Improving Neighborhood Connections Along Coachella's Harrison Street Corridor

A Report to the City of Coachella

February 2011

Prepared by:
Local Government Commission

Improving Neighborhood Connections Along Coachella's Harrison Street Corridor

February 2011

Acknowledgements

Coachella City Council
Mayor Eduardo Garcia
Mayor Pro Tem Steven Hernandez
Councilmember Arturo Aviles
Councilmember Emmanuel Martinez
Councilmember Gilbert Ramirez, Jr.

Coachella Planning Commission
Chairman, vacant
Isela Chapa, Vice-Chairman
Eddie Cedeno, Commissioner
Guillermo Sanchez, Commissioner
Manny Rios, Commissioner
Rodolfo "Rudy" Gutierrez, Alternate Commissioner

Coachella City Staff
David Garcia, City Manager
Linda Guillis, Development Services Director
Raymond Gregory, Chief of Police
Jonathan Hoy, City Engineer
Luis Lopez, Principal Planner
Gabriel Perez, Senior Planner
Mark Chappell, Traffic, Senior Civil Engineer
Frank Taylor, Assistant Chief of Police

Design Team

Local Government Commission
Paul Zykofsky, AICP, Director of Transportation and Land Use Programs
Steve Tracy, Research Analyst
Anthony Leonard, Project Manager

The Walkable and Livable Communities Institute, Inc.
Dan Burden, Executive Director

Clairvoyant Graphics
Marcel Schmaedick

Livable Streets, Inc.
Michael Moule, President

Opticos Design
Stefan Pellegrini, AICP, LEED, AP, Principal
Christopher Janson
Jennifer Block

Brian Settle

Funding provided through a California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Environmental Justice: Context-Sensitive Transportation Planning Grant and the City of Coachella.

Views and opinions presented in this report do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of Caltrans or the California Business Transportation and Housing Agency.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Project Purpose

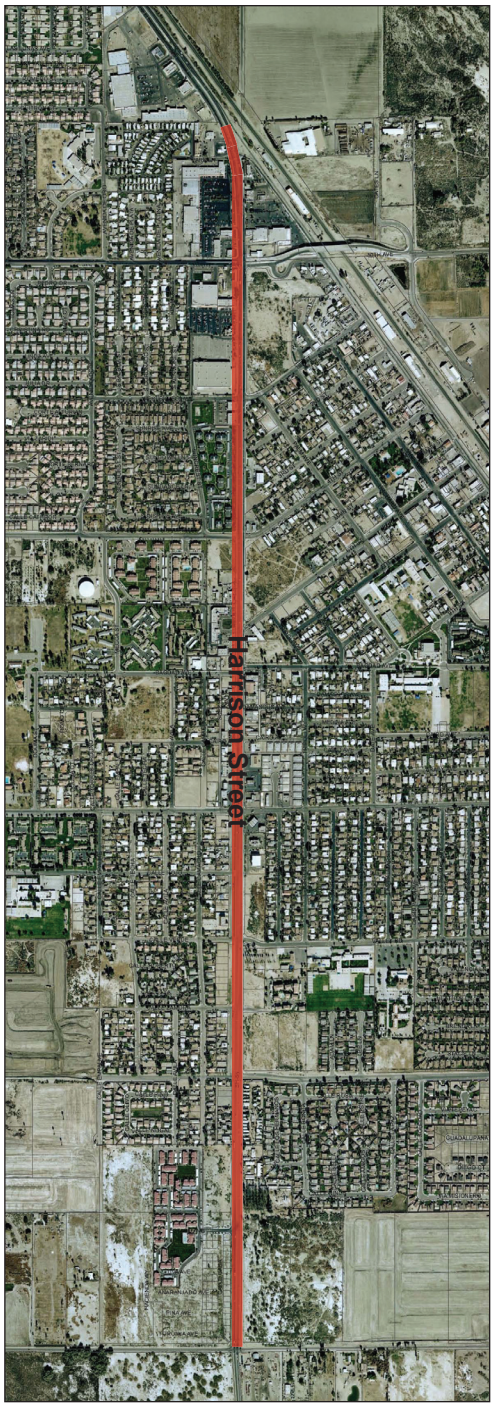
Harrison Street was designed many decades ago to serve as a portion of State Highway 86, a major highway through the Coachella Valley. Little attention was given at the time to the needs of people who might not be in vehicles, or the impact of the wide roadway and the high speeds and heavy traffic volumes on the community it bisected.

But no longer are streets considered the near exclusive domain of motor vehicles. Today they are recognized as important public resources that must meet the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, transit users, and the disabled. Contemporary street design practice allows these seemingly competing users of streets to safely coexist.

This project focuses on a roughly two-mile long segment of Harrison Street in the City of Coachella. Several nearby neighborhoods, school sites, and streets connecting to Harrison Street are also addressed. This project was funded by a California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Economic Justice: Context-Sensitive Transportation Planning Grant. That grant program's goals are to promote:

- Smart or strategic land use and opportunities for affordable housing and jobs
- Congestion relief
- Efficient movement of people, goods, and services
- Safe and healthy communities
- Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit mobility and access
- Public and stakeholder participation
- Measures to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions

This project's recommendations and the implementation activities that follow, advance all of these goals. Throughout many communities, the goals related to land use, safety and health, and non-automobile transportation were often ignored by transportation planning activities in the past. By including recommendations for significant changes in land use and zoning in the core area of Coachella, this project advances those goals as



Aerial view of Harrison Street in Coachella.

Harrison Street is characterized by wide streets and large intersections.

well as those related to affordable housing, economic vitality, the environment, and the transportation system.

This effort is focused around the Harrison Street Corridor, which forms the core of the community of Coachella. A description of the community should begin there.

Coachella is a city of nearly 42,591 residents *(California Department of Finance, 2010)* on the eastern edge of the Coachella Valley, north of the Salton Sea. It is a high growth area, with a 75% increase in population from 2000 to 2008. Now, as in much of the nation, some homes sit vacant in most neighborhoods. One of the key components of this project shows a future with a richer mix of uses in close proximity to spur economic development within the City.

Coachella has a median household income of $39,186 and around 20.5% of households living below the poverty line *(U.S. Census Bureau, 2009)*. Ninety-seven percent of the population is Latino.

Coachella's streets are currently characterized by:

- A deficient pedestrian environment with many barriers to travel along sidewalks.
- Difficulty for pedestrians crossing major streets.
- An almost complete lack of bicycle facilities.
- Speed limits and speeds too high for an urban corridor in the heart of the community.
- Problem intersections with numerous vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian conflicts.
- Speeding and other driver misbehavior in school zones.

The City of Coachella is split by Harrison Street and the corridor is a dividing line between neighborhoods. Harrison Street makes it difficult to access a number of vital destinations, including schools. Within the project area there are three elementary schools and one middle school.

During community Safe Routes to School workshops held in October 2007 in Coachella, parents cited "crossing the street" as one the most important safety issues related to children walking and bicycling to school. Many children do walk to school in Coachella now.

With these problems in mind, Caltrans funded this Harrison Street Corridor project because there is a need to increase the mobility and access for residents that live in neighborhoods adjacent to Harrison Street and connect them with vital services on either side of the street. A pedestrian master plan prepared for the City in the summer of 2007 highlighted the need for the Harrison Street Corridor to be addressed in terms of street design and adjacent land use.

This program used a highly participatory process called a design charrette that engaged residents, business operators, local elected officials, and city staff. Additionally, nearby school sites were evaluated, and recommendations made to improve safety and access.

This project presents an opportunity to improve the circulation between the established neighborhoods and future development. Through a series of community planning sessions, participants assisted the design team in developing a plan for a resident-friendly environment close to the Harrison Street Corridor that will also lend itself to local revitalization efforts and future investment programming.

Key stakeholders targeted in this project include local residents, property and business owners, and the Coachella Unified School District, which has campuses on both sides of Harrison Street.

The result is a detailed plan using context-sensitive design principles to redesign these auto-oriented thoroughfares into modern urban streets that also accommodate transit, pedestrians, and cyclists, and promote a lively town center and other gathering places for the residents of Coachella.

Overview of this Report

This report consists of five chapters. The first three chapters have information on the community of Coachella, this project, the process community members were engaged in, and issues this project addresses. Chapter 4 is the core of the street design component of this report, outlining proposals for streets in the Harrison Street Corridor and nearby school sites with block-by-block detail. Chapter 5 details future land use recommendations that will foster economic development, create a vibrant mix of uses, and build public gathering spaces along Harrison Street. Chapter 6 spells out the steps to move these designs and land use changes forward, as well as potential funding sources.

Two appendices are also included which include notes and comments from the various public meetings and workshops.

Chapter 2: Design Charrette Process

Steps in the Design Charrette Process

Design charrettes are an increasingly popular tool for neighborhood and street design programs. Charrettes are community-based design exercises that come out of a sincere intent to have the public involved in a meaningful way to craft their own future. This format allows residents, users of a street, or whatever population is targeted to be the primary force behind the designs. They are typically brought together for several sessions over a short period of time, before the charrette project team finalizes the designs and prepares a report like this one.

From June to December 2009, the Design Team held meetings with City and Caltrans staff, and met with an advisory committee for the project. Over the course of these meetings, participants reviewed goals for the Design Fair and discussed plans for public outreach to involve the community in the design process. The citywide Design Fair workshops and related events were conducted from January 21-26, 2010, and are the basis for the recommendations in this report.

Top: The mariachi group Nuevo Amanecer welcomed participants to the opening workshop. Bottom: Street signs advertising the charette.

Outreach Efforts

Publicity is critical to getting enough people to the charrette events for the design exercise to be meaningful. With City of Coachella staff taking the lead, this task was shared among the project team and members on the Project Advisory Committee. Meetings were held with the Advisory Committee prior to the charrette to brainstorm ideas on how to get public involvement. Flyers and postcards were distributed through various outlets: in the City utility bill, at local events and businesses, and through schools in the corridor. Phone calls were also made through the local schools, such as Bobby Duke Middle School. Signs and posterboards that announced the charrette events and provided contact information, were posted at prominent locations in the corridor and near local schools.

Top: Flyer advertising events. Bottom: Youth from the Boys and Girls Club share their recommendations for improving Harrison Street on maps.

Focus Group Meetings

Focus group meetings are held with stakeholders who have a common interest relevant to the charrette project. These groups are typically smaller to allow for conversations about particular streets or intersections, safety issues in general, or land use and economic development. Several of these meetings were held in Coachella over a period of two days. The Design Team met with the following groups:

- Public Safety Personnel
- Street Supervisor
- City Staff and Elected Officials
- Business Representatives and Chamber of Commerce
- School Officials
- Local churches
- Boys and Girls Club members

Summaries of the comments from these meetings can be found in the Appendix.

Public Charrette Events

Three public events were held at the Bobby G. Duke Middle School auditorium and open to anyone in the community. Snacks and beverages for those attending, and daycare for the events were provided. The community even had the Nuevo Amanecer student mariachi band liven up the opening session with a stellar performance.

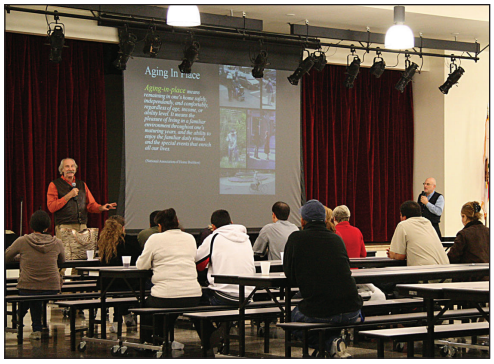
Opening Session — Thursday, January 21, 2010

On a weekday evening, the Harrison Street Corridor Improvement project opened with the first public event, held in the Bobby G. Duke Middle School auditorium. Paul Zykofsky, LGC Director of Land Use and Transportation Programs, introduced the project and offered background on the City's ongoing desire to improve safety and mobility.

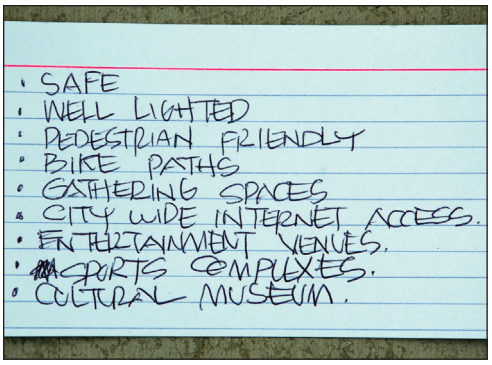
After the introduction, participants were provided index cards and asked to write down their future vision for the City of Coachella. Residents were also given "sticky notes" and asked to write simple statements about what they value in Coachella. The results were grouped into similar statement clusters. There was a remarkable convergence in the community about what they value most in Coachella and would like to foster. Principal values included:

- Environment and Climate
- Economic Health
- Personal Qualities
- Services and Amenities
- Community Qualities
- Education

Dan Burden, Executive Director of The Walkable and Livable Communities Institute, then gave the crowd a presentation about design techniques that can convert dysfunctional, unsightly, and dangerous streets into complete streets that work for everyone. His presentation included examples from other cities where problem streets, intersections, crosswalks, and school sites were redesigned into functional, attractive, and safe public spaces. Participants then took part in a simple exercise to set priorities for this street design charrette. They were asked to identify



Top: Design Team members meet with City Staff and Eleccted Officials. Middle: Design Team members present at the opening workshop. Bottom: Participants ask questions.



Top: One person's vision for the City. Middle: Participants voted on their top priorities. Bottom. The results.

things they would like to give attention to, while LGC staff recorded their issues on large easel paper. Those sheets of paper were then taped to the auditorium wall.

Next, participants were each given half a dozen colored adhesive dots to use as votes for the issues they felt were the most important in Coachella and the Harrison Street corridor. They were only allowed to place one dot per item, no double votes. The results are shown below, and this information was carried forward into the subsequent tour on Saturday morning, and to the designs the project team developed over the course of the charrette.

Top Priorities

- Improve lighting
- Need a better gateway entry to the City
- Bagdad needs a stop sign
- A roundabout at Avenue 52 and Harrison Street
- Improve pedestrian crossings on Harrison at Bagdad, and Avenues 50 and 52
- Create buffers between pedestrians and cars
- Get better crossings at Avenue 52 for school children
- Good medians, transit shelters, landscaping, and acceleration lanes south of Avenue 52
- Slow down speeds on Harrison Street
- Create a landscaping plan that works for this area and softens the edges of the street and provides shade
- Align Calle Empalme at Avenue 52
- Get a large big-box store on Harrison Street or somewhere else
- Narrow crossing distance at the Avenue 51/4th Street intersection

Saturday Workshop

The Saturday, January 23, 2010 session began in the morning with a short refresher course on some of the tools available to address the priorities identified by participants on Thursday evening. These included traffic calming, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and access requirements and techniques.

Following this presentation the project team led charrette participants on a walking tour from Bobby Duke School along Bagdad Avenue to Harrison Street, and south for a few blocks. At numerous stops on this walk the group assembled around leaders Dan Burden, Paul Zykofsky and traffic engineer Michael Moule, to discuss safety and mobility issues at each location. These animated, revealing, and educational discussions continued as the group worked its way back to the Bobby Duke auditorium for lunch.

Once refreshed, participants broke into two table groups and began the complex task of discussing the corridor. These thoughts were then translated into design recommendations which they drew on large aerial photographs.

Top: Saturday Walk Audit. Middle: Participants discuss their ideas in groups at table maps. Bottom: Mayor Garcia shares the groups' ideas with the rest of the participants.

Closing Session

This session, also at the Bobby G. Duke Middle School auditorium, was held on Tuesday evening, January 26, 2010. Over fifty residents and project team members were in attendance as Dan Burden began his presentation with a brief recap of the tools of good street design. This was followed by detailed images of the resident and project team recommendations for areas along the Harrison Street corridor, school sites, and other areas of Coachella. This included drawings by Opticos Design that showed the potential for future land use projects along the corridor. Community members asked questions and offered comments to Mr. Burden and the design team.

The resulting street designs appear throughout the next chapter of this report. Land use recommendations are in the chapter after that, with details about phasing projects over time.

Chapter 3: Existing Conditions

The following is a brief list of the existing conditions along the Harrison Street corridor that don't accommodate people on foot or on bicycles, are unsightly, or need improvement for other reasons. This is not meant to provide comprehensive detail, but rather a quick list of issues the recommended designs address.

- Vehicle speeds are too high throughout the corridor.
- Despite restrictions, drivers make unsafe turns in and out of driveways.
- There are no provisions for bicyclists along the corridor.
- Sidewalks and crosswalks are deficient in many places.
- Missing links on sidewalks
- The corridor could use more street trees and landscaping.
- Connectivity across the corridor and within adjacent neighborhoods can be improved.
- The entire community of Coachella can benefit from the creation of destination places on the Harrison Street corridor.

Harrison Street is a four-lane arterial, with wide lanes and large curb radii at major intersections that encourage fast driving and turns. High vehicle speeds and long crossing distances make pedestrian crossings more difficult. While measuring vehicle speeds at Harrison Street and Bagdad Avenue, a 40 mph zone, speeds as high as 64 mph were recorded.

The corridor has a high concentration of collisions. In fiscal year 2005-06, there were 49 collisions on this stretch of Harrison Street. From 2002 to 2007, there have been 32 pedestrian-involved crashes in the project area. *(Riverside County Sheriff's Department, 2010)*

Harrison Street runs a little over two miles within the project area, and carries approximately 23,700 vehicles a day along its busiest segment (northbound and southbound traffic from 51st Avenue to 50th Avenue) as measured in 2007. *(General Plan Update Baseline Transportation Conditions Report, Urban Crossroads, 2008)* This arterial street is characterized by suburban strip mall shopping fronted by parking lots and narrow sidewalks. Currently, there are plans to widen Harrison Street south of this planning area to accommodate automobile traffic associated with the airport and other future development. As new com-

Figure 3.1: Average Daily Traffic along Harrison Street Corridor

mercial development is built along Harrison Street, the amount of automobile traffic may increase. In addition, new housing in the City and region may add to the congestion on this corridor and increase the demand for safe pedestrian and bicycle access for residents along the roadway.

While sidewalks are sufficiently wide in many locations along the corridor, there are spots where they are too narrow or disappear. Some portions of the sidewalks on streets intersecting Harrison are obstructed with signs, poles, and/or street furniture. Many sidewalks along Harrison Street lack a buffer between the sidewalk and the travel lane. Commercial driveways are often built with excessive slope, encumbering pedestrian travel along sidewalks and not meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access guidelines. Large parking lots separate sidewalks from the businesses in many of the city's shopping centers.

There are no bicycle lanes on the corridor, or on the other arterials intersecting Harrison Street. Bicyclists were generally observed riding on the sidewalk or riding with the flow of traffic on Harrison.

The City is served by the SunLine Transit Agency with stops by the SunBus on Harrison. Many of the bus stops do not have shelters.

Coachella has a traditional downtown surrounding the City Hall complex, just west of the rail line that was constructed by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company over 140 years ago. The Pueblo Viejo plan for this downtown area was prepared recently, and is compatible with the proposed vision for the Harrison Street Corridor just to the west. Better connections between Harrison Street and the downtown, and supporting land uses, are detailed in the street design and land use chapters that follow.

There are four public schools in the Harrison Street Corridor; most removed a block or two from this busy street. The public schools include:

- Cesar Chavez Elementary
- Palm View Elementary
- Bobby G. Duke Middle School
- Valley View Elementary

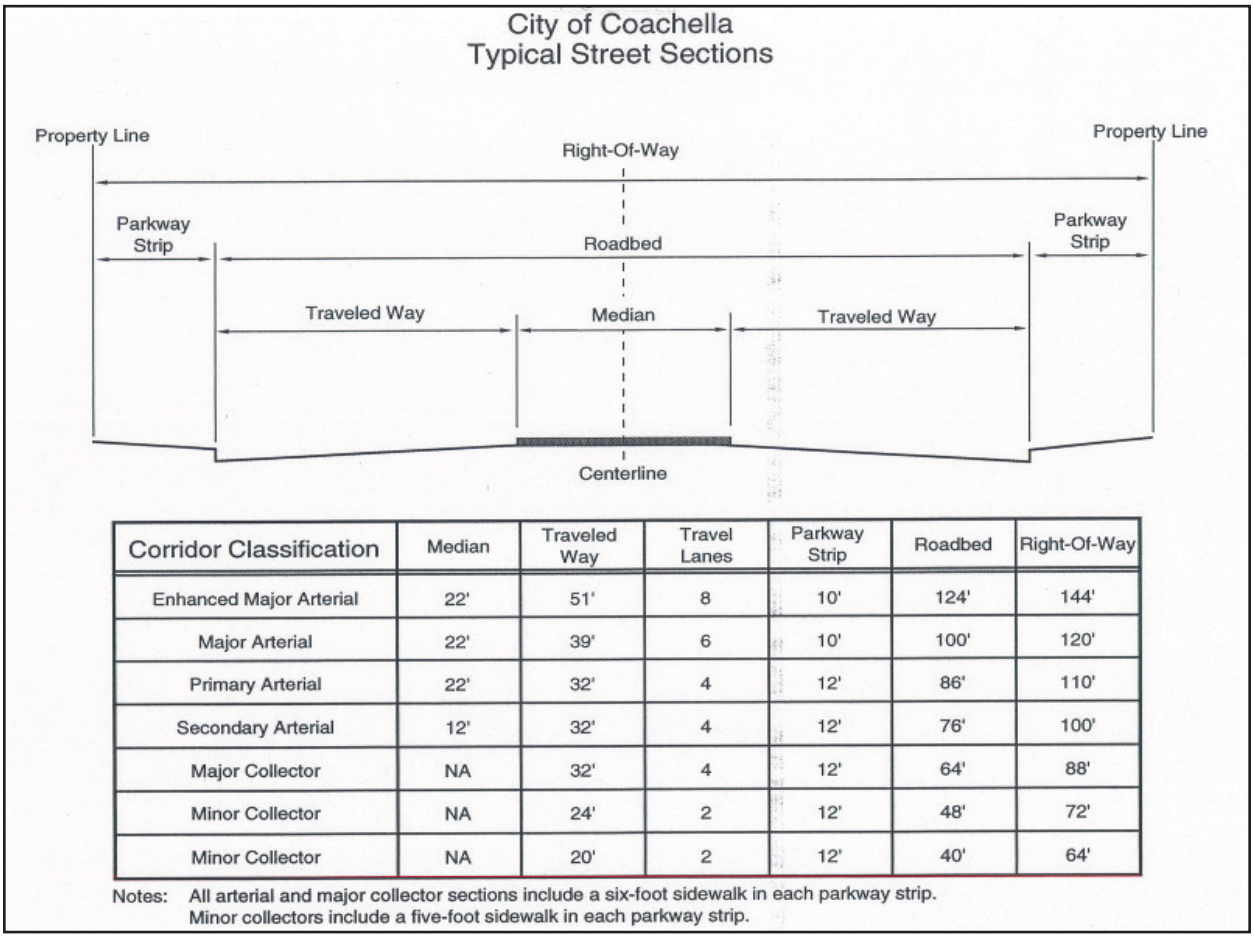
The service areas for these schools often require students to cross Harrison Street. Students attending schools outside the corridor also use Harrison Street to get to and from school. This project provides recommendations for facilities to improve the safety for students walking and biking to school. In turn, these would help increase parents' comfort levels with their children's walking or biking, and reduce the need to drive children to these schools.

Top: There are still development opportunities available along Harrison Street.
Bottom: Coachella has several excellent parks.

Figure 3.2: Map of Schools near the Corridor.

Bus stops lack shelters, leaving users exposed to the weather.

People make their own way across Harrison at Bagdad without a crosswalk.



Corridor Classification	Median	Traveled Way	Travel Lanes	Parkway Strip	Roadbed	Right-Of-Way
Enhanced Major Arterial	22'	51'	8	10'	124'	144'
Major Arterial	22'	39'	6	10'	100'	120'
Primary Arterial	22'	32'	4	12'	86'	110'
Secondary Arterial	12'	32'	4	12'	76'	100'
Major Collector	NA	32'	4	12'	64'	88'
Minor Collector	NA	24'	2	12'	48'	72'
Minor Collector	NA	20'	2	12'	40'	64'

Notes: All arterial and major collector sections include a six-foot sidewalk in each parkway strip.
Minor collectors include a five-foot sidewalk in each parkway strip.

Figure 3.3: Typical Street Section as classified by the Coachella General Plan 2020. The General Plan also calls for 12-foot lanes, which are unecessary in urban areas, and does not accommodate bicyclists on larger streets.

Chapter 4: Street Design Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter covers design recommendations for Harrison Street, all major cross streets, school sites, and some residential streets in neighborhoods in the corridor. It begins with a discussion of existing conditions, and the goals and philosophy that guided the work of the project team. The goals and philosophy, as well as the specific recommendations, are based on the comments and ideas provided by residents and policymakers during the workshops and focus group meetings discussed in the previous chapter.

The design recommendations are described in detail in the following order:

- Changes to Harrison Street, from the northern end of the corridor at Grapefruit Avenue/Highway 111 to the southern end at Avenue 54. Each major intersection and each segment of Harrison Street will be covered in turn, with images of the proposed changes alongside the text. Although this journey along the Harrison Street corridor is from north to south, it should be easy to visualize the return trip from south to north.
- Recommendations for cross streets, again in order from north to south.
- Neighborhood traffic calming recommendations, intended to slow traffic and improve safety.
- Improvements at school sites, with safety as a priority, and organizing school drop-off and pickup traffic next.
- Preserving options for future connectivity improvements.

While the discussion will at times link the recommendations to suggested changes in land use along the corridor, those development possibilities are discussed in detail in the next chapter of this report.

Top: Medians on Harrison Street.
Middle: Pedestrians at the corner of Harrison Street and Cairo Avenue.
Bottom: Commercial uses along Harrison Street are set back from the street.

Top: Harrison Street encourages speeding.
Bottom: Design Team members witnessed a car crash.

Project Team Street Design Goals

As the team worked in the community of Coachella, listened to residents, observed the patterns of travel and use of the streets, talked with City officials, reviewed the designs from the Saturday workshop, and developed recommendations for street designs and new development, the following principles guided that process:

- Improve safety for everyone on the street
- Reduce vehicle speeds
- Reduce unsafe turns in and out of driveways
- Reduce crashes
- Reduce crash severity
- Shorten crosswalk distance to improve pedestrian safety
- Improve sidewalks where they are insufficient or missing
- Provide space dedicated to bicyclists
- Beautify the streets
- Create streets that will promote new development patterns
- Foster new development that supports better streets and travel

General Recommendations

There are several design tools that appear either frequently or throughout the recommendations for the Harrison Street corridor and the major side streets discussed below. Those tools and the reasons for their use include:

- Carefully structure through traffic and turn lane vehicle flow. This avoids confusion in situations where drivers may be uncertain as to where they should best drive to go through an intersection or when preparing to turn onto a side street or into a driveway. Improving a driver's sense of where they should be on a street reduces sudden movements, which can lead to crashes.
- Regulate driver behavior with design features in the street. Figure 4.4 at the left illustrates this concept, using colored zones to designate segments of the Harrison Street corridor where different driver behavior should be expected and allowed. The green zones beyond the corridor end points are higher speed road segments with few conflicts from driveways, cross streets, pedestrians, or bicycle traffic. The yellow zones include the north and south entrances to the corridor and the Avenue 50 intersection. Care must

Figure 4.1: Harrison Street as it is today.

Figure 4.2: A photo simulation showing Harrison Street after restriping and adding colorized bicycle lanes.

Figure 4.3: A simulation of Harrison Street with new landscaping and buildings with a mix of retail and office space.

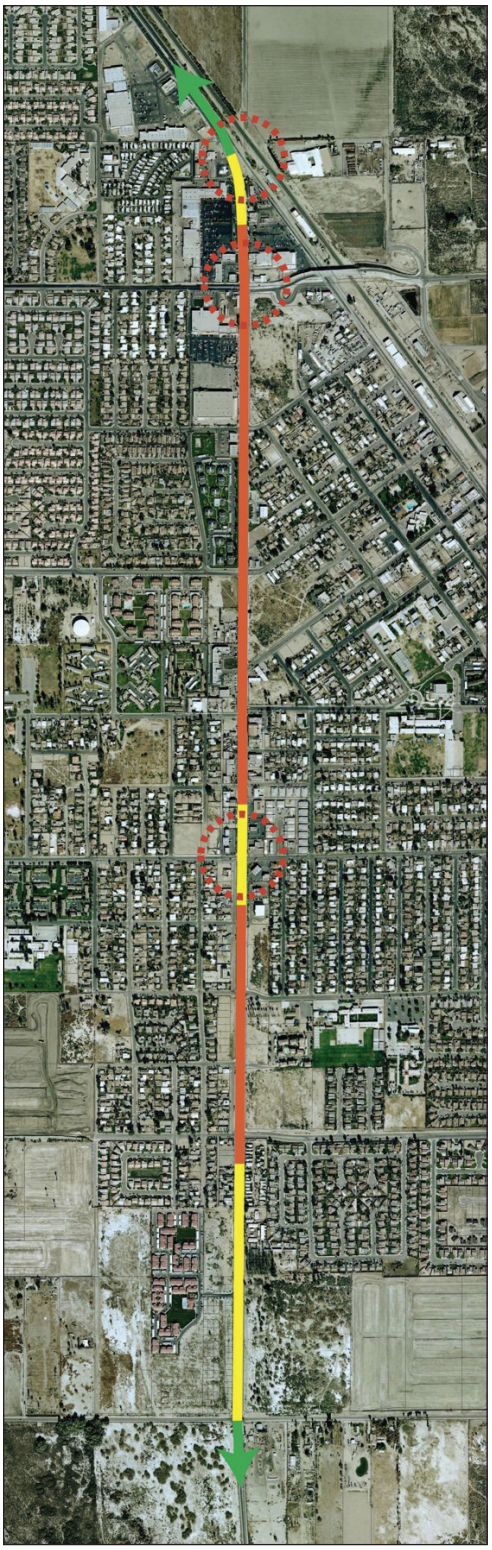


Figure 4.4: Driver behavior zones along the corridor.

be taken in these transition areas to keep drivers from maintaining speeds that are inappropriately high or speeding up before it is appropriate to do so. The red zones are the busy "main street" gathering points with pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Features in these areas should be designed to keep speeds low to improve safety and the feel of the sidewalk environment.

- Utilize roundabouts at major intersections. There are many benefits to roundabouts. They include reduced delays as vehicles move continuously through the intersections, improved air quality because fewer vehicles sit idling at stop lights, lower crash rates and crash severity due to reduced speeds, and improved pedestrian safety with fewer potential conflict points and shorter distances where people on foot cross. Bicyclists in bike lanes approaching roundabouts from any direction will have to carefully merge with the motor vehicle traffic stream as they approach the roundabout. They will then proceed in the nearest (or only) lane through whatever portion of the circle their route includes before exiting onto a bike lane again. This is not a risky procedure, because vehicles must slow down so much for the roundabout. Roundabouts can also be designed with an exit and entry ramp for cyclists that allows them to avoid the vehicle flow and use the crosswalks to cross. The centers of roundabouts also provide places for prominent landscaping and gateway features.

- Narrow vehicle lanes. Striping the street for narrower lanes frees up space in the roadway for other things such as bike lanes or landscaping. Studies conducted in recent years on lane width and safety have also found that in urban areas with speeds under 45 mph, narrow lanes have no impact on safety. In fact, some studies have found that by reducing vehicle speeds, they can help improve safety. *(Ingrid B. Potts, Harwood, D., Richard, K., Relationship of Lane Width to Safety for Urban and Suburban Arterials, Transportation Research Board, 2007 Annual Meeting.)*
- Add bicycle lanes. This improvement provides for adult and child cyclists who currently are riding in traffic lanes mixed in with motor vehicles, on sidewalks in conflict with pedestrians, or taking lengthy detours for safety.
- Restore on-street parking. Hundreds of yards of curb on Harrison Street or its major cross streets is currently signed or painted red to prohibit parking. Bringing parking back to these streets will reduce the need for off-street parking, and help utilize the excess width found in many locations in the corridor. It also narrows the driver's field of view, reducing vehicle speeds and promoting safety while providing a buffer to pedestrians on sidewalks.
- Improve pedestrian facilities. This includes placing curb extensions wherever appropriate (e.g. at intersections of streets with on-street parking) to reduce the crossing distance and exposure, and improve visibility for both pedestrians and motorists. Prominently marking and signing crosswalks, and adding new mid-block crossing points where needed.
- Improve the appearance of the street. This can be done with more trees and landscaping in planting strips, medians, and roundabouts.

Top: Bicyclists typically feel comfortable taking the lane through a roundabout since speeds are low. Middle and Bottom: Figures 4.5 and 4.6: Representation of how striping can help make the street feel narrower.

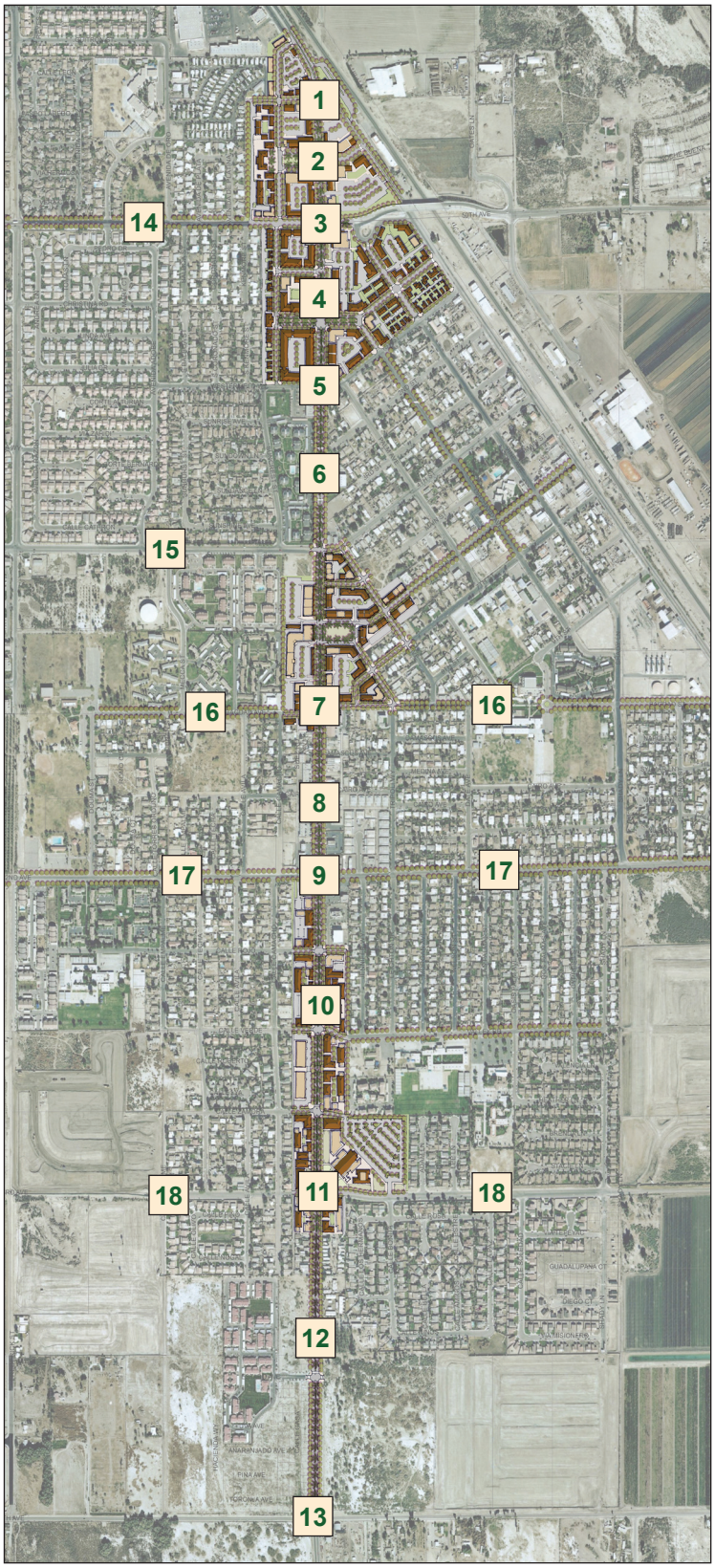
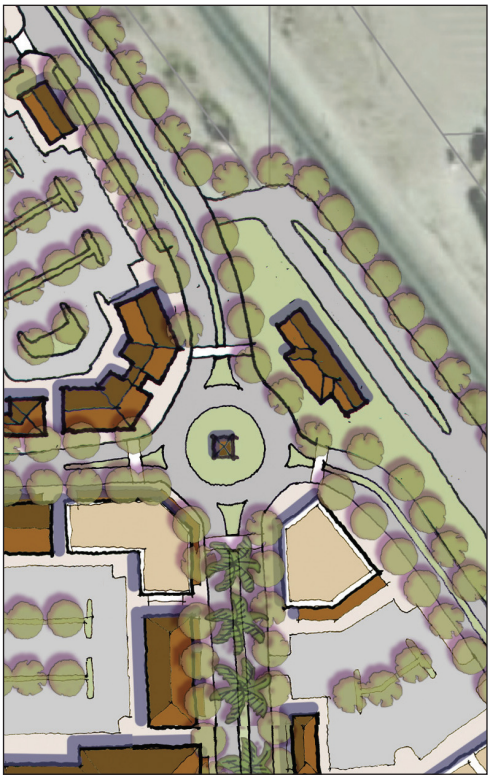


Figure 4.7: Project locations along the Harrison Street Corridor. The numbers correspond to the discussed recommendations that follow.

Harrison Street Recommendations



1 Grapefruit Boulevard/Highway 111 at Harrison Street

The most striking observation about this entryway into the corridor is that many southbound vehicles round the corner that is the transition from Grapefruit Boulevard onto Harrison Street at higher speeds than are appropriate. So the first priority at this location where the posted speed limit drops from 50 mph down to 40 mph, is to give drivers a message they should carry onto Harrison Street:

> *Slow down! This is a busy corridor with cross streets, driveways, turning vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, children in school zones, shopping center signs, and other distractions.*

Because Grapefruit Boulevard (also Highway 111) is wide and straight, and the curve leading to Harrison Street is gentle, it is unlikely conventional tools like speed limit signs and increased enforcement will be enough to slow drivers down or eliminate illegal left turns out of shopping center driveways. So modifying the street itself is the best approach.

A large roundabout is recommended at this location. There is more than enough room in the public right-of-way (ROW) for the design shown in Figures 4.8 and 4.10.

The roundabout shown is aligned a bit to the east of the current portion of Harrison Street for a few reasons. First, the roundabout is aligned with the centerline of Harrison to the south, which makes things a bit more orthogonal, allowing better geometry for all legs of the roundabout. This curve in the roadway alignment on the north side helps slow motorists down as they are approaching the roundabout – this is sometimes a recommended feature for higher-speed approaches, and is important since this roundabout represents a gateway to a more urban area. Another advantage of this alignment is that it opens up a significant amount of space for possible development on the northwest corner of the intersection. Finally, this alignment makes it easier to fit the roundabout without taking any right-of-way. The west side of the roundabout is by far the most constrained – the width of the right of-way for the west leg of

the roundabout is only about 50 feet. Moving the roundabout to the east makes the west leg narrow enough to fit within the right-of-way. This configuration would also allow for the development of a bus stop/transit center on the northeast portion as shown in the figure on the previous page.

It is also possible to move the roundabout west closer to the current alignment. While it could potentially save some money since less of the roadway would need to be rebuilt, it would also make the design of the roundabout geometry a little more difficult and might require some ROW purchase on the west side.

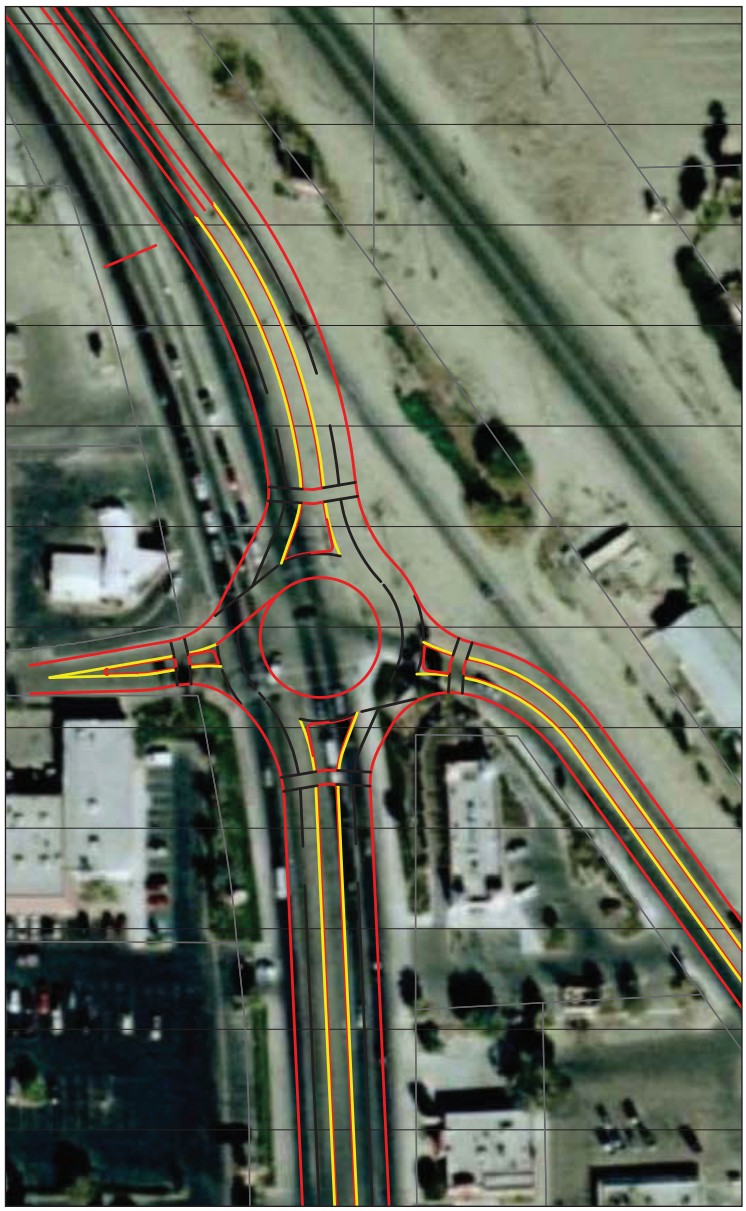


Figure 4.8: Roundabout design layout at Grapefruit Boulevard/Highway 111 intersection.

As described above, roundabouts help slow vehicle speeds while moving traffic very efficiently through intersections. This roundabout will create a beautiful gateway to Coachella and require drivers to slow to safer speeds as they enter the Harrison Street corridor. This large roundabout will provide two benefits beyond those cited in the previous chapter:

- The space in the center of the circle will be available for landscaping and "Welcome" signage, beautifying the street and providing a prominent gateway to the corridor. Both resident design tables wanted a gateway feature at this entry point to the corridor.
- The roundabout will facilitate access to a possible future transit hub located on the east side of Grapefruit Boulevard. More on this in the next chapter.

Note that this roundabout is designed to retain the current north/south travel lane count of two lanes in each direction. The east/west links are only a single lane each, more suited to the lighter traffic on Grapefruit Boulevard past this intersection and on the Coachella Shopping Center access road.

Figures 4.9 and 4.10: Before photo of Grapefruit Boulevard and Harrison Street intersection, and a photo simulation of what the roundabout could look like at this intersection.

Example of crosswalk through median with a median nose to provide shelter for pedestrians.

Alternative to Roundabouts

Even though the current General Plan calls for Harrison to be maintained as an Enhanced Major Arterial (144-foot ROW) it is recommended that the city avoid widening any streets to more than four lanes with a median. Roads that are wider than four lanes create significant barriers between neighborhoods and are not friendly to pedestrians and bicyclists. Also, all four-lane streets should be four-lanes with a median. Two-lane roundabouts provide the best combination of capacity and safety to manage the intersections of two four lane roads within the community. Where cross streets carry less traffic the roundabout can be configured to only have one lane on the cross street.

An alternative to the roundabouts proposed in this chapter is to maintain the signalized intersections. The following guidelines should be followed for signalized intersections where two four-lane roads meet:

- Corner radii should be kept as small as possible. They should be designed specifically for the largest vehicle that regularly makes right turns at each corner. And they should be designed so this vehicle can turn from the rightmost lane across both receiving lanes.
- Where on-street parking exists on the approach to intersections, curb extensions should be used to protect the on-street parking and reduce the crossing distance.
- Use single right turn lanes, and only where the right turn volumes are fairly high. Where large radii are needed for trucks at locations where there are right turn lanes, well-designed right turn slip lanes should be used.
- Double left turn lanes should be avoided except where there is a very high volume of left turning cars.
- Signal timing should include leading pedestrian intervals, which provides pedestrians a few seconds head start, in order to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and turning vehicles.

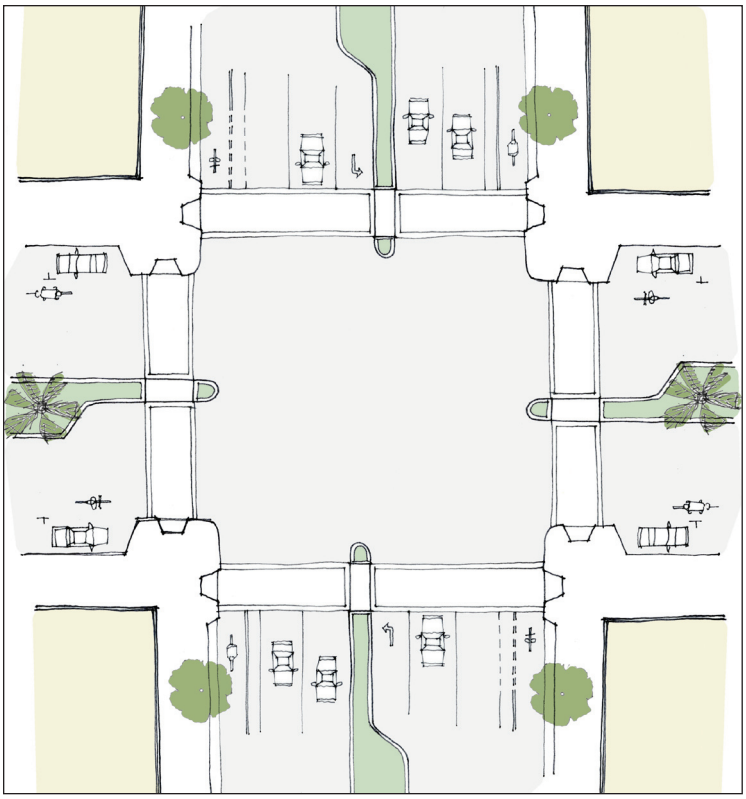


Figure 4.11: Typical intersection design — Street Section Option 1. (see discussion next page)

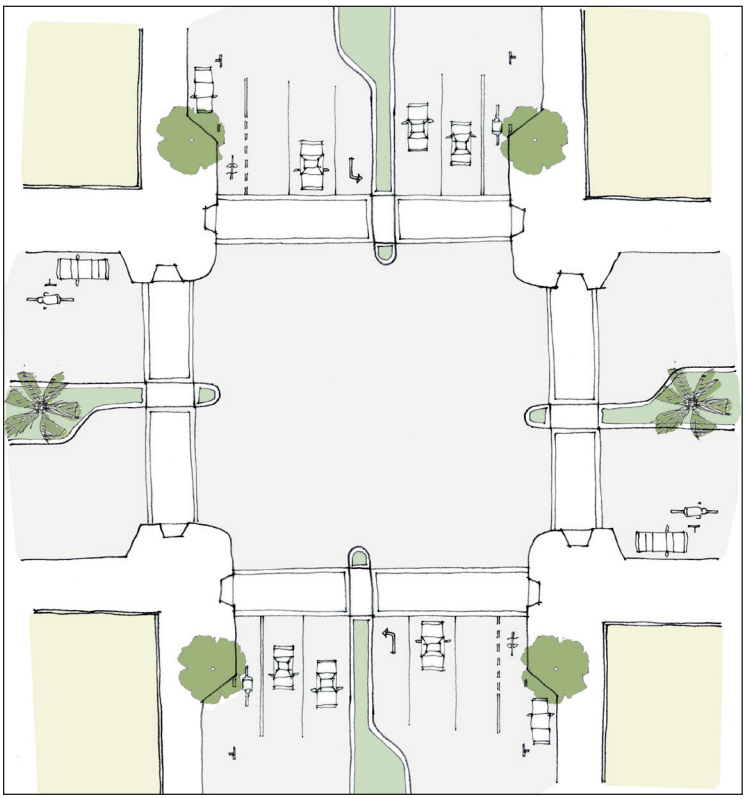


Figure 4.12: Typical intersection design — Street Section Option 2. (see discussion next page)

2 Harrison Street between Grapefruit Boulevard and Avenue 50

This long block of Harrison Street should get a dramatic reworking to improve safety and control shopping center driveway access better. The curb-to-curb street width here is much more than is necessary for four-lanes of traffic and a median. As Figure 4.15 shows (page 28), the traffic lanes next to the curbs are 20 feet wide. This is about twice the width that is appropriate in a corridor like this. That excess width encourages speeding and increases risks for all users of the street. The sidewalks are right against the curbs, fairly narrow, and have no buffer from this fast traffic.

Driveway safety is very important for drivers leaving the Coachella Shopping Center on the west side of Harrison Street. They often make illegal left turns out of one of the five driveways to go north. These turns cut across two lanes of southbound traffic, with speeding southbound vehicles coming into view around the curve from Grapefruit Boulevard to Harrison Street surprising drivers making these dangerous left turns.

In place of the current open two-way, a median should connect the roundabouts at Grapefruit Boulevard and Avenue 50 with two options for allowing and controlling left turns:

Option 1: The driveways should be right-in/right-out, with one protected left-turn pocket available on the southbound lanes to turn into the driveway for the properties east of Harrison. See Figure 4.13.

Option 2: A third one-lane/two-lane roundabout could be installed about midway between the roundabouts at Grapefruit and Avenue 50. See Figure 4.14.

U-turns can easily be made by turning right out of the driveways, proceeding to the roundabout at the end of the block, and then making a complete circle to go back the other way. This travel path is very safe, and may take less time than waiting for a gap in traffic to make the unsafe and illegal left turn.

The distance between the crosswalks on Harrison Street at the Grapefruit Boulevard roundabout and those at the Avenue 50 roundabout is over 1,000 feet. This is too far to reasonably expect a pedestrian wishing to cross Harrison Street at the midpoint to walk. To provide for more options for pedestrians, a mid-block crosswalk should be striped that is aligned with the future plaza access road on the west and the new street cutting through the La Plaza shopping center on the east side of Harrison Street. They should be on the upstream side of each driveway for the shopping center, so pedestrians arean't crossing the traffic turning right. For the roundabout option, the crosswalks should be placed back a car length from the roundabout travelways.

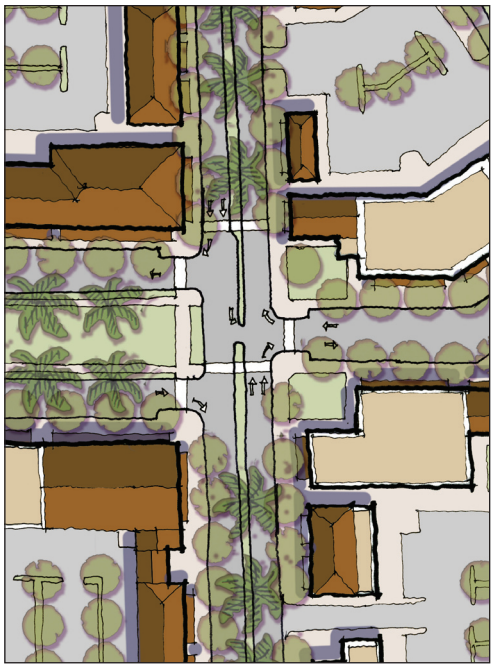
Two options are recommended for a typical street section on this corridor. Each contains four travel lanes, two in each direction, and bike lanes.

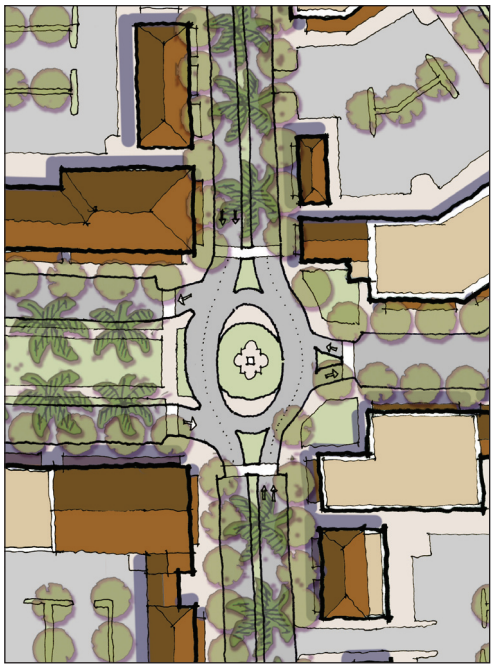
Street Section Option 1

This option allows parking on Harrison Street, and would require taking additional roadway from the existing sidewalk, but no additional ROW. The inside vehicle lane would be striped at 11 feet, outside vehicle lane at 10 feet, with a 6-foot bike lane and 7-foot planting strip with sheltered parking bays. The sidewalk zone would be reduced to 9 feet with a 4-foot furniture zone and 5-foot sidewalk. However, while the space for trees in the furniture zone is narrow, tree wells can be provided every 2 to 3 spaces in the parking lane. The 14-foot median is retained. See Figure 4.16.

Street Section Option 2

The second option removes parking on Harrison Street. Starting from the 14-foot median, the inside vehicle lane would be striped at 11-feet, 10-feet for the outside vehicle lane, a 3-foot buffer, 6-foot bike lane and 2-foot gutter. This option allows 11 feet for the sidewalk zone. Additional ROW is not needed for this option. See Figure 4.17.





Top: Figure 4.13: Option 1 for midblock crossings. Bottom: Figure 4.14: Option 2 for midblock crossings.

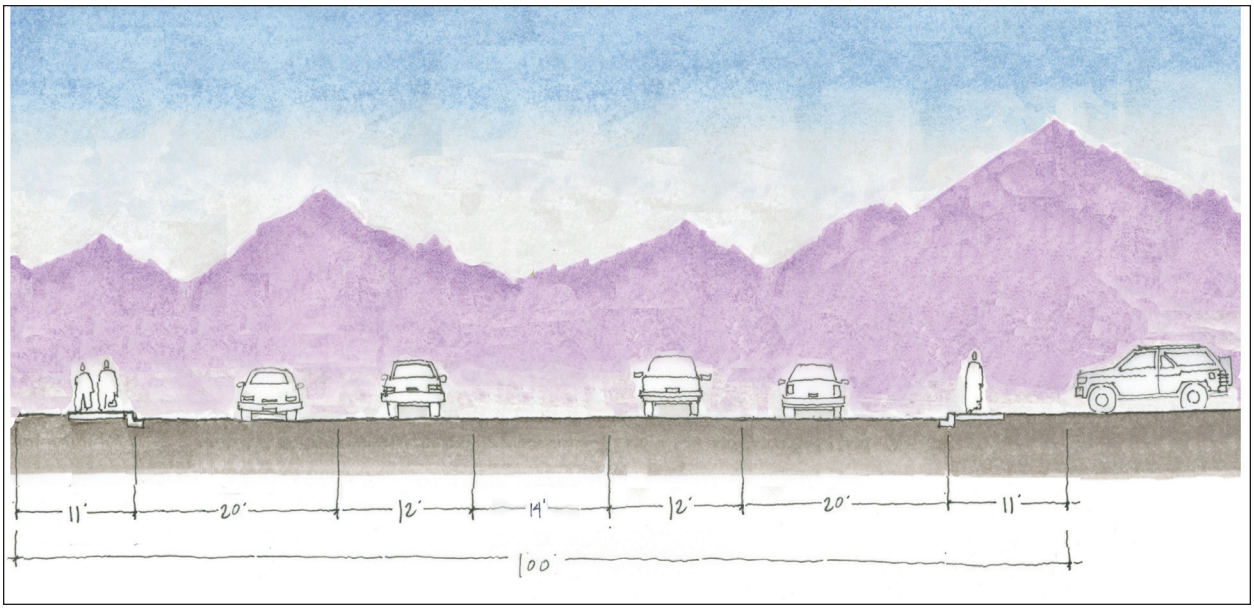


Figure 4.15: Harrison Street from Grapefruit Boulevard to Avenue 50 looking north – Existing

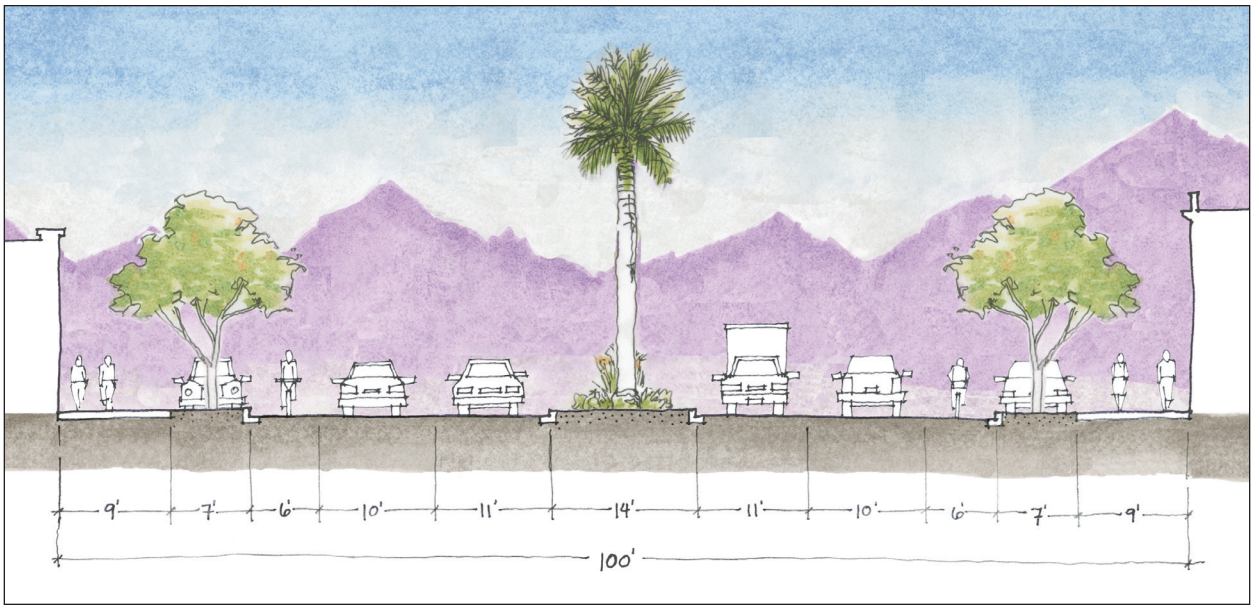


Figure 4.16: Harrison Street from Grapefruit Boulevard to Avenue 50 looking north – Proposed Option 1

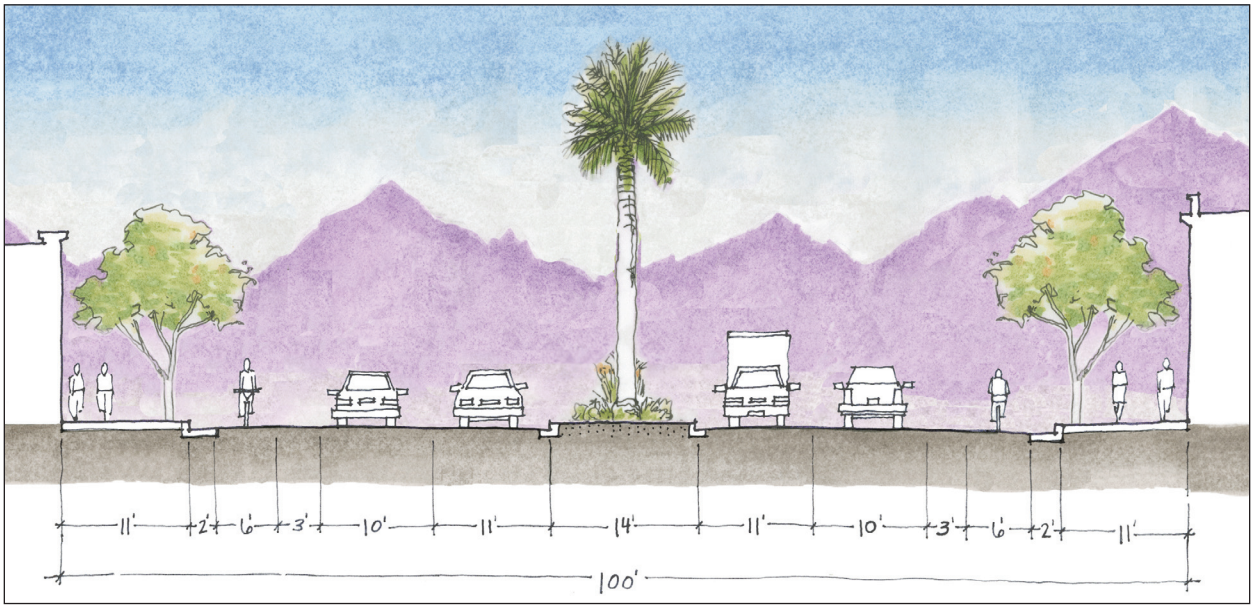


Figure 4.17: Harrison Street from Grapefruit Boulevard to Avenue 50 looking north – Proposed Option 2

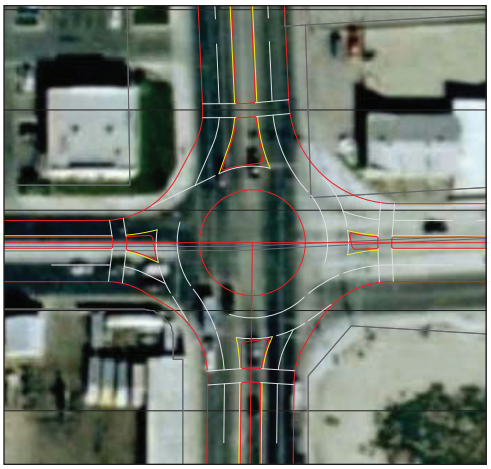


Figure 4.18: Roundabout layout at Harrison Street and Avenue 50.

3 Avenue 50 Intersection

This intersection is also a good candidate for a roundabout, scaled just slightly smaller than the one at Harrison Street and Grapefruit Boulevard. Like that roundabout to the north, the heavier north/south traffic volumes on Harrison Street dictate two lanes in the roundabout, while the lighter Avenue 50 cross traffic requires only a single lane in each direction. See Figure 4.18.

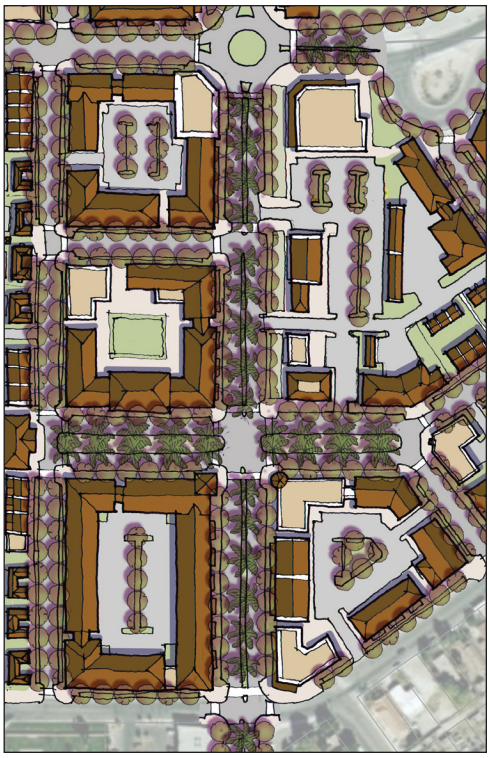
The available public right-of-way is not quite wide enough at this location to accommodate the entire roundabout and the sidewalks that will accompany it. As a result, it may be necessary to acquire a modest amount of private property — potentially less than 200 square feet at the northeast corner. It may be possible to reduce, but not eliminate, this need by shifting the roundabout slightly to the south. Naturally, detailed surveying outside the scope of this project will be necessary.

While trading conventional traffic signals for a roundabout may be uncomfortable at first for some, experience in many communities shows that people adjust. They quickly recognize that the roundabout not only improves safety but also allows for smooth flow of traffic. Even at this relatively uncomplicated intersection the result will be improved safety and smoother traffic flow. Communities all over the world are now replacing conventional traffic controls with roundabouts and (smaller) traffic circles, with great success.

Alternative to Roundabout

If it is determined that a roundabout at this location is not desireable, the alternative is to maintain the signalized intersection that currently exists. The guidelines for signalized intersections discussed on pages 24 to 25 should be followed.

4 Avenue 50 to Westerfield Way/1st Street



The undeveloped property on the east side of this section of Harrison Street represents one of the best opportunities for significant revitalization and can provide the street linkages that will connect the older downtown street grid into the center of the corridor. More discussion about preserving options for connectivity appears later in this report. Figure 4.20 shows the existing configuration of this section of Harrison Street. Without the raised median, this image reflects the design for some portions of Harrison to the south.

The two options for a typical street section discussed on page 27 are also recommended for this section of the corridor. Each option contains four travel lanes, two in each direction, and bike lanes.

Future development will require reworking this portion of Harrison Street. Before that time, interim changes can accomplish much to improve the appearance of the street, provide safer travel for everyone, and help attract the development to build a gathering place in the corridor. More details on future land use are in the following chapter, but as many communities have found: "It begins with the street."

The distance between the crosswalks on Harrison Street at the Avenue 50 roundabout and those at the Westerfield Way intersection is over 1,200 feet. As stated above, this is too far to reasonably expect a pedestrian to detour to cross the street. To provide direct route options for pedestrians, three mid-block crosswalks should be striped at roughly 400-foot intervals in this section of Harrison Street. One crossing should align with each of the new streets cutting through the commercial district on the west side of Harrison Street. The southernmost of these streets is intended to continue to the east side of Harrison Street and connect with future streets that carry the downtown grid through the adjacent vacant property. See Figure 4.19.

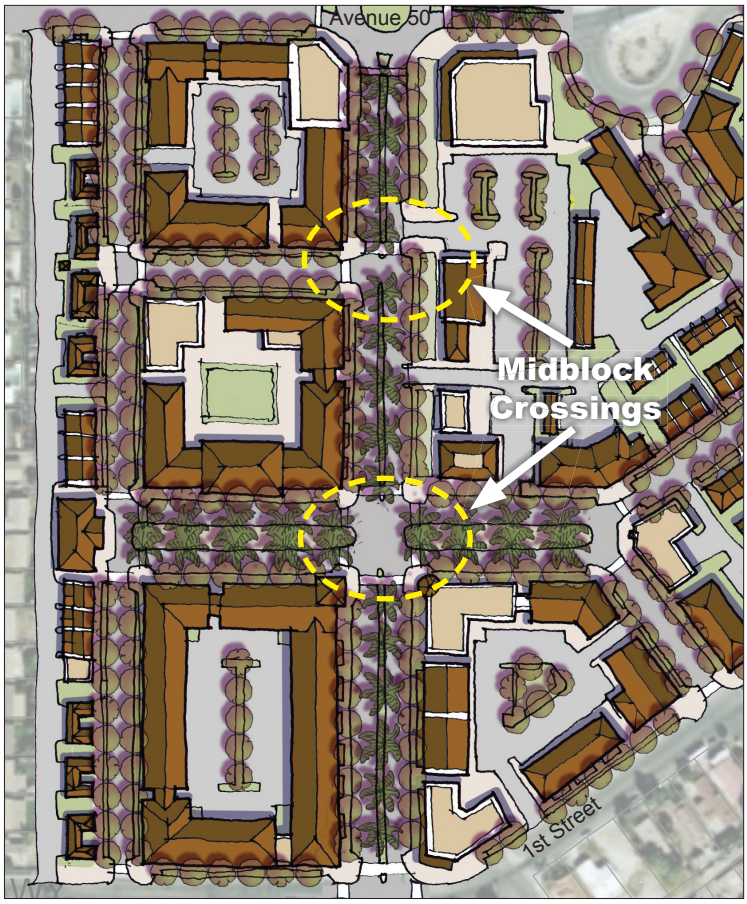


Figure 4.19: Before later stages of development, midblock crossings should be installed in the locations indicated between Avenue 50 and 1st Street.

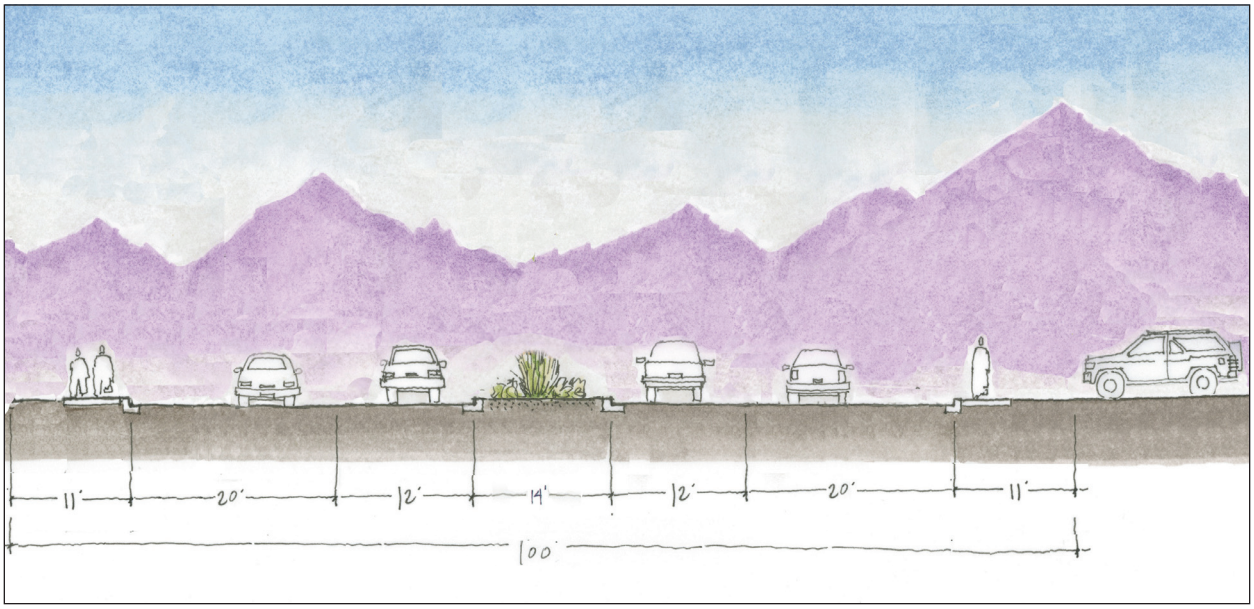


Figure 4.20: Harrison Street from Avenue 50 to Westerfield Way/1st Street looking north – Existing

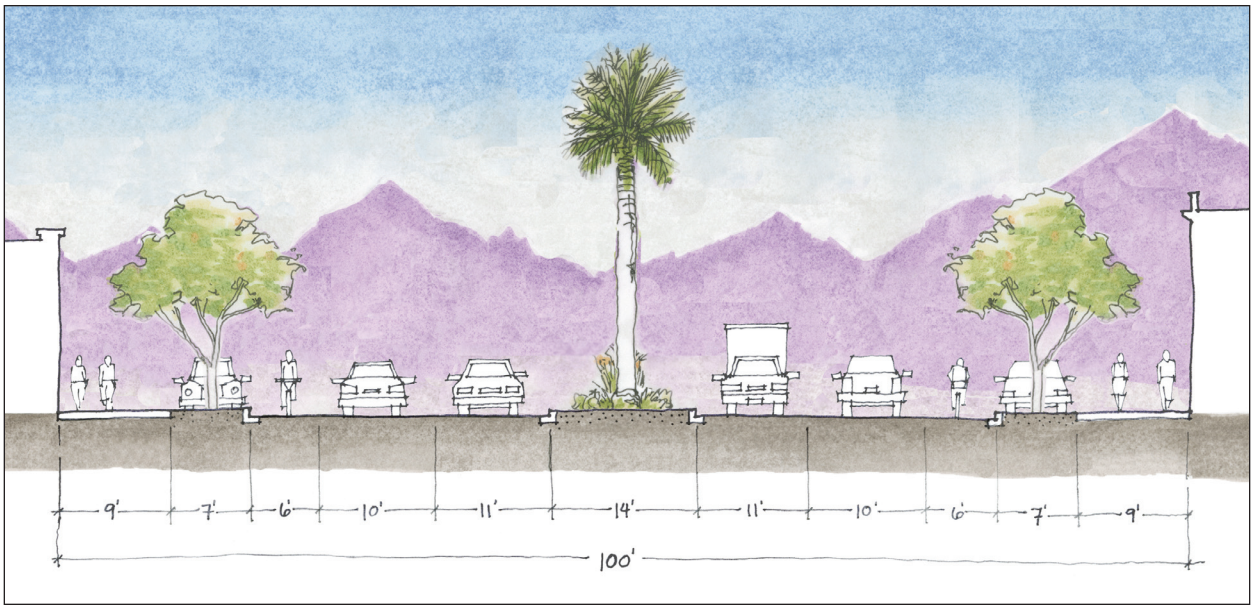


Figure 4.21: Harrison Street from Avenue 50 to Westerfield Way/1st Street looking north – Proposed Option 1

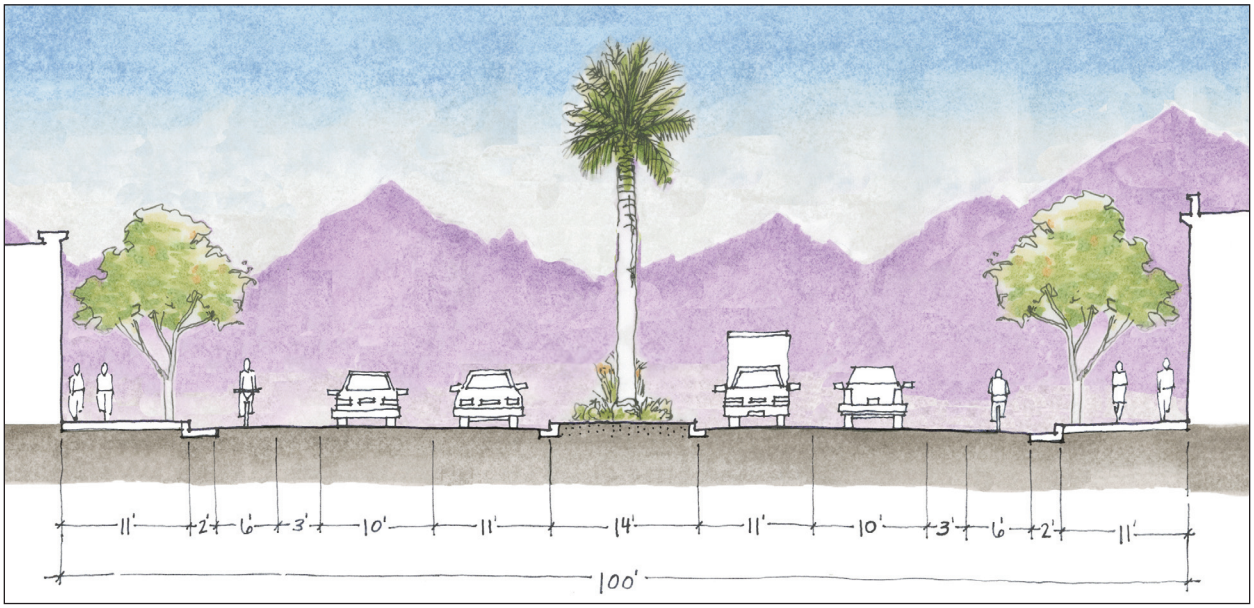


Figure 4.22: Harrison Street from Avenue 50 to Westerfield Way/1st Street looking north – Proposed Option 2

The Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (shown above) is not yet in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices but it has received interim approval from the Federal Highway Administration. These beacons have resulted in much higher yielding rates (approximately 80 to 90 percent) compared to normal circular yellow flashers (approximately 30 to 60 percent, or even lower).

The improvements recommended for this segment of Harrison Street fall into the three categories discussed earlier in this Chapter. The phasing of these improvements will depend on funding availability and the timing of future development. Here is how they are grouped:

A. Immediate changes that can be done with paint on the existing street:

- Narrow all four through vehicle lanes to 11 or 10 feet in width.
- Stripe a bike lane in each direction.
- Stripe 7-foot parking stalls on both sides of the street.

B. Near term modifications that require some construction funds:

- Paint highlighted mid-block crosswalks with ADA access across the new median. All mid-block crosswalk markings should include a yield line (shark's teeth) at least 20 feet before the crosswalk to avoid the danger of a multiple threat crash. Appropriate signs reminding motorists to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks should also be included.
- Install curb extensions at the Westerfield Way/1st Street intersection as shown in Figures 4.11 and 4.12, which represents a typical intersection design.
- Add pedestrian activated yellow beacons or rectangular rapid flash beacons to the mid-block crossings.

C. Longer term, more expensive items that may coincide with new development:

- Add street tree wells at intervals in the parking aisle.
- Extend the existing sidewalks feet to the edge of the ROW.

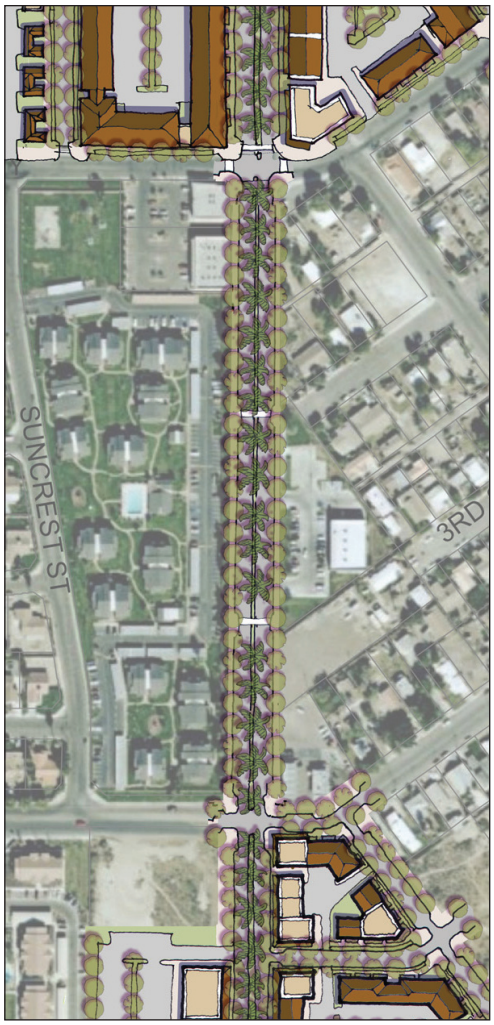
These three categories of improvements will logically be done in the order listed. Fortunately, a large and immediate safety improvement can be achieved with the less expensive things at the top of the list. The first three items require minimal construction, fit on the asphalt between the existing curbs, and need only paint to implement. The second set of changes will improve the corridor significantly, and help set the stage for the development that will trigger the final items. Widening the sidewalks to 9 or 11 feet will extend them out to the edge of the public ROW, where they will match the "build to" setback line for development.

5 Westerfield Way/1st Street Intersection

This intersection does not have enough cross traffic to justify a roundabout. Instead, conventional traffic signals with protected left turn arrows for all directions of travel should be retained here.

This design improves safety for motor vehicles because the left turn pockets will be protected on one side by raised medians, and the narrower lanes will help reduce vehicle speeds.

This design also improves conditions for bicyclists because in addition to reduced vehicle speeds, they will now enjoy marked space on the street. Pedestrians will benefit from more boldly marked crosswalks and the shortened crossing distances curb extensions create.



6 Westerfield Way to Avenue 51/4th Street

This section of Harrison Street connects to the older downtown Coachella street grid. And it also has opportunities that should be protected for significant new development and additional connections. Similar pedestrian-friendly improvements to the 4th Street intersection are in the Pedestrian Plan prepared in 2007 for the City of Coachella.

The same basic list of improvements for the segment north of Westerfield Way should apply here. The only adjustments would be to improve the existing crosswalks at Harrison Street and 6th Street, and add a new mid-block crossing between 4th Street and 6th Street. Because the terminus of 6th Avenue may be realigned northward some distance to connect to Harrison Street at a right angle, no other significant changes should be made to the existing.

7 Bagdad Avenue Intersection

This intersection is in critical need of design improvements because of the high number of pedestrians crossing Harrison Street at or near this point. The market on the corner, the Bagdouma Park and Community Center, the Boys and Girls Club, and several schools all attract people on foot.

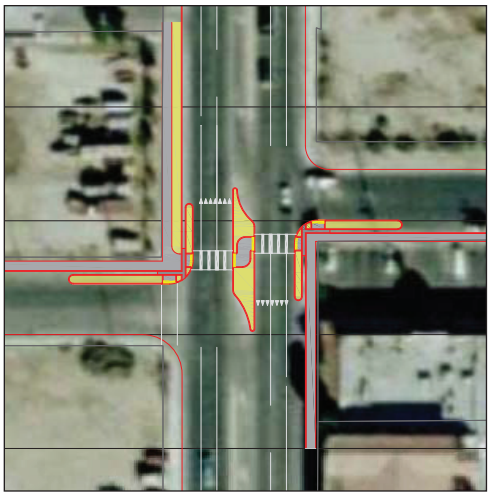


Figure 4.23: Plan view of proposed intersection design at Bagdad Avenue.

As in other portions of the Harrison Street corridor, speeding vehicles are a problem here. A project team radar survey showed few drivers obeying the posted speed limit through this intersection. Speeds as high as 64 miles an hour were observed on Harrison Street at this location during morning school traffic time at 8 a.m. on a weekday.

Bagdad Avenue does not line up east and west of Harrison Street. As a result, left turns are restricted at this intersection, and pedestrian travel is restricted. The best solution for a crosswalk is shown in Figures 4.23, 4.24 and 4.25. Note that the mid-street "jog" is the reverse of what is usually recommended. That switch is necessary because the crosswalks connect sidewalks that do not exactly align.

Figures 4.24 and 4.25: A photo simulation of proposed crosswalk at Bagdad Avenue.

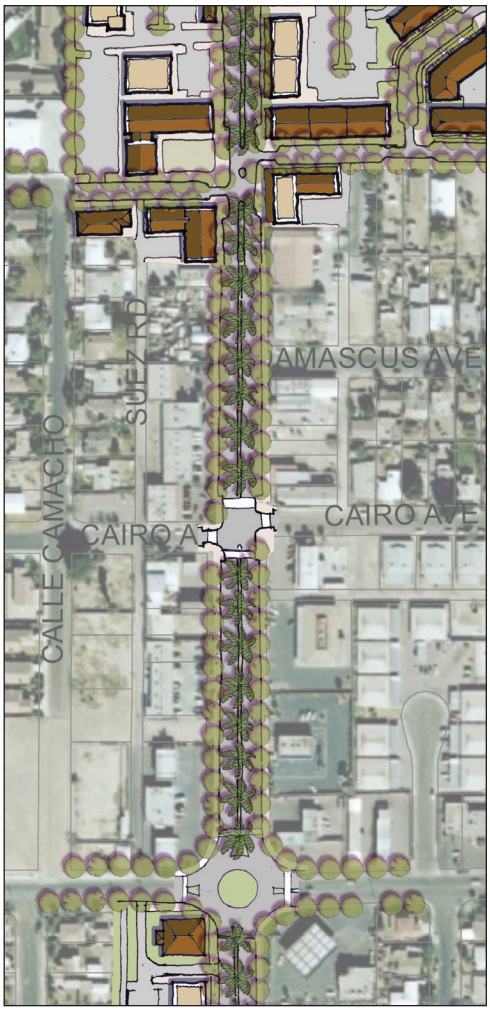
8 Bagdad Avenue to Avenue 52

This segment of Harrison Street continues the four-lane configuration with a median and left turn pockets, and bike lanes (Street Section Options 1 and 2) that began at the Avenue 50 to the north.

Because of the long distance between the major intersections at Bagdad Avenue and Avenue 52, the crosswalks at the Cairo Street intersection should be highlighted with bold crosswalk markings. If difficulties with crossing the street still persist, the City should consider placing button-activated flashing pedestrian beacons.

9 Avenue 52 Intersection

In the near term, this is the last roundabout the design team is recommending for the Harrison Street corridor. Beyond this point traffic levels on Harrison Street and the cross streets are low enough that conventional traffic controls will suffice. As discussed below, when development is extended to the Avenue 54 intersection, a new roundabout/gateway feature should be installed there.



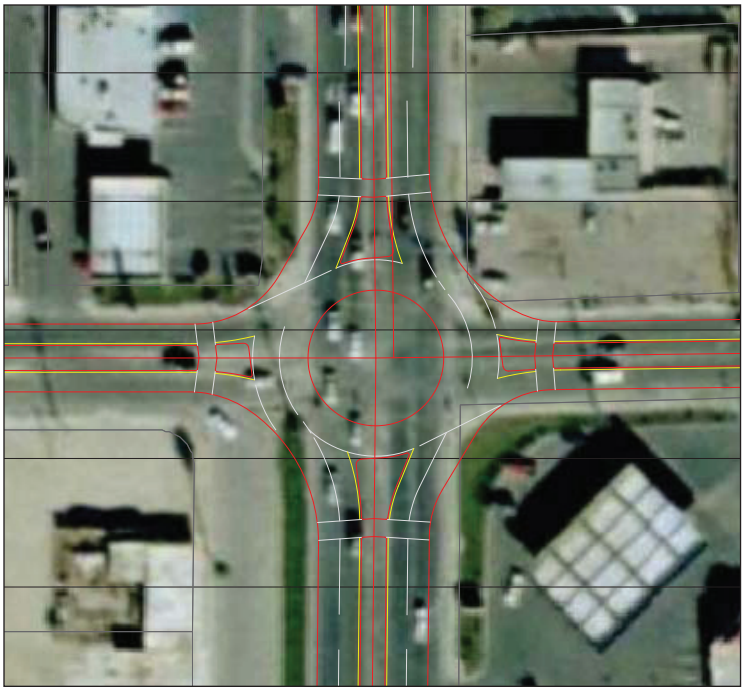
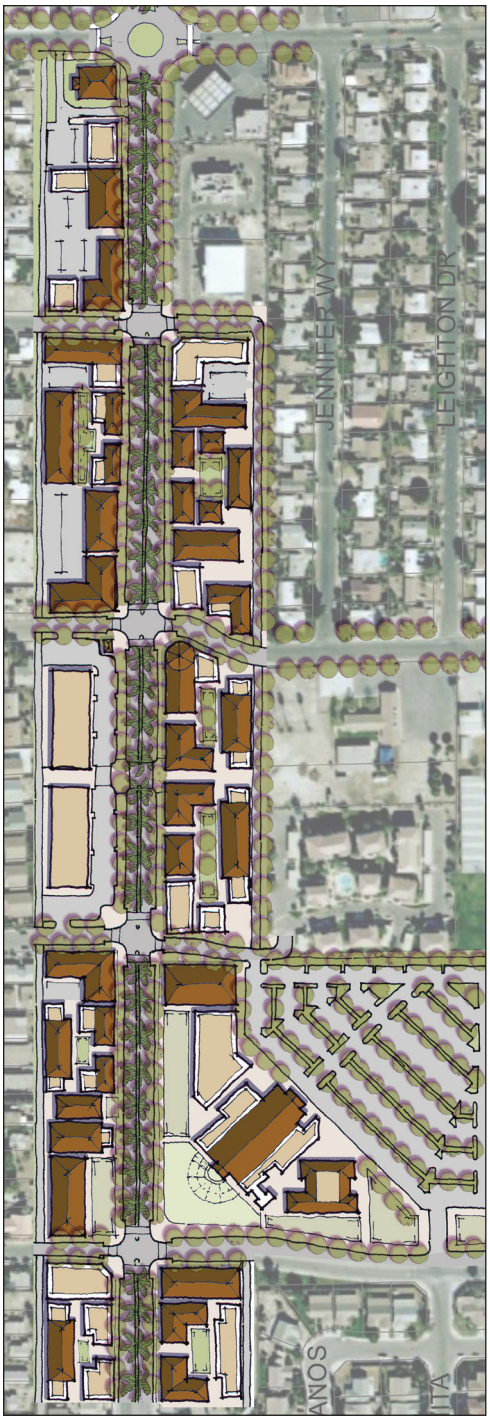


Figure 4.26: Roundabout design layout for Harrison Avenue and Avenue 52.



As with the roundabout at the Avenue 50 intersection, the City must acquire some small amounts of additional property for the proper design to fit at this location. Some adjustment of the roundabout may reduce this need, and some ROW may be obtained through development agreements for the properties at the northeast and southwest corners of the intersection. See Figure 4.26 on previous page.

Alternative to Roundabout

If it is determined that a roundabout at this location is not desireable, the alternative is to maintain the signalized intersection that currently exists. The guidelines for signalized intersections discussed on pages 24 to 25 should be followed.

10 Avenue 52 to Avenue 53

This segment of Harrison Street continues the four-lane configuration with a median and left turn pockets, and bike lanes (Street Section Options 1 and 2) that began at the Avenue 50 to the north.

The assumption behind the recommendations is that the frontage road on the west side of Harrison Street between Avenue 52 and Calle Verde will be eliminated. The new landscaped strip adjacent to the street would be retained, and sidewalks would be created beyond that buffer strip in part of the existing frontage road. The design would then conform to that shown for the more northern section of Harrison Street in Figure 4.16 or 4.17, above.

And again, because of the long distance between the major intersections at Avenue 53 and Avenue 54, the crosswalks at cross street intersections should be highlighted with bold crosswalk markings. If difficulties with crossing the street still persist, the City should consider placing button-activated flashing pedestrian beacons at select location between the major intersections.

11 Avenue 53 Intersection

Development at this intersection can create an anchor point for the southern portion of the corridor. A significant new church planned for the northeast corner can be designed to pull the buildings to the street, frame the intersection, and bring public life to the street.

For Harrison Street, this intersection becomes another with conventional traffic signals that gets reworked for safety and visual appeal. Harrison would retain two lanes in each direction through this intersection, with protected left turn pockets. Avenue 53 stays as it is with a single lane in each direction, but new medians would protect the existing barren left turn pockets. Highlighted crosswalks would connect new curb extensions at all four corners as shown in the typical intersection designs for Figures 4.11 and 4.12.

12 Avenue 53 to Avenue 54

This residential section of Harrison Street currently has little commercial activity, is quite wide, and carries low levels of traffic. As a result, high traffic speeds are the norm as the speed limit increases to 50 mph after Avenue 53, even though private homes line the street for much of this segment. There are development proposals to the south of Coachella, that are expected to increase traffic in this area. Although the General Plan calls for this segment of Harrison to be a 6-lane Major Arterial, it is recommended that this segment be no more than 4-lanes. Current traffic volumes are 11,200 vehicles per day

This segment of Harrison Street should maintain the four-lane configuration with a median and left turn pockets, and bike lanes (Street Section Options 1 and 2) that began at the Avenue 50 to the north.

There is half-a-mile between the major intersections at the end points for this segment of Harrison Street. Therefore, it is critical that the three intersections with Harrison Street at Calle Rojo, Calle Verde, and Calle Zamora all receive curb extensions and high-visibility crosswalks.

13 Avenue 54 Intersection and Gateway

This intersection is the southern end of the Harrison Street corridor that is the subject of this project. The City limit line extends south down Harrison Street from this point. West of the street, the City's zoning map shows a large open space tract extending half a mile to the southern City limits. East of Harrison Street, the unincorporated Riverside County map shows light industrial uses. Although there are discussions about more intense development south of the City, nothing concrete is in the formal planning process at this time. Even if it were, it would be inappropriate for traffic generated by these possible future uses to undermine this effort to create a main street core for the community of Coachella. There are alternate access routes to other locations in the Coachella Valley.

Therefore, in the near term the intersection of Avenue 54 and Harrison Street should be improved as a gateway to the City of Coachella. The same vehicle speed reduction purpose that brings a roundabout recommendation to the northern gateway of the corridor applies here. A prominent gateway sculpture of some type should be installed in the middle of the roundabout. This feature should be designed to be moveable, so that it can be relocated half a mile to the south when the open space park area is developed and Avenue 55 becomes a more logical gateway to the City of Coachella.

Cross Street Recommendations

14 Avenue 50

Avenue 50 has two very different sections in the corridor. East of Harrison Street a four-lane overpass provides safe passage over the railroad tracks and serves as a connector to Grapefruit Boulevard/Highway 111. Farther east Avenue 50 reverts to two lanes and continues to the Highway 86 expressway. This report does not address that portion of Avenue 50 east of Harrison Street.

West of Harrison Street, Avenue 50 quickly leaves the commercial corridor behind and serves a primarily residential area. The only exceptions are the recently developed but not yet fully occupied neighborhood commercial center at the northeast corner of Van Buren Street and Avenue 50.

The pavement width varies considerably west of Harrison Street. Along the southern frontage of the Coachella Shopping Center, the street is 60 feet wide. As both sides of Avenue 50 become residential, it narrows to 50, then 40 feet. At Avenue de Oro it widens again, to nearly 70 feet between the curbs, and continues through the newer residential area at that dimension.

Because Avenue 50 primarily functions as a neighborhood access road, it should to be designed to reflect that role. This will help the street to better accommodate the park and school traffic it carries, much of that on foot or bicycle.

In the short term, striping bike lanes on Avenue 50 can serve to narrow motor vehicle space on the street, which will reduce speeds, better control traffic, and provide safer access for bicyclists. Pedestrians crossing Avenue 50 will have reduced exposure to moving vehicles as well, as the bike lanes will serve as informal staging areas. From east to west, here is how these changes can be made:

In the 60-foot wide segment near the Coachella Shopping Center, the westbound bike lane can simply be striped at 8 feet wide. That leaves 6 feet clear of the gutter pan, and a vehicle lane 11 feet wide next to the existing median. The eastbound bike lane is more problematic, because until the future roundabout allows

Figures 4.27 and 4.28: A photo simulation of an improved crossing at the intersection of Avenue 50 and Avenue De Plata.

only one eastbound vehicle lane to serve all automobile traffic there will be a straight through and a right turn lane for vehicles. Those lanes should be reduced to ten feet wide, and a 5-foot wide bike lane striped between them for straight-ahead and left turning bicycle traffic. To the west of the point where the right turn lane begins, the bike lane can be the full width of 8 feet, 6 feet clear of the gutter pan. See Figure 4.29.

For the 800-foot long 50 foot wide then 40 foot wide segment that comes next, there is no good option except to stripe in narrower bike lanes. Those two lanes and two 11-foot vehicle lanes will leave room for Coachella's conventional 14-foot painted median in the 50-foot wide segment. When Avenue 50 narrows to 40 feet wide, that median should be reduced to 8 feet, the vehicle lanes narrowed to 10 feet, and the bike lanes to 6 feet (including the gutter pan).

Entering the school zone at Avenue de Oro, Avenue 50 widens considerably, and the street becomes a more difficult place for bicyclists and pedestrians. In the short term this excess width can be narrowed visually by prominent painting of 7 foot wide parking spaces along the curbs, and 8-foot wide bike lanes next to the 11-foot wide traffic lanes. The bike lane width would include a prominent one-foot wide stripe separating it from the vehicle lane.

Figure 4.29: Avenue 50 west of Harrison Street – Proposed 60' Segment

Ultimately, Avenue 50 through this segment and newly developing portions of Coachella to the west would retain this configuration, with raised landscaped medians.

15 Avenue 51

Avenue 51, though still wider than a residential access street needs to be, is less complicated than Avenue 50. The width between the curbs remains constant at 64 feet. This allows for 7- foot parking aisles, 7-foot bike lanes, and 11-foot vehicle lanes on either side of a 14-foot median. This reconfiguration can be done in the short term with paint, but ultimately raised and landscaped medians should be constructed.

16 Bagdad Avenue

While Bagdad Avenue is narrower than most streets that cross Harrison Street, it serves as access to a number of community facilities including parks, schools, and the Boys and Girls Club. But within the 40-foor width of the street curb-to-curb, there is nothing that can be done to provide bike lanes unless on-street parking is removed. So it is likely that this street will remain one where bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists must all coexist. Fortunately, they appear to be doing that now, even during times of heavy traffic. Aside from improvements to the intersection of Harrison Street and Bagdad Avenue detailed above, the only significant recommendations for this cross street are improved landscaping as detailed in the "connectivity" discussion elsewhere in this report. Sharrows, or shared line markings, and appropriate signs can be added to make sure motorists understand that bicycles may take the lane.

17 Avenue 52

Like Avenue 50, this street suffers from curb-to-curb widths that change several times in different segments. The proposed design will smooth and reduce those width changes, to better organize traffic flow and reduce vehicle speeds. Excess width will be given over to better sidewalks, new bike lanes, and landscaping.

West of Harrison Street, Avenue 52 is currently striped for two lanes in each direction with red curbing prohibiting on-street parking all the way to the stop sign at Calle Empalme. Continu-

ing west, curbside parking is allowed on the south side of Avenue 52, but still prohibited on the north side. This red curbing continues even along the frontage of the park/swimming pool complex at Douma Street. Not until Avenue 52 leaves the currently developed portion of Coachella does it narrow to one lane in each direction.

East of Harrison Street, Avenue 52 varies in width considerably, from 45 feet east of Harrison Street to nearly twice that (80 feet) approaching Grapefruit Boulevard. Further complicating design solutions is the fact that the widening is not continuous, but includes two 45-foot wide segments with wider portions both east and west. Development on one or both sides of Avenue 52 in these narrow places impedes adding right-of-way.

Because of this variation in width, Figure 4.30 is meant to be representative more of the two-lane with median configuration than the exact width of the street. Figure 4.31 shows the recommended design, again in a representative situation. Where the street is narrower, one foot could be taken from each bicycle lane and each vehicle lane, and the median width reduced so some mid-street landscaping is still provided. Where the street is wider, on-street parking can be striped and the median can be adjusted. Figure 4.32 shows curbside parking on one side of the street. These configurations can be produced in the short term with an application of paint on the existing street, and later improved with the landscaped medians.

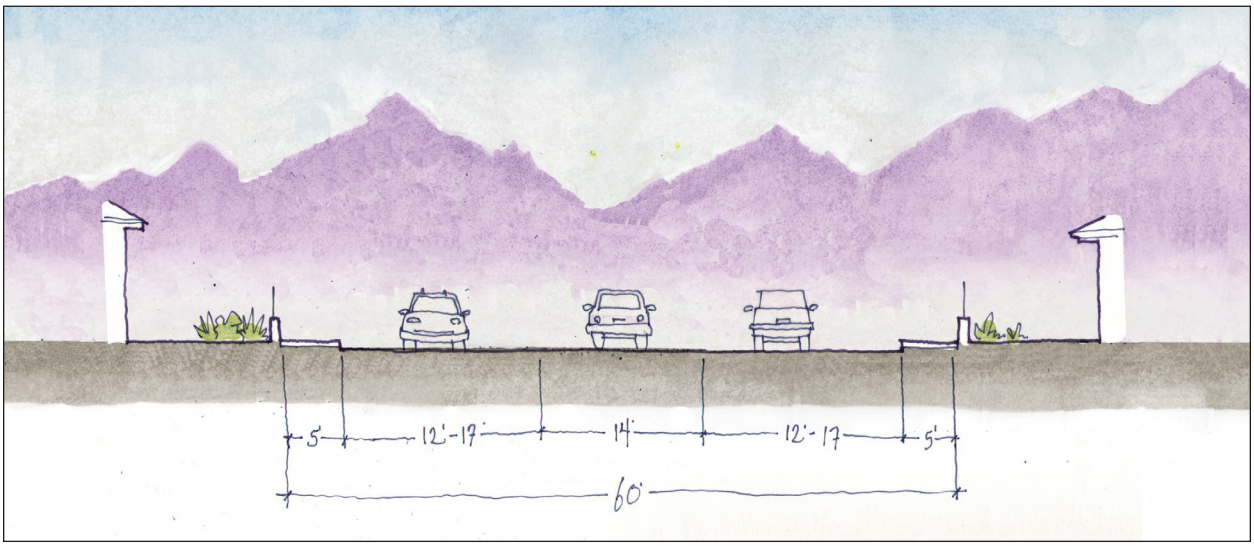


Figure 4.30: Avenue 52 — Existing

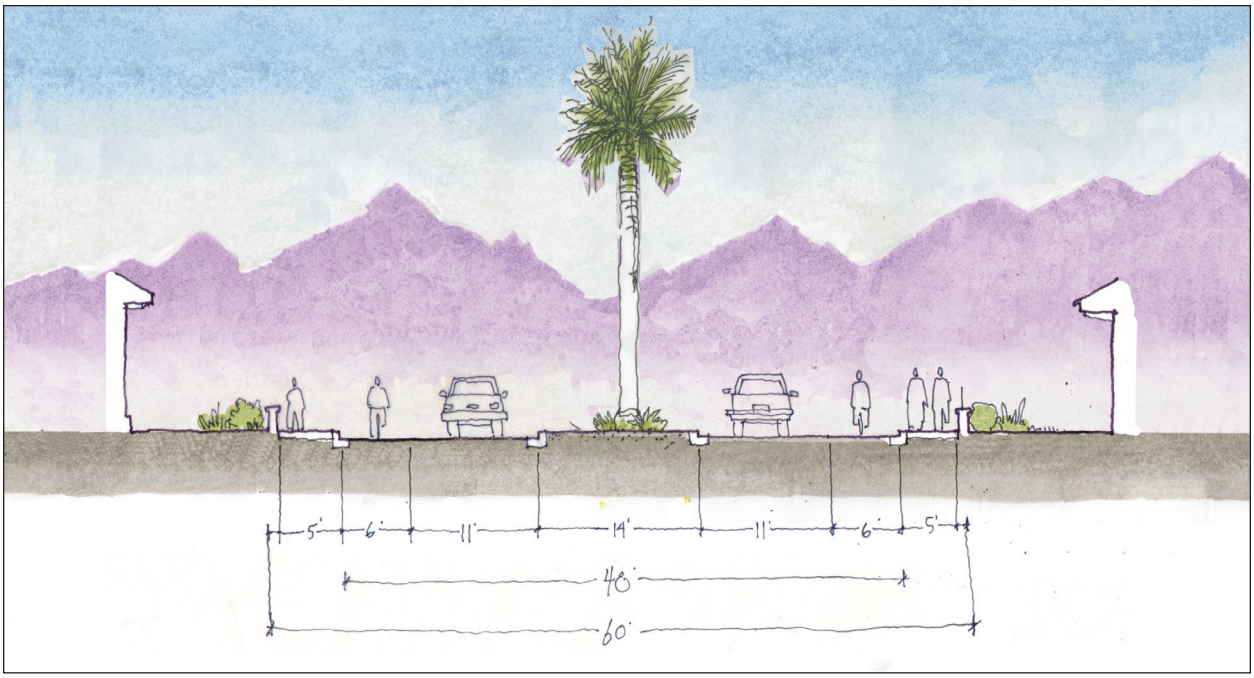


Figure 4.31: Avenue 52 — Proposed

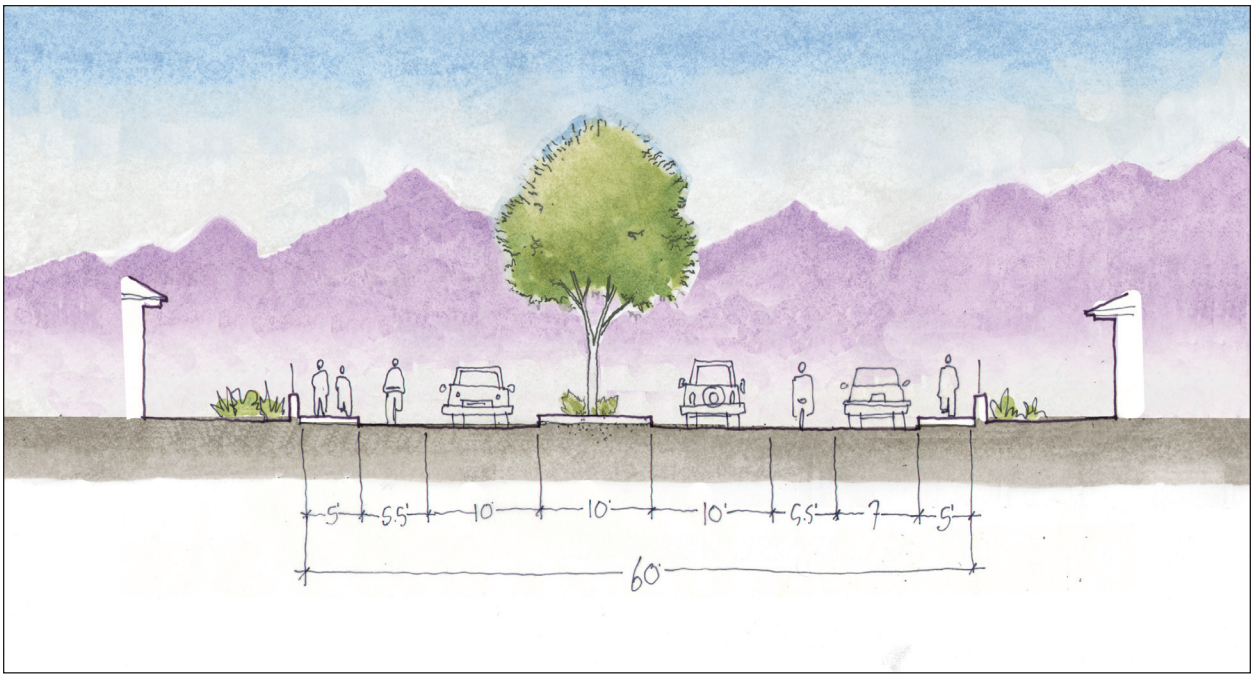


Figure 4.32: Avenue 52 with Curbside Parking — Proposed

On this street, they have created a 4 foot buffer between the parking aisle and the bike lane to use up more of the excess width.

In sections of Avenue 52 (and any other streets where this situation occurs) where the through lanes, medians with turn pockets, bike lanes, and curbside parking do not require all the width between the existing curbs, the City should explore striping the bicycle lane a few feet away from the parking lane so as to create an added buffer between the parking aisles and the bike lanes. This should not be so wide that it appears to be another vehicle or bike lane. In that situation the purpose is to use up excess width as the street is redesigned from four through lanes to two.

18 Avenue 53

This cross street should be re-striped in the short term to match the configuration shown above for Avenue 52 and make the street more consistent in segments where the right-of-way and curb-to-curb widths vary. Again, the ultimate improvements should include landscaped medians.

Future Traffic Volumes and Level of Service

The recommendations in this report are based primarily on the existing traffic volumes on the streets in Coachella. The project team has reviewed some of the traffic volume projections and roadway widening recommendations included in the General Plan Update Baseline Transportation Conditions Report dated October 2008, the South Valley Parkway Traffic Study and Roadway Phasing Plan dated April 2007, and the Riverside County Traffic Analysis Model (RivTAM). (For clarification, the South Valley Parkway Study was commissioned by landowners who wish to develop, and assumes buildout of a comprehensive land use plan that suggests a significant amount of suburban development in the largely rural land which lies south and west of the city of Coachella.) These three sources all predict significantly higher future traffic volumes and many widened streets in Coachella, in contrast to the foregoing recommendations in this report for Harrison Street and its cross streets. As such, this section of the report provides general information on the traffic capacity of the foregoing recommendations, and how these recommendations or future traffic conditions can be modified as nearby development occurs.

Harrison Street

The RivTAM results indicate that between 51,000 and 62,300 vehicles per day will travel on Harrison Street between Grapefruit and Avenue 54 (the predicted volumes vary somewhat for each specific segment within this corridor). Harrison Street is coded as a 6-lane arterial. The South Valley Parkway Study predicts even higher volumes for Harrison Street (77,000 to 85,000 vehicles per day), and recommends that Harrison Street (within the city of Coachella) "be an 8-lane arterial with limited property access". The documents that describe the high volumes of traffic and recommend the wider roadways are written as if these volumes and the wider roadways are a foregone conclusion. However, this simply is not the case. First of all, these traffic volumes won't be realized if the development does not occur as recommended by the property owners' land use consultants. And second, even if the development does occur, the traffic generated by the development doesn't necessarily need to travel on Harrison Street through the city of Coachella. The South Valley Parkway Study states: "For travelers moving in a north-south direction, Harrison is a more attractive option than Highway 111 and SR-86S because it carries traffic in a direct north-south route while the other two require a longer travel distance because their alignments divert further to the east." However, if the city of Coachella chooses not to build an 8-lane cross section or even a 6-lane cross section, Harrison is no longer an attractive option for drivers accessing the new development south of the city. In this case, the developers will either need to provide capacity on alternative routes, or develop in a more sustainable way that does not generate the amount of traffic predicted by the South Valley Parkway Study.

As recommended above in this report, a 4-lane divided roadway for Harrison Street will best support livability and viable connectivity for walking and bicycling within the City of Coachella. The city should not choose to widen Harrison Street to 8 lanes in order to accommodate suburban development outside the city; an 8-lane roadway would literally cut the city in half, making it extremely difficult for people to cross back and forth and access other portions of the city. Even the currently-proposed 6-lane roadway will have a similar effect. If the city of Coachella chooses to retain Harrison Street as a 4-lane arterial — as recommended in this report — the capacity will be approximately 40,000 vehicles per day, and the actual number of vehicles using this roadway will not increase much beyond this 40,000.

Another important factor is the economic reality of road widening. In the current economic downturn, many cities are struggling to simply maintain the streets they have today and are delaying repaving projects until funds are available. But even as the economy turns around, it will still be harder to widen streets and roads than it was in the past. Two cost factors to consider: right-of-way costs may increase as real estate values go up; and rising oil costs will result in increasing material costs for road construction, both directly due to the cost of the oil in asphalt, and indirectly due to the increased costs of transporting the construction materials to the site.

Cross Streets:

Avenue 50 and Avenue 52 are the two east-west arterial streets in the city that need to be addressed in this section.

Avenue 50: This report recommends one lane in each direction for Avenue 50 in the area west of Harrison Street within the City of Coachella. The General Plan indicates traffic volumes for the Coachella portion of Avenue 50 between 14,000 and 17,000 vehicles per day, and recommends a 4-lane divided roadway. The South Valley Parkway Study predicts similar traffic volumes and also recommends a 4-lane divided roadway. The predicted volumes fall within the capacity of a 2-lane roadway, if the intersections are treated in a way to provide adequate capacity. In the short term, the recommended 2-lane section (with two-way center turn lane or a raised median with left turn pockets) should result in a reasonable level of service. As the traffic volumes increase, it is recommended that the city make strategic intersection improvements, but maintain the two-lane cross section. The best solution is to use roundabouts at all intersections with arterial or collector streets, but it may also be possible to provide additional capacity at signalized intersections through the use of left and right turn lanes.

Avenue 52: This report recommends one lane in each direction for Avenue 52 between Van Buren Street and Grapefruit Boulevard in the City of Coachella. The General Plan indicates traffic volumes for this portion of Avenue 52 varying between 13,000 and 28,000 vehicles per day, and recommends a 6-lane divided roadway. The South Valley Parkway Study predicts similar traffic volumes and also recommends a 6-lane divided roadway. The

predicted volumes are beyond the typical capacity of a 2-lane roadway, even with enhanced intersection designs. In the short term, the recommended 2-lane section (with two-way center turn lane or a raised median with left turn pockets) should result in a reasonable level of service, and it is recommended that the two-lane roadway be maintained for the near future, along with strategic intersection improvements (similar to those described above for Avenue 50). If the traffic volumes increase, at some time, it may be appropriate to construct a four-lane divided roadway for Avenue 52 in Coachella. The challenge is that if a 4-lane road is shoehorned into the existing right-of-way, it would be a four-lane undivided facility, without accommodations for bicyclists, and poor accommodations for pedestrians. To build a 4-lane divided "complete street" with appropriate pedestrian and bicycle facilities would require additional right-of-way, which would significantly add to the cost. Either design would further divide the community and separate neighborhoods. It is strongly recommended that the city of Coachella eliminate any future plans to build a 6-lane roadway for Avenue 52. The predicted traffic volumes are within the capacity of a 4-lane divided roadway, and a 6-lane roadway would divide the city, and significantly reduce livability and create connectivity problems for pedestrians and bicyclists. This unnecessarily wide roadway would likely result in significantly more crashes for all users, including motor vehicles.

In summary, it is recommended that no matter what the traffic models predict for traffic volumes, it is in the City's best interest to limit the size of all streets in Coachella to no more than four-lane divided cross sections, preferably with roundabouts to control traffic at the major intersections. It is important for Coachella to take a stand in favor of complete, walkable, bicycle-friendly and livable streets and to resist building the overly wide roads that were recommend in older planning documents. Streets wider than 4 lanes with medians (divided roads) are too damaging to the community. They encourage high-speed traffic through the City and effectively cut it into segments. If the need to accommodate more traffic volumes arises in the future, the City should consider adding roads to the street network, or widening streets that don't go through the heart of the city.

Neighborhood Traffic Calming Recommendations

Residents raised issues related to connections, traffic speeds, traffic volumes, and school drop off and pick up problems in several primarily residential neighborhoods along the corridor. The school problems are discussed below. Other issues include:

Reopening the cul-de-sac connection pathways that once linked the north and south portions of Balboa, Coronado, and Kenmore Streets. This has the possibility to reduce vehicle trips that are made because the walking or biking distances once shortened by the now locked gates force people into cars.

Residents at the design workshop also commented that this three-street/six cul-de-sac neighborhood would benefit from the marking of all on-street parking spaces, to more efficiently control parking.

Installing traffic calming features can reduce vehicle speeds and eliminate the corner cutting on Mecca Avenue between Avenue 51 and Bagdad Avenue. This could include adding bike lanes to narrow vehicle lanes,.

School Site Recommendations

Introduction

Traditionally, engineers have built roads to handle the early evening peak hour traffic volumes, because those have been the highest numbers in the day. In many communities, though, traffic volumes in the morning peak hour have now surpassed the evening peak. This is primarily due to the high numbers of children now being driven to school instead of walking or bicycling. Most of the parents and grandparents of today's school children got to and from school under their own power, especially those attending schools close to their homes. High numbers of today's school children now participate in the rushed and often chaotic morning dropoff at neighborhood schools for a variety of reasons, including accident concerns, personal security fears, reductions in bus services, or busy schedules.

Not all of the factors discouraging against student walking and bicycling to school can be addressed in this project, but some improvements in pedestrian and bicycle facilities can ease fears about safety on the streets.

Cesar Chavez Elementary School

This school was visited by the design team. Observations during the morning drop off and discussions with adults on the street contributed to the design recommendation shown in Figure 4.34, high-visibility crosswalk markings and a median crossing island, which will improve crosswalk safety. This basic design should be installed at the Avenue 50 intersections with Avenue de Oro and Avenue del Parque, and at the primary access point for the school where Avenue de Oro and Avenue del Parque meet. The improved crosswalks on Avenue 50 are consistent with the recommendations for that street outlined earlier in this Chapter.

Palm View Elementary School

This school will benefit from modest improvements at the front door access point where Palm Avenue meets 7th Street. Curb extensions, more prominently marked crosswalks, and improved pedestrian signage should be installed as medium-term projects. Narrowing the vehicle space at this intersection will prevent much of the double parking and u-turns that are problems now.

Figures 4.33 and 4.34: Photo simulation of an improved crosswalk near Cesar Chavez Elementary.

Other more general improvements to bicycle and pedestrian features throughout the city that are detailed elsewhere in this report will help change the overall environment for kid-powered access.

Bobby G. Duke Middle School

The two Bagdad Avenue cul-de-sac access points at this school provide a study in contrasts and highlight how significant small details can be.

The western access point circulates traffic smoothly around a landscaped park area. For the first half of the loop, parking spaces are marked on the left side of the through lane and the right side curb is marked red to provide drop off and pick up space. Next, motor vehicles pass through a curb extension choke point that channels pedestrians across the loop to access the broad walkways between Bobby Duke Middle School and the Boys and Girls Club. Past that narrow point, parking spaces are marked on both sides of the through lane around the loop. This design works quite well because:

- The single through lane discourages drivers from stopping and blocking cars behind them.
- Space is provided out of the moving traffic flow for students to get in and out of vehicles, ideally next to the curb.
- The design includes a safe place for pedestrians to cross the slow stream of traffic moving around the loop.
- And the loop has fifteen or twenty parking spaces for parents who must stay longer than required to have a child hop quickly in or out of the car.

By contrast, the smaller open cul-de-sac that is the eastern student drop off point is unstructured, confusing, and allows behavior by students and drivers that is impolite and at times dangerous. Because there is no structured lane provided for through traffic, vehicles frequently double or triple park in the open center of the cul-de-sac bulb. Students are then on foot walking among the parked and moving vehicles, rather than waiting safely on the curb. Horns honk and drivers at times back up to clear parked vehicles blocking them in.

The solution is to mimic the loop at the western access point by creating a raised median in the center of the cul-de-sac bulb. The

bulb is approximately 80 feet in diameter. This is too small to allow stopped or parked vehicles on both sides of the through traffic lane, so a single 8-foot wide "lane" for brief stops only should be striped at the curb. A twelve foot through lane would then circle the raised center, which would be roughly 40 feet across. This raised center could be created in the short term, and can initially be built inexpensively with just a circle of raised concrete blocks or railroad ties. Later improvements should landscape the center of the circle and possibly provide a sculpture there.

Figures 4.35 and 4.36: Photo simulation of a narrowed entry point for student dropoff/pickup at Cesar Chavez Elementary. (This improvement would need to be constructed by the school.)

Valley View Elementary School

This school also has a chaotic and unstructured parent drop-off and pickup situation, that spills over into the neighborhood to the north of the school. Problems in the area of the school include:

- Waiting parents sitting in cars in the neighborhood from Jennifer Way to Las Palmas Street, often blocking those narrow streets.
- Students walking in the street leaving the school, because many streets in this neighborhood on the north side of Valley Road have no sidewalks.
- Parents driving in through lanes stopping and honking as they see their children and then blocking traffic until their passengers get to and get in the car.
- Students running in or across the street to get into vehicles that are stopped blocking the through lanes.
- U-turns in the Valley Road/Morgan Avenue intersection made while the crossing guard is trying to direct students across the street.
- Parents trying to get into the "bus only" access drive in front of the school, even though it is clearly marked and teachers are trying to block them.

While no specific designs were prepared for this site, some general principles should be followed as the City and the School District work to improve this situation. First, stringent enforcement would reduce the nearly constant blockage of through traffic on Valley Road and the side streets in the neighborhood to the north. Second, the District could consider creating a structured drop-off and pickup zone either at the existing bus only driveway or in the parking lot at the eastern end of the school site. If this

driveway is converted to a parent use drive, bus access could be relocated to the parking lot on the east side of the school. Third, curb extensions at the side street intersections with Valley Road would reduce pedestrian crossing exposure and control U-turns. Finally, sidewalks with good landscape buffers should be installed on the streets that are lacking them now.

In addition to the engineering changes mentioned above, the City should work with the School District to develop Safe Routes to School programs at all of the elementary and middle schools. These programs include efforts to educate children and parents on the benefits of walking or bicycling to school along with encouragement programs that make it fun for children to do so.

Summary

These recommendations fall into three groups, which will help the community prioritize and schedule improvements. Some short term efforts are policy-related, such as lowering speed limits and targeting focused traffic enforcement in the corridor. Others address the street itself, but require little beyond redesigning the lane configurations and then signing and striping the street to match. These features can be painted on the asphalt surface between the existing curbs. They require relatively little funding, just costs for signs, paint, and labor.

The short-term projects among those detailed in this Chapter include:

- Narrower vehicle lanes
- Bike lanes
- Parking aisles
- Improved crosswalk visibility
- More prominent marking of medians
- Lowering speed limits
- Adjusting enforcement and fines
- Identification of gaps in ADA ramps and related infrastructure
- Setting policy and "flagging" properties to preserve future connections options

- Evaluation of all vehicle accidents in the City with the goal of identifying problem locations
- Immediate safety improvements at school locations as possible

Medium term improvements are those that need more engineering and construction. These should also include infrastructure to improve safety and ADA compliance. Such projects would include:

- A roundabout at Grapefruit Boulevard (to slow traffic down at the entry point)
- Curb extensions at intersections not targeted to eventually receive roundabouts
- Mid-block crossings at the locations identified in this chapter
- Safety improvements at locations identified through the accident analysis
- The most logical immediate improvements to ADA features
- A raised median between the entryway roundabout at Grapefruit Boulevard and Avenue 50
- Reduce the number of commercial area driveways
- Some landscaping improvements

Longer term projects include:

- Completing landscaping and gateway features at the Grapefruit Boulevard roundabout
- Other roundabouts
- Full landscaping in the corridor

A more comprehensive discussion of this prioritization and funding opportunities can be found in Chapter 6 of this report.

Blank Page

Chapter 5: Land Use Recommendations

Introduction

This section of this report provides guidance on future land use in the corridor. As the City becomes more urbanized with growth, Coachella will begin to take steps to remake the Harrison Street corridor into a more walkable and livable area for people on, and alongside the roadways. As that process begins, the possibilities for enhanced development in the corridor will expand greatly.

While this section offers seemingly detailed overhead and street view images of future developments, these should not be interpreted as rigid requirements location by location. Rather they are meant to give a view to the potential of what can be achieved. The general principles that guided the suggested land use zones and creation of these images include:

- Mix uses wherever possible, bringing residential units into commercial areas.
- Connect new uses so that foot and bicycle travel is easy.
- Shelter pedestrian walkways from sun and rain wherever possible.
- Increase density, especially by putting residential uses on floors above commercial uses.
- Reduce parking requirements.
- Share parking.
- Increase the supply of on-street parking.
- Design window and walkway placement to maximize personal security with eyes on the street.
- Retain options for future new streets and pedestrian connections as vacant or underutilized parcels are filled in.
- Use landscapping and street trees to enhance the public realm
- Use architectural details to make all structures appealing to the eye.
- Orient uses, entryways, patios, and plazas to embrace the street, rather than turn away from it.

Figure 5.1 reviews the location of nodes along the entire corridor this project covers. It shows three distinct development areas, and connections through the existing traditional downtown core. Land use in the downtown area is covered by the recently pre-

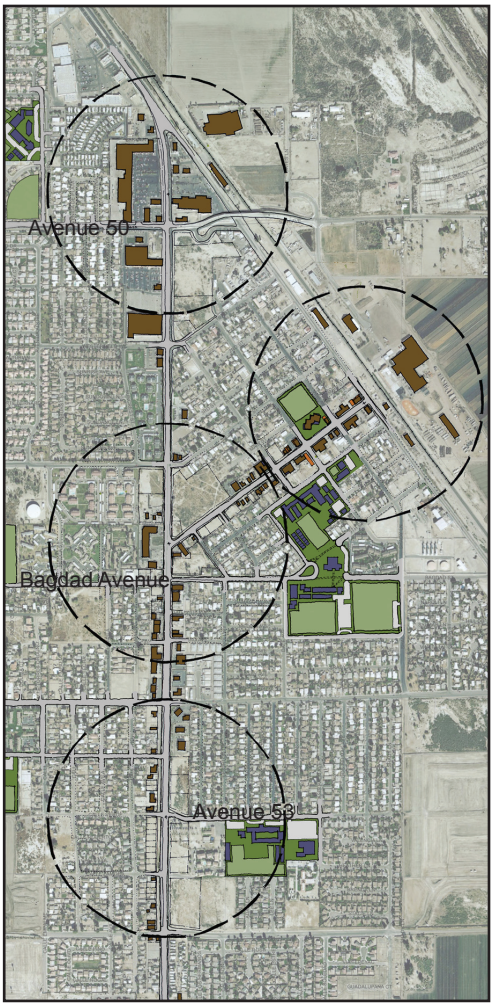


Figure 5.1: The three possible development nodes along Harrison Street (with additional downtown node).

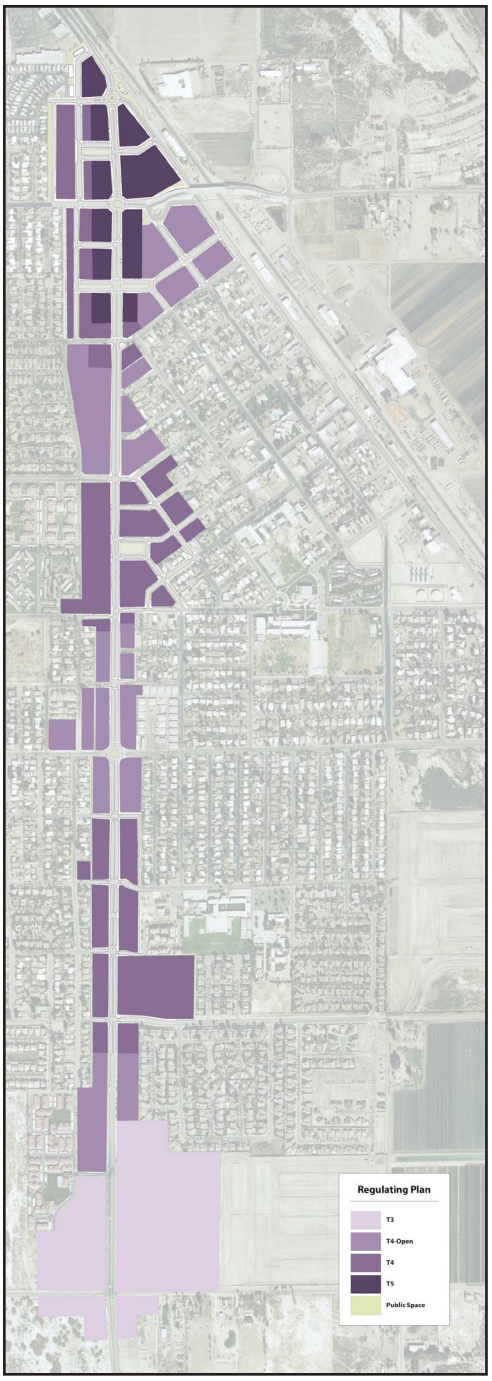


Figure 5.2: Land Use Regulating Plan.

pared Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan. Development possibilities for the three areas straddling Harrison Street will be outlined below. Because it is understood that what actually appears in the future will differ from the designs shown here, only the most important features are explained with the bullets and arrows.

The images in this section are a developement guide showing possible urban design characteristics that will boost economic activity, provide living units where residents' daily needs can be met nearby, and create "nodes of activity" that will be gathering points for the entire community. The exact nature of future development projects will be determined by the direction the City chooses to go, the market, and what proves to be the best fit for the community in the long term. However the details work out, there are a variety of possibilities for the Harrison Street corridor.

Regulating Plan

One successful approach to fitting different land uses in the appropriate spots in a community is called a "Regulating Plan." This is built out of the Transect concept and the Smart Code, which provides 6 different zones that define a community from the most rural edge to the densest high-rise urban center. They are labeled T1 through T6. A 7th zone is sometimes reserved for special uses such as large corporate headquarters, hospitals, or university campuses. The Regulating Plan will show where building "types" should be placed along the corridor.

Not all communities have all 6 or 7 zones. Only zones T2 through T5 seem to fit in the Harrison Street corridor. Figure 5.2 shows the areas along the corridor where each of these zones should be applied. Notice that the densest T5 development is reserved for the northern node, with the next density level (T4) going to the downtown area node and the southern node.

Figure 5.3 shows the building types typically recommended for each zone. Two different building frontage styles are shown for both the T4 and T5 zones. Note the purple shading in the upper images, which shows the angle of sunlight on south-facing building fronts at noon on mid-winter and mid-summer days. In Coachella's climate, it is very important to shade pedestrians, windows, outside displays, and sidewalk café tables.

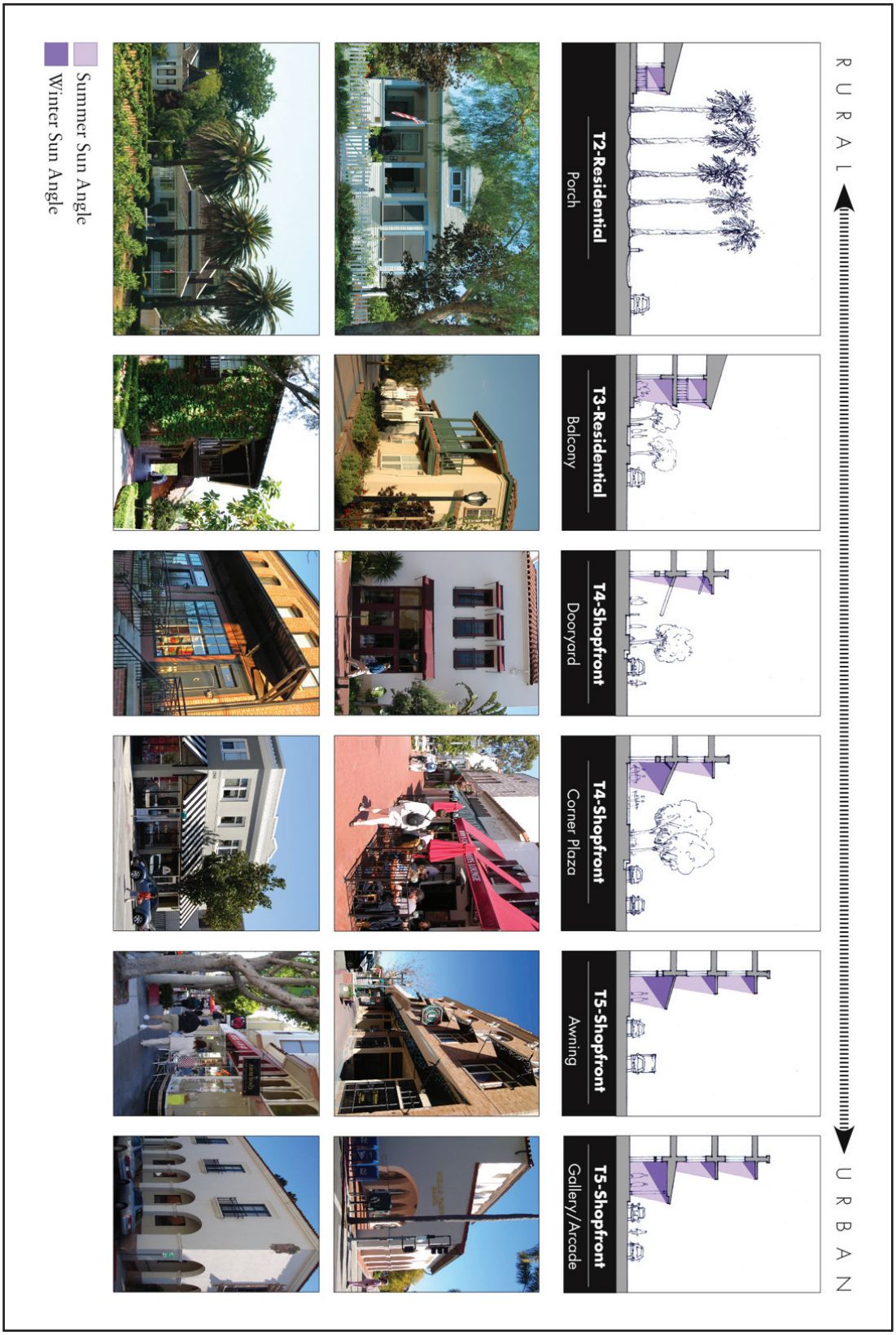


Figure 5.3: Harrison Street Frontage Types

Northern Node – The Area Around the Coachella Shopping Center

This node looks at future development on the existing shopping center sites, the vacant parcels east of Harrison Street, and the industrial yards along Grapefruit Boulevard.

- Roundabouts for improved safety and traffic flow at the major intersections.
- A new transit hub on excess land east of the entryway roundabout.
- Significant infill development in the existing shopping center parking lots.
- Eventual replacement of the existing large commercial buildings.
- Buildings that frame the Harrison Street and side street frontages.
- A new plaza and mini-plazas near the middle of the block between Grapefruit Boulevard and Avenue 50.
- Significant new landscaping.
- New street connections through all sections of this node.
- New pedestrian crosswalks on Harrison Street several hundred feet north and south of Avenue 50.
- New residential uses at the edges of the more intense redevelopment to buffer existing residential developments.

Figure 5.4 shows how this development might be phased in over time. Please note that care should be taken at the earliest stages of development to create new connections through these properties, and preserve the options for more connections in subsequent phases. Similar phasing should occur at the other nodes, always keeping an eye on improved connectivity in the future.

Because they are so critical to safety and traffic flow, the roundabouts and lane re-striping should come early. Putting those features in place soon prepares the corridor to better accept the later phases of development.

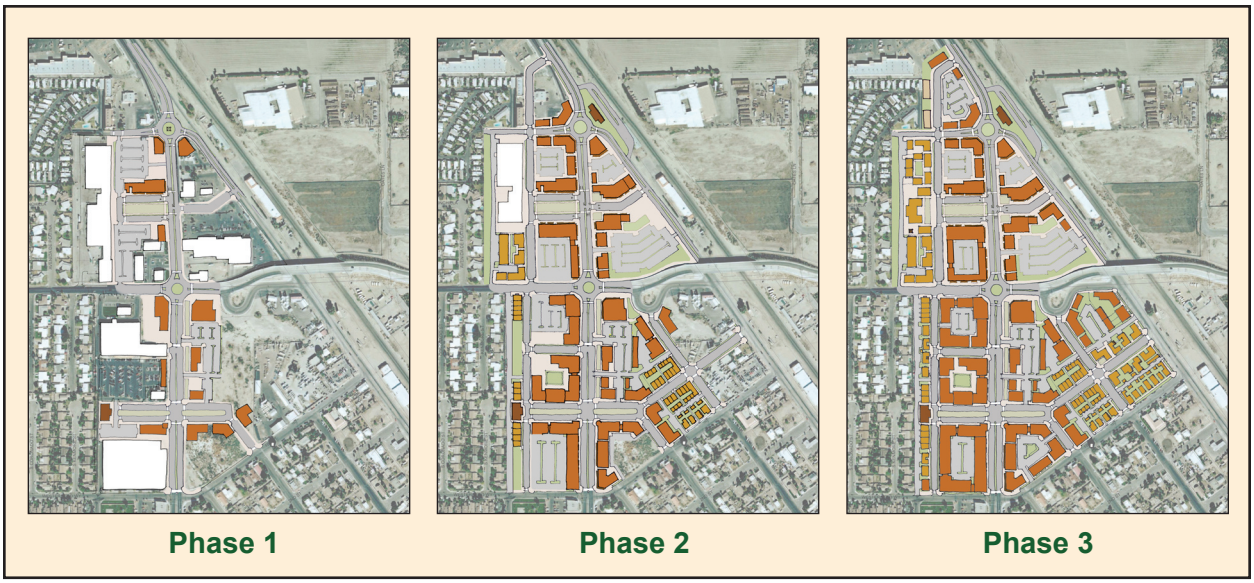


Figure 5.4: Potential phasing of new development over time. Redevelopment would start on the parcels closest to the corridor. As redvelopment progresses to the second phase, the larger commercial buildings would be replaced and infill development would begin.

Figure 5.5: Oblique view of the area around the redesigned intersection of Harrison Street and 1st Street. These images demonstrate what incredible potential this style of development has for the community.

Figure 5.6: Development on the Northern Node showing a mix of retail, commercial and residential uses.

Downtown Node – The Area on Harrison Street North of Bagdad Avenue

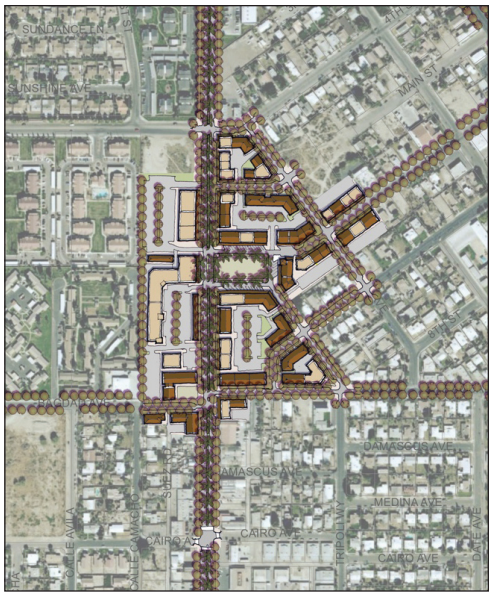


Figure 5.10 gives an overview of a future development scenario prepared by this project's design team. This design features:

- Development of vacant parcels, mostly east of Harrison Street between 4th and 6th Streets.
- Buildings that frame the Harrison Street and side street frontages.
- A new plaza on the east side of Harrison Street at the redesigned 6th Street intersection.
- Significant new landscaping.
- New street connections with existing downtown streets.
- New pedestrian crossings on Harrison Street between Bagdad Avenue and Avenue 50.

Development of this node is critical to the success of both this project and the Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan. Future development in this node will provide the means to better connect the existing downtown with the Harrison Street corridor. Safer and more frequent intersections that improve connections for automobiles, pedestrians, and bicycle riders alike will benefit everyone. As the street connections appear, so will people. As people appear, so will the demand for commercial and residential development. As that development appears, the boundary separating downtown Coachella and the Harrison Street corridor will disappear.

The recommendations at this node diverge slightly from what is currently n the Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan. The design team felt the City should consider putting this node into more orthogonal blocks, and realigning the 6th Street access to Harrison Street. The realignment seemed an important issue to address for retail in that area as it allows businesses to have more visible storefronts around that intersection and allows easier access for people lookling for parking on the streets.

Figure 5.7: Boundaries of Coachella's Traditional Downtown

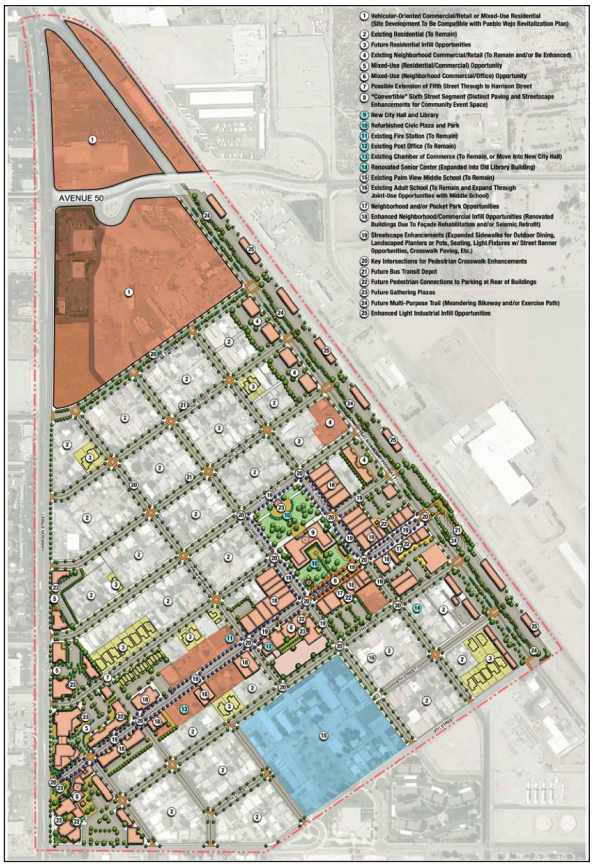


Figure 5.8: Overview of the Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan

Figure 5.9: Street-level view of the area around Harrison Street and 6th Street.

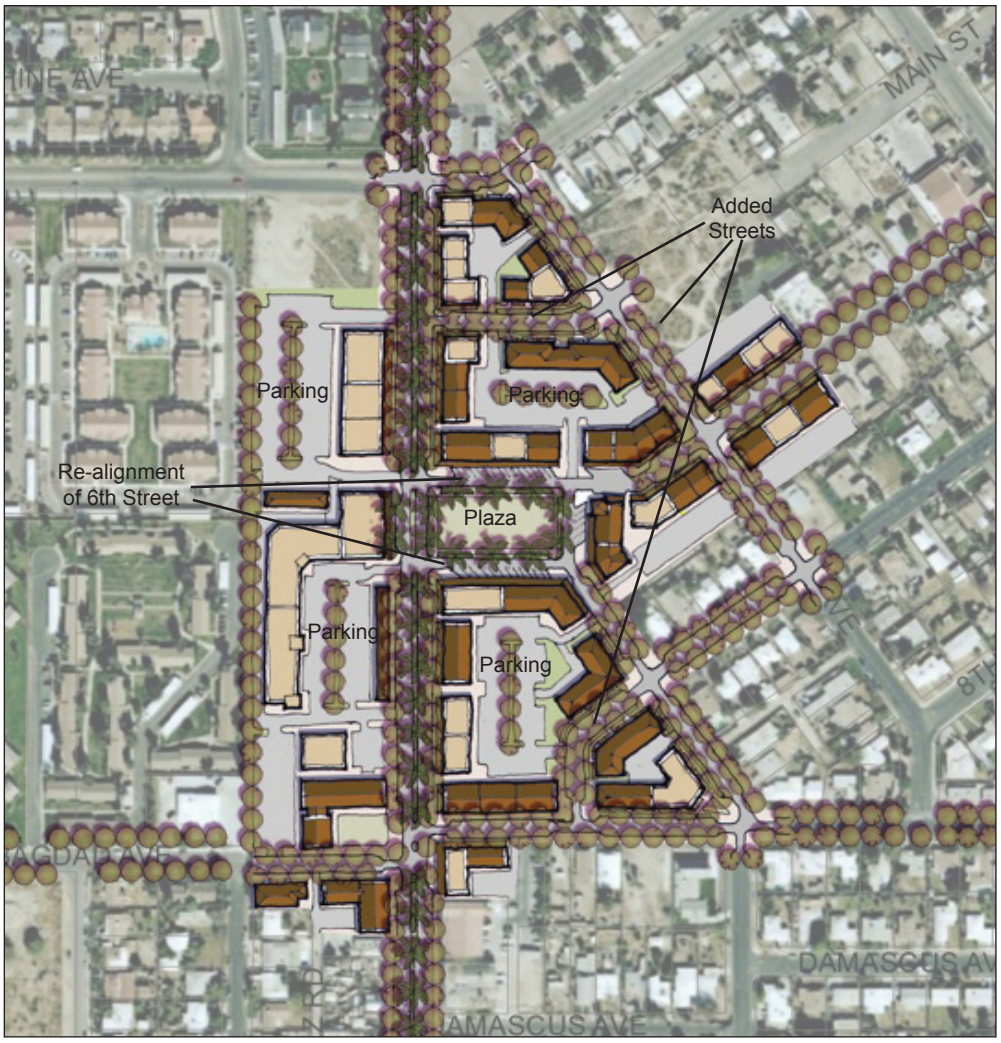
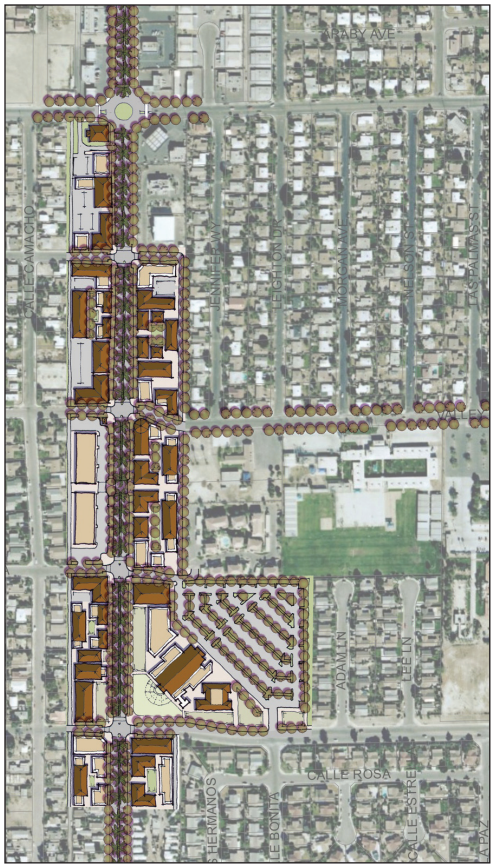


Figure 5.10: Overview of future development and street improvements around this node. Some of these recommendations diverge from the Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan.



Southern Node – The Area Along Harrison Street from Calle Rojo to Avenue 53

In the timeframe of this project, this node may remain the southern gateway to the Harrison Street corridor. As infill in the corridor is realized, future development may push the southern edge of the City south to Avenue 54. But for now, this node should introduce northbound drivers to a street that is designed for slower speeds, and land uses that tell drivers they are entering a City, not just a suburban speedway. Design details for this node include:

- A roundabout or signalized intersection with enhancements at Harrison Street and Avenue 52 for improved safety and traffic flow.
- Significant infill development on vacant and underutilized parcels.
- Buildings that frame the Harrison Street and side street frontages.
- A new plaza in front of the church at Harrison Street and Avenue 53.
- Significant new landscaping.
- New pedestrian crosswalks at all intersections on Harrison Street.

The keystone for this node, especially for the Harrison Street/ Avenue 53 intersection, is the new church at the northeast corner of Harrison Street and Avenue 53. Fortunate circumstances have church officials in the design phase for this new facility at this time. By orienting the buildings to the streets and the parking lot to the rear of the parcel, a plaza can be created at the corner as a focal point. This great opportunity for parishioners and the community is shown in Figure 5.12.

Please note that intersection spacing falls off significantly south of Avenue 53. At least two mid-block crossings should be created on Harrison Street between Avenue 53 and the official corridor gateway at Avenue 54. Figure 5.11 is an example of that type of crossing. Until additional street connections are constructed, similar crossings should be added in the near term in the northern and downtown nodes.

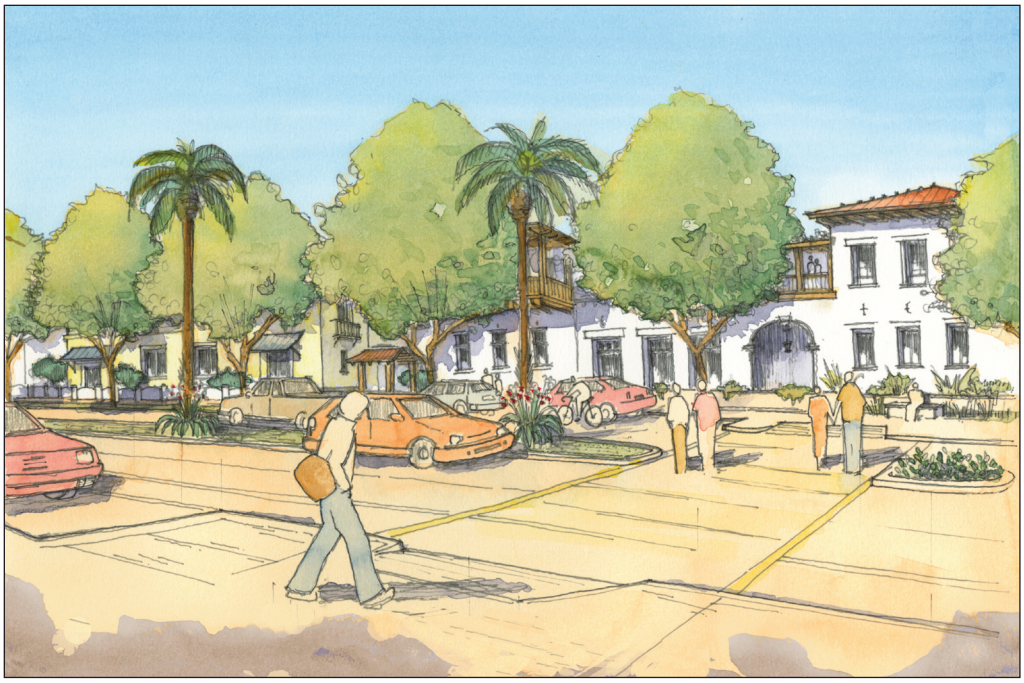


Figure 5.11: Street-level view of a midblock crossing and possible future design between Avenues 53 and 54.

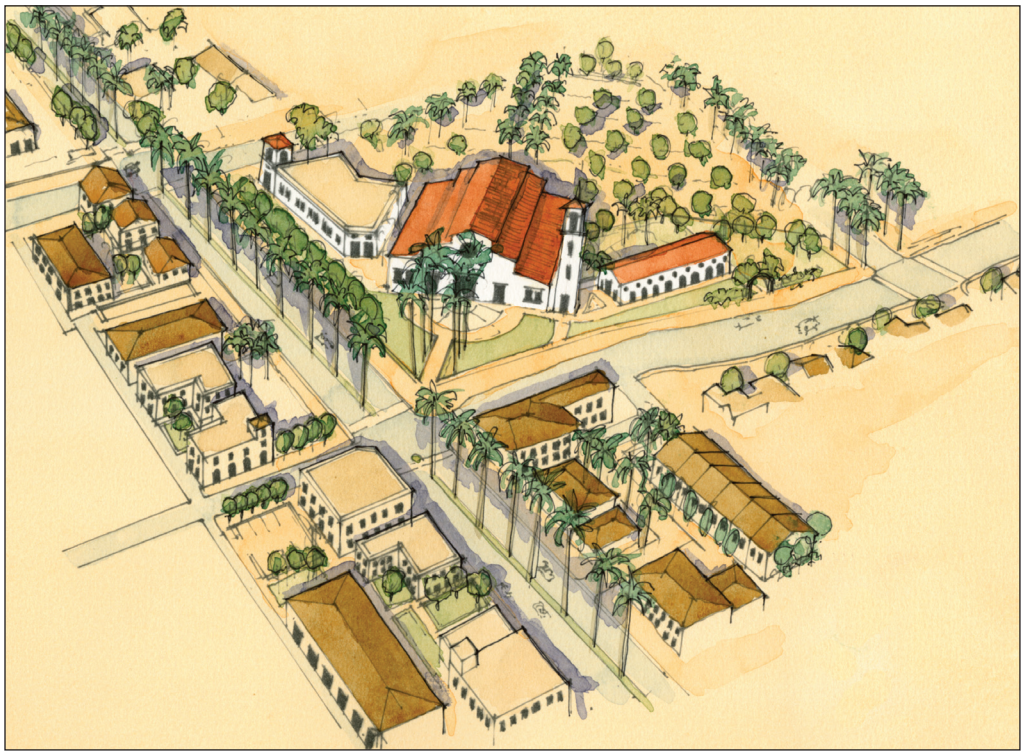
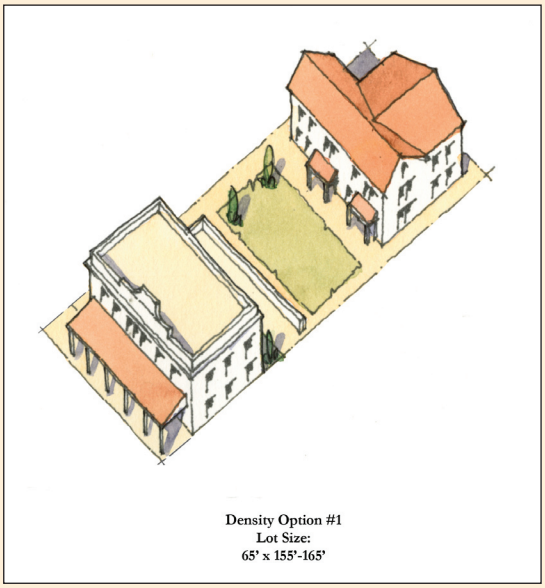


Figure 5.12: Oblique view of the new church and plaza as well as development on adjacent blocks.

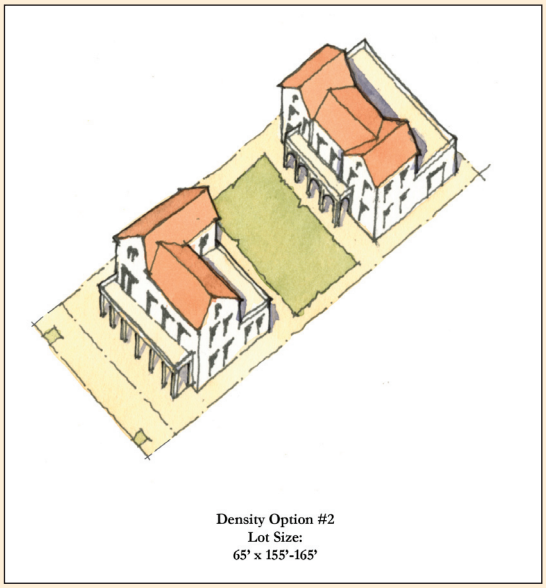
Figure 5.13: Overview of potential infill development in the Southern Node.

Building Type Options

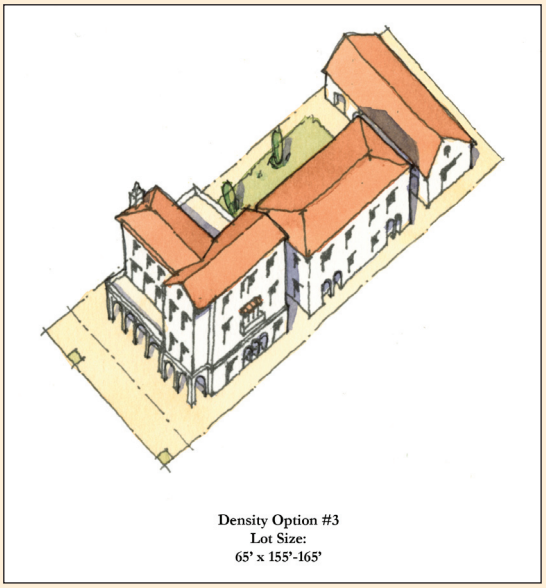
Significant increases in density can be achieved without disrupting the character of a community, through good design and attention to detail. The design team prepared several quick examples for this report. The images below show three different approaches to density. All have the same number of dwelling units, on-site parking, and retail uses at the ground floor frontage. Yet none are sterile high-rise developments.



Density Option #1
Lot Size:
65' x 155'-165'



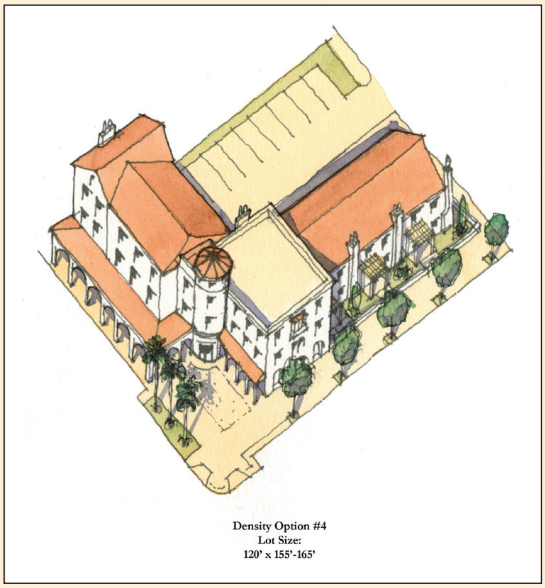
Density Option #2
Lot Size:
65' x 155'-165'



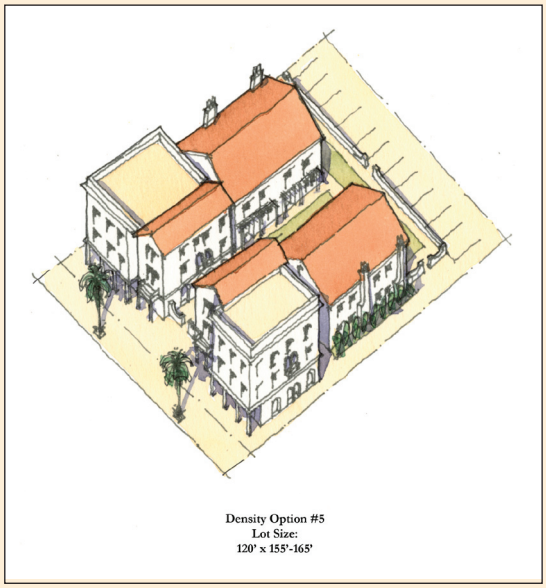
Density Option #3
Lot Size:
65' x 155'-165'

Building Type Options (Continued)

The next set of images show how an existing commercial property can be dressed up a bit with fresh landscaping, an enhanced entryway, a new roof, and a new building at the street frontage. This is a low-key approach that adds new leased space to a commercial property and improves its appearance at minimal cost. Solutions of this sort should be introduced immediately, with redevelopment agency funding and small business grants. The last chapter of this report has information on promising funding sources.



Density Option #4
Lot Size:
120' x 155'-165'



Density Option #5
Lot Size:
120' x 155'-165'

Chapter 6: Implementation

Implementation and Phasing

To implement recommendations, the project team suggests the City begin small and work up to the larger lane reduction and roundabout projects.

The first step is to review all scheduled street resurfacing projects, storm drain and sewer improvements, utility undergrounding projects, and other projects that already involve digging up or rebuilding streets. The City should identify opportunities for piggybacking onto these projects the recommended improvements including restriping, traffic calming, sidewalks, curbs and similar elements.

Where possible, grinding and restriping is recommended as the next step. Some recommended improvements to sections of Harrison Street and nearby roads can be accomplished with simple restriping. Avenue 52 is an example, where narrowing vehicle lanes and structuring the edges of the roadway can be done initially with just paint. Although the ultimate design for Harrison Street includes raised medians for the whole corridor, bike lanes and narrower vehicle lanes can be striped as an interim improvement until the medians can be built. More discussion on project phasing is in the preceding chapter on street design recommendations.

As road work/repaving is planned, the City may also want to evaluate opportunities for:

- Working on ADA improvements throughout the corridor.
- Leveling sidewalks where driveways (particularly on side streets) create lateral slopes.
- Shifting the placement of poles that inhibit pedestrian travel or shifting the sidewalk around the poles.

The greater the extent of the reconstruction, the greater the opportunity for adding new elements, such as curb extensions and medians, at a fraction of the cost of a stand-alone project. The community also avoids the disruption, noise and expense of repeatedly digging up a street and detouring traffic.

Such combination projects will require coordination between departments and capital improvement projects whose schedules and budgets are often distinct.

Many cities have incorporated streetscape and traffic calming features into street reconstruction projects. In Venice, Florida, for example, officials added $80,000 to a previously planned Main Street resurfacing project that provided for intersection and mid-block curb extensions, median crossings, and crosswalks of colorful paver stones. Seattle has added planted medians to several streets at reduced cost as part of sewer upgrade projects. The City of San Diego recently reconfigured a half-mile stretch of La Jolla Boulevard through the Bird Rock community as the street was being put back in place after being completely torn out for a large-scale sewer upgrade project. They widened sidewalks and added parking, removed all the traffic signals and stop signs in the corrido,r and installed five landscaped roundabouts at five intersections in sequence.

Funding

A large number of funding opportunities exist for leveraging City funds to construct the projects recommended in this report. These programs offer alternatives for street design, community facilities, and other infrastructure. Sources of funding include:

- State and federal transportation funds
- City road maintenance and construction funds
- Development fees
- Special districts
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- California Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency
- Proposition 84 Urban Greening Grants
- Compass Grants from SCAG
- Volunteer initiatives and private donations

Each of these funding sources is subject to changes in state and federal law, the economy and revenue levels, and project priorities. The following is a summary of programs as they existed at the time of this report.

Phasing for Street Improvements

Short-Term Projects

- Narrower vehicle lanes
- Bike lanes
- Parking aisles
- Improved crosswalk visibility
- More prominent marking of medians
- Lowering speed limits
- Adjusting enforcement and fines
- Identification of gaps in ADA ramps and related infrastructure
- Setting policy and "flagging" properties to preserve future connections options
- Evaluation of all vehicle accidents in the City with a goal of identifying problem locations
- Immediate safety improvements at school locations as possible

Medium-Term Projects

- A roundabout at Grapefruit Boulevard
- Curb extensions at intersections not targeted to eventually receive roundabouts
- Mid-block crossings at the locations identified later in this chapter
- Safety improvements at locations identified through the accident analysis
- The most logical immediate improvements to ADA features
- A raised median between the entryway roundabout and Avenue 50
- Reduce the number of commercial area driveways
- Some landscaping improvements

Long-Term Projects

- Completing landscaping and gateway features at the Grapefruit Boulevard roundabout
- Other roundabouts, or curb extensions and other signalized intersection improvements for major intersections
- Full landscaping in the corridor

State and Federal Transportation Funds

Major state and federal transportation funding programs are outlined below. For more information, please visit the website for Caltrans' Division of Local Assistance at www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program
Funds are directed to areas that are in non-attainment of air quality maintenance areas for ozone, carbon monoxide or particulate matter. Projects that contribute to attainment are eligible including traffic flow improvement programs and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. (http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cmaq99gd.pdf)

Regional Surface Transportation Program
Apportioned through MPOs and RTPAs, the program provides funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, safety improvements and hazard elimination, traffic management systems, intersections with high accident rates or congestion. (http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/transprog/federal/rstp/Official_RSTP_Web_Page.htm)

Safe Routes to School
As noted, the project team observed situations in Coachella where children walking or biking to or from school faced hazardous situations. Caltrans administers state and federally funded Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs to improve walking and bicycling conditions in and around schools. State grants are primarily focused on infrastructure (capital) projects. Projects for federal funding can include both infrastructure or non-infrastructure (education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation) categories.

The program seeks to fund projects that incorporate engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement and evaluation components. Engineering is listed first, because that effort creates the durable features that support other local efforts. However, successful programs often require that all 5 "E"s are addressed. Encouragement and Education programs can often be started at low cost and have proven to be very successful in getting more children to walk or bicycle safely to school. Applicants are en-

couraged to develop their proposals as partnerships of the school, city and community. For more information visit: www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoutes/saferoutes.htm

A standardized statewide SRTS training program with promotional materials and school resources is being developed by the California Department of Public Health to help communities implement programs.

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
This program represents the lion's share of California's state and federal transportation dollars. Three-quarters of the program's funds are earmarked for improvements determined by locally adopted priorities contained in Regional Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIP), submitted by SCAG and other regional transportation planning agencies from around the state.

STIP funds can be used for a wide variety of projects, including road rehabilitation, intersections, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, public transit, and other projects that enhance the region's transportation infrastructure.

Transportation Enhancement Activities
Federal Transportation Enhancement funds are for construction projects that are "over and above" normal types of transportation projects. These projects may include street trees and landscaping along roadways, pedestrian and bicycle access improvements and other scenic beautification. These are apportioned throughout the county.

Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA)
This state fund, administered by the Caltrans Bicycle Facilities Unit, can be used to support bicyclists, including through bike lanes, median crossings, and bicycle/pedestrian signals. Some of Coachella's desired bicycle facilities could be funded through this program. Annual BTA funding is in the range of $5 million a year, statewide.

To be eligible for BTA funds, a city or county must prepare and adopt a Bicycle Transportation Plan. Adoption of a plan establishes eligibility for five consecutive funding cycles.

Transportation Development Act (TDA)
TDA provides for two sources of funding: Local Transportation Funds (LTF) and State Transit Assistance (STA). Where TDA funds are not allocated solely to public transportation, TDA may fund other transportation programs, including planning and program activities, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
Under the State Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDGB) Program, cities and counties may seek funding for a broad range of activities ranging from establishment and operation of revolving loan funds and construction of infrastructure improvements to construction of new housing and community facilities.

Applicants may also seek funding for planning studies and writing grant applications related to these activities. Funding programs under the CDBG Economic Development Allocation include the Planning and Technical Assistance Grants, Over-the-Counter Grants for public infrastructure associated with private-sector job creation, and Economic Enterprise Fund for small business loans. Applications under the Economic Development Allocation require a job creation/retention component.

Potential projects include street and traffic improvements, water system expansion and improvements, and sewer system expansion and improvements. For more information visit: www.hcd.ca.gov/fa

California Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency (BTH) Revolving Loan Fund
The Business Transportation and Housing Agency (which includes Caltrans) administers a revolving loan fund for local governments to finance infrastructure improvements, including city streets. Cities may apply for and receive loan funding from $250,000 up to $10 million, with terms of up to 30 years for a broad range of projects. For more information, please visit: www.ibank.ca.gov

Urban Greening for Sustainable Communities Grant Program
The Proposition 84 Bond Act of 2006 provided funds for urban greening. The Strategic Growth Council is administering these funds, and anticipates three funding cycles (with the first

round of applications due in April 2010). Cities, counties and nonprofits are eligible to apply for these grants for projects to preserve, enhance, increase or establish community green areas such as urban forests, open spaces, wetlands and community spaces (e.g., community gardens). Funds for street trees and median landscaping might be eligible under this program. Up to 25 percent of the funds may be available for the preparation of comprehensive Urban Greening Plans. For more information, please visit: www.sgc.ca.gov.

SCAG Compass Blueprint Demonstration Projects
SCAG provides a package of consultant services, staff time, financial resources and technical assistance to successful applicants for Demonstration Projects that help achieve SCAG's Compass Blueprint. Demonstration Projects are usually large in scope, with the potential to be significant at the regional or sub-regional level. Demonstration Projects might include: greenhouse gas reduction strategies; partial General Plan updates; feasibility studies; visioning workshops; development code and zoning change analysis; transit-oriented developments; infill, redevelopment or brownfields; creation or addition to a downtown district; housing projects including multi-family and affordable homes; mixed-use development; and pedestrian infrastructure. For more information, visit http://www.compassblueprint.org/apply.

Other Local Funding Opportunitites

Sales Tax Measures
Local transportation sales tax measures can provide funding for street maintenance and rehabilitation.

Development fees
Some cities require developers to install or help pay for infrastructure improvements (streets, sidewalks, transit shelters, bike racks, landscaping, etc.) through individual development agreements. To avoid legal challenge of the City's right to levy these fees, care must be taken to apply this strategy only where there is a clear link establishing that travel generated by the private project will use the facility to be funded with the fees.

Public art funds derived from building projects can also be used for public art projects to enhance target areas.

Special Districts
A special district such as a Business Improvement District (BID) can provide up-front and on-going funding for projects benefiting specific commercial areas. Business-Based Improvement Districts are best suited for marketing, special events, and smaller expenditures like signage. Property-Based BIDs typically generate more revenues and are better suited for more expensive projects like landscaping. Landscaping and lighting districts are also sometimes established for streetscape improvements and maintenance.

Other types of facilities and infrastructure districts are sometimes created for parks, drainage and sewage. Special districts generally assess a charge levied upon parcels of real property within the district's boundaries to pay for "local improvements." Unlike redevelopment, it is necessary to charge an assessment or fee to property owners and/or merchants to fund such a district.

Volunteer initiatives and private donations
In addition to funding sources, programs can be created for volunteer initiatives such as "Adopt-a" programs where individuals or groups engage in beautification projects such as tree plantings, or monitoring and keeping up local transit shelters. Local artists, art centers, or school art programs can be partners in community-based projects to create distinctive public artwork, transit shelters, sculptures, water features, or other amenities. Private donors or businesses can be solicited to sponsor downtown enhancement activities. These programs can be led by the City or by other community organizations.

Appendix

Appendix A: Focus Group Meetings

Public Safety
9 am, Thursday, January 21, 2010

- Lieutenant Frank Taylor, Riverside County Sheriff's Department, serving as the City of Coachella Assistant Police Chief
- Paul Zykofsky, Local Government Commission
- Tony Leonard, Local Government Commission
- Steve Tracy, Local Government Commission
- Dan Burden, Gladding Jackson, Inc.
- Marcel Schmaedick, Clairvoyant Graphics

The Riverside County Sheriff provides police services to the City of Coachella under contract. Specific officers and supervisors are assigned to duty in Coachella, which better connects the responsible Sheriff's officers to the community than rotating random assignment of officers would. This is a summary of comments made by those participating in this meeting:

- Lieutenant Taylor reports that accidents are down roughly 10% over previous years, but pedestrian incidents are up 600%. This may be a symptom of the current economic difficulties, with more people walking to destinations or transit. It calls for additional enforcement, but that must be provided in times of declining revenues for the service. Although speeding is common in the City, it does not seem to be a major factor in the rise in pedestrian incidents. More prevalent factors include alcohol, drivers that fail to yield as required, and pedestrians crossing streets outside crosswalks.
- Speeding in parking lots on private property has been a big issue, but recent efforts have reduced those accidents somewhat. Bicycle accidents are not a major issue. Medians help reduce accidents of all types.
- Personal security is more a matter of gang activity in Coachella than predators. Sadly, school district budget cuts have affected school resource officers.

Street Supervisors
10:30 am, Thursday, January 21, 2010

- George Torres, Street Supervisor, City of Coachella
- Richard Pérez, Water Superintendent, City of Coachella
- Paul Zykofsky, Local Government Commission
- Tony Leonard, Local Government Commission
- Steve Tracy, Local Government Commission
- Dan Burden, Gladding Jackson, Inc.
- Marcel Schmaedick, Clairvoyant Graphics

The old Highway 111 R.O.W. through the Harrison Street corridor was relinquished by Caltrans and turned over to the City of Coachella approximately ten years ago. Since that time the third lane in each direction that was once striped on the northern portion of Harrison Street has been removed. On-street parking has also been removed for long stretches of curb throughout the corridor, and the painted pedestrian crosswalk markings at Bagdad Avenue were removed as well.

Current problems along Harrison Street include:

- Drainage, a need highlighted by the extremely heavy multi-day storm that occurred during the week the charrette began. Flood water at times backup completely across many streets and even onto sidewalks. Several streets were closed, and pooling and local flooding lasted for several days.
- Signal upgrades, which includes additional signals, better synchronization, more detection loops, protected left turns, and pedestrian lights.
- Long blocks, which create problems for pedestrians and concentrate vehicle traffic at infrequent intersections.
- Congestion at Park Lane on the inside of the curve where Harrison Street and Grapefruit Boulevard meet.
- Turn pockets that are to long in some locations, such as Cairo Street, and too short at others, like Avenue 52.

Positive comments include:

- The new raised medians on Harrison Street with xeriscape treatments appear to be effective at controlling traffic and certainly beautify the corridor.
- The sidewalks seem to be "OK" but there is little pedestrian travel in Coachella.

City Staff and Elected Officials
11 am, Thursday, January 21, 2010

- Councilmember Emmanuel Martinez, City of Coachella
- Linda Guillis, Development Services Director, City of Coachella
- Paul Toor, Public Works Director, City of Coachella
- Tony Lucero, City Engineer, City of Coachella
- Richard Pérez, Water Superintendent, City of Coachella
- Luis Lopez, Principal Planner, City of Coachella
- Gabriel Pérez, Senior Planner, City of Coachella
- Mark Chappell, Senior Civil Engineer, City of Coachella
- Mike Gialdini, Field Representative, Riverside County Supervisor Benoit
- Jerry Joliff, Planner, Riverside County Planning Department
- Paul Zykofsky, Local Government Commission
- Tony Leonard, Local Government Commission
- Steve Tracy, Local Government Commission
- Dan Burden, Gladding Jackson, Inc.
- Marcel Schmaedick, Clairvoyant Graphics

This group discussed a wide range of issues, some outside the Harrison Street corridor, the scope of this project, or even the City of Coachella. However, a comprehensive list of comments and questions from participants follows:

- Harrison Street used to be a highway, not a city street, so crossing it has always been difficult.
- Bagdad Avenue is a particular problem.
- Residents want better safety and improved traffic controls.
- Does the city want traffic channeled around the Harrison Street corridor?
- Arcades provide a nice benefit, rain and sun shelter, especially when rounding corners.
- There is a Vista Santa Rosa land use plan under review that has not yet been approved by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors. This project is primarily large lot residential but has commercial uses along Harrison Street with arcades.
- This is a young and active community, which needs connectivity and a pedestrian-friendly corridor.
- There is a lot of walking and daily shopping that is done on foot.
- Harrison Street is an old Caltrans highway that needs to be more pedestrian-friendly.
- We could develop a theme for the old highway.
- Outdated frontage roads need to be addressed.
- The General Plan calls for widening Harrison Street, but the City may want to de-emphasize that.
- Traffic backs up from Westerfield to Avenue 50.
- We could de-emphasize Harrison Street as a through corridor and direct that automobile traffic to Van Buren, then reconnect the residential neighborhoods to Harrison.
- Don't de-emphasize Harrison Street but emphasize a pedestrian area with shopping.
- People need a place to congregate that has slower traffic.
- There is a vision for this in the Pueblo Viejo plan done in 2009.
- The Pueblo Viejo plan calls for a main street treatment along 6th Street with gateways at Harrison Street and Grapefruit Boulevard.
- People cut through the empty properties along Harrison Street now.
- The City has no mixed-use ordinance.
- The pedestrian experience on Harrison Street is uninviting.
- Better designs for future developments can help.
- Plans to widen streets will run into difficulty in places because of existing buildings that are located right at the edge of the old R.O.W.
- This widening issue was to be addressed in the General Plan, but that is now on hold.
- Many lots along Harrison Street are too shallow for commercial buildings and off-street parking.
- The construction of the Del Taco building required the abandonment of a piece of a frontage road.
- This is all incremental and will take buy-in from the community, developers, and the City.
- The City has lots of turnover on staff, so it is hard to preserve a vision.
- That's why residents in the community need to be involved in the process of developing that vision so they become the owners of it and carry the vision forward.
- It is difficult to mix pedestrians and automobiles together.
- We must reduce speeds and design for improved safety.
- But we have to obey the vehicle code and put in things that are good here.
- Traffic calming doesn't belong in a corridor like Harrison Street and creates maintenance problems.
- We need to accommodate traffic and adhere to the General Plan, which calls for street widenings.
- The new medians slowed cars down, but now pedestrians expect to cross using them.

- Pedestrians don't like to walk two blocks out of the way.
- We can't just arbitrarily lower speed limits.
- The new median makes for poor visibility and keeps pedestrians from view.
- Caltrans took out two pedestrian crossings, one at Bagdad Avenue and one at 6th Street.
- The rules for accommodating alternate modes are changing, and there is money for redesigning and greening up urban areas if they have a vision in place.
- We got a hodgepodge of things when Caltrans turned Harrison Street over to the City, with missing lights, crosswalks, and ramps.
- Our project on light synchronization was never finished.
- Avenue 50 is the most dangerous for pedestrian fatalities.
- Please advise us on how to get an ADA compliance grant.
- Our drainage is in the streets, so we need to know how to work with that and do bulbouts and neckdowns.
- How do street sweepers work with bulbouts?
- Many of our utilities pre-date the existing R.O.W.
- We can't put these utilities underground with a grant the City gets because they are private companies and we can't use public funds to benefit them.
- We have a mixed-use private development that includes a Walgreen's store in process at Avenue 50.
- We have seen conceptual plans for private development on the vacant parcels at Harrison and 6th Street.
- There may be a Foster Garden center behind the Walgreen's.
- There is a proposal for bus rapid transit (BRT) along Grapefruit Boulevard, maybe in the railroad R.O.W. that would include a transit hub.
- The transit center may be modest at first, but can grow.
- The Catholic Church will be expanding also at Our Lady of Soledad downtown.
- Roundabouts on County roads don't work and are a safety problem.
- We need to remember funding requirements and implementation, not just do a design we can't afford to build.
- It must be pragmatic and recognize our resources, our implementation ability, and who we are.
- The recommendations should have a phased approach.
- We want detailed plans that can lead to precise cost estimates.
- We also have a façade renovation plan for two blocks of the downtown.

Business Representatives

12 pm, Friday, January 22, 2010

- Julieta M. de Caballero, Crisis Pregnancy Center
- Maria Nava, Crisis Pregnancy Center
- Cynthia Tinoco, Executive Director, Coachella Chamber of Commerce
- Arthur D'Souza, Franchise Principal, Aaron's Furniture
- Paul Zykofsky, Local Government Commission
- Tony Leonard, Local Government Commission
- Steve Tracy, Local Government Commission
- Dan Burden, Gladding Jackson, Inc.
- Michael Moule, Livable Streets, Inc.
- Stefan Pellegrini, Opticos Design
- Marcel Schmaedick, Clairvoyant Graphics

This meeting generated a good discussion about current business activities, proposed developments, dreams, future possibilities and desires. Comments and suggestions by those participating are characterized below:

- Many people coming to the clinic walk or take the bus because they do not have a car available, often struggling with strollers and other children.
- We see clients who come from Mecca, Thermal, Oasis, and Coachella.
- We have two trucks making deliveries, and may add two more with a new store close to Indio.
- The price of the land for the store five years ago was $5 per square foot, but would be $30 a square foot today.
- There is no way to get over Interstate 10 on a bicycle.
- Harrison Street has poor drainage, poor lighting, and is difficult to cross.
- We need improved safety and crosswalks.
- We are lacking sidewalks in many places, and others are right next to the street where they feel unsafe.
- Bus stops are too far apart.
- One bus line through Coachella only stops at Avenue 53.
- The area around Ranch Market at Avenue 50 is congested, and so is the parking lot.
- The (painted) median is a problem.
- There is no connection from the big parking lot to the small center on the northwest corner of Harrison Street and Avenue 50.
- Riding a bicycle doesn't work out.
- This is a small community with a lower income demographic and no elite yet.

- In the future our income and education levels will go up.
- We need beautification.
- Visitors all get taken to La Quinta to show the whole valley isn't a hinterland.
- People are walking and biking because they have no choice.
- Speed constraints are already there with the lights, etc.
- We need more landscaping and support for ADA accessibility.
- We need restaurants with outside seating.
- We need funds to improve older buildings and facades.
- Adult children are moving back home and many residences now have multiple breadwinners in the home.
- Parking is OK because we have a frontage road.
- Parking for some businesses must be in back.
- Not used to low light levels and the dark night sky, but a safer Coachella needs more lighting.
- Will this project also be looking at the frontage roads and private property? *Yes, driveways, lighting, sight lines, etc.*
- We need a gateway.

School Officials

2:30 pm, Friday, January 22, 2010

- Ricardo Z. Medina, Superintendent, Coachella Valley Unified School District
- Else F. Esqueda, Director of Facilities Planning and Construction, Coachella Valley Unified School District
- Erasmo Garcia, Principal, Bobby G. Duke Middle School
- Delilah M. Salado, Student Facilitator, Cesar Chavez Elementary School
- Paul Zykofsky, Local Government Commission
- Tony Leonard, Local Government Commission
- Steve Tracy, Local Government Commission
- Dan Burden, Gladding Jackson, Inc.
- Michael Moule, Livable Streets, Inc.
- Stefan Pellegrini, Opticos Design
- Marcel Schmaedick, Clairvoyant Graphics

The Coachella Valley Unified School District has 19,000 students in 25 schools serving the population in a 1,200 square mile area. District schools within the City of Coachella include Bobby Duke, Pendleton, Palm View, Valley View, and Cesar Chavez. Aside from the City of Coachella, the District serves all, or parts of Indio, La Quinta, Thermal, Oasis, Mecca, and Salton Sea. Seventy to eighty percent of the students are bused, with a fleet that covers roughly one million miles per year.

This meeting focused on safe access for students attending schools in Coachella. Attendees discussed both existing problems and recent improvements. Comments included:

- The most serious problems are conflicts with parents cars and school buses competing for space at drop-off and pickup zones.
- The Riverside County Health Department is now tuned into student fitness as a priority.
- Bobby Duke is the #1 fitness school in California, with Jake of "Body by Jake" presenting an award to the school in February.
- Bobby Duke has programs and events to get kids walking and having fun.
- There is not enough bicycle riding for a town like this (flat and small).
- Access to Bobby Duke from the south is a problem.
- People don't feel comfortable on the streets outside of cars.
- The Harrison Street/Avenue 52 intersection is a problem.
- The heat and lack of shade at bus stops is a problem as well.
- The "walking distance" radii for different school types are set by District Board policy: high schools – 2 miles, middle schools – 1.5 miles, elementary schools – 1.25 miles
- 200 students from west of Harrison Street cross to Bobby Duke Middle School each day
- There is a crossing guard as Avenue 52 and Date, between the Bobby Duke and Valley View schools
- There are also crossing guards on Avenue 50 at Avenue de Oro, and on Frederick Street at Guitron Street
- There are not as many crossing guards as we would like
- Traffic is a mess at the Harrison Street and Avenue 52 intersection, with vacant lots and two gas stations
- A student from Bobby Duke Middle School was hit there (Ave 52) last year
- There are no buses bringing students to Cesar Chavez Elementary or Palm View Elementary (built in 1928)
- There are as many as 900 students in some elementary schools
- Please take a careful look at Avenue 50 to see what you can do

- There used to be pathways through the cul-de-sacs at Kenmore, Colorado, and Balboa but now there are locked gates
- Look at Harrison Street and Avenue 52, and Bagdad, too
- Popular kid destinations are the markets, AM/PM store, the game store by the 99-cent store, Jack in the Box, and Carl's Jr.
- There are no crosswalks on Harrison Street between Avenue 53 and Avenue 54, not even at the entrance to the Cedar Springs apartment complex
- Crossing guards are trained and review a video
- What are our needs for being a speedway? *The maximum speed limit in a town like this should be no higher than 30 MPH*
- Well, we have people coming into town at 50 MPH
- There is a roundabout at Jefferson and Avenue 52 in La Quinta, but it is awkward
- Everyone agrees that Safe Route to School is an important program and will support all of it
- What is the timing for this project? T*hat depends on the City; the report will be done in three to four months; some recommendations are just paint and can be done immediately, others are more involved and will have to come later*
- Our District can apply for some funding, and has an opportunity coming up this spring

Discussion Regarding Our Lady of Soledad Catholic Church

4 pm, Friday, January 22, 2010

- Roberto Hernández, Maintenance, Our Lady of Soledad Catholic Church
- Paul Zykofsky, Local Government Commission
- Steve Tracy, Local Government Commission

This discussion revolved primarily around plans by church officials to build a new sanctuary and center on vacant church-owned property at the northeast corner of Harrison Street and Avenue 53. Comments included:

- There is a desire to replace the aging and cramped existing facility on Oasis Palm Avenue
- It is unclear if the old property will remain as a mission
- The Spring Fiesta will be a fundraiser for this project
- The existing plans are for a building with mission architecture
- The main room will seat 2,300
- Our current numbers are around 750 parishioners
- Plans have been submitted to the City for review
- We are open to suggestions on our work
- Our concerns are primarily for a pedestrian-friendly street
- We might suggest pulling the building to the corner and parking in back, so your project frames the intersection and creates a good public space
- We might build future wings off the initial building
- We want programs like large missionary retreats, in Spanish and English, where people come and stay for several days
- We would then serve maybe 60 people attending the retreat with 60 people working the event
- Maybe a bridge over Harrison Street would help this project
- Bridges in this situation are very expensive and do not accomplish much

Boys and Girls Club

4 pm, Monday, January 25, 2010

General recommendations for the Harrison Street Corridor:

- Blinking Crosswalks
- Bicycle Lanes
- Open pool year round in Viet Veterans Park
- Talking lights at every intersection
- Billboard with all events happening in Coachella
- Bus stops with water fountains, shade and mist system
- Signs for youth (locating to Boys and Girls Club)

Appendix B:
Resident Design Table Recommendations

The following material is gleaned from the presentations each table group made to the room that explained their design features and reasoning, and the margin notes the groups drew on their large-scale aerial photographs.

Those comments are below, with a summary of the verbal presentation first, followed by the notes from the aerial photographs:

TABLE ONE
Concepts and recommendations

Presentation — *"We would like…"*

- Roundabouts at all the major intersections
- Improved pedestrian crossings at all the other intersections
- A pedestrian bridge at Bagdad Avenue, but we know it has issues of safety, vandalism, accessibility, and expense
- Entry way or arch at Grapefruit Boulevard
- Landscaping and lighting all along the corridor, recognizing the issues of maintenance and cost
- Want bike lanes, narrower vehicle lanes, bulbouts, and wider sidewalks
- Want to shorten the walking distances for pedestrians
- Slow down traffic on Avenue 52, which may require rethinking plans for that street to provide major access to future development to the west, even widened
- Overall, focusing on connecting the community east to west through some of these locations

Notes on the aerial photograph from Table One

- The corridor should have a U.S. Highway 99 theme
- A gateway arch at Harrison and Grapefruit
- More street trees throughout the corridor
- Better street lighting throughout the corridor
- Complete landscaped medians on Harrison in the corridor
- Roundabouts on Harrison at Avenue 50, Westerfield Way/1st Street, Avenue 51/4th Street, 6th Street, Avenue 52, Calle Verde, and Avenue 53
- Improved crosswalks on Avenue 50 at Camino de Oro
- Street connections through future development on the vacant property east of Harrison between Avenue 50 and 1st Street
- Street connections including an extension of Main Street through future development on the vacant property east of Harrison between 4th Street and 6th Street
- A pedestrian bridge over Harrison Street at the Bagdad Avenue intersection
- Improved crosswalks at the Avenue 51, 6th Street, and Bagdad Avenue intersections
- Traffic calming on Mecca Street with improved crosswalks at Avenue 51
- A new crosswalk on Avenue 52 at the Calle Empalme/ Calle Torres Orundo intersection
- Better crosswalks at Damascus, Cairo, Calle Rojo, and Calle Amora
- Stop signs on Avenue 52 at Oasis Palm Avenue
- Stop signs or stop lights on Avenue 52 at Date Avenue
- New striping on the eastern and western portions of Avenue 52
- Medians, trees, and slower traffic in the southern portion of the corridor
- A parking structure on the west side of Harrison at the Calle Rojo intersection
- Better pavement on the Harrison Street frontage roads between Avenue 52 and Avenue 53

TABLE TWO
Concepts and recommendations

Again, these comments are in two parts. The first is a summary of the verbal presentation by the group working at Table Two, and the second set of comments reflect the drawings and notations on Table Two's map.

Presentation — *"We would like…"*

- To slow down and control traffic while at the same time making it more efficient, which makes many of our ideas echo the comments from Table One
- Roundabouts and better lighting
- Entrances to the downtown Coachella area from Grapefruit Boulevard and 6th Street
- To have more attractions—reasons for people to come to Coachella—so we need to improve our roadways to help that happen
- To bring in art, dance, music, and murals
- More greenery and small park spaces

- Bike lanes
- More crosswalks, especially where major stores are like Ranch Market and others
- Better lighting, maybe decorative like we saw in the presentation, because so may of our summertime activities happen at night
- A plan for everyone–families, students, tourists, residents, merchants
- Mid-block crossings north and east of the Ranch Market, with maybe a stoplight at the Avenue 50 crossing
- Better lighting on Avenue 51
- More space for pedestrians and children
- To slow down high speed cars along Mecca Street
- To slow down speeding cars coming into Coachella from the thermal area, so we don't have another death like the child that was run over a couple of years ago
- To narrow the vehicle space on Harrison as drivers enter Coachella from the south with bike lanes, parking, etc.
- To have a median to stop drivers from going back and forth between KFC/Pizza Hut and the Coachella Shopping Center
- Security measures different from bars on windows, because they send a signal that Coachella isn't safe
- To put in angled parking along the frontage roads between Avenue 52 and Avenue 53
- To see something at the Avenue 52 intersection that made things a little bit safer for people–automobiles, too

Notes on the aerial photograph from Table Two

- An entryway arch at the Harrison Street and Grapefruit Boulevard intersection
- All the traffic lights in the corridor to be synchronized
- Raised medians on Harrison Street in front of the Coachella Shopping Center
- Downtown entry arches across 6th Street west of Grapefruit Boulevard and east of Harrison Street
- Bike lanes and improved sidewalks along 6th Street
- Bike lanes on Grapefruit Boulevard
- Signs for bike lanes on streets
- Improved pavement on Grapefruit Boulevard
- Sidewalks that are not so close to the street
- Crosswalks on Avenue 50 connecting the Coachella Shopping Center to Cardenas Market
- Shops on the vacant property east of Harrison between Avenue 50 and 1st Street
- Signs for streets (Westerfield and Harrison)
- Bike lanes and traffic calming on Frederick Street
- All parking spots marked on streets in the Balboa/ Coronado/Kenmore neighborhood
- Signals, stop signs, and speed bumps on Mecca Street
- Bike lanes and bright street lights on Avenue 51
- Better crosswalks and pedestrian lights on Avenue 51 at Suncrest Street
- Turn on existing streetlights that are not operating
- Better crosswalks at Bagdad Avenue
- A roundabout at the Avenue 52 intersection with Harrison Street
- Bike lanes on Harrison Street
- Improved crosswalks at the Bagdad Avenue intersection
- Bike lanes and improved sidewalks on Avenue 52
- Improve the frontage roads between Avenue 52 and Avenue 53
- Turn on the existing street lights on Avenue 53
- Bike lanes and sidewalks farther from the street on Avenue 53
- Improved crosswalks at Avenue 53 and Harrison Street
- Harrison Street narrowed to reduce vehicle speeds
- Nicer looking light fixtures
- Landscaped medians at the southern end of the corridor
- An entry gateway at the southern end of the corridor at Avenue 54
- Bike lanes on all neighborhood streets
- Sidewalks farther from the street along Shady Lane
- Sidewalks farther from the street with street trees in the neighborhoods west of Harrison
- Improve the condition of the street at Grapefruit and Tyler
- Restrictions on barred windows along Harrison Street to improve appearances