

4th Street Corridor Visioning Study

Long Beach,
California



City of Long Beach
Office of Vice Mayor
Dr. Suja Lowenthal
333 West Ocean Boulevard
Long Beach, California

RSAUD

utile





Fig. 1: Dr. Suja Lowenthal at a community workshop.

Dear Stakeholder:

Thank you for your interest in 4th Street and the eclectic shops lining this vibrant corridor. Our small business corridors are critical arteries in our local economy branching out from the heart of our city - Downtown. Small business corridors offer community services and link neighborhoods together. In addition, they can foster public safety and community pride, serving as social gathering places for residents. In the case of 4th Street, the goal is to balance its popularity as a kitschy retail, food and entertainment destination with the space limitations of being a built out corridor surrounded by dense residential neighborhoods. As a result, we must continue to seek creative methods of using public and private space to the benefit of businesses and residents.

When I first came into office, I encouraged District 2 corridors to organize and develop visions for prosperity. Since then, 4th Street has made great strides with Retro Row becoming a business improvement area, but I want to make sure its progress extends beyond my terms in office.

To this end, I partnered with stakeholders to fund a vision study for the 4th Street corridor that reflects the consensus of businesses and residents. Over the course of six months, community members and City staff discussed various planning concepts and priorities with urban design. The 4th Street Corridor Visioning Study is the culmination of those discussions and ongoing efforts to build on attributes of this vibrant corridor. It is my sincere hope that stakeholders and City departments draw upon this document often for guidance and inspiration.

Ultimately, the study is intended to accomplish a few things: 1) inform City staff of the community's priorities for projects and funding; 2) enable the community to focus on long term goals through their own planning and grant writing; and 3) provide the basis for grant applications from the City to Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and other entities at the State and Federal levels.

I want to especially thank members of the Community Group and Technical Group committees for their guidance during this visioning process. We are fortunate to have such passionate volunteers and staff serving as stewards in our community.

Warmly,

Dr. Suja Lowenthal DPD
Vice Mayor & Councilmember
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Fig. 2: 4th Street and Cherry, Long Beach, California.

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Fig. 3: 4th Street near Almond Avenue, Long Beach, California.



Executive Summary

The visioning study for 4th Street is part of a series of visioning studies for major east-west corridors in Long Beach's Council District 2. The other corridors studied were Broadway and 7th Street. The study area for each street extends from Alamitos Ave on the west to Redondo Ave on the east.

This part of 4th Street is lined with low-rise residential, institutional, and commercial properties. At the heart of 4th Street is a business area known as "Retro Row," home to vintage stores and a range of historical architectural styles. It has thriving restaurants and popular local businesses.

The visioning study seeks to enhance the corridor by building on the momentum that exists among local businesses and residents in areas such as Retro Row.



Fig. 4: 4th Street corridor. 4th Street between Alamitos and Redondo, as it exists now, is an important east-west corridor in Long Beach. It has active residential neighborhoods on both sides, and is lined with a mix of vibrant commercial and residential uses. It is colloquially known as "Retro Row" because of a proliferation of vintage shops in the study area.



Fig. 5: Photos of 4th Street, as it exists now. 4th Street is lined with an electric mix of business, residences, institutions, and public spaces.

Outreach / Process

4th Street is well on its way to being one of Long Beach’s most vibrant pedestrian corridors, the beneficiary of its relatively narrow width (just 3 lanes), and generous stock of older storefronts. Likewise, it has rather organically developed a sense of its own unique identity, emblemized in “Retro Row.” In approaching the visioning of the kind of place 4th has the potential to become, the design team found both the source material and opportunities lying in plain sight.

The design team worked with numerous stakeholder groups for the 4th Street visioning study, with the eastern half of the

study area (east of Cherry) generally more well-represented. However, the priorities of the collective group, which largely concerned issues of increasing parking capacity and creating a more consistent and continuous pedestrian experience along the corridor’s length, were often focused on improvement of what was felt to be the more neglected western half of the corridor (Alamitos to Cherry). At the three public workshops, at which both Public Works and Planning staff were in attendance, there were comment cards filled out at each workshop, as well as image boards on which stakeholders were asked

to apply stickers as a means of voting on which most attracted them. Dots were also placed by community members on a map of the corridor as a means of identifying both favorite places and areas most needing improvement. Design team presentations were also posted online through Vice Mayor Lowenthal’s page on the City’s website, with an opportunity for online comment, as well as through online surveys that were conducted by same, using surveymonkey.com. Questions ranged from: “what do you usually do to 4th street?” to “how would you describe the identity of 4th?” and “what are your key concerns about 4th street?”

The input received was clear: **1 create more places along the street through additional sidewalk**

Fig. 8: 4th Street community workshop.



Fig. 6: 4th Street community workshop, July 26, 2014.

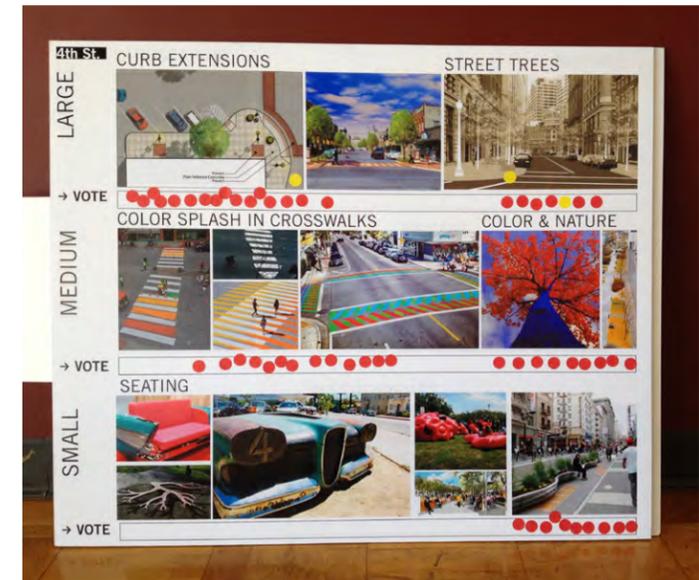
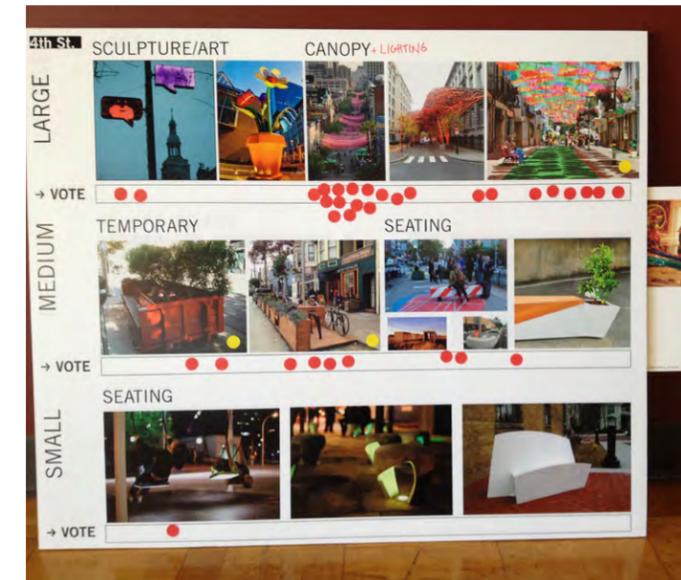


Fig. 7: At the community workshops, participants “voted” on their preferred design approaches for 4th Street. There was a strong preference for streetscape improvements, such as color splashes, inventive crosswalks and canopies, art, and creative lighting.



Fig. 9: Tactical urbanism in Long Beach. In Long Beach, there have been several recent “tactical urbanism” projects. These short-term interventions seek to test out design ideas on the street. A recent example, from July 2014, shows a “bulb-out” along 4th Street (west of the study area).

width and amenities (especially bike racks and trash receptacles) to walk and linger, supporting local businesses; **2 use decorative lighting as an integral part of the new identity of 4th**, while preserving its “bohemian,” “upcycled,” “organic” feel; create more reasons to walk and use 4th west of Cherry; and **3 do so without eliminating, and where possible adding additional parking.**

The design team made several key observations which led to the recommendations that follow. First, there are a preponderance of “T” intersections along 4th, where cross streets dead end into it from the north and south; these present interesting opportunities to serve as natural gateways or points of arrival onto 4th from

the adjacent neighborhoods. Second, a considerable number of underutilized plots of space adjacent to the public sidewalk, yet located on private property, appear to offer opportunities for property owners to make improvements and add amenities that would enliven the experience of passersby. And third, a survey and inventory conducted by the design team revealed a great deal of underutilized private surface parking lots immediately adjacent to 4th. These lots could be potential reservoirs of peak hour public parking through initiation of agreements with property owners (the lots could be an untapped source of revenue for property owners, many of whom are churches).

Through the robust community process

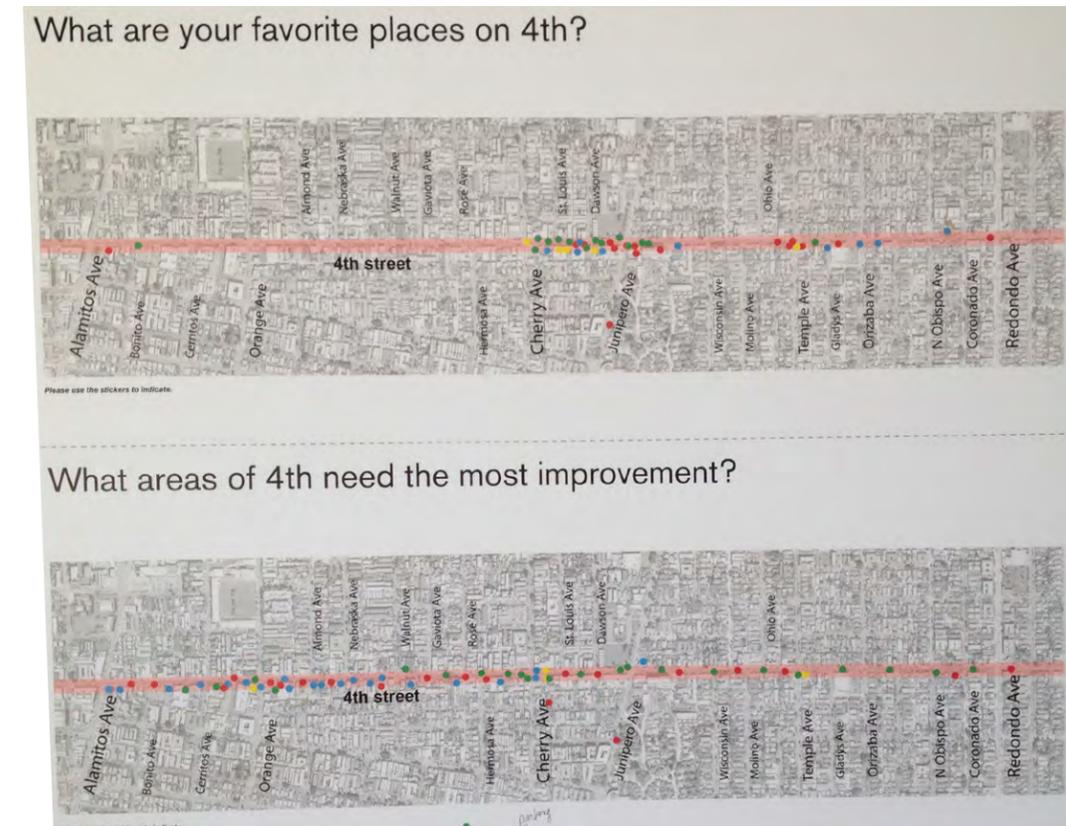


Fig. 10: Community workshop feedback, photo of map with community members’ markings. During public workshops, community members identified their favorite spots along the corridor and locations that could the most improvement.

Online Surveys

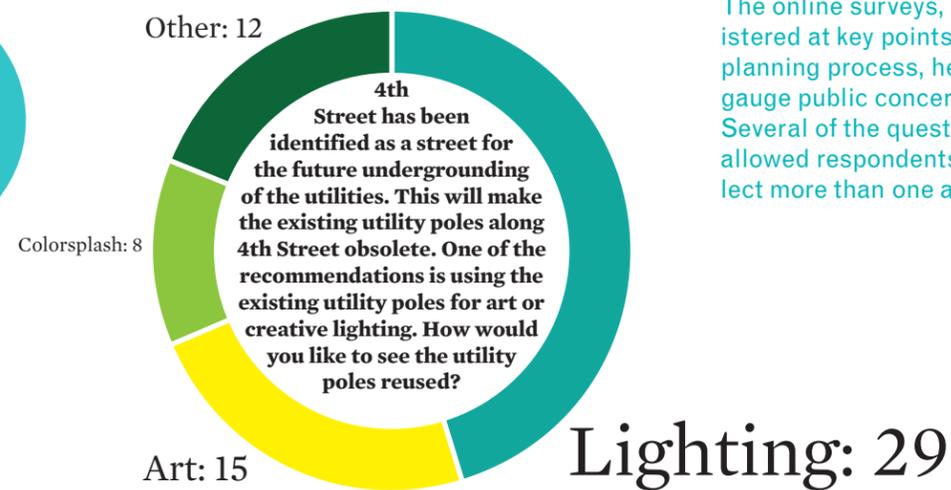
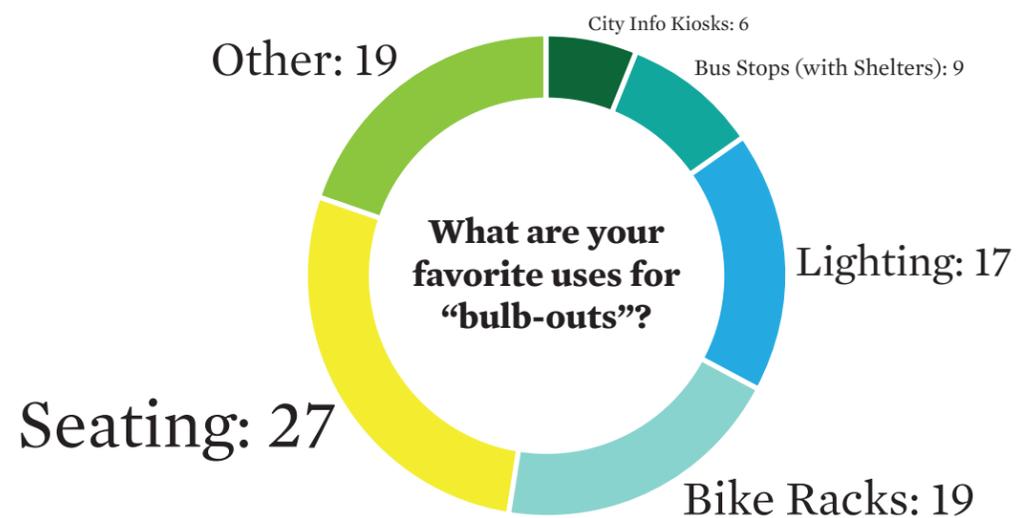
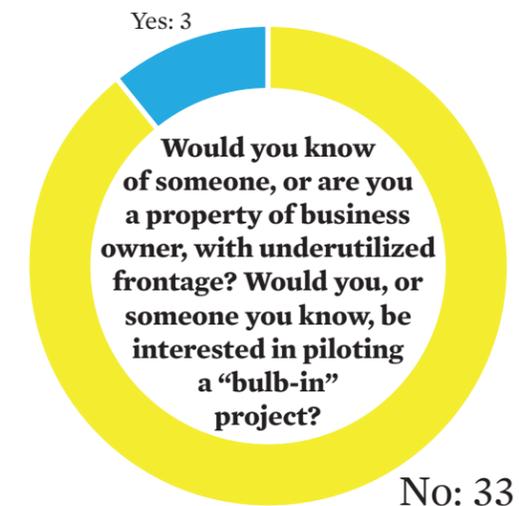
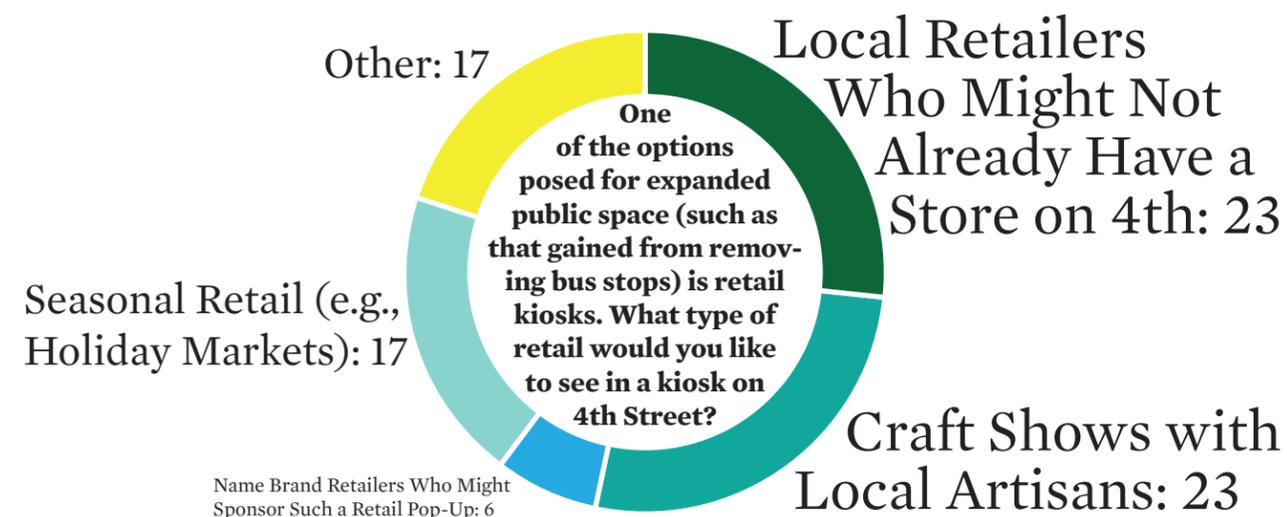
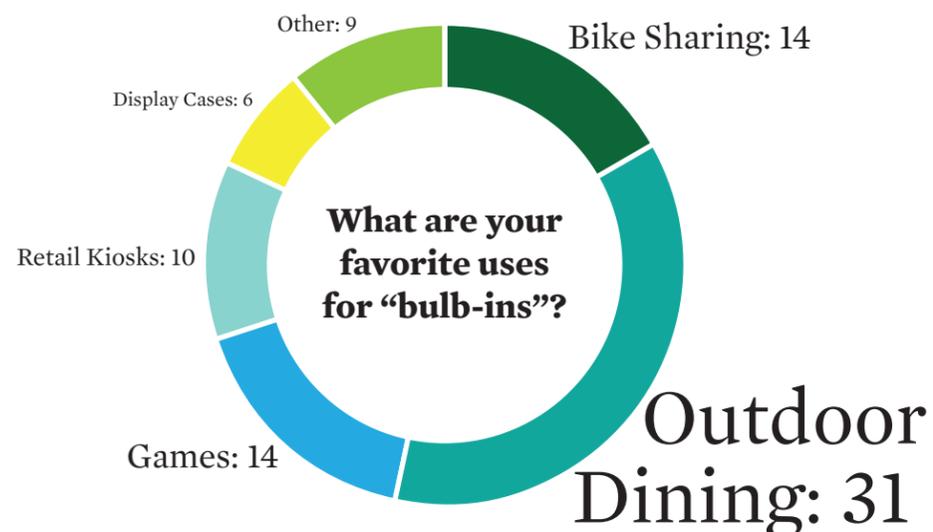
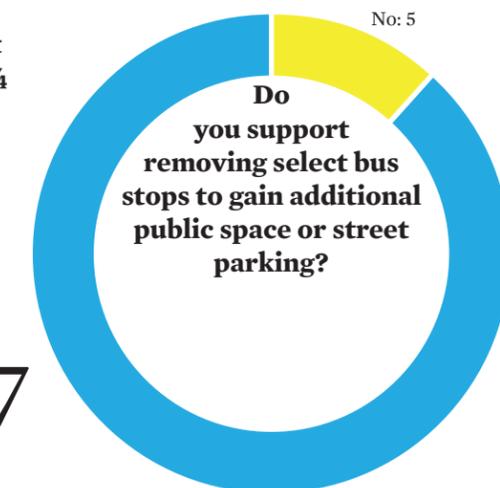


Fig. 11: Online survey results. The online surveys, administered at key points in the planning process, helped gauge public concerns. Several of the questions allowed respondents to select more than one answer.

(including online surveys), the design team learned about residents' thoughts and concerns about the "T" intersections, the parking needs of residents and businesses and visitors, peak parking times and potentially underutilized parking lots, and institutions and businesses that might be amenable to shared parking agreements. This local knowledge from community members contributed greatly to the planning effort and directly resulted in the community goals and vision that follow.



Best practices for transit recommend that bus stop be located approximately every 1/4 mile (approximately every 3 blocks). Bus stops on 4th Street are currently every 12 blocks. By removing some bus stops from 4th Street, we can gain either additional public space (through a curb extension or parklet) or approx. 3 additional onstreet parking spaces.



Key Community Goals

- Create neighborhood destinations along the street
- Reinforce the emerging identity of 4th (“Retro Row”)
- Provide more public amenities
- Build on/explore public-private partnerships/synergies
- Improve western half of corridor (Alamitos to Cherry)
- Preserve or increase parking

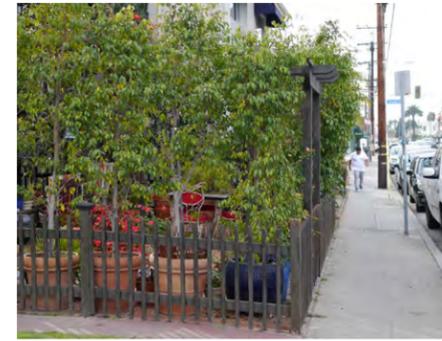
Stakeholders for 4th Street are largely in agreement as to the emergent identity of the corridor, which they characterize variously as “upcycled,” “recycled,” “vintage,” “grass roots,” and “organic”. There is consensus that further improvement and growth of what has been happening on 4th Street over the past decade can only be accelerated through the involvement and support of the City, through the policies and programs proposed in the Visioning Study. At the same time, the community is emphatic that, as is consistent with the character of Retro Row, the vision must be one that is publicly enabled but privately executed. There are three primary needs and desires which were expressed in order for 4th Street to continue

to thrive and grow (see Outreach/Process section for more detail):

- 1 more neighborhood destinations along the sidewalk for the general public to sit and linger (in addition to dedicated dining areas like the existing parklets)
- 2 improved lighting, especially of the decorative sort (character-giving, not just for safety).
- 3 additional parking (especially during peak shopping/dining hours)

With regard to the first and principal goal, the visioning study includes recommendations to provide enhanced pedestrian/sidewalk areas through a two-part strategy that calls for a combination of public investment and private initiatives. On the public side, bulb-outs or neck-

Fig. 12: Photos of the corridor. (facing page) The community would like to build on and enhance 4th Street's current identity as Retro Row, a funky destination with good restaurants, coffee shops, and shopping destinations.



downs would occur at mid-block points opposite the “T” intersection of key side streets, marked by a trapezoidal-shaped crosswalk area denoted by color on the roadbed and enhanced by a canopy of pole-suspended lighting. On the private side, the first 5-20 feet of unutilized private property fronting on sidewalks could be programmed to accommodate a range of activities that would enliven the experience of the street, from outdoor dining, to urban games, to public art displays—all in the organic spirit already instantiated at Retro Row (the second goal). As to the third goal, in addition to the discovery of an underutilized supply of parking space to help supplement the scarce supply of public parking on-street, several community members suggested, and it is recommended here, that red-zone curb lengths could be reduced in a manner similar to areas further west on 4th, liberating more on-street parking or more likely providing a means of compensating for loss of parking elsewhere due to the widening out of sidewalks to create more pedestrian amenity zones.

Finally, a wide consensus of community members agreed that a pilot project would be the most effective way to test the recommendations in this booklet, and at the same time serve to build momentum and public support for subsequent actions. While not unanimous, there was nonetheless a plurality of votes in favor of it being located along the short segment of 4th Street between Almond and Tile (including both “T” intersections), expressive of the widely-held belief that the west portion of the study area was in greatest need of help and transformation. Stakeholders

were convinced that the best chance of success lay with the passionate commitment of the owner of Hole Mole, whose property improvements will be necessary to match the public investment in the right of way adjacent to it in order for the project to be a success. Those include the establishment of pop-up stores, a farmers market, urban game courts, outdoor dining, a bicycle lot and cantina lighting overhead. A series of studies of differing combinations of amenities, in a range of color palettes, are included here to allude to the possibilities.

Finally, there was general sentiment that the monies provided by the council office toward the pilot be leveraged by using a “good” or “better,” rather than “best” approach to its design and construction. Minimizing costly underground utility work in favor of the use of color and lightweight surface mounted installations similar to those found in the parklets further west on 4th Street would allow limited resources to go a longer way in achieving a noticeable visual impact.

Fig. 13: Photo of the corridor. (facing page) 4th Street has a fun and vibrant character, with the “retro” store, public art, and an active community.



The Vision

- Improve corridor primarily west of Cherry
- Capitalize upon, highlight “T” intersections with adjacent retail businesses as pedestrian nodes
- Explore synergies between public and private initiatives

The vision for 4th Street is comprised of several coincident but coordinated initiatives. First, it calls for an effort by the City to aggressively facilitate public parking arrangements with some of the many private property owners along 4th whose parcels contain parking lots only periodically occupied. The existing parking lot at 4th Street and Cherry serves as a great model, supporting businesses during the day and providing parking for residents at night.

Second, it capitalizes upon the increase

in public parking that this would provide by replacing some on-street spaces with “bulb-outs” or curb extensions (widened sidewalks); these would be located at key “T” intersections and a couple larger 4-way crossings, with adjacent commercial properties and/or the aforementioned shared parking lots. The bulb-outs would be one component highlighting these intersections through the use of decorative “canopy” lighting, painted street crossings, public art, seating and bike kiosks.



Fig. 14: Parket on 4th Street.

Where are underutilized spaces along 4th Street?

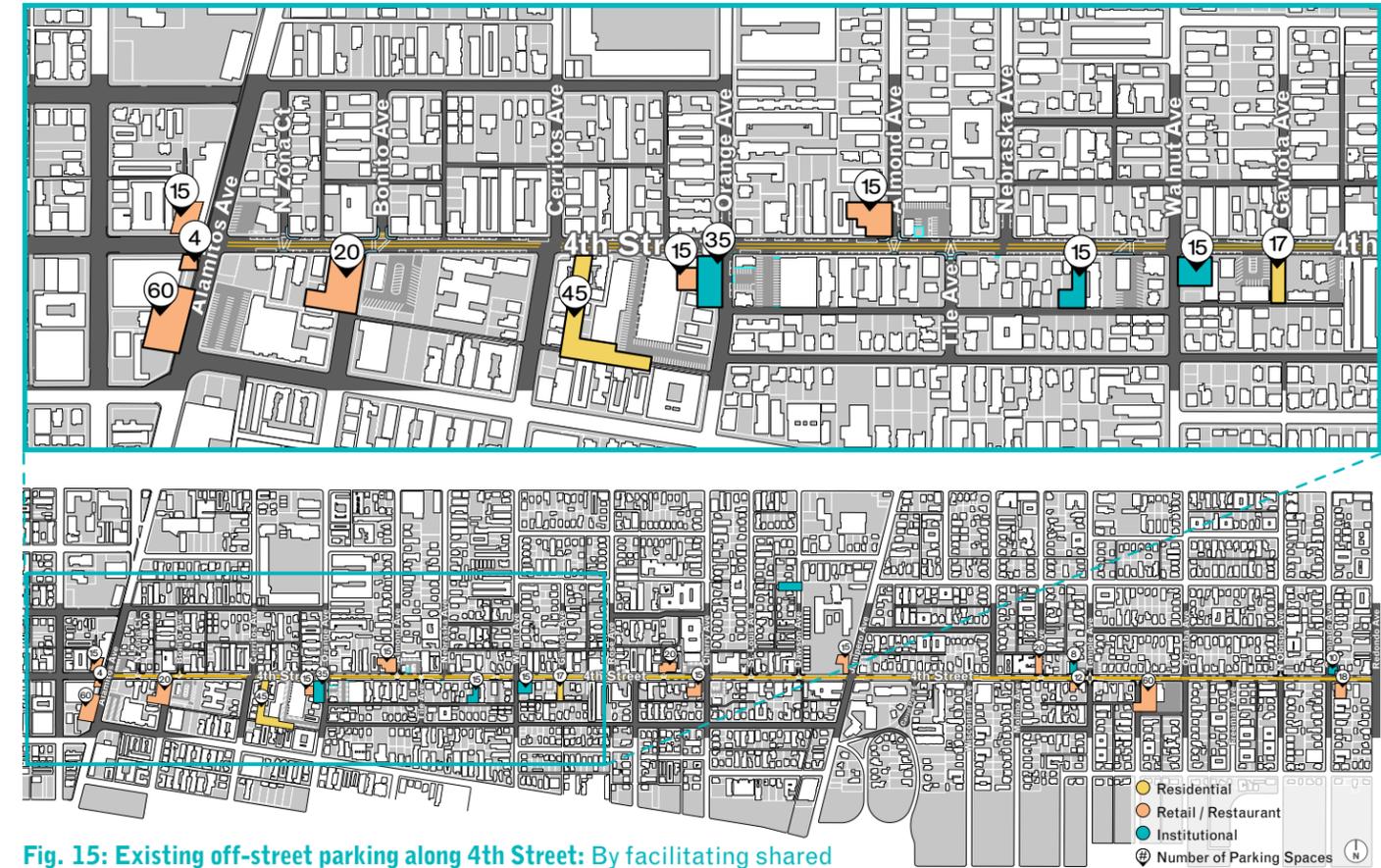
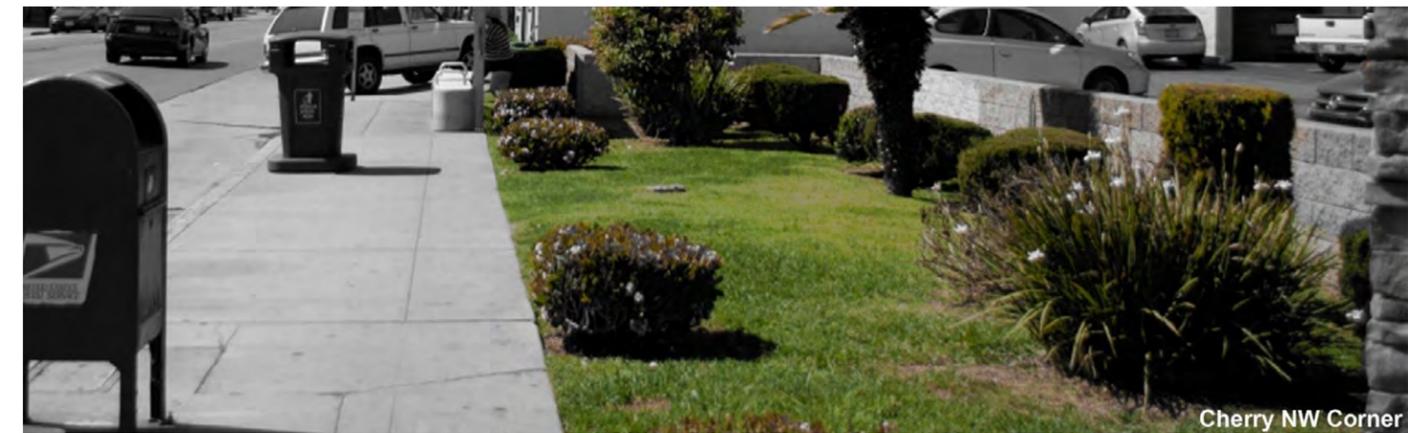


Fig. 15: Existing off-street parking along 4th Street: By facilitating shared public parking arrangements with some of the many private property owners along 4th Street, new public spaces could be created.



Cherry NW Corner



Junipero NW Corner



Carroll Park Apts.



Cherry SE Corner

Fig. 16: Examples of potential “bulb-in” locations.

What can happen at “bulb-ins” and “bulb-outs”?

Fig. 17: Bulb-out (public): plantings



Fig. 19: Bulb-in (private): retail kiosks

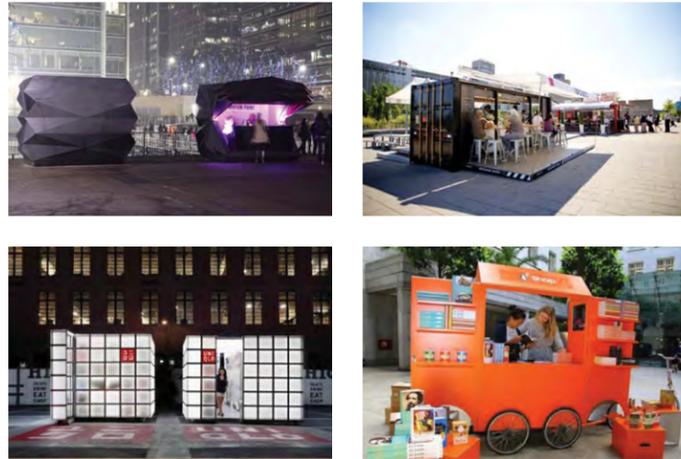


Fig. 18: Bulb-out (public): lighting



Fig. 20: Bulb-in (private): games



Fig. 21: Bulb-out (public): bike share / parking

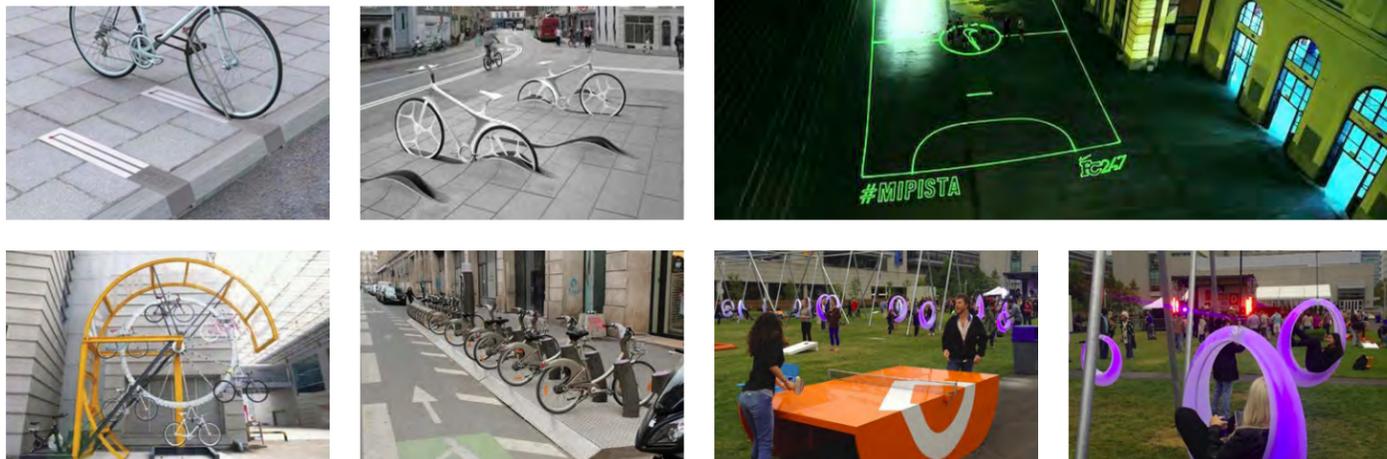


Fig. 22: Open space on 4th Street. The branding and identity of 4th should build off this.

Lastly, the vision calls for allowing private property owners with unused, excess land fronting upon the corridor to lease out that frontage to adjacent or other businesses for specific uses which will contribute to and create a more continuously animated street frontage. These uses might include so-called pop-up kiosks, outdoor dining, or bike parking, to name a few. These bulb-ins, as they are referred to, are called for to be designed around a general theme of “urban games”, described in more detail in the pages that follow, perhaps linked via a customized app designed expressly for 4th Street.

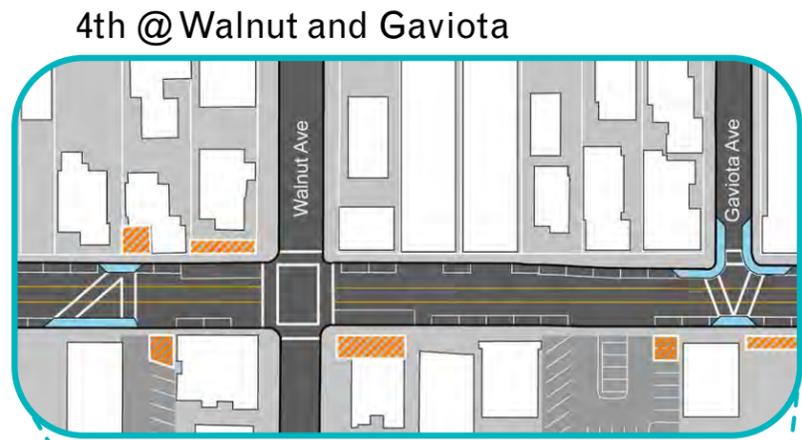
ing, art, or other means.

A combination of bulb-ins and bulb-outs, along with repurposed utility poles and greater public space (due to bus stop consolidation as well as the bulb-ins and bulb-outs) can further enliven 4th Street and build on the vibrancy that exists there.

Through the process, two other ideas captured the public imagination and are worth exploring further in additional studies:

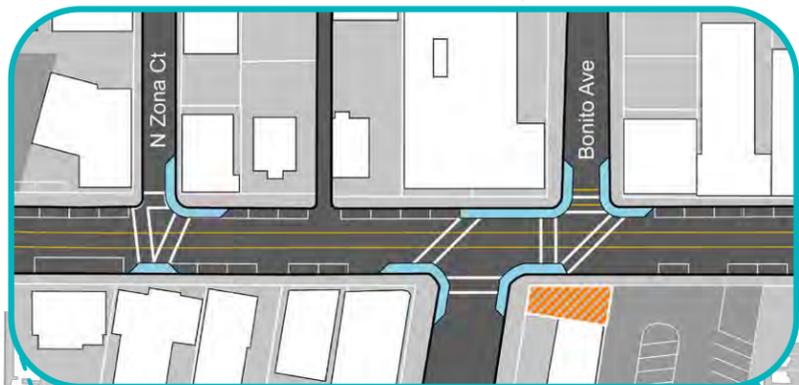
- 1 consolidating bus stops (currently spaced very close together) to create more public space along the sidewalks
- 2 repurposing public infrastructure, namely utility poles, to create identity for 4th Street; this can be through color, light-

Fig. 23: The vision for the corridors seeks to combine “bulb-outs” and “bulb-ins” in select locations, to maximize new public space.



“Bulb-ins” and “bulb-outs” work in concert along the corridor, increasing the public realm for all.

4th @ N Zona Ct and Bonito

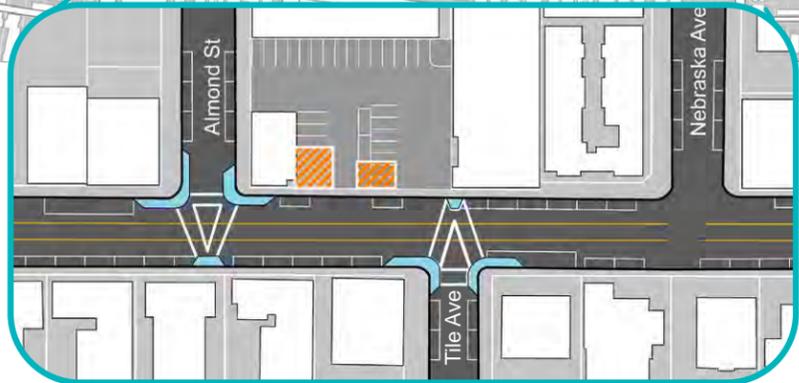
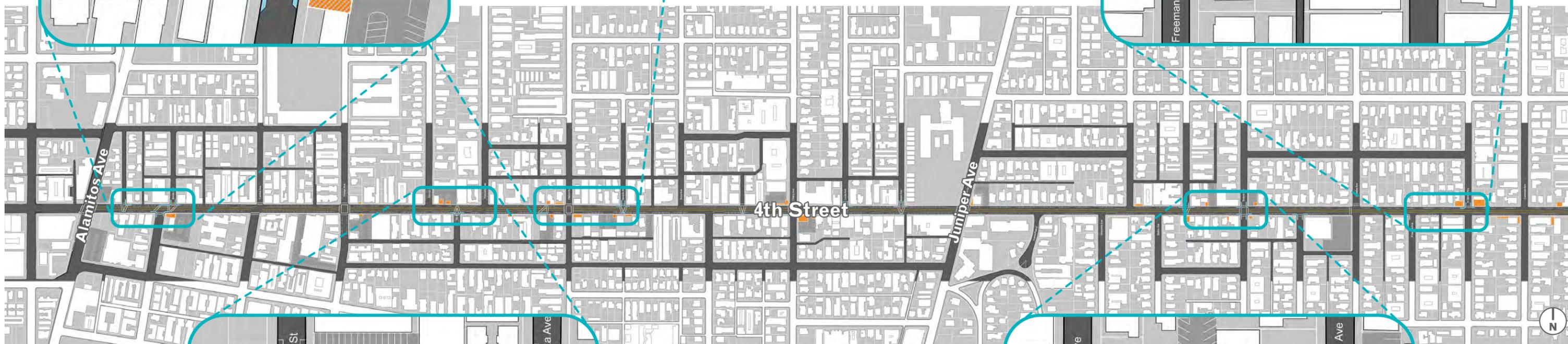


4th at N. Zona Court and Bonio might have pop-up retail or exterior seating in its bulb-ins and bulb-outs. These would complement the restaurants and markets already there.

4th @ Freeman and N Obispo



4th at Freeman and N. Obispo could be the site of games and play areas in their “bulb-ins.”



4th @ Almond, Tile, and Nebraska

This is recommended pilot project location (see page 30 for more information).

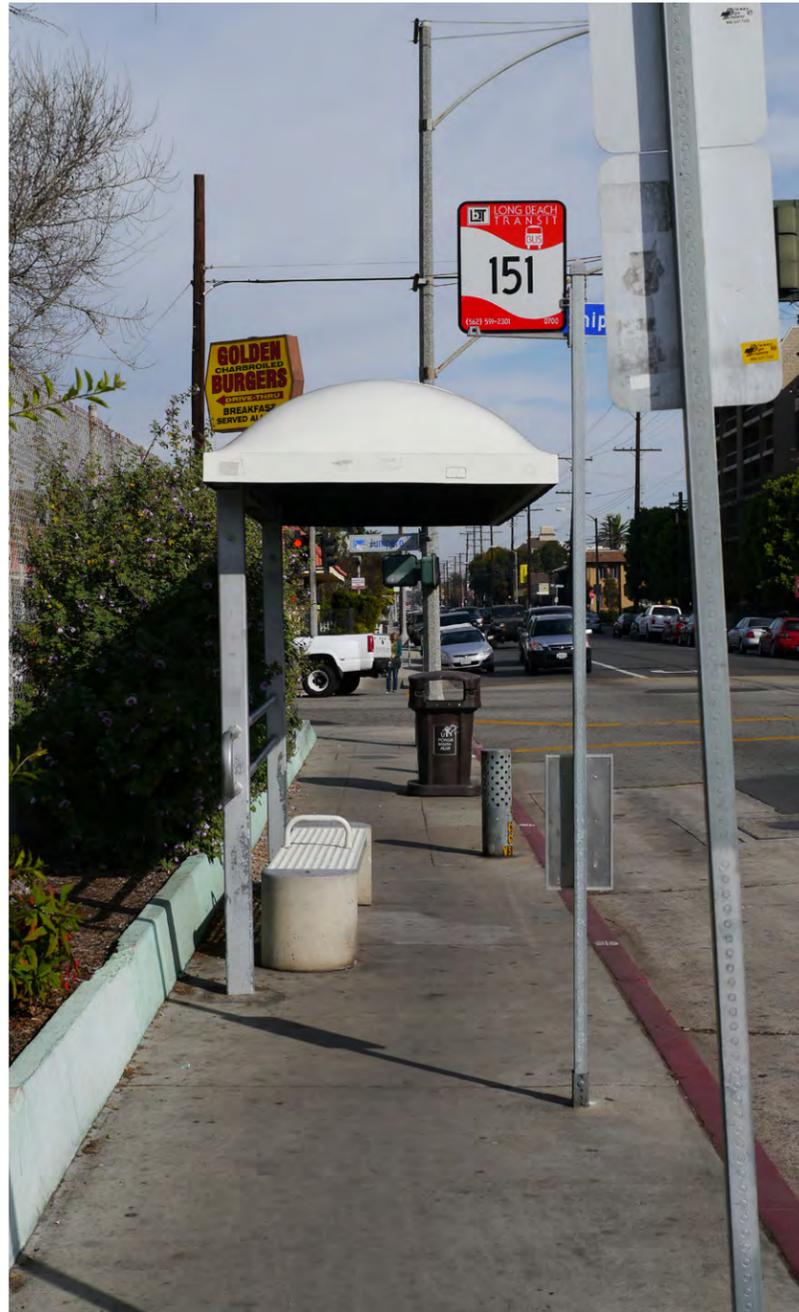
4th Street at Ohio and Temple could host pop-up retail, which might be focused on the sports (surfing, biking) stores on this strip of 4th.



4th @ Ohio and Temple

- Bulb-out
- Bulb-in

Are the bus stops adequately spaced?
By removing bus stops that are too close together, we can add street parking capacity.



Within every ¼ mile (5 minute walk distance) along the corridor, there are three (3) bus stops. **One (1) bus stop every ¼ mile should serve the needs of residents and workers.** Each bus stop equals approximately **3 parking spaces.**

Fig. 24: Bus stop on 4th Street

Existing Corridor and Bus Stops



Fig. 25: Map of bus stop locations. Bus stops are spaced very closely together along 4th Street (approx. 3 every 1/4 mile). This is 3-times the recommended distance.



Fig. 26: Photo of bus stop



Fig. 27: Photo of bus stop

Can soon-to-be obsolete public infrastructure become an identity marker for 4th Street?



Fig. 28: Before (right) and after (above) views of 4th Street at Dawson Avenue (looking west).

Fig. 29: Oppositepage:night view.



One of the community ideas for the corridor was repurposing the soon-to-be obsolete utility poles along 4th Street. (The utility company is planning to move the lines underground in the near future.) The current utility poles help maintain the street edge and provide a strong visual framework as one looks down the street. In keeping with 4th’s funky spirit and “up-cycling” ethos, the city, design team, and community brainstormed about possible ways to reuse the utility poles, to support

innovative lighting, public art, or wayfinding along the street.

Any design improvements or changes along the corridor should respect and enhance 4th Street’s unique character and culture. Bulb-ins and bulb-outs, as well as better spacing of bus stops and repurposing utility poles, all reflect the community’s desire to use the public space smartly and creatively to foster a lively pedestrian environment.

Pilot Projects

After extensive review two sites were recommended for the pilot project: the block of 4th between Nebraska and Temple, and that between Almond and Tile. By a vote of 11 to 3 at the final meeting, the community preferred Almond and Tile, for a variety of reasons: 1) a desire for the City to invest in the improvement of the more

dilapidated western half of the study area (west of Cherry); 2) the coincidence of two consecutive “T” intersections in Almond and Tile, which obviates the need for a dedicated left turn lane in that segment of 4th; 3) a willing and proactive business owner (Hole Mole); and 4) the existence of two properties on the north side of 4th

Street that offer opportunities for both shared parking and private “bulb-ins” of the kind proposed in the larger visioning study for the entire corridor.

Pilot Project A:
4th Street between Almond and Tile
T-intersection with thriving businesses

Pilot Project B:
4th Street @ Temple
T intersection and 4-way intersection



Fig. 30: Pilot project locations.

Pilot Project A: 4th Street, from Almond to Tile to Nebraska

For this segment of 4th Street, which has a series of T-intersections and thriving restaurants and other businesses, there is the opportunity to create a series of bulb-ins and bulb-outs. These will provide additional attractions for local businesses, increase pedestrian safety, and make this segment of 4th Street more of a destination.

The goal is the not adversely affect parking (and ideally add additional parking capacity through shared parking arrangement or increasing efficiency) as well as to create a lively walkable neighborhood to support local businesses.

Pilot Project A creates shorter pedestrian paths, or itineraries, from both parking and the residential neighborhoods to the businesses and amenities in the area. It does so by introducing crosswalks in key locations. In addition, the expanded public realm created in this pilot project should support the local businesses and community by providing gathering spaces. These new spaces can be lightly or heavily programmed with seating, events, and games, as desired by the community and property owners.



Fig. 31: Existing conditions photos.



Fig. 32: Before (left) and after (above) views of 4th Street at Almond Avenue (looking east). This is one possible vision for this pilot project location. The canopy above the street can carry lights, as shown above, or art.

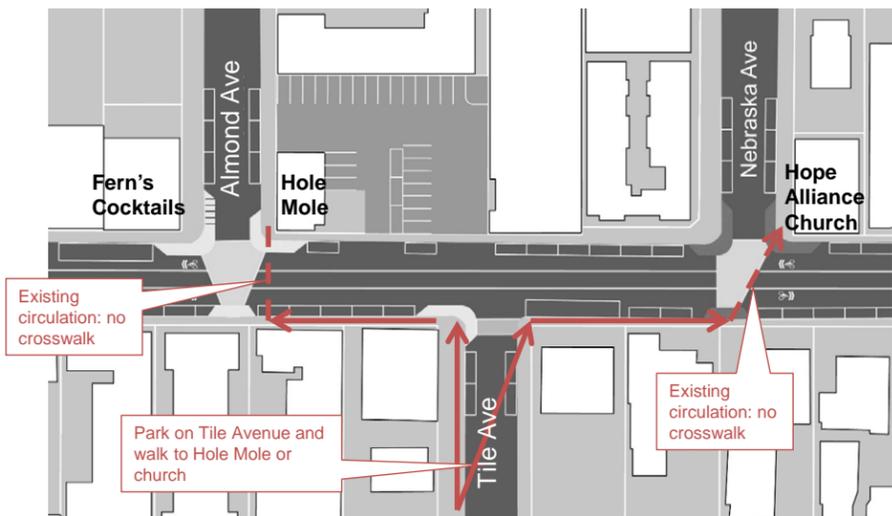


Fig. 33: Existing conditions.

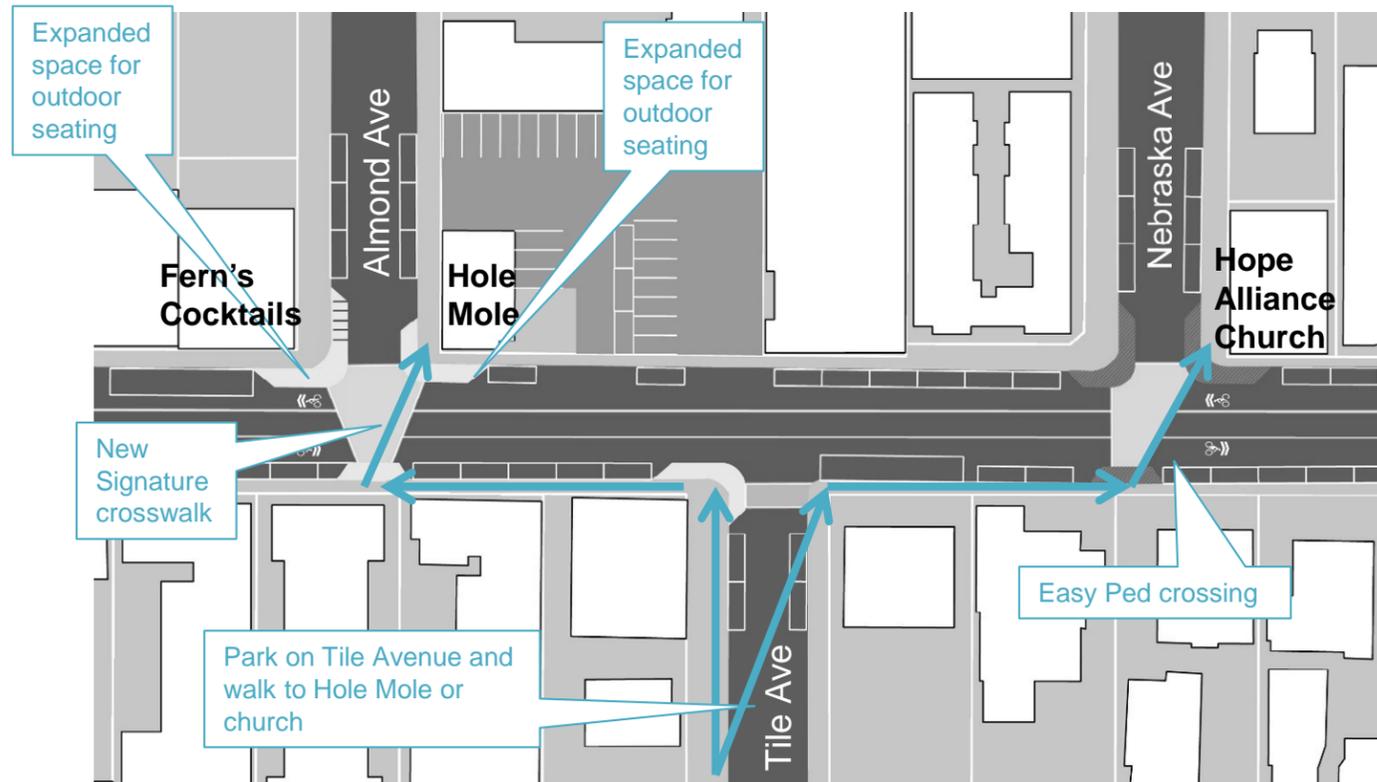


Fig. 34: Select design changes. For more options, see following pages.



Fig. 35: One possible vision of this pilot project location shows public art, bright colored crosswalks and canopies. Before (right) and after (above) views of 4th Street at Almond Avenue (looking west).



Two scenarios were explored for Pilot Project A. The primary difference between the two is the size of the bulb-in and its resultant effects on parking. Pilot Project A: Scenario A has a smaller bulb-in and

maintains vehicle access to 4th from the Hole Mole parking lot. Pilot Project A: Scenario B has a much larger bulb-in.

Fig. 36: Almond Avenue with Bulb-in, scenario A



Fig. 38: Almond Avenue with Bulb-in, scenario B



Fig. 37: Almond Avenue with Bulb-in, scenario A: This scenario maintains vehicle access to 4th Street from the Hole Mole parking lot. It has 26 parking spaces (plus 2 employee parking spaces). One curb cut is removed to create the bulb-in, which increases the amount of street parking

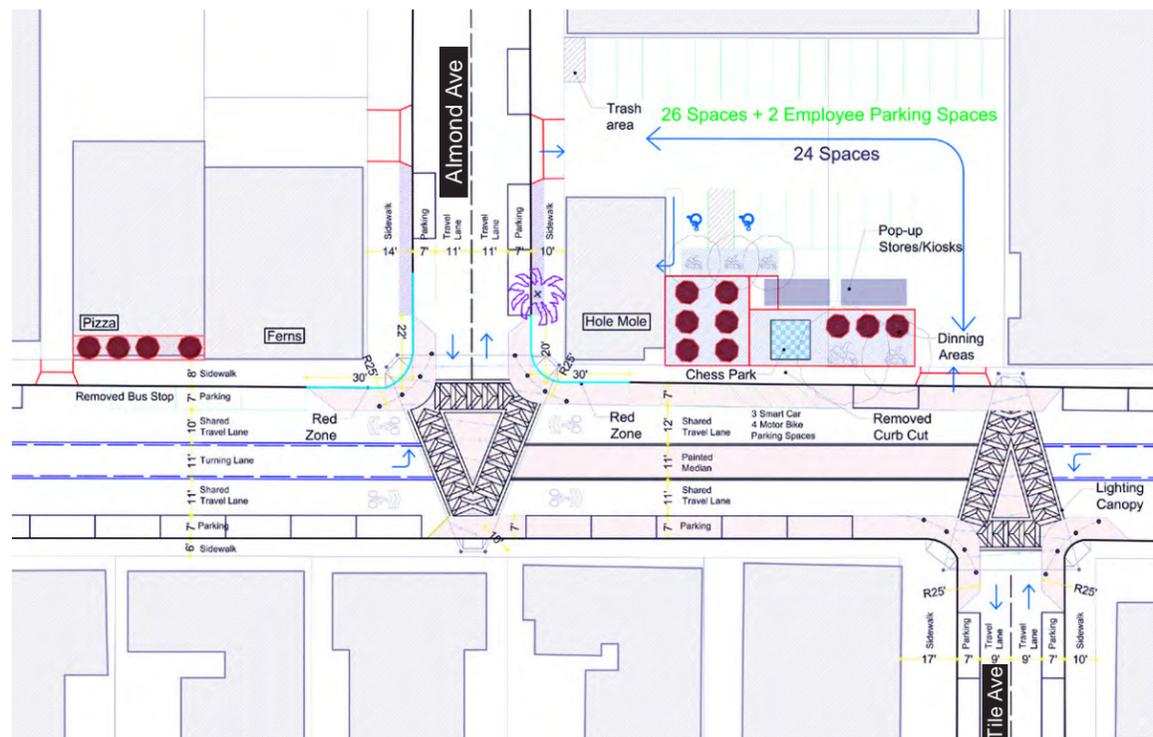
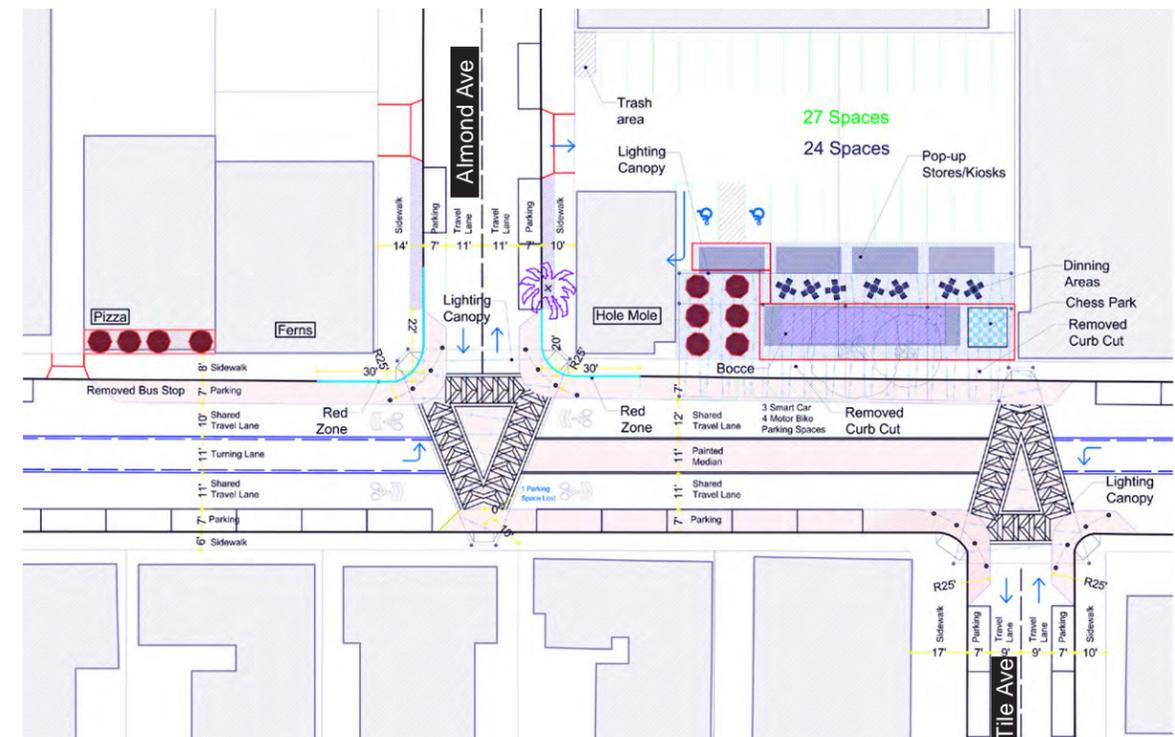


Fig. 39: Almond Avenue with Bulb-in, scenario B. This scenario removes two curb cuts from 4th Street, which adds parking to the street and leads to a much larger bulb-in.



Pilot Project B: 4th Street @ Temple

The stretch of 4th from Ohio to Temple offers both a “T” intersection and a four-way intersection. The proposed plan calls for crosswalks, bulb-outs at the intersections, and new bulb-ins in select locations. There are several advantages of crosswalks and bulb-outs, namely:

- Better pedestrian paths
- Slower traffic
- Safer pedestrian crossing
- Gives identity to the intersections and the street
- Small vehicle parking spaces
- Relatively inexpensive

For the four-way intersection at Temple, two options were developed, one a “light” option with one fully built-out bulb-out and the other a more aggressive option with two bulb-outs.



Fig. 40: Existing Conditions

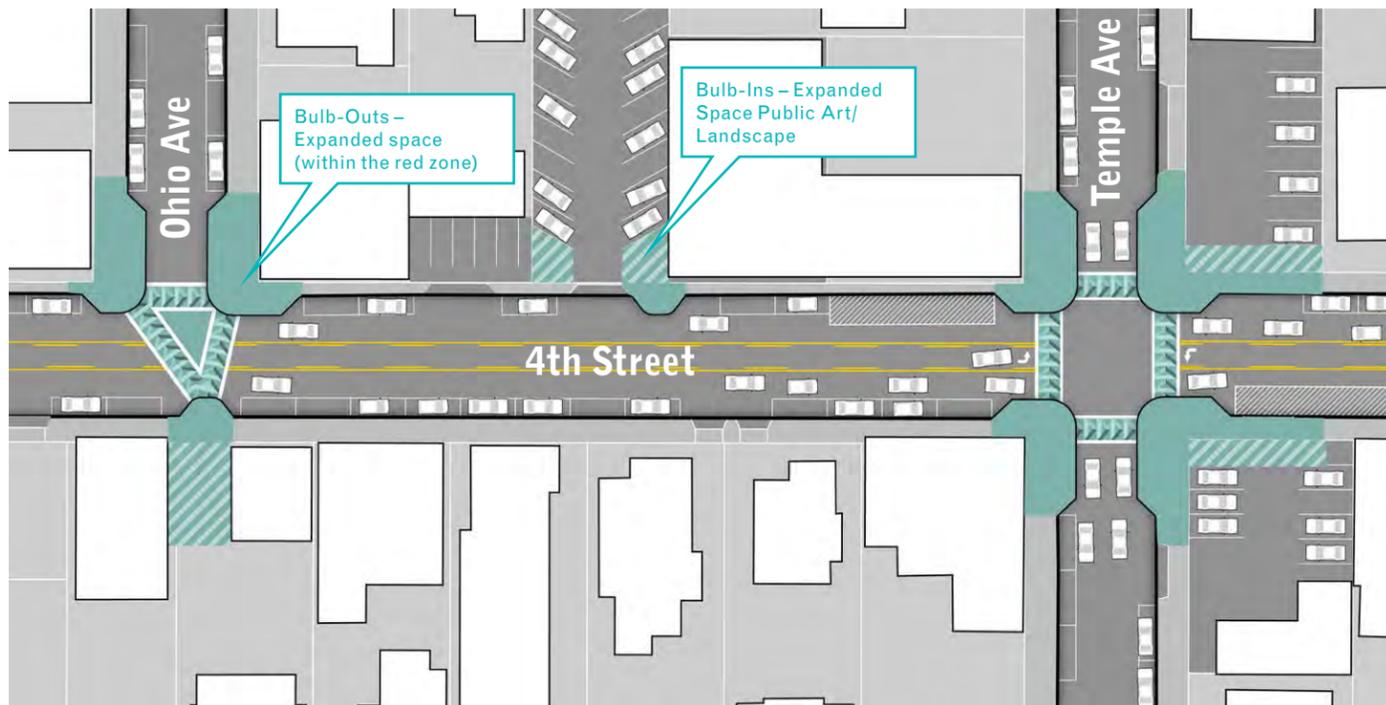


Fig. 41: Proposed Plan

Fig. 42: Temple Intersection, option A: This option weights the bulb-out on the southeast corner of the intersection, where there is a thriving business. It is designed to call attention to this business. The other three corners of this intersection have painted extensions to help slow vehicle speeds and shorten crossing distances for pedestrians.

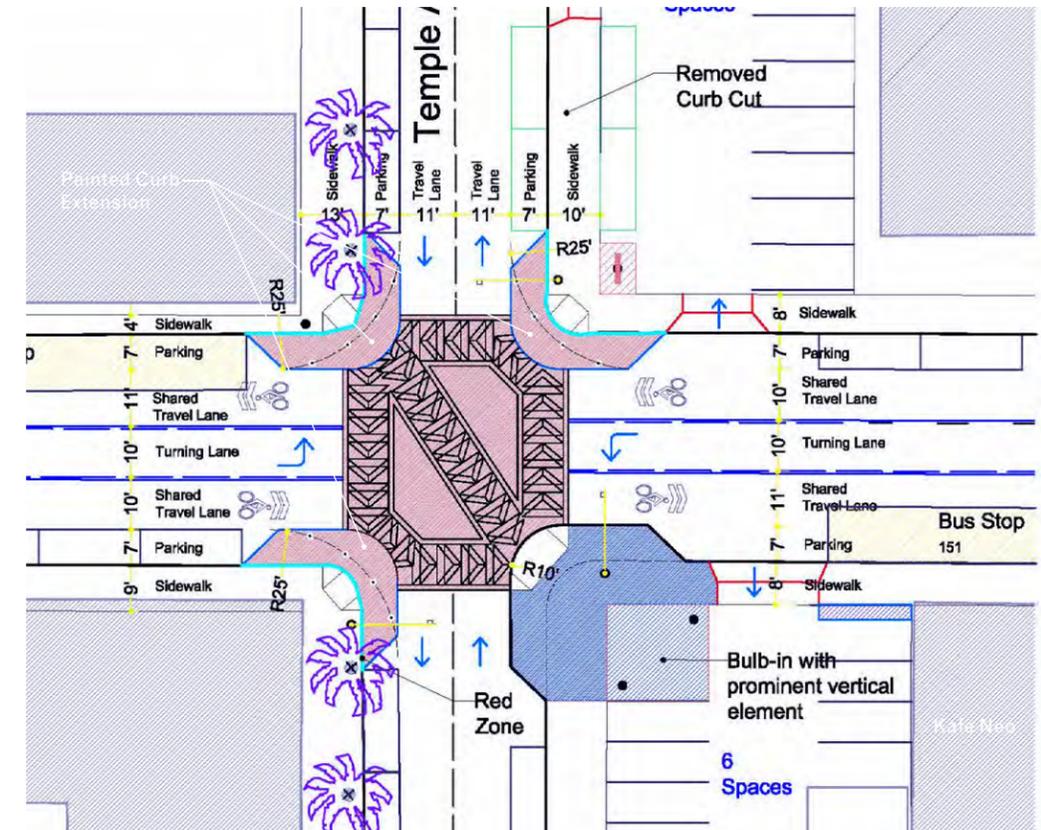
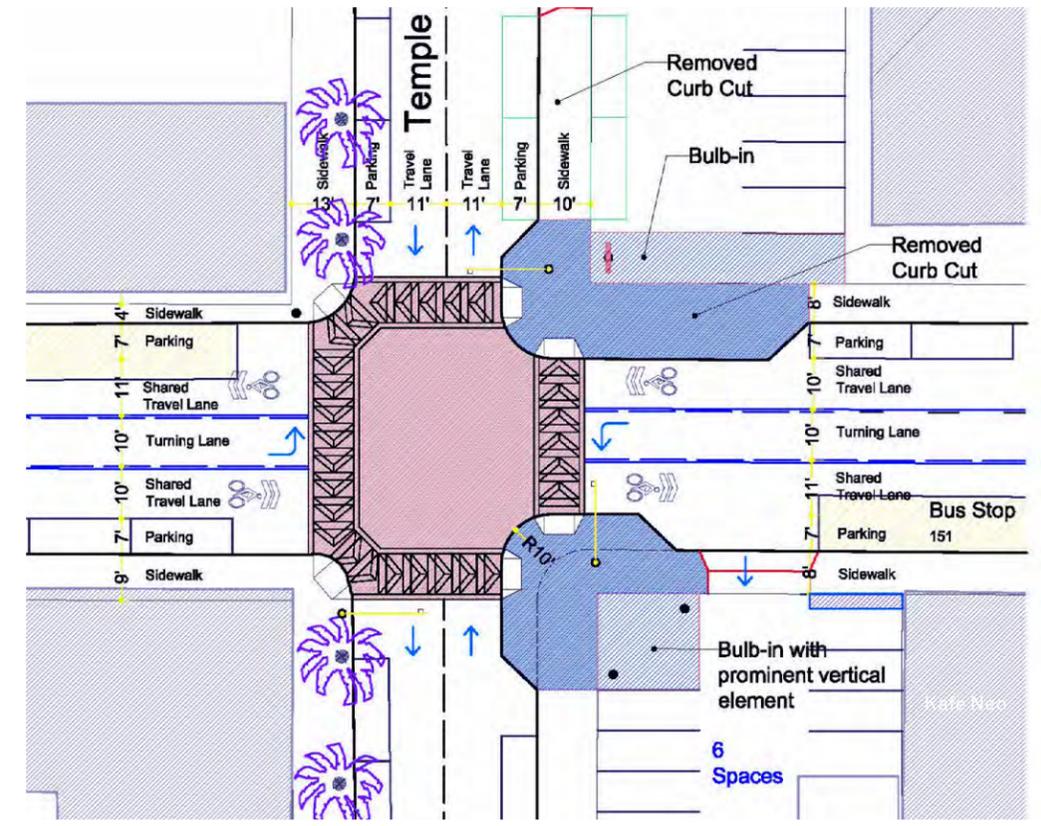


Fig. 43: Temple Intersection, option B: This option has two bulb-outs on the west side of the intersection. It removes one curb cut (and an existing entrance to a parking lot) and uses this additional space for a new bulb-out.

In both scenarios, the bulb-in on the southwest corner should have a prominent vertical element to give visibility for the business.



Funding Opportunities

There is the potential to use 1) matching funds for Metro grants, 2) supplemental funds once grant funding is in place, or 3) to apply for other grants such as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) “Our Town” program or from the Knight Foundation as a means of funding targeted [wayfinding](#), [public art](#), [parklets](#), landscaping and other such [placemaking](#) elements suggested in the visioning study. Funding from outside sources, whether public, foundation, or private, could make the difference in leveraging the seed money committed by the Vice Mayor to enhance a more substantial segment of 4th Street in a more significant, impactful way.

Next Steps

As mentioned, additional studies, analysis, and community process is required to test the viability of the options outlined in this report. This includes potentially a traffic analysis that considers the volume and speeds of traffic at different times of day, and pedestrian counts. In addition, conversations with property and business owners will be critical to developing the “bulb-ins” and “bulb-outs” and streetscape improvements. Additional community process will help refine the preferred features and design of the [crosswalks](#), possible [curb extensions](#), and the “bulb-ins” and “bulb-outs.”

4th Street has a dynamic, engaged community and future efforts should build on the community base in place and the momentum of Retro Row.

Fig. 44: A vignette of a possible design vision for 4th Street at Almond Avenue (looking east). This is one recommended pilot project location.



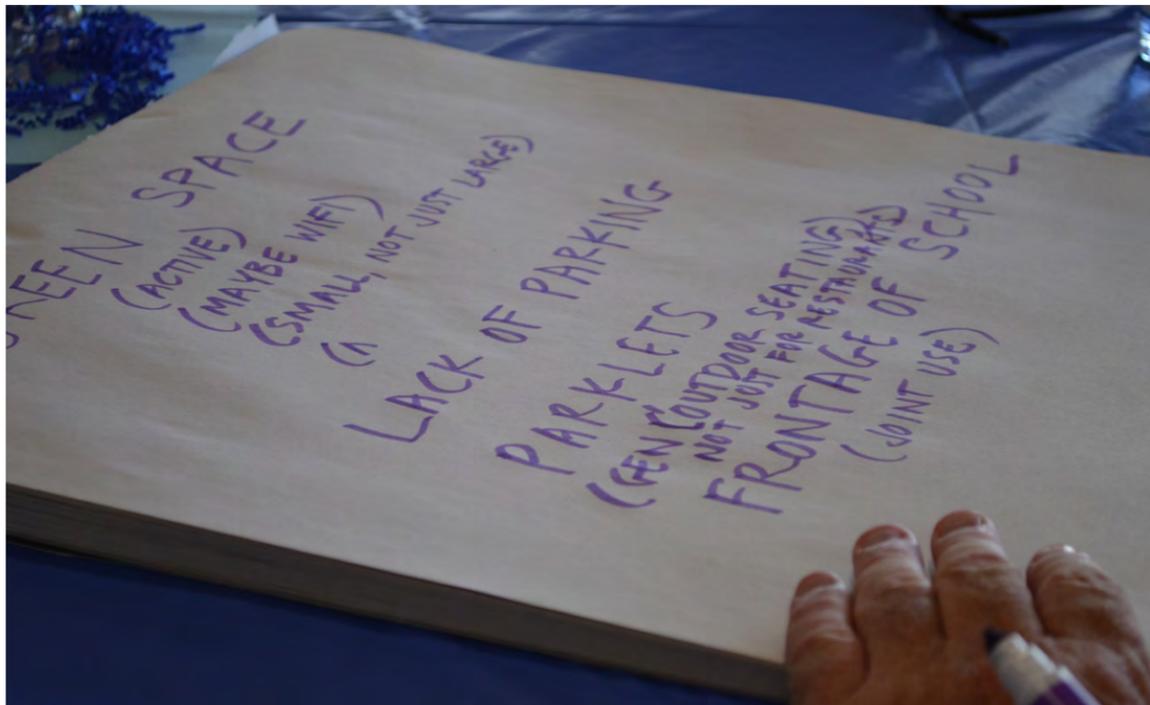


Fig. 45: 4th Street community workshop. At the workshops “scribes” kept track of the ideas and concerns from the community, including concepts such as [parklets](#) and the types of community or public space desired.



Fig. 46: At the community workshops, the city staff and consultants would present short powerpoint presentations on the progress of the [Visioning Study](#) and the recommendations. Presentations from the public workshops were posted online so community members could review the materials.



Fig. 47: Break-out groups allowed small group discussions.

Glossary

Bulb-In Bulb-Ins utilize excess land fronting the street for specific uses which will contribute to and create a more continuously animated street frontage. Examples include pop-up kiosks, outdoor dining, or bike parking.

Bulb-Out Bulb-outs, also known as neck-downs, curb extensions, or bumpouts, are created by extending the sidewalk at corners or mid-block. Bulb-outs are intended to increase safety, calm traffic, and provide extra space along sidewalks for user amenities.

Neighborhood Destinations Neighborhood destinations draw residents from adjacent neighborhoods as well as passersby or other local residents. These might include coffee shops, vintage stores, or specialty grocery.

Painted Curb Extension Painted curb extensions offer a low cost alternative to traditional bulb-outs while still providing the same benefits.

Parklet A parklet is a sidewalk extension, or the occupation of parking spaces within the roadway, that provides public space and amenities for people using the street.

Pedestrian-friendly Oasis A pedestrian oasis can be a pedestrian refuge island in the middle of a wide street, or a bulb-out that provides additional safety to pedestrians crossing the street. It enhances the feeling of safety by providing people walking with additional visibility and a refuge from moving vehicles.

Pedestrian Itinerary Pedestrian itineraries are very important when designing walkable neighborhoods. Ideally, there are groups of businesses nearby so people can “park once” and walk to various destinations. How one walks from shop to shop, or car to store, is critical for businesses to thrive.

Pedestrian Node Pedestrian activity tends to happen in clumps, rather than even spread out throughout a street. These nodes occur where there are Pedestrian Destinations.

Pilot Project To test design or programming ideas, planners, cities, and businesses often identify a Pilot Project. This project will be a small-scale test of a large-scale idea.

Placemaking is about the planning, design, and management of public spaces of all scales. The goal is public spaces that promote social cohesion and a community’s vibrancy and well being.

Pop-up kiosk Pop-up kiosks, or pop-up retail, is a short-term, temporary retail space. This might take place in a vacant storefront or in a separate kiosk that occupies a vacant lot, a park, or the street.

Traffic Calming Traffic calming devices slow or reduce motor-vehicle traffic while improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Visioning Study A Visioning Study is a community-based design and planning process that which the community, with the assistance of the city (and sometimes consultants), collectively work together to determine a shared vision for the future of a place.



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4th Street Corridor Visioning Study

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