in retail categories for which there is no market demand, a well-run new business could out-compete existing businesses, likely forcing an existing business to close.

Rather than focusing on an individual firm or tenant, the following descriptions suggest the retail categories in which community efforts to attract new businesses would likely generate the easiest success.

Convenience Goods

This type of retail encompasses food and beverage stores, health and personal care stores, gasoline stations, and many of the miscellaneous store retailers. These stores typically attract a majority of their customers from within a 1.5-mile trade area (the local trade area), but the 3-mile trade area is important because a store located between 1.5 and 3 miles can capture spending from the local trade area.

The analysis finds that there is demand for more food and beverage stores within the 1.5-mile trade area but not within the 3-mile trade area, suggesting that competition outside of the 1.5-mile radius captures local spending. Looking in finer detail, however, shows that both the 1.5- and 3-mile trade areas can support additional convenience stores and specialty food stores, with demand for about 5,000 square feet of each in the 1.5-mile area.

The analysis finds that there is demand for more health and personal care stores in both the 1.5- and 3-mile trade areas. Market demand would support about 2,000 square feet of additional pharmacies and drug stores in the local trade area; that support increases to 107,000 square feet with 3 miles.

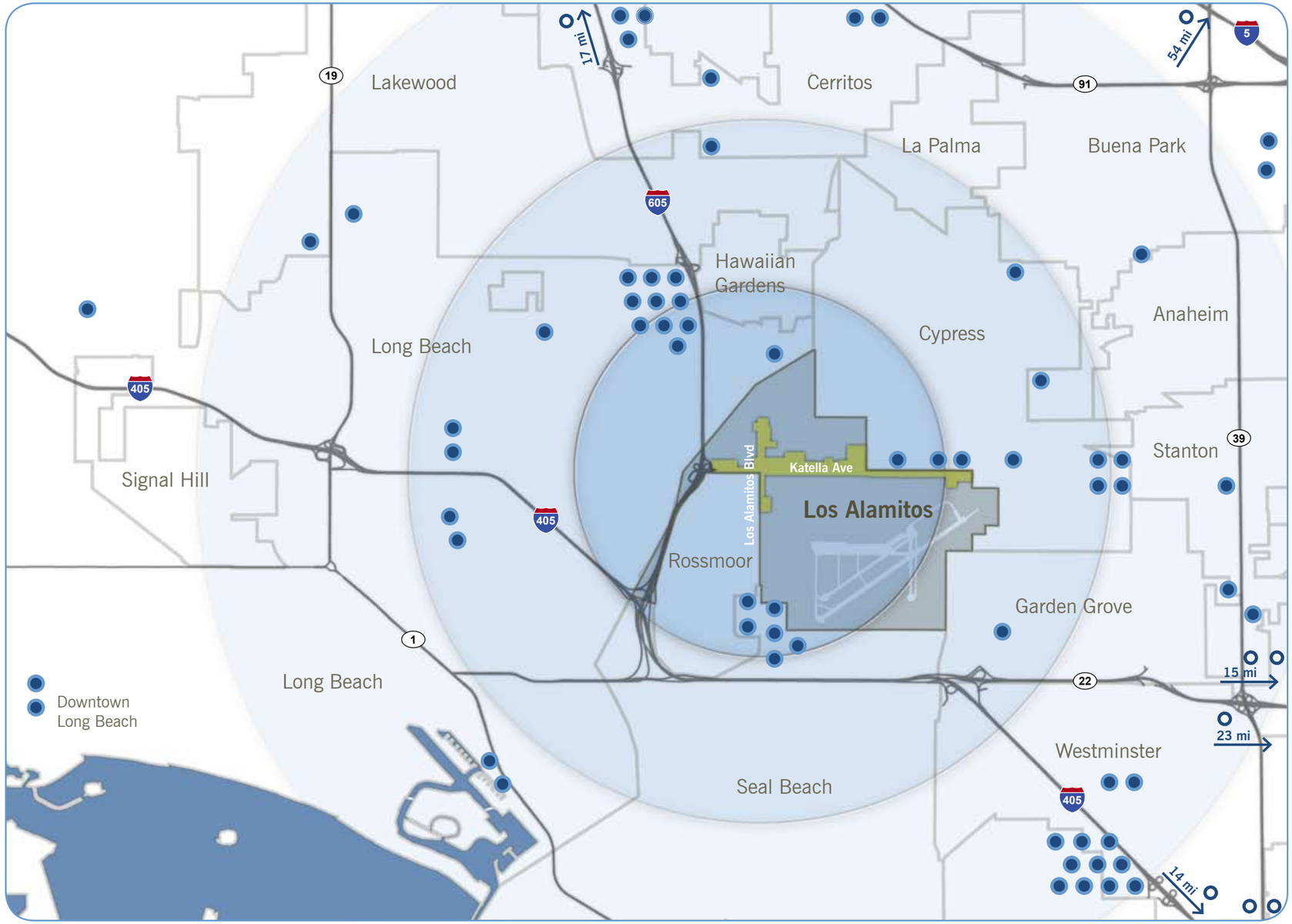
Retail Typology

CONVENIENCE GOODS

COMPARISON GOODS

FOOD SERVICE & DINING

EXPERIENTIAL SHOPPING



Retail Trade Area and Stores

- National Retail Location
- Off-Map National Retail Location

Trade Area Distance from Los Alamitos Blvd and Katella Ave:

- 1.5-Mile Radius
- 3-Mile Radius
- 5-Mile Radius
- Corridor Study Area

Figure 16. Retail Trade Area Map

This market demand and the future expansion of Los Alamitos Medical Center suggest that corridor revitalization efforts should seek to attract one or more pharmacies and drug stores. The analysis also finds sufficient demand to support 3,000 square feet of cosmetic, beauty supply, and perfume stores; and 6,000 square feet of other health and personal care stores (primarily food supplement stores and medical supply).

The analysis finds that there is demand for 6,000 square feet of additional gasoline stations, with and without convenience stores. Although this use might not fit into the vision for portions of the Los Alamitos and Katella corridors, the City should remain cognizant of the market support for additional gasoline stations.

Comparison Goods

This type of retail includes furniture and home furnishings stores; electronics and appliance stores; building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers; clothing and clothing accessories stores; sporting goods; hobby, book, and music stores; general merchandise stores; and some miscellaneous store retailers.

These stores typically draw a majority of their customers from a 3-mile trade area (the community trade area), although some big box retailers draw from a 5-mile area (the regional trade area) and stores that are part of a regional mall or power center can capture a majority of spending from an 8-mile-radius trade area.

Because the corridor study area does not have the amount of land needed to develop a regional shopping center, the analysis focuses on the market demand within the community trade area and uses the demand in the regional trade area as an indicator of competition within the region. For all of these retail categories (except general merchandise and miscellaneous), the analysis finds market demand at the 3-mile trade area but none at the 5-mile.

The sole exception is building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers. Market demand would support an addition 197,000 square feet of these stores. The potential of capitalizing on this unmet market demand is the most lucrative opportunity uncovered by the market analysis.

Looking in finer detail, the analysis finds sufficient market demand in the 3-mile trade area (without significant competition in the 5-mile trade area) to support: 5,000 square feet of camera and photographic equipment stores; 32,000 square feet of women's clothing stores; and 19,000 square feet of sporting goods stores.

Food Service and Drinking Places

This type of retail includes full-service restaurants, which can draw from a 3-mile radius community trade area, and limited-service restaurants and bars, which attract a majority of their customers from a 1.5-mile local trade area.

The analysis finds that there is insufficient market demand to support additional full-service and limited-service restaurants. In contrast, the analysis finds sufficient market demand to support an additional 9,000 square feet of drinking places.

Experiential Shopping

This type of shopping can include both convenience goods and comparison goods retailers. In experiential shopping, though, the consumer is at least equally as interested in the experience of shopping as in the desire to satisfy a material need. Often, this type of shopping involves family or friends, and socializing is a key component of the trip.

Because people intend these shopping trips to be different and special, they are often willing to drive past conventional shopping centers, malls, and big box power centers to get to a shopping area that provides a pleasurable, relaxed experience. Successful experiential shopping areas are true destinations, attracting consumers and their spending from throughout a region.

Due to the conventional shopping competition Los Alamitos faces in most directions, new retail development would either have to fill a particular niche not met by these conventional centers or compete head-on, with success requiring new retail to provide a better mix of quality and costs in the eyes of regional consumers.

Establishing a new town center as an experiential shopping district could be an effective way to capture regional spending without competing head-on with surrounding conventional shopping centers.

Retail Market Demand Summary

The analysis finds a large unmet demand for building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers. Within this category, there is no support for additional home centers and little support for new hardware stores. There is, however, significant support for:

- Paint and wallpaper stores
- Building materials supply dealers
- Cabinet stores, kitchen (except custom), to be installed
- Ceiling fan stores
- Ceramic tile stores
- Door stores
- Electrical supply stores
- Fencing dealers
- Floor-covering stores, wood or ceramic tile only
- Garage door dealers
- Glass stores
- Hardwood flooring dealers
- Kitchen cabinet (except custom) stores
- Lighting fixture stores
- Lumber retailing yards
- Masonry (e.g., block, brick, stone) dealers
- Plumbing supply stores
- Prefabricated building dealers
- Roofing material dealers
- Siding dealers
- Tile stores, ceramic
- Window stores
- Outdoor power equipment stores
- Nursery and garden centers

Based on current spending patterns, market demand would support an additional 197,000 square feet of retail

Table 1
Market Demand for Additional Retail Building Space (in sq.ft.) by Retail Category
1.5-, 3-, and 5-Mile Trade Areas, Los Alamitos, 2009

Retail Store Type	1.5-Mile Radius	3-Mile Radius	5-Mile Radius	Recommendation for the Corridor
CONVENIENCE GOODS				
Food and Beverage Stores	34,100	0	0	5–10,000
Gasoline Stations	6,900	12,500	0	5–6,000
Health and Personal Care Stores	11,200	159,700	225,700	10–25,000
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	0	0	0	1–2,500
COMPARISON GOODS				
Building Material, Garden Equip Stores	0	197,500	467,500	50–200,000
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	10,800	157,400	0	10–30,000
Electronics and Appliance Stores	14,100	57,500	0	5–10,000
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	0	29,300	0	0
General Merchandise Stores	0	0	0	0
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores	22,500	52,500	0	10–20,000
FOOD SERVICE AND DRINKING PLACES				
Food Service and Drinking Places	0	12,079	0	10–20,000

Source: The Planning Center, 2010, using data from Claritas and the Urban Land Institute

building space among these types of stores. Developing and marketing the area to create a regional destination for home improvements could capture regional spending and support even more new retail building space (the 5-mile trade area has an unmet demand for up to 467,000 square feet of these types of businesses).

In addition to a home improvement focus for the project area, there is sufficient market demand to support a variety of other types of stores that could round out the offerings of a new town center. Specifically, the analysis finds that market demand could support:

- 5,000 square feet of convenience stores
- 5,000 square feet of specialty food stores
- 2,000 to 25,000 square feet of pharmacies and drug stores
- 3,000 square feet of cosmetic, beauty supply and perfume stores
- 6,000 square feet of other health and personal care stores
- 6,000 square feet of gasoline stations
- 5,000 square feet of camera and photographic equipment stores
- 32,000 square feet of women's clothing stores
- 19,000 square feet of sporting goods stores
- 9,000 square feet of drinking places

Even though there is market demand, individual retailers may or may not be interested in locating in the project area. New or expanded businesses elsewhere in the 1½- and 3-mile trade areas may capture parts of this market demand.

Furthermore, other retail categories are saturated or over-saturated in the local and community trade areas. Some of these businesses may relocate or go out of business over time. The square footage figures are thus a gross amount; vacant building space and buildings that become vacant could accommodate some of the market demand. Not all of the market demand represents new construction potential.

The analysis suggests two key opportunities for Los Alamitos. First, the large unmet regional demand for home improvements creates an opportunity to create a DIY (do-it-yourself) home improvement destination. To capitalizing on this opportunity, the community could:

- Work with existing home improvement businesses to understand and address challenges they face
- Establish and operate a business attraction program to seek out complimentary home improvement businesses to locate in Los Alamitos
- Establish and operate unified marketing and public relations campaigns to create a public image of Los Alamitos as a DIY home improvement location
- Develop public spaces and work with the home improvement businesses to program DIY special events to attract new consumers to Los Alamitos

Secondly, the location of conventional shopping centers and big box retailers in proximity to Los Alamitos and the lack of an experiential shopping district provide an opportunity to create a unique shopping and entertainment destination catering to regional consumers. To capitalizing on this opportunity, the community could:

- Plan a town center area with the look and feel of a traditional downtown shopping district
- Focus all planning, development, investment, and improvements on the experience of the shopper
- Provide ample pedestrian amenities, including easy access from parking, wide sidewalks, street trees and shading, and comfortable street furniture
- Work with existing retailers and restaurateurs to understand and address challenges they face
- Establish and operate a business attraction program to seek out complimentary retailers to provide a balanced mix of destination stores
- Establish and operate unified marketing and public relations campaigns to create a public image of Los Alamitos as destination experiential shopping district
- Develop a public place or festival space and program special events to attract new consumers to Los Alamitos

These images show examples of unanchored experiential shopping districts in nearby Long Beach: Parkview Village Shops (top) and Belmont Shore (right).

Both areas are pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly and are located along corridors that carry significant traffic volumes.

REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Knowing where to start is one of the unique challenges to corridor revitalization. A tool to help identify opportunities is assessing the redevelopment potential of individual sites.

Think Like a Developer

To understand redevelopment potential, one must think like a developer. When developers consider the development potential of an existing site, they consider the costs to acquire the property, demolish existing improvements, and construct the new improvements. They weigh these costs against the likely revenue from the project—the sales or rents from the housing, stores, or offices they could develop.

The difference between a redevelopment site and a vacant site is the additional acquisition cost for the existing building and the demolition cost. These costs add no value to the final product. These are referred to as "throw away" costs because it is money developers literally throw away on redevelopment sites; these costs do not arise with a vacant site.

A later section of this project includes a pro forma analysis to test the financial feasibility of development concepts for two opportunity sites, getting to the bottom line of redevelopment potential. Pro forma analysis, however, is not cheap and easy. As an alternative to inform the early stages of planning efforts, one can evaluate measures that indicate the relative level of throw away money required for redeveloping individual parcels, as demonstrated in the following section.

Redevelopment Potential Indicators

Three indicators of redevelopment potential are lot size, density or lot coverage, and improvement-to-land value ratio.

1. Minimum Developable Area: Generally, parcels less than 20,000 square feet do not have redevelopment potential. Two or more adjacent lots having a combined land area that meet this threshold could have redevelopment potential if under single ownership or if the present owners are willing to sell to a common owner.

2. Floor Area Ratio: Non-residential density can be measured by floor-area ratio (FAR). FAR is derived by dividing the total building square footage by the lot or parcel square footage. Those sites that have a floor-area ratio of less than 0.25 (i.e., less than 25 percent of the site is used for buildings) may be underutilized and offer redevelopment potential.

3. Improvement-to-Land-Value (I/L) Ratio: Sites for which the value of improvements (e.g., buildings) is less than one-third of the value of the land may be underutilized and offer redevelopment potential.

Study Area Redevelopment Potential

Approximately 32 parcels (total of about 67 acres) meet the minimum size threshold and satisfy either the FAR or I/L value ratio indicator. Parcels in this set might not present as strong of a case for redevelopment. With a motivated seller willing to accept a price reflecting the underlying land's value for redevelopment, however, these parcels could be strong candidates for redevelopment.

Another 50 parcels (total of about 11 acres) do not meet the minimum size threshold but do satisfy both the FAR and I/L value ratio indicators. These parcels could have redevelopment potential if they are assembled with one or more other parcels to create a project with at least 20,000 square feet of land.

Only 10 parcels (total of about 11 acres), satisfy all three indicators. These three indicators, however, must be tempered by information collected through site visits. Sites that may look like obvious redevelopment opportunities sometimes reveal themselves to be quality businesses that have simply not expanded or do not use a large portion of their site for buildings. Other sites may not seem like redevelopment opportunities using the three indicators, but a field visit reveals a vacant building that is poorly maintained.

Figure 17 identifies parcels that indicated a strong potential for redevelopment and deserve further study. They are divided into primary and secondary opportunity sites. Primary opportunity

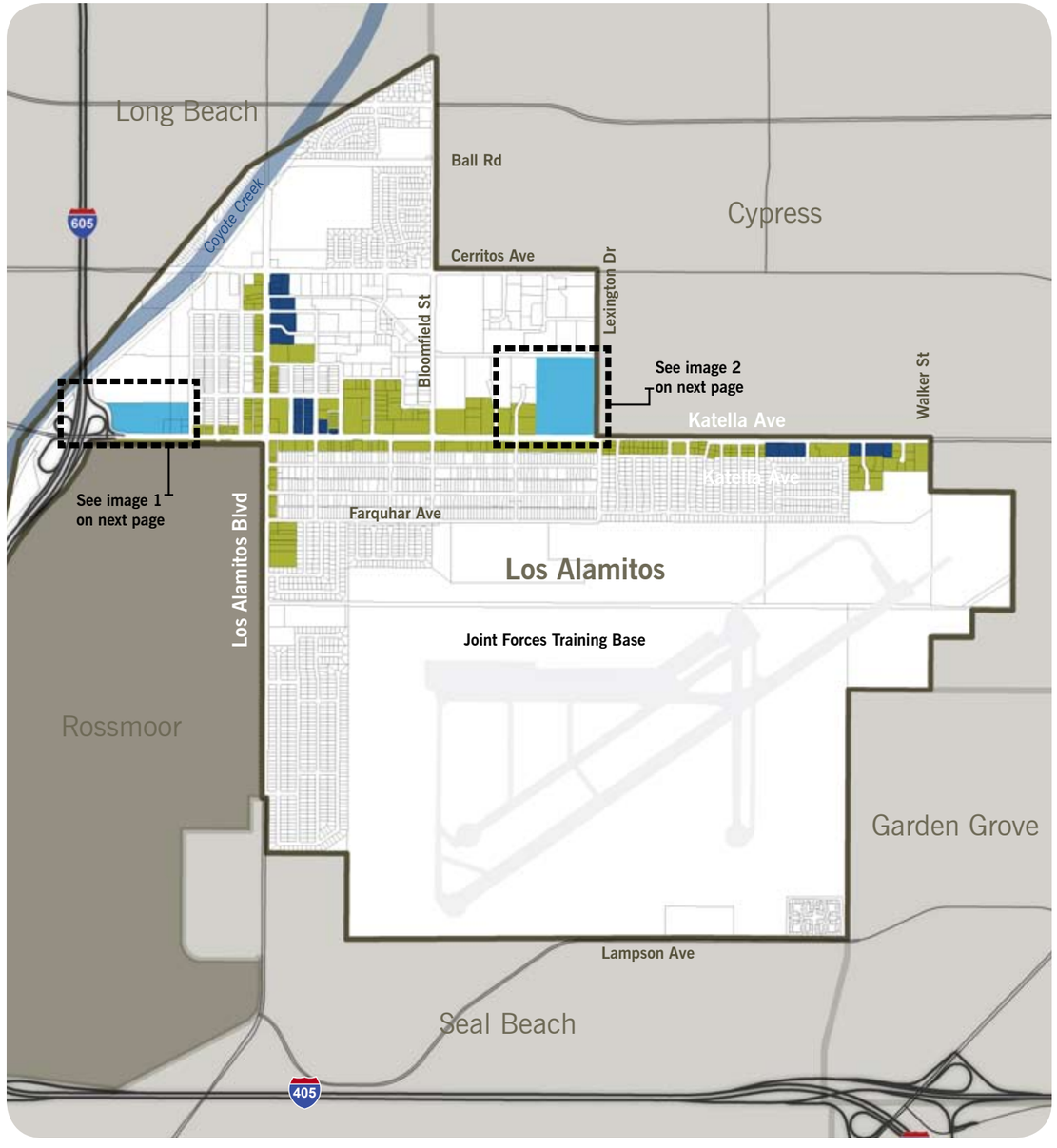


Figure 17. Study Area Redevelopment Potential Map

sites satisfied the criteria and were verified through site visits to represent true opportunities. Secondary opportunity sites may satisfy the criteria, but they contain existing businesses that may or may not be interested in selling and/or moving.

Redevelopment Potential Conclusions

Using the three indicators to identify redevelopment potential is a broad level of analysis and attempts to identify parcels where the cost to acquire and demolish existing buildings might not be prohibitively high.

These measures do not assess the inclination of the current owner to sell or the potential sales price of the parcels. Even parcels identified as having redevelopment potential actually have no potential if the owner is not willing to sell.

Likewise, parcels that appear not to have redevelopment potential could actually have potential if the current owner is motivated to sell and is willing to accept a price that could be considered below the full market value of existing buildings. Nevertheless, Figure 17 does provide some indication of areas where there are several lot or parcels that could form the nucleus of a redevelopment project.

Primary Sites: First, on the east side of Los Alamitos Boulevard are several sites that could be considered for a project to provide additional retail space and a public plaza for special events, capitalizing on the region's unmet market demand for home improvement retailers.

Similarly, near the intersection of Los Alamitos and Katella are a few parcels that could be redeveloped to begin the process of creating a town center retail and entertainment district, satisfying the niche for a regional experiential shopping destination to compete with the conventional shopping centers and big box retailers outside the City. Some of these parcels could also be developed to strengthen the connection between the medical center and the uses along Los Alamitos Boulevard.

Along the south side of Katella Avenue close to the eastern border are several lots with redevelopment potential. Some of these could be redeveloped to create small retail nodes to primarily serve the needs of adjacent and nearby residential neighborhoods.

Secondary Sites: There are two areas in the City where a single business is located on large areas of land that could be well-positioned for major new redevelopment projects.

The Arrowhead Products property, at 28 acres, is one of the largest areas of land dedicated for private use in the City. Some may view the property as an ideal site for new big box commercial development. The proximity to the new commercial development in Cypress does offer the attraction of a large subregional draw. There are a few potential obstacles to redeveloping the site.

The company has been operating at this location for decades and generates a large number of highly skilled, highly paid jobs. As is true for many of the aerospace companies still located in Southern California, their contracts require zero downtime (time when manufacturing activity is idle). Accordingly, it can be cost prohibitive to acquire the site, as one must often pay not only for the existing property, but also for the installation of new, highly specialized equipment at another location to minimize downtime.

The second site consists of just over 13 acres of City properties (City Hall, Police Department, and City Yard), other public and quasi-public buildings, and SuperMedia (on the western 10 acres).

Private development interest, along with the City's willingness to relocate its own facilities, indicate that this area could support a variety of uses, including a theater, hotel, or senior housing. The area is also near Los Alamitos Boulevard and could serve as a southern anchor with additional redevelopment along Katella Avenue—though it should not be developed to potentially compete with the uses along Los Alamitos Boulevard.

These parcels, however, are not visible to those traveling along the 605 freeway due to the location and configuration of the on- and off-ramps. Potential commercial uses should not rely upon freeway exposure; those that would rely upon such exposure would likely request a large pole sign to gain exposure along the freeway.

Image 1: Sites containing SuperMedia and Public Uses

Image 2: Arrowhead Products Site

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GENERATING THE VISION

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Katella + Los Alamitos

4. Generating the Vision

The future of the Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard corridors will be determined largely by those who live, work, learn, and invest in Los Alamitos. The businesses, residents, developers, students, City staff, and City decisionmakers have the ability to change how these corridors look and function over the next 20 years.

As part of this demonstration project, the City interviewed key stakeholders, spoke with residents and others at the City's 50th Anniversary celebration, and conducted a public survey to learn about how people experience the corridors today and what people would like to see in the future.

Additional public meetings took place on March 8, 2010 in a presentation to the Planning Commission, on May 25, 2010 through a meeting with the General Plan Committee, and on June 14, 2010 in a second presentation to the Planning Commission.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

In February, the City conducted one-on-one interviews with 13 key stakeholders who lived and/or worked in Los Alamitos. These stakeholders are listed in alphabetical order by first name. Their comments are summarized to the right.

- **Brad Sheridan** | Los Alamitos Traffic Commission
- **Brad Miles** | Commercial Real Estate Broker
- **Dean Hill** | Resident and Bikeway Advocate
- **Gary Loe** | Planning Commission
- **Gordon Robinson** | Project Manager, BRT, OCTA
- **Jeff Stewart** | Los Alamitos City Manager
- **Judy Klabouch** | Business Owner, Green Street Interiors; 1st Vice Chair, Los Alamitos Chamber of Commerce
- **Kim Herrington** | Manager of Real Estate Operations, SuperMedia (formerly Idearc)
- **Marilynn Poe** | Mayor of Los Alamitos
- **Michele Finney** | CEO, Los Alamitos Medical Center
- **Rob Feldman** | Resident / Residential Real Estate Broker
- **Sandy Yavitz** | Property Owner, Center Plaza
- **Shariar (Shawn) Afshani** | Property Owner, Los Alamitos Town Square, Katella Deli, Los Alamitos Plaza

Summary of Stakeholder Interviews

We need a central gathering space and a better sense of identity.

Los Alamitos is known for its medical uses, the racetrack, recreation areas, and the schools, but we need to offer something more for the locals, places where kids can go and reasons to keep people in the City.

Need to give people (cars and bikes) a reason to stop in Los Alamitos, as opposed to traveling through the City.

Los Al Blvd should be more walkable, narrower, and slow traffic down. Outdoor dining should be available all along the corridor. Both streets should have more street trees.

Would like to see the City add lots of trees to the right-of-way and improve the aesthetic image of Los Alamitos along both corridors; more street trees and wider sidewalks.

The boulevard needs to have its own sense of place and a sense of slowing down. The slower speeds will allow people to see the businesses and stop by safely.

We would like to see more street trees everywhere, spruce up the medians, create a city identity through signage (including signs for each neighborhood).

We would like to see bulbouts and pedestrian islands to improve a pedestrian's ability to cross the street.

We want something that is more walkable than The Shops at Rossmoor, which is too car oriented.

If outdoor dining were offered, people would be more likely to eat along the boulevard. We have such wonderful weather, why not take advantage of it?

A clock tower should be at the main intersection.

The medical uses are one of the City's biggest strengths. We should work to enhance and improve our medical uses.

Services (e.g., medical) and Rossmoor (discretionary income) are the City's strongest economic engines.

The hospital is the center of the wheel in the City and you need pedestrian-friendly areas around and connecting to it—from the Medical Center to Los Alamitos Boulevard along Florista and Katella Avenue.

Medical uses should be celebrated. Their employees/customers help support our stores and restaurants.

Help medical uses improve their own area through a business improvement district.

The medical office is found everywhere along Katella Avenue. It should be concentrated into a district and take advantage of the medical center.

Everyone bikes in Los Alamitos. It should be easy and safe to ride your bike along the corridors. Safety is especially important around schools.

The bike paths should be improved, particularly the one along the north side of Oak Middle School (so you know it's there and how to get to Los Al Blvd).

We need bike lanes and paths to bring people from the San Gabriel River Trail into our City.

The high school is a significant congestion point and there are too many potential accidents waiting to happen between kids, bikes, and cars. Schools are one of the biggest reasons people live here and are the anchor of the community (only one high school in district).

The City needs to modify development standards (especially parking) and provide greater certainty to incentivize new development.

A parking district is needed so that each business does not have to park itself individually.

Business and property owners need to see more consistency in the interpretation of rules and standards. Some ordinances are out of date and/or were never completed.

Once better standards are created, outdoor seating should not require a conditional use permit.

Additional parking spaces should not be required for outdoor seating.

The medical office is found everywhere along Katella Avenue. It should be concentrated into a district and take advantage of the medical center and its forthcoming expansion.

Input gathered during the City's 50th Anniversary celebration echoed those received through the survey and interviews.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

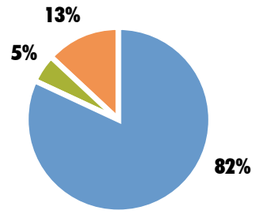
Between January and March, over 100 people filled out a survey through the City's website, in person at City Hall, and at the City's 50th Anniversary celebration. The survey asked questions about how people used and accessed the corridors, whether they used transit, and how they would like to see the corridors improved. The following summarizes and illustrates the responses received over the three-month period.

A. USE OF THE CORRIDORS

1. How often do you visit the corridor area?

RESULTS: Nearly all those surveyed said they visited the corridors almost every day.

- 82% 4 or more days a week
- 13% 2–3 days a week
- 5% 1 day or less a week



2. Why do you usually come to the corridor area?

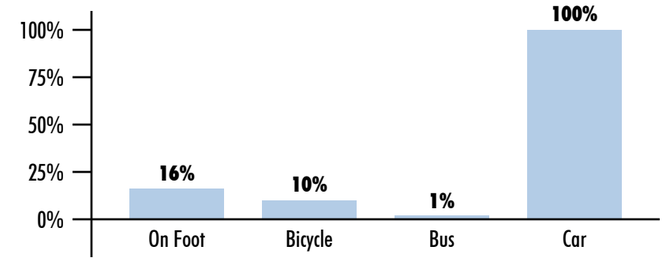
RESULTS: In addition to their transportation role, the corridors are used primarily for their shops and services, with many living and/or working around the corridors. However, despite the regular shoppers, very few stay to walk and stroll.

Katella Ave		Los Alamitos Boulevard
60%	Travel through the corridor	52%
58%	Patronize shops and services	67%
40%	Live around the corridor	46%
35%	Work within the corridor	24%
13%	Patronize the office uses	5%
7%	Visit friends within the corridors	7%
5%	Walk or stroll along the corridor	5%
4%	Catch the bus along the corridor	1%

B. ACCESS AND TRANSIT

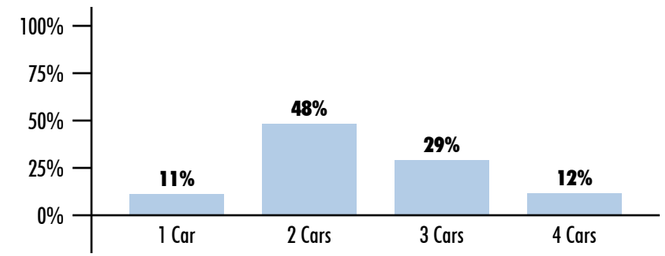
3. How do you usually come to the corridor area?

RESULTS: Everyone visits the corridor by car, and some occasionally walk to or bike along the corridors.



4. Number of cars in your household?

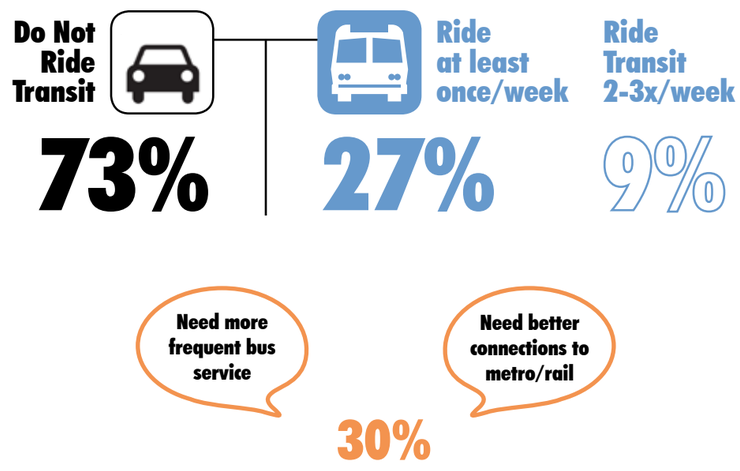
RESULTS: Similar to most Southern California households, the majority of respondents live in households with two or three cars.



5–7. Frequency of public transit? Why do you use public transit? What would encourage you to use public transit more often?

RESULTS: Over one in four respondents ride the bus or train to get to work or places for recreation, but few do so more than once a week.

More frequent bus service and better connections to metro/rail were the two improvements respondents indicated would encourage them to ride public transit. The planned BRT (bus rapid transit) service along Katella Avenue should bring both and increase the viability of using transit.



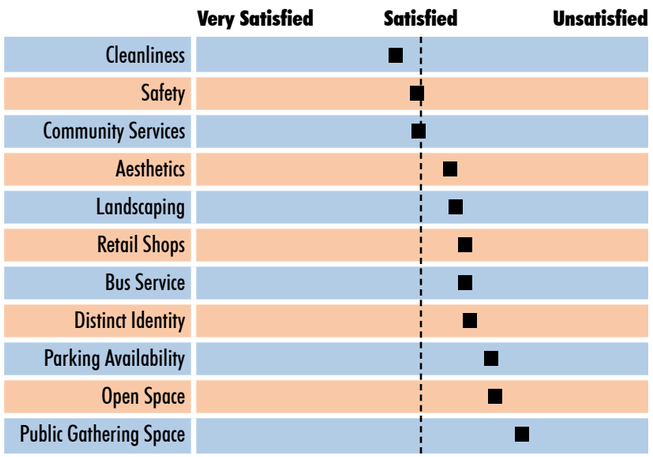
C. SATISFACTION

8–9. How satisfied are you with Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard?

RESULTS: The survey results showed that respondents were most satisfied with the safety and cleanliness of the corridors.

The results also showed a desire for more open space and better places for public gathering. A lack of parking was also cited as a problem along the corridors.

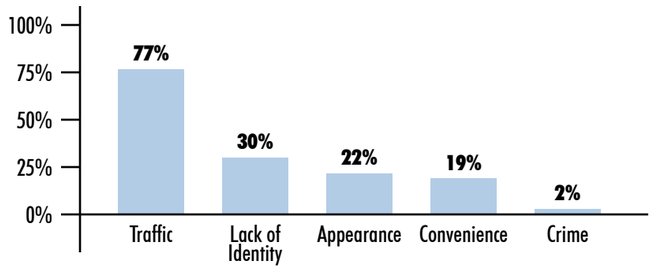
Dozens of comments were received asking for safe bike paths and better connections to the San Gabriel River Trail. Wider sidewalks and better walking conditions were also highlighted in the comments.



10. What are the biggest problems along the corridors?

RESULTS: Unsafe traffic conditions were cited as the biggest problem along both corridors. The comments stated that both roadways currently cater too much to cars and do not provide a safe condition for either pedestrians or bicyclists.

The second biggest problem was a lack of identity. The respondents want a stronger sense of being in Los Alamitos when traveling through the corridors.



YOU ALSO SAID... There are too many driveways close to one another. This backs up traffic and makes it unsafe for pedestrians, bike, and cars.

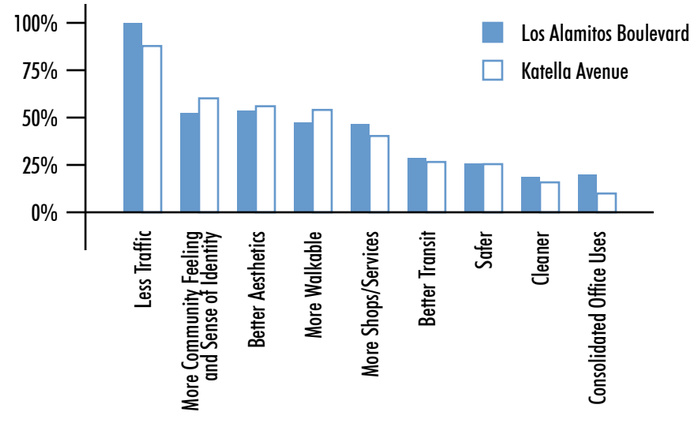
We need places where local kids and adults can feel comfortable about gathering. We want to stay in Los Alamitos instead of going elsewhere.

D. POTENTIAL CHANGES

11. What changes would you like to see along the corridors?

RESULTS: Driven by the answers in Q10, the most common change requested for both roadways was a decrease in traffic.

Respondents also asked for a greater sense of identity and community along the corridors, with a desire for better looking, more walkable parkways.



12–13. What would you like to see more of along the corridors?

RESULTS: Over half of all respondents asked for more sit down restaurants or cafés. Over one-third asked for more neighborhood retail and a theater.

Over three-quarters of all respondents requested that more trees be placed along both corridors, especially along Los Alamitos Blvd. Almost half asked to see more parks and open space along the corridors.

The comments emphasized the desire for sidewalk seating and opportunities for safe nighttime strolling and gathering.

78%	More trees
52%	More sit down restaurants and cafés
40%	More parks and open space
34%	A theater
33%	More neighborhood retail

YOU ALSO SAID... We need small restaurants with sidewalk seating, a coffee shop that is open later in the evening hours, art stores, and a bookstore.

The businesses need more parking—perhaps even parking structures. We want well lit streets that cater to the mobile, local youth and families.

14–15. How would the corridors change and improve over the next 5 and 20 years?

RESULTS: The desired future for the corridors was very clear. There is a desire for a more dynamic environment that provides a central place for the residents of Los Alamitos.

A downtown should be developed along the Boulevard with walkable streets, great design, a mix of uses, slow traffic, and plenty of parking concentrated in central lots or structures.

Katella Avenue will organize its uses into attractive and successful clusters that serve the region and City residents.

The buildings, landscaping, and signage should all be coordinated, provide a greater sense of place, and encourage those traveling through the City to come back to Los Alamitos to shop, stroll, and have fun.

The streets will be safe for everyone and every form of transportation—be they children, families, workers, or customers who walk, bike, or drive along the corridors.

Bicycles should be fully embraced and connections to the nearby San Gabriel River Trail should be strengthened.

Los Alamitos Boulevard

More biking and walking. Close down the street some nights for pedestrians and bikes only.

A pedestrian bridge that allows the high school students to safely cross Cerritos and eliminates the traffic jam in the morning drop-off hour. We don't need three lanes; we need a safer way for the kids to get to school.

Greater mix of uses, lofts above retail, more ped friendly, and much slower traffic. Crossing the street to restaurants and shops is easy and safe.

A wall that matches the look and quality of the Rossmoor brick wall.

In the next 5 years, there are ways to bike safely along the boulevard and places to stop and grab a quick bite or coffee. In the next 20 years, it is a walkable main street that offers places for all to gather. It is the downtown of Los Alamitos.

Katella Avenue

Medical buildings and uses are concentrated into a large campus.

Developed into a place you want to be, with mixed use at key intersections, great street trees, and more cohesive development overall.

A better sense of entering and leaving Los Alamitos in the next 5 years. In the next 20 years, the businesses along Katella look unified and are thriving.

Distinctive and lush landscaping lining Katella Avenue.

Shopping, retail, offices, and restaurants would be coordinated and rearranged in clusters. Their facades would be representative of a citywide theme.

Great connections to Metro and Metrolink.

Safe for kids to walk and bike, and synchronized lights.

CORRIDOR VISION

A vision describes what the two corridors will be like in the future based upon a set of values shared by the residents, workers, and students of Los Alamitos. The vision presented below is based on the input received from the surveys, stakeholder interviews, and other outreach efforts combined with an analysis of existing conditions, opportunities, and constraints. This vision guides the design strategies and implementation efforts found in the next section of this report.

Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard are attractive corridors that bring people into Los Alamitos. The two streets host some of Southern California's most attractive and dynamic places to shop, work, live, and have fun.

The look and feel of the buildings, landscaping, signs, and spaces reflect the City's small town character while supporting successful businesses, a world-class medical center, unique shops and services, wonderful restaurants, and a wide range of places to live. The businesses provide the City with a diversity of tax revenue and fiscal support, helping ensure Los Alamitos is economically sustainable.

The streets are safe for everyone and every form of transportation—be they children, families, workers, or customers who walk, bike, ride transit, or drive along the corridors. Traveling by bicycle is easy and safe along Los Alamitos Boulevard and throughout much of the City. The corridors attract a large number of commuter and recreational riders living and working in Los Alamitos and those traveling along the nearby San Gabriel River Trail.

Katella Avenue offers landmark gateways that signal passage into and out of Los Alamitos. The uses are organized into attractive and logical clusters enabling the region's and City's residents to easily find what they want.

Los Alamitos Boulevard provides a central place for the residents, workers, and students of Los Alamitos to meet friends, stroll, enjoy great food, and shop. The Boulevard forms a downtown with walkable streets, great design, a mix of highly desirable uses, slow traffic, and plenty of parking concentrated in central lots or structures. It is the place that defines the popular image of Los Alamitos.

Katella
Los Alamitos

DESIGN CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

5

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5. Design Concepts and Strategies

To achieve the vision for the Los Alamitos Commercial Corridors, this report presents a number of concepts and strategies. The first five design strategies represent ideas on how to make the corridors more livable, create pedestrian-friendly environments, reorganize land uses into logical clusters, and enhance alternative means of transportation around and through the City.

The sixth design strategy presents an urban design study of how two key areas along the corridors could potentially be configured or redeveloped. The resulting site plans were evaluated through a pro forma analysis to determine their financial feasibility and uncover any unexpected constraints posed by the City's existing development standards.

STRATEGY #1: A PEDESTRIAN- AND BUSINESS-FRIENDLY BOULEVARD

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND CHALLENGES

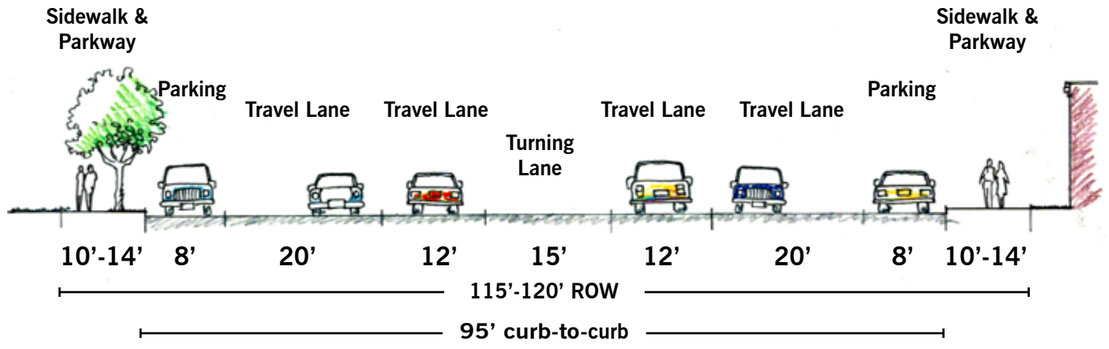
Los Alamitos Boulevard operates as a six-lane street south of Katella Avenue, carrying over 60,000 cars and trucks into and through the City on an average day. North of Katella Avenue, the traffic volumes decrease significantly to just over 23,000 trips per day and traffic backs up only during the morning hours when students are driving to or being dropped off at Los Alamitos High School.

Though the number of striped lanes decrease from six to four (two in each direction), Los Alamitos Boulevard retains the same right-of-way width. As a result, the roadway itself is not reduced and the distance from curb-to-curb is roughly 95 feet. This is the distance that pedestrians have to travel to cross from one side of Los Alamitos Boulevard to the other.

In addition to a daunting crossing distance, the extra-wide roadway encourages cars and trucks to travel much faster than the posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour. Actual vehicle speeds along this stretch of Los Alamitos Boulevard can easily reach 45 to 50 miles per hour. The combination of speeding vehicles and large crossing distances ensure that the only safe places pedestrians can cross Los Alamitos Boulevard are at signalized intersections with a formal crosswalk.

Furthermore, businesses suffer when potential customers are passing by at high speed and few pedestrians walk along the corridor. It is not sufficient for commercial businesses to be exposed to a large number of vehicles. Those vehicles must be able to see the businesses and slow down to visit them. Additionally, the businesses on either side of the street are too far apart to relate to one another and opportunities for synergy between businesses are compromised.

Accordingly, two concepts were explored that narrow the roadway and enlarge the parkway and sidewalk areas along Los Alamitos Boulevard. Cross-section samples of each concept are shown on the following page and compared to the existing cross-section to the right. Following the cross-sections are plan views of the two concepts as they could be implemented along the entire length of Los Alamitos Boulevard north of Katella Avenue.



Los Alamitos Boulevard: Existing ROW

These two images show some of the challenges associated with the current width of Los Alamitos Boulevard north of Katella Avenue. It can be intimidating to consider crossing the street anywhere but at a controlled intersection. Businesses have also indicated that they have missed opportunities to share customers with stores across the street due to the disconnect between the two sides of the street.

5. DESIGN CONCEPTS/STRATEGIES

DESIGN CONCEPT 1: STRAIGHT

The first concept is called the "Straight" option and expands the sidewalk and parkway area equally on both sides of the right-of-way, while slightly reducing the internal drive and turning-lane widths. The two primary goals are to slow down passing traffic and increase walkability.

A. Sidewalks and parkways expand from 10' to 21'

The resulting right-of-way yields 21 feet for sidewalks, parkways, enhanced landscaping, and outdoor dining on each side of the road—doubling the space provided before.

B. Crossing distance decreases from 95' to 73'

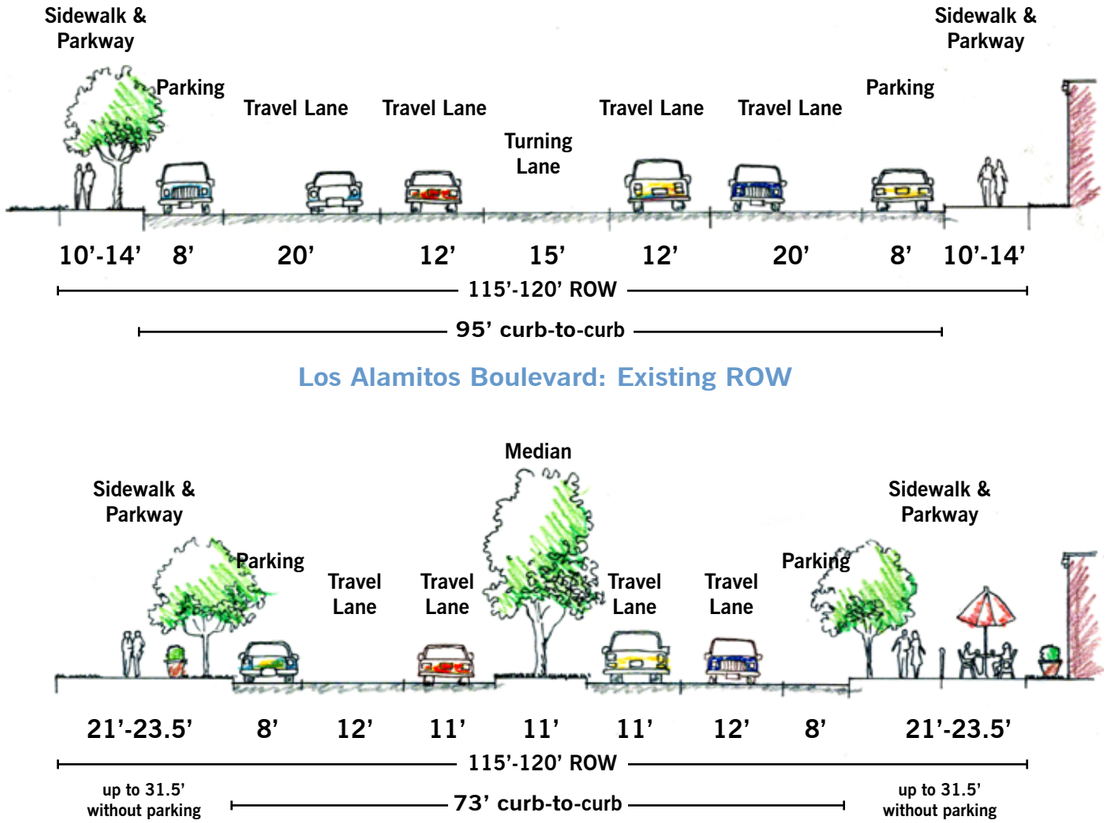
The increase in parkway width reduces the crossing distance from 95 feet to 73 feet—a reduction of 22 feet or nearly one-quarter of the original distance. This design preserves four 11–12-foot lanes for traffic and turning lanes at intersections. However, because the roadway has been narrowed from 95 to 73 feet, vehicles will naturally drive slower. In the existing configuration, cars are roughly 8 feet away from the nearest parked car and 16 feet from the nearest curb. The new configuration places passing traffic within approximately 2–4 feet of the nearest parked car and 8–10 feet of the nearest curb. These reduced distances, which are still safe for vehicles and pedestrians, cause drivers to slow down.

C. With a median, vehicles are now framed by 31' of road instead of 95' of road

Additionally, an 11-foot central median can be provided and support features such as large trees and other landscaping, public art, and signage. The median provides another reason for vehicles to slow down. Previously, passing traffic was a part of 95 feet of uninterrupted asphalt. This design places vehicles within a 31-foot area bordered by a median, parallel parking spaces, and wide, landscaped parkways.

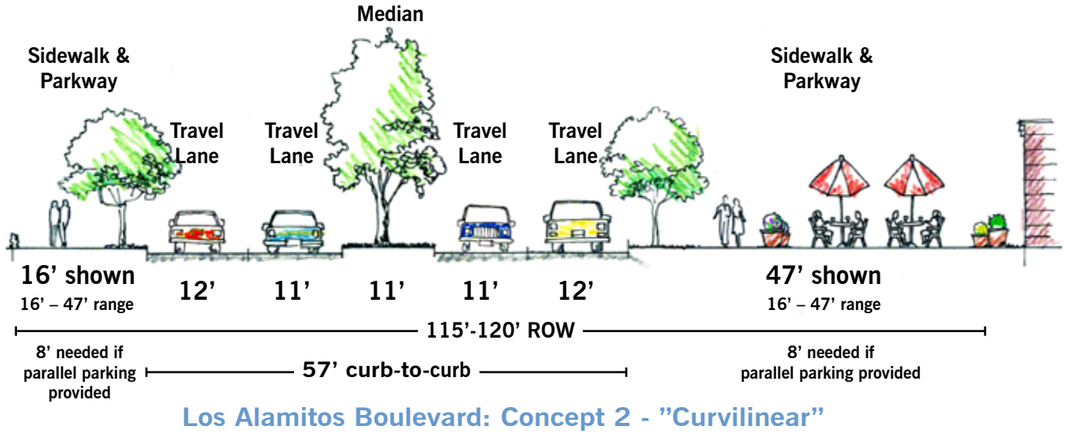
D. Bulb-outs reduce crossing distances to 57' at intersections

The crossing distance can be reduced even more at intersections where bulb-outs are provided. Bulb-outs are a traffic-calming measure where the sidewalk is extended into the parking area at an intersection to reduce the crossing distance while maximizing visibility between passing cars and pedestrians. When bulb-outs are incorporated, they reduce the crossing distance by an additional 8 feet on each side (the width of the parallel parking space). The result is a crossing distance as little as 57 feet—a 40 percent reduction and more comparable to a typical residential street crossing.



Los Alamitos Boulevard: Existing ROW

Los Alamitos Boulevard: Concept 1 - "Straight"



Los Alamitos Boulevard: Concept 2 - "Curvilinear"

Figure 18. Los Alamitos Boulevard Conceptual Cross-Sections

DESIGN CONCEPT 2: CURVILINEAR

The second concept is called the "Curvilinear" option and explores maximizing the sidewalk and parkway area around key parcels: the Los Alamitos Plaza and Center Plaza. The two primary goals remain to slow down passing traffic and increase walkability.

A. Sidewalks and parkways expand from 10' to 16'–47'

The Curvilinear option envisions a roadway that bends to the left and right as one travels north along Los Alamitos Boulevard. The apex of each curve is designed to maximize the sidewalk and parkway space for the parcels on the opposite side of the street.

For example, as the road bends slightly to the left between Katella Avenue and Florista Street, the space available for the sidewalk and parkway in front of Los Alamitos Plaza can be as much as 47 feet (shown in the section below). This space would not only provide ample room for enhanced landscaping and outdoor dining, it would also enhance the view of the interior galleria that is currently somewhat hidden.

The concept could also be applied to the Center Plaza area and the adjoining vacant parcel. This area is considered the most likely to host new development within the next few years.

B. Crossing distance decreases from 95' to 57' in some mid-block areas and at intersections

The section shows a condition where on-street parking may not be provided along certain blocks to maximize the sidewalk and parkway and minimize the crossing distance. This can also be done at intersections where bulb-outs are provided. When parallel parking is provided, the crossing distance would be 73', as it is in the Straight concept.

C. With a median, vehicles are now framed by 23' of road instead of 95' of road

With the inclusion of an 11-foot central median, passing traffic would be framed by a mere 23 feet of travel lanes (on each side) instead of the previous 95 feet of uninterrupted asphalt.

Note: The curb-to-curb area shown in Concept 2 would adjust to the curvature of the roadway. In areas where parallel parking is provided, the sidewalk and parkway area would be reduced by 8 feet, but would not be any smaller than 16 feet.

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CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

The roadway improvements considered by either option would represent a significant investment by the City, its residents, and property and business owners. The following presents general information on the estimated costs, timing, and logistics of the construction effort.

Estimated Costs

The Planning Center obtained a cost estimate from a local company for the construction of the two improvement concepts. This estimate was based on measurements of the linear feet of curb and the areas of sidewalks, asphalt, and medians for the existing roadway and two concepts. Despite the differences between the appearance of the concepts, the estimated cost of construction did not vary substantially between the two. Table 2 presents the generalized costs for either option associated with the four major components of roadway construction:

Design and Engineering: Roadway surveying, design, and engineering.

Mobilization and Allowances: Project management, traffic control, regulatory reports, transporting equipment to and from the job site, and other costs associated with starting up and maintaining the project.

Demolition and Removal: Removal of the existing curb, sidewalk, and roadway.

New Construction: Grading; construction of new curb, sidewalk, and roadway; extension of stormwater facilities; striping; electrical and street lights; and landscaping.

The cost for either option was estimated to be $2,445,000. This does not include future costs for maintenance and property-specific features such as signage. Additionally, the costs of constructing and maintaining customized intersection treatments (pavers, stamped concrete, or color-coded asphalt), could increase the total cost to approximately $3 million.

Timing and Logistics

Los Alamitos Boulevard is one of the primary roadways in the City. Roadway construction can create significant delays and access issues if not planned properly. Fortunately, the large right-of-way already provided would allow at least three lanes to remain open to traffic during construction activity.

Existing Aerial of Los Alamitos Blvd

Corridor Study Boundary

Parcel Boundaries

N

Table 2
Estimated Construction Costs
Los Alamitos Boulevard Improvements

Task	Cost Estimate
Design and Engineering	$320,000
Mobilization and Allowances	$175,000
Demolition and Removal	$205,000
New Construction	$1,745,000
Total Cost Estimate	**$2,445,000**

Source: The Planning Center and Excel Paving Company, 2010.

Due to the traffic patterns associated with the high school, one could expect two lanes to be open for northbound traffic and one lane to be open for southbound traffic (although the lane configuration could be altered on demand). Moreover, construction could begin at the conclusion of the school year to minimize traffic impacts associated with construction. The estimated timeframe for demolition, removal, and new construction is three to four months, which means that the improvements could potentially be started and completed during the summer break. More information on potential financing options are provided in the section of this report that presents economic development strategies.

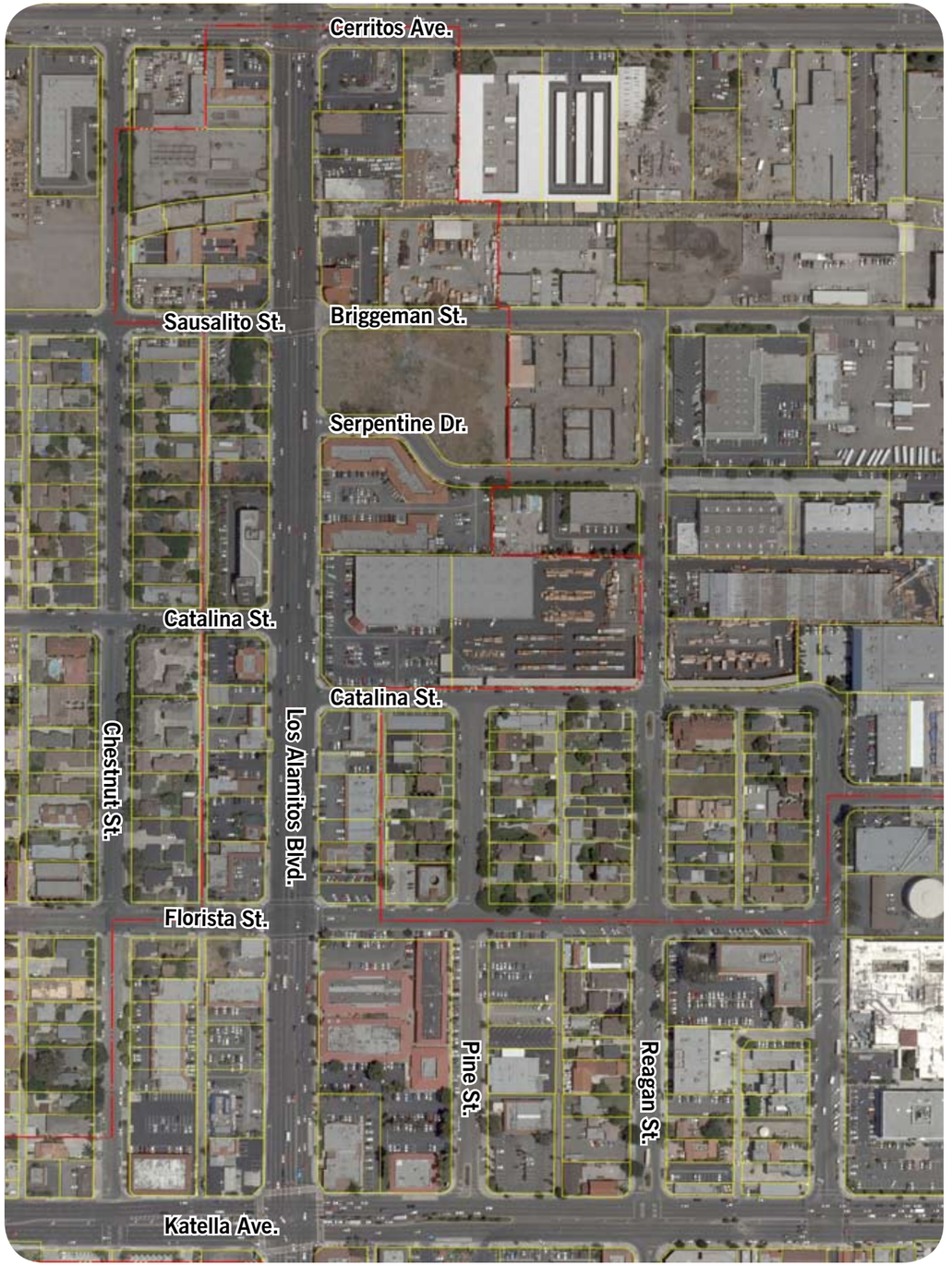

Figure 19. Existing Aerial of Los Alamitos Boulevard

Figure 20. Los Alamitos Boulevard | Concept Plan 1: Straight

CONCEPT PLAN 1

Los Alamitos Boulevard: Straight

1. A landscaped paseo for bicycle and pedestrian access between the medical center, St. Isidore's, and the boulevard. Hospital employees, visitors, and patients are able to travel to the boulevard instead of waiting inside the hospital for lengthy periods of time.
2. If this corner can be intensified, the existing surface lot could be turned into a 200–300-space public parking structure (2–3 stories).
3. Possible uses for an intensified land use pattern (64,000–96,000 square feet of mixed-use; 4–6 stories) include retail, medical office, and/or an extended-stay hotel, due to proximity to the medical center.
4. Pine Street could be reconfigured, made up of attractive concrete pavers, and lined with removable or collapsible bollards to allow space to be blocked off for a central plaza.
5. A 4,500-square-foot addition replaces a problematic curb cut and strengthens the building's presence. This would complement the existing 11,000 square feet and serve as a gateway opportunity for retail and restaurant with an outdoor dining plaza.
6. An additional 13' of sidewalk is added to create a 22.5' walkway/parkway.
7. The increased sidewalk and parkway area allows greater visibility for the inner courtyard area.
8. An additional 14'6" of walkway is provided on each side to create a 23'6"-wide walkway and parkway.
9. Left turn pockets are provided at all intersections.
10. The alleyway is enhanced with landscaping and lighting to create a safe and attractive paseo for bicycle and pedestrian access. This alleyway can augment additional bicycle routes provided along other side streets.
11. A design concept on how the vacant parcel adjacent to Center Plaza and Serpentine Drive could be developed shows an additional 40,000-square-foot (single-story) retail/restaurant "Town Square" opportunity with a 7,500-square-foot special events plaza. Parking is provided through on-site surface lots.

    Center Plaza (36,000 square feet of commercial shops) would remain largely unchanged, with the exception of some adjustments to Serpentine Drive and access points.
12. An additional 22'6" is added to the eastern sidewalk and parkway to provide room for outdoor dining and enhanced landscaping (no on-street parking to maximize size of sidewalk area).
13. An additional 22'6" is added to a bulb-out on each side at the intersection, reducing crossing distance from 102' to 57'.
14. On-street parking is restricted on the northbound side of Los Alamitos Boulevard from 6 to 9 AM to maximize queuing space for cars traveling to or by the high school.
15. A gateway median marks the northern or southern entrance into the Boulevard District.
16. An additional 19' of sidewalk is added to form a bulbout on the west side and the eastern side is extended by 6', resulting in a 30 percent reduction in crossing distance (from 106' to 70') at a crosswalk frequently used by school children.

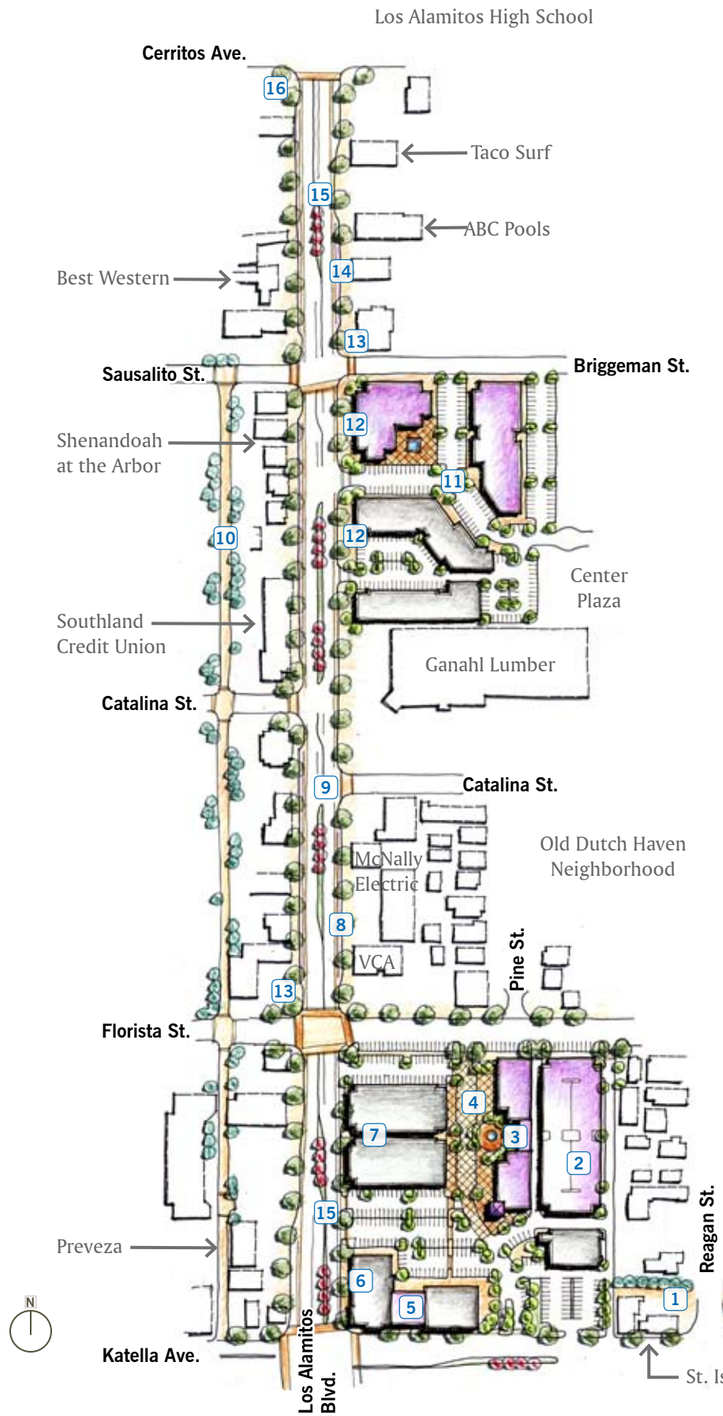

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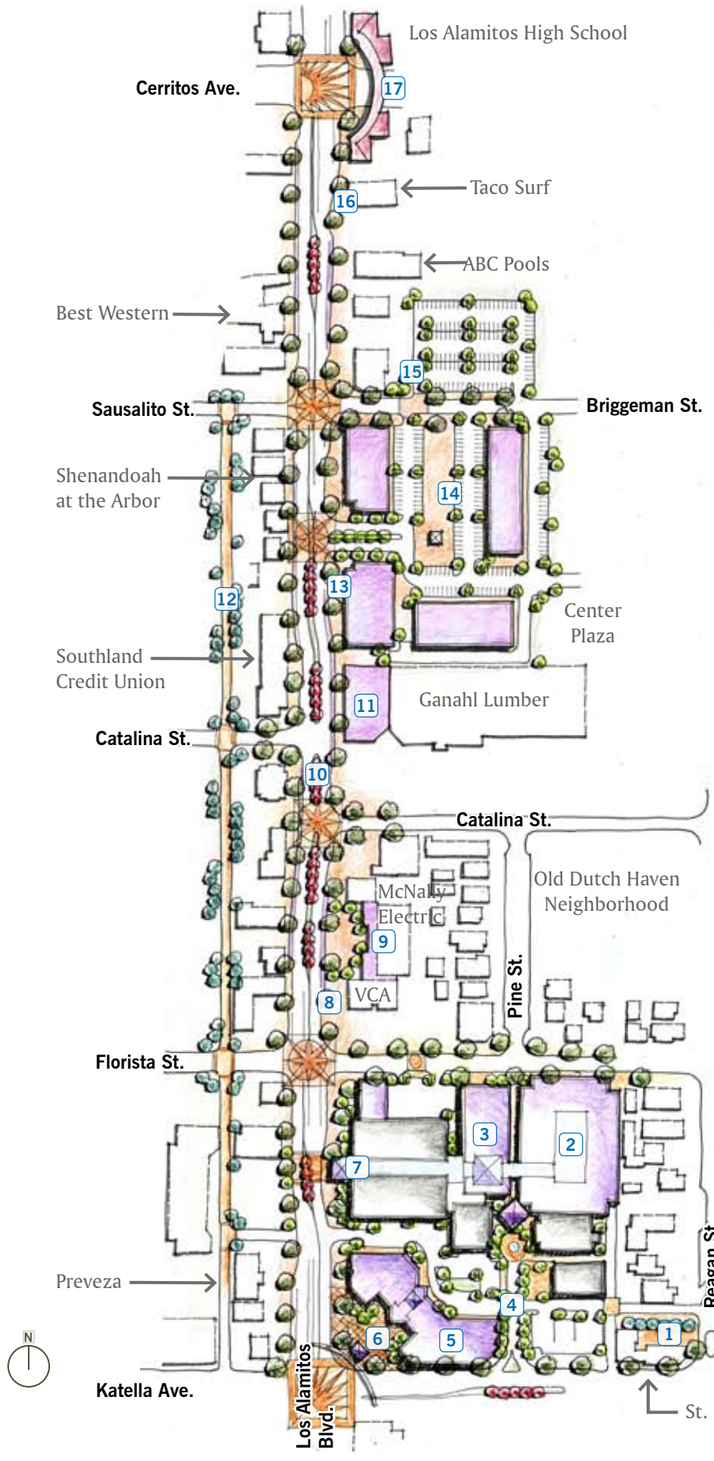
Figure 21. Los Alamitos Boulevard | Concept Plan 2: Curvilinear

CONCEPT PLAN 2
Los Alamitos Boulevard: Curvilinear

1. As in Concept 1, a landscaped paseo provides for bicycle and pedestrian access between the medical center, St. Isidore's, and the boulevard.
2. If this corner can be intensified, the existing surface lot could be turned into a 500-space public parking structure (4 stories) with central atrium stairs, elevators, bicycle storage, and electric car recharging stations.
3. A total of 100,000–150,000 square feet of mixed-use (4–6 stories) is shown and could include retail, medical office, and/or an extended-stay hotel.
4. Pine Street is abandoned on this parcel. Although it remains as an access point from Katella Avenue, it is designed as a walkway between the internal buildings as one travels into the site.
5. If the buildings fronting the corner could be intensified, 50,000 square feet of mixed use (2–3 stories) could be developed as a signature gateway opportunity. Potential uses could include retail on the ground floor and food/beverage or office uses on the second floor. A dining plaza could also be introduced on the second floor.
6. An enhanced corner treatment is constructed with lush landscaping, a gateway arch, a clock tower as another vertical element, and a 10–14,000-square-foot plaza. This feature draws attention from passing motorists and invites them to turn left or right onto the Boulevard.
7. An additional 15' to 35' are added to the eastern edge to enhance the view of and into the covered "galleria" walkway. The curvature of the roadway permits the sidewalk and parkway to be increased by 20' more than under Concept 1. A decorative pedestrian crosswalk is introduced to create a greater connection between the eastern and western sides of the street.
8. An additional 30–37' are added to the eastern sidewalk and parkway. The road begins to curve back to the right about 200' north of Florista Street.
9. With roughly 10,000 square feet more of sidewalk and parkway space along the eastern side between Florista and Catalina Streets, the existing buildings could be redesigned or redeveloped into a shopping and eating space that centers on a plaza space.
10. An additional 16' are added to a bulb-out on each side at the intersection, reducing crossing distance from 102' to 57'. The road has completed a curve back to the right.
11. Approximately 19,000 square feet of showroom space could be added to the existing Ganahl Lumber store, bringing the building closer to the street in a manner that complements the walkable shopping experience.
12. The alleyway is enhanced with landscaping and lighting to create a safe and attractive paseo for bicycle and pedestrian access.
13. The roadway curves back to the left, allowing for a large sidewalk and parkway (up to 34' wide). Serpentine Road is altered and now serves as a primary entrance off of Los Alamitos Boulevard.
14. In this concept, Center Plaza is rebuilt and a total of 68,100 square feet of retail and food-related businesses are centered around a 16,000-square-foot linear plaza that could also be used for special events.
15. A nearby parcel is used to provide additional surface parking (approximately 150 spaces) for the new development to avoid costly structured parking.
16. The road completes its curve back to right. About 300 feet south of Cerritos Avenue, a dedicated right turn lane is provided and on-street parking is prohibited northbound from 6 to 9 AM for school drop-off activity.
17. A pedestrian ramp and bridge provides a connection to/from the high school. This bridge is safer for pedestrians and bikes, allows more efficient turning movements at the signal, and serves as a northern gateway into the City and Boulevard District.



ADDITIONAL DESIGN OPTIONS

The two concept plans are purely illustrative and impart no legal obligation or regulatory requirement. These concepts are intended to explore design and land use ideas and are not exclusive of one another.

The ultimate roadway improvements may include components from each alternative as well as other components that have yet to be considered. Some additional design options not already explored include: diagonal parking, reduced speed limits, and the reduction of medians and left turn pockets.

Diagonal Parking

Diagonal parking can provide approximately double the number of parking spaces in the same curb length as parallel parking. Diagonal parking is also more closely associated with smaller, main street environments and provides a larger buffer between the sidewalk and travel lanes.

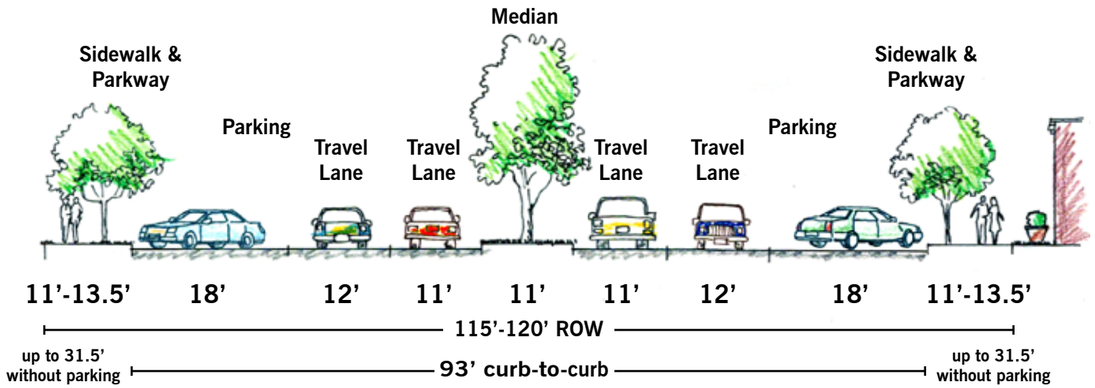
Diagonal parking, however, requires increases the distance between the two sides of a street when compared to a street with parallel parking (see Figure 18). Parallel parking spaces are generally 20 feet long and 8 feet wide. A diagonal parking space, which is oriented at an angle to the curb, is roughly 8'6" wide and requires 18 feet of length: 13 feet for the parking space and another 5 feet for space to safely back the car up without infringing too much on the outside travel lane.

Accordingly, a diagonal parking design would increase the curb-to-curb distance from 73 feet to 93 feet—20 additional feet. This would also mean that the sidewalk and parkway area would be reduced by 20 feet (10 feet on each side).

Additionally, diagonal parking can be more dangerous than parallel parking for oncoming traffic, the departing vehicle, pedestrians, and bicyclists. In diagonal parking, one is backing up into oncoming traffic while adjacent vehicles block the rear view until a car is at least halfway out of the space.

The surrounding parked cars can also hide departing vehicles from oncoming traffic until the departing car has already pulled out into the traffic lane. In parallel parking, a car generally pulls out moving with traffic and the departing car is more visible to all vehicles and pedestrians.

Figure 22. Los Alamitos Boulevard Conceptual Cross-Section: Diagonal Parking



Los Alamitos Boulevard: Concept 1 - "Straight" with Diagonal Parking

This image, taken at the Parkview Village Shops in Long Beach, shows both parallel and diagonal parking on the left side of the street and parallel parking only on the right side. The image illustrates the differences in the parking space dimensions and the effect on the width of the roadway. This street contains only two travel lanes. Los Alamitos would need to retain a total of four travel lanes.

Reduced Speed Limits

Los Alamitos Boulevard does not currently and is not expected to carry a large amount of traffic north of Katella Avenue. Additionally, with the exception of school activity, drivers encounter little congestion. The current speed limit is 35 miles per hour along Los Alamitos Boulevard between Katella Avenue and Cerritos Avenue.

If the roadway is narrowed and bulbouts are installed, the majority of actual traffic speeds should decrease from their current range of 35 to 45 miles per hour to 30 to 35 miles per hour. To increase the feeling of a safe and walkable environment, the City could reduce the speed limit to 30 or even 25 miles per hour, which could bring the actual traffic speeds down to 25 to 30 miles per hour.

Reducing the speed limit could also ensure that businesses receive greater exposure to passing vehicles and improve safety at the street's numerous driveways and intersections. The Curvilinear option, with its slightly curving roadway, should slow down traffic more than the Straight option. The amount of curvature, however, is not extreme and the roadway concept has been designed to maintain safe yet efficient traffic speeds and flows commensurate with those discussed above.

Minimal Medians and Left Turn Pockets

Los Alamitos Boulevard does not currently have any medians north of Katella Avenue. Left turn pockets are provided at each intersection (signalized or unsignalized). Left turn pockets (11-feet-wide) provide a separate turning lane at intersections so that traffic going straight can proceed without delay. Away from the intersections, the turning lanes (in the center of the roadway) allow vehicles to turn left into driveways before the next intersection.

If the roadway is improved and narrowed, the two options shown retain the left turn lanes and introduce medians into the center of the roadway. The curb-to-curb distance could be reduced by 11 feet and narrow the crossing distance at intersections to as little as 46 feet (which is more comparable to the width of adjacent residential roads).

Removing the left turn pockets, however, would mean that one lane of traffic in each direction could be held up by cars turning left. The demand for left turn movements at the intersections will likely increase if medians are introduced and replace the central turning lane.

STRATEGY #2: NEW CORRIDOR DISTRICTS

As stated in the discussion on Community Structure in Section 3 of this report, districts are the medium-to-large sections of a city that are dedicated to a common or focused land use or activity. The City of Los Alamitos comprises a series of residential, military, medical, office, industrial, and retail districts defined by similar land uses and character.

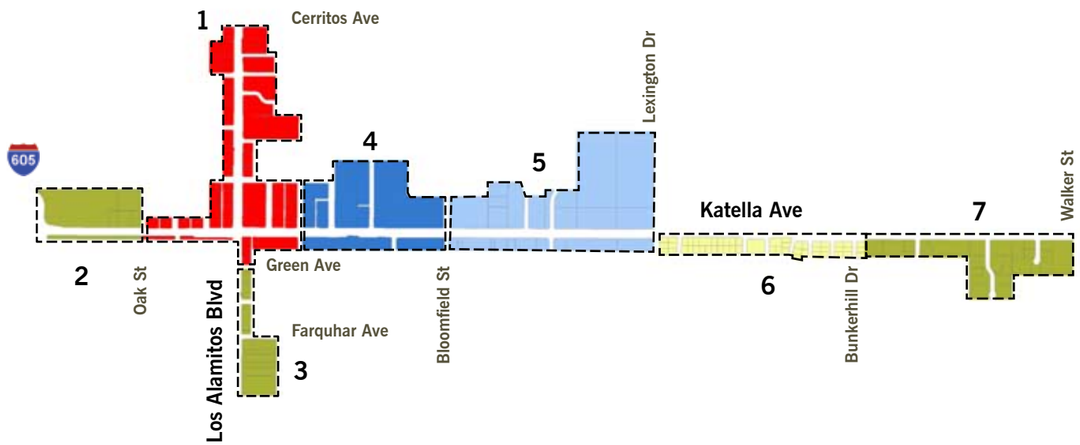
The current pattern of districts, however, largely excludes much of the two corridors (see Figure 14). The land uses are scattered within the corridors and the design treatment is somewhat inconsistent.

The creation of a new series of districts along Los Alamitos Boulevard and especially along Katella Avenue would help the City define itself internally, brand itself to those outside of Los Alamitos, and enhance the economic synergy among related land uses.

As shown in Figure 23, the design concept proposes the creation of seven new and distinct districts within the corridors, along with an adjustment to an existing residential neighborhood district:

1. The Boulevard
2. Western Gateway
3. Southern Gateway
4. Medical
5. Commercial Office
6. New Dutch Haven
7. Eastern Gateway

A discussion of the boundaries and land uses is provided for each district. The Boulevard District also receives additional discussion regarding landscaping and signage.



Conceptual Corridor Districts

1 | The Boulevard District

The Boulevard District is designated to become the heart of Los Alamitos. Centered on a newly designed Los Alamitos Boulevard, this district is envisioned as a pedestrian-oriented boulevard with a variety of commercial shops and eating establishments with outdoor dining.

** The Boulevard District could be expanded to incorporate the commercial properties currently in Rossmoor (the southwestern corner of the intersection).*

2,3,7 | Gateway Districts

The Western, Southern, and Eastern Gateway Districts shape the impressions of those entering and leaving Los Alamitos. On an average day, over 100,000 cars travel along Katella Avenue and the southern portion of Los Alamitos Boulevard. That represents a lot of eyes and a lot of opportunities to strengthen the image of the City. These districts are envisioned to promote the identity of Los Alamitos through enhanced landscaping and signage and high quality development.

4 | Medical District

The Medical District will consolidate the medical uses scattered along Katella Avenue into a focused district that leverages the demand generated by the medical center and its expansion plans. This district will also create a stronger connection to the Boulevard District for its employees, patients, and visitors.

5 | Commercial Office District

The Commercial Office District will provide a district for non-medical office and neighborhood commercial uses. The district also serves as a secondary gateway as it marks the final transition from the City of Cypress to the City of Los Alamitos.

6 | New Dutch Haven District

The New Dutch Haven District is an extension of the New Dutch Haven neighborhood and will encourage development that is compatible with a corridor street frontage and the surrounding single family homes.

Figure 23. Conceptual Corridor Districts

DISTRICT #1
The Boulevard District

The Boulevard District is designated to become the heart of Los Alamitos. Centered around a redesigned Los Alamitos Boulevard, this district is envisioned as a pedestrian-oriented boulevard with a variety of commercial shops and eating establishments.

BOUNDARIES: The Boulevard District would encompass five blocks along Los Alamitos Boulevard: from Cerritos Avenue to the north, Reagan Street to the east, Oak Street to the west, and Green Avenue to the south. The Boulevard District would include the intersection of Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue. Currently, only three corners of this intersection are within the City boundaries. The City anticipates that the southwest corner will be annexed at some point in the future.

LAND USES: Several shops surrounding Ganahl Lumber cater to the homeware/hardware retail market. Based on the economic analysis in this report, there is more demand for homeware/hardware retail within the trade area around Los Alamitos. The Boulevard District could become a center for homeware and hardware retail and capitalize on the existing concentration of shops to capture a niche in the local retail market. The theme could also extend into the design features of the building architecture and street furniture.

The dining opportunities within the Boulevard District should take advantage of the beautiful Southern California weather and the enhanced public right-of-way. With the enlarged parkways and sidewalk areas, outdoor dining should be found all along the street frontage.

Some, like Shenandoah at the Arbor, could add streetfront dining to their tranquil dining area behind the business. Others, like Paul's Place, that have heavily screened outdoor dining along the road, could expose the dining area to the slower traffic and enhanced pedestrian areas along the improved right-of-way. Finally, existing and new businesses could introduce outdoor dining opportunities on the first or even upper story(ies).

DISTRICT #1
The Boulevard District

LANDSCAPING: The Boulevard District should be heavily landscaped within the public rights-of-way and within internal plazas and pathways. The street trees should be deciduous and offer large canopies for shade, but spaced to frame businesses (not obscure them).

Lush landscaping does not have to be expensive or require large areas of parkway dedication. The Boulevard District should supplement the street trees and groundcover with potted plants and large planters. The pots should vary in height and plant type, and planters should be designed so that they can be used as a sitting area. Some existing businesses and restaurants already maintain a beautiful combination of in-ground and potted landscaping along the street.

Landscaping at intersection corners should be especially lush, but still permit pedestrians, cars, and bicycles to see one another. If central medians are introduced along Los Alamitos Boulevard, the landscaping should incorporate both horizontal (groundcover, flowers, and bushes) and vertical plantings (trees).

The trees do not need to have large canopies, however, the addition of new palm trees are discouraged as they would not help provide a unique identity for the City or district.

DISTRICT #1
The Boulevard District

SIGNAGE: The Boulevard District is the City's northern gateway and contains the most prominent intersection in Los Alamitos. Signage should be provided at three levels: 1) Citywide identification, 2) The Boulevard District, and 3) Individual centers/businesses.

Citywide signage is already present in the monument sign north of Cerritos Avenue. A permanent archway sign could be placed on the north side of the Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue intersection to brand the City and the Boulevard District. The archway sign could either span Los Alamitos Boulevard or be placed on both the northwest and northeast corners.

Signage for individual centers or stand-alone businesses should be of a similar theme and scale. The existing signage at the Arbor Village complements the town and country image that residents, businesses, and other stakeholders want. Features and elements found in the antique band saw could also be incorporated into the shops and signs for stores, particularly those related to the homeware and hardware market.

DISTRICTS #2, 3, 7
Gateway Districts

The Western, Southern, and Eastern Gateway Districts shape the impressions of those entering and leaving Los Alamitos. On an average day, over 100,000 cars travel along Katella Avenue and the southern portion of Los Alamitos Boulevard. That represents a lot of eyes and a lot of opportunities to strengthen the image of the City. These districts are envisioned to promote the identity of Los Alamitos through enhanced landscaping and signage and high quality development.

BOUNDARIES: As a by-product of the City's boundaries, each of these districts controls land uses along only one side of the street. The Western Gateway encompasses the land east of the 605 freeway and west of Oak Street, with Oak Middle School as the northern boundary and Katella Avenue as the southern boundary (though the City does control the southern right-of-way of Katella Avenue).

The Southern Gateway starts at the Von's shopping center just south of Farquhar Avenue and travels north to Green Avenue. The western boundary is the centerline of Los Alamitos Boulevard and the eastern boundary stops at the residential parcels in the adjacent neighborhoods.

The Eastern Gateway starts at the eastern edge of the New Dutch Haven neighborhood and stops at the City's eastern border. Katella Avenue provides the northern boundary and the Royal Oak Park neighborhood serves as the southern boundary.

LAND USES: The Western Gateway District contains public and quasi-public uses and a large office use. Private development interest, along with the City's willingness to relocate its own facilities, indicate that this district could support a variety of uses, including a theater, a hotel, or senior housing. The area is also immediately adjacent to the Boulevard District and could serve as a southern anchor—though it should not be developed to potentially compete with the uses in the Boulevard District.

DISTRICTS #2, 3, 7
Gateway Districts

The parcels in the Western Gateway, however, are not visible to those traveling along the 605 freeway due to the location and configuration of the on- and off-ramps. Commercial uses should not rely on freeway exposure; those that do will likely request a large pole sign to gain exposure along the freeway.

Land uses in the Southern Gateway District are expected to remain largely the same and simply need to continue aesthetic upgrades and maintenance.

The Eastern Gateway District will likely remain light industrial at the eastern border. If the existing commercial or office uses turn over, there are parcels of sufficient size and depth to support new commercial, boulevard housing, or a mix of the two to complement and capitalize on the new development in Cypress.

DISTRICT #4
Medical District

The Medical District will consolidate the medical uses scattered along Katella Avenue into a focused district that leverages the demand generated by the medical center and its expansion plans. The District will also create a stronger connection to the Boulevard District for its employees, patients, and visitors.

BOUNDARIES: The Medical District encompasses the area from Reagan Street on the west to Bloomfield Street to the east. It includes the commercial parcels on the south side of Katella Avenue adjacent to the Carrier Row neighborhood. Florista and Catalina Streets mark the northern boundary.

LAND USES: The Los Alamitos Medical Center is the City's largest employer through both direct employment on the medical center campus and through the creation of demand for offsite medical services and office space. The medical center also serves over 100,000 patients annually, with nearly 90 percent of admissions from within an eight-mile radius.

The February 2010 draft of the Medical Center Specific Plan proposes a three-phased master planned expansion to be constructed over approximately 25 years. The expansion will result in the addition of hospital beds, a new medical office building, and two parking structures.

Existing medical office space along Katella Avenue should be encouraged to locate on the medical center campus or within the Medical District. Commercial and restaurant uses that can service the medical center employees and visitors could stay within the district, although some uses may be encouraged to locate in the adjacent districts. Non-medical office uses should be encouraged to locate in the Office or Eastern Gateway Districts.

By concentrating the medical office uses, the City will increase the synergy between the medical office uses and the medical center, create a more logical flow of land uses along Katella Avenue, and enable the medical office to potentially contribute funds within a focused district to improve the corridor's appearance and function.

DISTRICT #5
Commercial Office District

The Commercial Office District will provide a district for non-medical office and neighborhood commercial uses. The district also serves as a secondary gateway, as it marks the final transition from the City of Cypress to the City of Los Alamitos.

BOUNDARIES: The Commercial Office District starts at Bloomfield Street and travels east to Lexington Drive. The Carrier Row neighborhood marks the southern boundary. The northern boundary is largely parallel with Florista Street, with the exception of the Arrowhead Products property, which extends nearly a quarter of a mile north to the old railroad easement.

LAND USES: The Commercial Office District contains a variety of land uses, including the aforementioned Arrowhead Products, Katella Deli, Laurel Park, and numerous commercial and office businesses. Although medical office uses may be permissible, the district should be reserved primarily for non-medical office and commercial uses. This district also serves as a transition from the corridor to the light industrial area to the north.

As discussed earlier in the report, the Arrowhead Products site may be a potential opportunity site. However, there are a significant number of hurdles and potential constraints facing its redevelopment in the near future.

DISTRICT #6
New Dutch Haven District

The New Dutch Haven District is an extension of the New Dutch Haven neighborhood and will encourage development that is compatible with a corridor street frontage and the surrounding single family homes.

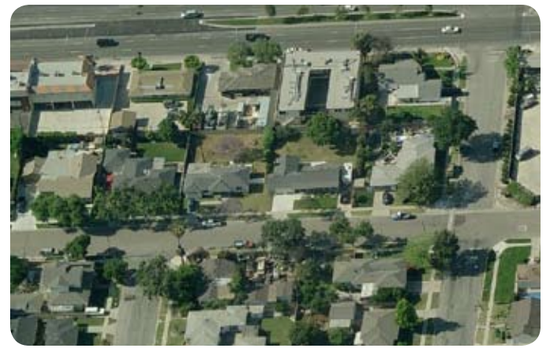
BOUNDARIES: The New Dutch Haven District would parallel the eastern and western boundaries of the New Dutch Haven neighborhood (Lexington Drive to one parcel east of Bunkerhill Drive). Katella Avenue represents the northern border of this District, and the southern border extends approximately 200–225 feet south (between one and three parcels deep).

LAND USES: The New Dutch Haven neighborhood will remain primarily single family homes. Some of the existing non-residential uses within this district include medical office and hotel use. The medical office should be encouraged to relocate closer to the Medical District when feasible.

The parcel configurations of the non-residential uses mimic single family home lots, which will inhibit any significant change in land uses. Future commercial or office land uses should generate low traffic volumes and exclude activity in the early morning or late evening hours to maximize compatibility with the surrounding single family neighborhood.

A medical office building fronting Katella Avenue within the Medical District

The landscaped median along Katella is shown in front of Arrowhead Products



An aerial shot of the New Dutch Haven neighborhood

STRATEGY #3: PLAN FOR BRT

WHAT IS BUS RAPID TRANSIT?

Put simply, bus rapid transit (BRT) is a high quality bus service that provides more frequent service than local bus service at stations set along major corridors. BRT systems also employ intelligent transportation system technologies, such as transit signal priority that extends green lights several seconds to allow BRT vehicles to pass through the intersection. Bus rapid transit is considered a more affordable alternative to light rail or commuter rail for improving transit service quality and attracting travelers who would otherwise drive on congested urban corridors.

BRT service differs from local bus service in that BRT stations are spaced farther apart: 0.7 to 1.2 miles apart instead of 0.1 to 0.5 mile apart for local bus service. While BRT lines cover a greater geographic area than local bus lines, BRT services each station more frequently. Local bus service typically operates on 30–60-minute headways during much of the day and 10–15-minute headways during peak commuting hours (headways are the time between bus service at a given station). BRT is designed to operate on 10–15-minute headways throughout the day. BRT buses are also of higher quality than most local buses, and the BRT stations will ultimately include features such as real-time arrival and departure information.

KEY FEATURES OF BUS RAPID TRANSIT

- **Frequent service:** Buses arrive every 10–15 minutes throughout the day and more often during peak commuting times.
- **Fewer stops:** Stops are spaced about 0.7 mile apart, like rail lines, at most major transfer points.
- **Level boarding/alighting:** Low-floor buses speed up boarding and departure times.
- **Bus priority at traffic signals:** New technology reduces traffic delay at intersections by extending the green light or shortening the red light.
- **Color-coded buses and stops:** A distinctive color scheme makes it easy to identify BRT stops and buses.
- **Enhanced stations:** Stations provide information, lighting, canopies, and "next bus" displays.

BRT IN ORANGE COUNTY

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is planning to introduce six lines of BRT service over the next decade (see Figure 24). Known as the "Bravo!" service, OCTA plans to introduce the first line along Harbor Boulevard, followed by a line on Westminster/17th, and then a line running from Brea to Irvine. The next three lines will operate along the Katella, Beach, and Edinger corridors. Although budget cuts have forestalled the introduction of the first three lines, BRT remains one of OCTA's top priorities. It is estimated that the Katella line could be implemented within the next 5 to 10 years.

The City has coordinated with OCTA and generated proposed locations for two Bravo! stations in Los Alamitos: 1) the intersection of Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue, and 2) the intersection of Bloomfield Street and Katella Avenue. Although these stations would be approximately one-half mile apart (slightly less than the average), they would maximize connections to the heavily used 42 and 50 routes at Los Alamitos Boulevard, and maximize service to the medical center, which employs thousands and serves 100,000 patients annually. Figure 25 shows the proposed BRT station locations.

LAND USE AND DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Katella Avenue is a highly traveled corridor in Orange County and contains a large number of employment centers and entertainment destinations. A BRT line, with a combination of quicker, more frequent service and a large service area, could attract not only the transit-dependent rider, but also many discretionary riders (those who could easily travel by car).

As the line runs through Los Alamitos along Katella Avenue, it could service a portion of the thousands of employees, visitors, and (non-emergency) patients of the Los Alamitos Medical Center. The commuting and visiting times associated with hospitals are much different from general office or commercial businesses. Hospital employees often work swing shifts or are required to arrive early or stay late at a moment's notice. Hospital visitors face similar irregularities in travel times.

This lack of consistency in work and visiting hours can make it difficult for employees and visitors to use transit. Local bus service currently provides service at 30- to 60-minute intervals at off-peak hours. An employee or visitor who misses a bus service by only a minute or two is not going to want to wait around another half hour or hour until the next bus

Figure 24. OCTA Planned BRT Routes

Source: OCTA 2006 Long Range Transportation Plan

Bus Routes and Rail Access

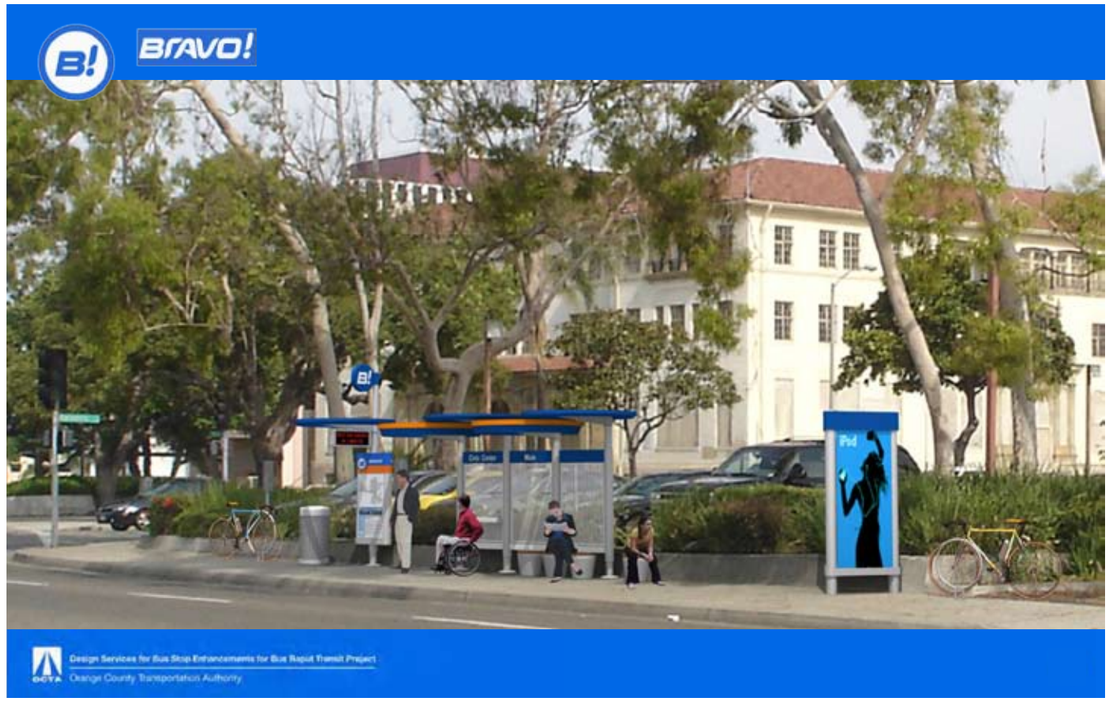
Bus Lines Within and Adjacent to the Project Area

- BRAVO! Proposed OCTA BRT | Bravo! Katella Line
- 42 City of Orange (via Norwalk) to Downtown Seal Beach
- 46 To City of Orange
- 50 Long Beach/Metro Rail Blue Line to City of Orange
- 164 Leisure World to Westminster Mall
- 211 Leisure World to Irvine Station
- 701 Downtown Los Angeles to Westminster Mall
- P Park & Ride

Bus Stops Within and Adjacent to the Project Area

- Bus Stop along Route 701
- Bus Stop along Routes 42, 46, and 50
- Proposed Bravo! BRT Stop

Figure 25. Proposed BRT Station Locations



Source: OCTA, 2009

Figure 26. Bravo! BRT Station Concept

arrives. The potential for BRT to provide 10–15-minute service throughout the day makes transit a much more feasible and attractive alternative to traveling by car.

As the medical center expands over the coming years, the potential ridership demand should continue to increase. The introduction of BRT service could reduce the potential traffic impacts of the medical center expansion, reducing the strain on Katella Avenue and surrounding roads.

A connection to local bus routes at Los Alamitos Boulevard should increase the ability to take transit to employment and other destinations in the surrounding communities. Additionally, many of the City's multiple-family neighborhoods are within a quarter-mile of one of the two proposed BRT stations, providing a higher density population that works well with transit systems.

The BRT stations will replace the existing bus stops at the two locations and serve as the bus stops for the local bus service. A conceptual rendering of a Bravo! BRT station is shown in Figure 26. It is important to note that although a BRT line provides transit service similar to light and commuter rail, a BRT station typically resembles an enhanced bus stop. A BRT station does not consume a large area of land within or outside the public right-of-way.

Some BRT systems (such as the Metro Rapid Orange Line in Los Angeles) operate buses along a dedicated busway that does not permit non-transit vehicles. Other BRT systems convert existing travel lanes to time-restricted busways (primarily during commute times). BRT service along Katella Avenue would operate within the existing travel lanes and would not time-restrict any of the lanes exclusively for bus service.

The City and property owners should encourage and seek the placement of commercial and retail stores in the area immediately surrounding the BRT station. Uses like Starbucks (located along Katella Avenue just east of Los Alamitos Boulevard—almost exactly adjacent to the proposed BRT station) work well with transit stations, particularly during peak commuting hours.

The shops and businesses around the BRT station should, when possible, maintain an entrance or view oriented toward the transit stop. Sidewalks and paths should provide easy and direct access between the stop and businesses. Additionally, plaza spaces—particularly when associated with food and beverage uses—are excellent companions to transit stops and help to elevate the BRT station from a bus stop to a node of desirable activity.

STRATEGY #4: IMPROVE BIKEWAY SYSTEM

The residents and employees of Los Alamitos indicate a clear desire for a greater ability to ride their bikes in and around the City. Some stated that they did not feel it was safe for them or their children to ride their bikes along Los Alamitos Boulevard or Katella Avenue. Others indicated that they did not know if the City had a clear set of bike routes, including a connection to the Coyote Creek and San Gabriel River (SGR) Trails. The City should improve existing bike facilities and introduce new bikeways into a well-signed and comprehensive bike system.

IMPROVED CONNECTIONS TO THE SGR TRAIL

The San Gabriel River Trail is an off-road multipurpose trail, part of a 61-mile loop that travels from the Pacific Ocean in Seal Beach to cities such as Long Beach, El Monte, and Asuza. Thousands of bicyclists, runners, and walkers use the SGR Trail every day for commuting, exercise, or general recreation. The Coyote Creek Trail connects to the SGR Trail just one mile south of the access point at Oak Middle School. The Coyote Creek Trail is a heavily traveled bike path with a significant number of serious riders (those with expensive gear traveling long distances).

Some of these users may be eager to find a nice place to stop, rest, and grab something to eat or drink. Los Alamitos enjoys direct access to the Coyote Creek Trail at three points in the City: 1) just north of Oak Middle School, 2) Cerritos Avenue, and 3) the northwest corner of Los Alamitos High School.

Whether they stop for coffee, breakfast, a quick snack, or to peruse shops and services, people using the Coyote Creek and SGR Trails represent potential customers for the businesses of Los Alamitos. By improving the connection points to the Coyote Creek Trail, the City could encourage some of those using the trail to visit the businesses and places within Los Alamitos, particularly within the Boulevard District. Some might visit during their use of the trail while others might return later after seeing a great place to eat or shop in the City.

Each connection point should become a visual landmark along the trail. Enhanced landscaping should be combined with attractive signage, seating areas, lighting, and water fountains to provide users with a nice place to rest during their time on the trail. The signage should include direction markers to the Boulevard District. The landscaping should be low water consuming and native, and the lighting should by powered by alternative energy if possible.

The path leading from the Coyote Creek Trail to City streets should be treated in the same manner, with a special focus given to the connection along the northern edge of Oak Middle School leading to Catalina Street, which ultimately leads to Los Alamitos Boulevard.

INCREASED NUMBER OF CLASS II AND III BIKEWAYS

OCTA maintains a Bikeways Strategic Plan and makes recommendations for new bike facilities within Orange County jurisdictions. Figure 13 earlier in the report identified existing and proposed facilities for Los Alamitos, according to OCTA's 2009 Commuter Bikeways Strategic Plan. Based on an analysis of the City's roadways and uses, a slightly modified system of bikeway facilities is recommended to enhance bicycle travel within Los Alamitos.

Class I Bike Paths

Alleyways: The alleyways that parallel Los Alamitos Boulevard could be converted into Class I bike paths. Although these alleyways could continue to permit cars (and therefore not be fully Class I facilities), the alleyways are very small—17 to 20 feet wide—and could be treated with special pavers to create an environment that could safely support all three modes of travel (car, bike, and foot).

Although these alleyways are short (0.36 mile north of Katella Avenue and 0.23 mile south of Katella Avenue), they could provide an alternate route that feels safer than traveling along

Bikeways

Corridor Study Area

Existing Bikeways and Recommended Improvements

- Class I Existing
- Class I Proposed
- Class II Existing
- Class II Proposed
- Class III Existing
- Class III Proposed
- Connection to Coyote Creek Trail

Major Uses within the City of Los Alamitos and Rossmoor

- Los Alamitos City Hall
- Los Alamitos Medical Center
- Los Alamitos Post Office
- St. Isidore Church
- Parks and Recreation Areas
- Schools

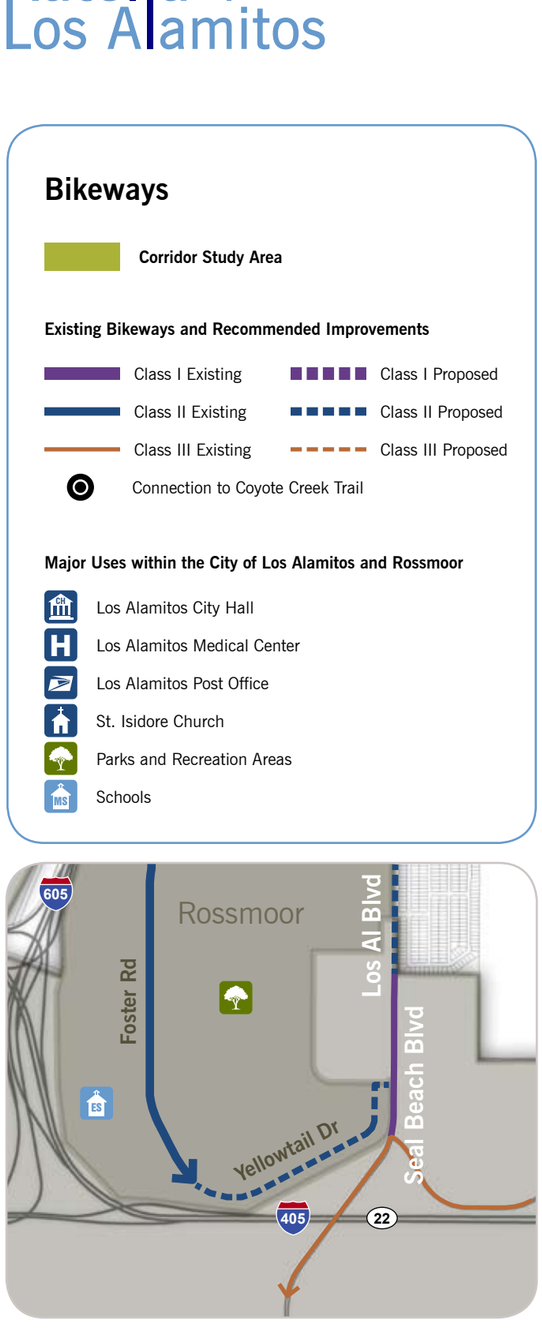


Figure 27. Existing Bicycle Network and Proposed Improvements

Los Alamitos Boulevard. They could also encourage additional patronage to local businesses. Some improvements have already been made along the alleyway south of Katella Avenue.

Class II Bike Lanes

Oak Street: The Class III bike route along Oak Street (0.37 mile) could be upgraded to a Class II bike lane and provide greater awareness, signage, and striping for bicycles around Oak Middle School and the streets that connect to the Boulevard District.

Chestnut Street: A new Class II bike lane could be created along Chestnut Street from Katella Avenue to Catalina Avenue (0.25 mile). This could serve as another alternate route for those looking to travel by bike along Los Alamitos Boulevard, particularly if the adjacent alleyway is not improved.

Los Alamitos Boulevard: The right-of-way dimension of Los Alamitos Boulevard north of Katella Avenue could accommodate a Class II bike lane. This area currently uses only two travel lanes in each direction, although the space adjacent to the curb does provide some parallel parking. Although OCTA shows a Class II bike Lane for Los Alamitos Boulevard, the number of driveways may make a Class II lane dangerous for both cars and bicyclists.

South of Katella Avenue, the right-of-way configuration and lane geometries provide less opportunity for an on-street facility without widening the roadway or right-of-way to allow a Class I bike path. Nevertheless, as Los Alamitos Boulevard is the City's only direct north–south route, a Class II bike lane is something the City should continue to consider in future planning efforts.

Rossmoor: The existing Class II bike lane travels from Katella Avenue down Wallingsford Road and Foster Road until it reaches Druid Lane. At that point, Foster Road turns into Yellowtail Drive (see Figure 27), which runs approximately three-quarters of a mile until it intersects with Saint Cloud Drive, just 150 feet to the west of Seal Beach Boulevard (the name of Los Alamitos Boulevard in Seal Beach). Yellowtail Drive is not striped for a Class II bike lane, but could be, completing a bikeway for those seeking a slower, safer alternative to traveling along Seal Beach Boulevard/Los Alamitos Boulevard. The City could coordinate with the County of Orange to consider extending the Class II bike lane along Yellowtail Drive.

Class III Bike Routes

Various Streets: Class II bike routes should be introduced along the streets that connect the existing and proposed Class I and II facilities, and/or to provide direct access to the corridors. Class III routes may also be recommended for streets that are too narrow to accommodate a Class II bike lane.

Katella Avenue

Katella Avenue is a major east–west corridor and is categorized by OCTA as a Smart Street. Within the City, however, on-street parking is provided along Katella Avenue. The sidewalk and parkway area within the Katella Avenue right-of-way is 8 to 12 feet wide, with frequent interruptions by driveways. With these driveways and the on-street parking, neither a Class I bike path nor a Class II bike lane could be introduced onto Katella Avenue. Additionally, the amount and speed of traffic along Katella Avenue make conditions unsuitable for a Class III bike route. If the on-street parking is removed at some future date, a Class II bike lane could be introduced.

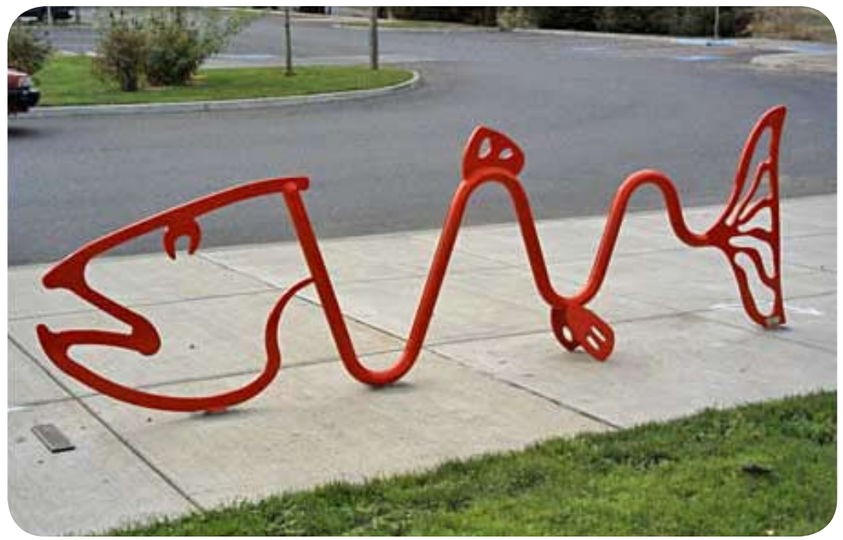
ENHANCED BIKE SIGNAGE AND RACKS

Enhanced bikeway signage should be introduced along all three types of bikeways to promote bicycle usage and provide directions on how to connect to other bikeways or key points in the City.

A local example of enhanced bikeway signage can be found in the neighboring city of Long Beach, which has created "Long Beach Bikeway" signs and route markers. These signs elevate the bicycle to a mode of transportation that is supported in the City's official infrastructure. The signs also allow easier use of the bikeways and directions for those seeking to travel within the City or to other cities and destinations.

The City may want to collaborate with the City of Long Beach to create bikeway signage that is unique to Los Alamitos, but complementary to the signs in Long Beach. The neighboring cities can work together to strengthen the local and regional system of bikeways in Southern California.

This image shows an example of a sign introduced by the City of Long Beach as part of the Long Beach Bikeway system. The sign provides a route number and is supplemented with additional signage that indicates the direction of local destinations.



These images demonstrate how enhanced bike racks can serve as functional public art and create a sense of whimsy along the corridor. These types of racks can also reinforce the adjacent offices, shops, and restaurants.

Going clockwise from the top left image: old-fashioned bicycles, a paper clip, a cup of coffee, Chinese lotus flowers, a fish, and a stethoscope.

source: Creative Metalworks LLC.

Enhanced bike racks are another feature that should be introduced along the corridors. Going beyond conventional metal tubing, enhanced bike racks can be described as metal artwork that shapes metal tubes into words or objects to provide the bike rack structure. These types of racks enhance the right-of-way and serve as functional public art. They also present an opportunity to connect to the adjacent businesses; e.g., a coffee cup-shaped bike rack in front of Starbucks.

Bike racks can help draw in customers and complete the bikeway system. With more bikeways and enhanced signage, more people know that they can bike safely around the corridor and how to get to the corridor. Enhanced bike racks are an attractive way of telling people that they are welcome to stop along the corridor with their bike.

Additionally, the installation of on-street or curb-adjacent bicycle parking may be considered at key points along the corridor. Approximately 12 bikes can park in the space normally reserved for a single car. Therefore, by replacing one parking space, corridor businesses could accommodate space for up to 12 customers. On-street parking should be done primarily on side streets where traffic is slower and limited to two lanes, but the spaces should still be highly visible as one travels along the corridor.

The intent of the recommended bikeway system improvements is to provide a safe way for residents, workers, and students to travel around the corridor, with specific connections introduced to funnel people to the corridor via slower side streets.

This image shows an example of on-street bicycle parking. Approximately 12 bicycles can be accommodated in a space that is normally reserved for a single automobile.

STRATEGY #5: PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES

The introduction of pedestrian bridges along the corridors could provide safe routes to school, alleviate traffic congestion points, and bolster the City's identity.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL & TRAFFIC ALLEVIATION

The City of Los Alamitos supports a world-class school district that provides educational and recreational instruction to approximately 10,000 students. While the majority of the elementary schools are located off the quiet, residential roadways in Rossmoor, the City's two middle schools and primary high school are along or near busy arterial roadways. Students walking or biking to school must cross these roadways via crosswalks at signalized intersections.

Although crosswalks are relatively safe and effective, they can create traffic congestion, as cars must wait for the crosswalk to be entirely clear of pedestrians before turning right. During school drop-off and pick-up hours, hundreds of students may need to cross the corridors while a similar number of cars are trying to travel through the intersections. The introduction of pedestrian bridges would separate the vehicular traffic from the pedestrian and bicycle traffic. This separation would allow cars to travel through the intersection without having to wait for the crosswalk to be clear, and pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the corridors without risk of being struck by a moving vehicle.

ENHANCED CITY IDENTITY

These bridges could also enhance the City's identity at key entrance and exit points. The City currently maintains four small monument signs at the ends of both corridors that welcome people into Los Alamitos. Pedestrian bridges would offer larger, elevated signage opportunities that mark a clear transition into and out of Los Alamitos. The bridges and accompanying signage would be architecturally designed to emphasize the City's high quality town and country character.

GENERAL SIZE AND PROPORTIONS

The size and scale of pedestrian bridges vary depending on potential usage and surrounding context. Pedestrian bridges in Southern California are most often employed to facilitate access to the beach, to a school, or across a major roadway.

These bridges tend to be 15 to 20 feet wide and 130 to 300 feet long. A pedestrian bridge crossing Katella Avenue or Cerritos Avenue would need to cross approximately 80 to 105 feet of roadway and allow for an additional 60 to 80 feet on either side for a set of stairs and handicapped-accessible ramp (which could also be used by bicyclists). Total length of the bridge structure would be 200 to 265 feet. If elevators are incorporated into the bridge, its length could be shortened considerably.

Pedestrian bridges must be constructed to provide a vertical clearance of at least 17 feet to accommodate large vehicles such as buses and trailer trucks. This vertical clearance must be available across the entire roadway to ensure turning movements are not restricted. Additionally, the bridge area may be enclosed or fenced to prevent accidental or intentional littering of objects onto the traffic and people below.

Some local examples include the bridge crossing over Campus Drive between the University Center (shopping) and the University of California at Irvine campus. Another example can be found in Huntington Beach, where a pedestrian bridge crosses the Pacific Coast Highway, providing beach access for the Hyatt Regency Resort and Spa. Examples from Huntington Beach and Dana Point, and images of general bridge concepts are provided in Figures 29 and 30.

PROPOSED LOCATIONS

There are two points along the corridors where there is sufficient space and desired access for a pedestrian bridge (see Figure 28).

Katella Avenue and Oak Street

The first location is at the intersection of Katella Avenue and Oak Street. Students walking or biking to Oak Middle School from Rossmoor or Los Alamitos neighborhoods south of Katella Avenue must cross Katella Avenue at the signalized intersection with Walnut Street. The crossing pattern for pedestrians at this intersection is against the light and can be confusing (i.e., pedestrians are told to cross when the traffic coming towards them has a green light, while traffic that would go in their same direction has a red light). Additionally, thousands of cars pass the intersection each day to access the on- and off-ramps for the 605 freeway, located just a quarter mile west of the intersection.

A pedestrian bridge could be constructed at Oak Street and students would be able to cross the six-lane arterial without risk of crossing at the wrong time or being hit by a moving vehicle. The City is fortunate to have control of the right-of-way on both sides of Katella Avenue, which includes the large (~30-foot) southern sidewalk and parkway area and City Hall property on the northern side. Accordingly, the City would have sufficient space for the pedestrian stairway and (handicapped accessible) ramps.

Los Alamitos Boulevard and Cerritos Avenue

The second location is at the intersection of Los Alamitos Boulevard and Cerritos Avenue. A tremendous amount of pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular activity take place at this intersection during morning drop-off hours. It is not unusual for cars seeking to turn right from Los Alamitos Boulevard onto Cerritos Avenue to wait two or even three light cycles before they can travel through the intersection. A pedestrian bridge would allow for safer and more efficient traffic movements, while also providing large gateway signage into the City.

A small, privately owned parcel on the northeastern corner of this intersection—the former home of a gas station—has sat vacant for well over a decade and is fenced off from the high school. Although this site may be environmentally contaminated and might need to be specially remediated, the parcel would provide sufficient space for the northern end of a pedestrian ramp.

On the southern side, the parking lot for the current restaurant (El Pollo Loco) is adequately sized to accommodate a pedestrian ramp. This property is privately owned and the City and school district would need to coordinate with the property owner on a potential redesign of their lot. The additional pedestrian traffic created by a pedestrian bridge should be viewed by the property and business owner as a potential benefit and welcome the enhanced access to the school.

Other Locations

Other locations considered were the City's eastern border along Katella Avenue (either at Lexington Drive or Walker Street) and the intersection of Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard. A bridge built at the eastern boundary would not experience significant pedestrian activity and so might be considered too costly for the potential benefit (although costs could be shared with the City of Cypress). An archway banner could be a more cost-efficient solution to provide enhanced entry signage.

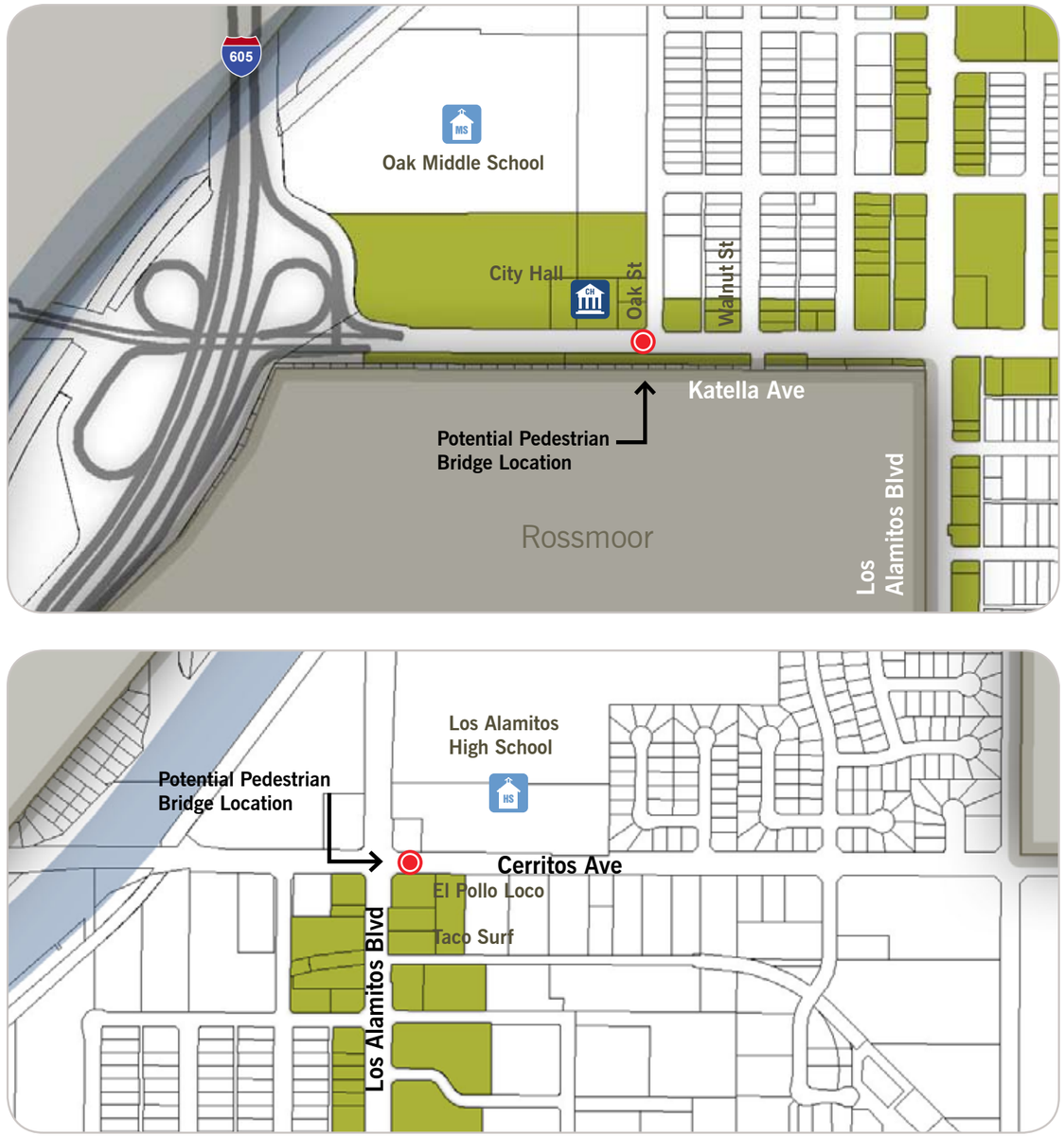


Figure 28. Proposed Pedestrian Bridge Locations

At the intersection of Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard, a pedestrian bridge could be highly utilized and create a great opportunity for City theming and the branding of the Boulevard District. The connection the other two bridge locations have to schools make them more competitive for funding.

COST AND FUNDING

The cost of pedestrian bridges varies depending upon materials, design, and size. Based on informal samples of bridges constructed or planned in the past few years, a rough estimate of the potential design and construction of a pedestrian bridge across Cerritos Avenue would be $750,000 to $1.5 million, while a bridge crossing Katella Avenue might cost up to $3.0 million. For comparison purposes, the 130-foot long bridge built in Dana Point (see Figure 29) cost approximately $2.8 million to construct. This bridge crosses eight lanes of traffic and has a combination of stairs and elevators for access. The elevators shorten the necessary length of the bridge and offer ADA and bicycle access, but create higher initial construction and long term maintenance costs.

Supplementary funding can be found in federal and state grant programs such as the Safe Routes to School Programs, which provide funding for infrastructure projects that increase the opportunity for children to walk and bike to school by making it safer to do so. Other funding sources may include federal and state programs focused on improving walkability and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

BRIDGE ALTERNATIVES

If a pedestrian bridge is not economically feasible for one or more locations, bridge alternatives should be considered. This is especially important for the intersection of Katella Avenue and Los Alamitos Boulevard, where the need for safe pedestrian and bicycle crossing is critical. The heavy traffic volumes at this intersection are the single biggest deterrent to people walking or riding their bike from south of Katella Avenue to the northern half of Los Alamitos. Some examples of low cost pedestrian intersection crossings include:

- **Countdown signals** are used in conjunction with conventional pedestrian signals to indicate the amount of time remaining to safely cross the street. These can enable pedestrians and bicyclists to make better decisions about when it is safe to cross the street. These are becoming increasingly common throughout Southern California.

Figure 29. Pedestrian Bridges in Huntington Beach and Dana Point, CA

Pedestrian bridges can take a variety of shapes and sizes. The top image shows a photosimulation of what a pedestrian bridge might look like crossing Katella Avenue at Oak Street. The next three design concepts were created by Thirtieth Street Architects, Inc for a pedestrian-oriented development elsewhere in Southern California. These concepts illustrate other bridge styles and show how bridges could help shape the City's identity as people, cars, and bikes travel through Los Alamitos.

Figure 30. Pedestrian Bridge Concepts

image sources: ***Top:*** *Photosimulation by City of Los Alamitos.*
Bottom Three: *Thirtieth Street Architects, Inc.*

These images show two examples of low cost pedestrian intersection crossings: a pedestrian scramble (top and middle) and a countdown signal (bottom).

- **In-pavement lights** are used at crosswalks to alert motorists to the presence of a pedestrian crossing or preparing to cross the street. The amber LED lights are embedded in the pavement on both sides of the crosswalk and oriented to face oncoming traffic.

  When the pedestrian activates the system, either by using a push-button or through detection from an automated device, the lights begin to flash at a constant rate, warning the motorist that a pedestrian is in the vicinity of the crosswalk ahead. The amber LED lights flash in unison at a rate designed for maximum motorist recognition and are visible during the daylight as well as at night.

- A **pedestrian scramble** or **exclusive pedestrian phase** is pedestrian crossing system that stops all vehicular traffic and allows pedestrians to cross an intersection in every direction, including diagonally, at the same time. This short all-red light clearance interval provides a better separation between cars and pedestrians and allows people to cross from one corner to another in one simple movement. Scramble timing also eliminates conflicts with turning vehicles if pedestrians and motorists obey their signals.

  This crossing system does create longer wait cycles for cars, but the timing can be designed to be on-demand so that wait cycles when pedestrians are not present are reduced significantly. Scramble timing may eliminate the ability to synchronize timing at adjacent traffic signals, and its benefits may not extend to vision-impaired pedestrians. Highly visible signage is an essential companion to this option.

- **Raised intersections** are flat, raised areas elevated three to six inches above the surrounding street grade. The intersection and all adjoining crosswalks are raised, accessed by gently sloping ramps. The intersections are often constructed of a different type and/or color of materials than the surrounding road. Vehicles automatically slow due to the change in grade and materials.

  Raised intersections can create lengthen the time it takes for vehicles to travel through the intersection and can be slightly more expensive to build and maintain than a traditional intersection.

STRATEGY #6: REDESIGN AND REDEVELOP

A pedestrian- and bike-friendly corridor is only part of what makes a great town center for Los Alamitos. The Boulevard District must also contain vibrant uses that attract people during the day and night. There are a number of great restaurants and shops already present along the corridor, but there are also opportunities for new development that could benefit from and support a town center atmosphere.

As part of this report, two conceptual plans were prepared for two sites along the corridor. The first alternative includes modest development generally following existing development patterns and minimizes the demolition of existing buildings. The second alternative provides more ambitious development and incorporates either greater intensity or additional urban design features that promote and enhance experiential shopping.

These plans were also evaluated for their financial feasibility using a pro forma analysis. Using the results of the pro forma, the conceptual plans were refined several times to enhance financial performance and minimize the amount of subsidy required to achieve feasible redevelopment.

Before the results are presented, the following provides an introduction to some of the terms and concepts involved in the financial feasibility evaluation process.

BASIC TERMS AND CONCEPTS: Financial Feasibility Modeling

Development Pro Forma

Put simply, a development pro forma is a tool used by developers and property owners to assess the costs and revenues associated with a potential development, helping the person to determine whether a project is financially feasible.

More specifically, a development pro forma is a spreadsheet that calculates the costs of development and the revenue flow, adjusting these for the time value of money and the costs to borrow money. The pro forma determines the amount of equity investment (i.e. actual cash) required of the developer and the rate of return on that investment. References to the financial feasibility of a development project simply mean whether or not the rate of return is sufficiently high to attract a developer to invest in that project. Property values were obtained using a combination of County Assessor data and recent sales information.

Lease Rates

The rents paid by office and retail tenants are the income source that repays the development costs. Tenants are willing to pay some base level of rent just for the building space, and then some premium rent if the location will generate more revenues for their business.

In central and western portion of Orange County, retail lease rates average about $2.19 per square foot per month (excluding utilities), and office lease rates average about $1.97 per square foot per month. Discussions with local brokers and landlords suggest that lease rates in Los Alamitos average $1.75 to $2.25 per square foot per month.

The pro forma analysis assumes that, after Los Alamitos Boulevard is improved, new retail space could command a 10 percent rent premium over the regional average lease rate, or $2.48 per square foot per month, excluding utilities. If Los Alamitos garnered this rate, development might become financially feasible for undeveloped sites. It is not unreasonable to assume that with the envisioned improvements to Los Alamitos Boulevard and with an increase in special events, lease rates for newly constructed retail space could rise from about $2 to $2.48 per square foot per month.

Return on Investment

In a typical development processes, the development firm puts up some amount of its own money, while bringing in an outside investor for the majority of the required equity investment. The developer takes out a construction loan, which might cover all of the development costs and perhaps half of the land acquisition costs (with the equity investment covering the remainder of the costs).

Upon completion of the project, the developer obtains permanent financing and pays off the construction loan. Typically, the developer would then hold the property for a short period, maybe three to five years, and, with a leasing track record, sell the property. Upon the sale of the property the developer pays off the permanent loan. What remains after that final payment represents the developer's final return on the initial investment.

Developers and investors most often use the internal rate of return (IRR) to measure the expected return on their investments and to decide whether or not to invest in a particular project. Under current market conditions—namely the economic recession and its slow recovery, the 2008 collapse of the financial services sector and its slow recovery, the loss of wealth from the stock market crash and the 25 to 30 percent decline in real estate values, and the increased investor aversion to risk brought on by these events—there is less money available for investment in development.

Conversations with developers, brokers, and investors suggest that an IRR of 20 to 25 percent is needed to attract equity investment in development projects today. The pro forma analysis assumes a financial feasibility goal of a 20 percent IRR over the short term, as the economy and financial markets continue to recover slowly. The expected IRR might decline to 15 percent in three to five years if market conditions continue to improve. The pro forma analysis uses the more conservative 20 percent IRR to avoid overstating the potential for redevelopment along the corridors.

Residual Land Value

With an IRR target of 20 percent, the pro forma analysis calculates the remaining variable, the residual land value. Residual land value is the amount the developer can afford to pay to acquire the land, given the IRR goal and the amount and type of development the site can accommodate with its size and shape and the zoning requirements.

If the residual land value is less than the market rate cost for the properties involved, the project is said to have a feasibility gap. A feasibility gap represents the level of subsidy likely required for redevelopment to occur under near-term market conditions. If the residual land value is more than the market rate cost for the properties, the developer could realize larger profits or provide more amenities and improvements.

Existing Land Owner as the Developer

A financial feasibility analysis typically assumes a scenario in which a new developer acquires all of the parcels that comprise a particular site. In such scenarios the developer must pay the market value of each parcel, thus raising the land acquisition costs and lowering the IRR.

The pro forma analyses for this project also model the financial feasibility under the assumption that the owner of the largest portion of the site acquires the remaining parcels and develops the project. Assuming the existing landowner as developer lowers the land acquisition cost because that landowner must only pay off the existing debt on the site rather than paying the full market value. If a landowner purchased a site many years ago, they might own the site outright and not carry any debt on property.

The pro forma analysis estimates the remaining debt by assuming that the property owner incurred debt at the time of purchase and has not since re-financed. This alternative is offered to illustrate the value in working with existing property owners versus the conventional approach of seeking new developers. The applicability of this approach, however, depends on the willingness of the existing property owners and the actual level of debt that would need to be retired in order to redevelop each opportunity site.

PRO FORMA ANALYSIS: Site 1: Los Alamitos Plaza Area

EXISTING SITE INFORMATION

Site 1 is called the Los Alamitos Plaza Area and consists of the parcels at the northeast corner of Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue, extending to Florista Avenue to the north and eastward to the alley east of Pine Street. The site contains 6.7 acres across seven parcels plus the right-of-way for Pine Street.

The parcel in the southwest corner of the site, immediately adjacent to the intersection of Los Alamitos and Katella contains a multi-tenant retail building, currently occupied by Shoe City, Fantastic Sams, Talyn Cleaners, and a shoe repair store.

The remainder of the site between Pine and Los Alamitos Boulevard is a single parcel that has three single-story retail buildings and a two-story building with retail and office uses. A variety of tenants are located at the site, including restaurants and food stores, medical office, real estate offices, and other service retail. The parcels on the east side of Pine are used for parking and two office buildings, US Bank and the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF).

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

The first development option (1A) would remove the existing two-story retail/office building and the buildings housing the real estate broker and the CIF (approximately 48,000 square feet). The concept (see Figure 31) would develop a 236-space parking structure, a 64,000-square-foot four-story office/retail mixed-use building, and a 4,500-square-foot retail building connecting the two existing buildings in the southwest corner of the site. This concept plan would vacate Pine Street, converting the northern half of the street into a central plaza. The US Bank parcel would stay largely as is.

The second development option (1B) would demolish the existing two-story retail/office building and the two retail buildings in the southwest corner of the site (approximately 52,000 square feet of building demolition). The concept (see Figure 32) would develop a 236-space parking structure, a 100,000-square-foot four-story office/retail mixed-use building, a 3,000-square-foot retail building attached to the north side of the existing retail building, a 1,500-square-foot kiosk retail space at the southwest corner of the parking structure, and a 62,000-square-foot two-story retail building in the southwest corner of the site. Both the US Bank and CIF parcels would largely stay as is.

Both development concepts assume that the City vacates the right-of-way for Pine Street and donates that right-of-way and the City's parking lot parcel at no cost as an incentive for redevelopment. The pro forma model for both concepts assumes that the parking structure provides free parking. Charging for parking or using an assessment district or BID to finance construction of the structure would improve the feasibility of the conceptual development plans.

PRO FORMA RESULTS

A development pro forma modeled the financial feasibility of both concept plans, one time assuming a new developer acquired the entire site and a second time assuming that the existing property owner developed the site. Table 3 summarizes the four analyses.

Concept plan 1B provides substantially more building space, and, thus, its development cost are about twice that of concept 1A ($64.6 versus $26.7 million), and its estimated sales value after five years of operation is about twice as large ($69.1 versus $34.6 million).

Concept plan 1B is less feasible than concept plan 1A. If a new developer were to develop site 1, concept plan 1A would require an $8.5 million subsidy and concept plan 1B would require a $34.6 million subsidy. If the existing land owner were to develop site 1, however, the feasibility gap would decrease to $1.4 million for concept 1A and to $27.5 million for concept 1B. Without any direct subsidy, an existing landowner could expect an IRR of 11.4 percent for concept 1A, but concept 1B would not be feasible. This suggests that as the economy and market conditions improve, some version of the development concepts could become feasible.

Table 3
Pro Forma Analysis Summary, Opportunity Site 1: Los Alamitos Plaza Area

	Development Concept 1A		Development Concept 1B	
Pro Forma Information	**New Developer**	**Existing Owner as Developer**	**New Developer**	**Existing Owner as Developer**
Existing Site Information				
Site area (SF)	293,400	293,400	293,400	293,400
Existing building (SF) to be demolished	48,000	48,000	52,000	52,000
Estimated property value	$14,900,000	$7,820,000	$13,600,000	$6,510,000
Development Costs Summary				
Land acquisition	$6,610,000	$6,610,000	$14,000,000	$6,710,000
Construction cost	$18,560,000	$18,560,000	$54,270,000	$54,270,000
- site development costs	$1,060,000	$1,060,000	$1,270,000	$1,270,000
- direct construction costs	$17,500,000	$17,500,000	$53,000,000	$53,000,000
Construction interest	$843,000	$843,000	$2,180,000	$1,880,000
Construction loan fee	$655,000	$655,000	$1,840,000	$1,730,000
Total Direct Costs	$26,668,000	$26,668,000	$72,290,000	$64,590,000
Loan amount	$23,298,000	$23,298,000	$65,330,000	$61,270,000
Total equity required	$3,370,000	$3,370,000	$40,300,000	$31,700,000
Percent financed*	87.4%	87.4%	90.4%	94.9%
Financing Costs				
Amount financed - land	$3,300,000	$3,300,000	$7,010,000	$3,360,000
Amount financed - construction	$18,500,000	$18,500,000	$54,300,000	$54,300,000
Total amount financed	$21,800,000	$21,800,000	$61,310,000	$57,660,000
Construction loan fee	$655,000	$655,000	$1,840,000	$1,730,000
Total carried interest	$843,000	$843,000	$2,180,000	$1,880,000
Feasibility Summary				
Estimated site sales value, after 5 years	$34,600,000	$34,600,000	$69,100,000	$69,100,000
IRR without subsidy	n/a	11.4%	n/a	n/a
Residual land value at 20% IRR	$6,410,000	$6,410,000	-$21,000,000	-$21,000,000
Feasibility gap	**($8,490,000)**	**($1,410,000)**	**($34,600,000)**	**($27,510,000)**
- Portion of estimated land value	-57.0%	-18.0%	-254.4%	-422.6%

* Based on land acquisition subsidy equal to the feasibility gap at 20% IRR.

Site 1: Los Alamitos Plaza Area Concept Plan 1A

Existing Building

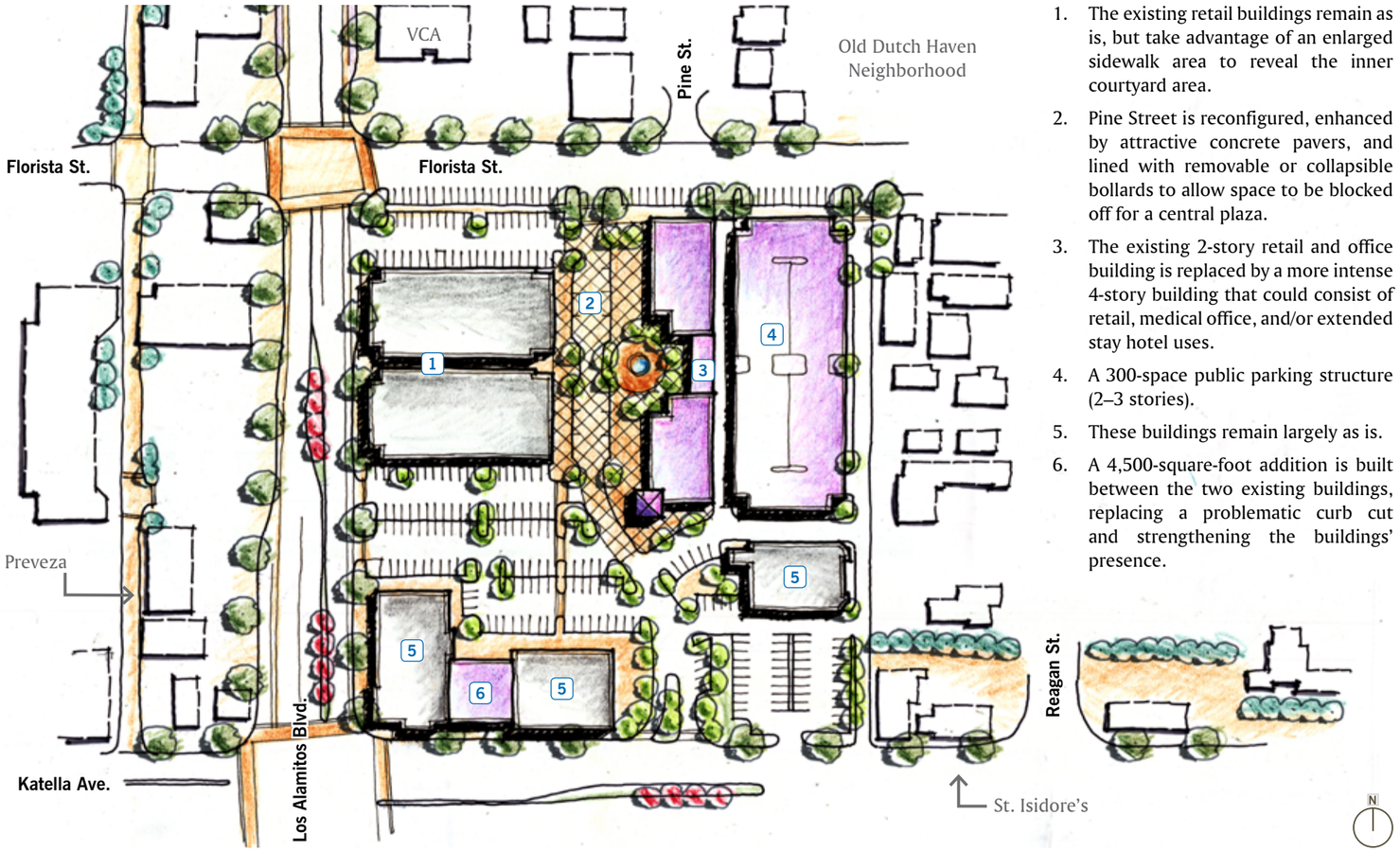
New Construction

Concept Details

Site Area: 6.7 acres
293,400 SF

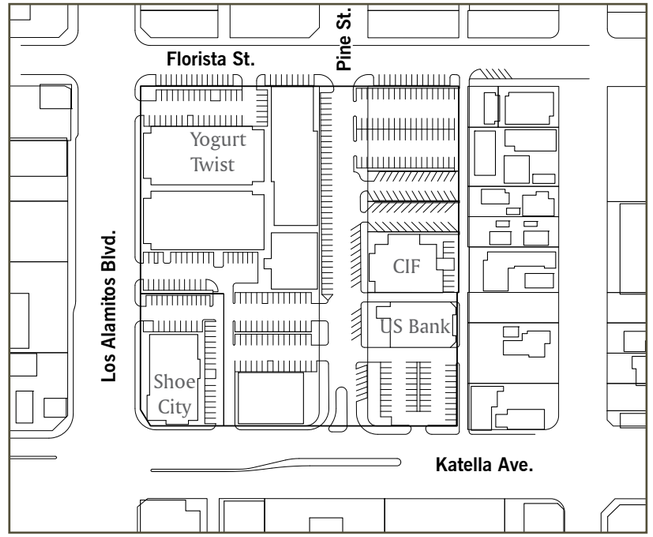
* Site area includes a portion of Pine Street

	Building Square Feet	Parking Spaces
Existing	115,600	421
Proposed Demolition	48,000	235
New Construction	68,500	236
Final Site Total	136,100	471
Retail	88,100	--
Office and/or Hotel	48,000	--

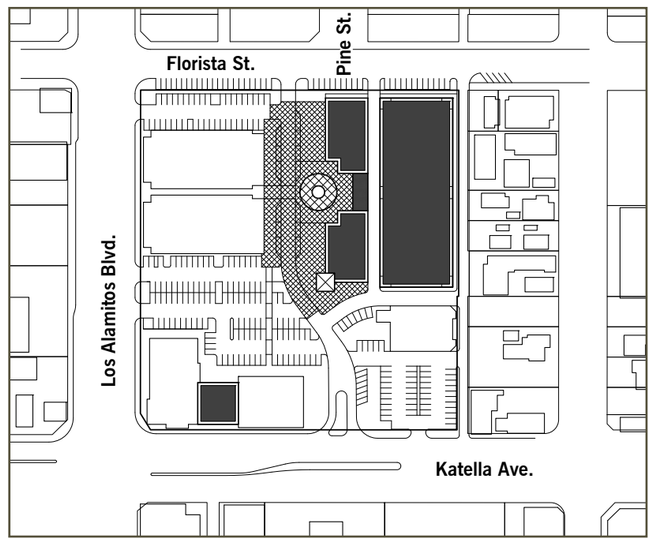


1. The existing retail buildings remain as is, but take advantage of an enlarged sidewalk area to reveal the inner courtyard area.
2. Pine Street is reconfigured, enhanced by attractive concrete pavers, and lined with removable or collapsible bollards to allow space to be blocked off for a central plaza.
3. The existing 2-story retail and office building is replaced by a more intense 4-story building that could consist of retail, medical office, and/or extended stay hotel uses.
4. A 300-space public parking structure (2–3 stories).
5. These buildings remain largely as is.
6. A 4,500-square-foot addition is built between the two existing buildings, replacing a problematic curb cut and strengthening the buildings' presence.

Figure 31. Los Alamitos Plaza Area Concept Plan 1A



The existing site configuration showing building footprints, circulation, and parking.



Buildings that remain as is are shown in white; new construction is shown in grey or hatched.

Site 1: Los Alamitos Plaza Area Concept Plan 1B

Existing Building

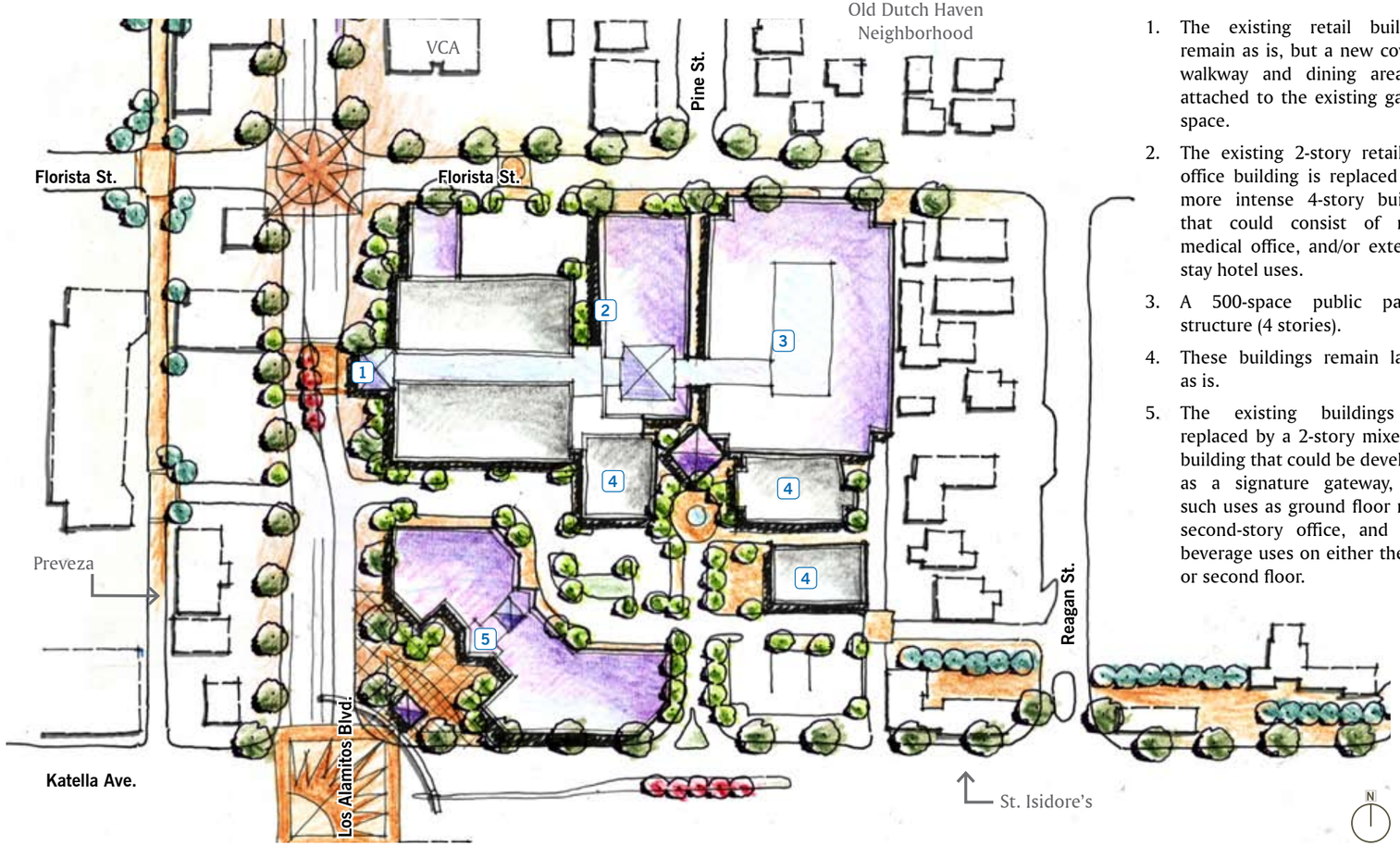
New Construction

Concept Details

Site Area: **6.7 acres**
293,400 SF

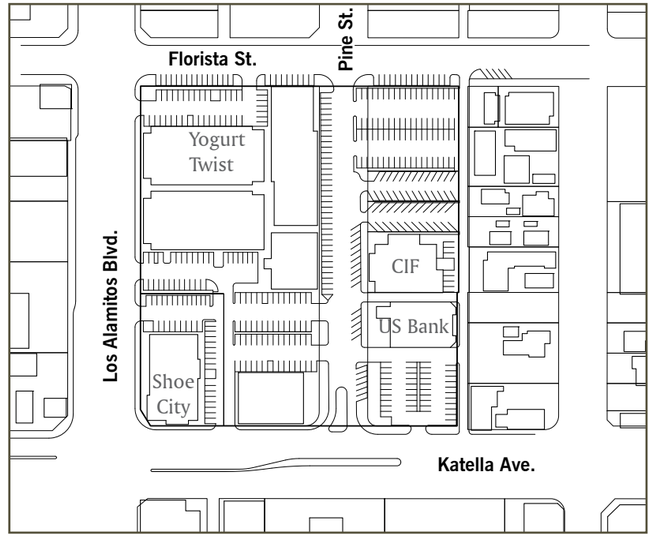
* Site area includes a portion of Pine Street

	Building Square Feet	Parking Spaces
Existing	115,600	421
Proposed Demolition	52,000	331
New Construction	166,500	500
Final Site Total	230,100	590
Retail	166,100	--
Office and/or Hotel	64,000	--

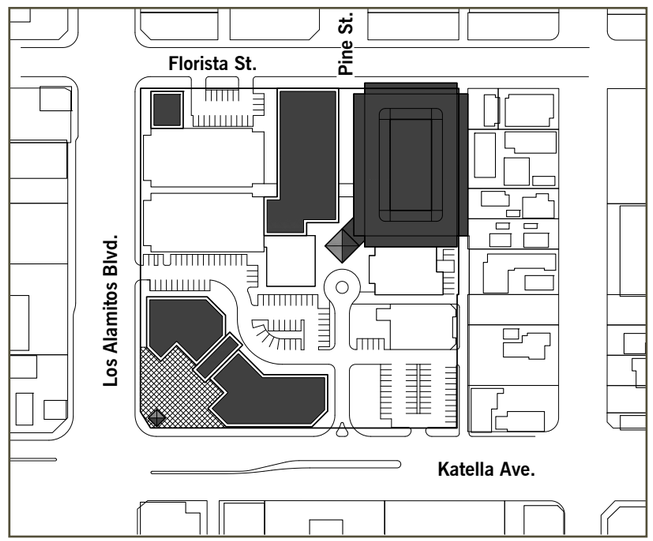


1. The existing retail buildings remain as is, but a new covered walkway and dining area are attached to the existing galleria space.
2. The existing 2-story retail and office building is replaced by a more intense 4-story building that could consist of retail, medical office, and/or extended stay hotel uses.
3. A 500-space public parking structure (4 stories).
4. These buildings remain largely as is.
5. The existing buildings are replaced by a 2-story mixed-use building that could be developed as a signature gateway, with such uses as ground floor retail, second-story office, and food/ beverage uses on either the first or second floor.

Figure 32. Los Alamitos Plaza Area Concept Plan 1B



The existing site configuration showing building footprints, circulation, and parking.



Buildings that remain as is are shown in white; new construction is shown in grey or hatched.

PRO FORMA ANALYSIS:
Site 2: Center Plaza Area

EXISTING SITE INFORMATION

Site 2 is referred to as the Center Plaza Area and is located at the southeast corner of Briggeman Street and Los Alamitos Boulevard. For concept plan 2A, the site consists of the single vacant parcel immediately south of Briggeman Street and a portion of Serpentine Drive—a total of about 2.8 acres.

Concept plan 2B consists of all of concept plan 2A plus the developed parcel immediately south of Serpentine Drive (Center Plaza) and the industrial parcel north of Briggeman (not including the commercial parcel fronting on Los Alamitos). The site for concept plan 2B includes about 5.8 acres of land

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

The first development option for this site (2A) does not involve any demolition because the site is vacant. The proposed development (see Figure 33) would construct two single-story retail buildings with a total of 40,000 square feet of floor area. The site would also include a 7,500-square-foot plaza for hosting special events.

The second development option for this site (2B) envisions developing the vacant site and redeveloping Center Plaza to create a more cohesive site plan. This plan (see Figure 34) would entail demolition of about 38,000 square feet of existing retail buildings, the construction of four single-story retail buildings with about 68,000 square feet of floor area, the addition of a surface parking on a lot on the north side of Briggeman Street, and a 16,000-square-foot special event plaza.

The market analysis suggests a do-it-yourself (DIY) home improvement niche for this part of the Boulevard District. The market analysis also indicates that hosting DIY demonstrations and other special events to attract residents from the region will help this niche thrive. Both development options provide an event plaza for these events. Also, both concept plans assume that the City vacates the right-of-way for Serpentine Drive and donates the land as an incentive for redevelopment.

PRO FORMA RESULTS

A development pro forma modeled the financial feasibility of both concept plans. For the second concept (2B), the pro forma included an alternative assuming that the existing Center Plaza property owner developed the entire opportunity site. Table 4 summarizes the three analyses.

The development cost for concept plan 2B ($16.5 million), is nearly twice that for concept plan 2A ($9.7 million), because site 2B includes demolition of existing buildings and the construction of more new building space. The estimated sales value of opportunity site, after five years of operation, could be $24.0 million under concept plan 2B or $14.1 million under concept plan 2A.

Concept 2A is not currently feasible under current market conditions and with the assumed acquisition cost. Nevertheless, this concept could achieve an unsubsidized IRR of 12.6 percent. This suggests that as market conditions improve, some version of the concept plan could become feasible.

Concept 2B, however, is not financially feasible without a subsidy. With a new developer, current market conditions would leave a feasibility gap of $7.0 million. Even with the current owner as developer the gap would still be $6.0 million. The owner-as-developer alternative provides less of a benefit for opportunity site 2 than it does for opportunity site 1 because the land owner has not held the property as long as is assumed to have a larger amount of existing debt to repay before redeveloping Center Plaza.

Table 4
Pro Forma Analysis Summary, Opportunity Site 2: Center Plaza Area

	Development Concept 2A	Development Concept 2B	
Pro Forma Information	**New Developer**	**New Developer**	**Existing Owner as Developer**
Existing Site Information			
Site area (SF)	121,349	252,650	252,650
Existing building (SF) to be demolished	0	38,229	38,229
Estimated property value	$2,100,000	$8,830,000	$7,870,000
Development Costs Summary			
Land acquisition	$1,460,000	$1,910,000	$1,910,000
Construction cost	$7,697,000	$13,650,000	$13,650,000
- site development costs	$607,000	$1,450,000	$1,450,000
- direct construction costs	$7,090,000	$12,200,000	$12,200,000
Construction interest	$304,000	$526,000	$526,000
Construction loan fee	$253,000	$438,000	$438,000
Total Direct Costs	$9,714,000	$16,524,000	$16,524,000
Loan amount	$8,985,000	$15,518,000	$15,518,000
Total equity required	$729,000	$1,006,000	$1,006,000
Percent financed*	92.5%	93.9%	93.9%
Financing Costs			
Amount financed - land	$728,000	$954,000	$954,000
Amount financed - construction	$7,700,000	$13,600,000	$13,600,000
Total amount financed	$8,428,000	$14,554,000	$14,554,000
Construction loan fee	$253,000	$438,000	$438,000
Total carried interest	$304,000	$526,000	$526,000
Feasibility Summary			
Estimated site sales value, after 5 years	$14,100,000	$24,000,000	$24,000,000
IRR without subsidy	12.6%	n/a	n/a
Residual land value at 20% IRR	$1,410,000	$1,850,000	$1,850,000
Feasibility gap	**($690,000)**	**($6,980,000)**	**($6,020,000)**
- Portion of estimated land value	-32.9%	-79.0%	-76.5%

* Based on land acquisition subsidy equal to the feasibility gap at 20% IRR.

Site 2: Center Plaza Area Concept Plan 2A

Existing Building

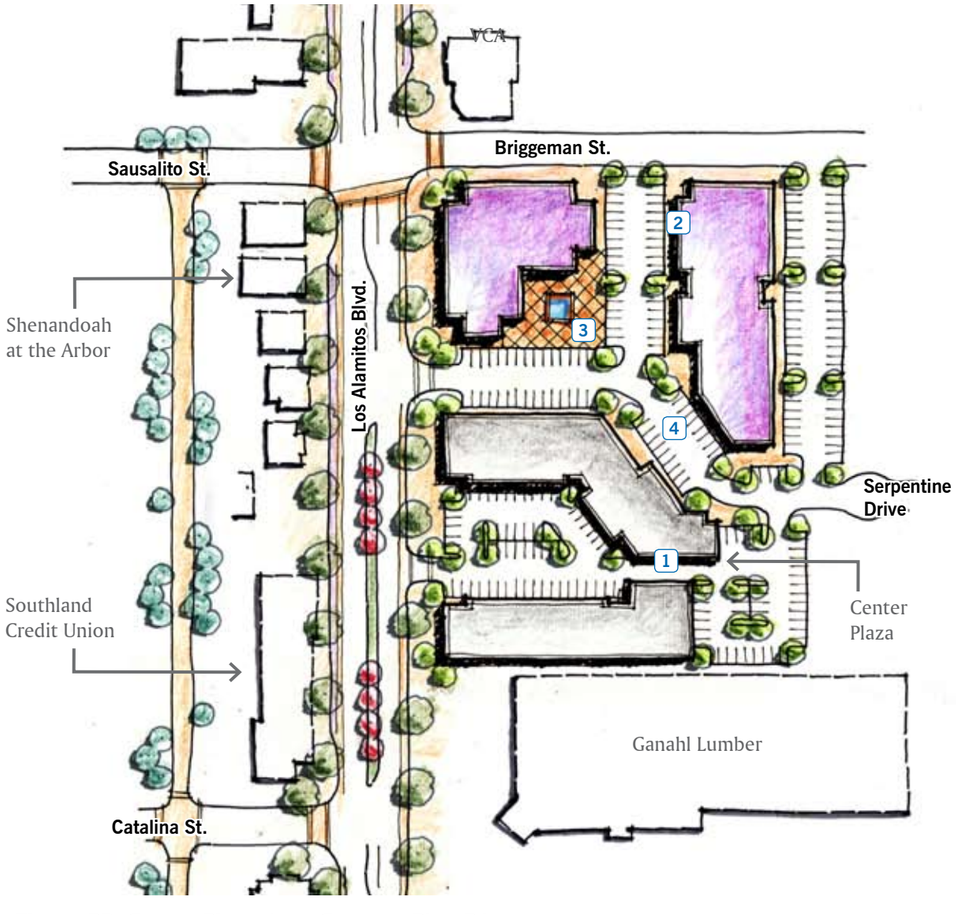
New Construction

Concept Details

Site Area: 2.8 acres
121,300 SF

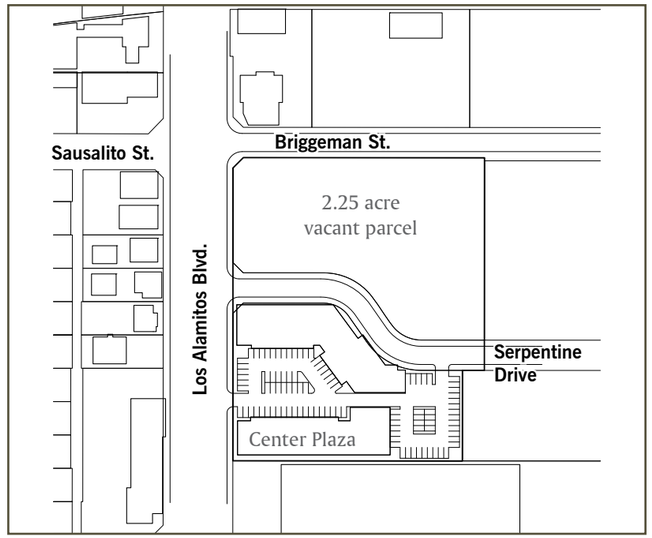
* Site area includes a portion of Serpentine Drive

	Building Square Feet	Parking Spaces
Existing	0	0
Proposed Demolition	0	0
New Construction	40,000	150
Final Site Total	40,000	150
Retail	40,000	--
Office and/or Hotel	0	--

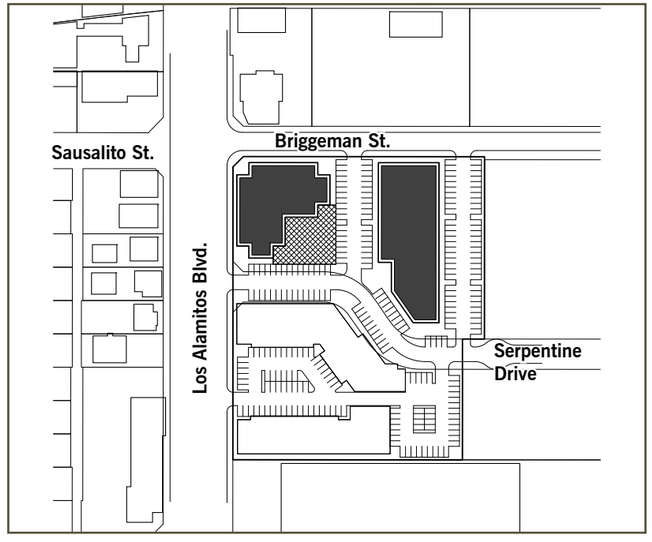


1. Center Plaza remains as is.
2. A total of 40,000 square feet of single-story retail/restaurant space is constructed on the vacant parcel.
3. A 7,500-square-foot plaza provides space for outdoor dining and small events.
4. Serpentine Drive is revised to accommodate greater amounts of parking, while also providing service access at the rear of the properties.

Figure 33. Center Plaza Area Concept Plan 2A



The existing site configuration showing building footprints, circulation, and parking.



Buildings that remain as is are shown in white; new construction is shown in grey or hatched.

Site 2: Center Plaza Area Concept Plan 2B

Existing Building

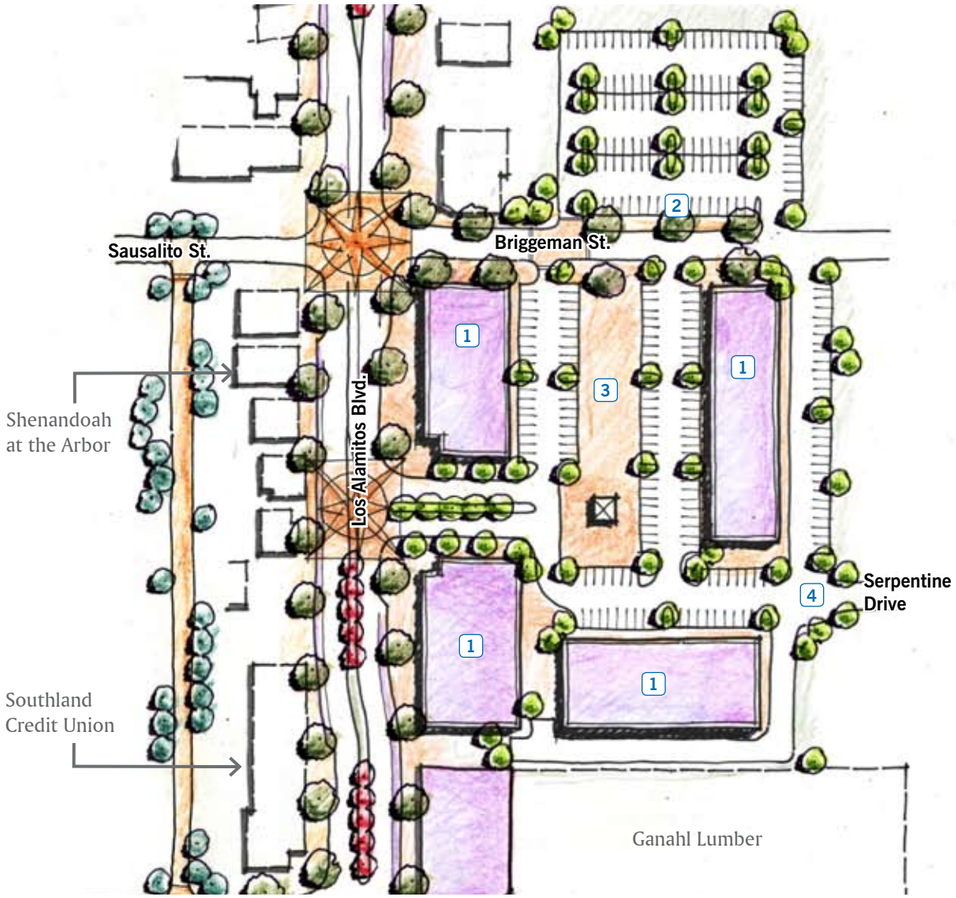
New Construction

Concept Details

Site Area: 5.8 acres
252,650 SF

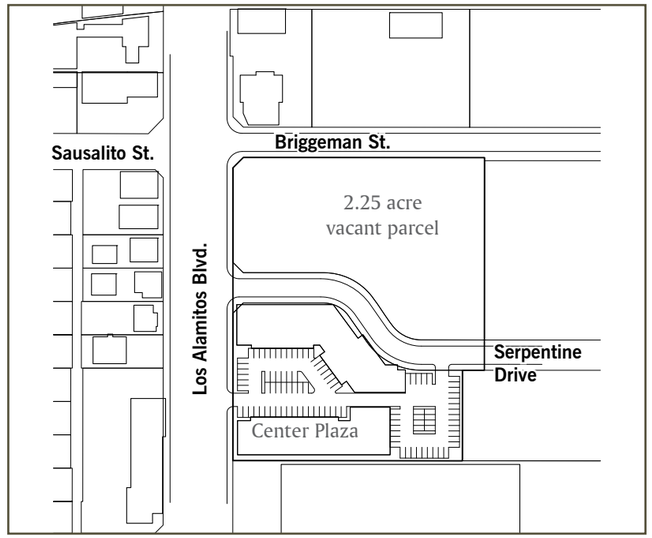
* Site area includes a portion of Serpentine Drive

	Building Square Feet	Parking Spaces
Existing	38,200	101
Proposed Demolition	38,200	101
New Construction	68,100	287
Final Site Total	68,100	287
Retail	68,100	--
Office and/or Hotel	0	--

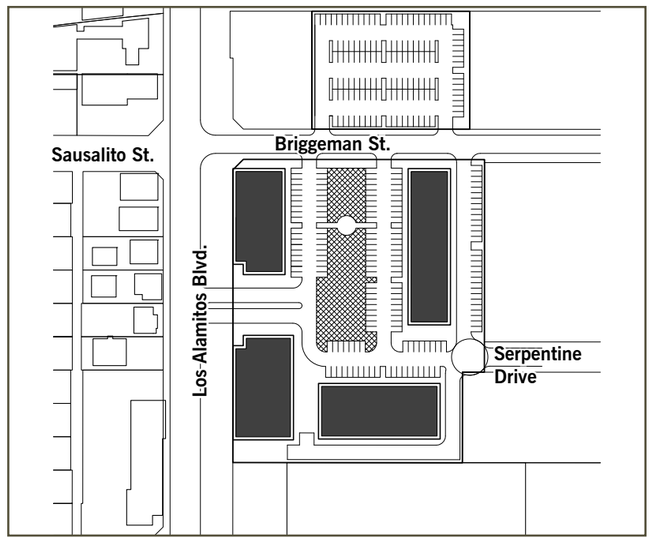


1. Center Plaza is rebuilt and the vacant parcel is developed to yield a total of 68,100 square feet of single-story retail and food-related businesses.
2. A nearby parcel is used to provide additional surface parking (roughly 150 spaces) for the new development to avoid costly structured parking.
3. A 16,000-square-foot linear plaza provides space for outdoor dining, general gathering, and special events.
4. Serpentine Drive is altered and now serves as the primary entrance off of Los Alamitos Boulevard.

Figure 34. Center Plaza Area Concept Plan 2B



The existing site configuration showing building footprints, circulation, and parking.



Buildings that remain as is are shown in white; new construction is shown in grey or hatched.

ADDITIONAL CONCLUSIONS AND NOTES

Lease Rates

The pro forma analyses suggest that the current lease rates generally will not support new development under current market conditions. For redevelopment of existing sites to be financially feasible without a subsidy, lease rates would have to rise to about $3.44 per square foot per month. This is about where lease rates are in Belmont Shore, although at the height of the last economic cycle rates were as high as $4.00 per square foot per month.

It will clearly take some time for improvements and activities in the Boulevard District to increase consumer traffic enough to support a 60 percent increase in lease rates. Until that level of success is realized, redevelopment of existing sites will require some level of subsidy, either financial and/or regulatory.

As lease rates rise, some existing tenants may well decide to relocate to less expensive space elsewhere. This discussion of lease rates, however, is not intended to imply that the Boulevard District needs a whole new set of businesses. Rather, the City should aim to improve the value of a Los Alamitos business location, whether through increasing customer traffic, improving the shopping experience, or helping existing businesses to operate more profitably.

Residual Land Value

Because the equity required for a development is directly related to the cost to acquire land and because this cost occurs at the beginning of the project (when the time value of money has no impact), the residual land value is the one factor that most immediately influences the rate of return. For example, in the pro forma analysis for Opportunity Site 1, a 10 percent increase in lease rates only yields an 8.7 percent improvement in the IRR, but a 10 percent reduction in the land acquisition costs increase the IRR by 13.2 percent.

With an IRR target of 20 percent, the pro forma analysis calculates the remaining variable, the residual land value. The feasibility gap, the difference between the residual land value and the estimated market value for each opportunity site, represents the level of subsidy likely required for redevelopment to occur under near-term market conditions. The feasibility gap percentage—the residual land value expressed as a percentage of the estimated market value—provides an indication of how far off the proposed development is from being financially feasible.

Table 5
Pro Forma Assumptions

Hard Cost		
Commercial construction cost	$ 144.00	per sq. ft.
Demolition cost	$ 5.00	per bldg. sq. ft.
Open space/landscaping cost	$ 2.50	per sq. ft.
Office construction cost	$ 147.68	per sq. ft.
Parking construction cost	$ 10.00	per sq. ft.
Site development cost	$ 5.00	per sq. ft.
Cost Factors		
Contingency	5.0%	of hard costs
Developer fee	5.0%	of hard costs
Indirect land cost	3.0%	of estimated land value
Selling costs	3.0%	of sales value
Soft cost	15.0%	of hard costs
Rental management fee	4.0%	of effective gross income
Growth rate - expenses	3.0%	
Revenue		
Retail lease rate	$ 28.90	per sq. ft. per year
Retail operations and vacancy allowance	12.5%	
Office lease rate	$ 23.64	per sq. ft. per year
Office operations and vacancy allowance	12.5%	
Growth rate - revenues	4.0%	
Capitalization rate	8.0%	

Financing		
Financing portion for land	50.0%	
Financing portion of improvement	100.0%	
Construction loan interest rate	8.0%	
General interest rate	10.0%	
Construction loan fee rate	3	basis points
Sales commission	5.0%	
Discount rate - unleveraged	12.0%	annual rate
Discount rate - leveraged	18.0%	annual rate
Commerical Loan-to-Cost ratio	75.0%	
Commercial loan DSCR	1.15	Debt service coverage ratio
Commercial permanent loan term	25	
Commercial permanent loan rate	6.5%	
Commercial permanent loan fee	1	basis points
Commercial permanent loan LTV	75.0%	
Taxes		
Depreciation - residential buildings	27.5	years
Depreciation - non-residential buildings	39.0	years
Income tax	35.0%	
Capital gains tax	15.0%	
Tax on depreciation	25.0%	
Growth rate - property value	2.0%	

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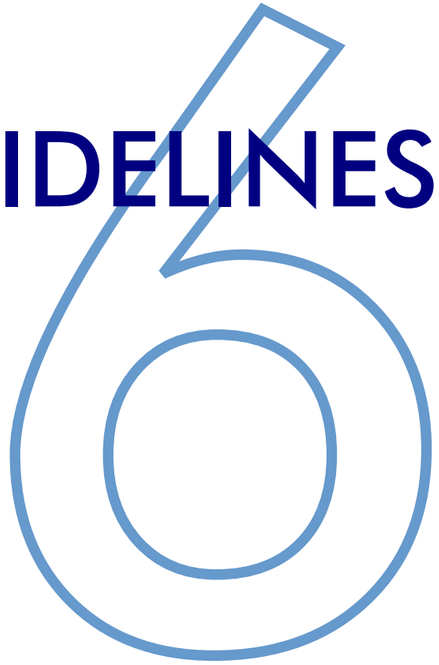
Katella
Los Alamitos

DESIGN GUIDELINES



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6. Design Guidelines

DESIGN SETTING

Existing architectural styles and building designs found in Los Alamitos represent an eclectic blend of architectural expressions, primarily characterized by a variety of "franchise modern" or "builder style" influences from the past 50 years. From the City's early days of incorporation, growth has resulted in no singular or dominant authentic architectural style. Instead, a variety of semi-Mediterranean architectural designs have gained a foothold, characterized by stucco-clad facades and red tile roofs.

The City desires to have a more cohesive image along the two corridors, particularly for their commercial buildings. But the City also wants to maintain flexibility and allow the property owner or developer to express their vision.

The City's existing regulations and policies encourage an Early Californian or Mission Style theme and provide some direction on issues such as mass, scale, character, and orientation. The City Council adopted Architectural Review Guidelines in 1983 and published an Architectural Review Handbook. This handbook focused as much on the design review process as it did on general design guidelines. The City also created an Architectural Review Committee (ARC) in 1983, which is currently referenced in the Municipal Code in Section 2.52 (amended in 1991). The ARC has not been active over the past few years.

The 1997 General Plan contains policies that reinforce the need for high-quality design, development that appeals to the automobile and pedestrians, and a greater sense of place (see the Regulatory Setting discussion in Section 3, *Site Context*).

PURPOSE AND INTENT

The purpose of these commercial design guidelines is to expand upon the City's existing architectural design guidelines and demonstrate the art of building composition using pictures. Their primary function is to provide prospective architects, builders, and developers with a clear statement of the appropriate design direction for commercial development within the City of Los Alamitos.

As a secondary, though not subordinate function, the design guidelines were crafted to furnish a document that can be easily used and understood by the general public, property owners, decision makers, planning staff, and other development professionals.

These guidelines address 11 different aspects of a commercial development's structure, appearance, layout, and function.

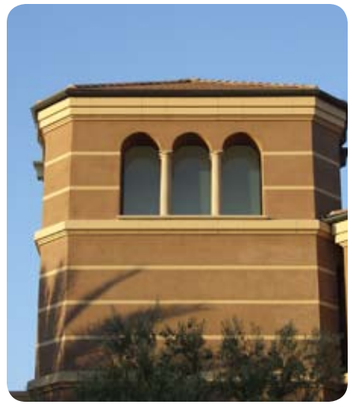
1. Massing and Form
2. Structure
3. Facade Components
4. Transitional Elements
5. Storefront Elements
6. Materials
7. Streetscape
8. Signage
9. Storefront Display
10. Building/Parking Location
11. Urban Open Space

The guidelines can and should be implemented in any new construction. These guidelines also apply to existing development and should be implemented as improvements (incremental or comprehensive) are made to private and public buildings and spaces. The intent is to encourage creative individual architectural statements that, when viewed as a whole, produce an equally outstanding commercial district.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

Although it is not the intent of these guidelines to require any particular architectural style in new construction or refurbishment, architects, builders, and developers should be sensitive to past Southern California architectural expressions, where historical and inherited styles such as Spanish Colonial, Mission, and Monterrey have been successfully crafted, designed to respond to local climatic conditions, traditional building practices, and a varied palette of indigenous building materials.

The architectural design process should be one of emulation tempered by modern interpretation. The architect should work with knowledge of and sympathy for past traditional architectural styles found in Southern California, in an effort to craft authentic, enduring, buildings that stand the test of time.



1 | BUILDING MASSING AND FORM

Streetwalls play a key role in defining and framing the public realm. Composed of buildings contiguous to the sidewalk and public streetscape, streetwalls create comfortably defined "outdoor rooms" that attract pedestrians due to their pleasing proportions, human scale, and ability to create a positive definition of the street space. This blockscape, composed of opposing streetwalls, is further defined by corner articulations and tower elements designed as landmark features and focal points that ultimately intensify and punctuate streetscape.

ELEMENT: Streetwalls

- ❑ Orient building masses towards the public realm, creating a distinguishing street wall that frames and defines the streetscape (A, B, C).
- ❑ Distinguish individual buildings along the street wall. Provide slight variations in materials, coloration, and ornamentation while maintaining consistent floor heights, structural bay rhythms, upper-story window placements, and sign bands between adjacent buildings (A).
- ❑ Design buildings that are human scaled. Reduce buildings into a series of scale-giving elements, including a distinguishable base (foundation), shaft (middle), and roof cap (top) (A, B, C).
- ❑ Avoid large, monumental, and scale-less building masses.

ELEMENT: Towers

- ❑ Locate tower elements at street intersections to highlight these higher-intensity settings (A, B, C).
- ❑ Use tower elements to resolve and accentuate two converging street walls (A, B, C).
- ❑ Extend tower elements above the street wall as an "exclamation point" that punctuates the streetscape (A, B, C, D).
- ❑ Pair tower elements at street intersections as gateway elements and landmark features that announce entrance into the Los Alamitos commercial district.
- ❑ Design tower elements with a distinct base, shaft, and cap (A, B, C, D).

ELEMENT: Corners

- ❑ Accentuate building corners with a distinguishable architectural element designed to emphasize this higher-intensity location. Use the following techniques to underscore the building corner:
  - Use a rounded building mass to "turn the corner" (A).
  - Sheer off the building corner at a 45-degree angle to accentuate the corner (B, C).
  - Create a square indentation at the building corner, creating an entrance forecourt that facilitates pedestrian gathering.
  - Provide a ground-floor building indentation that is covered by upper-story overhang (D).

2 | BUILDING STRUCTURE

The sacred trinity of building design—the building base, shaft, and cap—establishes architectural proportions that are appealing to the eye and define buildings both individually and collectively.

The base, functioning as a pedestal footing, solidly anchors the building to the ground plane. The shaft breaks the building into a series of repetitive, scale-giving structural bays that enhances the "rhythm" of the blockscape, while the roof cap crowns the building with distinction.

ELEMENT: Building Base

- ❑ Rest the building on a noticeable foundation base or pedestal to firmly anchor the structure to the ground plane (A, B, C, D).
- ❑ Use solid, visually substantial building base materials to project an image of durability, quality, and permanence (A, B, C, D).

ELEMENT: Building Shaft

- ❑ Display the underlying structure of the building shaft through the use of columns and piers that segment the building into a series of defined structural bays (A, B).
- ❑ Create visual building rhythms through the use of repetitive facade elements that include vertical repeating columns and piers, horizontal repeating spandrels, and rows of vertically oriented windows repeated in horizontal bands (A, B).
- ❑ Define upper-story facades by a series of vertically oriented windows (C).
- ❑ Amply recess upper-story windows into the building facade, designed to express building mass (C).

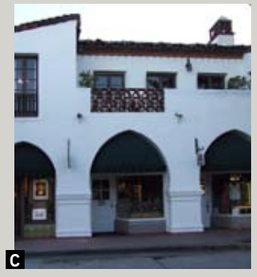
ELEMENT: Building Cap

- ❑ Crown the building with a discernible roof cap that defines and terminates the top of the building (A, B, C, D).
- ❑ Use traditional, authentic gable and hip roof forms with a discernible center ridgeline (B, C).
- ❑ Distinguish and define the roof cap using the following roof forms:
  - Flat roof with distinguishable cornice element (A).
  - Gable roof form (B).
  - Hip roof form (C).
  - Conical roof forms (associated with tower elements) (D).
  - Provide a ground floor building indentation that is covered by upper story overhang (D).
- ❑ Avoid the use of mansard roof forms. Roofs shall be defined by fully pitched forms, not fragmented mansards.

3 | FACADE COMPONENTS

The building facade is the primary architectural element that faces the public realm. Traditionally, commercial storefronts are characterized by tall storefront windows designed to display merchandise to pedestrian passersby and entice them inside, while enhancing interior daylighting. Additionally, structural members of the building facade, in the form of columns and piers, define space and convey a sense of rhythm. Lastly, cornice and roof elements delineate the wall and roof juncture, terminating and defining the top of the building.

ELEMENT: Storefront Structural Bays

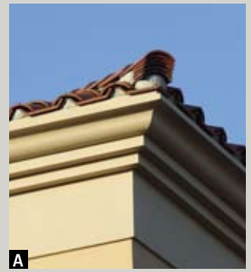


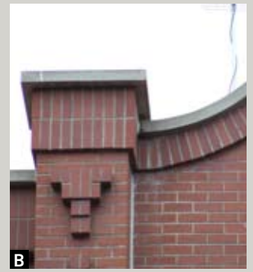
- Define ground-floor storefronts with a series of structural bays that divide buildings into individual, repetitive storefront components (A, B, C).
- Use vertical columns/piers and horizontal spandrels to define individual ground-floor storefront structural bays and display windows (A, B, C).
- Design distinct ground-floor storefronts that provide a greater level of transparency than upper-story facades (A, C).
- Provide traditional commercial storefront heights that increase interior daylighting while amply displaying merchandise to pedestrians (A, B, C). Ground-floor storefront heights shall be a minimum of 15 to 18 feet.

ELEMENT: Upper Story Facades

- Define upper-story facades by rows of vertically oriented windows designed to enhance interior daylighting (A, B, C).
- Substantially recess upper-story windows into building facade to express mass and depth (A, B, C). Upper-story windows shall be recessed a minimum four inches from the exterior wall plane.
- Use mullions to divide horizontal window openings into a series of vertically oriented windows (C).
- Emphasize horizontal building rhythms such as continuous cornice elements, repetitive window openings, and sign bands that provide architectural continuity between neighboring buildings.

ELEMENT: Cornice/Roof Elements





- Define the junction between the wall plane and eave line with a discernible cornice element that defines and terminates the top of the building (A, B).
- Use the following elements to define the cornice/roof junction:
  - Protruding crown molding (A).
  - Protruding brick masonry (B).
  - Roof corbels supporting roof overhangs (C).
  - Roof brackets supporting eave overhangs (D).
- Top roof parapet walls with a distinctive cap or coping.

4 | TRANSITIONAL ELEMENTS

Transitional elements are the places between the building interiors and the parking and street areas. Arcades were traditionally designed as semi-public transitional space to shelter patrons and merchants from the elements. In Mediterranean climates, such as Southern California, such space offers a shady retreat from the heat of the day, a protective environment between the street and storefront. Portals are used as gateway transitional elements, announcing entrance to and exit from urban open spaces, while defining a series of outdoor rooms.

ELEMENT: Arcades


A


B


C


D

- Design continuous arcades that reflect the architectural style of the building. Arcades shall not be small segmented elements but shall travel the entire length of the building (A, B, C, D).
- Create repetitive facade rhythms through the use of consistent column placements that define the face of the arcade (A, B, C, D).
- Define the interior of the arcade with storefront structural bays.
- Provide substantial traditional arcade heights that increase interior building daylighting while providing a shady retreat (A, B, C, D). Arcade dimensions shall be governed by the following standards:
  - Minimum Depth: 12 feet
  - Width-to-Height Ratio: Width at least two-thirds the height of the ground floor storefront

ELEMENT: Portals


A


B


C


D

- Provide portals designed to announce entrance into urban open spaces, such as paseos and plazas (A, B, C, D).
- Use portals to frame, define, and enclose outdoor spaces, creating a series of outdoor rooms (A, B, C, D).

5 | STOREFRONT ELEMENTS

Storefront elements are the smaller-scale "jewelry" that dress the commercial storefront, ultimately reinforcing the architectural style of the building. While the bulkhead functions as a pedestal, anchoring the building to the ground plane, it also performs a decorative function, often composed of ornamental tilework. Awnings and canopies perform both functional and ornamental duties as climate-controlling devices and decorative ornamentation, beautifying the storefront structural bay. Lastly, architectural embellishments such as light fixtures, wrought ironwork, and trelliswork enliven the storefront.

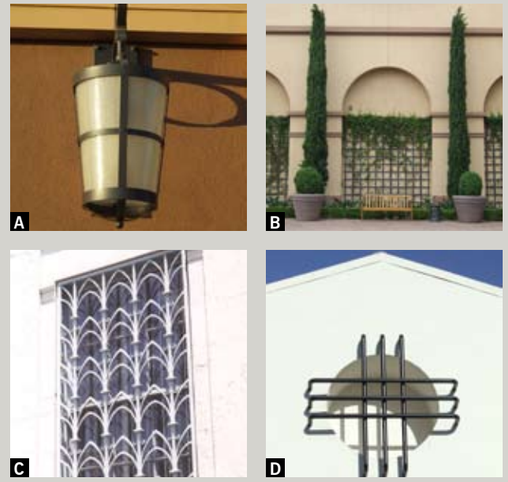
ELEMENT: Bulkheads

- Define the ground-floor storefront base with a discernible bulkhead that visually anchors the storefront to the ground plane (A, B, C, D). Storefront bulkheads shall range between 18 and 36 inches.
- Construct ground-floor storefront bulkheads with durable yet ornamental building materials that resist maltreatment while expressing the architectural style of the building (A, B, C, D).

ELEMENT: Awnings and Canopies

- Provide storefront awnings and canopies that complement and reflect the architectural style of the building (A, B, C).
- Design awnings to conform to individual storefront structural bays. Awnings shall express the shape and proportion of storefront window openings based on the following standards:
  - Square shed-style awnings shall accommodate square structural bays (A).
  - Rounded awnings shall accommodate arched structural bays (B, C).
- Avoid continuous awnings. Awnings shall be segmented, conforming to individual storefront structural bays (A, B, C).
- Avoid internally illuminated awnings. Awnings shall not be backlighted.
- Construct canopies of durable materials such as steel and glass (D).

ELEMENT: Ornamentations

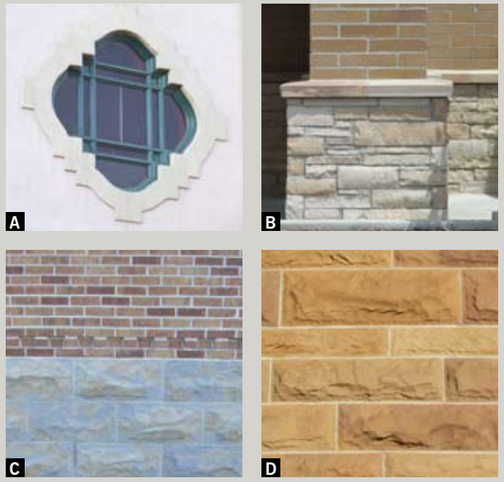


- Ornament building storefronts with light fixtures that reflect the architectural style of the building (A).
- Create building recesses outfitted with trellis elements and plant materials, which soften building facades (B).
- Use ornamental wrought-iron grillwork as window and wall decoration to reinforce the architectural style of the building (C, D).

6 | BUILDING MATERIALS

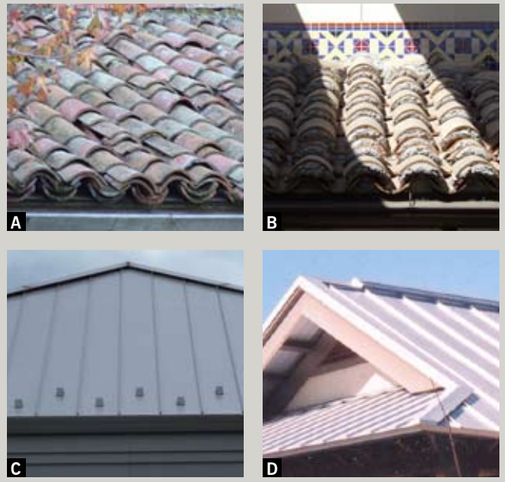
Authentic building materials emphasize and promote the architectural style of the building, reinforcing Los Alamitos' Mediterranean vision while projecting an image of quality and durability. Building materials should be chosen for their architectural integrity, functional honesty, and visual authenticity, to complement the architectural style of the building. The intent is to promote building material applications that appear genuine and convincing, ultimately crafting human-scaled buildings.

ELEMENT:
Wall Materials



- Use Mediterranean-oriented wall materials to reinforce Los Alamitos' mild climatic conditions and architectural image (A).
- Use human-scaled wall materials that can be repeated in incremental units (B, C, D).
- Use dimensional wall materials, such as brick and stone, that help people interpret the size of the building (C, D).
- Avoid large, featureless modern wall surfaces, such as all-glass curtain walls and blank facades.
- Use exterior plaster finishes that are not overly exaggerated or irregular.
- Preferred exterior plaster finishes include: fine sand float, light dash, medium dash, lightly skip troweled.

ELEMENT:
Roof Materials



- Use durable, authentic, and indigenous roof materials that increase the value of commercial buildings (A, B, C, D).
- Encourage the use of authentic Mediterranean-style roof materials to reinforce Los Alamitos' architectural image (A, B).
- Avoid non-durable, rustic residential-type roof materials such as wood shingles and composition roofing, which are out of context with Los Alamitos' commercial vision.

ELEMENT:
Recommended Materials List

- Design commercial buildings based on the following recommended building materials:

Building Base and Facades

- Concrete, sandblasted (building base only)
- Exterior plaster, smooth (use real three-coat exterior plaster applications)
- Masonry, brick (i.e., FBX; face brick, 4x2-2/3x8"; narrow gage Roman, 4x2x12")
- Masonry, Stone (i.e., natural, broken rangework, pitched face, quarry faced)
- Metal, structural (e.g., steel I-beam spandrels)
- Tile (bulkhead base; use traditional glazed transparent 4x4" square ceramic Dal tile, with deep, rich colors, such as cobalt blue, vermilion, timberline green, sunflower, grape, or black)

Windows

- Glass, lightly tinted (allowing 90 percent light transmission)
- Glass, transparent

Roofs

- Metal, copper
- Metal, rolled or rubber membrane (flat roof sections only), screened from public view by a parapet wall and associated cornice
- Metal, standing seam (standing seam joint segments shall be spaced 18 inches, maximum)
- Tile, full arched clay or concrete (Straight Barrel Mission)

Beams, Brackets, Corbel & Rafter Tails

- Wood, dimensional timber (use for exposed structural members)

7 | STREETSCAPE

Streetscape components, including landscape elements, sidewalks, and street furniture, become significant in establishing a consistent and identifiable blockscape image that will accentuate Los Alamitos' commercial districts. Landscape elements in the form of consistent street tree plantings along broad sidewalks frame and enclose the streetscape while shading and sheltering pedestrians. Lastly, groupings of plant containers containing colorful flowering annuals and perennials beautify the streetscape. All create a sense of place while reinforcing the desired town and country image of Los Alamitos.

ELEMENT: Landscaping

- Plant formal soldier rows of street trees (20 to 30 linear feet on-center, maximum) to frame and enclose the streetscape (A, B, C).
- Provide a consistent streetscape image through the use of formal canopy-style street tree plantings that provide summer shade and winter transparency (B, C).
- Provide groupings of consistent plant containers or raised planters along sidewalks planted with colorful flowering annuals and perennials to promote a formal landscape image (C, D).
- Use raised planters within broad sidewalk portions of Los Alamitos Boulevard as a physical buffer between vehicles and pedestrians (D).

ELEMENT: Sidewalks

- Create wide sidewalks along Los Alamitos Boulevard 18 to 25 feet in width to accommodate three types of activity or spaces (A, B, C):
  - Pedestrians (7 to 9 feet)
  - Outdoor dining or seating (6 to 10 feet)
  - Sidewalk appurtenances (5 feet) such as street furniture and building entry
- Locate street trees adjacent to the street and parking areas. Plant trees in formal cast iron tree grates and guards to project a formal landscape image (B, C).

ELEMENT: Street Furniture

- Use a consistent palette of street furnishings designed to complement and unify each district along the corridor (A, C, D).
- Locate street furnishings within the appurtenance zone and within entrance forecourts, plazas, paseos, and interior courtyards (A, B, C).
- Place seating where it will not conflict with pedestrian movements. Seating should be placed for psychological comfort, provide a sense of protection, and be positioned to view storefronts and pedestrian movements (B, C).
- Use decorative human-scaled light poles (maximum 14 feet high). Light poles shall have a discernible base, shaft, and cap that support the luminary. Use flutes, moldings, and other light pole ornamentations to create human interest (A, C, D).
- Use trash receptacles with covered tops and sealed bottoms to keep contents dry and out of sight.

8 | BUILDING SIGNAGE

Building signage plays two important roles in establishing a unique, distinct, and consistent commercial district character. First, building signage must allow for individual expression, calling attention to and identifying a particular business. Signage also contributes to a commercial district's overall image, setting a tone and character that ultimately complement and reinforce the district's desired theme.

ELEMENT: Wall Signs

A

B

C

D

- Use wall signs to identify the business. Design wall signs that coordinate with the design, materials, color, and architectural style of the building (A, B, C, D).
- Provide wall signage composed of individually formed letters or symbols, including individual pinned metal letters (A), beveled and gilded letters (B), and three-dimensional foam letters (D).
- Avoid dominating the building facade with wall signage that is out of scale. Wall sign shape and proportion should fit and seamlessly integrate into the building facade, conforming to the sign band above the storefront and below second-story windows (A, B, C, D). Wall signs shall not cover windows or architectural embellishments.
- Express the personality of the business through the use of decorative font styles that add character to the streetscape (A, B, C, D).
- Provide a uniform sign program (theme) for single developments, coordinating wall sign size, font type, materials, color, and illumination source.

ELEMENT: Projecting Signs

A


B


C


D

- Use projecting signs to identify the business, such as word signs (A, B, D) or symbol signs (guild signs) composed of a recognizable symbol that conveys the image of the business (C).
- Design projecting signs to complement the architectural style of the building (A, B, C, D).
- Construct projecting signs using durable materials, including enameled metal (A, B), powder-coated metal, (C) and punched iron plate (D).
- Illuminate projecting signs with exterior down lighting fixtures such as incandescent "gooseneck" lamps and spot halogens.
- Design structural brackets to complement the projecting sign, composed of materials and colors that reinforce the form and shape of the sign (A, B, C, D).

ELEMENT: Window Signs

A

B

C

D

- Use window signage to identify the business only (A, B, C, D). Window signage shall not be used to advertise products, prices, sales, or other extraneous information that muddles the message.
- Compose window signs using permanent durable materials, including interior-mounted gilded and die-cut vinyl letters (A, B, C, D).
- Avoid large advertising placards that obliterate storefront window openings. Storefront windows shall be transparent, allowing pedestrians to window shop, while providing ample interior daylighting (A, B, C, D).
- Design subtle window signs that identify the business, not products. Window signs shall not exceed 10 percent of the window area (defined as the area of glass present in the storefront) (A, B, C, D).

9 | STOREFRONT DISPLAY

Storefront window displays contribute to the formation of a business identity and function as pedestrian-level window dressings to draw customers inside. Envision the storefront display window as a large picture frame designed to capture the imagination of the pedestrian. If properly orchestrated, individual storefront displays can contribute to the character and economic success of the commercial establishment, as well as contributing to the image of the streetscape and commercial district as a whole.

ELEMENT:
Window Display


A


B

C


D


E

F


G


H


I


J

- Design window displays as a composition, creating a pleasing tableau of merchandise, a contrived and creative still life that delights and entertains the passerby (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J).
- Complement and emphasize the shape of the storefront display window by using horizontal or vertical window dressing elements. The building and storefront window should function as a picture frame, complemented by the window display in color and proportion (A, C).
- Develop a clear idea or message of what the window dressing should convey. Concentrate on a single concept designed to articulate the desired overall theme (A, D, E, J).
- Change windows dressings frequently. Transform window displays seasonally, reflecting holidays and special events (F, H). A memorable display will be anticipated by patrons each year as a traditional part of the holiday.
- Don't confuse patrons with too much "eye candy." The intent is to entice people inside the commercial establishment, not to display every piece of merchandise (F, J).
- Use actual physical merchandise to provide an immediate connection to customers without word signage or product placards. Actual product color, shape, texture, and, in some cases, smell or sound, are subtle methods to convey your message (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J).
- Use a consistent window dressing color to convey your merchandising message (D, E).
- Illuminate storefront window dressings to entice nighttime window shoppers to return during business hours. Use halogen spotlights to illuminate merchandise, while enhancing public safety by lighting the sidewalk and allowing security to view inside (G).
- Group merchandise together to convey a consistent message (A, B, D, E, G).
- Use larger merchandise components to balance a grouping of smaller products (C, I).

10 | BUILDING/PARKING LOCATION

Building and parking locations and orientations create a formal pedestrian-oriented environment in which a concentrated mix of uses, traditional building placements, narrow streets, and defined open space combine to create a decidedly town and country image.

The purpose is to foster building placements whereby pedestrian activities are concentrated along the public streetscape and within defined plazas, forecourts, paseos, and courtyards. The environment should place automobiles largely behind buildings and celebrate people and activity.

ELEMENT: Building Location


A


B


C

- Place building storefronts contiguous to the property line directly fronting the sidewalk. Locate 85 percent of building storefronts at the property line. Fifteen percent of the block length can be set back 25 feet to accommodate building forecourts and outdoor eating areas (A, C).
- Locate primary building entrances toward the public streetscape (A, C). Secondary building entrances should be oriented toward interior parking courts.
- Create short building streetwalls composed of attached buildings to frame and enclose the streetscape. Streetwalls should not exceed 100 feet without a building indentation or pass-thru separation (A).
- Orient building frontages to frame and enclose formal open space features, such as external plazas (B).

ELEMENT: Parking Location


A


B


C

- Locate long-term vehicular parking within interior parking courts behind street-facing buildings (C).
- Locate short-term parking on-street, characterized by parallel and diagonal parking placements (A, B).
- Design the parking court as a dual-usage plaza intended to accommodate both vehicles and pedestrians. Provide vehicular parking stalls in addition to pedestrian amenities, including fountains, tree bosques, and accent pavers (C).
- Share entrance streets with neighboring parcels. Reciprocal access agreements should be required to allow the passage of vehicles between adjacent parcels.
- Eliminate pedestrian and vehicular conflicts. Locate curb cuts on minor secondary streets and rear alleys (as opposed to major boulevards), providing access to internal-oriented parking courts.

11 | URBAN OPEN SPACE

Urban open spaces are invaluable for accommodating pedestrians within defined and enclosed areas. These people-oriented "outdoor rooms" are intended as havens from the hustle and bustle of daily life, places where pedestrians can linger in comfortably defined spaces that contain public amenities such as outdoor seating, fountains, and plant materials that please and delight. These spaces stimulate the senses, providing a setting that ultimately celebrates the human experience.

ELEMENT:
Plazas, Forecourts, Courtyards


A


B


C


D

- Orchestrate building placements to frame and enclose urban open space features, such as forecourts, plazas, and courtyards (A, C).
- Use small-scale entrance forecourts and intersection plazas contiguous to the streetscape to announce entrance into districts and individual buildings (A, B, C, D).
- Locate larger-scaled plazas externally, oriented towards the public realm and commonly defined by multiple building frontages.
- Locate private courtyards internally, defined and framed by multiple buildings, to accommodate pedestrians and vehicles.

ELEMENT:
Corner Plazas


A


B


C

- Locate plazas at major intersections to announce entrance into Los Alamitos' commercial districts (A, B).
- Define corners with building masses that frame and enclose outdoor plazas.
- Equip and dress corner plazas with public amenities, including tree bosques, fountains, planters, and special pavers (A, B, C).

ELEMENT:
Paseos


A


B


C


D

- Locate narrow pedestrian paseos internal to the site to link private interior courtyards and patios (A).
- Use internal pedestrian paseos to link individual private parcels (C).
- Design paseos to accommodate public amenities such as fountains, plant containers, and al fresco dining opportunities (B, D).

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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7. Economic Development Strategies

Los Alamitos would need to implement two types of economic development strategies to carry out plans for Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue: funding strategies and economic activity strategies.

FUNDING STRATEGIES AND OPTIONS

These strategies provide funding to construct and maintain public and private improvements and to provide incentives for developers and property owners to develop buildings and sites that implement the plans.

FUNDING OPTION #1: Redevelopment Agency

WHAT IT IS

California's Community Redevelopment Law authorizes cities to establish redevelopment project areas. Within these areas, cities' redevelopment agencies collect increases in property taxes generated by redevelopment and new redevelopment projects. The agencies can pledge these increased property tax revenues (called tax increment revenues) as security for bonds and use the proceeds of the bonds to fund public improvements and provide subsidies as an incentive for redevelopment.

WHAT IT COULD DO

Typically a community redevelopment agency would undertake the public improvements envisioned in this plan, such as new expanded sidewalks, street trees, street furniture, and plaza space. An agency would also typically provide financial and other assistance to make desired redevelopment financially feasible.

Redevelopment agencies can also be eligible for special grant or assistance programs. For example, the California Polanco Redevelopment Act (Health and Safety Code Section 33459 et seq.) provides redevelopment agencies with the power to require a property owner to clean up an environmentally contaminated property (commonly referred to as brownfields or greyfields). Programs established in connection with the Polanco Act provide funding for the cleanup of brownfields or greyfields in a redevelopment project area.

HOW TO SET IT UP

The criteria by which a city may find an area blighted and therefore establish a redevelopment agency has become more stringent. Health and Safety Code Sections 33033 et seq. require that a redevelopment project area have one or more physical blight conditions and one or more economic blight conditions to the degree that they cause "a reduction of, or lack of, proper utilization of the area to such an extent that it constitutes a serious physical and economic burden on the community that cannot reasonably be expected to be reversed or alleviated by private enterprise or governmental action, or both, without redevelopment."

Physical Blight Conditions:

- Buildings in which it is unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work
- Conditions that prevent or substantially hinder the viable use or capacity of buildings or lots
- Adjacent or nearby incompatible land uses that prevent the development of those parcels or other portions of the project area
- The existence of subdivided lots that have multiple owners and whose physical development has been impaired by their irregular shapes and inadequate sizes

Economic Blight Conditions:

- Depreciated or stagnant property values
- Impaired property values due, in significant part, to hazardous wastes
- Abnormally high business vacancies, abnormally low lease rates, or an abnormally high number of abandoned buildings
- A serious lack of necessary commercial facilities that are normally found in neighborhoods
- Serious residential overcrowding that has resulted in significant public health or safety problems
- An excess of bars, liquor stores, or adult-oriented businesses that has resulted in significant public health, safety, or welfare problems.
- A high crime rate that constitutes a serious threat to the public safety and welfare

This project has not conducted a blight study of either corridor area. Nevertheless, site visits and data analyzed in the course of this project suggest that Los Alamitos would face a difficult task to make a finding that blight exists to the degree that it is a serious physical and economic burden on the community.

If, however, the City decides to investigate the feasibility of establishing a redevelopment project area along one or both corridors, it should note that recent changes to California's Community Redevelopment Law no longer allow the use of eminent domain to acquire an owner-occupied residence for conveyance to a private person or business entity. Historically, many efforts to establish redevelopment agencies have faced resistance generated by public opposition to the use of eminent domain.

FUNDING OPTION #2: Assessment District

WHAT IT IS

Several different sections of California law authorize the use of assessment districts to fund public improvements such as roads, sidewalks, streetscapes, infrastructure, and parking.

An assessment district establishes a levy on parcels that benefit from the public improvements. This levy is on top of the maximum 1 percent level allowable under Proposition 13. Once an assessment district is established, the City can issue bonds, pledging the additional property tax revenues as security and using the bond proceeds to pay for the public improvements.

WHAT IT COULD DO

An assessment district would be appropriately applied to fund improvements envisioned for Los Alamitos Boulevard, including the expanded sidewalks, streetscapes, medians, street improvements, and parking.

As an example, this plan explores reducing the pavement width for Los Alamitos Boulevard to that necessary for two lanes of through traffic in each direction and extending the sidewalks farther into the right-of-way. The plan estimates the construction cost for this improvement would be about $2.5 million.

The City could form an assessment district using just the lots fronting Los Alamitos Boulevard to fund the construction cost. Assuming a 20-year bond term, the assessment district would levy an assessment of about $48 per linear foot of parcel frontage along Los Alamitos Boulevard. The average property owner (with 117 linear feet of road frontage) would pay an additional $5,500 in taxes per year. Alternatively, the

assessment district could cover all 70 parcels included in the Boulevard District, resulting in an annual assessment of about $6,300 per acre. The average property owner (with a 0.5 acre parcel) would pay an additional $3,150 in taxes per year.

HOW TO SET IT UP

Because there are several authorizing statutes and because Proposition 218 created conflicting provisions, there are several ways to establish an assessment district. A general process might follow the Municipal Improvement Act of 1913 (Streets and Highways Code Sections 10000 et seq., the "1913 Act"), as modified by Proposition 218 and subsequent legislation (namely SB 919 and SB 392).

1. The City would approve a map establishing the boundary of the proposed assessment district, which would include those parcels deemed to gain a special benefit from the improvements. The City would also adopt a Resolution of Intention. The boundary map is then recorded.
2. The City would begin the engineer's report. This report estimates the cost and expense of constructing the proposed improvements and plans for the assessment proceedings and bond financing. The report also establishes a fair and equitable allocation of the estimated cost and expense to the benefited parcels.
3. The City would next preliminarily approve the engineer's report, schedule the hearing, and put the improvement project out to bid. The hearing schedule must allow for preparation of notices and assessment ballots and the completion of mailing them at least 45 days prior to the hearing.
4. As property owners return their assessment ballots prior to the hearing, the responsible person (typically, the county clerk) compiles a record of ballots received and places them in safekeeping as public documents.
5. Prior to the hearing, the City would open project bids, analyze the results, and identify the apparent best bidder. If the apparent best bid is below the cost estimate, the City would likely prepare an amended engineer's report to reflect reduced costs and reduced assessments. However, if the apparent best bid results in increased estimated costs and thus the need to increase assessments, the City would have to begin a new cycle of notices, ballots, and hearings.
6. The City would conduct the hearing and at its conclusion tabulate the ballots and announce the results. The City cannot approve the assessment if the ballots submitted in opposition to the assessment exceed those submitted in favor, weighting each according to the amount of the proposed assessment on the parcel.
7. If a majority does not oppose the assessment, the City may then approve and record the assessments. Once recorded, the assessments become liens, and the City mails cash payment notices to the property owners, who have a 30-day period to the pay cash assessment in full and avoid the interest charges.
8. The City would then authorize the assessment bonds, approve the Official Statement, if any, and sell the bonds by either competitive or negotiated sale.
9. The City would award the construction contract and, upon receipt of bond sale proceeds, give the contractor notice to proceed. Upon completion of construction, the City would distribute any leftover construction funds in accordance with the 1913 Act.
10. Annually, over the life of the assessment bonds, the City would collect installments on account of unpaid assessments, with interest, from property owners and use the collected monies to pay the bonds' principal and interest.

FUNDING OPTION #3: Specialized Assessment District

There are two specialized uses of the basic assessment district with potential applicability to Los Alamitos and Katella Avenue.

PARKING DISTRICTS

An assessment district can be formed to fund the construction and operation of public parking spaces, lots, garages, and meters. Unlike the standard assessment district, a parking district may also use the ad valorem property tax revenues for operations and maintenance as well as acquisition and construction.

A parking district may also obtain revenue for operations and maintenance from parking meters. The Parking District Law of 1951 (Streets and Highways Code Sections 35100 et seq.) would require the City appoint a parking place commission, but an existing public body, such as the planning commission, could fill this role.

Establishing a parking district requires majority property owner support because the district would impose a property tax levy on top of the 1 percent maximum levy under Proposition 13. Property owners, however, could come out ahead. If a parking district were formed for Los Alamitos Boulevard and it provided a variety of new on-street parking and parking lots conveniently located throughout the town center area, the City could reduce or eliminate the zoning requirements for on-site parking.

Property owners could expand or construct new buildings on the portions of their property that had been paved parking generating no revenue. For example, a typical 30,000-square-foot retail site along Los Alamitos Boulevard might have a 10,000-square-foot building with 8,000 square feet paved for parking spaces. If the City established a parking district, this typical property owner could eliminate the on-site parking and expand the existing building by 8,000 square feet.

Most of the existing development along Katella Avenue appears to be fairly intensive. Most parcels have maximized the amount of building square footage and on-site parking that they can physically accommodate. It is unlikely that there will be redevelopment along Katella without some off-site parking arrangements that allow more of each individual parcel to be developed, thus creating an incentive for property owners to redevelop their property in a way consistent with the community's vision.

Parking districts could be an effective tool for providing off-site parking. To effectively spur redevelopment, however, establishment of off-street parking facilities along Katella will require close coordination between the City and property owners to assure that parking is being provided for sites whose property owners want to redevelop.

CONTRACTUAL ASSESSMENTS

The Improvement Act of 1911, which generally authorizes assessment districts, includes a chapter for contractual assessments (Streets and Highways Code Sections 5898.10–5898.32).

Whereas a standard assessment district applies to a number of parcels in a particular area, a contractual assessment would allow individual property owners, on a voluntary basis, to ask the City to construct a public improvement on their property and to levy an ad valorem property tax assessment on their property to pay for the public improvement. There is no public vote because contractual assessments occur on individual parcels with the consent of the property owner.

If the property owners on Los Alamitos Boulevard fail to agree and/or consent to a funding mechanism, such as an assessment district, the City could still pursue implementing the plan on an individual site basis, using a contractual assessment to help finance public improvements for catalytic projects.

Although property owners eventually pay for public improvements, whether through an assessment district or a contractual assessment, there is still a particular benefit for the property owner. Because property owners repay the construction costs through property taxes, the debt does not show up on the balance sheet of the property-owning entity.

Thus the property owner does not have to show a debt obligation for improvements funded this way and does not have to recoup the value of the improvement in the sale price if they sell the property. This can be an attractive enticement to developers trying to put together complex financing in current market conditions.

FUNDING OPTION #4:

Business Improvement District

WHAT IT IS

A business improvement district (BID) is a partnership between a municipality and the businesses and property owners within a particular district. While districts may have many objectives, they most often seek to improve the attractiveness and functionality of a business district, improve the business climate, help existing businesses grow and prosper, attract new businesses, and, most important, attract more visitors and customers to the district.

There are two basic types of BIDs, categorized by how they are financed. The Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1989 (Streets and Highways Code Sections 36500 et seq., the "1989 Act") provides for the establishment of BIDs funded through an assessment in the individual businesses within the district. The Property and Business Improvement District Law of 1994 (Streets and Highways Code Sections 36600 et seq., the "1994 Act") allows BIDs financed with assessments on property owners.

Experience demonstrates that business-based BIDs (organized under the 1989 Act) tend to have less financial wherewithal and effectiveness than do the property-based BIDs (organized under the 1994 Act). Under the 1989 Act, the levy to support BID activities and projects is usually applied as part of the business license tax. Under the 1994 Act, the levy to support BID projects and activities is usually a property tax assessment.

The greater stability and usually higher revenues from property-owner BIDs is one key reason for their greater effectiveness. And, although this is not a hard rule, property owners tend to provide a longer-term perspective and focus less on the immediate outcomes.

WHAT IT COULD DO

A BID could construct, operate, and maintain parking facilities, street furniture, trash receptacles, street lighting, decorations, and parks and public spaces. A BID could also organize and run public events in the district, promote tourism, and pursue other activities that would benefit businesses in the district.

Enhancing the vitality in the Boulevard District and realizing the vision for a town center will require attracting regional consumers to the area, especially though special events, to make them aware of the experiential shopping district the plan envisions. A BID could be an effective means to bring new consumers to Los Alamitos.

HOW TO DO IT

Establishing a BID follows a process similar to establishing an assessment district. In the case of a BID, however, the process requires majority support of either the businesses within the district (if organized under the 1989 Act) or the property owners in the district (if organized under the 1994 Act).

Organizing a BID under the 1994 Act has two extra hurdles, however. First, the City cannot initiate the establishment of the BID. Rather, a petition by a majority of the affected property owners is required. Second, a non-profit owners association, under contract to the city, operates the BID and implements its projects and activities.

FUNDING OPTION #5:

Landscaping and Lighting Maintenance District

WHAT IT IS

A landscaping and lighting maintenance district (LLMD) is a form of an assessment district. Whereas the assessment districts described previously allowed for an assessment on properties that receive a special benefit from proposed public improvements, LLMDs can apply to a much larger area where the properties all receive some benefit, even if parcels do not abut the proposed improvement or receive a special benefit.

LLMDs apply an ad valorem property tax assessment on all properties within the district and, as with standard assessment districts, this increased property tax revenue can be used as security for the issuance of bonds to pay for improvements and can be used to pay for annual operation and maintenance costs.

Because LLMDs can provide usually stable property tax revenues to fund operation and maintenance of public facilities, including parks, cities are increasingly turning to LLMDs as a means to cope with budget constraints. However, they are only effective when there is sufficient community support for increased taxes.

WHAT IT COULD DO

The general authority of LLMDs is broad and encompasses the construction, operation, and maintenance of landscaping, ornamental structures and facilities, lighting, traffic signals, park or recreational improvements, community centers, and municipal auditoriums and halls. An LLMD could fund the sidewalk improvements envisioned for Los Alamitos Boulevard, public plazas and gathering spaces, and, of course, lighting and landscaping for all public ways, properties, and facilities.

The authorizing statute does not, however, reference streets, parking, or special events, Thus an LLMD would not be a total solution. Because it would, however, allow the assessment to be spread across a greater number of parcels that would benefit from the revitalized corridors, it could, given broad community support for the plan, lower the cost for each individual property owner for the facilities that the LLMD can provide.

HOW TO DO IT

Establishing an LLMD follows a process similar to establishing an assessment district. Once established, however, the City must conduct an annual public hearing to review the engineer's report for activities planned for the coming year.

At this public hearing the City would approve the annual assessment that funds ongoing activities, but not the portion of the assessment used to repay previously approved bond debt. In any year that the City proposes to increase the assessment for ongoing activities or to increase the assessment as security for a new bond issuance, the assessment is subject to the approval of a majority of the property owners in the district.

FUNDING OPTION #6:
General Fund

The City's general fund is the final major funding source available to finance public improvements. When public improvements generally benefit the community as a whole, with little to no special benefits for a subset or small group of properties, then it is appropriate for the public to pay for the improvement. The City's general fund (or any relevant special fund) is the primary vehicle for the public to pay for public improvements.

The City may directly finance small improvements with annual appropriations from the general fund. Such small improvements could include incremental streetscape improvements. The general fund can also finance economic activity strategies discussed in the next section of this report.

The costs for larger improvements, however, would likely overwhelm the City's annual budget. The City would probably have to finance large projects, such as the improvements to Los Alamitos Boulevard, with long-term debt, namely general obligation bonds. General obligation bonds require a two-thirds voter approval because they also require an additional ad valorem property tax levy over and above the 1 percent maximum under Proposition 13.

Because a super-majority voter approval is required, cities do not often issue general obligation bonds anymore. When, however, there is broad community support for public improvements, these bonds can be an effective means of finance. They are also efficient in that they do not affect general property tax collections and thus do not affect the general fund and the annual budget.

Using the previous assessment district example, the City could finance the improvements to Los Alamitos Boulevard with general obligation bonds. With a two-thirds voter approval, the average parcel would pay about $90 additional property taxes each year over a 20-year period.

FUNDING OPTION #7:
Grants

The federal and state governments and many private foundations grant funding to municipalities for a variety of projects and activities.

Unfortunately, Los Alamitos is not eligible or would not compete well for many of the grants most often used for the types of projects and activities envisioned in this plan, such as Community Development Block Grants from the US Department of Housing and Community Development or Public Works grants from the federal Economic Development Administration. Most of these types of grants are aimed at large jurisdictions or communities with concentrations of poverty. Nevertheless, there are smaller, more targeted grants that could help with some of the costs.

For example, Caltrans administers a state and a federal Safe Routes to Schools grant program for infrastructure projects and programs. The City could apply to this program for funding for the bridge crossing to Oak Middle School and/or Los Alamitos High School or for smaller-scale improvements to facilitate safe pedestrian crossings at key intersections.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY STRATEGIES

These strategies are the activities and actions—the "doing" part of economic development—that can be undertaken by City staff and the City's partners to increase economic activity along the two corridors.

1. SPECIAL EVENTS

For the Boulevard District to function effectively as a destination, residents in the region will have to be familiar with what the district has to offer as an experiential shopping area. Hosting special events on a regular basis provides a key way to build that regional public identity.

The annual schedule of special events should be coordinated, but a variety of groups and organizations can be responsible for different events. The City can directly provide that organization, but if the community forms a BID, that entity would be the logical choice for programming events. The BID might also be able to provide funding for some of the costs associated with events, such as additional police, cleanup, and equipment such as portable stages, chairs/bleachers, and public address systems.

2. DIY HOME IMPROVEMENT

The Boulevard District will not have an anchor in a traditional sense: that is, one or a few national chains that attract regional visitors. Instead, Los Alamitos will need to generate an unanchored experiential shopping district that emphasizes a sense of place and capitalizes on a market niche unique to Los Alamitos. Belmont Shore is a local example of an unanchored experiential shopping district.

The market study found that there is little regional competition within five miles of Los Alamitos for do-it-yourself home improvement businesses. This study also found that Los Alamitos already contains a number of businesses that cater to this retail sector within the Boulevard District.

Los Alamitos could create a regional attraction of a concentration of do-it-yourself home improvement businesses. With coordinated marketing and home improvement special events, these businesses can attract regional consumers. The goal is not that consumers will drive to Los Alamitos for unique plumbing fixtures and then decide to have a fine meal and purchase flowers and gifts. Rather, the goal, the same as with special events, is to bring regional residents to the Boulevard District so they are familiar with the town center area. The next time those consumers decide to have an experiential shopping trip, to enjoy a fine meal with friends, or to spend an afternoon or evening strolling through unique specialty shops, Los Alamitos will come to mind as quickly as Belmont Shore.

As with special events, capitalizing on DIY home improvement will require coordinated marketing and events. While this could be accomplished through the cooperation of the home improvement businesses, a BID with management and funding resources would be more effective.

3. BRANDING AND MARKETING

Regional malls have been successful in attracting consumer spending for decades, in part because the national chain tenants advertise and the mall owners advertise. The challenge for downtowns and town centers is to provide a unified branding message, build the brand experience, and market the brand to regional residents.

The Boulevard District will require unified branding and marketing. The City could directly provide this service. A BID, however, that is focused solely on the district and directly accountable to the businesses and property owners would be much more effective.

Regardless of what entity provides general management of the branding, the businesses and property owners must be involved in all stages of the process. Branding can only be as effective as the brand experience, and it is the businesses and the property owners that provide the bulk of the brand experience. The public realm is the portion of a downtown or town center brand experience that the City can most influence.

There are two key components to marketing downtowns and town centers: the input side and the output side.

Input: Knowing What Consumers Want. The input side encompasses activities that build knowledge and awareness of what consumers want. While the City can spend money on consultants, the best information will come from the existing businesses, people who serve and talk to the district's customers every day. An intercept survey, where student interns or volunteers ask random people on the sidewalks a few brief questions about their reason for being in the district that day, is one method to obtain information about consumers.

Moreover, the City can immediately begin engaging existing businesses and conducting intercept surveys with little direct cost.

Output: Communicating the Brand. The output side of marketing includes activities that communicate the Boulevard District's brand to the public, locally and regionally, seeking to build public awareness of the brand. Paid advertising can communicate that message, but marketing does not necessarily require paid advertising. Public relations, getting free media coverage of Los Alamitos in general and the Boulevard District in particular, will likely be the most effective and efficient way to build the brand identity.

There is a wide range of newspapers, magazines, and web sites that cater to the regional audience. As a start, the City can work with local media to provide coverage and craft stories about this corridor plan and the upcoming general plan to begin a public relations campaign that will ultimately market Los Alamitos as an experiential destination.

4. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ATTRACTION

Business development and business attraction activities will apply to retail businesses, the medical services businesses, and industrial businesses located on and off the corridors. Business development activities seek to put local businesses in contact with services to help them operate more efficiently and profitably. Business attraction activities seek to target types of businesses that would complement the existing mix of businesses and to identify and attract specific firms to locate in Los Alamitos.

Independent retailers provide the authenticity at the core of experiential shopping, but all too often the proprietors of independent businesses, who may know everything there is to know about their particular line of goods or services, know far less about being successful merchants.

Likewise, small- and medium-sized professional and industrial businesses usually lack the resources to have staff dedicated to developing their businesses. Business development programs try to put these businesses in contact with service providers that can help, such as small business development centers, the workforce investment board, or Service Corps of Retired Executives.

In contrast, business attraction efforts are much less well defined and often take many forms. Business attraction can be a costly undertaking, and many communities hire outside consultants. Los Alamitos can begin business attraction, however, by working with commercial real estate brokers. Through regular meetings, the City can make brokers aware of the City's plans and efforts, and brokers can keep the City informed of potential businesses looking for new locations.

5. MEDICAL SERVICES AS AN ANCHOR

Los Alamitos has a successful and growing medical services sector centered on Los Alamitos Medical Center. Too often communities do not fully appreciate the value of this sector because it produces little in the way of added municipal revenues, but generates traffic. The medical services sector in Los Alamitos does, however, provide two important benefits.

First, it provides a large daytime population base. While many medical services employees do not have schedules with sufficient lunch time to leave work and eat at a restaurant, there are still a fair number of workers and customers from the hospital and medical offices who patronize restaurants and other local businesses both during the day and at night. An axiom in the restaurant business is that lunch time pays the bills and dinner generates the profits, meaning that restaurants need crowds at both times of day to be successful. The spending of medical service employees and customers is a direct benefit to the local economy.

Second, the medical services sector serves as a quasi-anchor, attracting residents from the larger region to Los Alamitos. The value is not so much that these customers can be expected to stop and shop after a visit to the doctor, but that these trips to Los Alamitos will make the regional population aware of the experiential shopping available in the Boulevard District. Later, when those individuals decide to join friends or family on an experiential shopping trip, Los Alamitos will spring to mind.

If the medical uses are to effectively function as an anchor for the experiential shopping district, the City will need to assure that the experience of visiting Los Alamitos for an appointment at the doctor is pleasant. Getting to and traveling throughout Los Alamitos, finding parking, and, when desired, finding a place to eat or fill up on gas should be as easy and painless as possible. Any perception that the City is a difficult place to get around, find parking, or find a store will be projected on the City as a whole, including on the Boulevard District, no matter how attractive and inviting it looks.

6. PARKING STRATEGY

The City should invest in a parking study to evaluate the potential for centralized, shared public or private parking options along the corridors. For the Boulevard District, limiting on-site parking can lead to a more cohesive and walkable district. A parking study can help quantify how much parking is needed and where it should be located.

Additionally, walkability is a key element of successful experiential shopping districts. Upon completion of a parking study, the City can begin to work with property owners and businesses to develop an implementation strategy that could include a parking district or BID and could also include modifications to zoning requirements and development standards.

The City may consider coordinating with the Los Alamitos Medical Center as it finishes its plans for new parking structures on its property. Whatever funding entity (e.g., BID), is created could also own or lease parking spaces from the Medical Center for employee or customer parking. It would be more likely for businesses to lease spaces for employee parking, since the Medical Center is not located directly along the Boulevard. The Medical Center will need firm commitments for spaces in a parking structure in the form of long-term lease contracts—ideally prior to the design and engineering stage.

For Katella Avenue, shared parking facilities are about the only effective way that the City could allow increased development intensity that will create an incentive for redevelopment. A parking strategy for Katella Avenue will focus less on public parking facilities and more on joint or shared parking facilities. However, this process will likely need the City as a catalyst to bring property owners and businesses together and explore options through a parking study.

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8 NEXT STEPS

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8. Next Steps

To realize the vision for the Los Alamitos commercial corridors and the City as a whole, this report recommends a series of steps and activities that should be taken within the next few years.

1. Incorporate the Corridors Report into the General Plan Update

The City of Los Alamitos will initiate a general plan update in the fall of 2010. The principles and concepts contained in this report should be incorporated into the update process, specifically regarding the Citywide vision, policies, and land use and circulation plans.

The stakeholders interviewed as part of this report should be considered as possible members of a general plan advisory committee (or similar entity) for the general plan update.

Technical studies supporting the general plan update should include:

- A traffic study that can provide more precise roadway design direction for Los Alamitos Boulevard given the expected buildout of the City, including the Los Alamitos Medical Center.
- A non-motorized vehicle circulation analysis that confirms and augments this report's recommended bikeway and pedestrian improvements.
- A parking study to provide direction on parking demand, supply, and assessment strategies for the corridors. The parking study should also consider revisiting the City's parking standards, particularly regarding outdoor dining requirements.

2. Adopt Commercial Design Guidelines

The commercial design guidelines presented in Section 6 of this report provide a clear statement of the appropriate design direction for commercial development within the City of Los Alamitos. The City should adopt (by resolution) these commercial design guidelines on a Citywide basis and apply them to all commercial and office properties. The design guidelines could be augmented by industrial design guidelines and form the basis for community design in the general plan.

3A. Meet with Property and Business Owners

The City should meet with property and business owners within the Boulevard District about the possibility of forming assessment and/or improvement districts (see funding options 2 through 5 in Section 7, *Economic Development Strategies*). Separate meetings should be held with the property and business owners because they have different needs and interests. Provided the City continues to be interested in annexation of its sphere of influence, owners currently located in Rossmoor should also be considered part of the discussion.

These meetings will educate all involved about what types of activities and funding vehicles are possible, as well as what types are supported. The City may also find that there is support on a Citywide basis to fund improvements for a town center area. Once a certain amount of consensus is reached, the City could then form a Town Center Committee.

3B. Obtain Consumer Input

At the same time, the City could work with the existing businesses and others to obtain information about why people shop and dine in Los Alamitos and what they would like to see in a future town center. This effort could take the form of an intercept survey, as described in Section 7 of this report.

4. Establish a Town Center Committee

Either as part of the general plan update or as a separate effort, the City should convene a Town Center Committee to guide changes to Los Alamitos Boulevard and its role as a town center. The Town Center Committee could also form the nucleus of a future business improvement district or similar entity that begins to work with the City to implement some of the economic development strategies identified in the previous section of this report.

5. Prepare an Area Plan, Revised Zoning District, or Specific Plan

Implementing the changes envisioned in this report could ultimately lead to the preparation of a targeted planning effort exclusively focused on the corridor(s). This effort could take the form of an area plan, a revised zoning district, or a specific plan.

Area Plan. The General Plan, as well as the associated environmental clearance document and technical studies, will have to consider the potential buildout of the City, including the corridors.

As part of the General Plan update, the City could develop an area plan or community plan for the Boulevard District or other parts of the corridors. An area plan would consist of refined policies and design guidance focused on a specific part or community of Los Alamitos. The area plan could contain specialized designations and a recommended land use plan.

By creating an area plan, the City could evaluate and address the potential development along the corridor(s) as one project. Most important, that means analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) could be conducted as part of the general plan update, reducing or potentially eliminating future costs for a potential zoning code update or specific plan.

Revised Zoning District. The City could, in place of or in addition to an area plan, revise and expand its Town Center Overlay (TC Overlay) District to the Boulevard District or a larger area along the corridors. Revisions to the district could include the removal of its overlay status; instead the new district could replace the existing Commercial General (C-G), Commercial Office (C-O), and Community Facilities (C-F) districts that are currently applied to the corridor areas.

This revision could take place concurrent with the general plan update and be analyzed with the general plan under a single CEQA document (most likely an EIR).

Specific Plan. This report has been prepared to provide the foundation for a potential specific plan for the Los Alamitos Boulevard and/or Katella Avenue corridors. While a general plan examines an entire city, a specific plan concentrates on the individual development issues of a particular project or subarea. A specific plan provides both policy and regulatory direction, serving as official zoning for all properties involved (if adopted by ordinance).

A specific plan typically establishes land uses and circulation plans, development standards, regulations, infrastructure requirements, design guidelines, and implementation programs on which subsequent project-related development activities are to be founded.

The specific plan could be supported by a more comprehensive market analysis for the retail, general office, medical office, and industrial uses along the corridor(s). The specific plan could also refine the cost and value of the potential improvements and determine the funding needed for possible assessment or improvement districts.

A specific plan is therefore a kind of hybrid between an area plan and zoning district. It provides both the policy foundation of an area plan and the regulatory authority of a zoning district. Also, the analysis that accompanies a specific plan is usually (though not always) more comprehensive and conclusive than that which is associated with an area plan or zoning district.

A specific plan may also be seen as providing greater certainty to the City, public, and property owners with its precise focus, regulations, and design direction. A specific plan, even if prepared immediately after the general plan update, would require its own CEQA document—although it may be limited to a focused EIR or even a mitigated negative declaration.

6. Form Assessment and Improvement Districts

After the City receives direction through the previous steps, the assessment and/or improvement districts should be established.

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Katella +
Los Alamitos