



UNIVERSITY AVENUE STREETSCAPE

City Council Meeting

Ashwini Kantak, Project Manager
Holly Boyd, Public Works Asst. Director
Casey Case, Landscape Architect

December 9, 2024

www.cityofpaloalto.org/UniversityAveStreetscape

AGENDA

- Downtown Updates and Stakeholder Engagement
- Proposed Streetscape Concept Plan
- Next Steps
- Staff Recommendation



DOWNTOWN UPDATES AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

UPDATES SINCE JUNE 2024 COUNCIL MEETING

Interim Improvements

- **Downtown Garage Power Washing**
 - Garage Q (High/Alma), Civic Center and Garage S/L (Bryant/Lytton): **Completed**
 - Lot J (Cowper/Webster): **Jan 2-4 & Jan 10-11**; Garage R (Alma/High): **Jan 30 - Feb 1**
- **Continued Enhanced Cleaning and Trash Pickup**
- **News racks**
 - 62 broken/unused removed in September; 119 remaining
 - Staff to contact publishers/vendors regarding restoring, replacing or removing boxes
 - Anticipated consolidation of news racks on each block by Spring 2025
- **Downtown Curb Ramp upgrades underway; Lytton Plaza Improvements**
- **Ground Floor Retail Uses and Permit Streamlining**

UPDATES SINCE JUNE 2024 COUNCIL MEETING (contd.)

Stakeholder Engagement

- Per Council direction, re-initiated an inclusive public engagement process to inform project scope and concept plan
- Conducted outreach to downtown businesses, residents, and community partners to participate in a downtown working group
- Downtown Stakeholder Working Group (17 members) established in August 2024
- Stakeholder Group met in September and November 2024
- Community Survey conducted October-November 2024

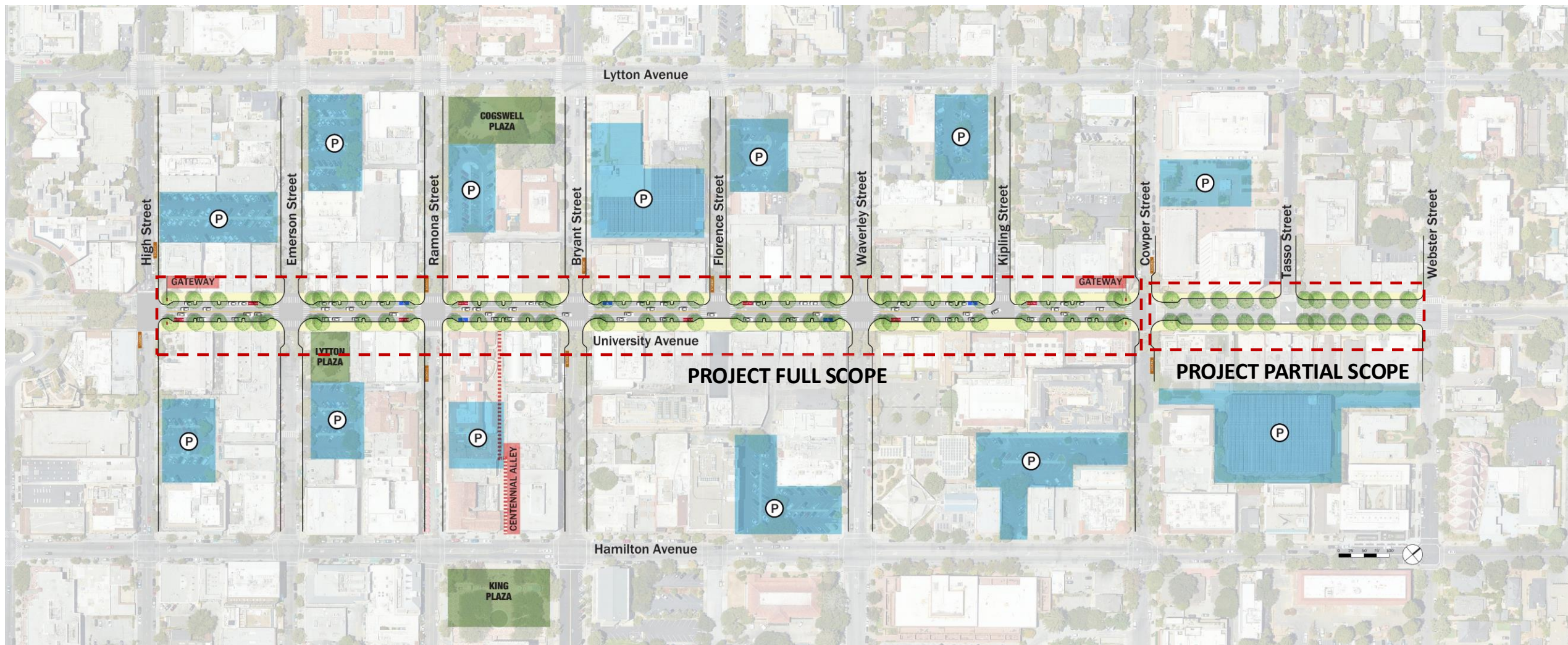
Key Takeaways from Downtown Stakeholders and PA Community

- **Scope:** Widened sidewalks between High and Cowper Streets; streetscape enhancements between High and Webster Streets with a budget of about \$43 M preferred by 60% of downtown stakeholders
- **Sidewalk Corner Elements:** Seating and Public Gathering Spaces, Landscaping, and Bike Parking
- **Gathering Spaces:** Lytton Plaza, Historic Ramona Street, High Street Gateway, Centennial Alley
- **Highlighting Palo Alto as “Birthplace of Silicon Valley”:** Interpretive history and technology exhibits/History walk, Murals, Special Events, and Gateway elements
- **Special events:** Preferred venue between Ramona and Waverley Streets at a frequency of about 2-5 times a year; some stakeholders stated a preference for no road closures

PREFERRED STREETSCAPE CONCEPT



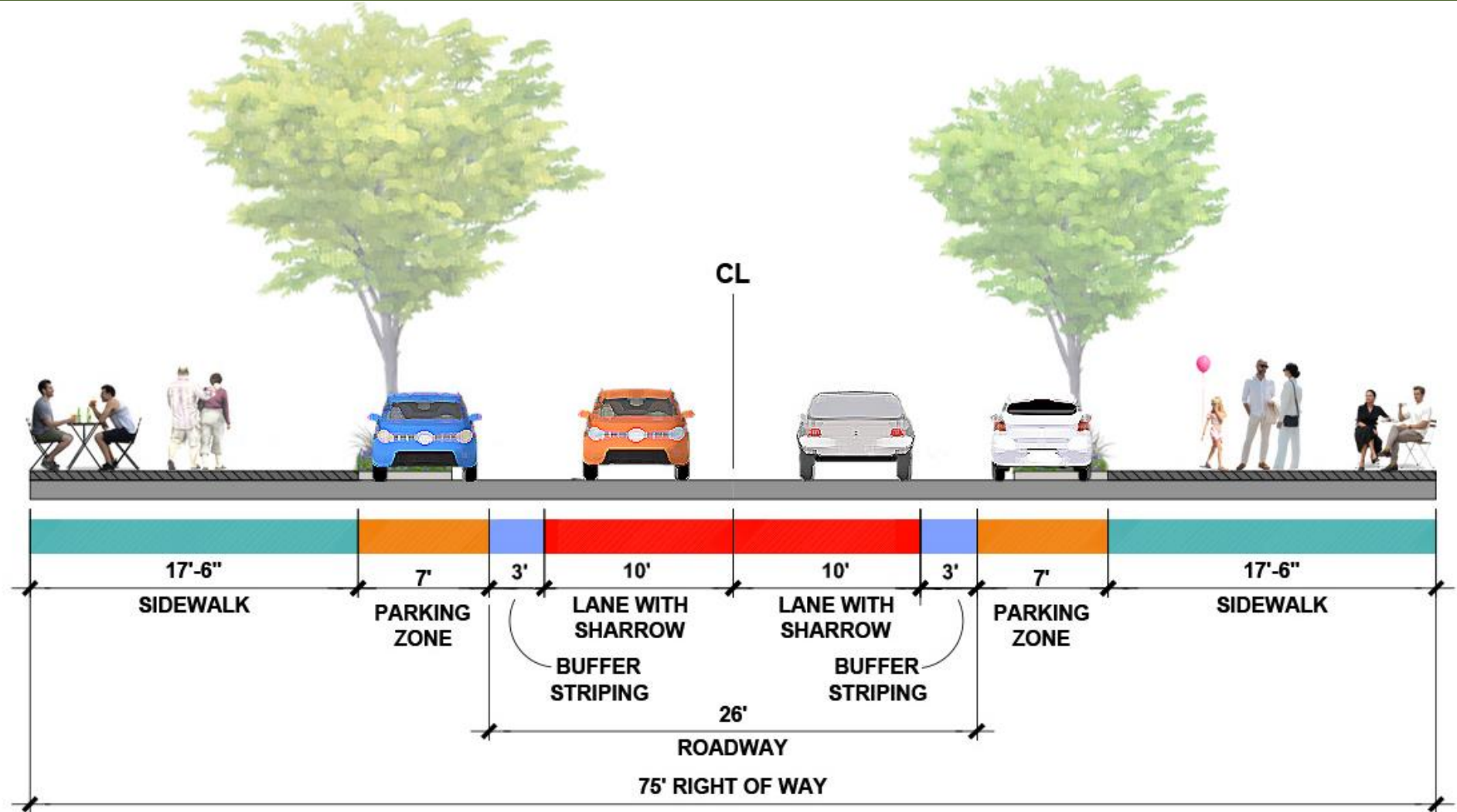
LIMIT OF STREETSCAPE CONCEPT



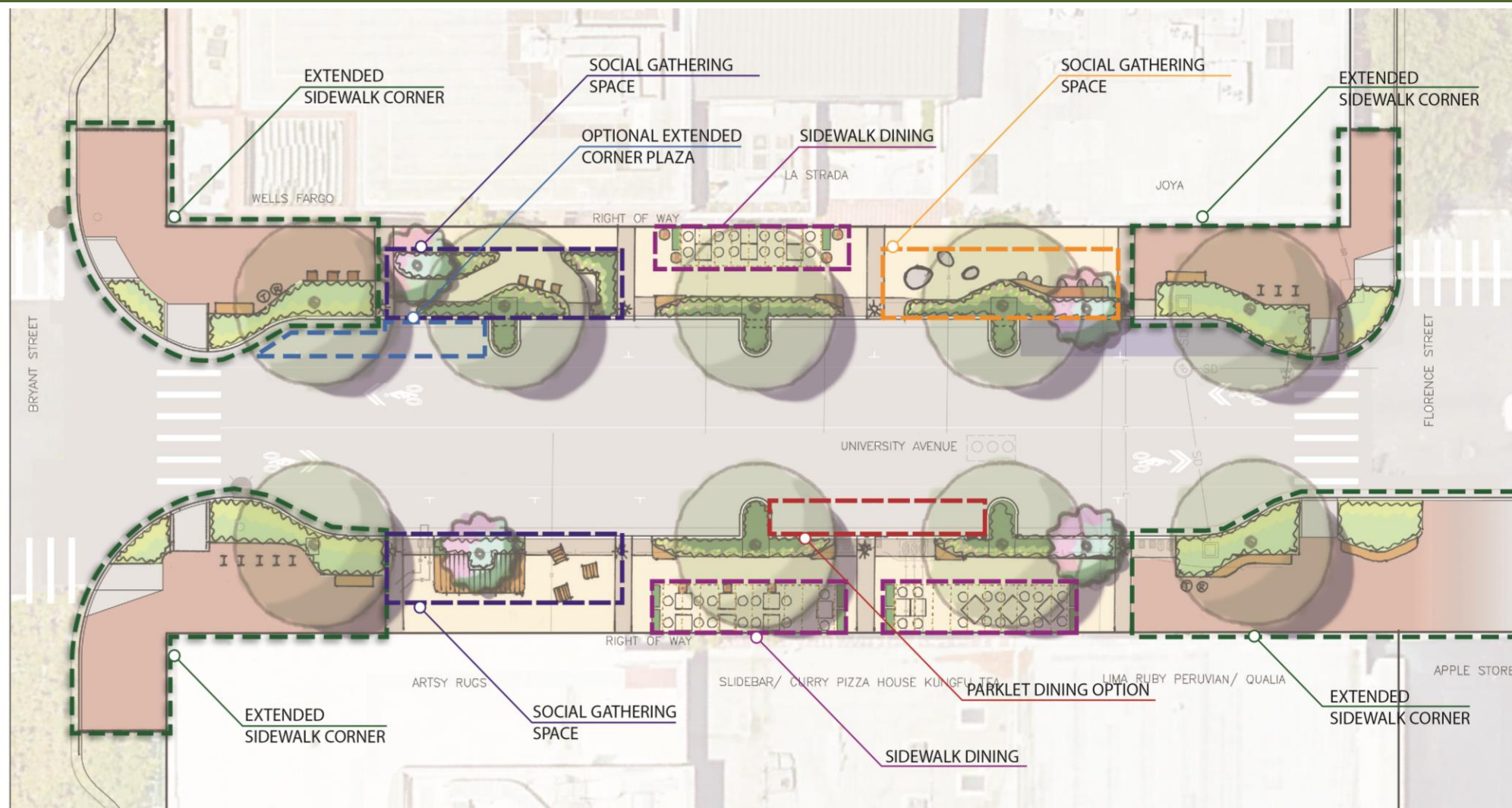
KEY STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

- 17.5 wide sidewalks with extended curbs at crosswalks across 7 blocks of University Avenue (High to Cowper)
- Decorative paving on sidewalks across 9 blocks of University Avenue (High to Webster) and in key gathering spaces
- Re-location of utilities and storm water improvements
- Re-paving of the street between High and Webster streets
- New landscaping; maintain existing street trees
- New streetlights, traffic signals, and wayfinding signage
- New street amenities – bike racks, news racks, benches, waste/recycling receptacles
- Interpretive elements to showcase Palo Alto history and “Birthplace of Silicon Valley”
- Collaboration with Public Art program to install artwork at focal gathering spaces

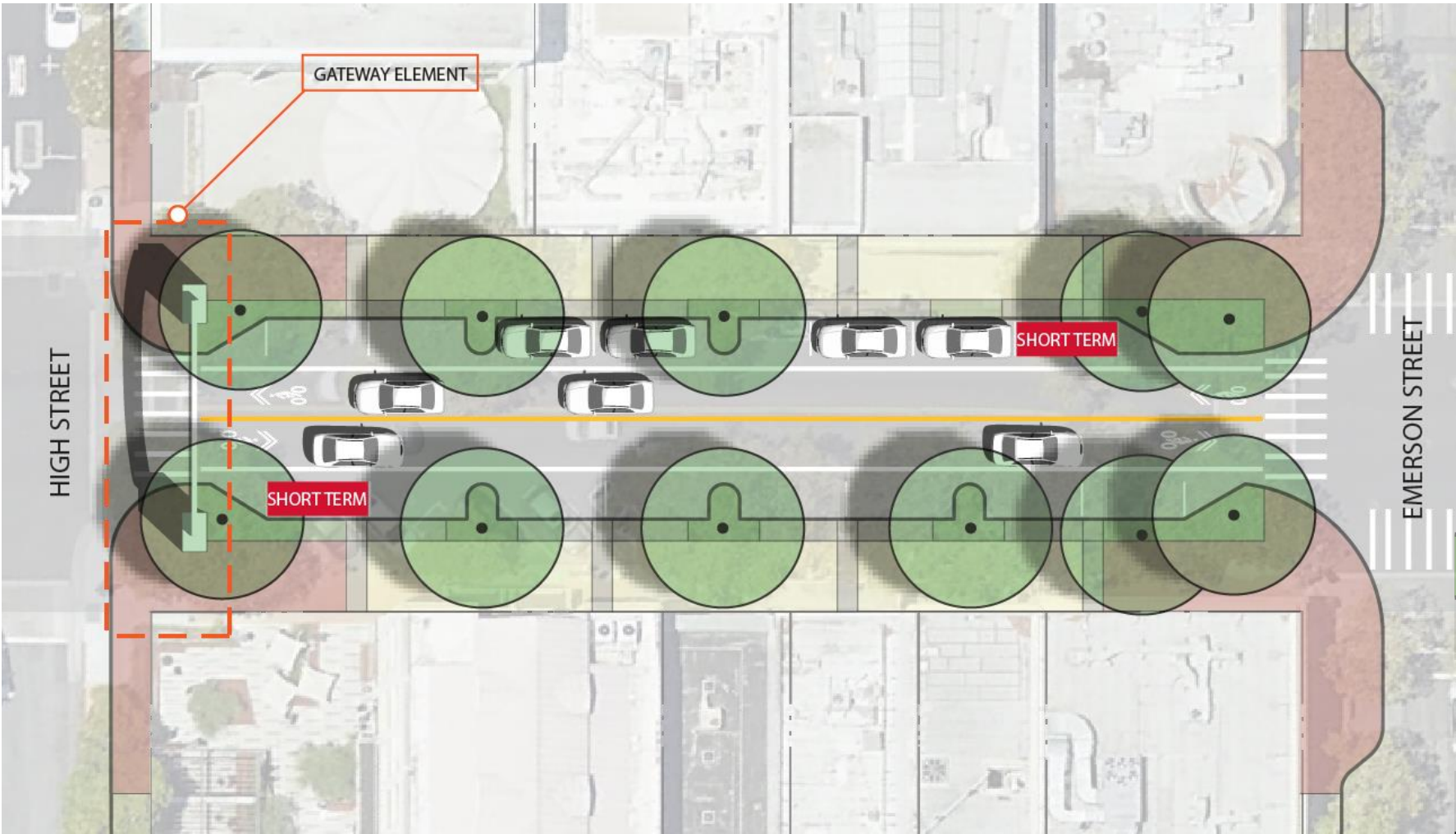
CONCEPT PLAN: Typical Section between High and Cowper Streets



CONCEPT PLAN: Illustrating Various Streetscape Elements



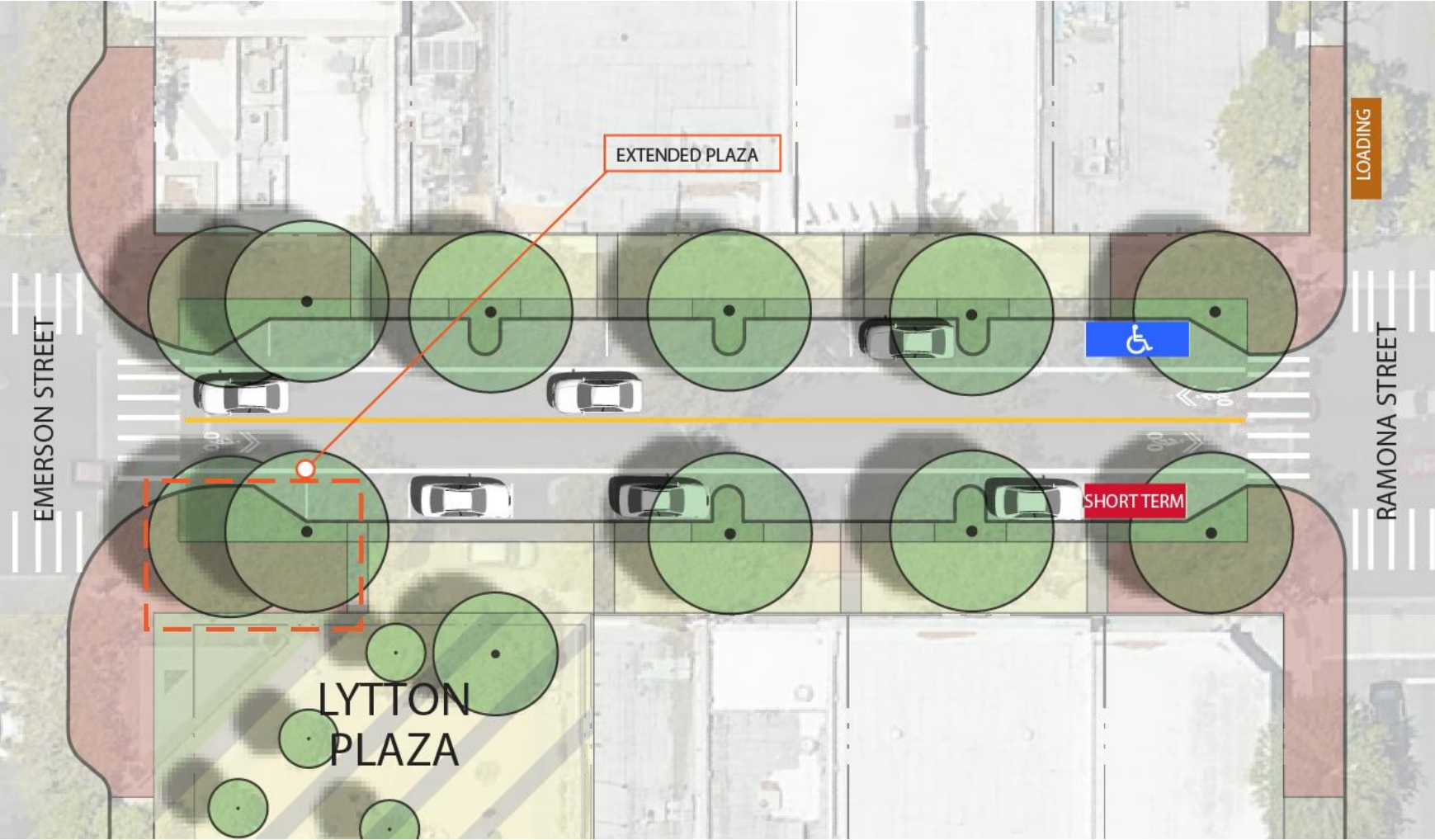
CONCEPT PLAN: Between High and Emerson Streets



Item	Number
Existing Parking	20
Proposed Parking	16
Existing Parklets	0



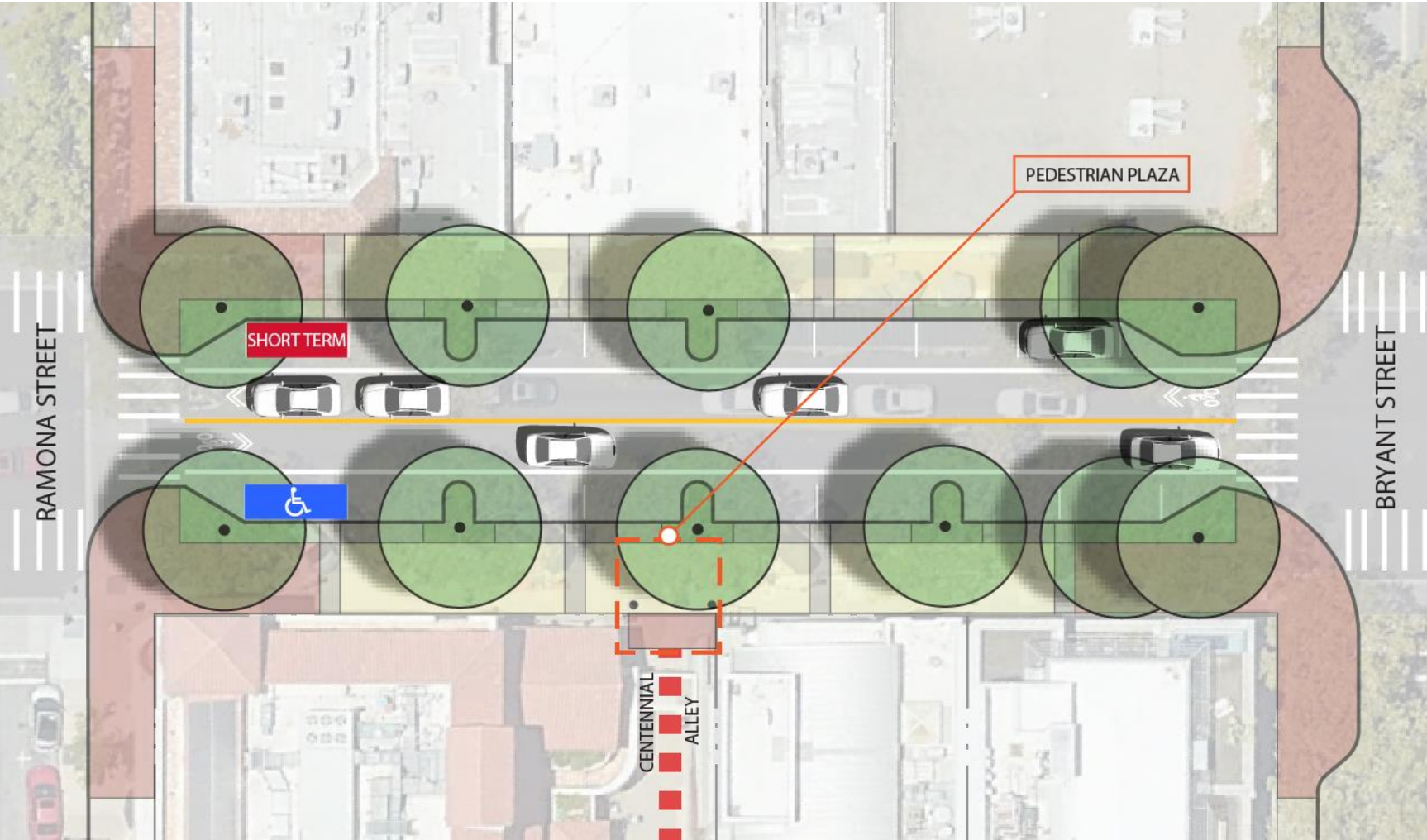
CONCEPT PLAN: Between Emerson and Ramona Streets



Item	Number
Existing Parking	18
Proposed Parking	16
Existing Parklets	1



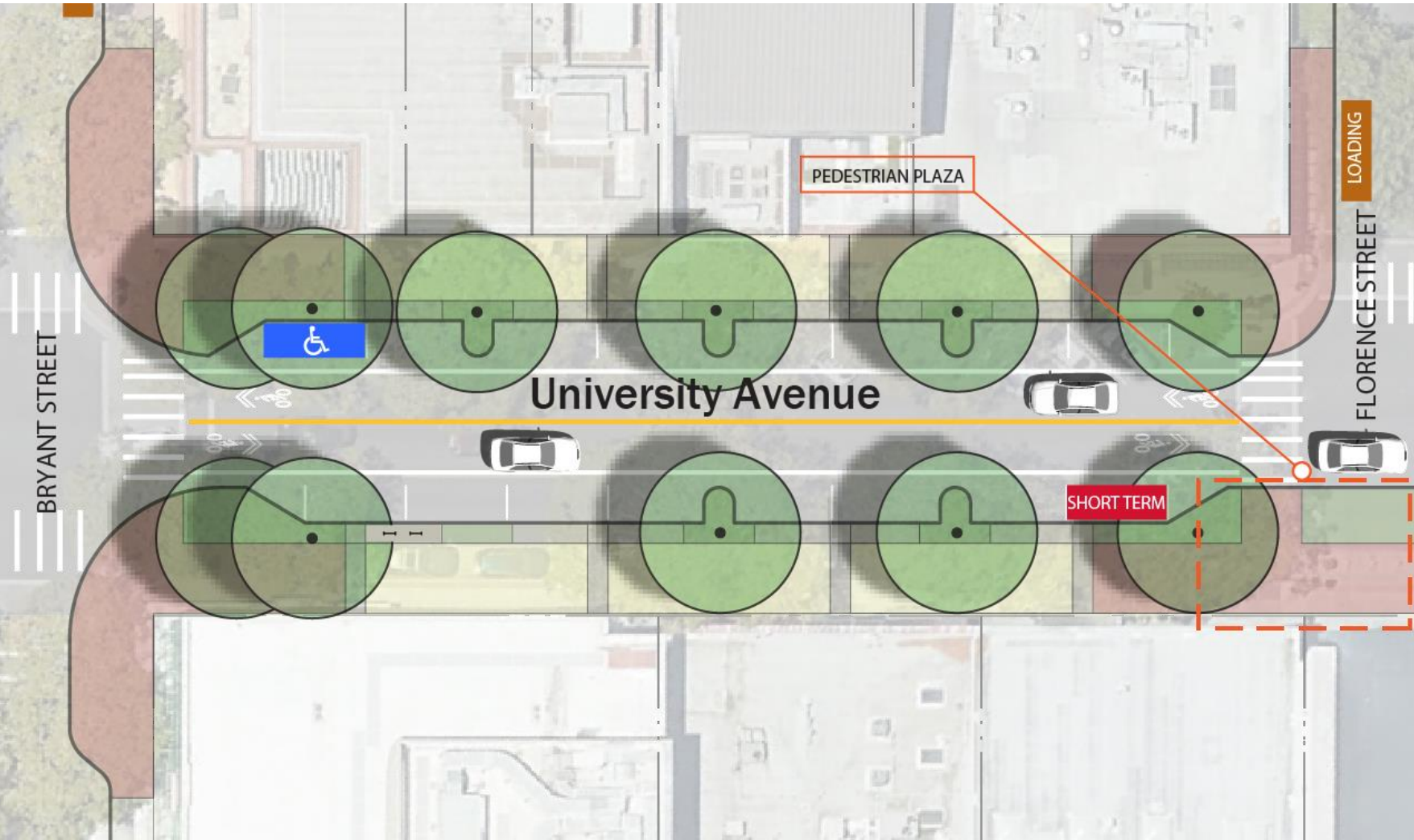
CONCEPT PLAN: Between Ramona and Bryant Streets



Item	Number
Existing Parking	20
Proposed Parking	16
Existing Parklets	2

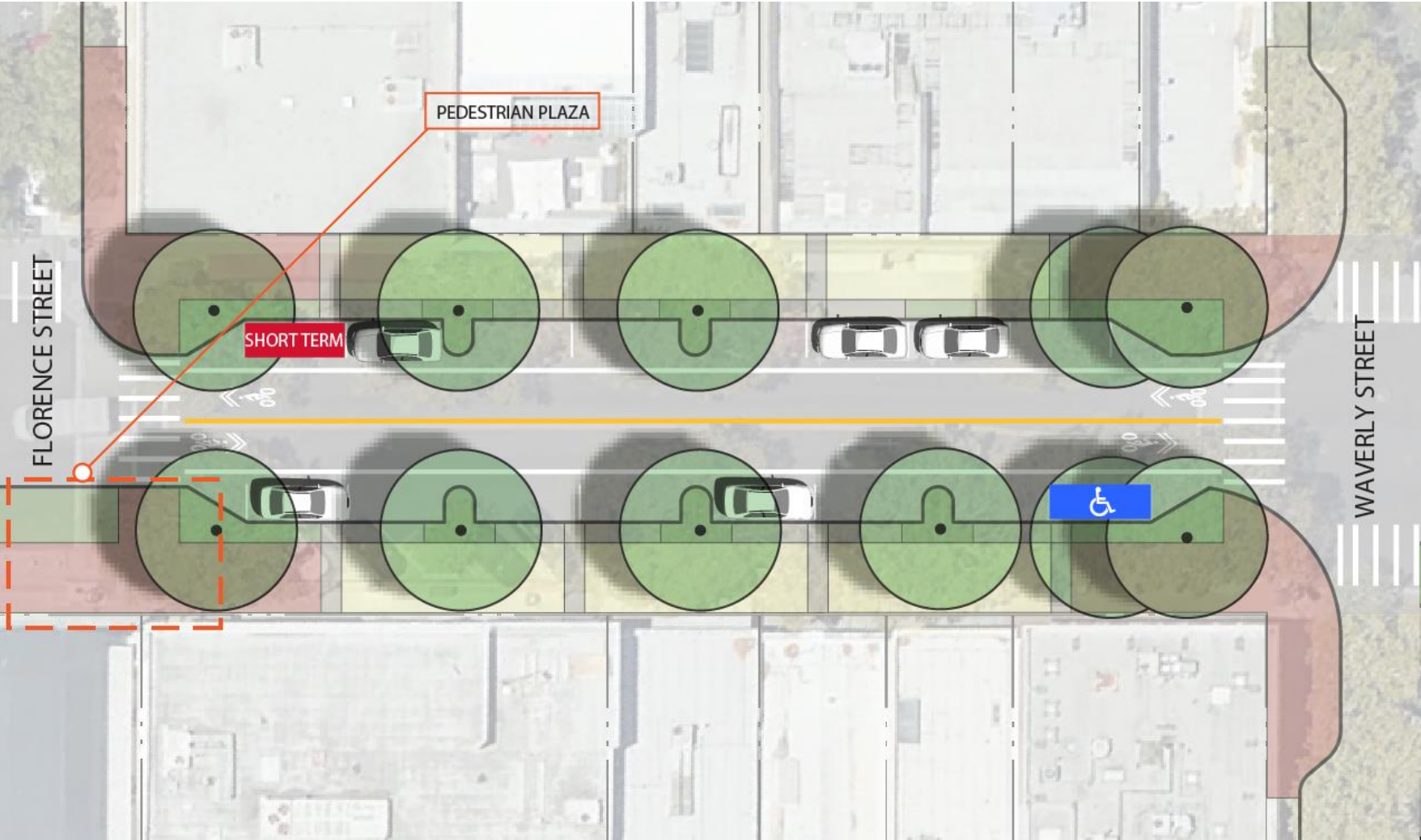


CONCEPT PLAN: Between Bryant and Florence Streets



Item	Number
Existing Parking	20
Proposed Parking	16
Existing Parklets	1

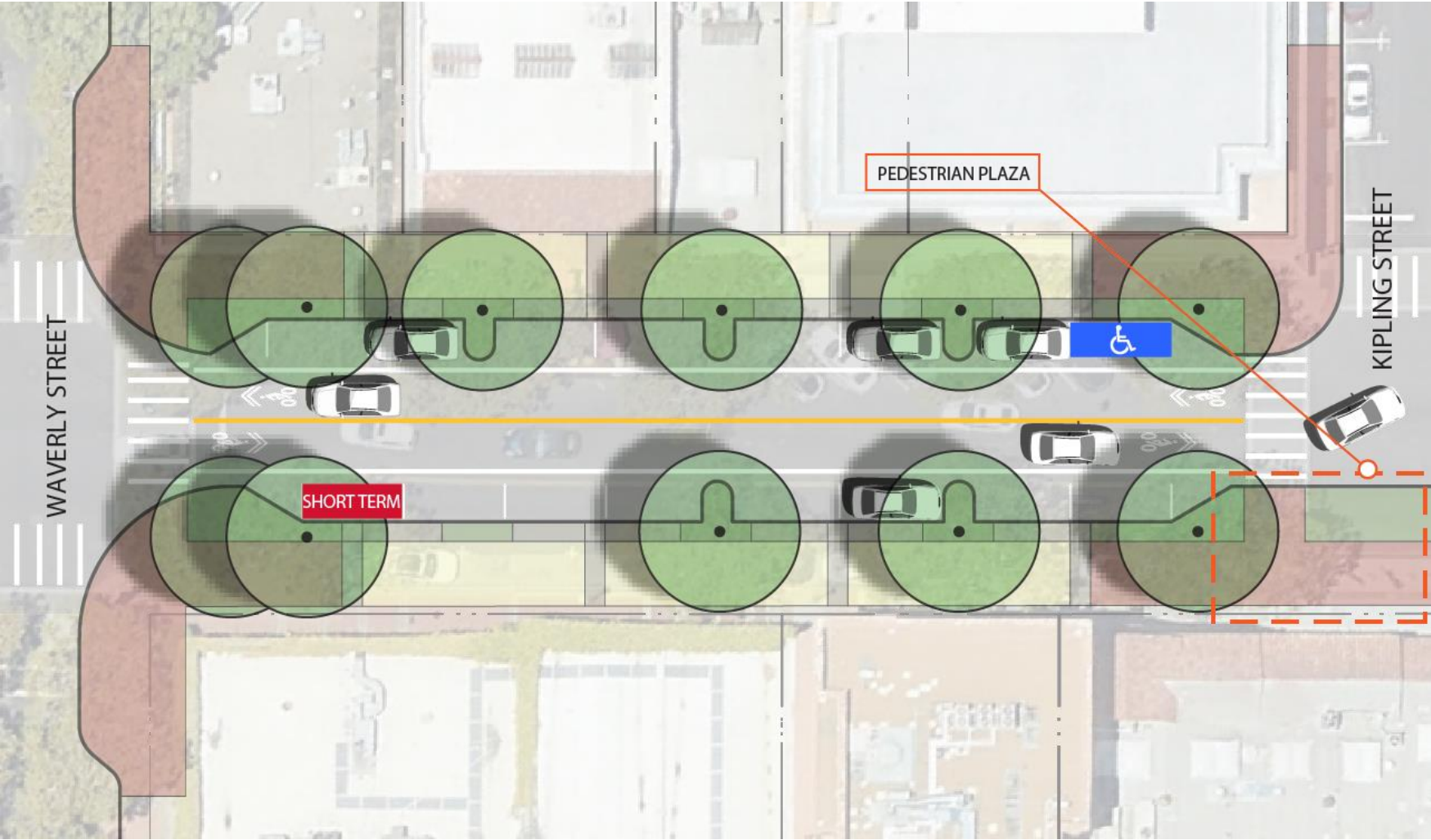
CONCEPT PLAN: Between Florence and Waverley Streets



Item	Number
Existing Parking	19
Proposed Parking	16
Existing Parklets	1



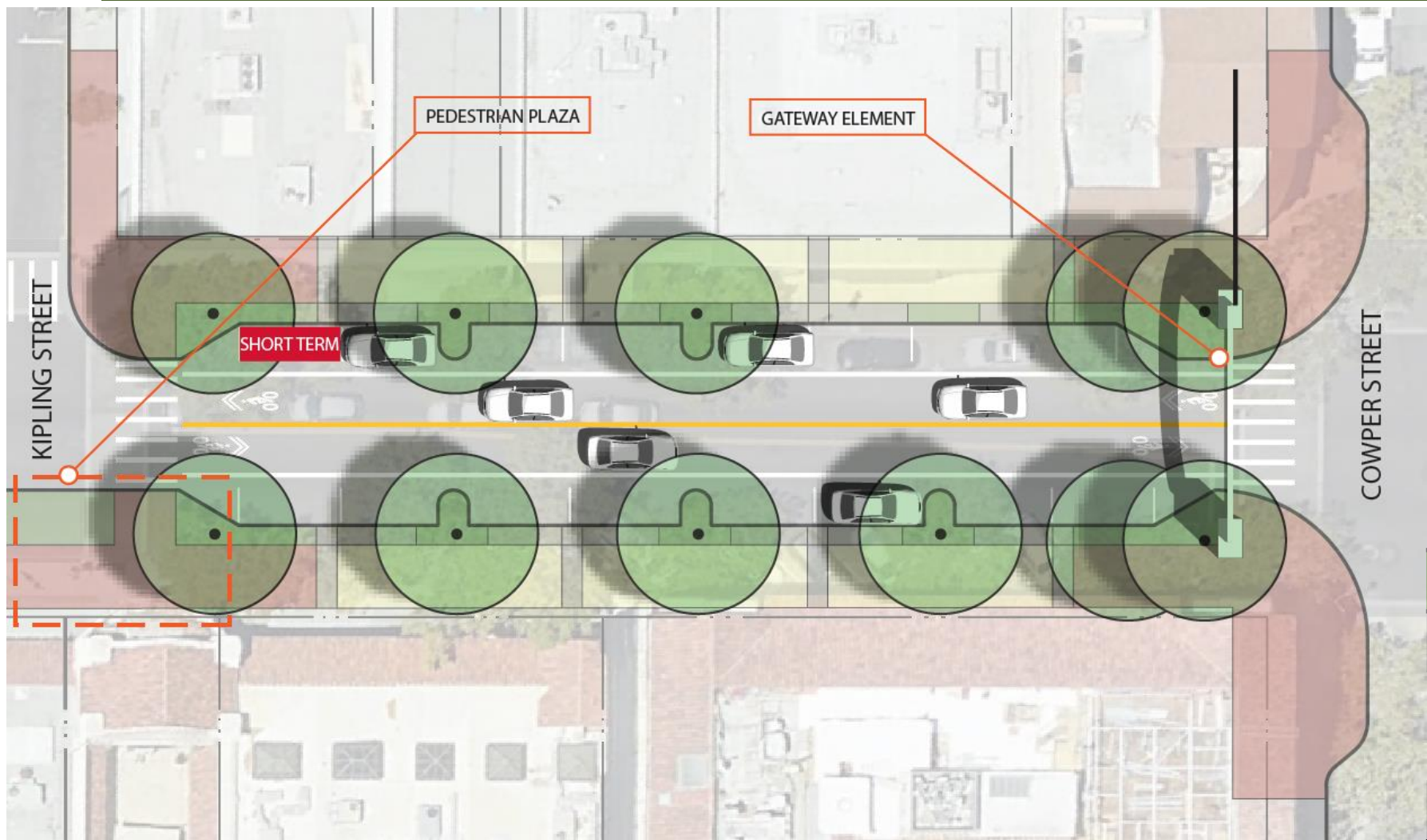
CONCEPT PLAN: Between Waverley and Kipling Streets



Item	Number
Existing Parking	19
Proposed Parking	16
Existing Parklets	1



CONCEPT PLAN: Between Kipling and Cowper Streets



Item	Number
Existing Parking	18
Proposed Parking	16
Existing Parklets	1

STREETSCAPE ELEMENT EXAMPLES (Burlingame)



PROJECT COSTS

Estimated at **approximately \$40 million**; estimates are preliminary and will be refined during design

Assumptions

- Project Scope includes widened sidewalks and street enhancements between High and Cowper streets; street enhancements only, between Cowper and Webster streets
- 25% contingency for design and construction.
- Assumes construction start in 2027 with annual inflation factor of 4%.
- Cost estimate includes design, construction management, permit fees, formation of an assessment district, and all construction costs.
- Cost estimate does not include ongoing operations and maintenance costs.

CAR AND BICYCLE ACCESS

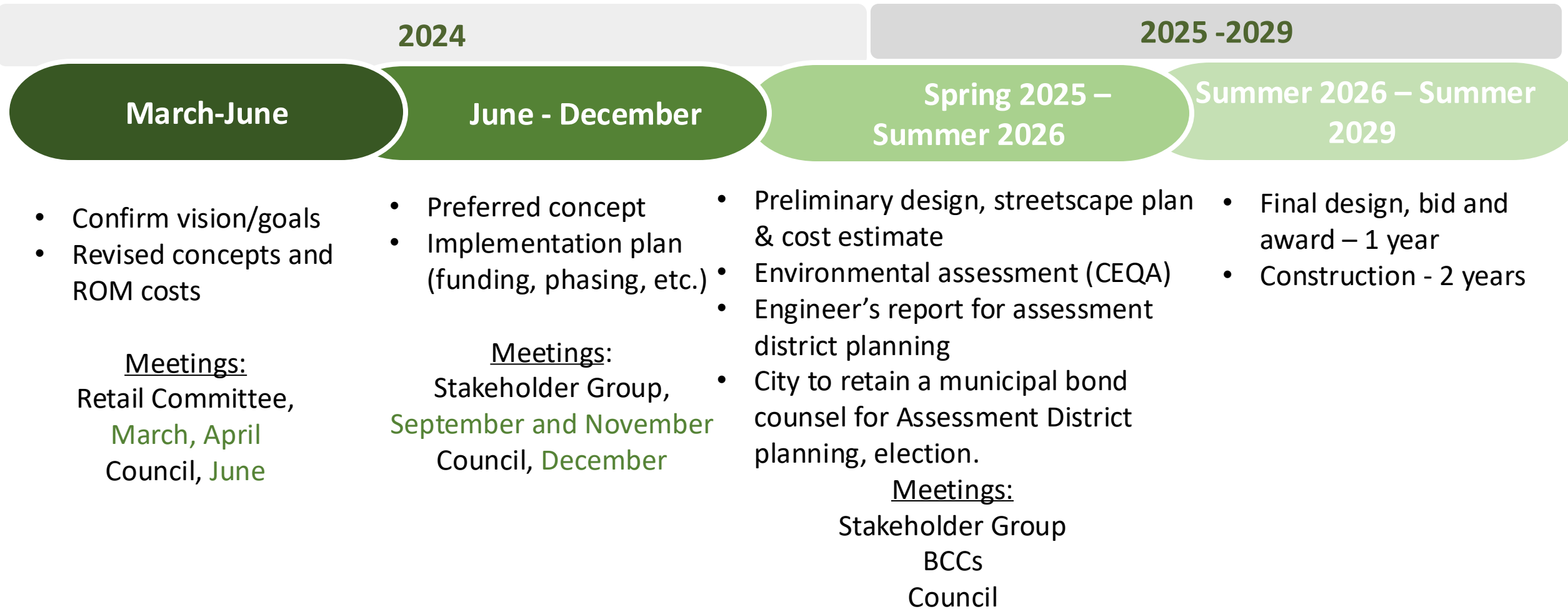
Vehicular Access and Parking Management Strategy

- Maintain two-way vehicular access with 10' wide travel lanes
- Automated parking and wayfinding to efficiently direct visitors to available parking; implementation currently underway
- Accessible and short-term parking on-street to support delivery, rideshare, and loading needs
- New downtown garage, located at existing surface parking lot D (Hamilton/Waverley)
- Ongoing parking studies

Bicycle Access

- University Avenue will continue to be a Class III facility; 3 feet buffer on each side of travel lane
- Close coordination with Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan Update

TENTATIVE PROJECT TIMELINE



NEXT STEPS

- Consultant contract amendment for Council consideration in early 2025
- Begin preliminary design in spring 2025, based on Council feedback on preferred concept design
- Release RFP for an assessment district feasibility analysis in winter 2025, contract award in spring 2025
- Assessment district feasibility and environmental analysis for approved design (spring 2025 - summer 2026)
- Design and construction (summer 2026 – summer 2029)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council confirm the preferred concept plan for the University Avenue Streetscape Project (PE-21004) and direct staff to bring back a consultant contract amendment for Council approval, in order to proceed to the project's design phase.