

Our CONGRESS AVENUE ENVISION!

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS
URBAN DESIGN INITIATIVE

DOWNTOWN COMMISSION
MARCH 20, 2019

AGENDA

Introduction

Timeline | Existing Initiatives | Public Engagement | Next Steps

Balance the Avenue

Mobility Overview | Street Space Allocation | Ann W. Richards Congress Ave Bridge
Bike & Scooter Lanes | Curbside Management & Flex Parking

Pedestrian Realm

Congress Avenue for All | Defining the Sidewalk | Seating & Furnishing
Lighting | Trees | Green Infrastructure | Ann W. Richards Congress Ave Bridge

Design Concepts & Placemaking

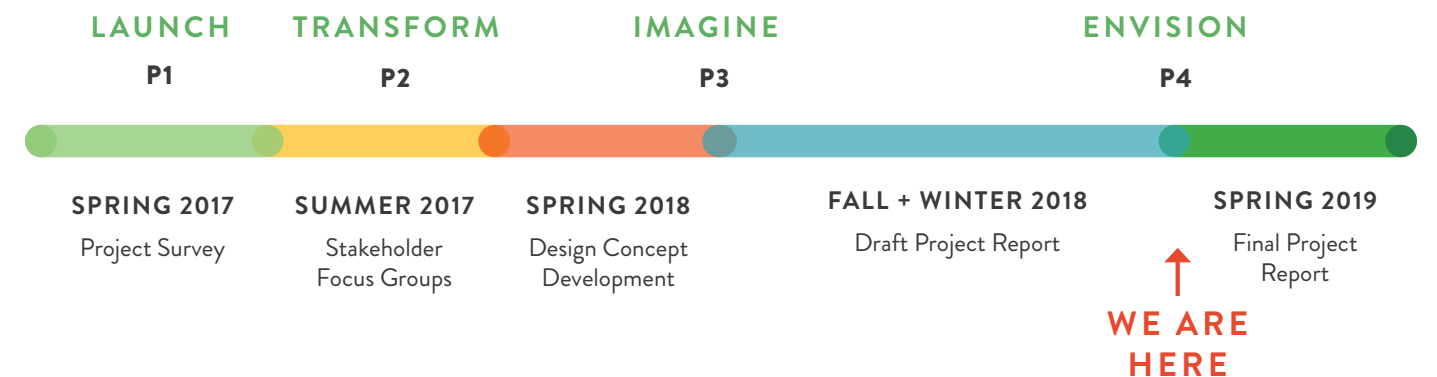
Civic Stage | Heart of Austin | Green Gateways | Vibrant Crossings

Implementation



Our CONGRESS AVENUE

is a great Texas people place - the cultural, historic and commercial spine of downtown Austin where people come to **share, celebrate and create a bright future.**



EXISTING INITIATIVES



XYZ Atlas Congress



Our Austin Story

Final Plan as Adopted on June 16th, 2016

SOUTH CENTRAL WATERFRONT
VISION FRAMEWORK PLAN



June 2016  Austin, Texas



Great Streets Initiative



Downtown Austin Master Plan, 2011

Launch

PUBLIC EVENT # 1

Demonstrated the existing conditions and challenges of the corridor today

161
Attendees

2,320+
Comment Cards
517 in person
1,830+ online

ENVIRONMENT

Congress Avenue is a mini-valley that...

SOCIAL EQUITY

The 1928 "A City / Austin, Texas" call...

CULTURE & HISTORY

There are 46 locally designated landmarked buildings that front the Avenue, four of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places—Capitol Building, Western Telephone Building, the theatre, and the bakery. In addition, Congress Avenue is a National Register...

ECONOMICS

...centration of ...ted along ...nd around

MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

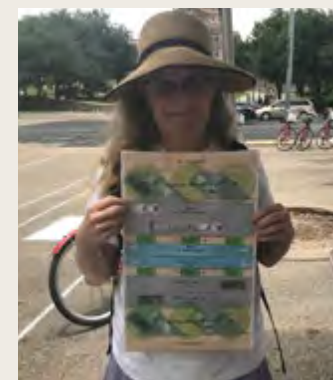
Congress Avenue is an important route for bicyclists to get across Lady Bird Lake and get to the Butler Hike & Bike Trail along the Lake. Bicycle traffic across the Congress Avenue Bridge is increasing and is among the highest in the city.



Transform

PUBLIC EVENT # 2

The second public event was held at various locations along Congress Avenue on June 2-3, 2017.



Build a Street

Transform

PUBLIC EVENT # 2

Activations and pop-up events along the Avenue demonstrated potential streetscape design elements.



Imagine

PUBLIC EVENT # 3

The third public event invited Austin residents to discuss and evaluate different concepts for Congress Avenue



Imagine

PUBLIC EVENT # 3

Common Elements

SIDEWALKS FOR PEOPLE

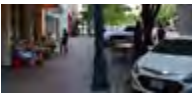
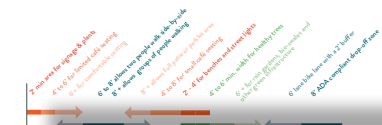
Common Elements

Congress Avenue is one of Austin's most iconic places, lined with local businesses, cultural institutions, and global offices. The design of the Avenue will respect its status as a National Historic District and provide a spacious and dynamic tree-shaded public realm that connects and supports these destinations with places for people to stroll, mingle, and participate in urban life.

SUPPORTING KEY THEMES

- CULTURE & HISTORY
- ECONOMICS
- SOCIAL EQUITY
- ENVIRONMENT

POTENTIAL DESIGN



Existing Conditions
Most of the ROW is currently dedicated to vehicles, leaving minimal sidewalk and public space.



Precedent
Wider sidewalks that are inviting and include an array of public amenities.

Station 4
Public Event 3: Imagine!

ACTIVE GROUND FLOORS

Common Elements

In many places along Congress Avenue active ground floor uses such as cafés, retail, event venues, and busy building lobbies animate the sidewalks today. However, large stretches of the Avenue are lifeless due to blank facades, empty storefronts, and few building entries. Urban design guidelines for Congress Avenue will improve ground floor activations through a variety of strategies.

SUPPORTING KEY THEMES

- SOCIAL EQUITY
- CULTURE & HISTORY
- ECONOMICS



EXISTING CONDITIONS
Ground floor conditions vary greatly along the Avenue. Sidewalks are enlivened by uses such as Royal Blue, yet empty just blocks away due to outback lobbies and limited active ground floor uses. South of the Bridge, surface parking greatly diminishes the pedestrian experience of the Avenue.

Station 4
Public Event 3: Imagine!

SAFE BIKE LANES

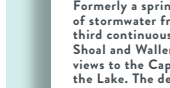
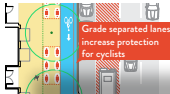
Common Elements

Despite a lack of bike facilities, Congress Avenue is a heavily-used route for cyclists. The Avenue intersects numerous urban bike routes as well as the trail system around Lady Bird Lake. The introduction of grade-separated bike lanes will create a safer route for cyclists of all ages and ability levels, strengthening the Avenue's role as central spine of Austin's bike network.

SUPPORTING KEY THEMES

- MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY
- ENVIRONMENT

POTENTIAL DESIGN



Existing Conditions
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Precedent
Wider sidewalks that are inviting and include an array of public amenities.

Station 4
Public Event 3: Imagine!

HEALTHY LANDSCAPES

Common Elements

Formerly a spring bed, Congress Avenue plays a central role in capture of stormwater from adjacent spaces. It has the potential to serve as a third continuous green finger through downtown—centered between Shoal and Waller Creeks. A majestic tree canopy will not only frame views to the Capitol, but provide continuous habitat from the Capitol to the Lake. The design of street tree planting and stormwater capture will be optimized to allow the Avenue to live up to this potential.

SUPPORTING KEY THEMES

- ECONOMICS
- ENVIRONMENT

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Tree growing conditions and spacing varies throughout the study area, weakening the trees' ability to provide strong definition and character to the Avenue.

PRECEDENTS



Permeable paving systems may be used in the sidewalk amenity zone to infiltrate stormwater, thereby reducing the amount of runoff.

Station 4
Public Event 3: Imagine!

FLEXIBLE TRANSIT

Common Elements

A circulator connecting Downtown Austin with South Congress will tie together several of the city's most dynamic neighborhoods, and support local businesses and institutions. A future transit hub at Riverside Drive would support mass transit envisioned by Project Connect, provide access from under-served neighborhoods, and help reduce congestion by providing an alternative to driving.

SUPPORTS KEY THEMES

- SOCIAL EQUITY
- ECONOMICS
- MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

POTENTIAL DESIGN



Existing Conditions
Most of the ROW is currently dedicated to vehicles, leaving minimal sidewalk and public space.



Precedent
Wider sidewalks that are inviting and include an array of public amenities.

Station 4
Public Event 3: Imagine!

SPACES FOR CELEBRATION

Common Elements

Congress Avenue is the political, cultural, historic, and symbolic center of Texas's capital city. The Avenue hosts a diverse range of parades, festivals and protests that can attract thousands of visitors throughout the year. A flexible design for the northernmost portion of the Avenue, adjacent to the Texas Capitol, will create a place that can function equally well as a parade route, festival ground and an urban street.

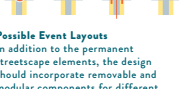
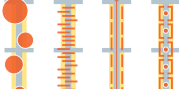
SUPPORTING KEY THEMES

- SOCIAL EQUITY
- CULTURE & HISTORY

POTENTIAL DESIGN



Existing Conditions
Most of the ROW is currently dedicated to vehicles, leaving minimal sidewalk and public space.



Precedent
Wider sidewalks that are inviting and include an array of public amenities.

Station 4
Public Event 3: Imagine!

REFRESH THE BRIDGE

Common Elements

The Ann W. Richards Congress Avenue Bridge connects two of Austin's most vibrant pedestrian districts. On spring and fall evenings, the bridge becomes a lively destination as residents and visitors gather to watch the Congress Avenue Bat Colony. The design for the bridge should reflect its importance as an iconic destination, provide safe bike and pedestrian movement, and create shaded spaces to linger, sightsee, and learn.

SUPPORTING KEY THEMES

- CULTURE & HISTORY
- MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY
- ENVIRONMENT



Existing Conditions
Most of the ROW is currently dedicated to vehicles, leaving minimal sidewalk and public space.

Station 4
Public Event 3: Imagine!

GOALS

- Increase capacity and safety for pedestrians and cyclists
- Respect the historic character and design of the bridge with any modifications
- Enhance the bridge as a destination
- Provide shade and greening opportunities



Precedents
Shade canopy size, location, and materials should respect the character and design of the bridge. Drought tolerant planting could be incorporated to help "green" the bridge.

Station 4
Public Event 3: Imagine!

REFRESH THE BRIDGE

Common Elements

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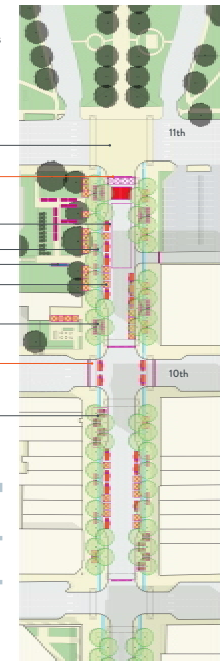
SUPPORTING KEY THEMES

- CULTURE & HISTORY
- MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY
- ENVIRONMENT



Existing Conditions
Most of the ROW is currently dedicated to vehicles, leaving minimal sidewalk and public space.

Station 4
Public Event 3: Imagine!

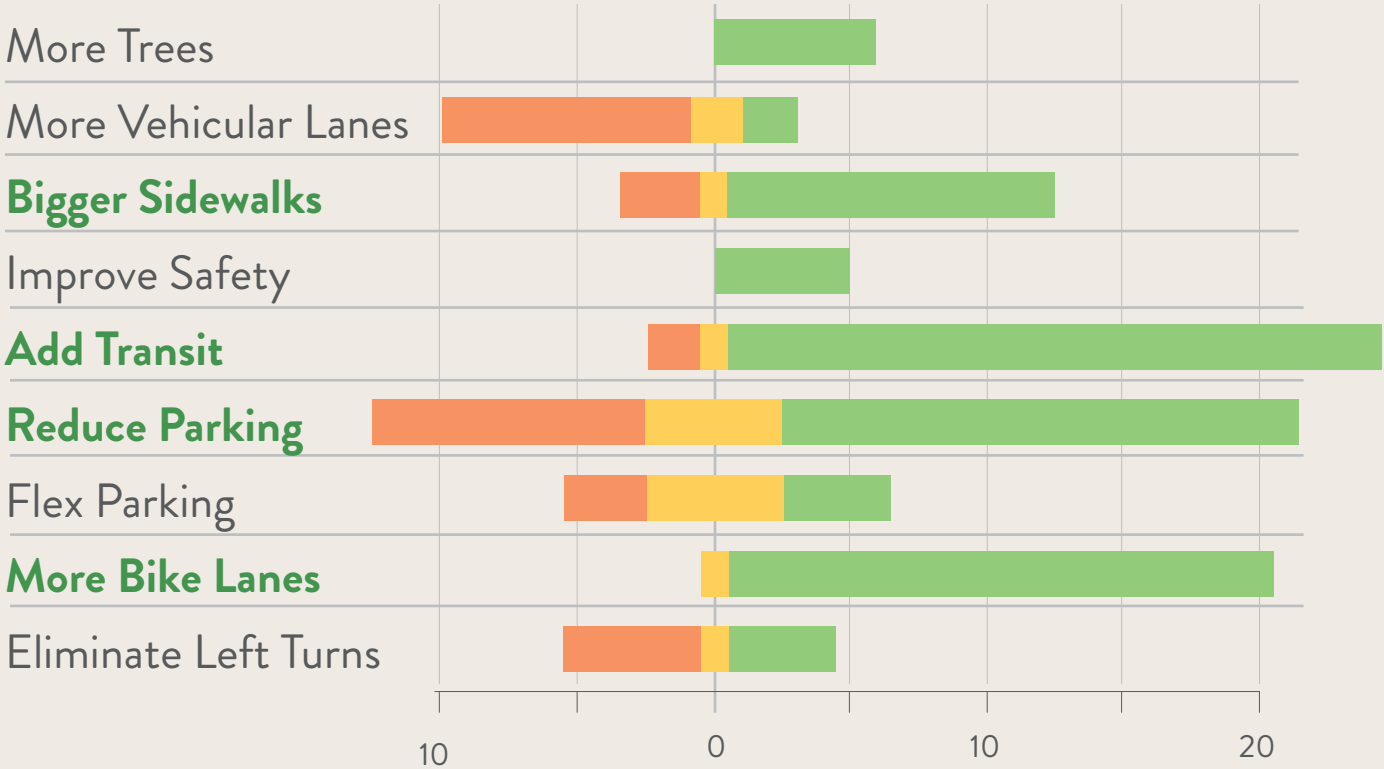


Possible Event Layouts
In addition to the permanent streetscape elements, the design should incorporate removable and modular components for different types and scales of events.

Station 4
Public Event 3: Imagine!

Imagine

PUBLIC EVENT # 3



Key Sentiments (Number of responses)

Agree Neutral Disagree

Station 5: BALANCE THE AVENUE

input opportunity

WHICH OPTION PROVIDES THE BEST OVERALL BALANCE FOR THE AVENUE?

(check one) ☒

HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THESE OPTIONS?

A

5 Lanes / 18' Sidewalk
Five travel lanes plus parking and raised bike lanes

Vehicular 43%

Parking 13%

Bike 13%

Sidewalk 30%

~10 parking spaces/block

B

5 Lanes Flex / 27' Sidewalk
Five flex-lanes including off-peak parking and raised bike lanes

Vehicular 25%

Parking/Flex 18%

Bike 13%

Sidewalk 43%

~16 parking space/block AT NON-PEAK TIMES

C

4 Lanes / 24' Sidewalk
Four travel lanes plus parking and raised bike lanes

Vehicular 35%

Parking 13%

Bike 13%

Sidewalk 38%

~10 parking spaces/block

A donut chart showing the distribution of responses for the three options. The center of the chart displays '249 responses'.

Option	Percentage
Existing	7%
Option A: 5 Lanes / 18' Sidewalk	15%
Option B: 5 Lanes Flex / 27' Sidewalk	41%
Option C: 4 Lanes / 24' Sidewalk	37%

NEXT STEPS

- ▶ Incorporate Feedback from Public Engagement
- ▶ City Council Approval of Amendment to Downtown Austin Plan
- ▶ Design Development & Engineering
- ▶ Phased Construction

OUR CONGRESS AVENUE: ENVISION!
Input Opportunity:
In your opinion, how well do the recommendations address the goals established by the community for the future of Congress Avenue?

SOCIAL EQUITY Ensure a welcoming, accessible, and representative space	MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY Balance mobility options along Congress Avenue	CULTURE & HISTORY Enhance Congress Avenue as a historic and cultural destination	ECONOMICS Amplify the economic strength and diversity of Congress Avenue	ENVIRONMENT Celebrate biodiversity and urban habitat in a functional, resilient streetscape design
<input type="radio"/> Very Well <input type="radio"/> Mostly <input type="radio"/> Somewhat <input type="radio"/> Not at All	<input type="radio"/> Very Well <input type="radio"/> Mostly <input type="radio"/> Somewhat <input type="radio"/> Not at All	<input type="radio"/> Very Well <input type="radio"/> Mostly <input type="radio"/> Somewhat <input type="radio"/> Not at All	<input type="radio"/> Very Well <input type="radio"/> Mostly <input type="radio"/> Somewhat <input type="radio"/> Not at All	<input type="radio"/> Very Well <input type="radio"/> Mostly <input type="radio"/> Somewhat <input type="radio"/> Not at All

Please use the back of this card to make any suggestions for how we could better address these goals



Draft Recommendations:

Balance the Avenue

- ▶ Mobility Overview
- ▶ Street Space Allocation
- ▶ Ann W. Richards
Congress Avenue Bridge
- ▶ Bike & Scooter Lanes
- ▶ Curbside Management & Flex Parking

3TH STREET
(HICKORY ST.) 100

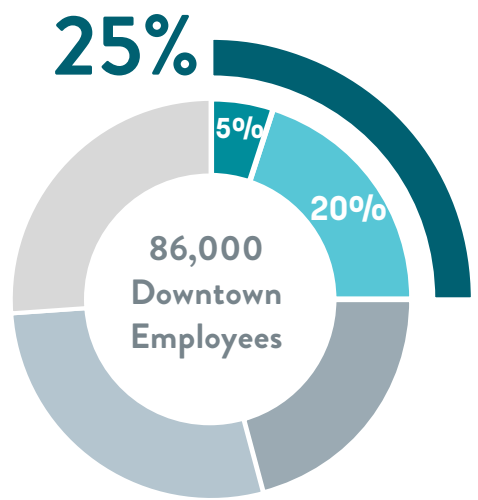
8th
100

Balance the Avenue

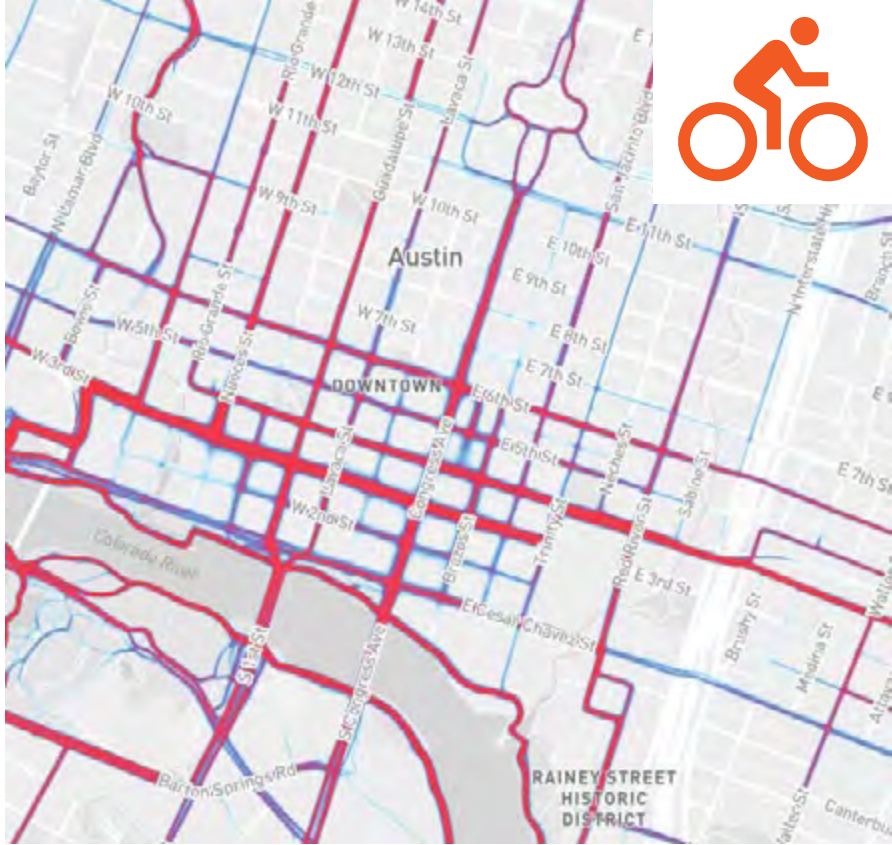
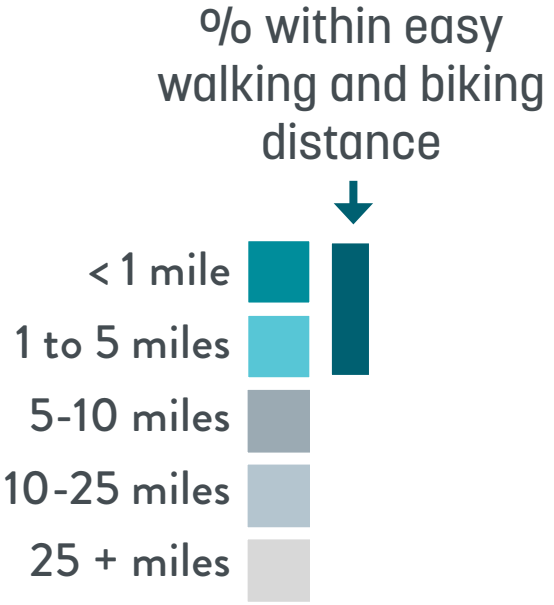
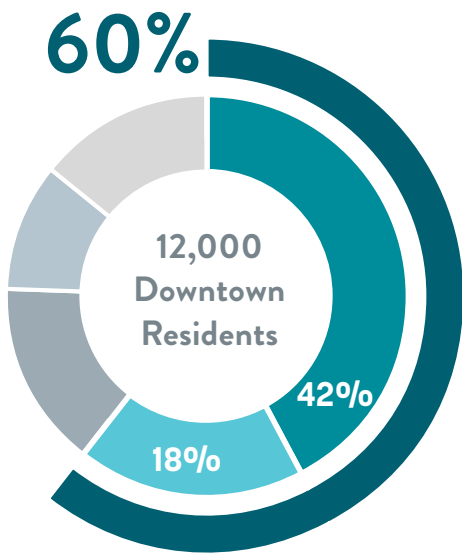


MOBILITY OVERVIEW: A MULTIMODAL AVENUE

Regional
Downtown Employees within
Walking or Biking Distance
from Work



Local
Downtown Residents within
Walking or Biking Distance
from Work

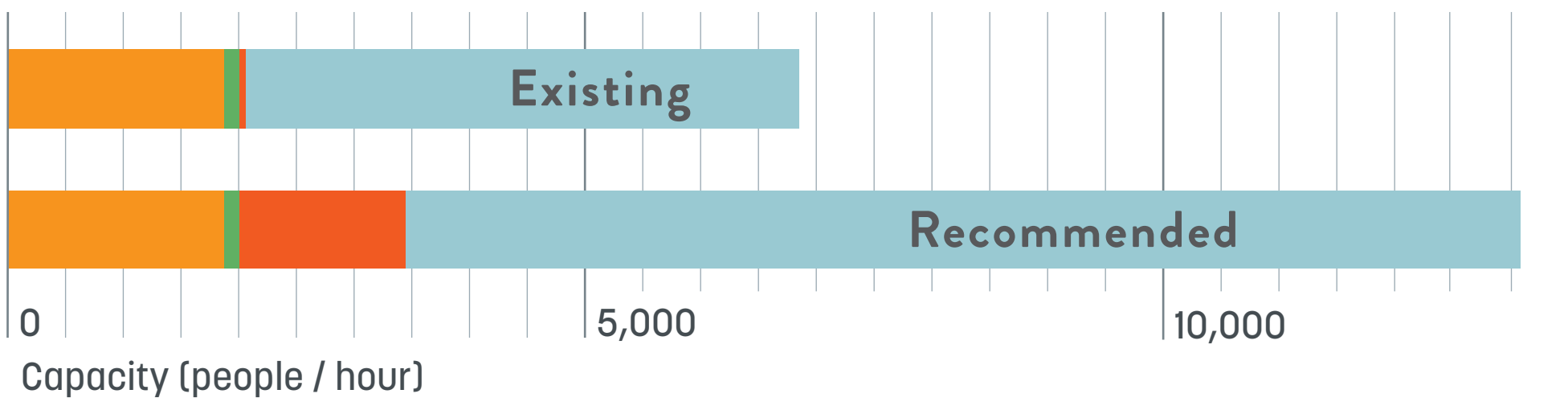


Existing Bike Heatmap



MORE ACCESS FOR ALL MODES

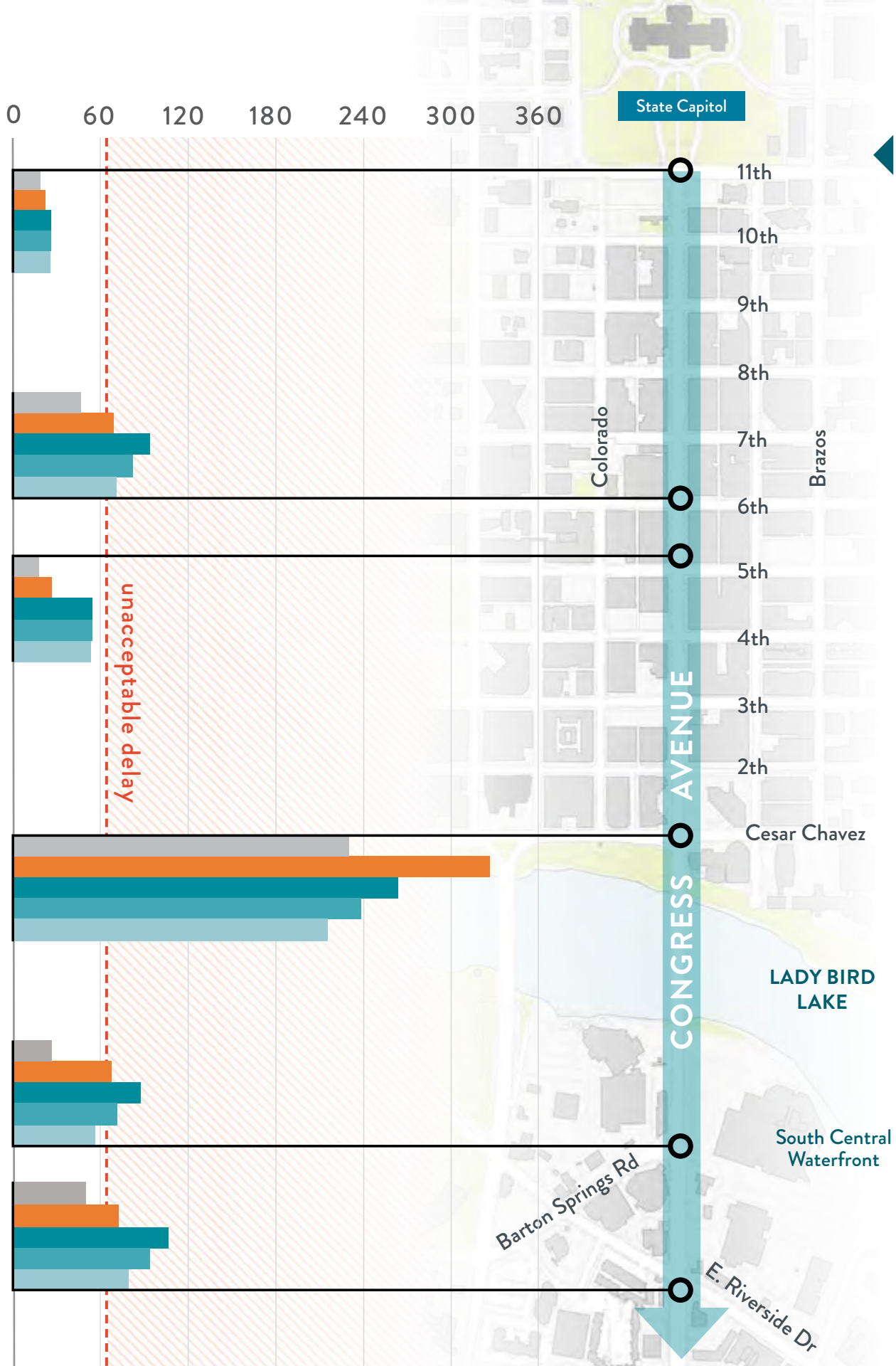
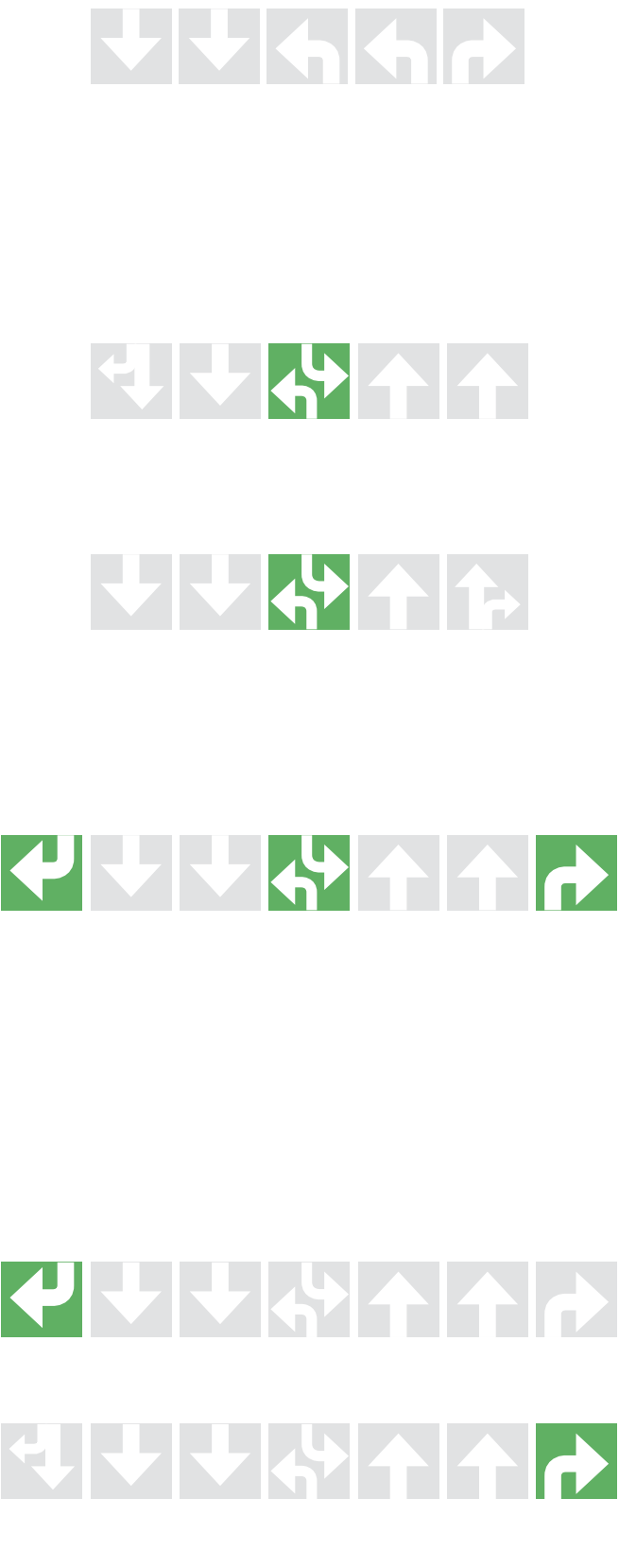
Motor Vehicle Transit Bike / Scooter Pedestrian



Existing Pedestrian Heatmap



MOBILITY OVERVIEW:
RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS



Impact of Recommended Improvements Over the Next 20 Years

Intersection Delay During PM Peak Traffic (Seconds)

- Existing
- 2040 No Build
- 2040 Alternative Low Mode Shift
- 2040 Alternative Medium Mode Shift
- 2040 Alternative High Mode Shift

Recommended Intersection Improvements in Green

STREET SPACE ALLOCATION: EXISTING

Parking:
~ 12 permanent spaces per block



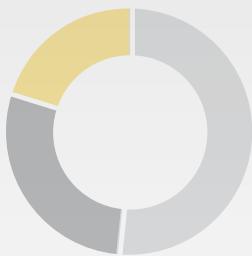
Left Turns:
Allowed with option for left turns



Allocation of Space

- Vehicular 52%
- Parking & Amenity Zone 28%
- Sidewalk 20%

Shared Bike Lane

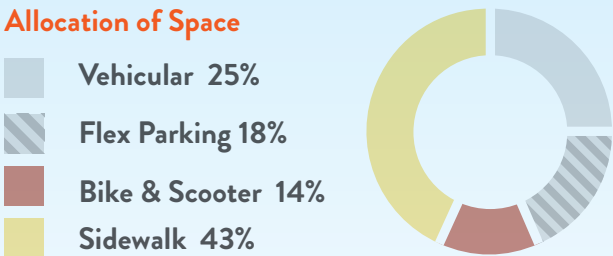


Pedestrian Zone	Parking & Amenity Zone	Travel Lane / Shared Bike Lane	Travel Lane	Travel Lane / Turn Lane	Travel Lane / Turn Lane	Travel Lane	Travel Lane / Shared Bike Lane	Parking & Amenity Zone	Pedestrian Zone
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STREET SPACE ALLOCATION: RECOMMENDED

Parking:
~ 16 spaces per block at off-peak times

Left Turns:
Allowed with dedicated lane



Pedestrian Zone	Amenity Zone	Bike / Scooter Zone	Flex Parking / Travel Lane / Circulator Lane	Travel Lane	Turn Lane	Travel Lane	Flex Parking / Travel Lane / Circulator Lane	Bike / Scooter Zone	Amenity Zone	Pedestrian Zone
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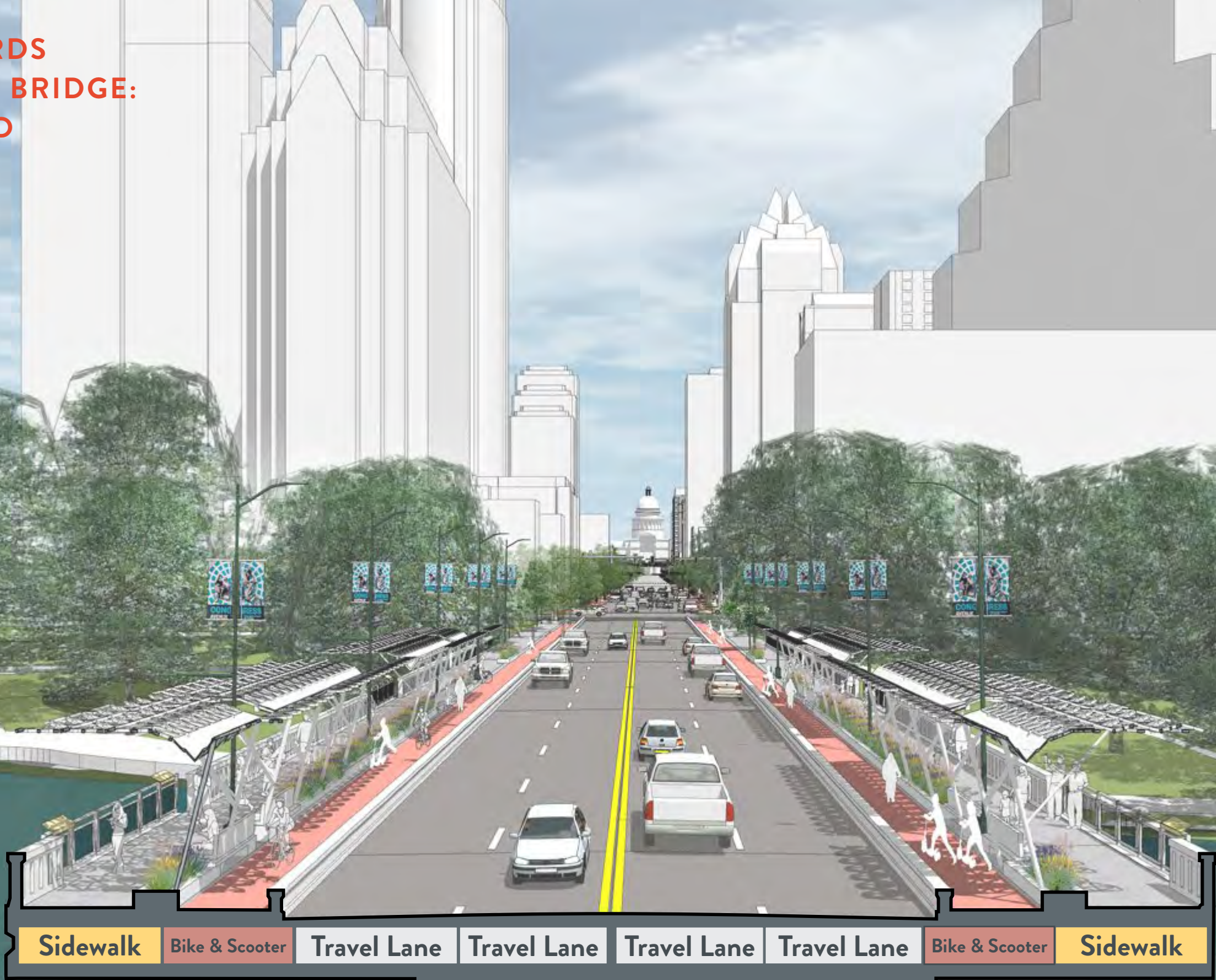
ANN W. RICHARDS
CONGRESS AVE BRIDGE:
EXISTING



Allocation of Space

- Vehicular 50%
- Bike / Sharrow 25%
- Sidewalk 25%

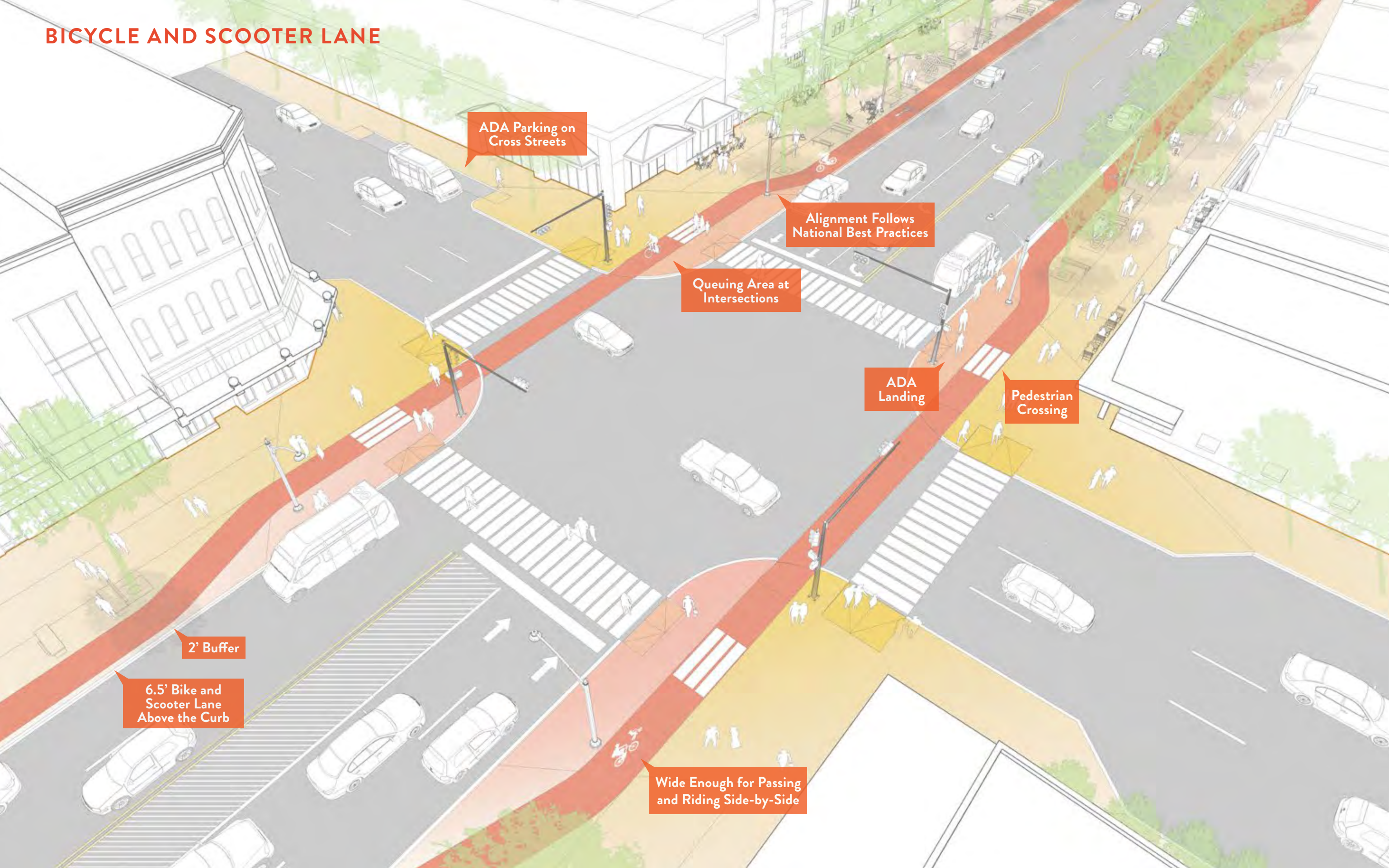
ANN W. RICHARDS
CONGRESS AVE BRIDGE:
RECOMMENDED



Allocation of Space

- Vehicular 50%
- Bike / Scooter 25%
- Sidewalk 25%

BICYCLE AND SCOOTER LANE



ADA Parking on Cross Streets

Alignment Follows National Best Practices

Queuing Area at Intersections

ADA Landing

Pedestrian Crossing

2' Buffer

6.5' Bike and Scooter Lane Above the Curb

Wide Enough for Passing and Riding Side-by-Side

BICYCLE AND SCOOTER LANE

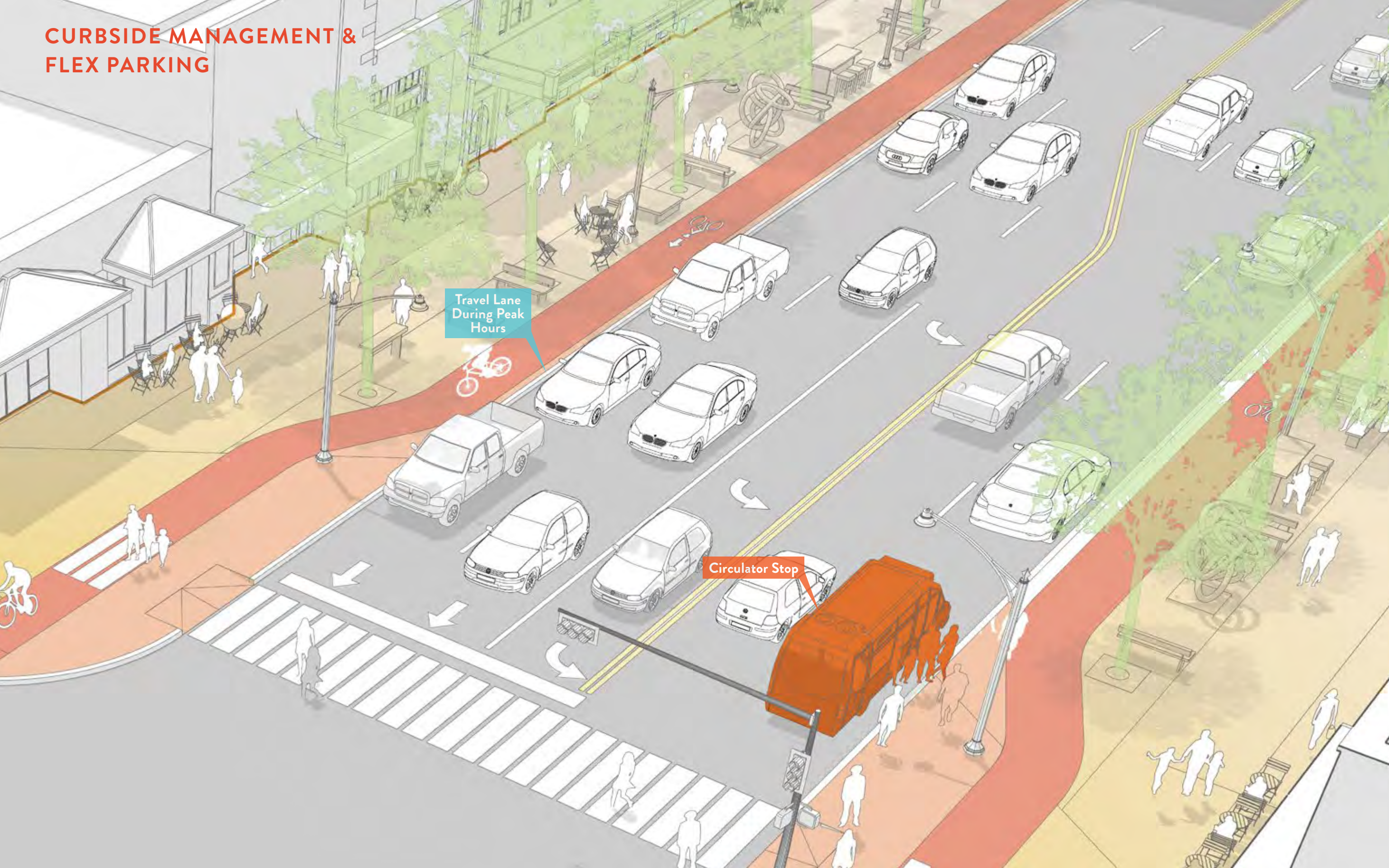


Space for Queuing
at Intersections

2' Wide Buffer

6.5' lane wide
enough for passing

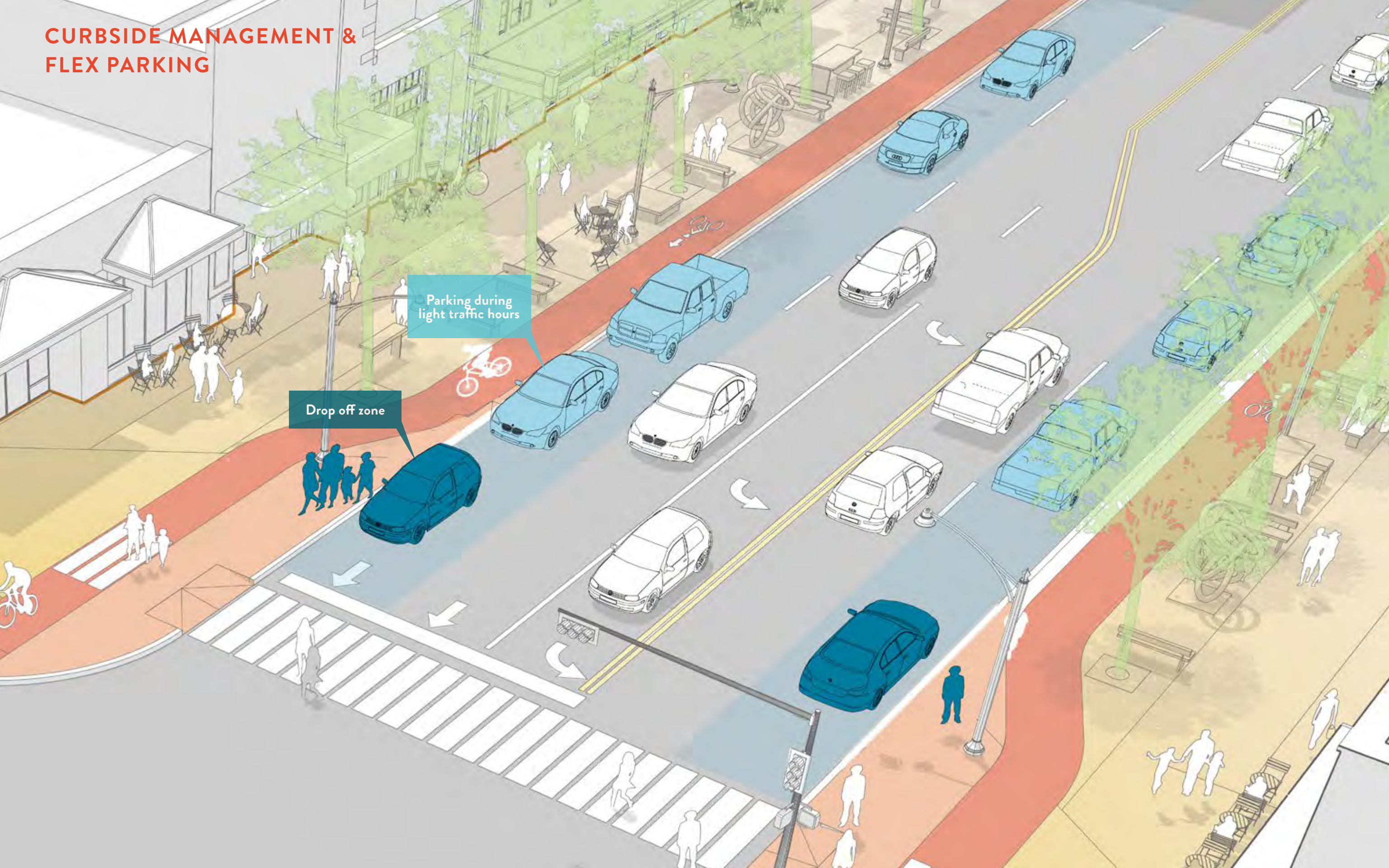
CURBSIDE MANAGEMENT & FLEX PARKING



Travel Lane
During Peak
Hours

Circulator Stop

CURBSIDE MANAGEMENT & FLEX PARKING



Draft Recommendations:

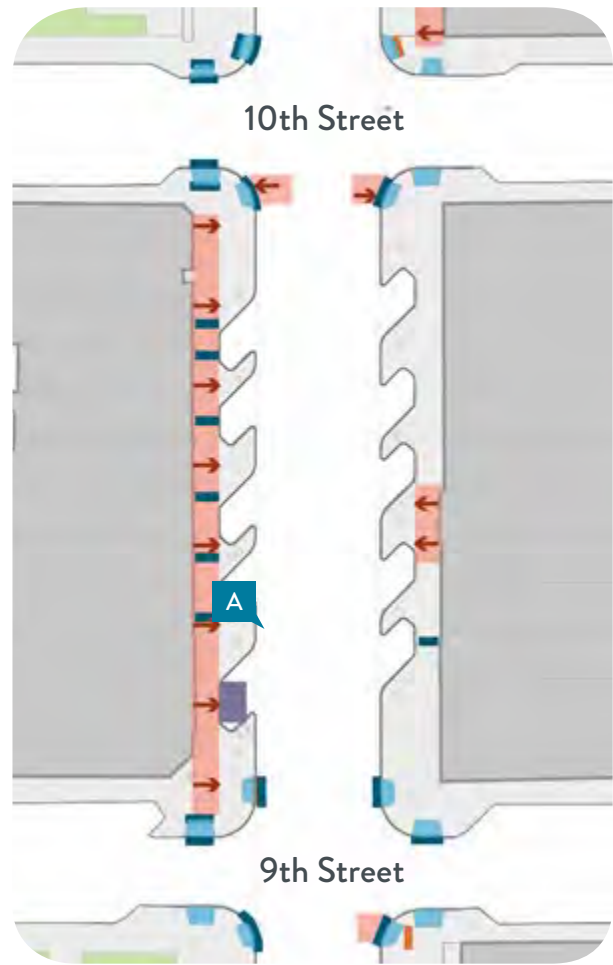
Pedestrian Realm

- ▶ Congress Avenue for All
- ▶ Defining the Sidewalk
- ▶ Seating & Furnishing
- ▶ Lighting
- ▶ Trees
- ▶ Green Infrastructure
- ▶ Ann W. Richards Congress Ave Bridge












Pedestrian Realm

CONGRESS AVENUE FOR ALL



Accessibility Issues

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|---|---|
|  | Cross-slope exceeds 2% |  | Protruding object in circulation path |
|  | Running-slope exceeds 5% |  | Accessible parking is non-compliant |
|  | Curb ramp slope exceeds 8.3% |  | Ground material is non-compliant |
|  | Horizontal opening exceeds 1/2" |  | Push button reach range or level clear floor is non-compliant |
|  | Vertical height exceeds 1/2" | | |

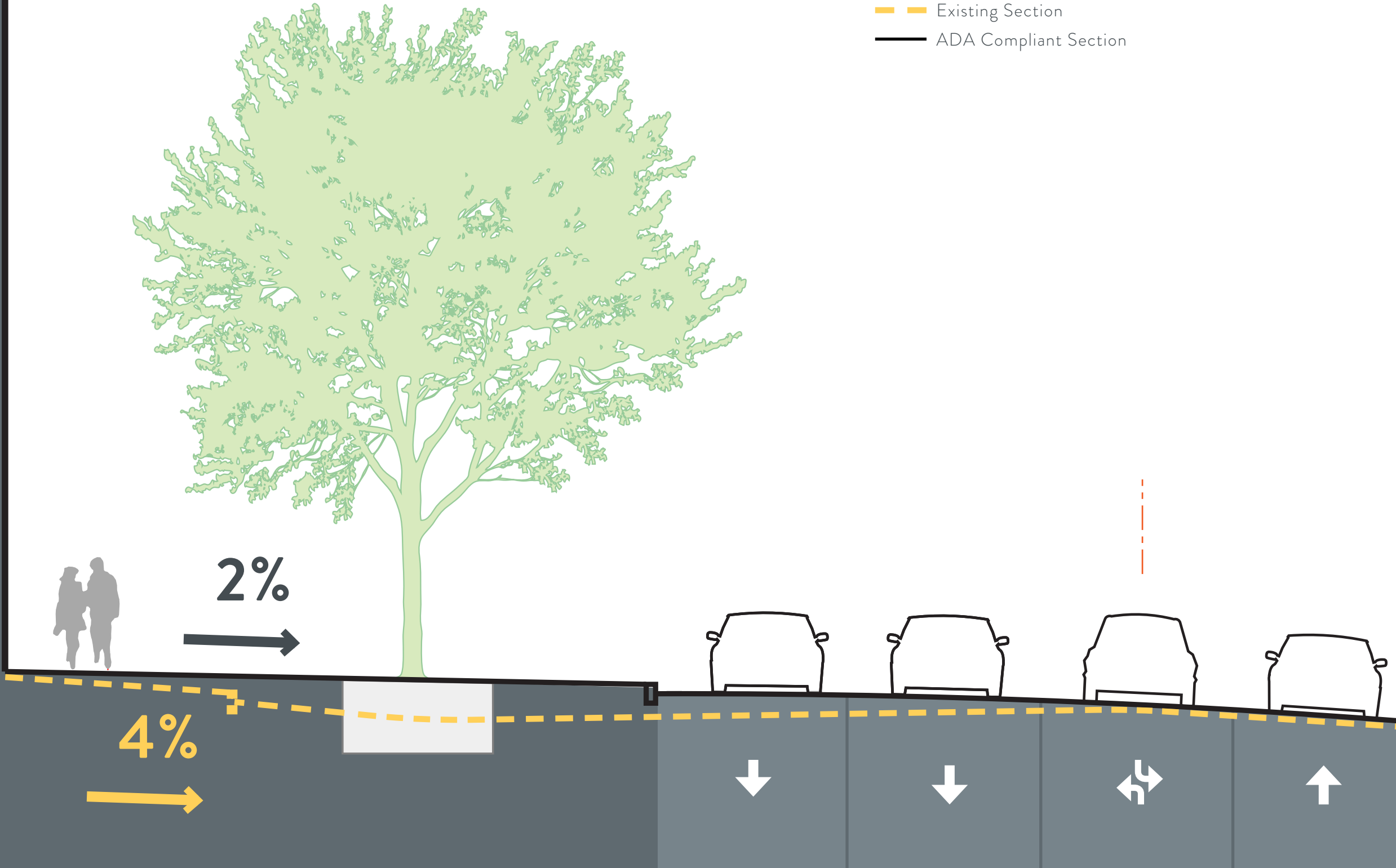


CONGRESS AVENUE FOR ALL:
CROSS SLOPES

Section @ 700 block

Recommended Cross-Slope

- Existing Section
- ADA Compliant Section



DEFINING THE SIDEWALK

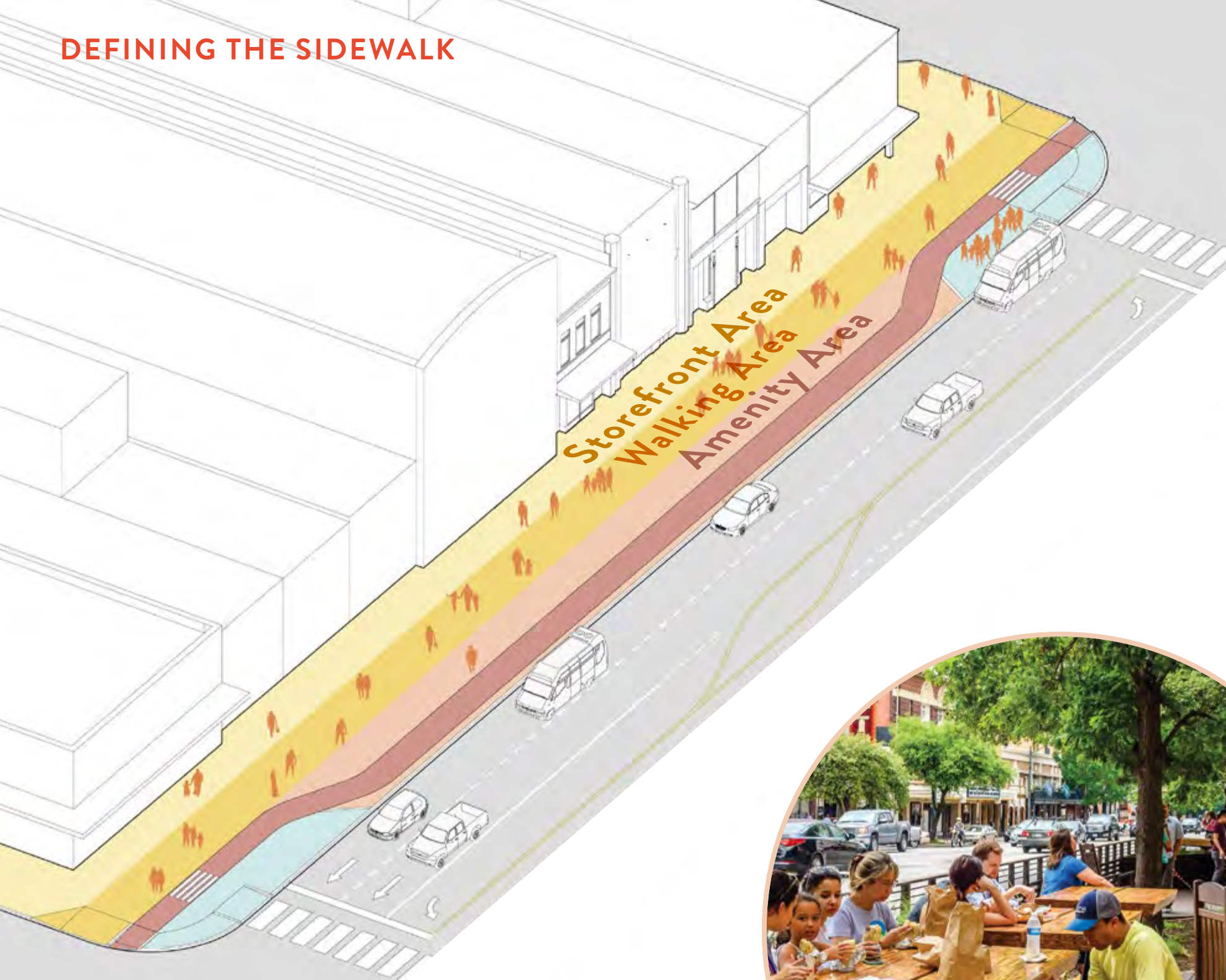


8' Storefront Area

9.5' Walking Area

8' Amenity Area

DEFINING THE SIDEWALK



Walking Area

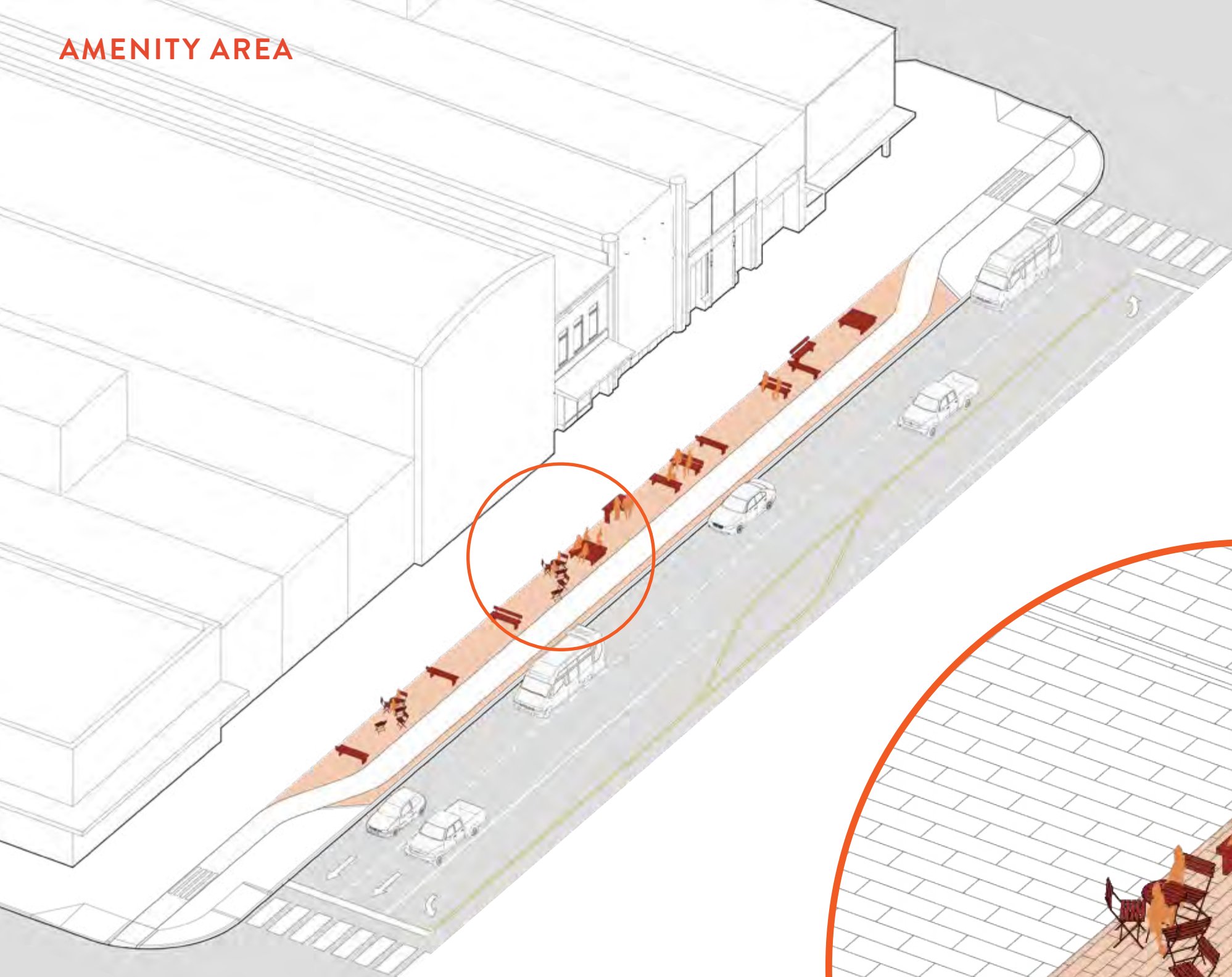


Amenity Area

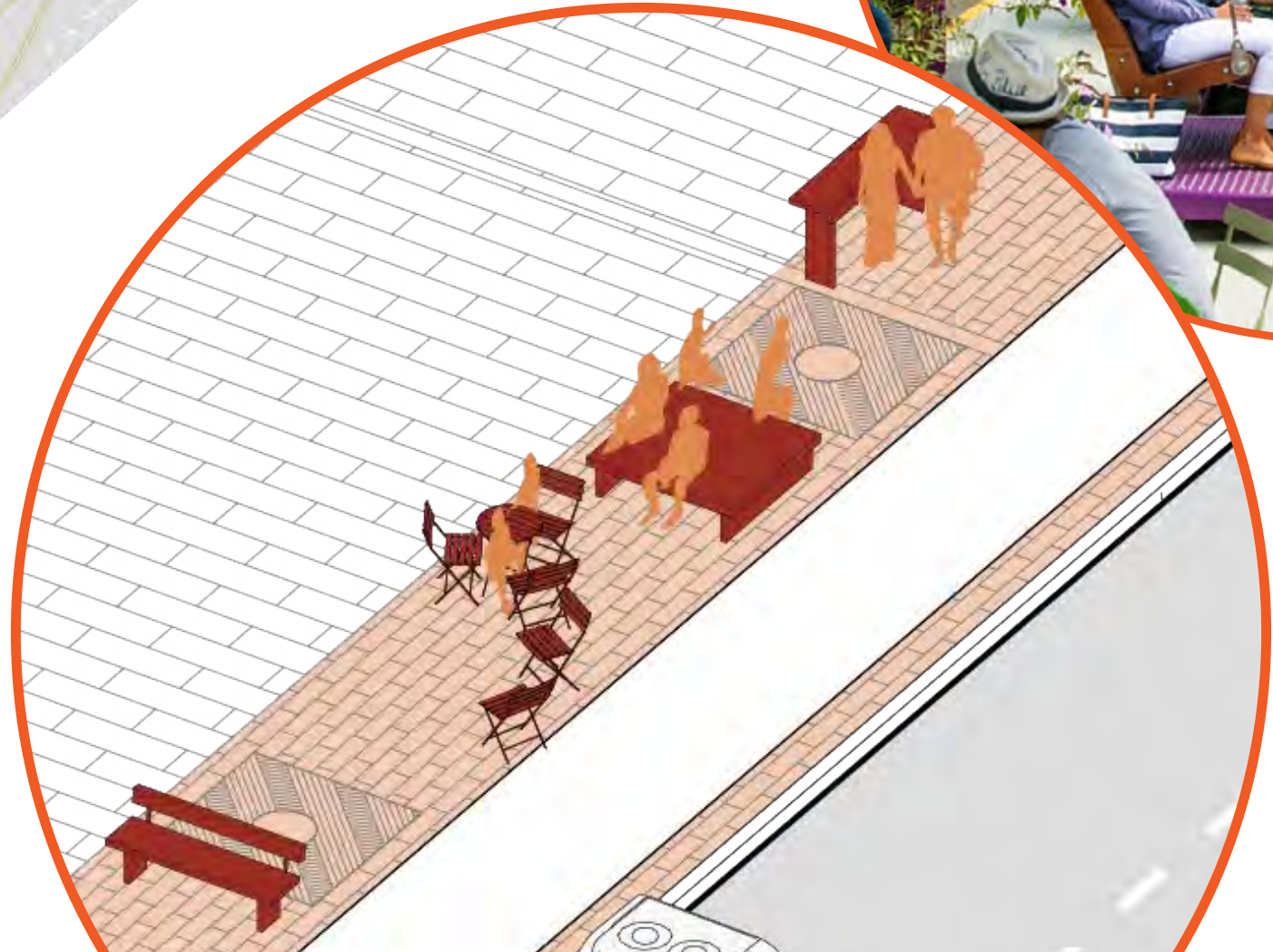


Storefront Area

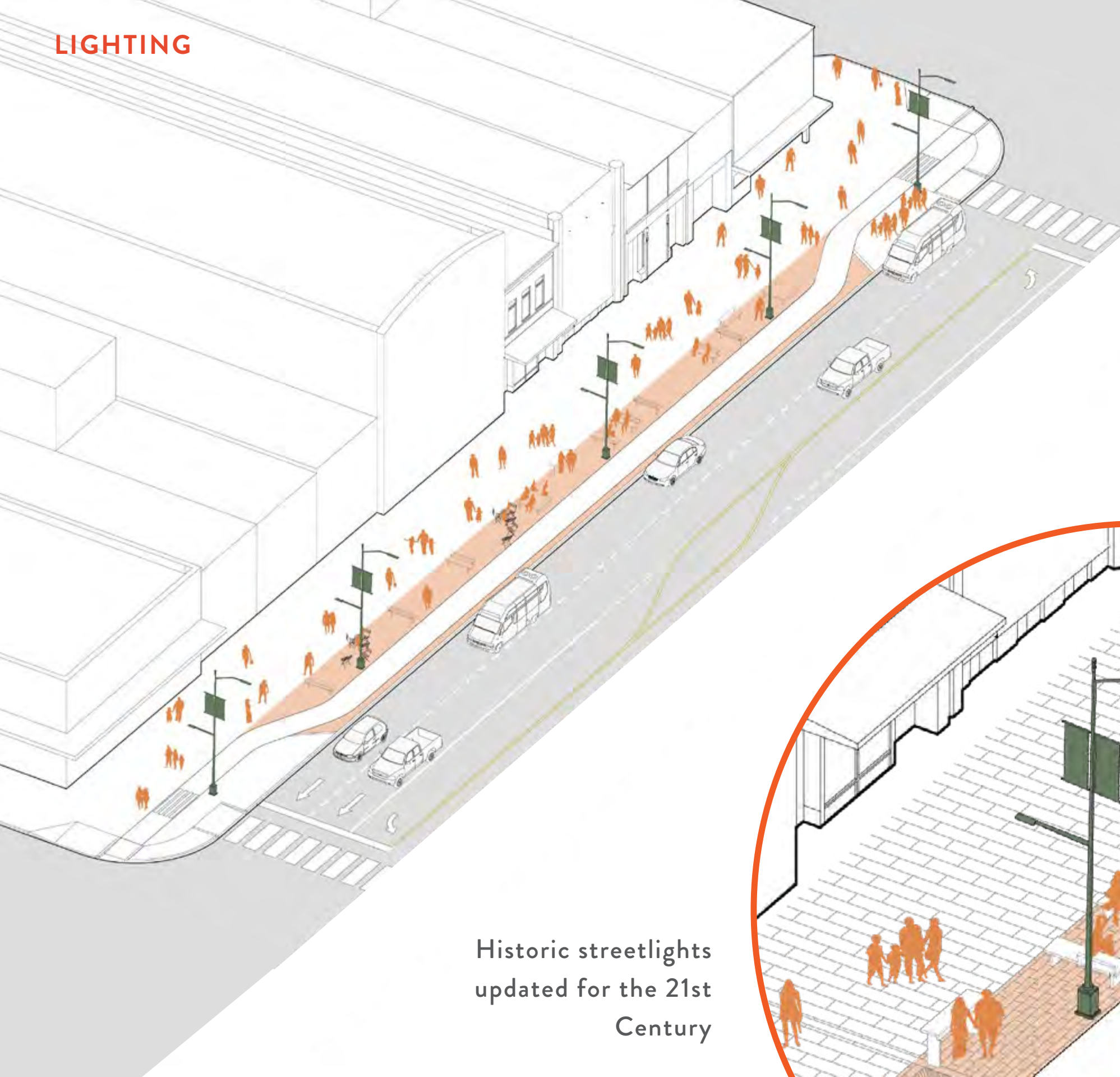
AMENITY AREA



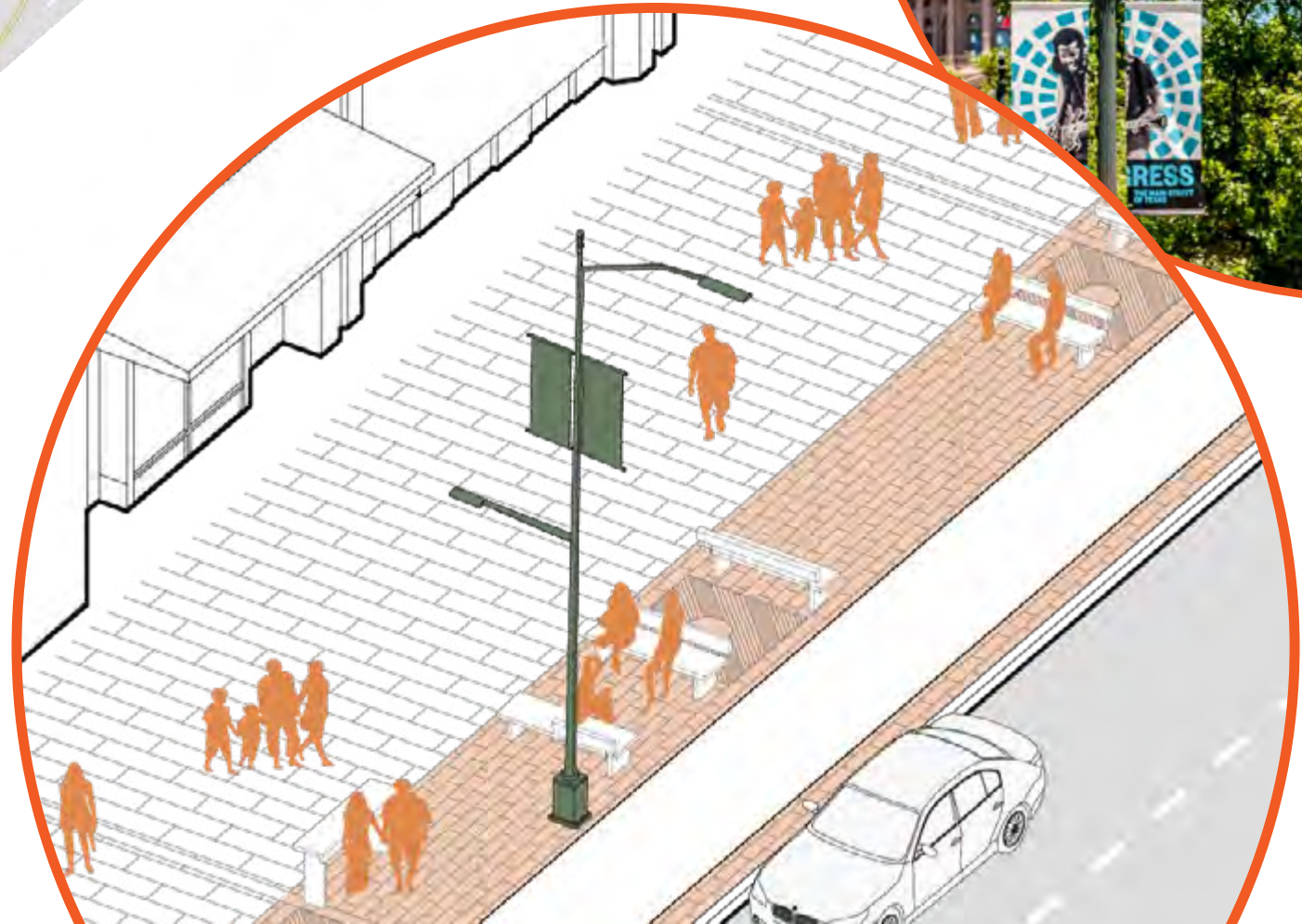
Spaces to Meet, Eat, Work,
Perform, and Tell Stories



LIGHTING



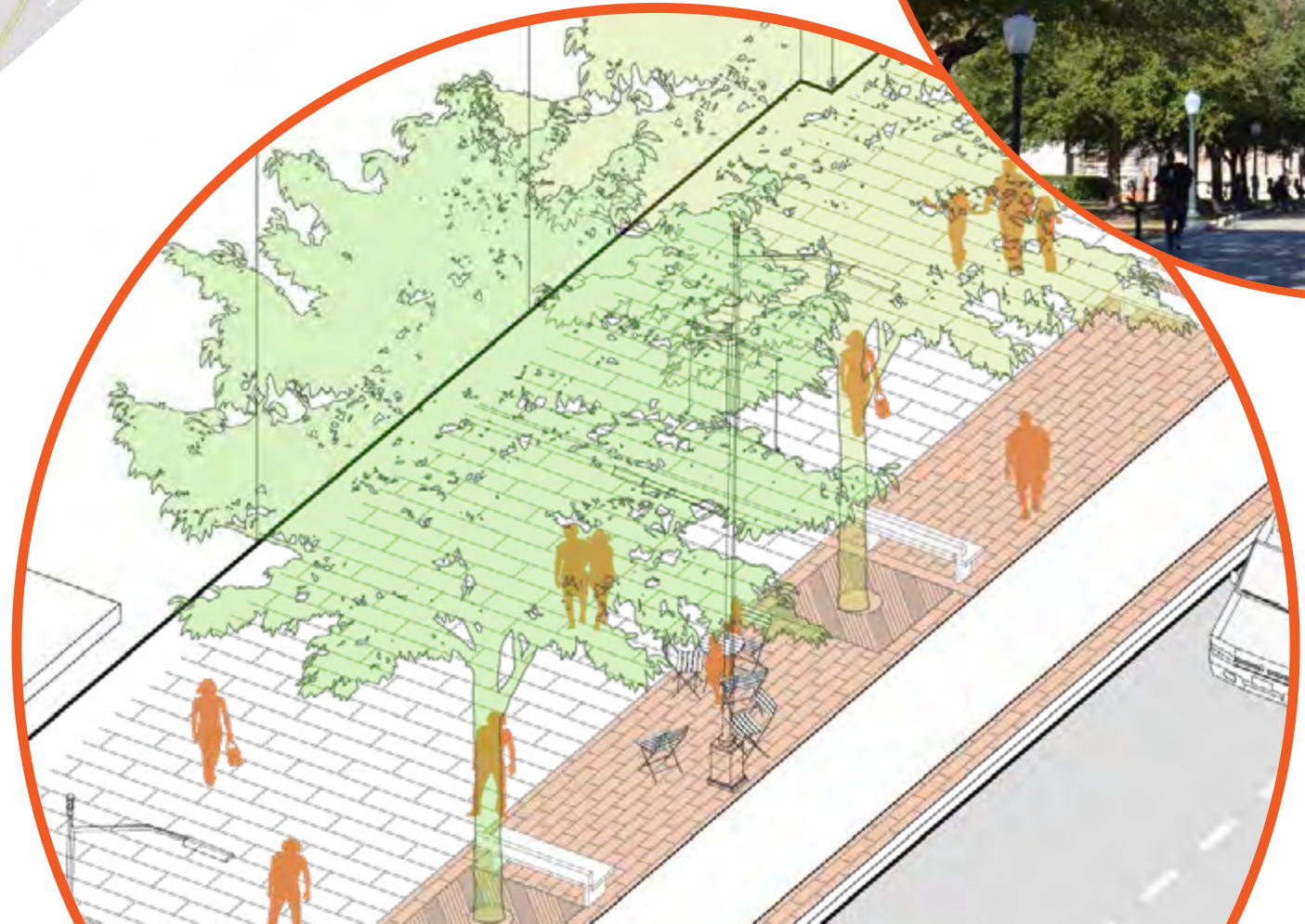
Historic streetlights
updated for the 21st
Century



TREE TYPES AND SPACING



A resilient mix of Texas
Oak trees



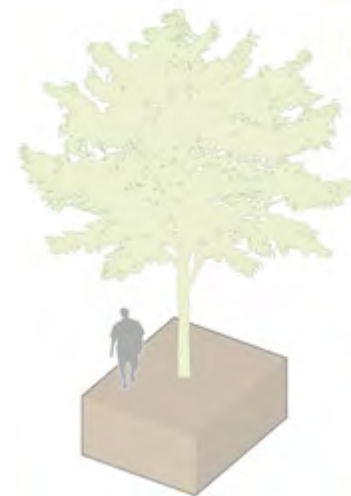
SOIL & TREE HEALTH



Soil volume directly
affects mature
canopy size



100 ft³



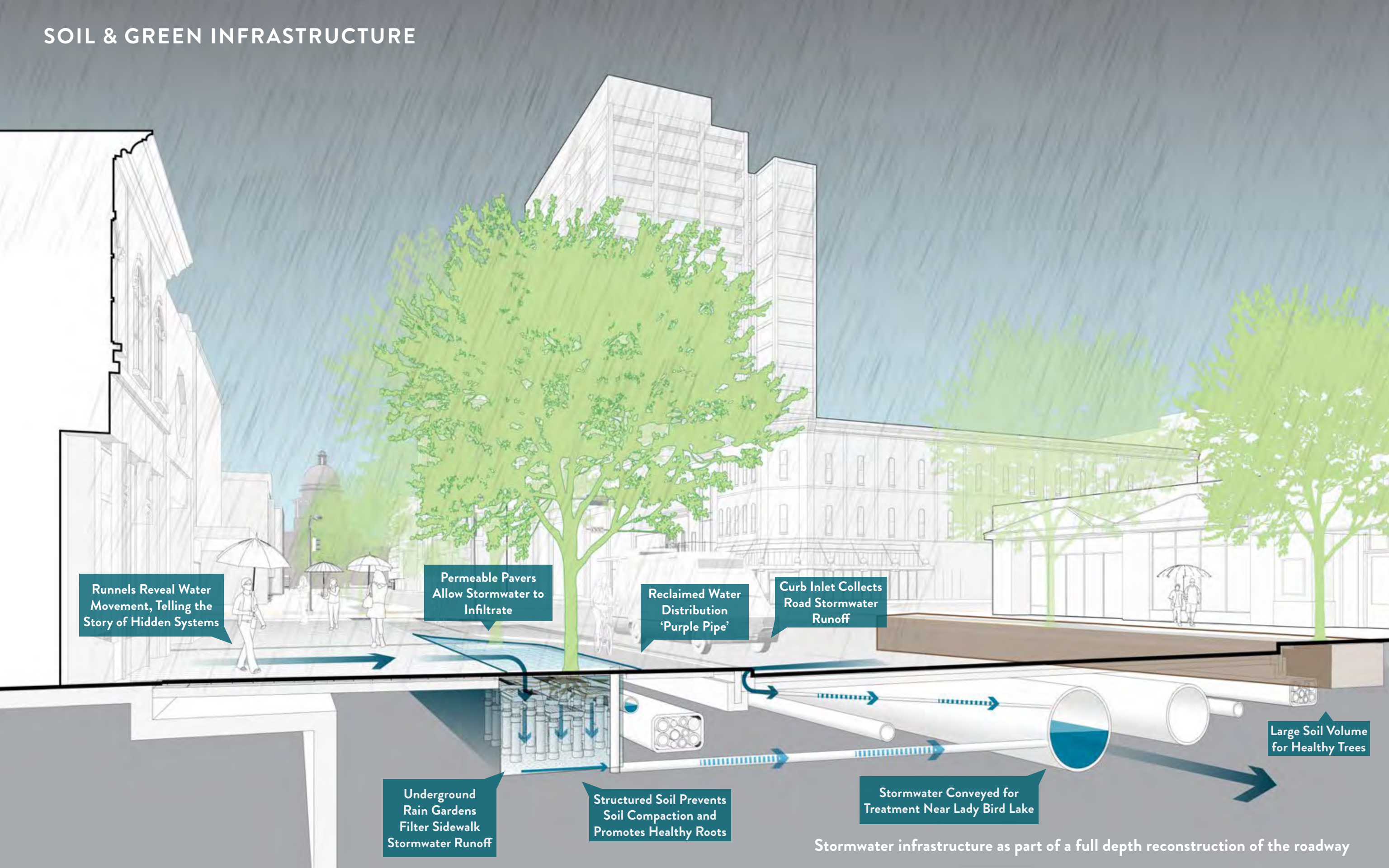
300 ft³



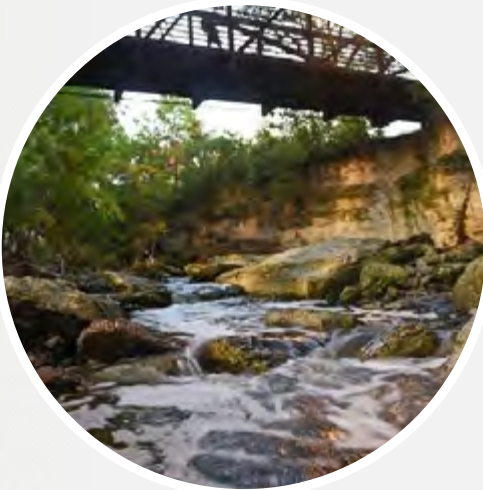
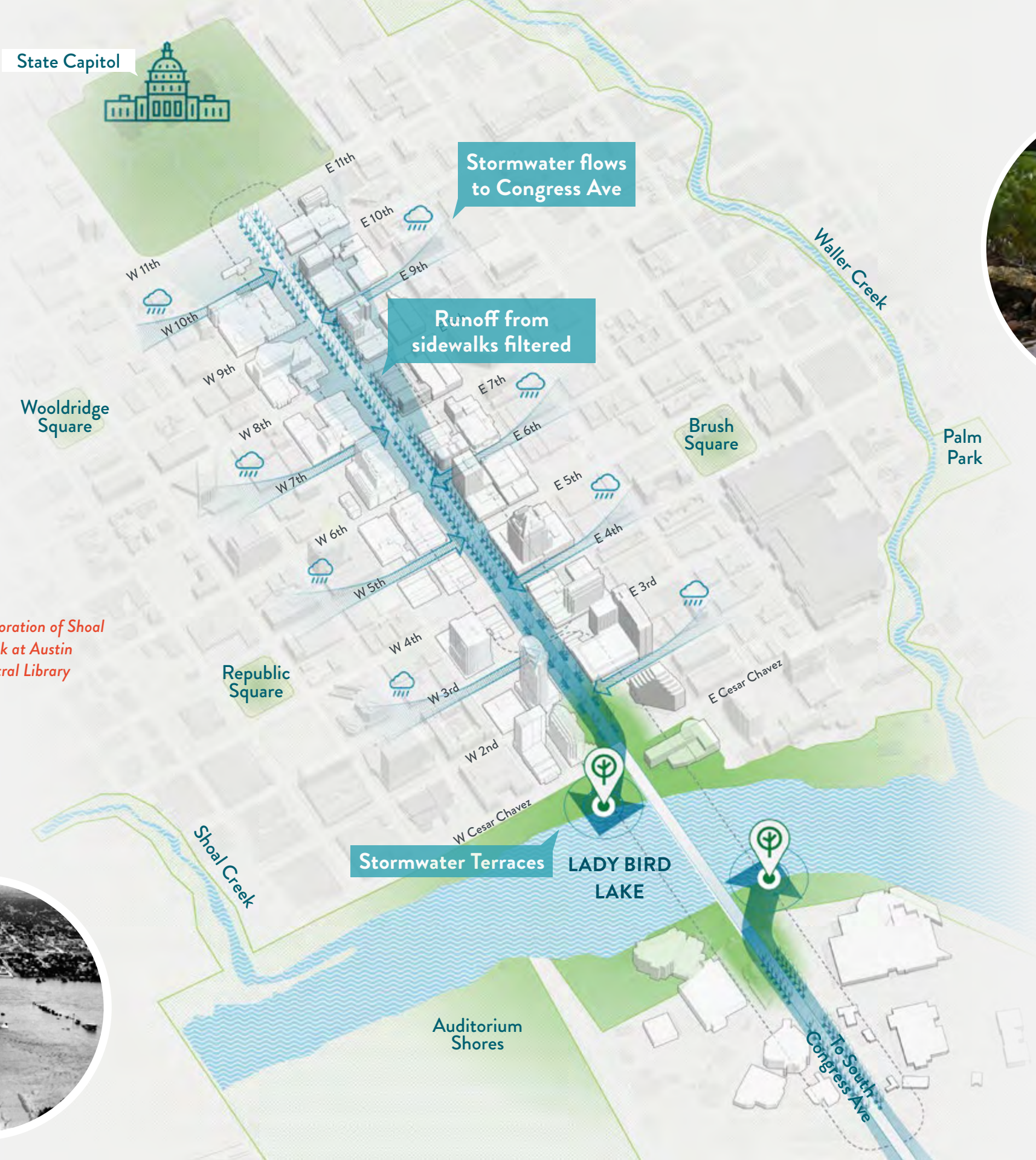
1,000 ft³

Sufficient soil volume
for a healthy tree
canopy

SOIL & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



STORMWATER STORY



BRIDGE LANDINGS



Stormwater Sculpture



Stormwater Terraces



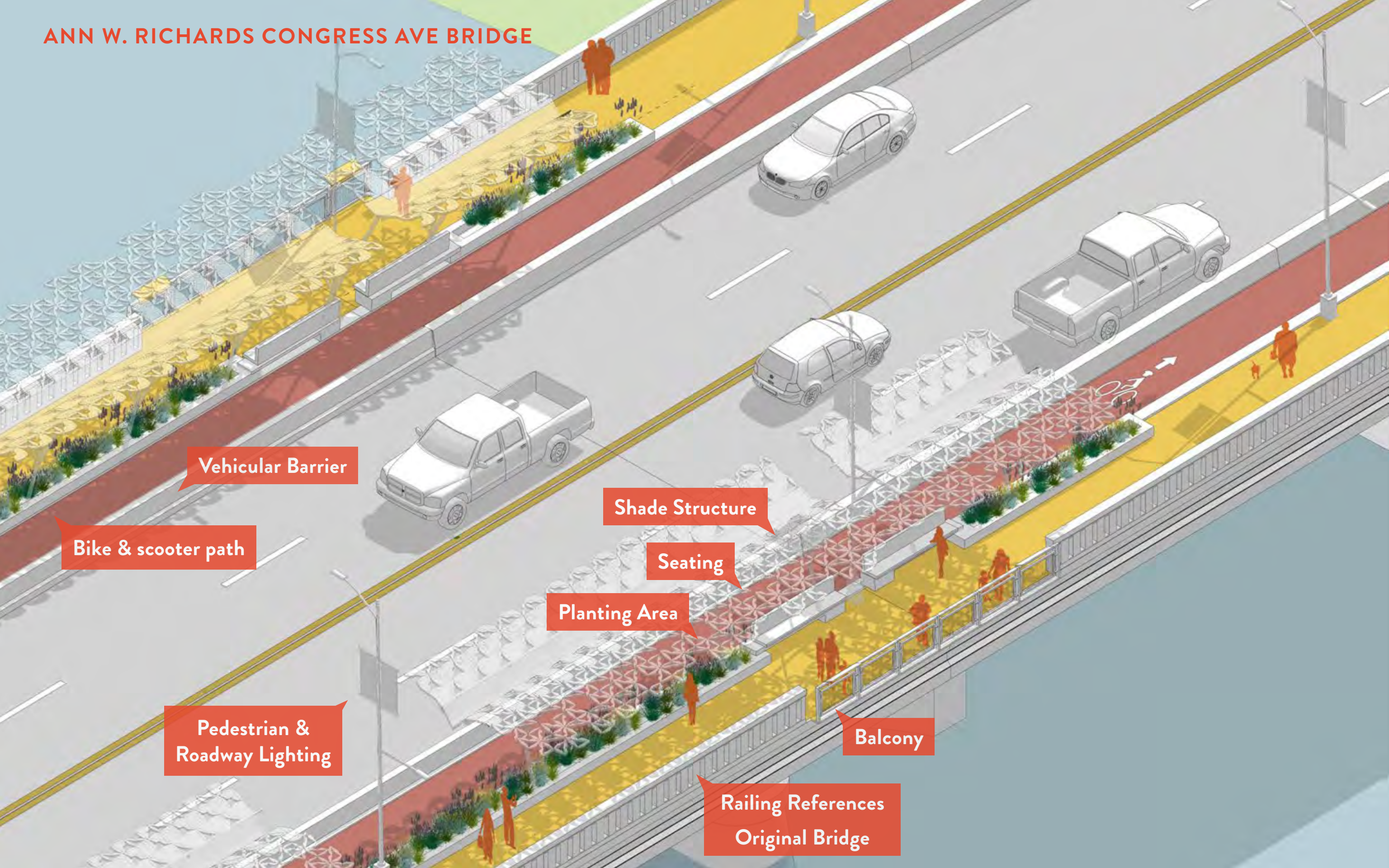
Deck at Edge of Lake



ANN W. RICHARDS CONGRESS AVE BRIDGE



ANN W. RICHARDS CONGRESS AVE BRIDGE



Vehicular Barrier

Bike & scooter path

Shade Structure

Seating

Planting Area

Pedestrian &
Roadway Lighting

Balcony

Railing References
Original Bridge

RAILING AND SHADE PRECEDENTS



Draft Recommendations:

Design Concepts & Placemaking

- ▶ Civic Stage
- ▶ Heart of Austin
- ▶ Green Gateways
- ▶ Vibrant Crossings

DESIGN CONCEPT

State Capitol



VIBRANT CROSSINGS





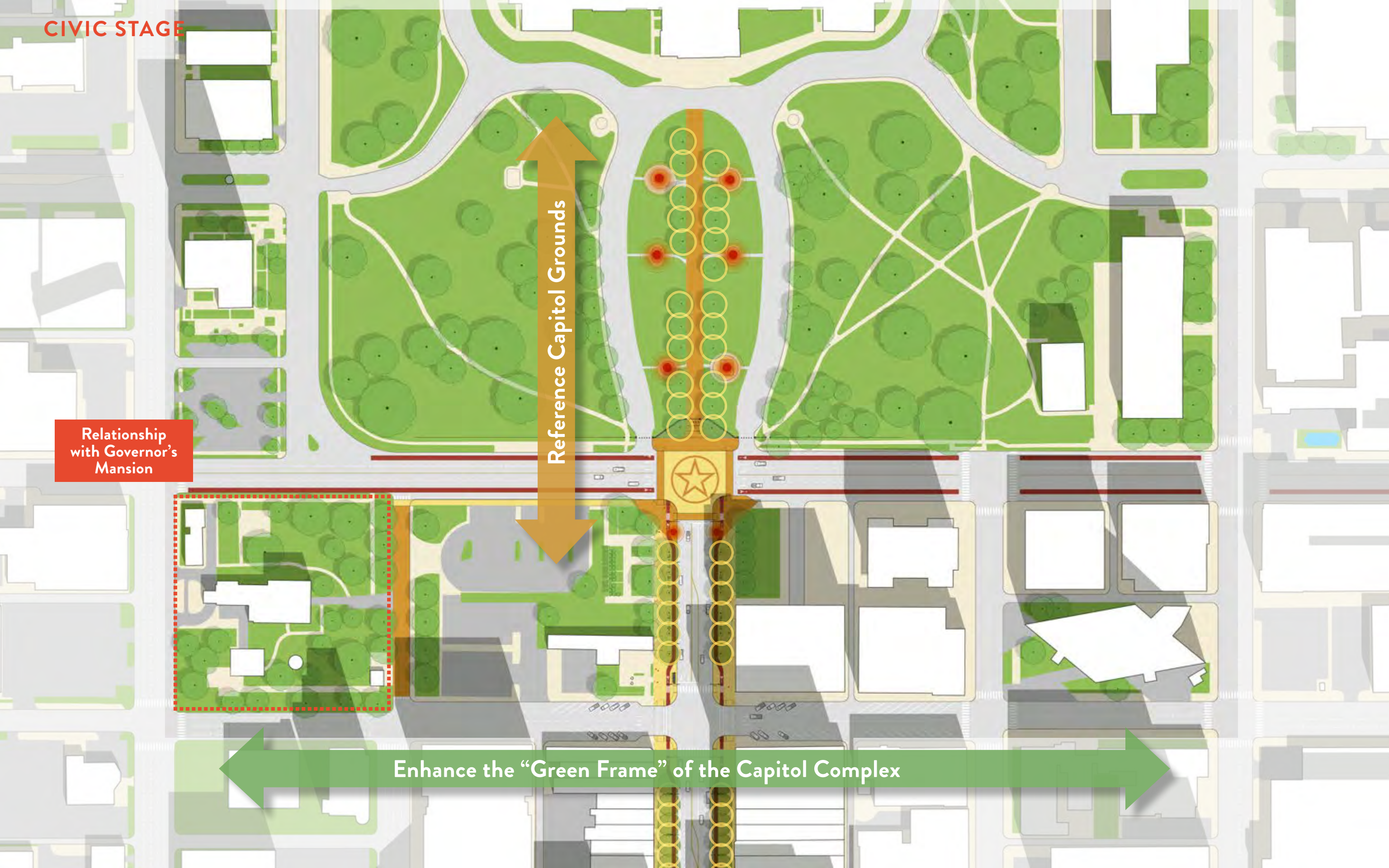
Civic Stage

CIVIC STAGE

Relationship
with Governor's
Mansion

Reference Capitol Grounds

Enhance the "Green Frame" of the Capitol Complex



CIVIC STAGE





Heart of Austin

HEART OF AUSTIN

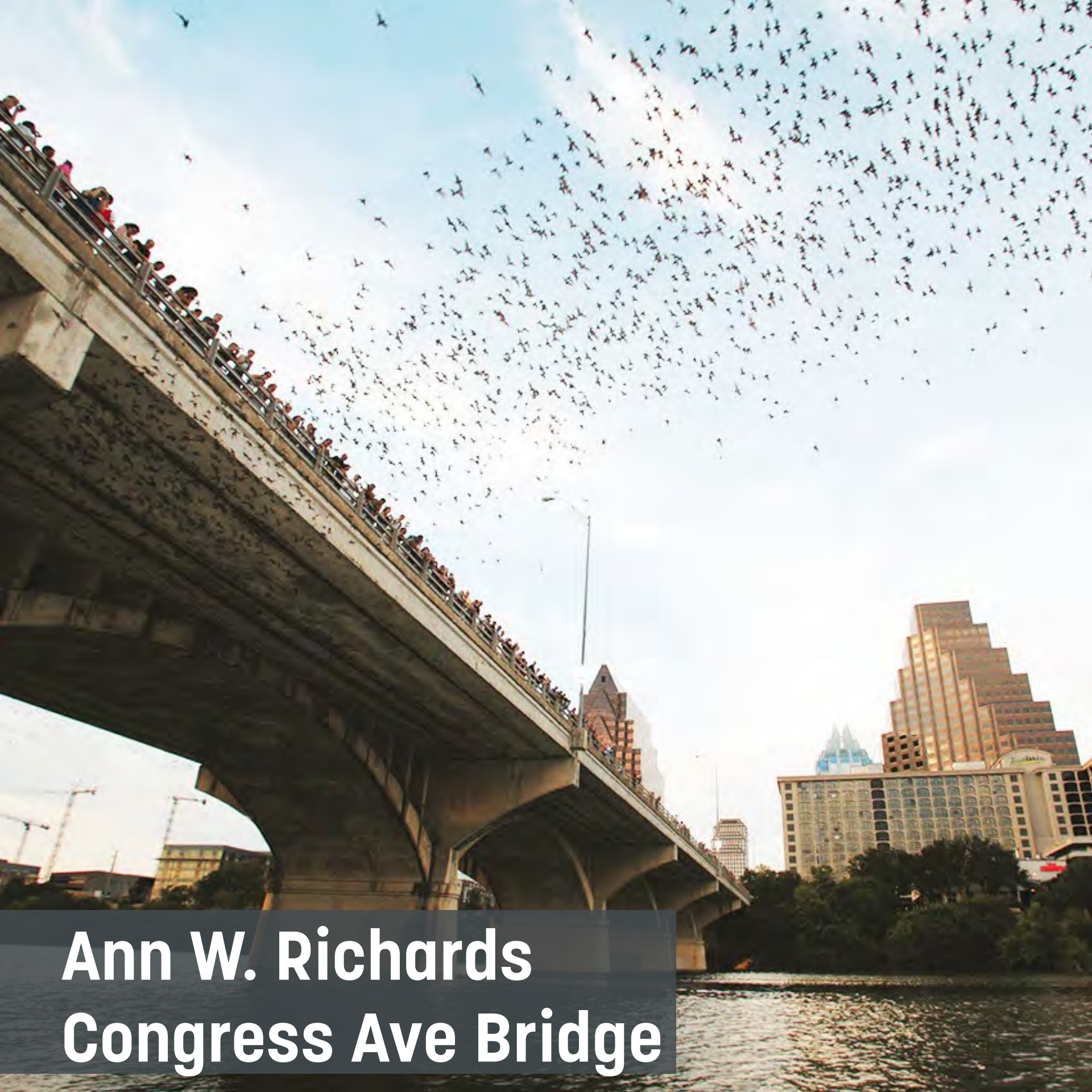




Green Gateway

GREEN GATEWAY





**Ann W. Richards
Congress Ave Bridge**



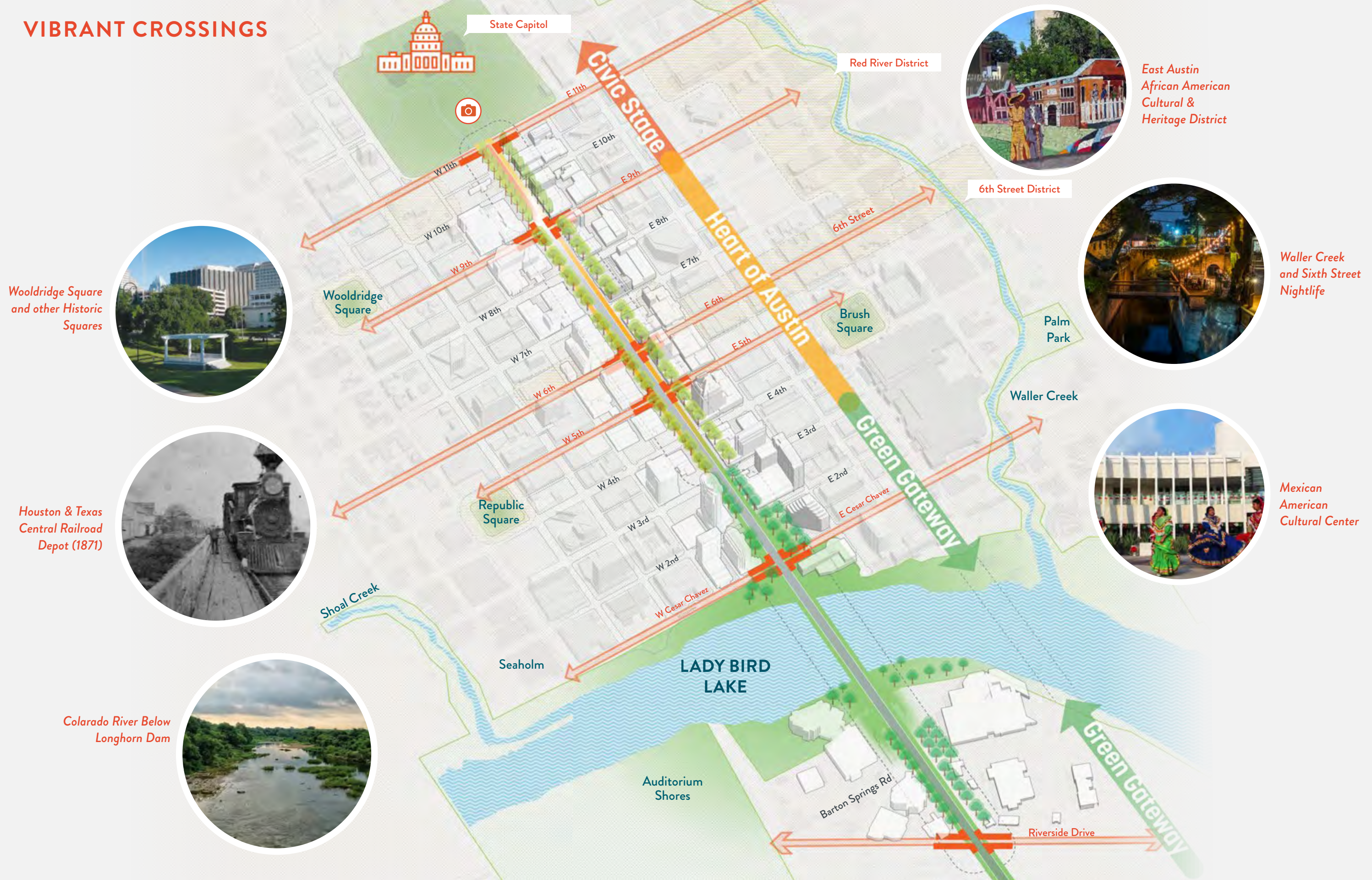
ANN W. RICHARDS CONGRESS AVENUE BRIDGE



Vibrant Crossings



VIBRANT CROSSINGS



VIBRANT CROSSINGS

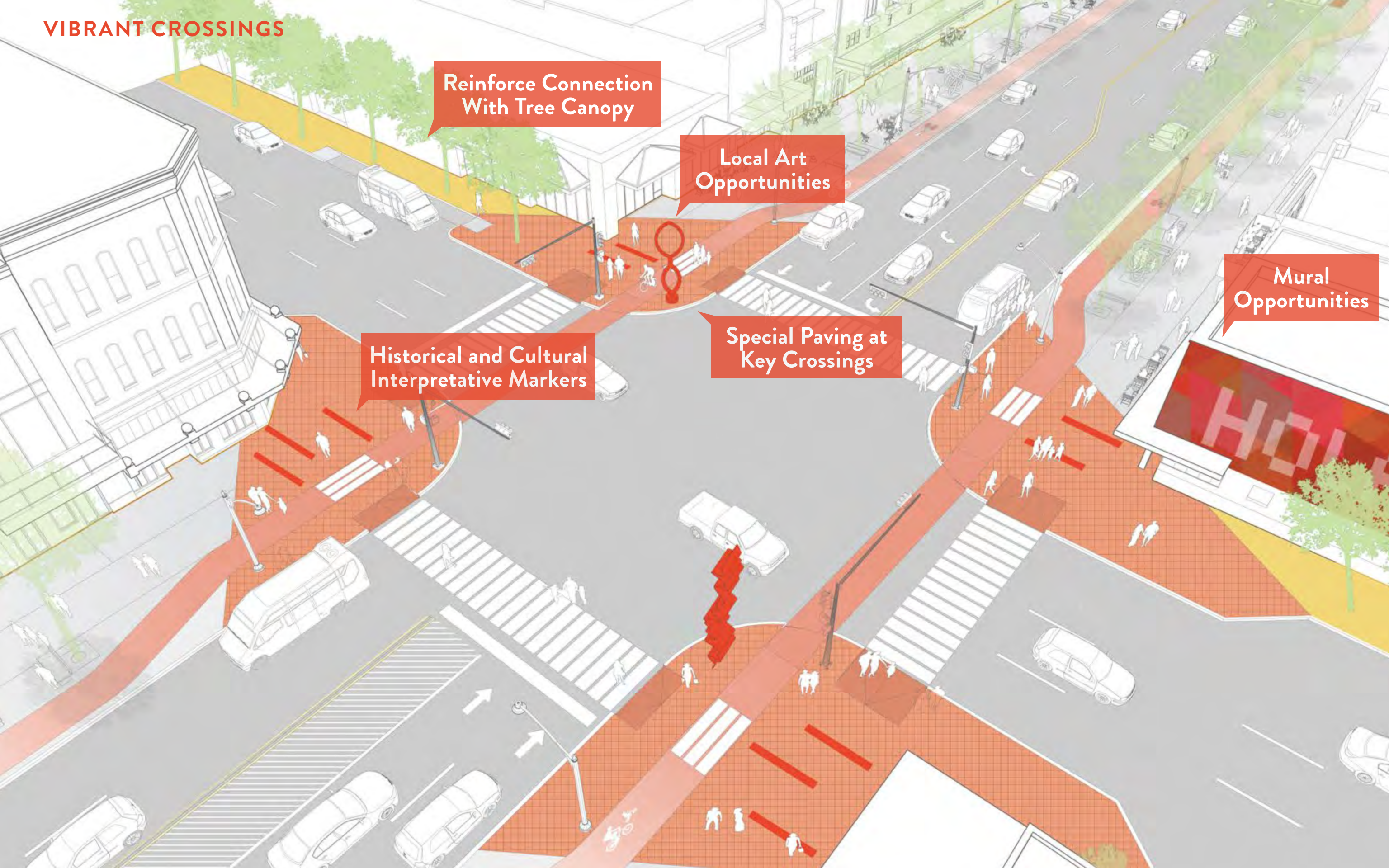
Reinforce Connection
With Tree Canopy

Local Art
Opportunities

Mural
Opportunities

Historical and Cultural
Interpretative Markers

Special Paving at
Key Crossings



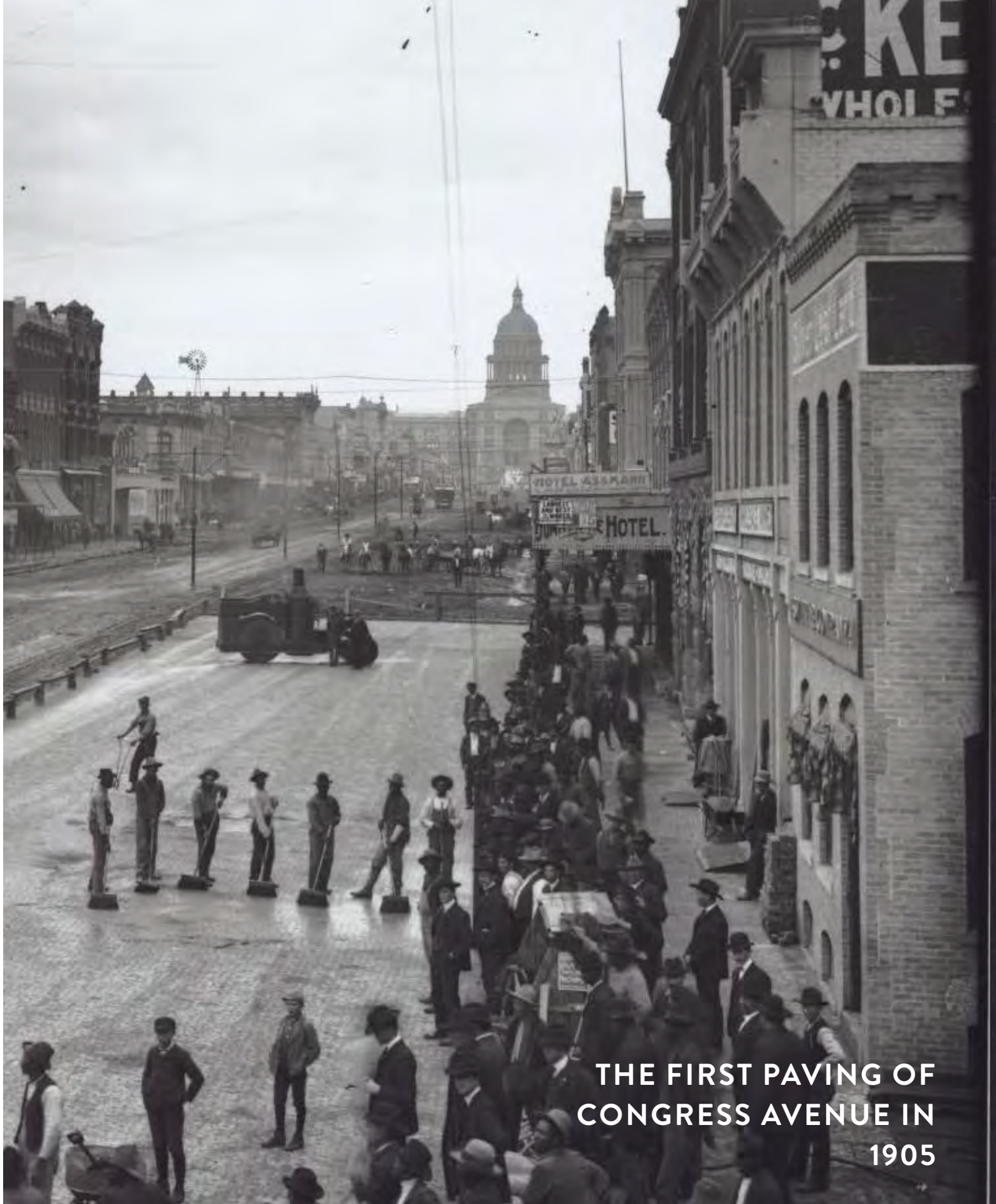
Next Steps:

Implementation

FINANCING

CAPITAL COSTS (ESTIMATED)	
Engineering & Management	\$9.6 million
Surveys & Inspections	\$1.5 million
Construction Costs	\$50.1 million
<i>Street Reconstruction</i>	
<i>Utility Reconstruction</i>	
<i>Landscape & Streetscape</i>	
<i>Bridge Improvements</i>	
Contingency & Miscellaneous	\$8.3 million
Total	\$69.5 million

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES INCLUDE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Bond Financing▶ Ongoing Development Fees▶ Tax Increment Financing▶ Federal / State Funding▶ Fees Recovered from Dockless Mobility Providers



THE FIRST PAVING OF
CONGRESS AVENUE IN
1905

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

Funding Sources for Events, Operations & Maintenance

- Public Improvement District
- Philanthropic Sources
- Event & Rental Fees



IMPACTS & METRICS



AUSTIN STRATEGIC
DIRECTION | 2023

Economic Opportunity and Affordability

- ▶ Increased opportunity for small, local businesses through markets and events
- ▶ Increased foot traffic and retail sales
- ▶ More mobility choices and connections offer more affordable transportation
- ▶ Increased land value and “value capture” for new and existing businesses

Mobility

- ▶ Move more people
- ▶ Full ADA accessibility
- ▶ Minimize vehicular traffic impacts through efficient design
- ▶ Increased pedestrian, bicycle, and scooter space and connectivity
- ▶ Designed for future flexibility and potential connector transit
- ▶ Simplified curbspace management

Safety

- ▶ All sidewalks and ramps ADA compliant with minimal trip hazards
- ▶ Increased pedestrian safety
- ▶ Increased bicycle and scooter safety
- ▶ More street activity, lighting and better conditions for a 24/7 neighborhood

Health & Environment

- ▶ Increased walkability and pedestrian activity for all ages and abilities
- ▶ Improved stormwater management
- ▶ Increased shade, comfort, and areas of respite
- ▶ Increased biodiversity, habitat, and a healthier urban tree canopy
- ▶ Decreased asphalt areas — reduction in urban heat island effect

Culture

- ▶ Strengthen the national register historic district and historic interpretation
- ▶ Increased visibility and viability of existing cultural institutions
- ▶ Improved wayfinding and interpretive opportunities
- ▶ Increased capacity for programming and events
- ▶ Increased opportunities for “streetlife”



Our CONGRESS AVENUE