

# Making a Lot with a Little: Long-Term Sustainability Strategies for Rural Communities

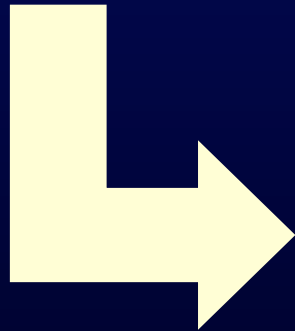
Josh Meyer, Director  
Community Planning and Design  
Local Government Commission  
[jmeyer@lgc.org](mailto:jmeyer@lgc.org)



*Local Government Commission*

# Decades of Low Density Development

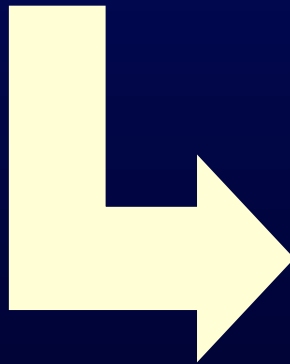
- ↑ trip distances
- ↑ vehicle trips
- ↓ walking



- ↓ Air & water quality
- ↓ Health
- ↓ Farmland
- ↓ Countryside
- ↓ Community character

# Decades of Large-scale Agriculture

- ↑ Jobs
- ↑ Regional Wealth



- ↓ Water supply
- ↓ Soil and water quality
- ↑ Vulnerable, low paid work force

# Addressing the Challenges: Community Visioning

## Design Charrettes

- Workshops, meetings and design sessions
- Residents and professionals
- Concentrated period of time



Funded in California by State Department of Transportation



# Focus Group Meetings





# Opening Event: Food and Heritage





[illegible]



# Priorities



•• Public Realms  
- places

••• Trash Receptacles

••• Rejuvenate Gateway  
Points  
- Foothill Transit Stops

••• Pedestrian Engaging  
Land Uses - mixed use  
- outdoor cafes

⑤ ••• TREES (NOT PALMS)

② •• BIKE LANES

⑦ ••• PEDESTRIAN ISLANDS

② •• APPROPRIATE  
WIDTH SIDEWALKS

⑨ ••• BUILDING-PLACEMENT  
MIX OF USES



# Walking Audits





# Design Tables





# After the Workshops: Design Production

- Translate input into concepts and recommendations.
- Present for community feedback.
- Prepare community-based plan.

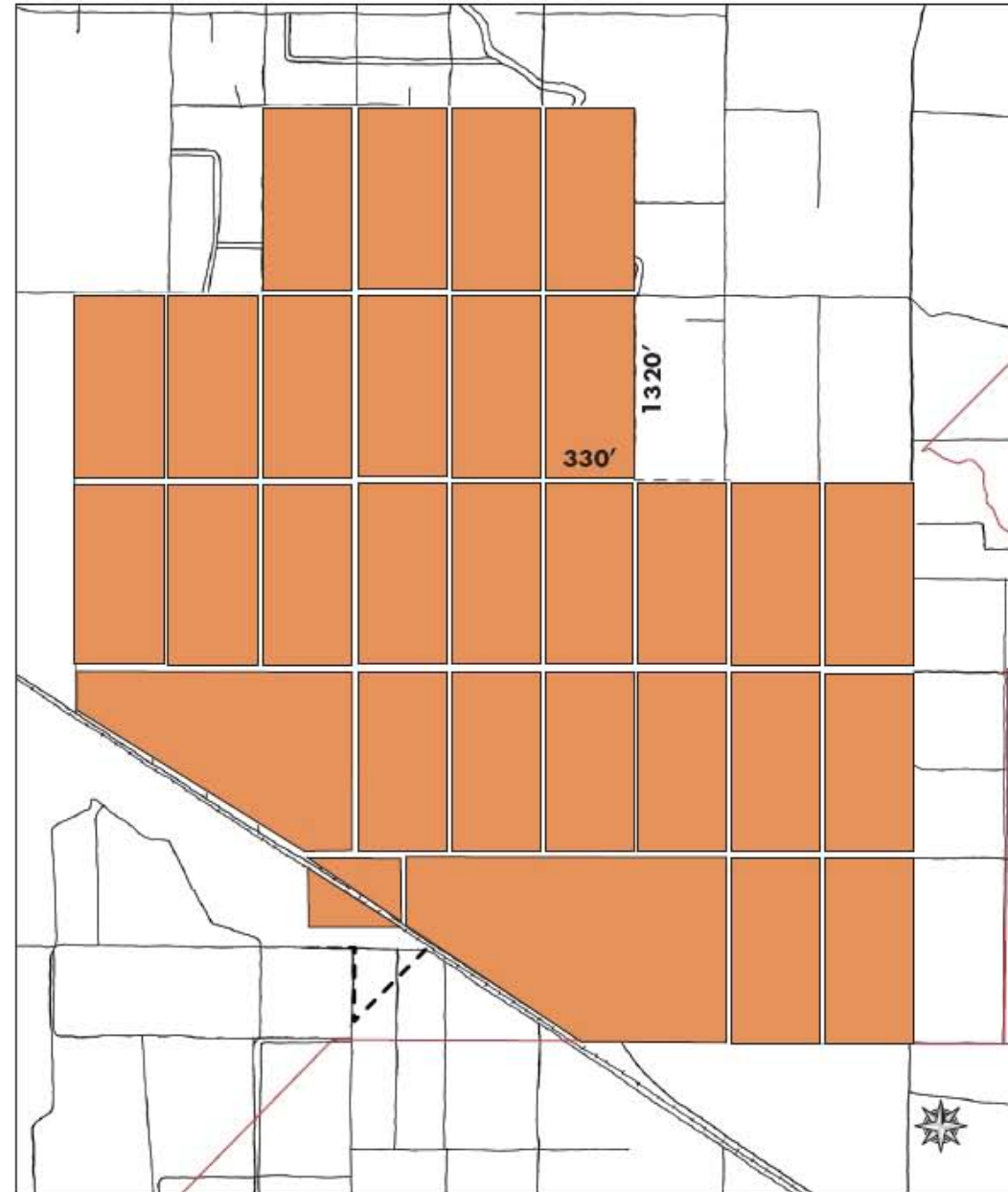
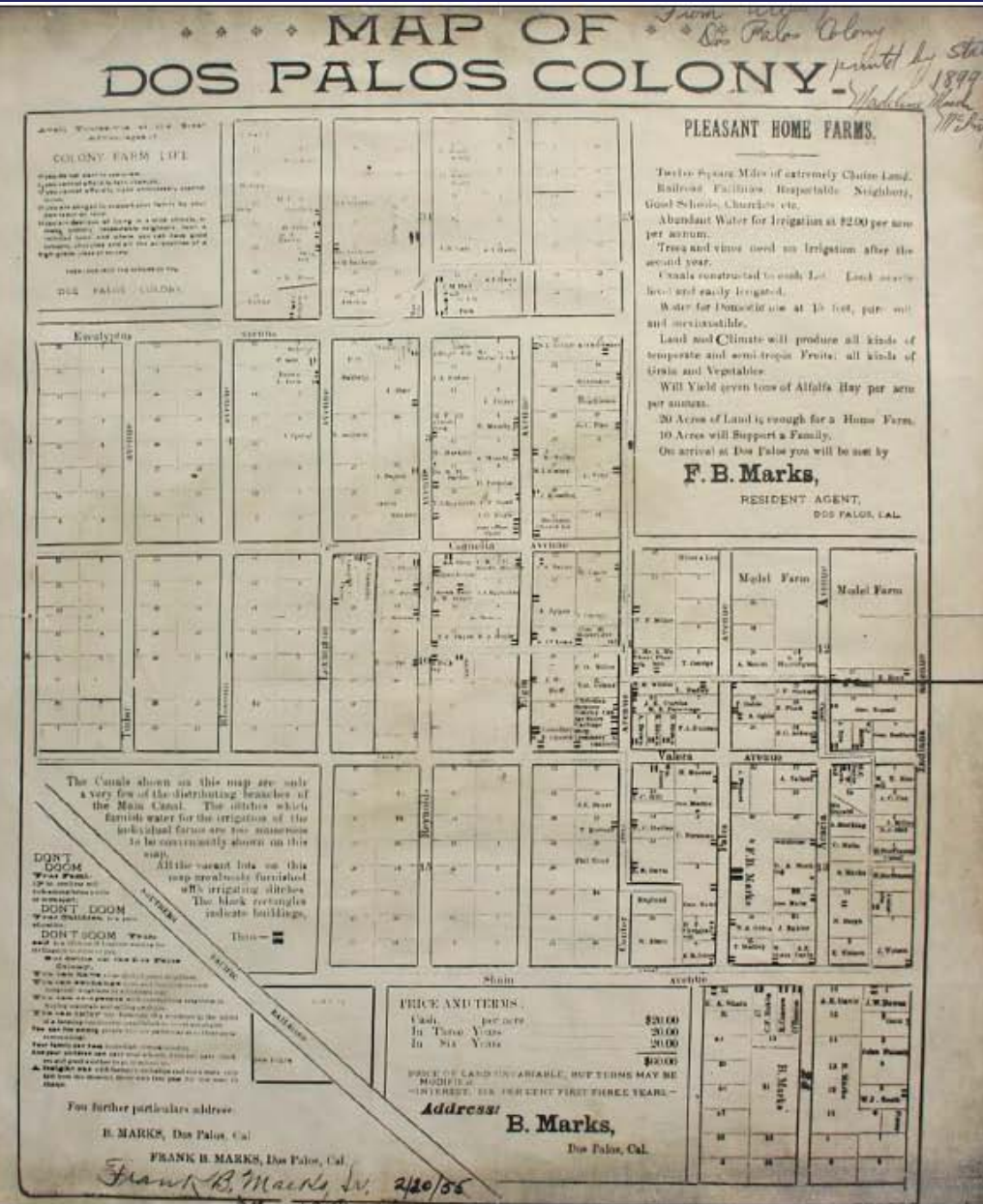




# Rural Community Origins

- Post Gold Rush ranching and farming
- Small settlements establish at transportation hubs or start off as farm-based colonies
- Many incorporate around the turn of the century
- Groundwater pumping technology and year-round growing seasons spur agricultural growth
- Massive state and federal water projects spur further expansion

# Historic Form: Dos Palos Colony



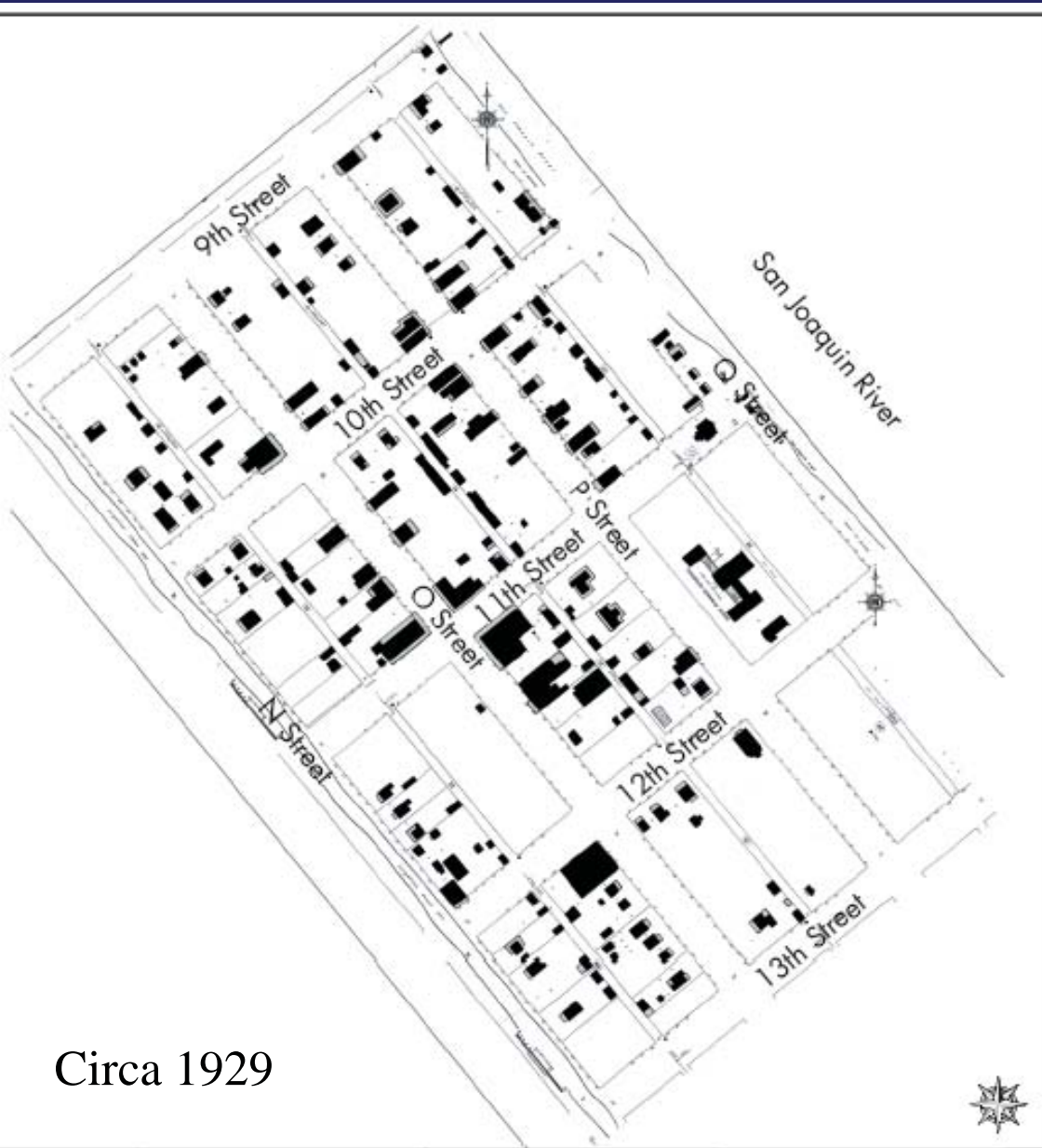


# Historic Form: Firebaugh



- Established 1854
- Sheep shearing station and ferry crossing
- River a major thoroughfare prior to railroad
- Incorporated 1914

# Firebaugh Early Years

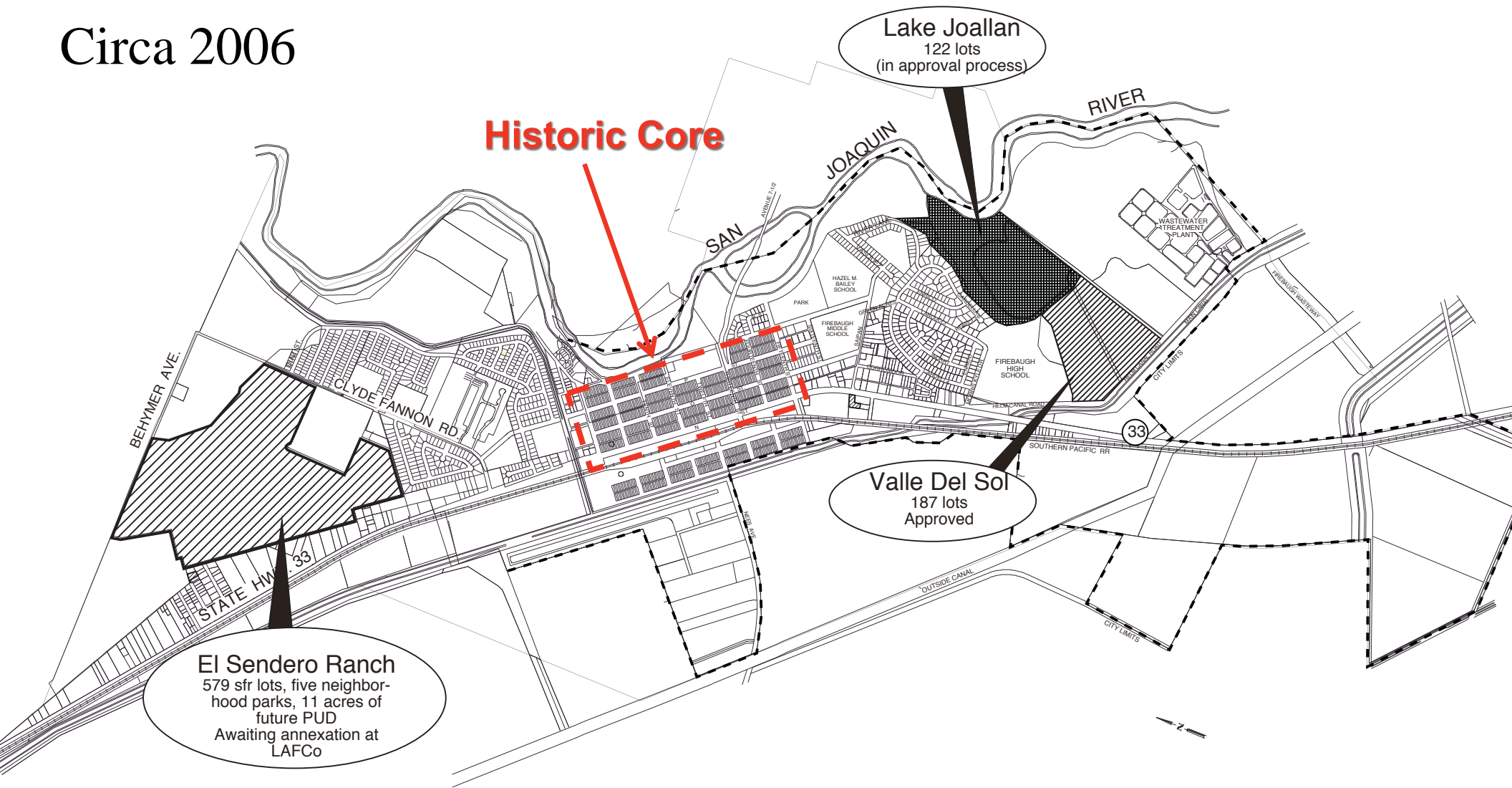


Circa 1929

- Compact, small block grid
- Gradual expansion to the north and south
- Remained a service center to surrounding agricultural industries



Circa 2006



- Growth to the north and south
- Suburban development

- Proposed new subdivisions: cheaper alternatives to built-out and high-priced coastal regions

# Firebaugh Today

- Population: 6,900
- 2,300 Foreign Born
- 88% Hispanic
- High Unemployment
- 22.5% below poverty line



*Historic Water Tower*

# Issues

- Highway (12,500 vehicles per day)
- San Joaquin River
- Isolation
- Retail leakage (\$1.6 million annually)
- Dilapidated roads and streetscapes
- Agricultural land retirement
  - soil quality, water shortages



*College Campus*



*River Trail*



# Firebaugh Vision

- Improve Transportation Arteries
- Improve River Awareness and Access
- Maintain a Compact Town Center
- Improve North-South Mobility for Pedestrians and Bicyclists

# Firebaugh, California

7 1/2 (13th Avenue)

Highway 33 (N Street)

Nees Avenue





SPORTSMENS  
**MOTEL**  
LOW DAILY WEEKLY MONTHLY RATES  
CLEAN ROOMS

25¢ GAS WASH

SPEED  
LIMIT  
35

8 Feet

12 Feet

12 Feet



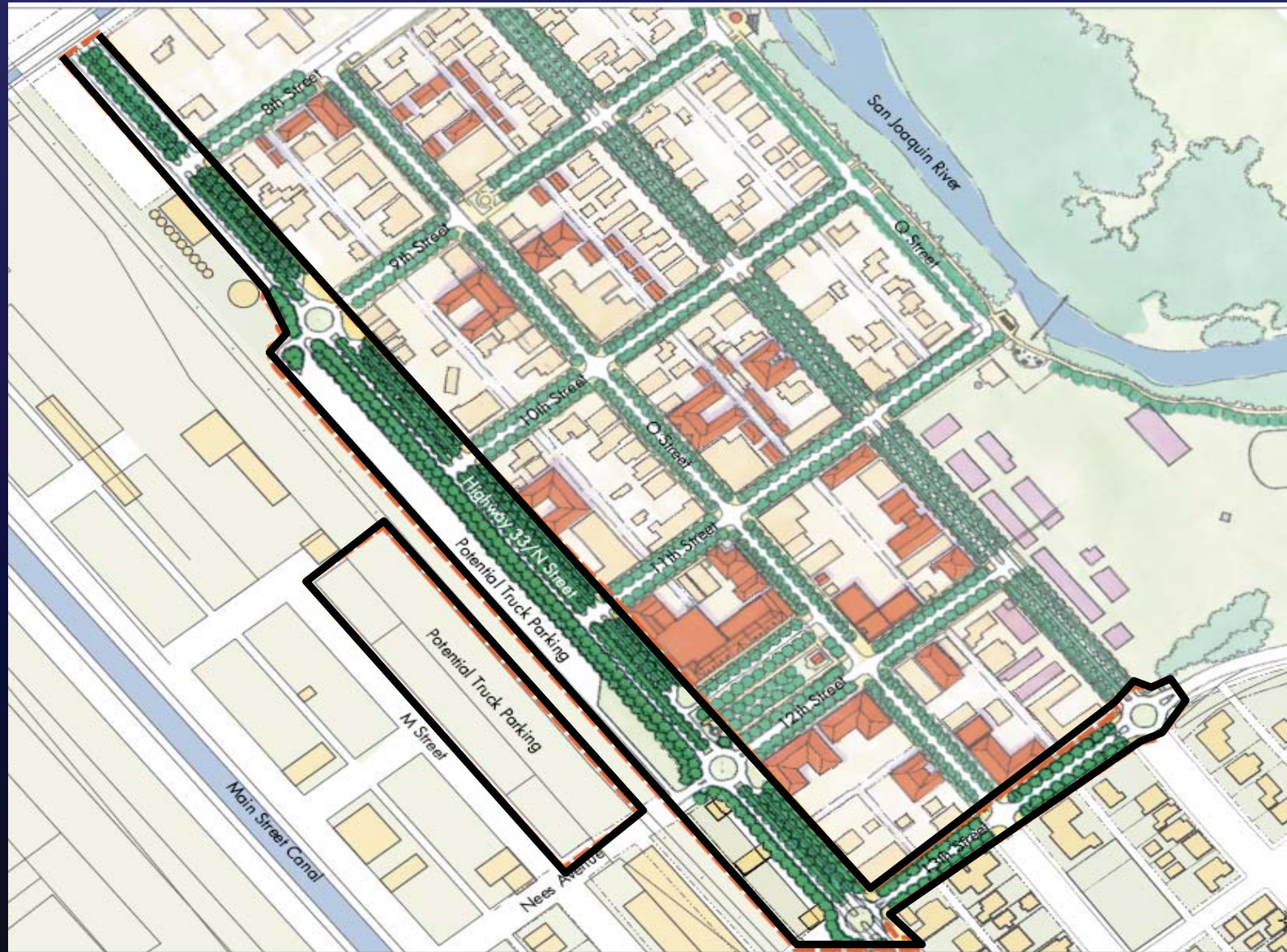




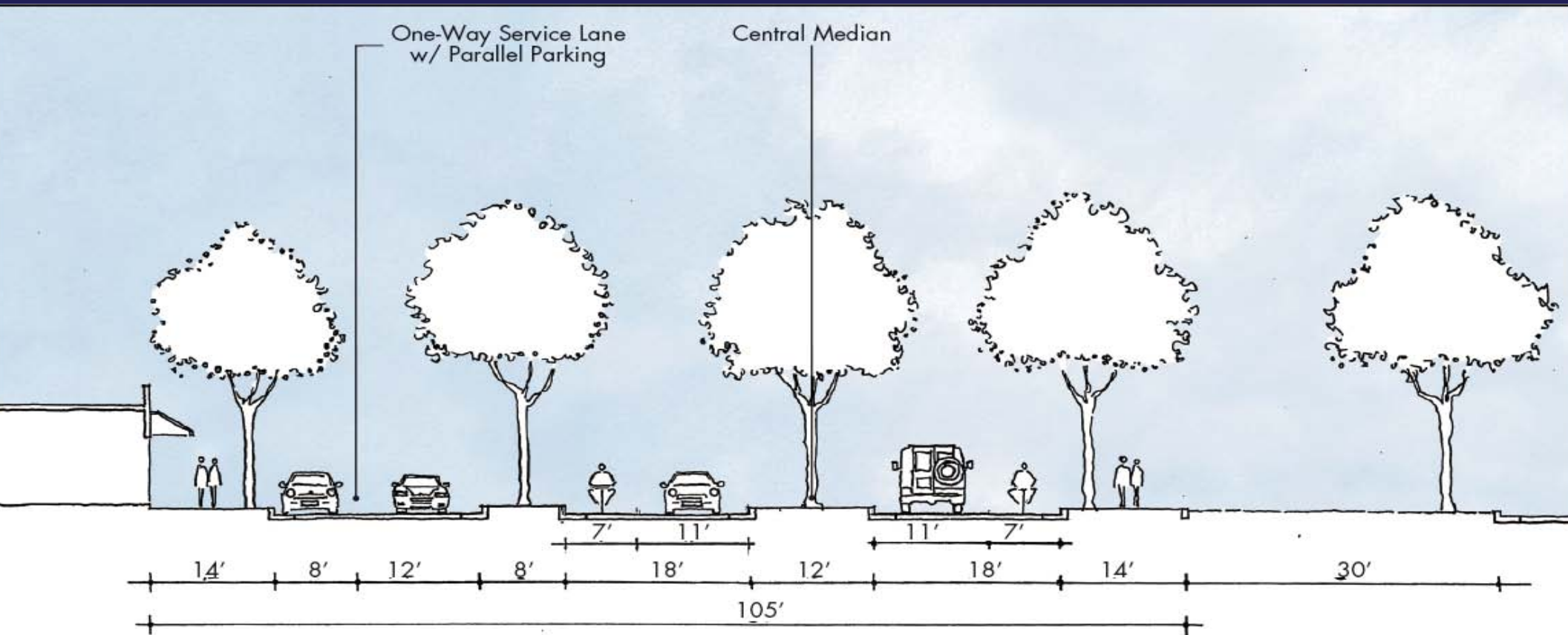


# Long Term

- Lane reduction
- Intersection improvements
- Frontage improvements
- Truck parking

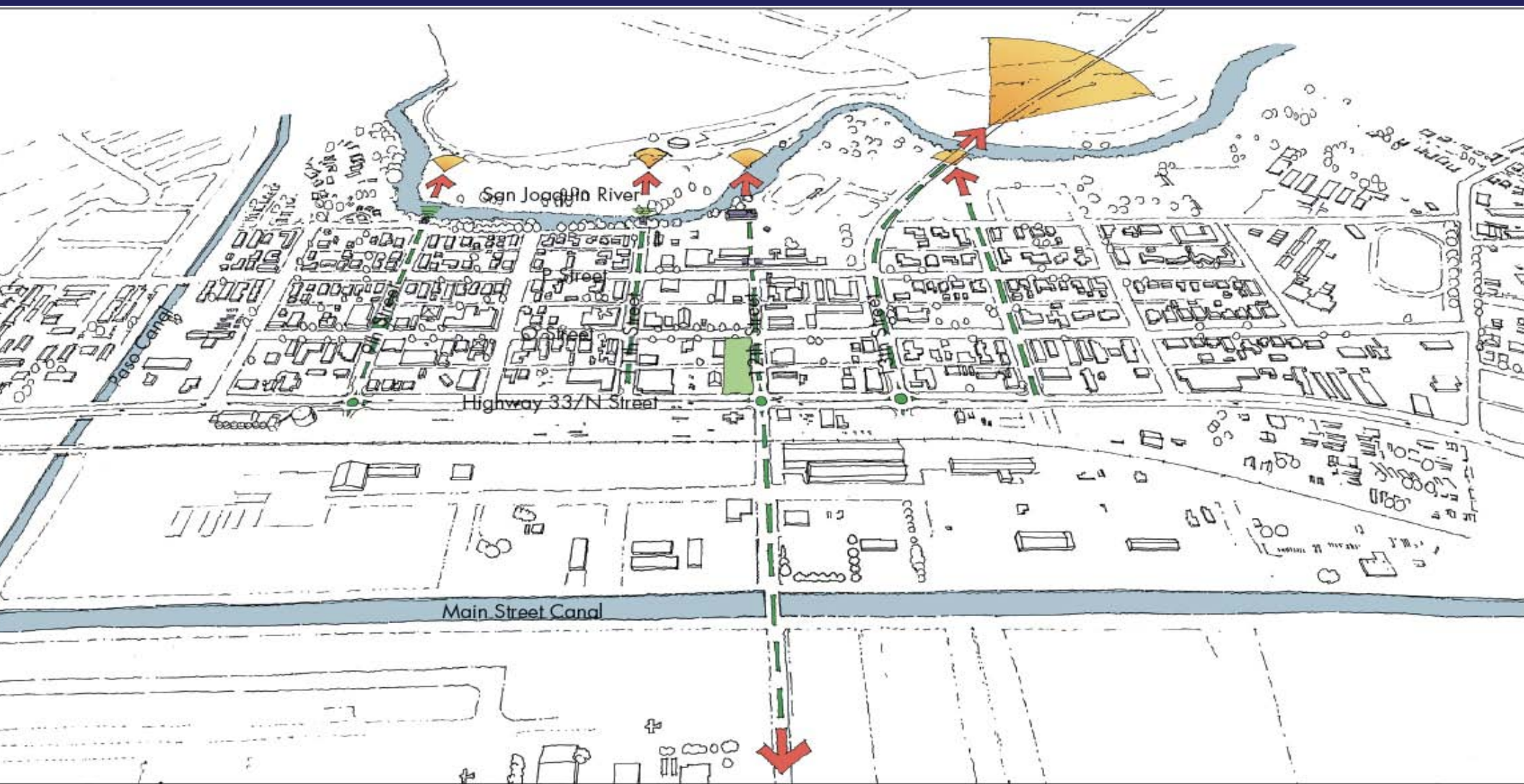


# Long Term: Highway 33



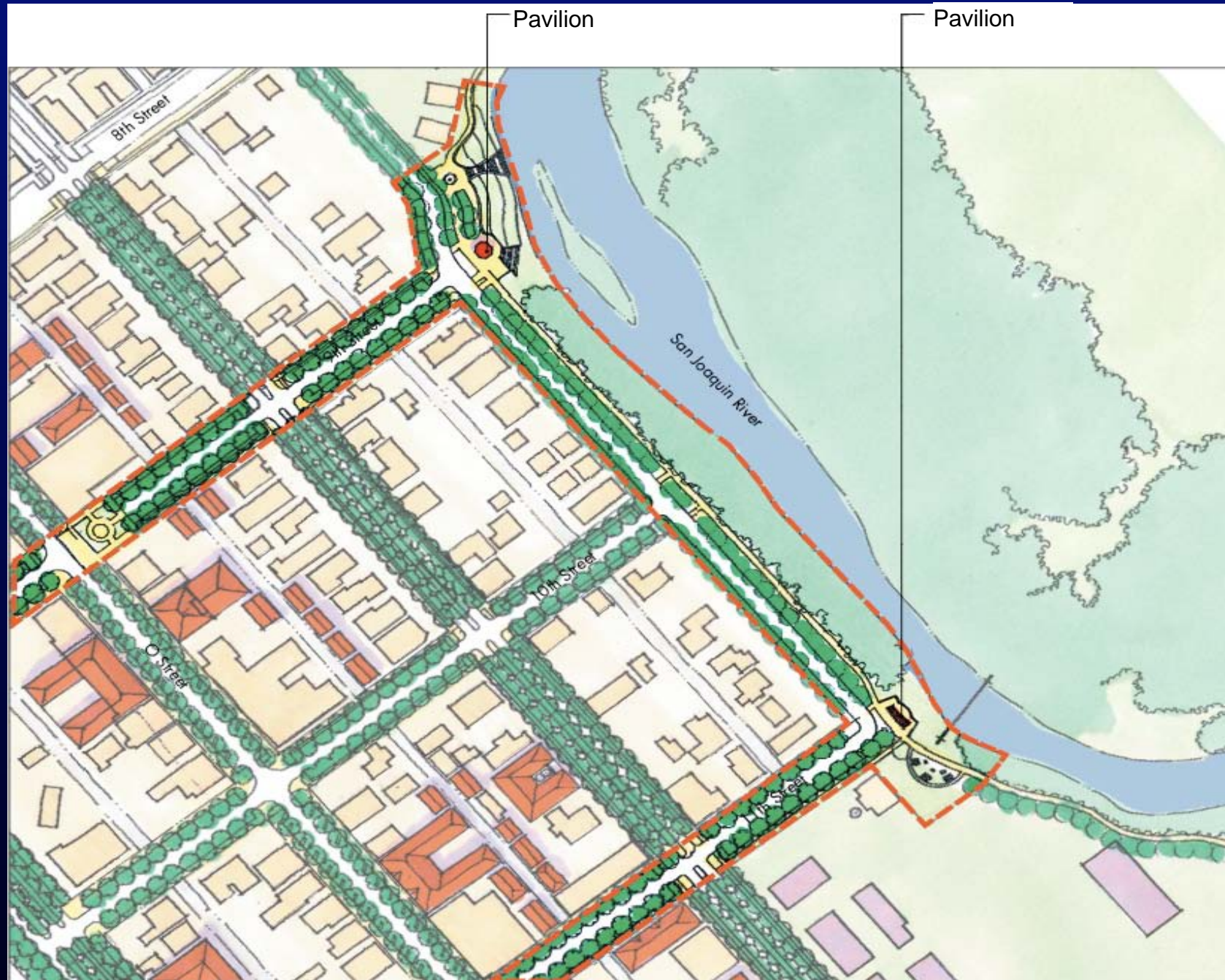


# Improve River Visibility and Access

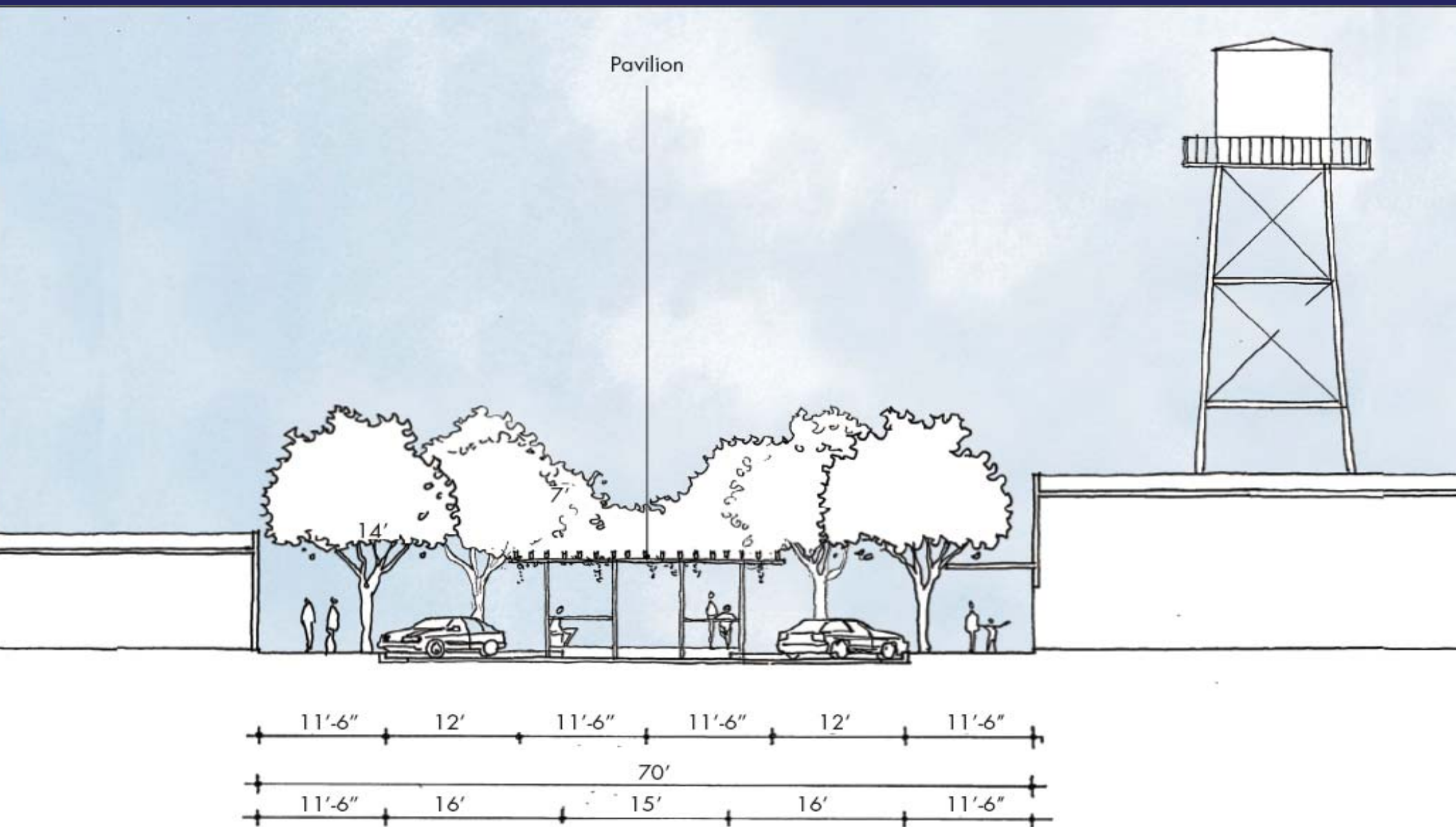




- Visual terminus on east-west streets
- River access features

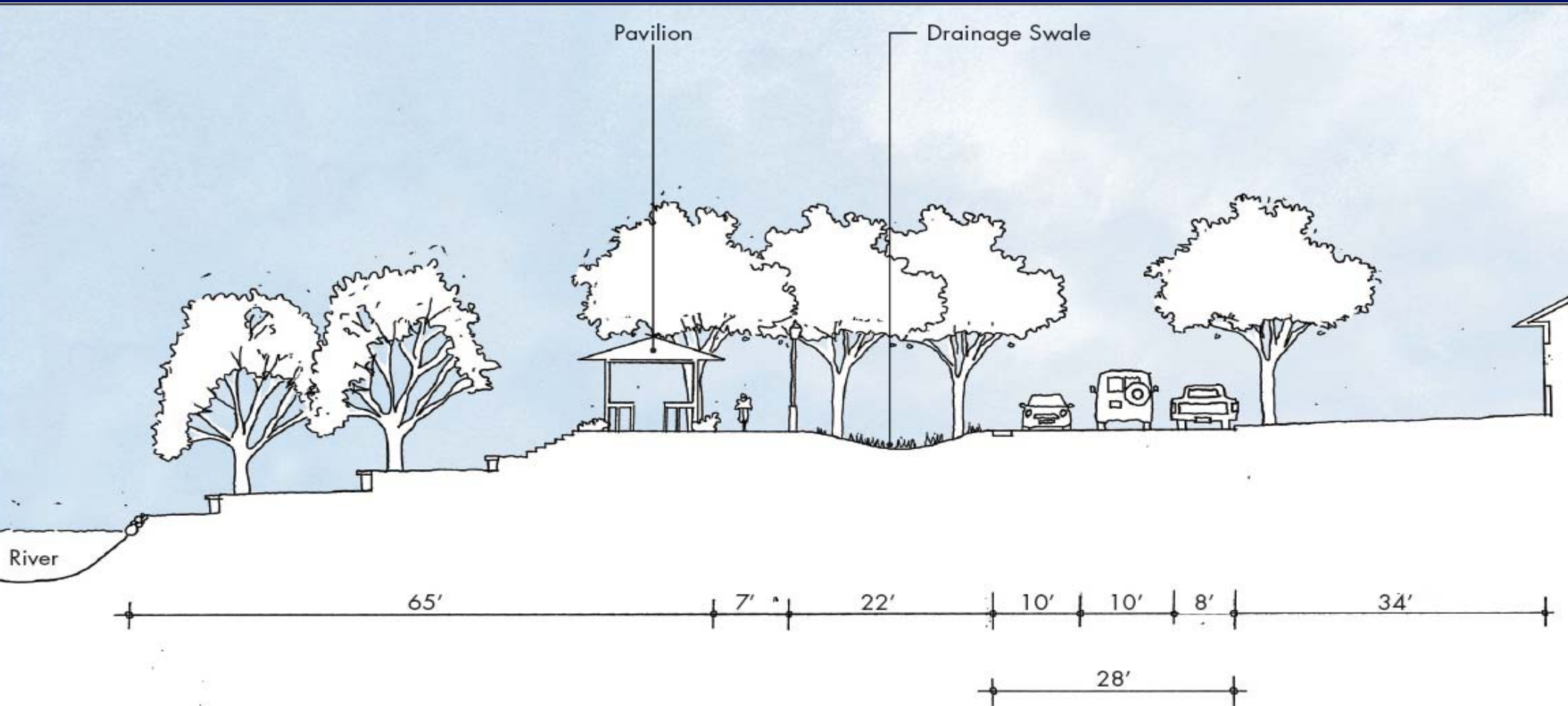


# 11<sup>th</sup> Street: Looking east toward river





# Q Street: Parallel to River

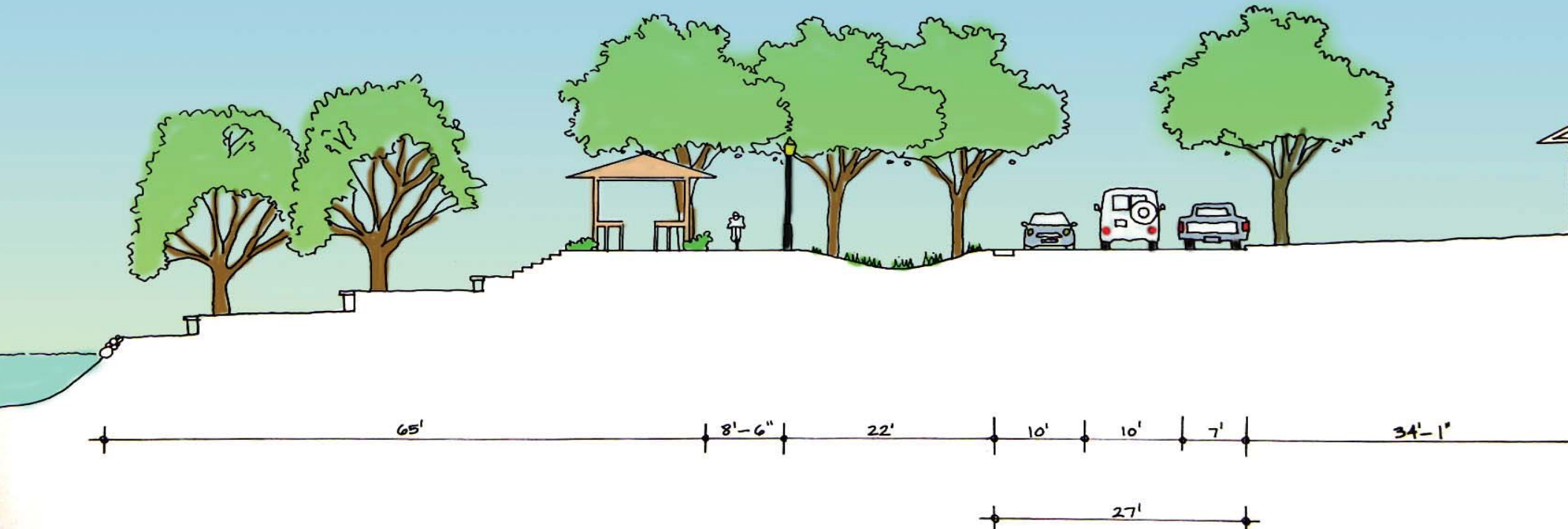






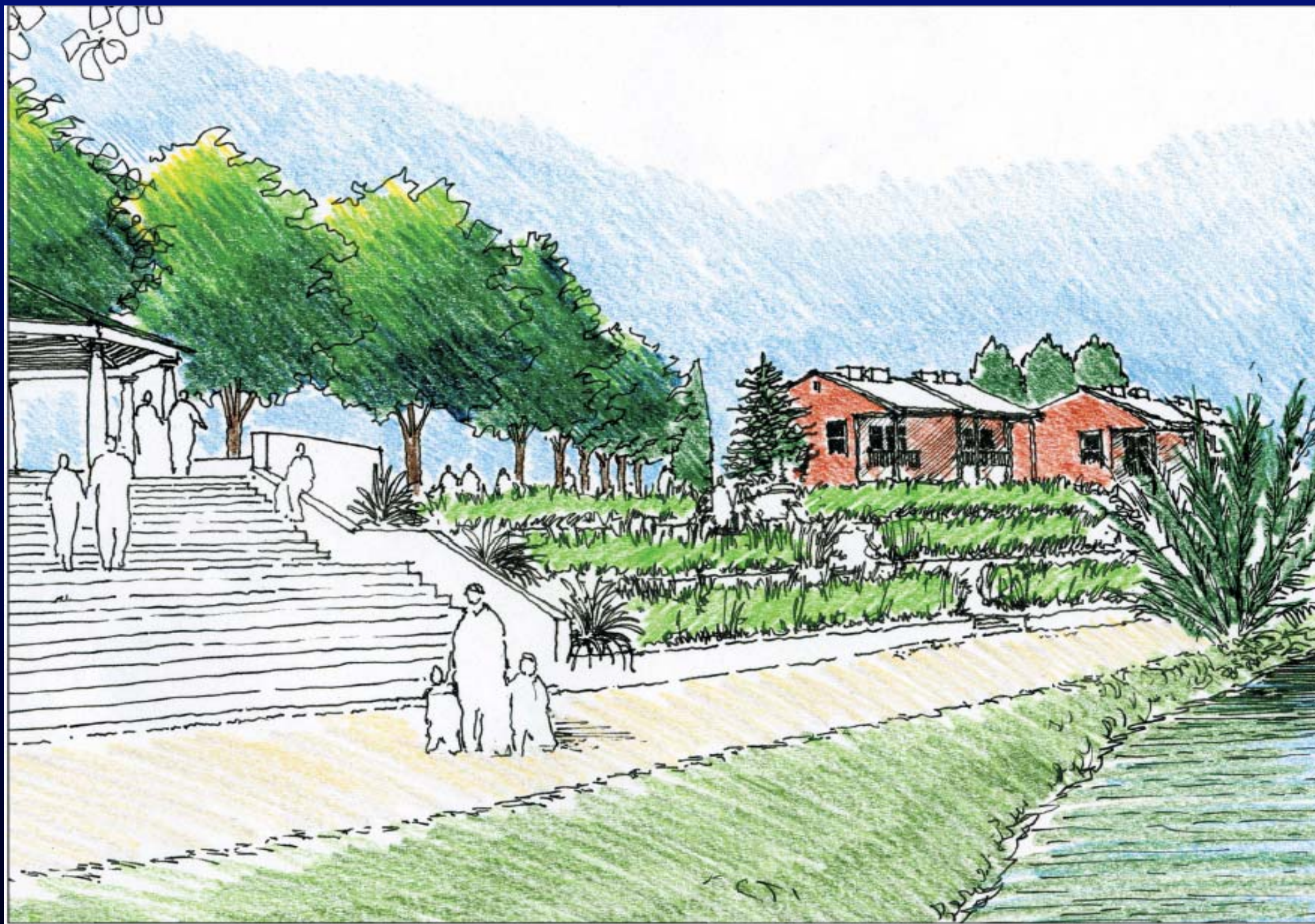


## Q Street



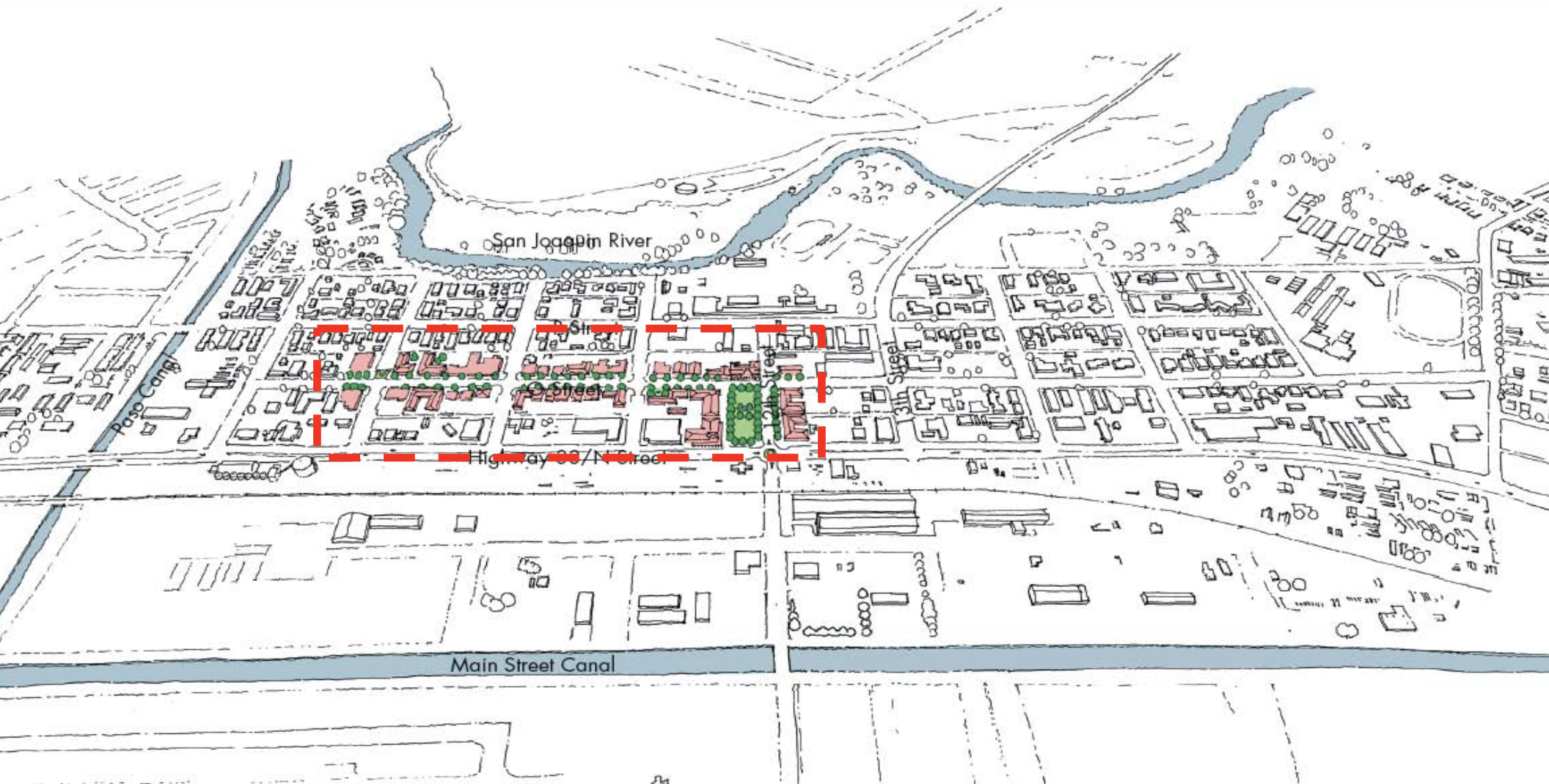
In this vision reworking of landscaping includes carefully spaced plantings maximizing the view of the water and open space. One 20 foot travel lane and parking on the housing side completes the quality aesthetics of place. The river side of the roadway has a 2 foot wide concrete ribbon to stabilize the road bed, then a gentle swale to capture and percolate any remaining water runoff. Multi-Use trails provide a commanding view of the water and open space. Over time, homes along this corridor will feature townhouses and court style housing.





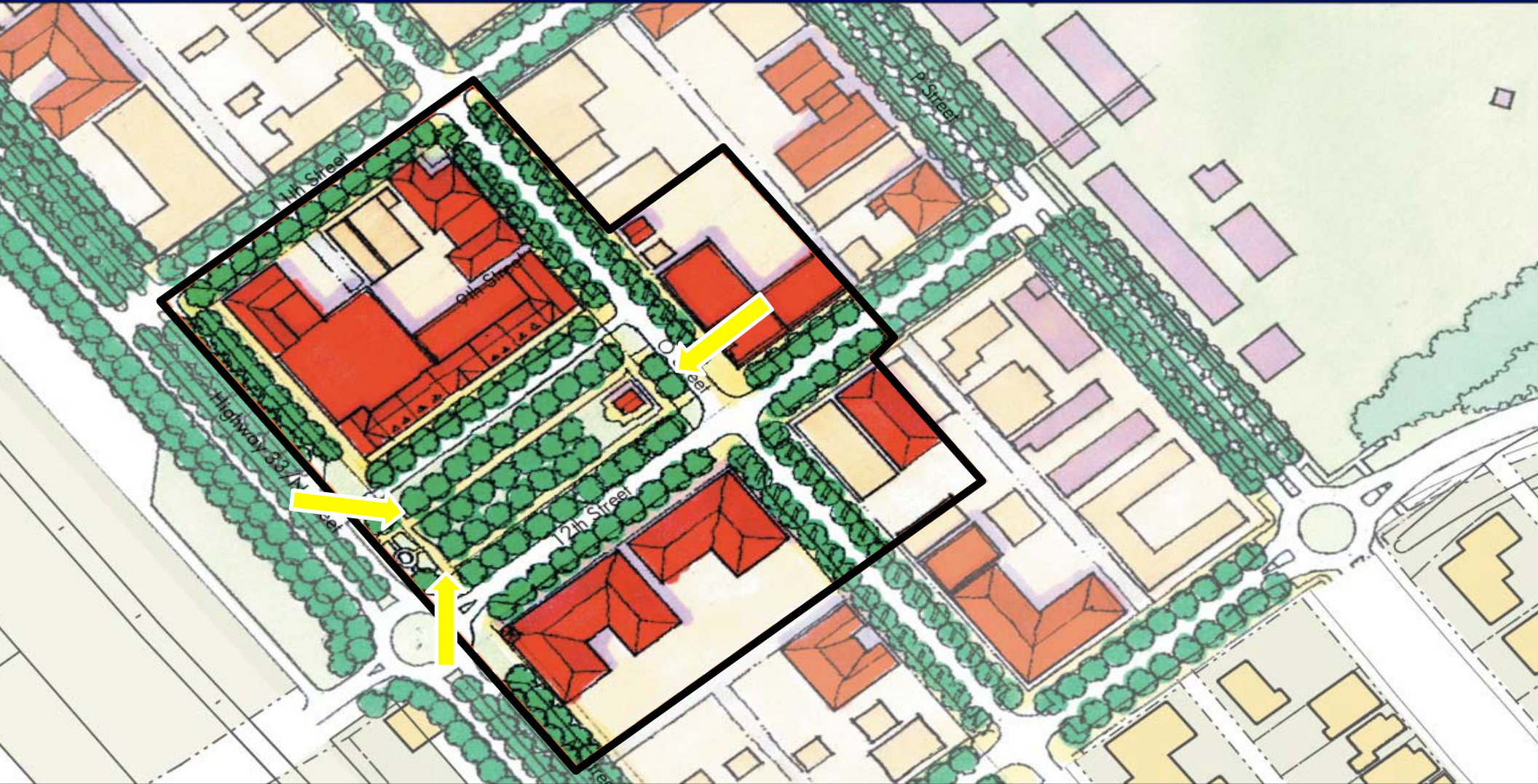


# A Compact Town Center





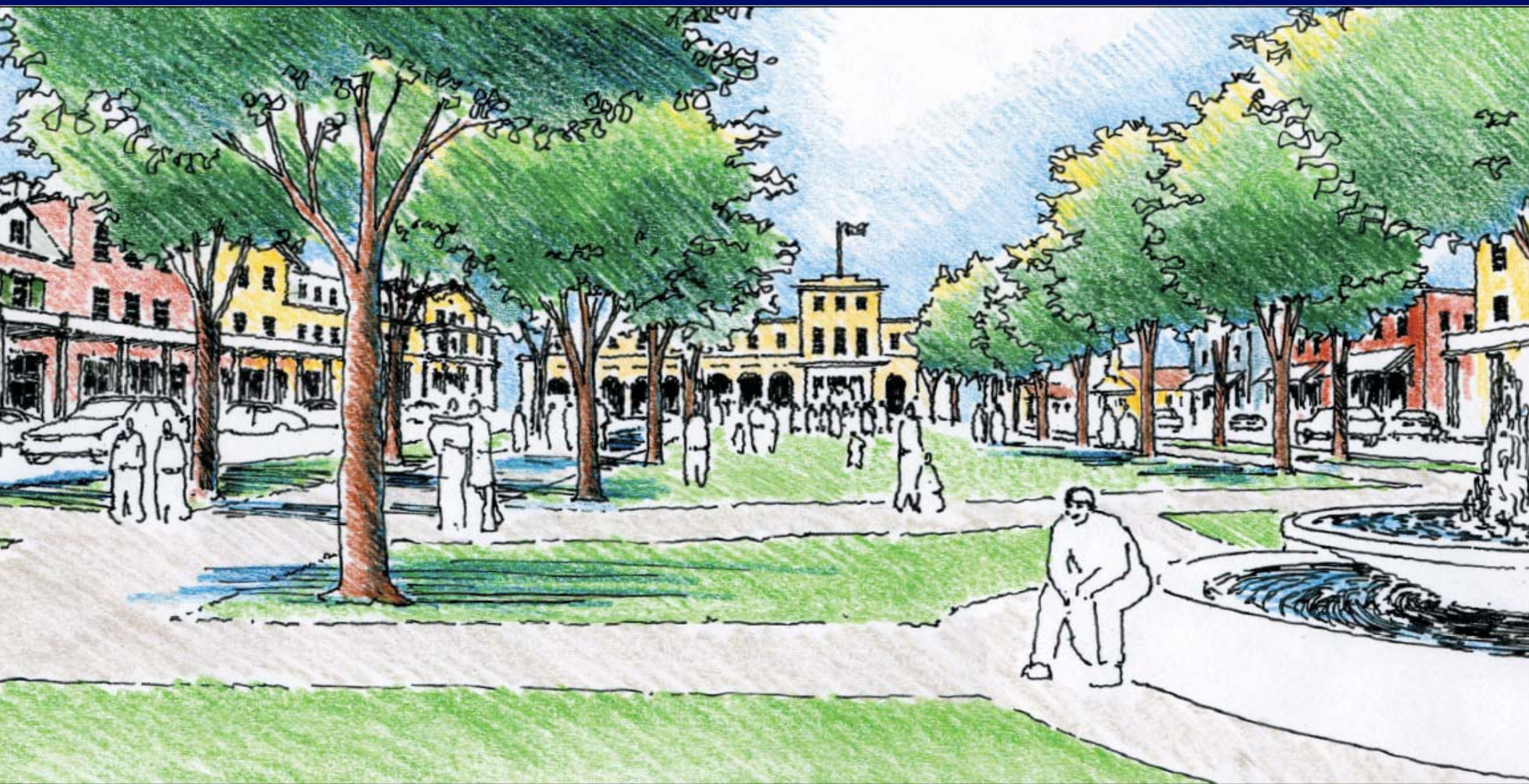
# Town Plaza and Mixed Use Center





## Town Plaza

- Looking east from Hwy 33/N Street
- City Hall in background







*Sonoma Town Square, CA*



*Sonoma Historic City Hall*



*Lindsay, CA*

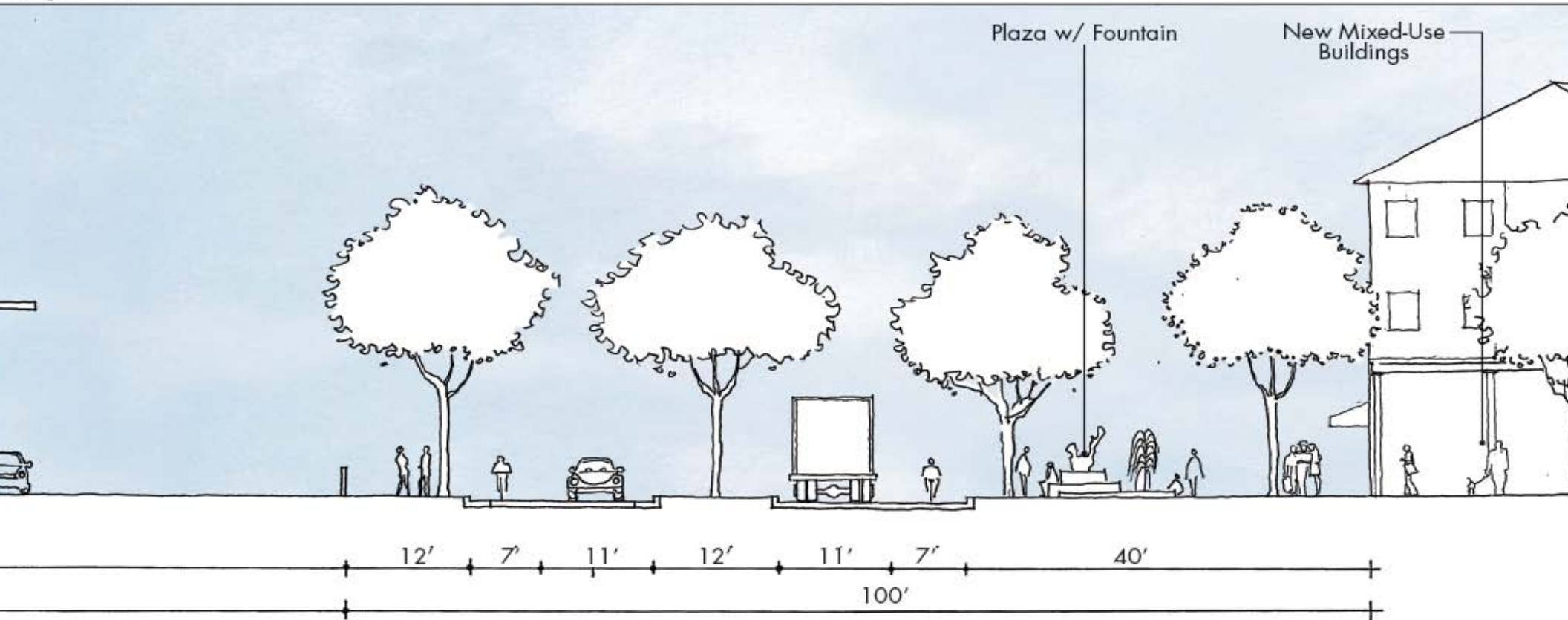


*Oaxaca, Mexico*

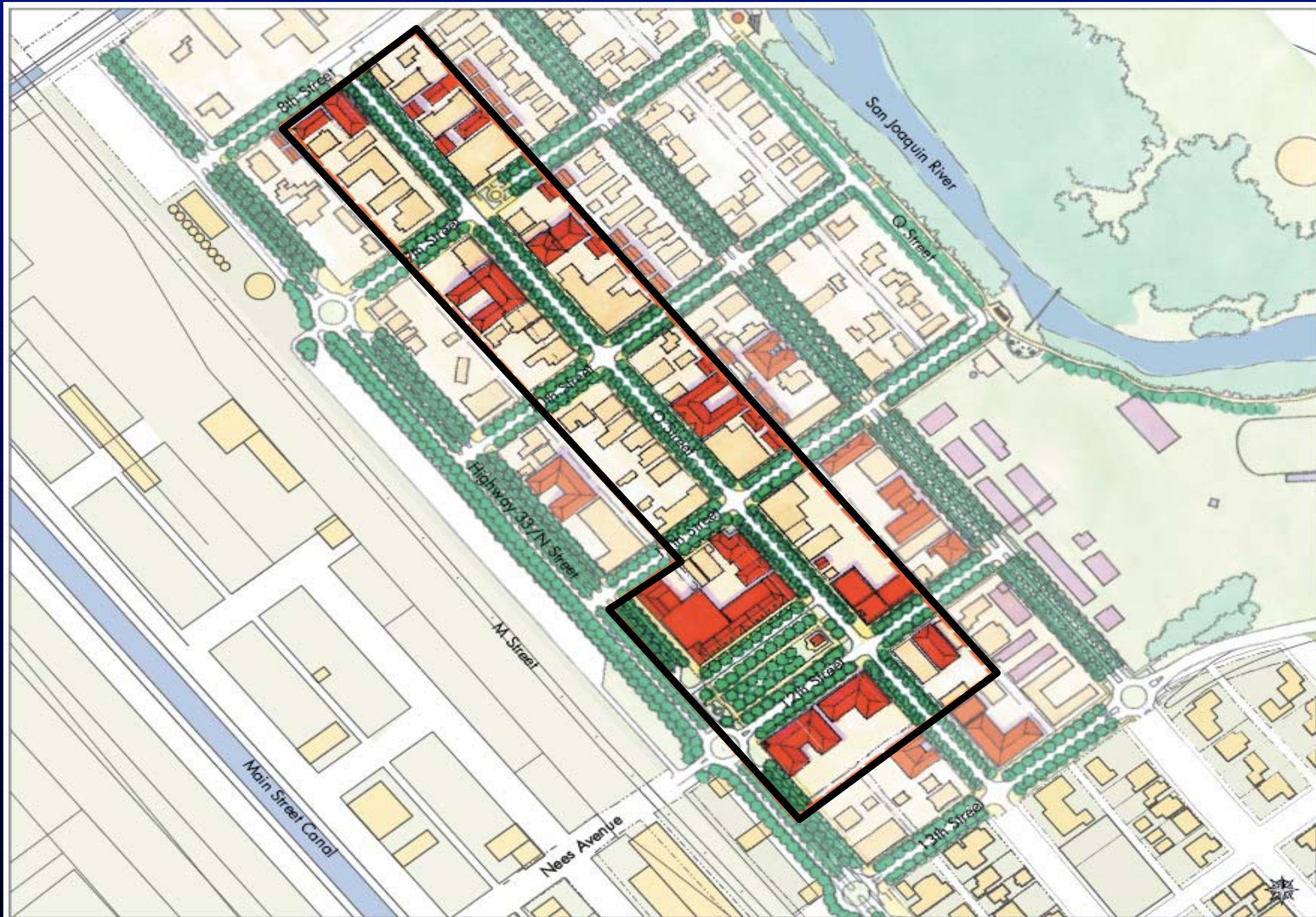


# Highway 33/N Street

Proposed



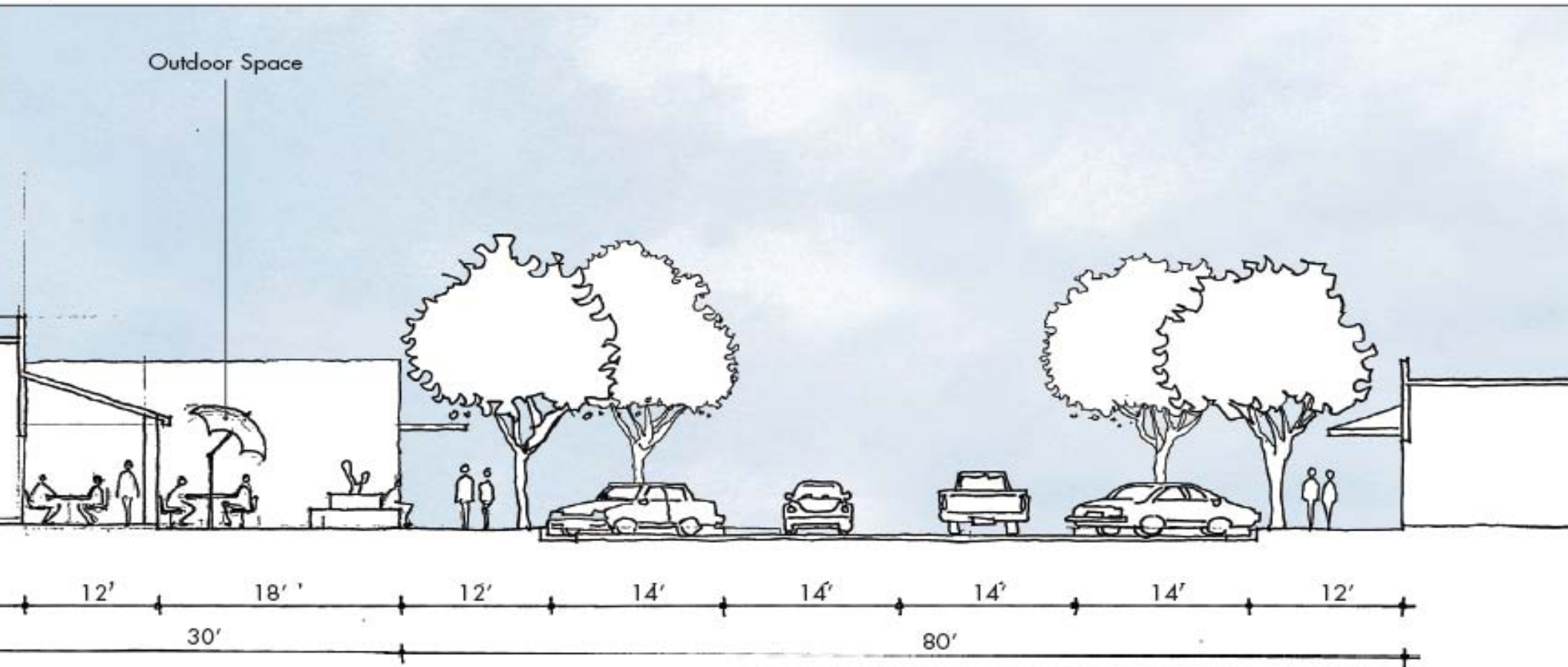






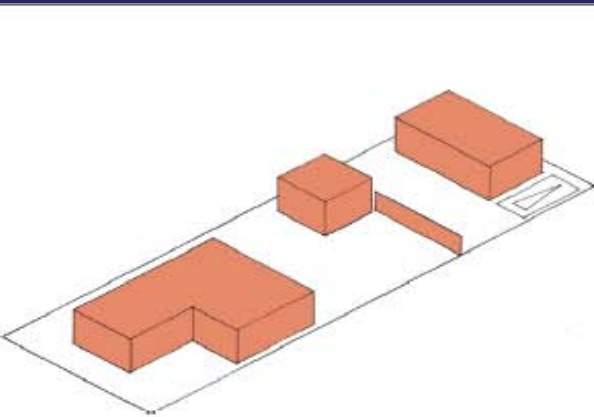
# O Street/Main Street

Proposed

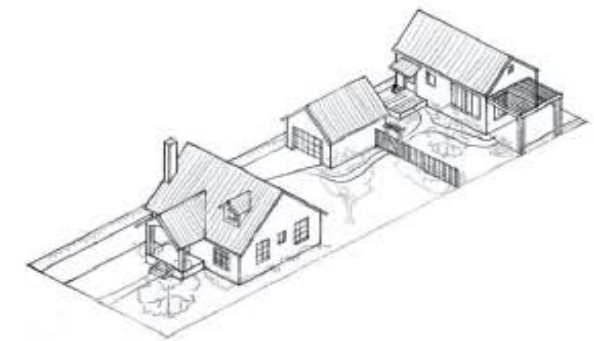




# Infill Housing

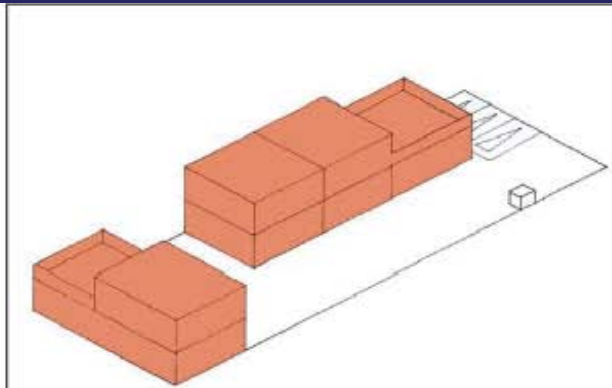


BUILDING ENVELOPE

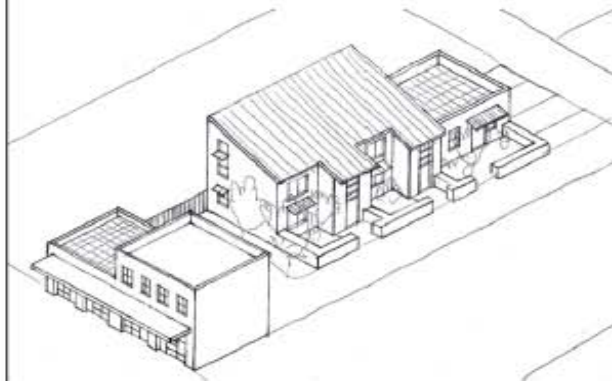


BUILDING CHARACTER

50' x 150' lot  
2 dwelling units

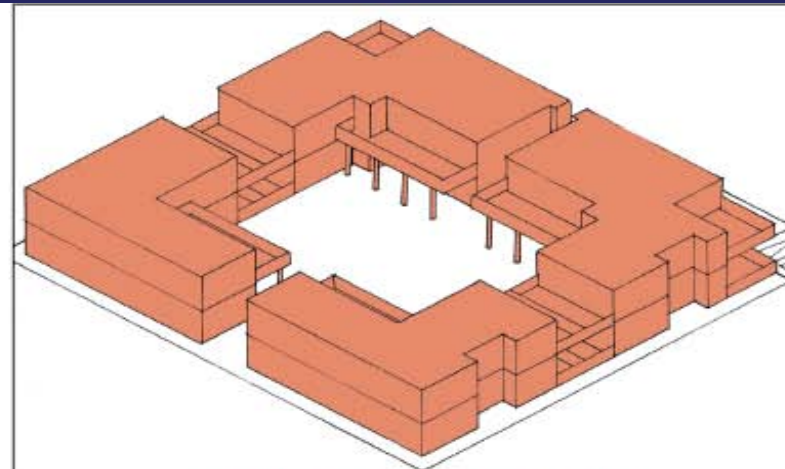


BUILDING ENVELOPE

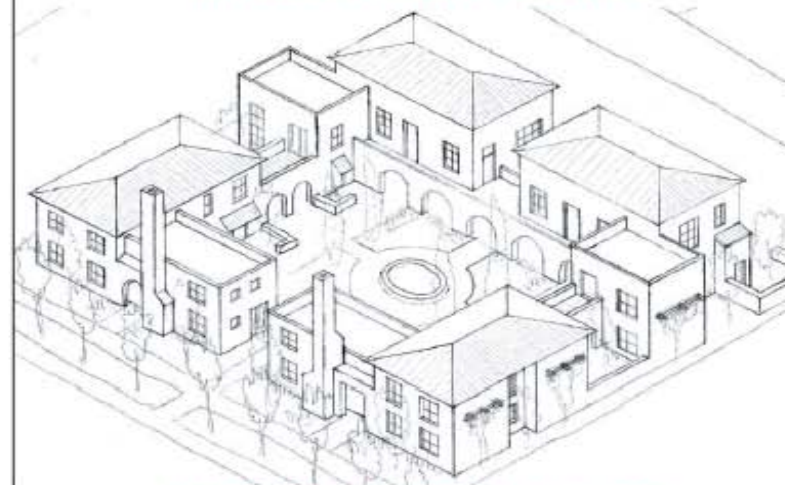


BUILDING CHARACTER

50' x 150' lot  
Mixed-use



BUILDING ENVELOPE



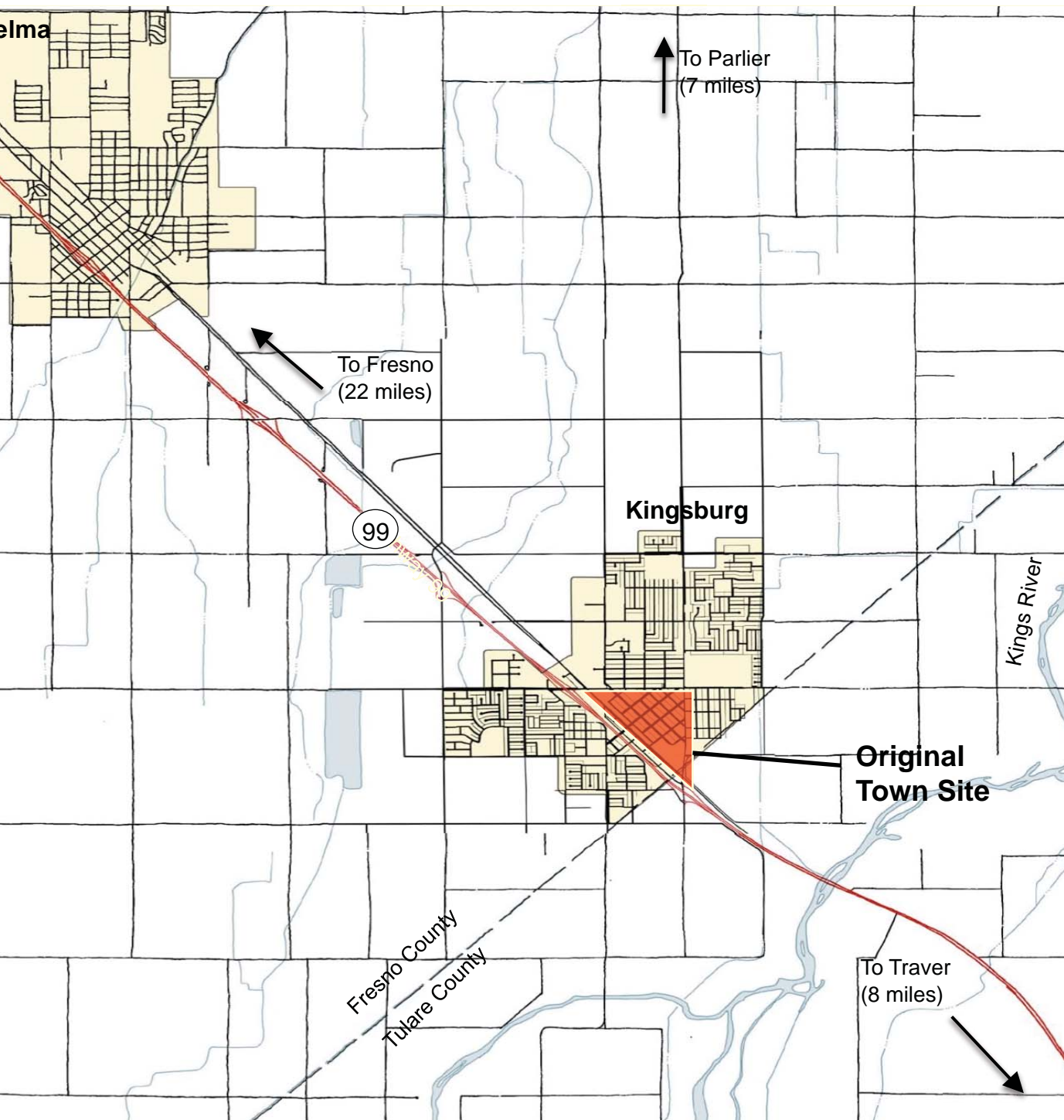
BUILDING CHARACTER

150' x 150' lot  
Courtyard Housing

# Implementation

Caltrans Hwy 33 Beautification Funding	Up to \$2 million for improvements.	Hwy 33	Yes	Yes	Summer 2007
Firebaugh "Green Trees for the Golden State" Grant (Urban and Community Forestry Department)	\$25,000 to plant trees around the city to reduce harmful emissions and pollutants and improve the beauty of the community and provide shade (500 trees).	Along new bicycle trail from Dunkle Park south and west to the high school. Along the westside of the high school from Morris Kyle Road south to the new subdivision.	Yes	N/A	Anytime
Bicycle Infrastructure Incentive Component Remove II Program (San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District)	\$100,000 to construct 4,000 feet of eight foot wide bicycle trail.	Along the Eastern border of the San Joaquin River within the City of Firebaugh.	Yes	Yes	Summer 2007
Safety Trails and Beautification Project (Transportation Enhancement Program)	\$400,000 transportation master bicycle plan for bikes and pedestrian pathways to connect schools, parks, recreational facilities and other services.		Yes	Yes	Summer 2007
Reberti-Z'berg-Harris Grant (Department of Parks and Recreation)	\$1.5 million to rehab and improve the park by incorporating new baseball fields, skate park, volley ball courts, basketball courts, track, etc.	Maldonado Park.	Yes	Yes	Summer 2007
Safe Routes to School	\$460,000 to Install in-Pavement crosswalk lights; Construct curb ramps; enhance crosswalks and striping.	Morris Kyle Drive, Intersections of Siapan and Q Street, 14th and P Street and 12th.	Yes	Yes	Summer 2008
Preserve America	Special designation as a Preserve America Community, which recognizes communities that: protect and celebrate their heritage; use their historic assets for economic development and community revitalization; and encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through education and heritage tourism programs.	City Limits.			Ongoing
P Street Improvements	The city council has decided to replace sidewalks, curbs and gutters. Specific Charrette standards were incorporated.	Between 7th and 10th Street on P Street.	yes	yes	Currently out to bid
Electronic Sign USDA Grant	In an effort to communicate more with the community an LED sign will be installed on the eastern entrance of the city.	On 13th Street next to the rodeo grounds.	Yes	Yes	Fall 2007





# Kingsburg

- Established late 1870s with railroad
- Incorporated 1908
- By 1920s, 94% Swedish

Circa 1952



Streets parallel & perpendicular to the railway

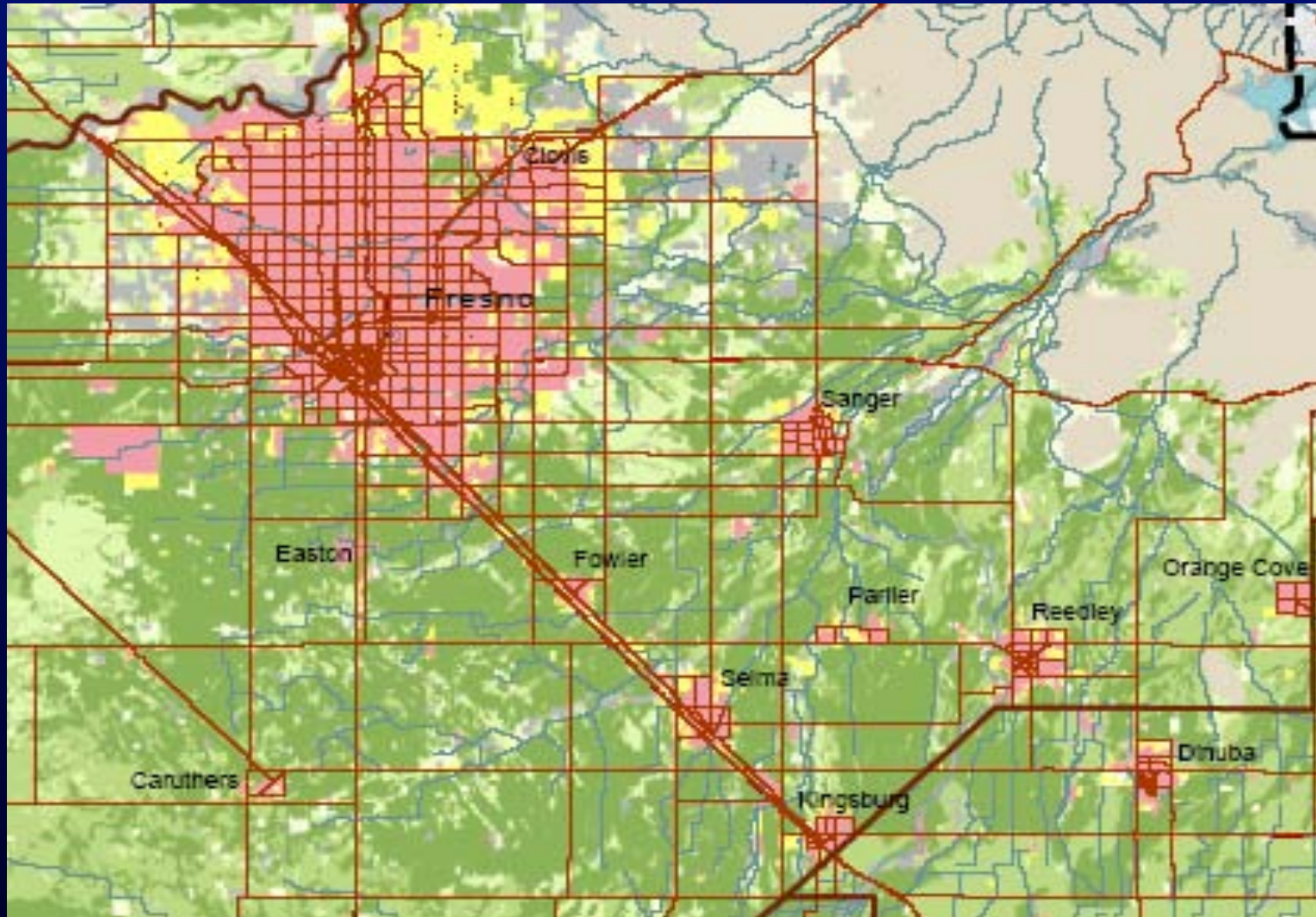
Compact, small blocks

Main Street and institutions within a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile distance

“Swedish Village” identity



# Central Valley Agriculture: Land & Sustainability



# Kingsburg Today

- Population: 11,500
- 35% Hispanic
- 60% White Non-Hispanic
- 11.5% below poverty line
- 8.8% unemployment rate
- Relatively high per capita income



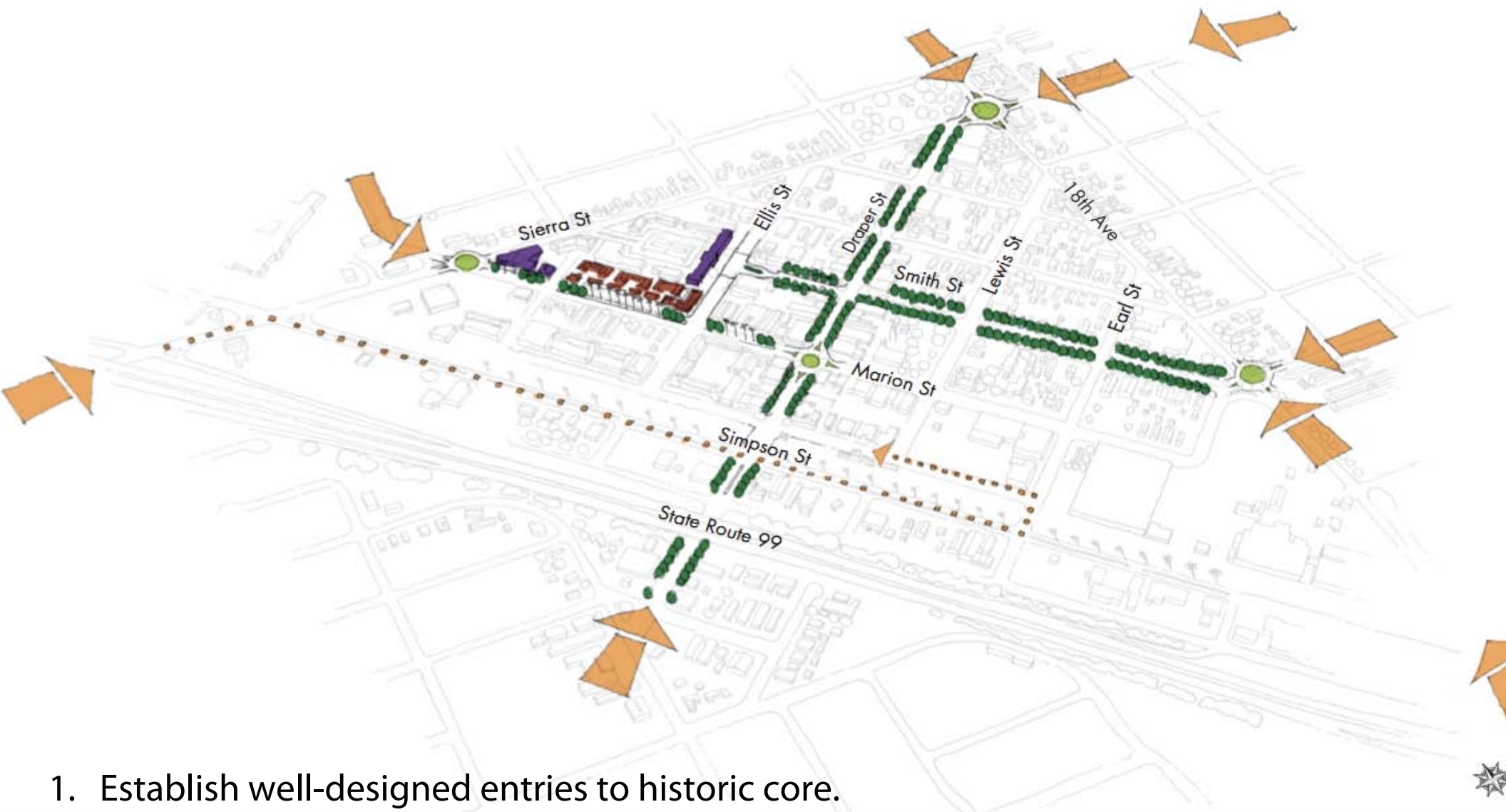


# Issues - Kingsburg

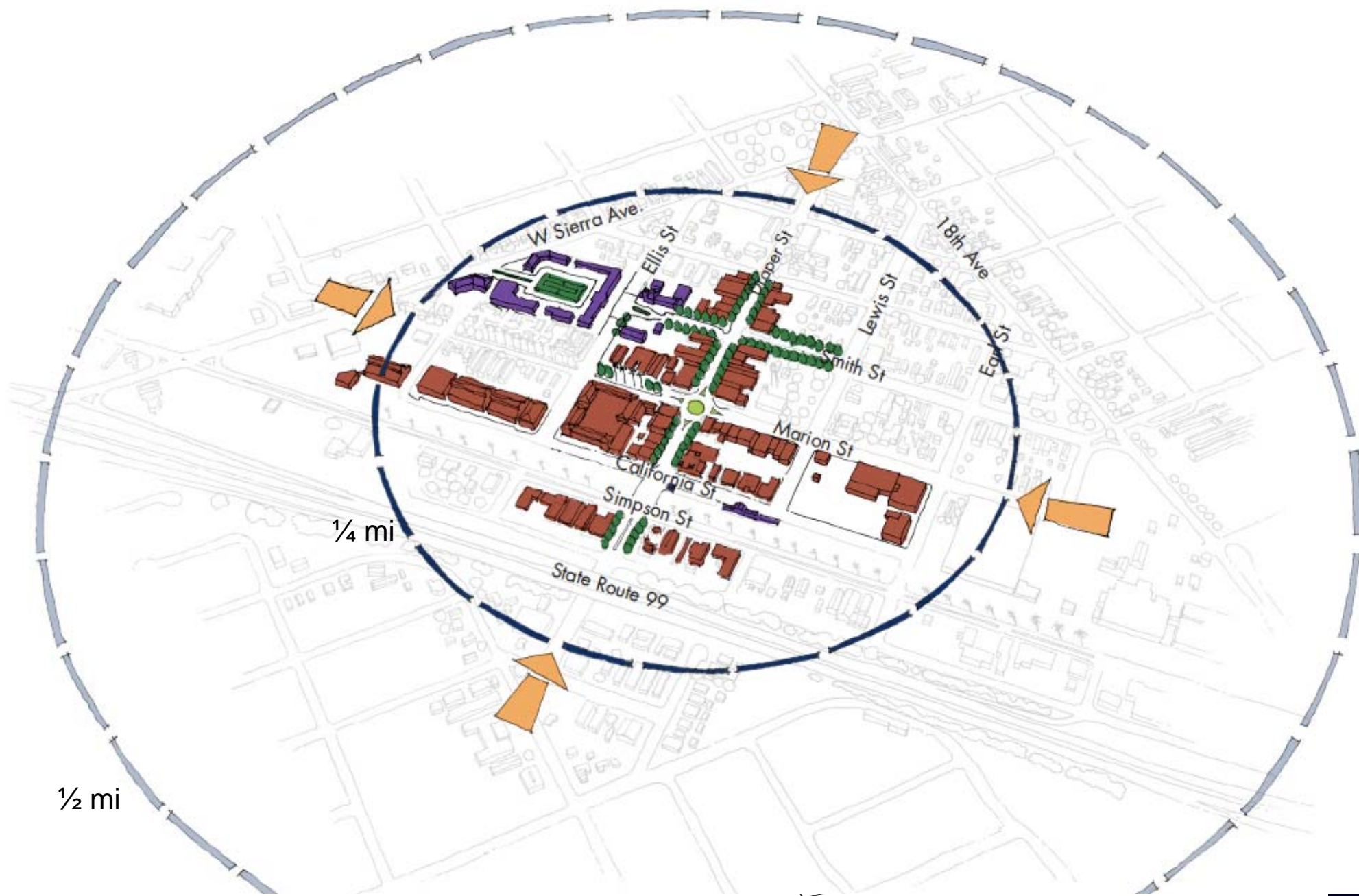
- Decline of the central core
  - Aging buildings, vacancies
  - Loss of retail to the highway
- Public infrastructure
  - Very wide, un-shaded streets
  - Failing pavement
  - Inadequate sidewalks
- Lack of housing diversity
- Development on the periphery



# Kingsburg Vision

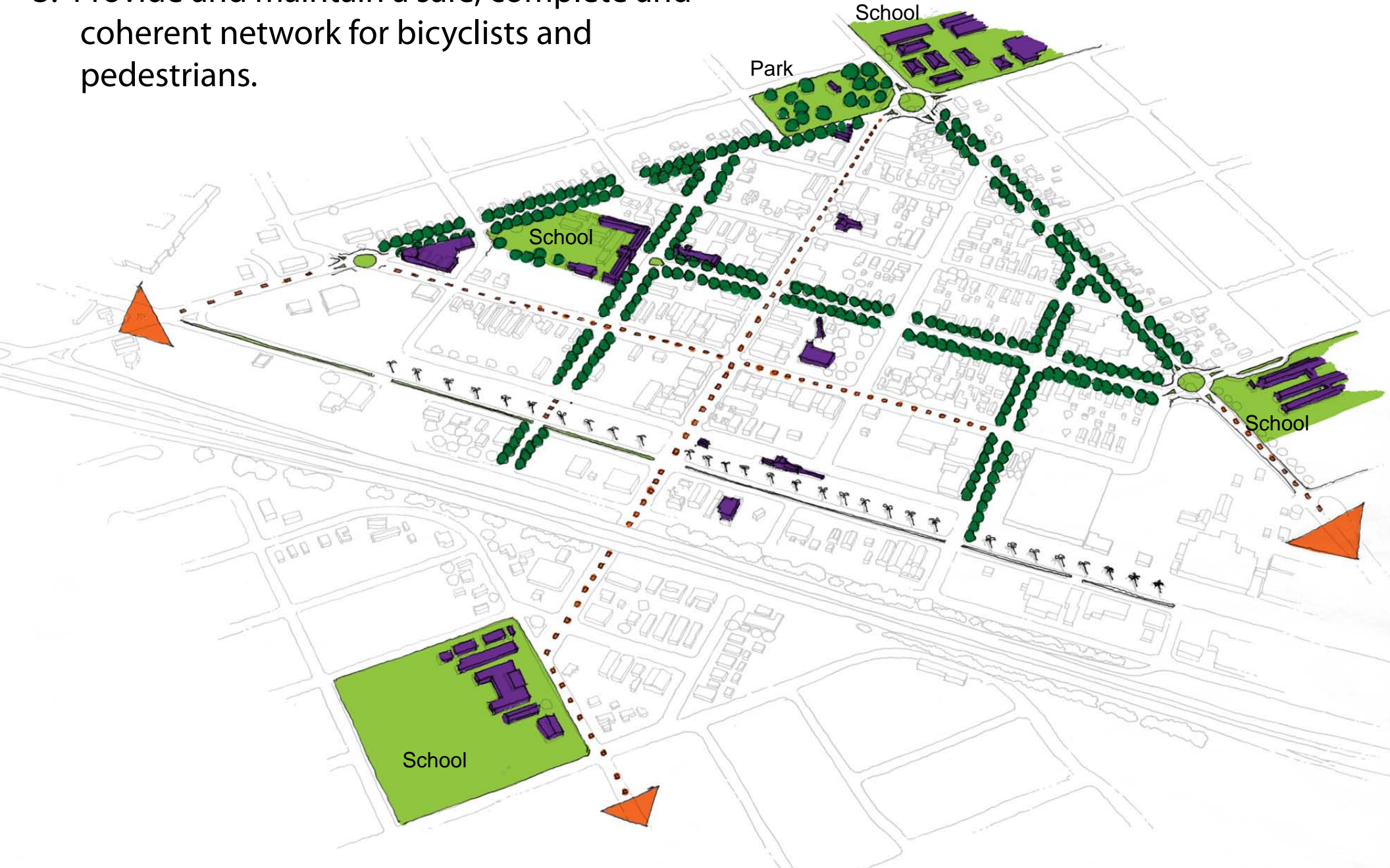






2. Support and maintain a compact town center.

3. Provide and maintain a safe, complete and coherent network for bicyclists and pedestrians.







90 degrees















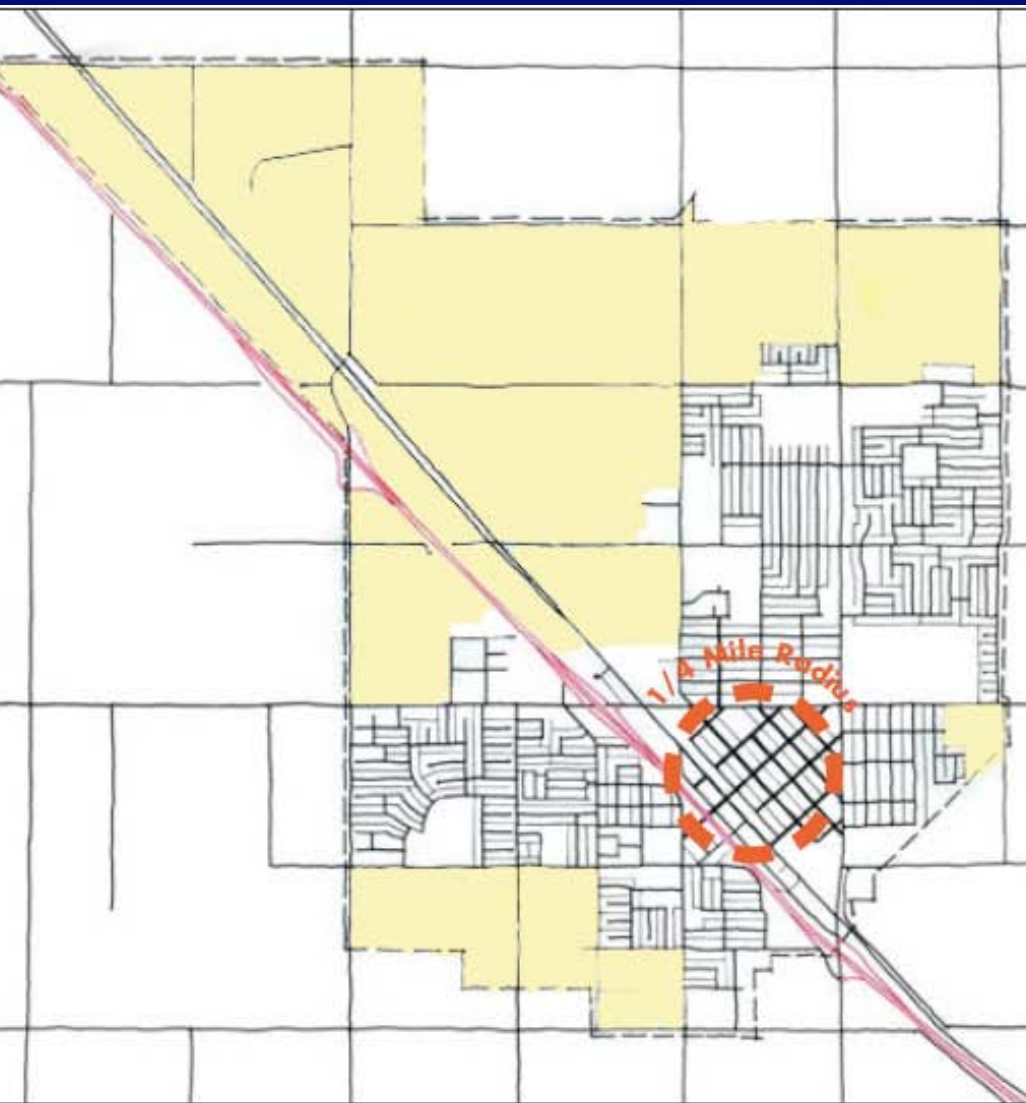




# Rail with Trail







# Implementation

- Revise Development Regulations using Form-based Coding (FBC) Strategies
  - FBC's use the desired outcome (visual, built result) instead of allowable uses as the organizing principle for development regulations
- Create Redevelopment Area to Generate Tax Increment Financing
  - As assessed values increase, can collect the increment and target funds to the downtown area



# Form-Based Code: Regulating Plan

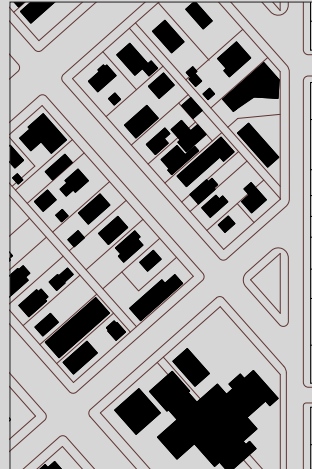
R U R A L



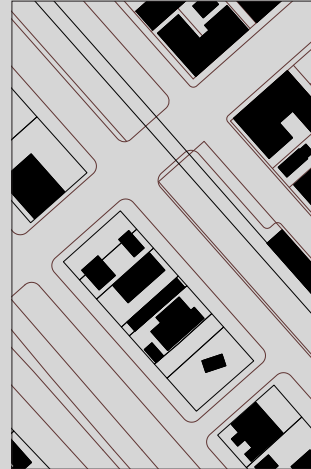
U R B A N



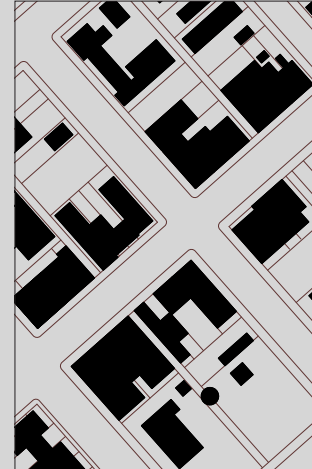
**T2-Rural Zone**



**T-3-Neighborhood General Zones**



**T-4-General Urban Zone**



**T-5-Town Center Zone**



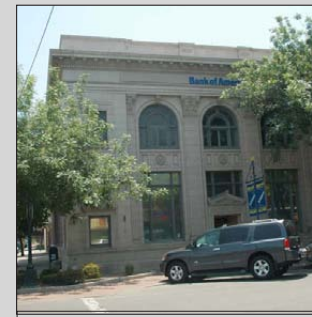
Cultivated Lands



Single-Family Home



Locally-Serving Commercial



Mixed-Use



Cultivated Lands



Compatible Multi-Family



Locally-Serving Commercial



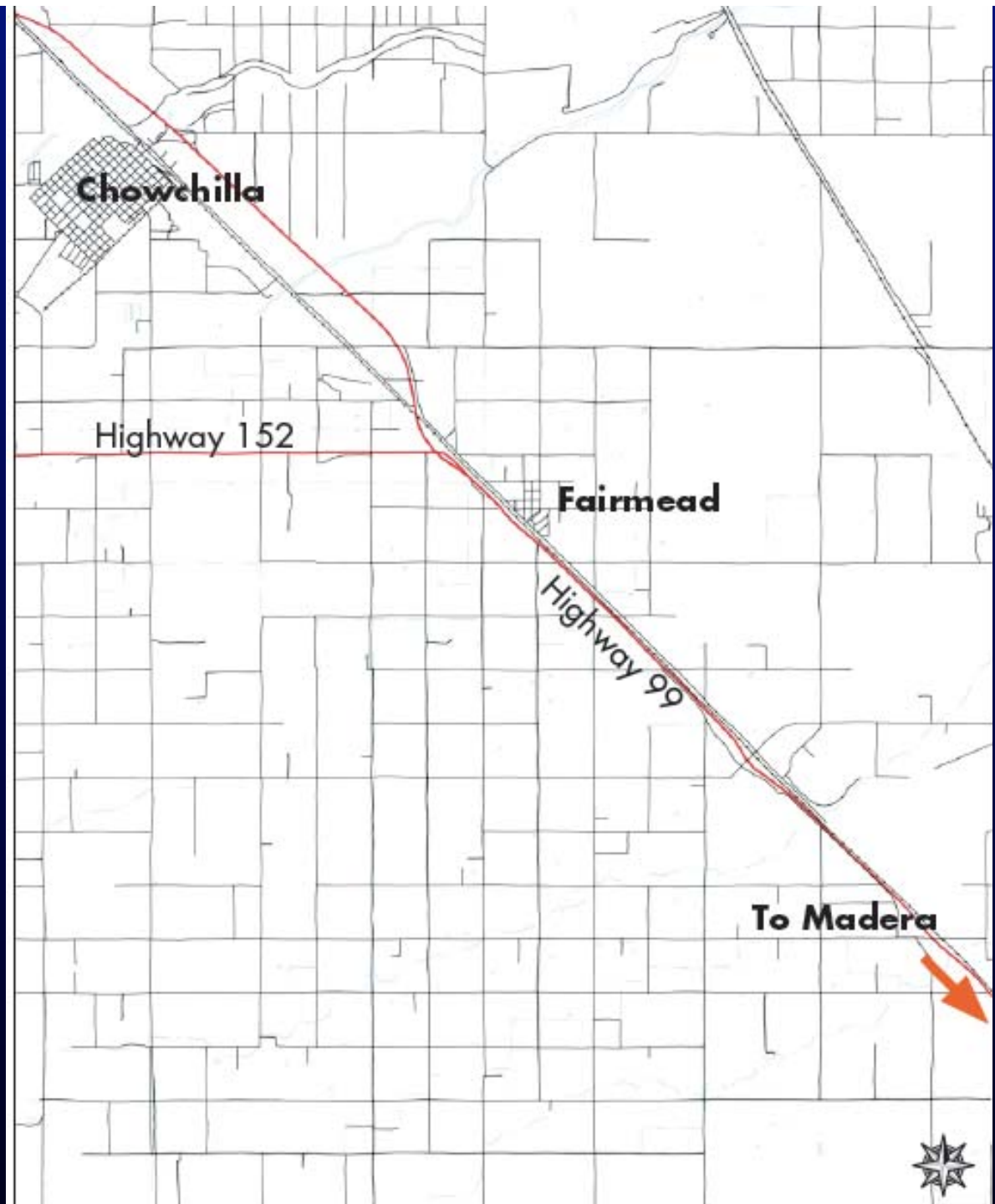
Street-Oriented Retail

# Form-Based Codes

- Regulating Plan: zoning districts
- Building form: lot, height, placement, parking standards and uses
- Public spaces: whole street and civic spaces
- Building types and frontages
- Blocks and subdivision design
- Administration: predictable approval process



# Fairmead



- Founded 1912 as agricultural colony



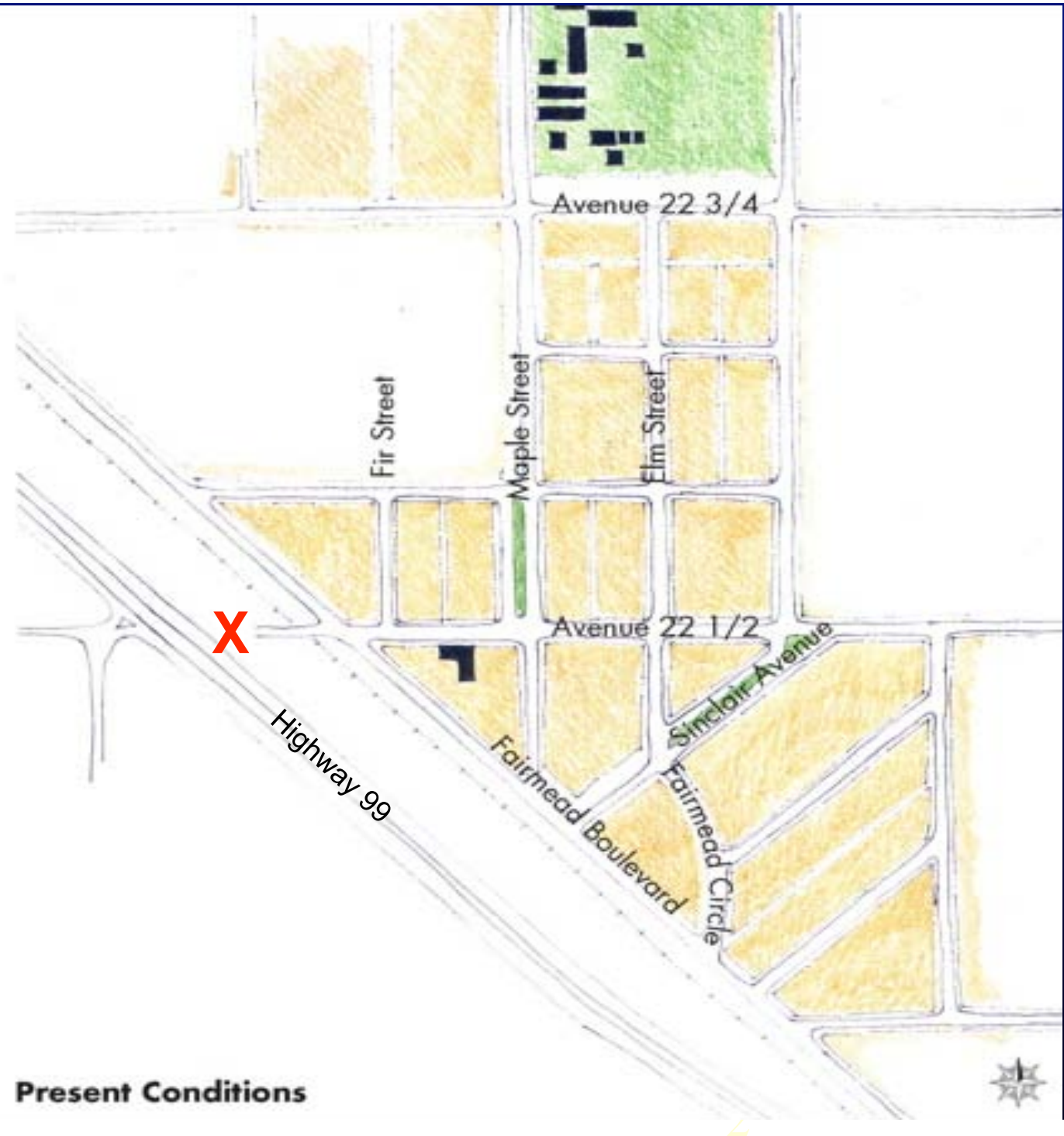
Train-Oriented circa 1912



Highway moved to  
west side of  
railroad in the 1930



Access from Hwy  
99 removed





















# Primary Challenges

- Decaying/Inadequate Infrastructure
  - Streets & Roads
  - Water
  - Sewer & Septic
  - Stormwater and Drainage
  - Streetlights
  - Lack of Connectivity



















#### MAP NOTES

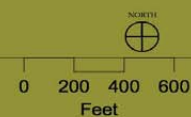
-Map only represents stormwater features as provided by the Fairmead Master Drainage Plan or as observed in the field.

#### LEGEND

- Minor Contours (1 ft)
- Major Contours (5 ft)
- Observed Ponding
- Potential Retention Area
- Basin A - 157.5 acres
- Basin B - 1427 acres



*Fairmead Stormwater Conditions*  
Fairmead, CA









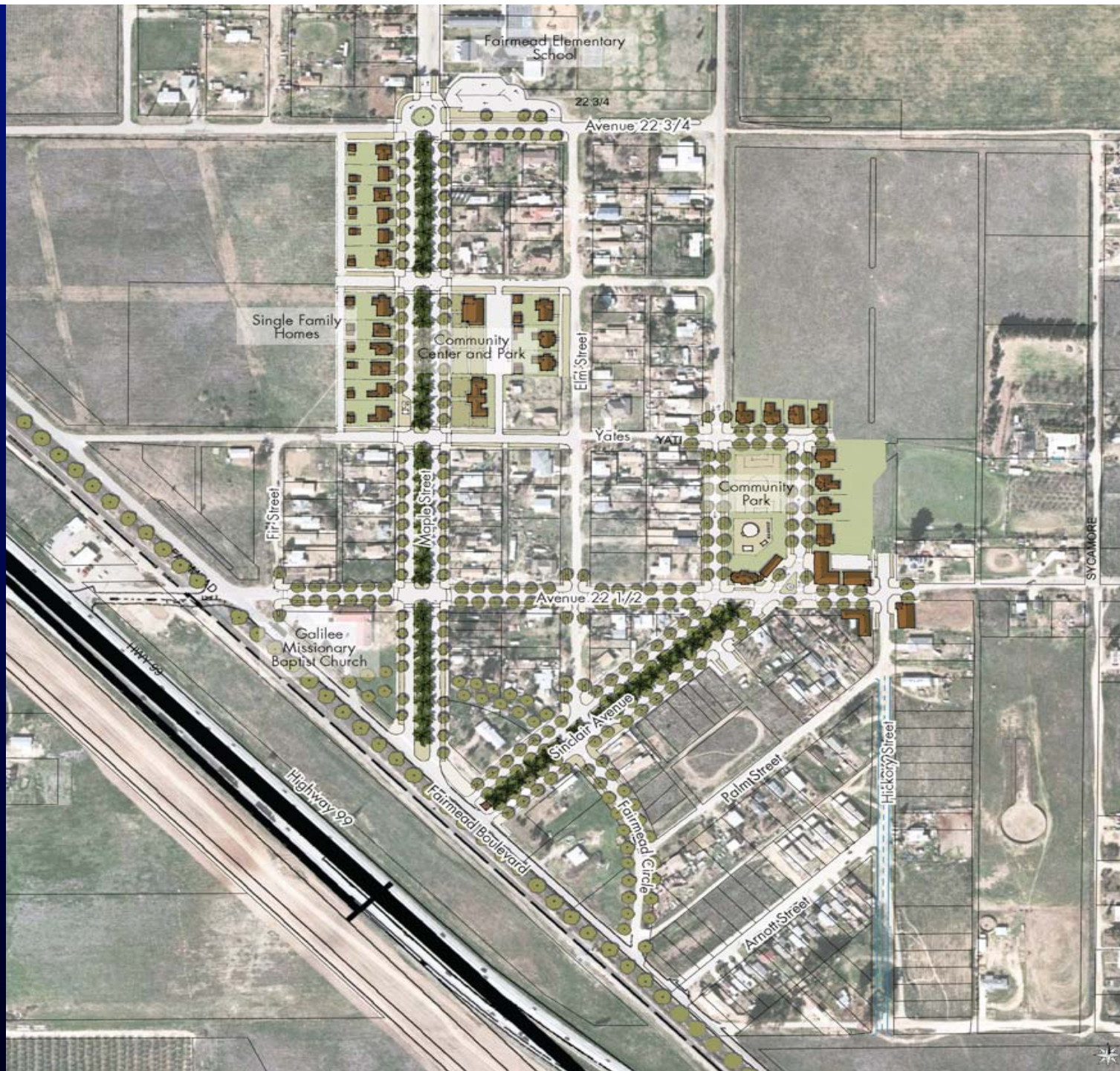
# Guiding Strategies for Revitalization

- Focus on Low Impact, Low Cost, Incremental, Strategies
  - Build Quality Community Focal Points Through a Concentrated Mix of Small Scale, Coordinated Physical Improvements:
  - Targeted Code Enforcement & Cleanup
  - Pedestrian Amenities
  - Improved Drainage and Infiltration
  - Opportunities for Community Development
  - Opportunities for Incremental Infill Development











## Option 1





## Option 2





existing





roposed



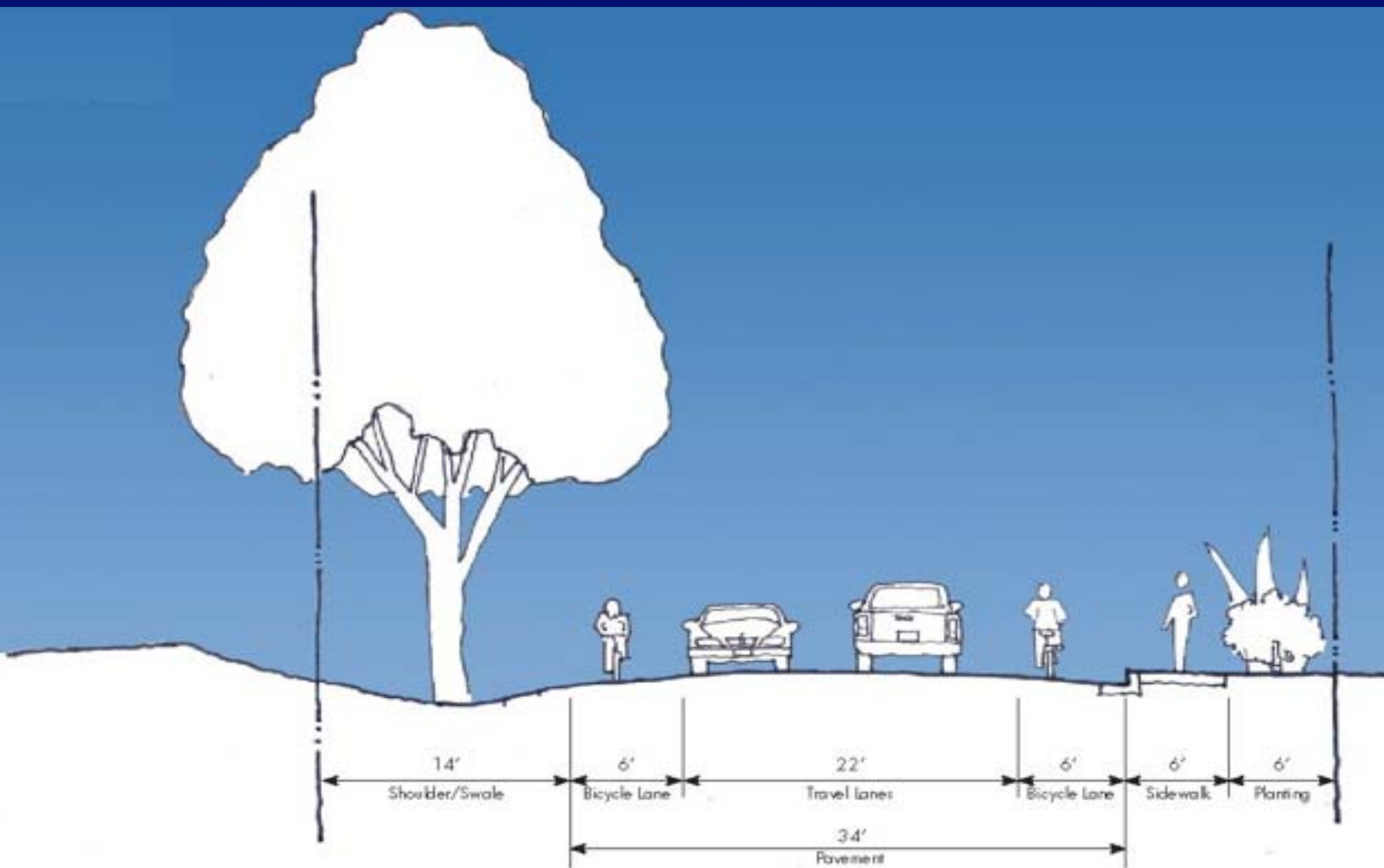












Existing

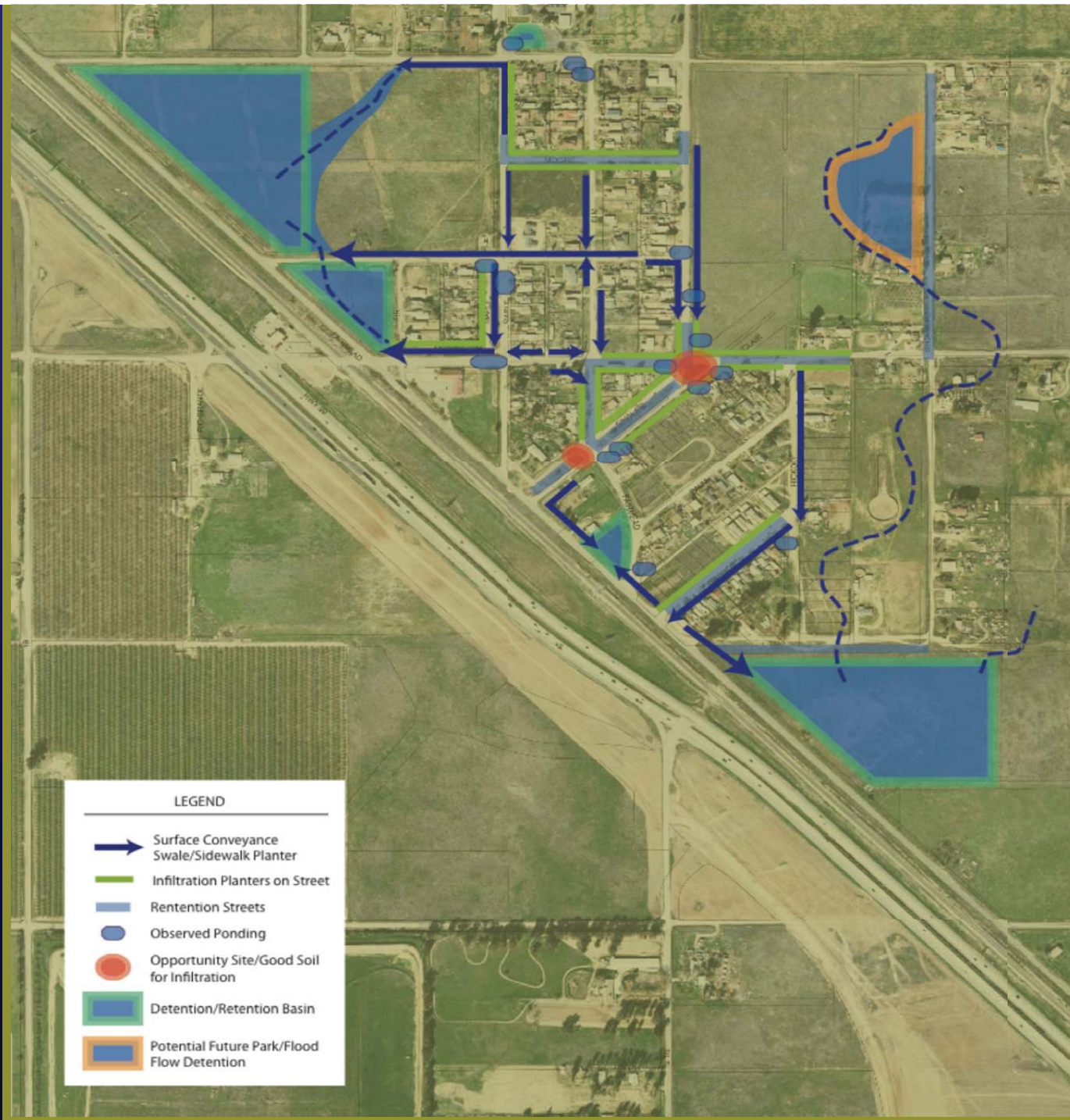




Proposed



















# Concluding Remarks

- Engage residents and stakeholders to:
  - Document place.
  - Identify areas appropriate for change or new growth.
  - Develop designs for walkability and focused density.
- Focus public investment to support the vision:
  - Seek funding from multiple sources.
  - Concentrate targeted improvements for noticeable impact.
- Update the development code and policies to reduce barriers and uncertainty, and streamline approvals.



# Thank You!

Josh Meyer  
Local Government Commission  
jmeyer@lgc.org  
[www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org)



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