



usf school of architecture
+ community design

Professor Taryn Sabia

Service-Learning Course

Streets and Blocks: Case Study of Neighborhood
Commercial Districts

Palma Ceia

Neighborhood Commercial District

Anastasiia Hunda



INTRODUCTION



The first private golf and country club in the Tampa Bay area, Palma Ceia was born in 1916 during a time when the game of golf was growing rapidly. It's the birthplace of women's professional golf.

Now Bay to Bay Boulevard can be conditionally divided into two parts, more than half of the western part of the street is single-family houses, and the eastern part is dominated by commercial buildings and retail.



Therefore, according to the given context, the street cannot be considered and maintained only as a commercial corridor or collector street. The main idea is to change the typology of Bay to Bay and McDill to Neighborhood Main Street.



'A Little Paradise'

Neighbors plan to improve Fred Ball Park, where Palma Ceia Spring once fed a swimming pool.

By CINDY RUPERT
of The Tampa Tribune

BAYSHORE GARDENS

They probably won't unearth the buried swimming pool, but Bayshore Gardens residents plan to make improvements to Fred Ball Park at Bayshore Boulevard and Rubidoux Street.

Members of the recently organized Bayshore Gardens Neighborhood Association want to work with the Rose Circle garden club to install a wrought iron fence and improve the lighting and irrigation systems at the park, president Israel Diaz said.

The Rose Circle has been the park's caretaker for 11 years, along with the city parks department.

Diaz said the neighborhood association has asked the Tampa Police Department to do a security survey of the park, and expects recommendations to include fencing at least part of it, closing it after sundown to discourage vandals and overhauling the lighting.

Association member Jason Busto of Busto Plumbing is researching whether it's possible to use water from the park's Palma Ceia Spring for irrigation, Diaz said. A reclaimed water truck now supplies the park's water.

"Parks are an important element in a healthy society because they bring people together, out of their homes and away from their televisions," Diaz said, adding that he's seen people practice golf with white balls, play bicycle polo and even get married in the park. "Where you have a healthy park, you have a healthy neighborhood."

The park began as an unofficial health resort.

In the 1840s, Tampa automobile dealer Jim Ferman's great-grandfather, William Samuel Spencer, reportedly bathed in Palma Ceia Spring and drank its waters to treat his rheumatism. And stories persist that people bathed their children in the spring during a yellow fever epidemic in the late 1890s.

Hyde Park resident Doris Bowfby Garcia began swimming in the spring — where the fountain is today — around 1922, and had a not-so-healthy experience when she was about 10 years old. "I remember



Photo from Hillsborough County Public Library



In the 1920s, an oblong Venetian swimming pool, above, was built behind the spring with a platform in the middle to swim out to. The pool was later filled in because of health problems and a drowning. At left, Shavon Balames, left, and Chastity Wyatt enjoy a conversation while visiting Fred Ball Park on a recent afternoon.

See SPRING, Page 5 ▶

JASON DENNAEN/Tribune photo

EXISTING OBSERVATIONS



SIDEWALKS

- Since there is no assigned lane for cyclists and there just one mark that it is shared road (at the eastern end), it can be concluded that in order not to be hit by a car, cyclists will drive on the already narrow sidewalks, of despair, creating additional obstacles for pedestrians.
- No street trees at all
- No shadows along the street at all
- People are mainly walking from the car to nearest building
- No people on the street
- Even if the bay is at the end of the street its hard to get there, because sidewalk are breaking right there and no appropriate crossing over the track, as well as no enough place to leave a car



INTERSECTIONS

- The location needs a traffic signal or crosswalk
 - even if legally every intercection is a crosswalk, it has to be marked, otherwise might create misunderstandings and traffic accidents
- The crosswalk is not marked or is poorly marked
- People need to walk >300 feet for a safe place to cross the street
 - around 900-1200'
- Paving/Route is inaccessible for wheelchairs and strollers
- It seems that the viewing angle for turning cars is insufficient for safe entry or crossing the boulevard, especially when there are people on the sidewalk



COMFORT and APEAL

- There are some nice historical houses and building along the street
- The typology of facades is not homogeneous due to the difference in use, but could have common features in commercial buildings, like:
 - semi-public front yard
 - awning
 - landscape feature
- No awnings or shade trees along the street make it difficult to walk and torture pedestrians, especially given the climate in Florida
 - No shade for rain
 - No shade for sun

EXISTING OBSERVATIONS

- Car speeds are too fast
 - Even though it has speed limit and speed radar, cars are moving way too fast for the non buffer conditions between sidewalk and road.

- There's too much traffic
 - Its quite intensive

Drivers are distracted (e.g., they're using cellphones)

PROBLEMS FOR PEDESTRIANS

- No human oriented light features
- Absence of safety/landscape buffer between sidewalk and road.

Some areas are empty parking lots just covered with asphalt with nothing, with access through the sidewalk

SAFETY



ENVIRONMENT

- Sidewalks do not have encourage rainwater collection
- The existing city drainage system is clogged in places
- No trees along the street
- Everything is covered with asphalt and concrete
 - Need to use materials that are able to absorb water
- Not adequate usage of underhighway space
 - not enough place for parking on one side
 - material of parking could let water go through
 - acts as physical barrier between bay (main destination) and the rest of the street



DRIVER BEHAVIOR

PROBLEMS FOR PEDESTRIANS

- Drivers do not stop at stop signs
- Drivers don't yield to pedestrians, especially at right turns
 - Drivers do not tolerate pedestrians crossing the road on crosswalks without signal lights
- Drivers do not stop behind the crosswalk
- Drivers don't look when leaving or backing out of driveways
- Drivers make unexpected turns/maneuvers
- Drivers are using car horns a lot
 - Taking into account that the street is half residential then creates loud and unwelcoming environment for both residents and visitors



Bay to Bay Blvd Tampa

Street Diagram

Tree like this are helping to create comfort street room for this particular building with overhang providing additional shades and creating visual buffer between road and active commercial space

Chaotically organized electrical and other communications, stretched along the whole street

One-story building with small overhang, that doesn't provide shade, and empty wall doesn't create neither functional use, nor aesthetic value

Usage of historical roof materials for space identification and to support street character

Non-functional solution of the relatively new building facade does nothing useful for the street scape and realm

Palm trees do not provide enough shade for pedestrians and generally

The wall articulation of new buildings try to mimics historical ones, but that usually looks too plane and not interesting

Poorly organized electrical and other communications disturb the eye of visitor creating unsafe and unpleasant street frame

The garage exit like this doesn't seem to be save for pedestrians, especially during night time, since there is no lighting

Landscape features are not welcoming and doesn't provide any shade for visitors

Obstacles on the sidewalk: except landscape features maintenance the electric pole is standing at the middle of the street

No - to visually disturbing commercial sign

Overhang over commercial building creates comfortable people scaled place that are generate main interest of pedestrians, because of shade

Highly overloaded with various signs creating confusion with understanding those

The sidewalks are regularly interrupted by driveways and parkings

The sidewalk is as narrow as it is allowed - just 5 ft Also there is no buffer between road and sidewalk.

On the already narrow sidewalk there are often obstacles (poles, signs, shrubs, dumpsters) in the middle or on the side, that do not allow two people can't pass each other without walking on someones property or getting on the road.

Driveway without signage

Narrow sidewalk does not allow active commercial door along main street

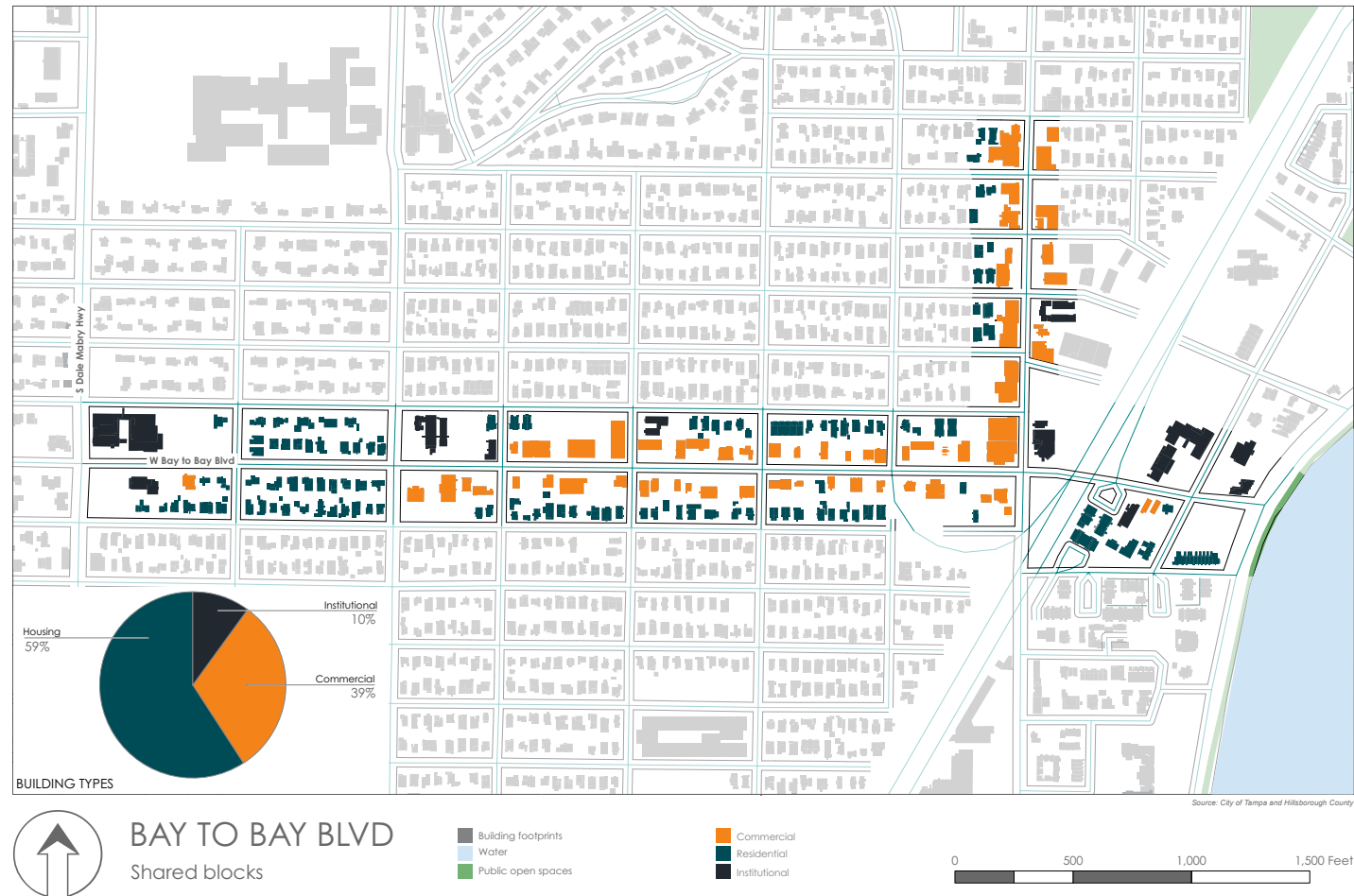
The rhythm of doors and windows suppose to create dynamic facade, but since the most of the buildings has just that on a blank wall, that is not working. Some of them also are not providing access for pedestrians at all, even though being commercial.

At places where sidewalks are interrupted by driveways, slopes to the road are often inadequate. There also are no tactile paving at most of the places.

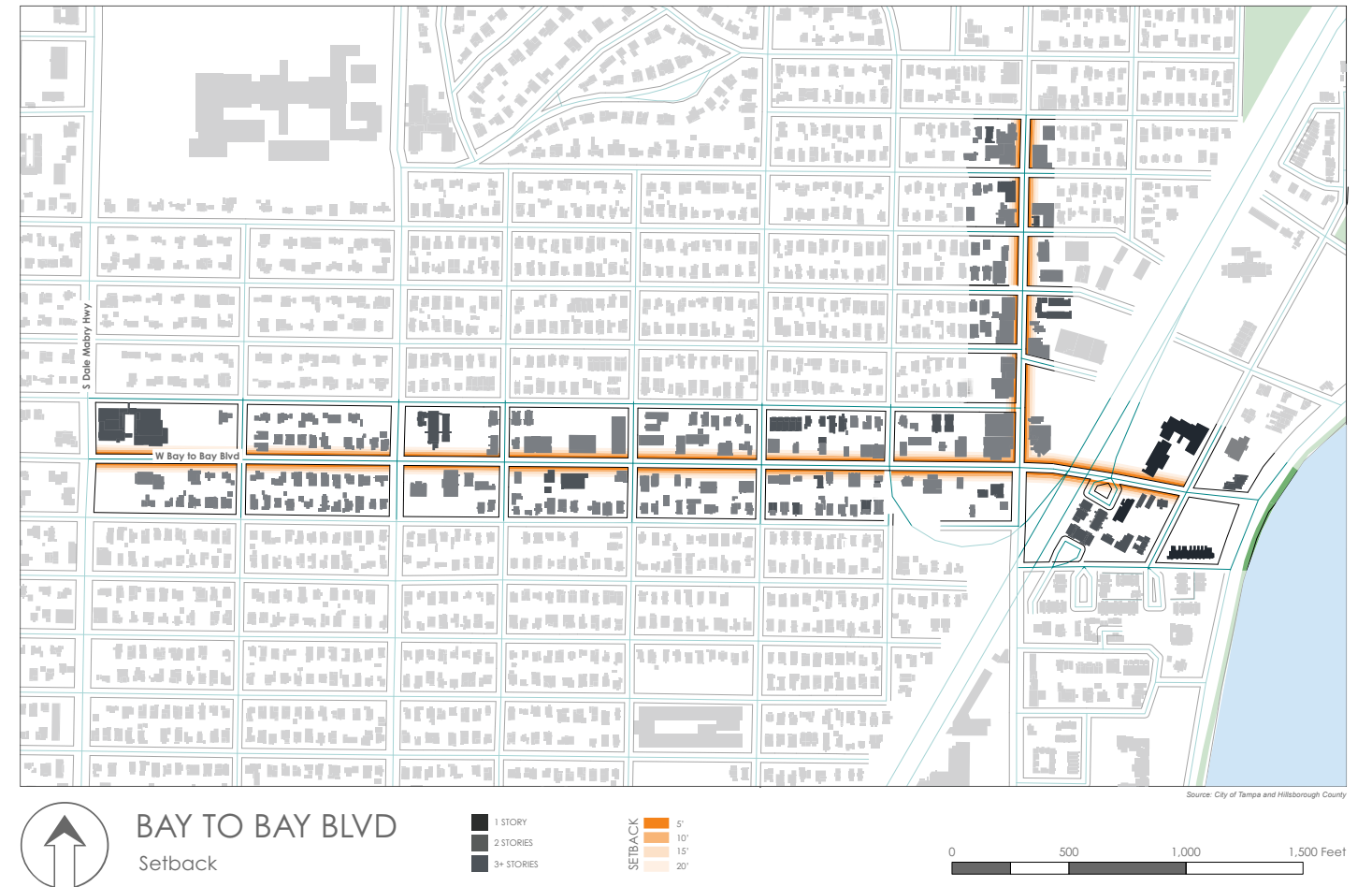


EXISTING

CONTEXT ANALYSIS



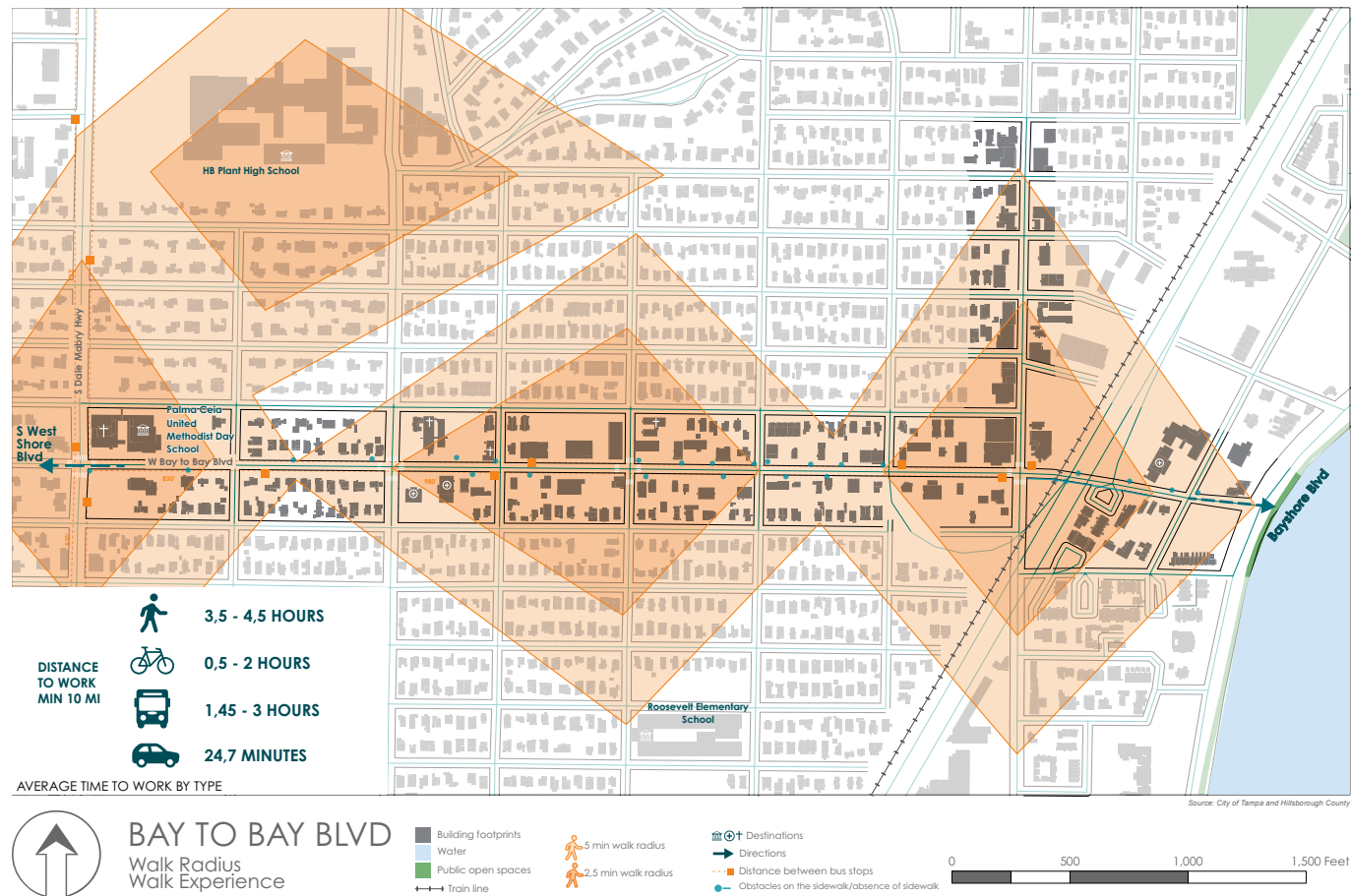
There are almost exclusively commercial (along the corridor) and residential areas. Possible to trace a clear division of zones along the street from west from Bay to Bay and Himes intersection.



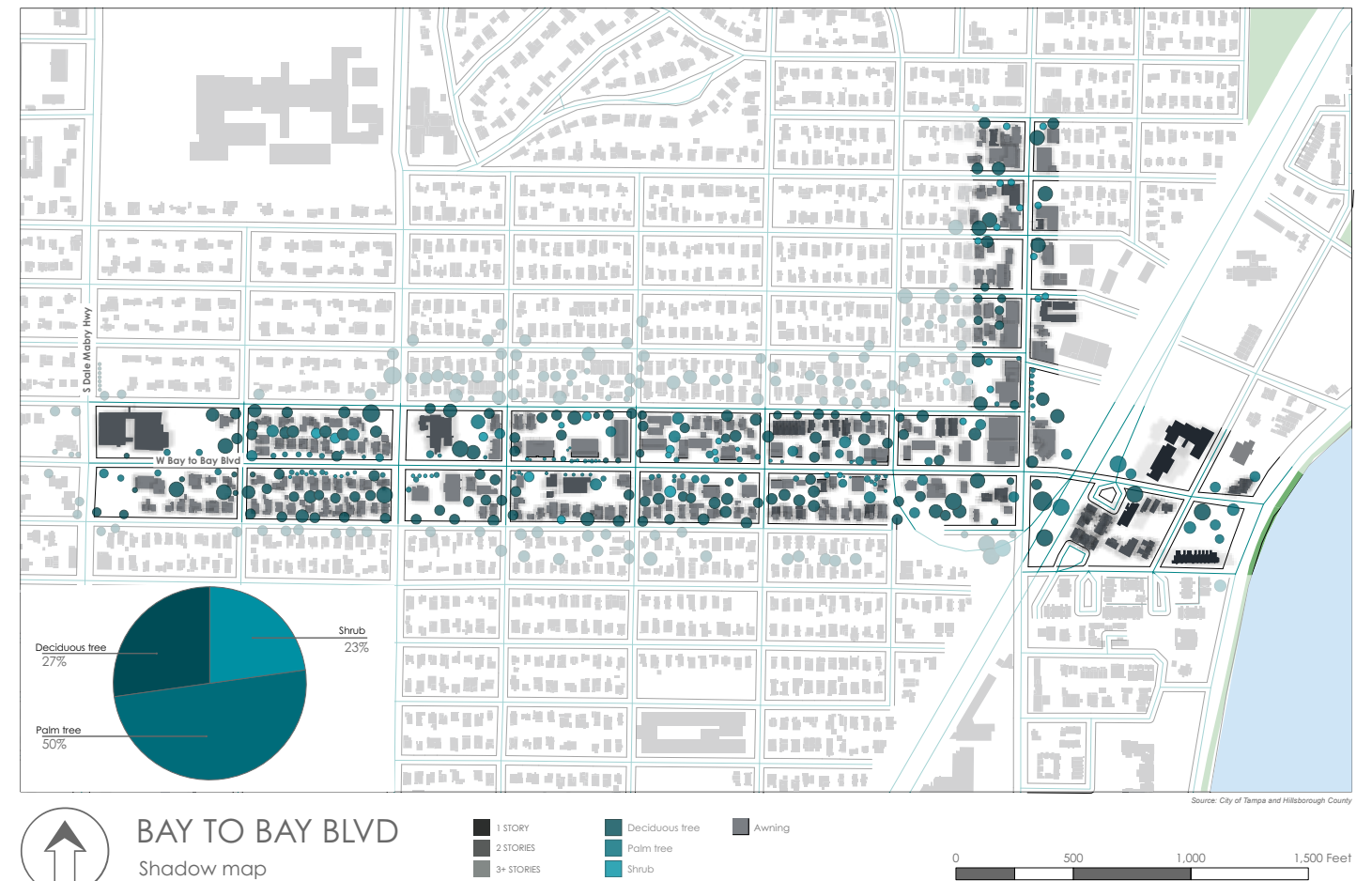
Heterogeneous setbacks of buildings along the street, no visual connection, just time when build and privat vs. retail diference

EXISTING

CONTEXT ANALYSIS



Besides 3 schools at the 1mi radius there ~5 more schools in 2 mi



Tree canopy mostly over residential areas in the depth of the blocks, the corridor doesnt have any coverage

PROPOSED

10 PRINCIPLES OF VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOOD

PALMA CEIA EDITION



1. HUMAN SCALE



2. SOCIAL DIMENSION AND URBAN VITALITY



3. COMPLETE STREET



4. GREEN AREAS



5. DIVERSITY OF USES



6. LOCAL IDENTITY



7. STIMULATING THE LOCAL ECONOMY



8. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

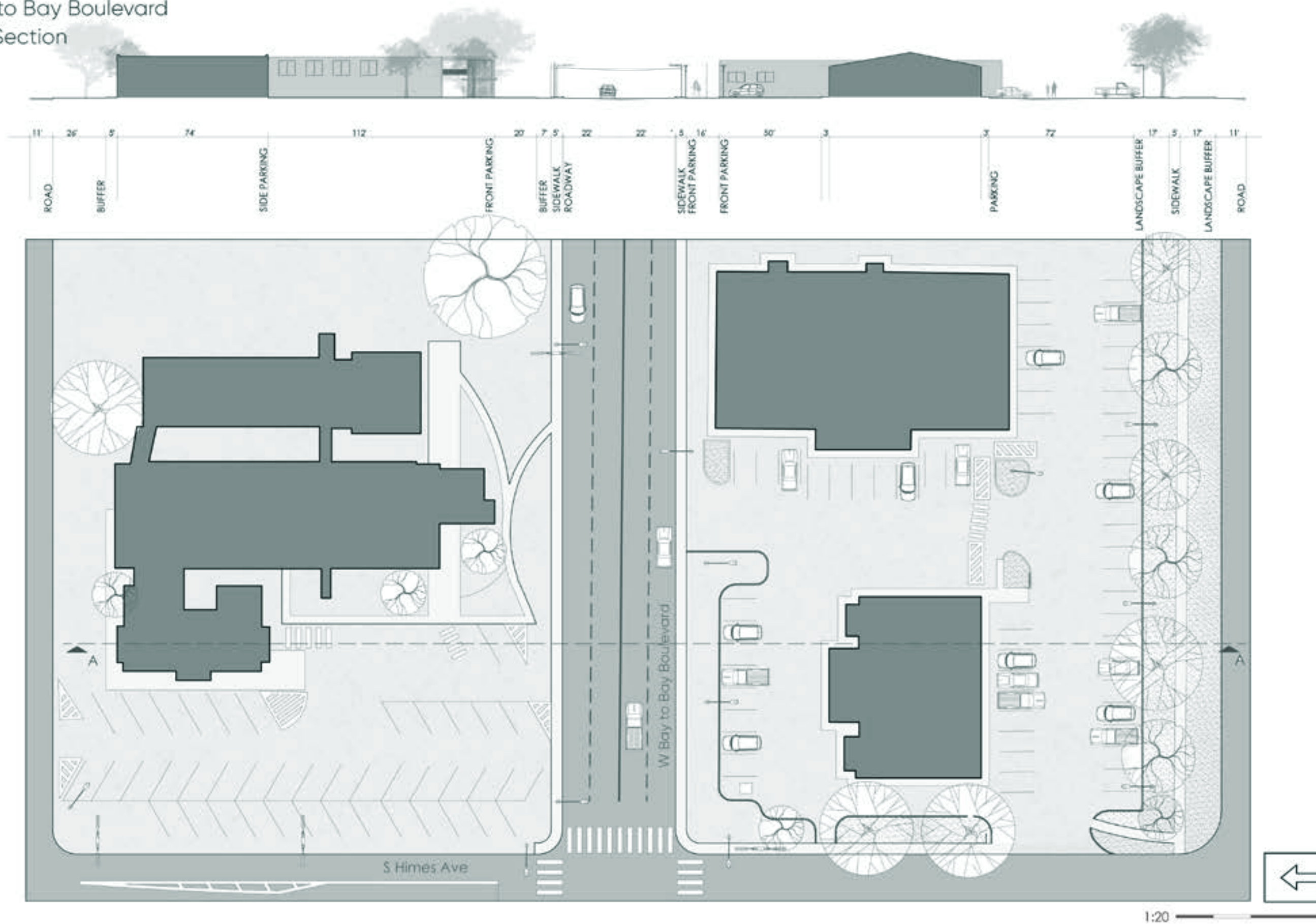


9. LIGHTING



10. ACTIVE FACADES

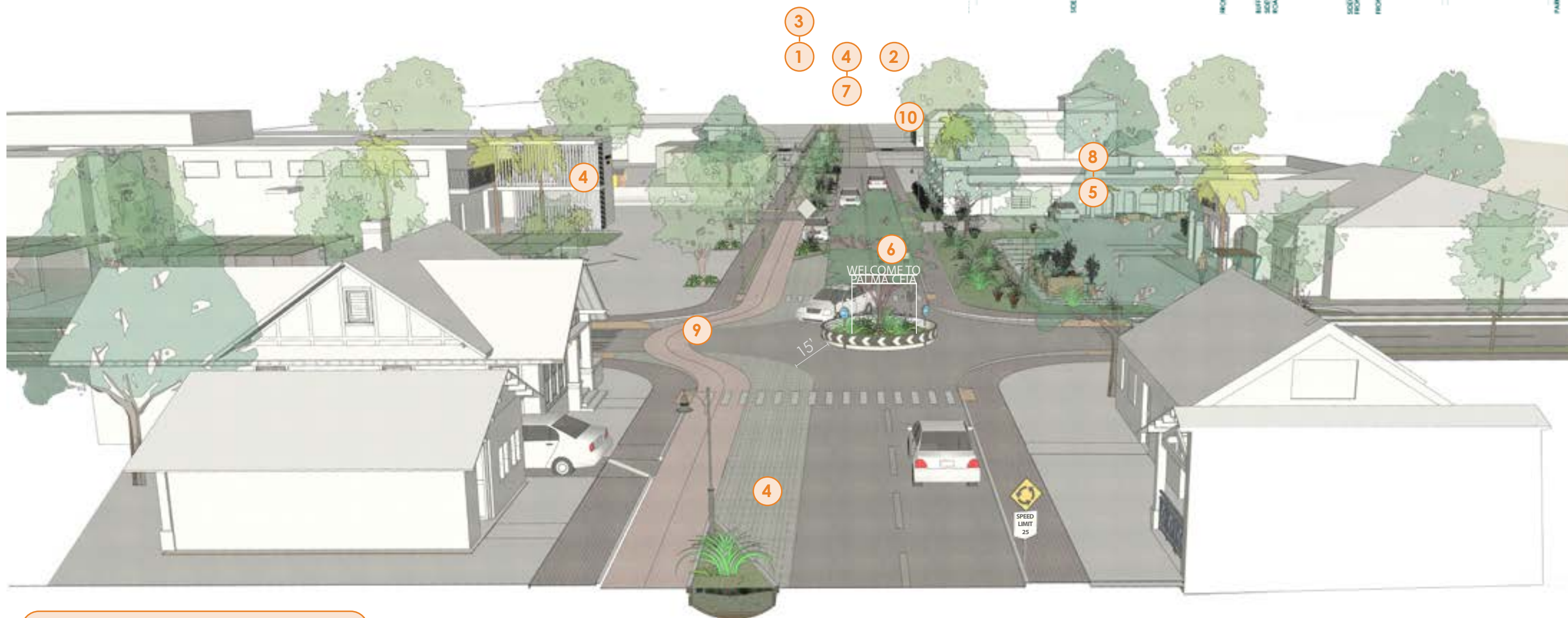
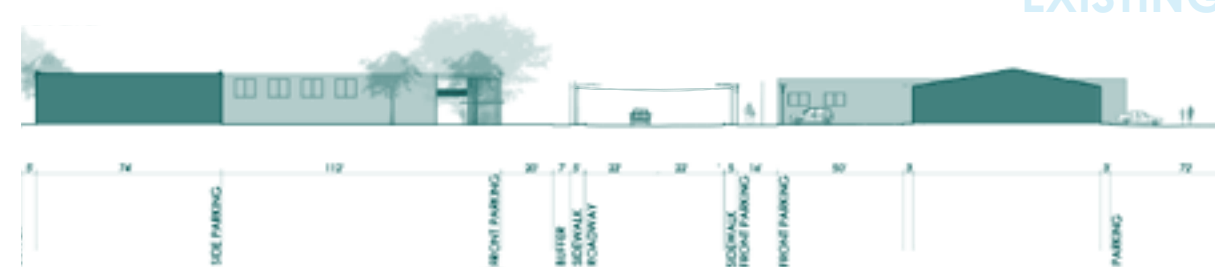
W Bay to Bay Boulevard Plan + Section



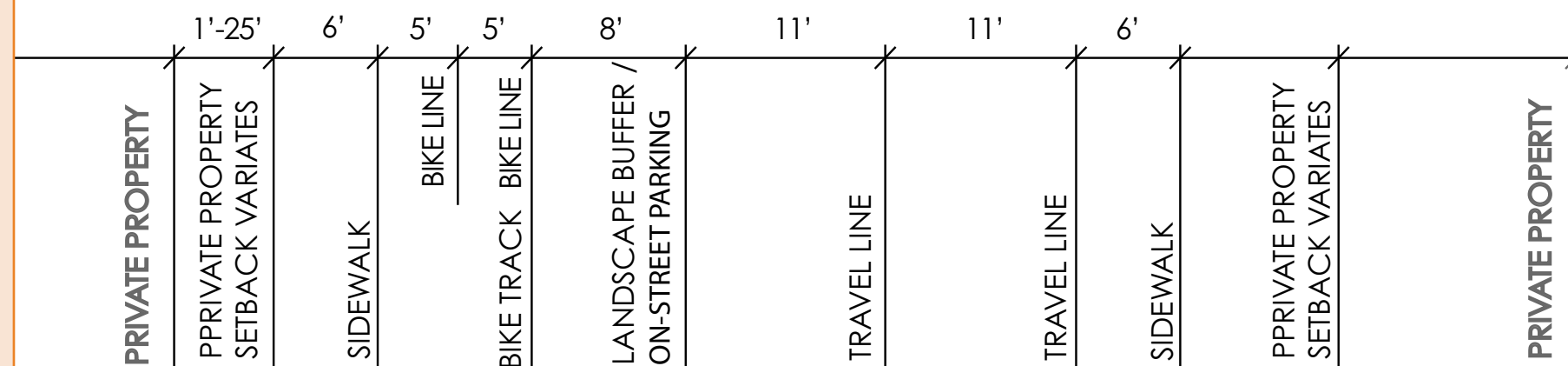
PROPOSED

W Bay to Bay Blvd + S Himes Ave Intersection

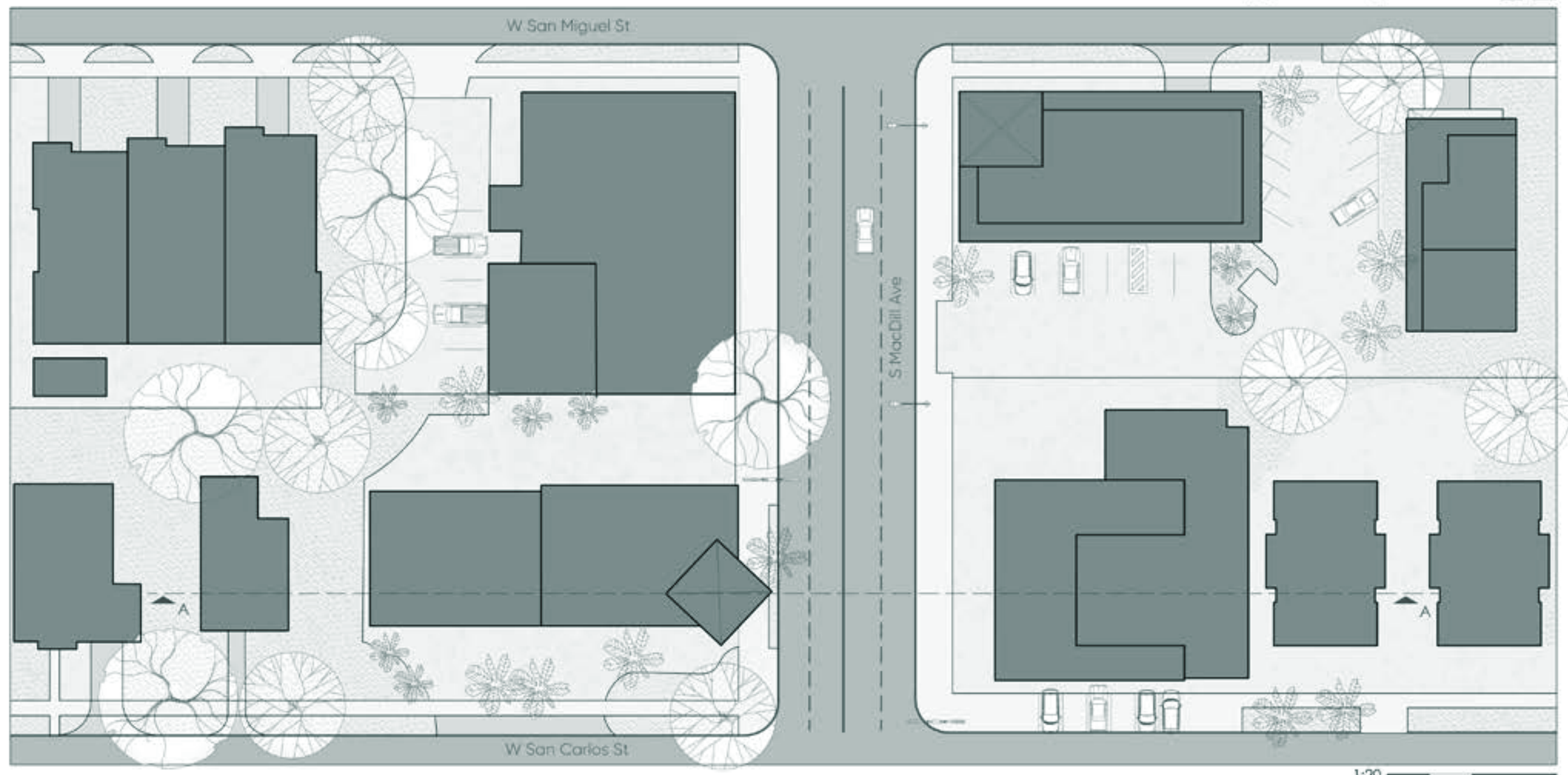
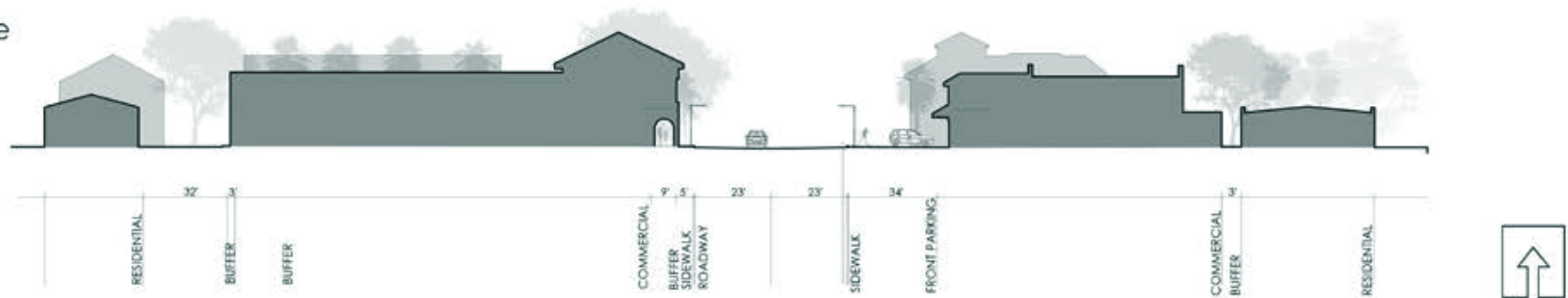
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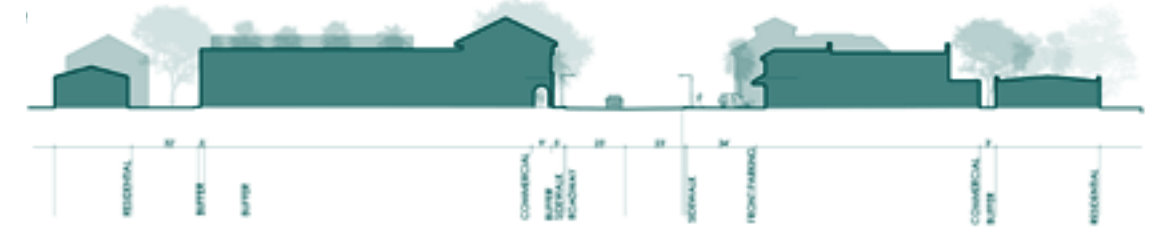
1. Human scale
2. Social dimension and urban vitality
3. Complete street
4. Green areas
5. Diversity of uses
6. Local identity
7. Stimulating the local economy
8. Social participation
9. Lighting
10. Active facades



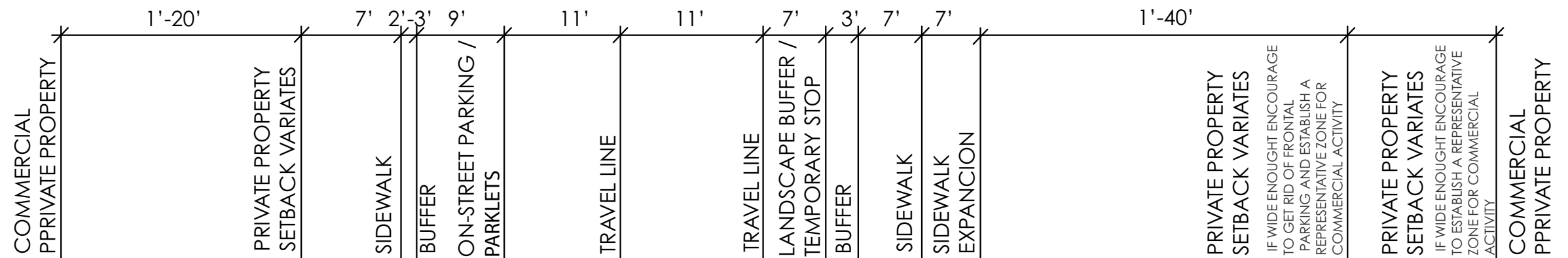
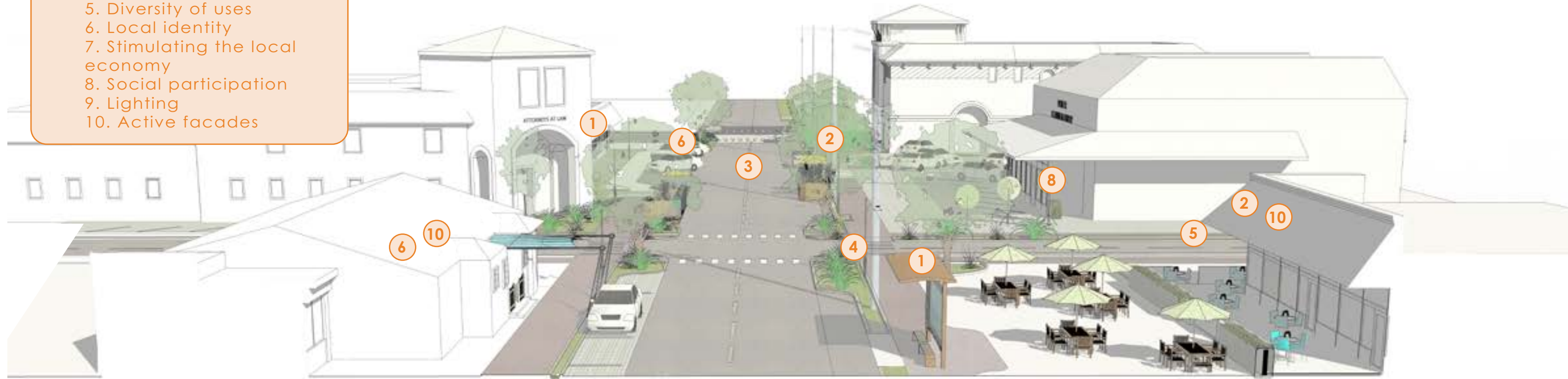
S MacDill Ave
Plan+ Section



S Mac Dill Ave + W San Carlos St Intersection

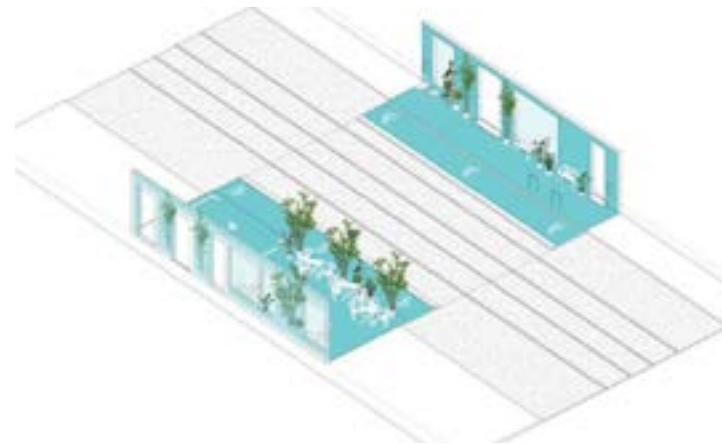


1. Human scale
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PROPOSED

1. HUMAN SCALE



Human scale design of physical elements optimized for human use. In urban design that means that the scale of the street must correspond to the scale of life of the people who live in it and balance the proportions of the street for the best human response. Bay to Bay Boulevard has a wide 52' right of way with two lanes in two directions, a minimal sidewalk and uneven setback (large in some places, no existing in others) and a pronounced limitation of building heights (1-2 floors). Often, low-rise buildings are maintained to ensure that the street has just that human scale, but at this situation that's not working, because the street heights to width ratio is lost. One of the main recommendations is general street humanization, so people feel that they were considered in the planning process of that space.

Goal: creating '**Street Room**'

- Min 6' sidewalk
- Pop-up urban experiences at the human scale - Parklets
- Reduce the requirements for parking spaces for commercial, encourage shared parking for several businesses
- to get rid/reuse of frontal/side parking 'voids' where possible

2. SOCIAL DIMENSION AND URBAN VITALITY



Wide, accessible streets, squares, parks, sidewalks, bike paths and urban furniture stimulate interaction between people and the environment, generate a positive use of space and increase urban vitality. Now Palma Ceia is lacking all these elements. Given that the Palm Tree is not only just commercial corridor, but also a residential street, it has the potential for a livable street with many visitors and residents. Considering, that promotion of quality of life is becoming ever more important nowadays, quality public space becomes crucial for social dimension. To create urban vitality, it's important to give people reasons to go out and sense of property/value in their neighborhood.



- Open spaces : under highway will be one of possible places for that
- Incorporate tactical urbanism gestures:
- Park(ing) Day
- Road Repair (like Rainbow Crossing)
- Reuse of frontal/side parking lots- placeholders (pocket parks in long run)
- Co-trading to encourage all day use
- Transformative placemaking
- Reducing an asphalt canvas for one line in favor of pedestrians and cyclist
- Murals



PROPOSED

BLOCK DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The current rhythm of most houses is generally satisfactory and difficult to change, so the main recommendation will be to provide and maintain a visual room on the street and to improve the pedestrian infrastructure and the experience of crossing the street. Most of the responsibilities will fall on future re-developers, as the main requirement will be to provide the ground floor with a widely available function, to maintain the rhythm of the active facades and to stimulate local identity, preferably mid-storey (3-5) to increase the density along the corridor.

Direct Recommendations:

- Adequate sidewalk
- Bicycle infrastructure
- Street framing
- Revitalization of front or side parking lots in favor of outdoor areas to stay (there may seasonal)
- Encourage shared parking for local businesses and services



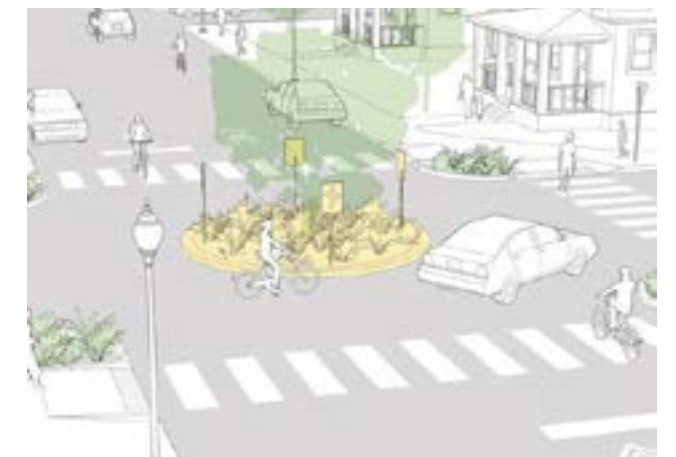
PROPOSED

3. COMPLETE STREETS

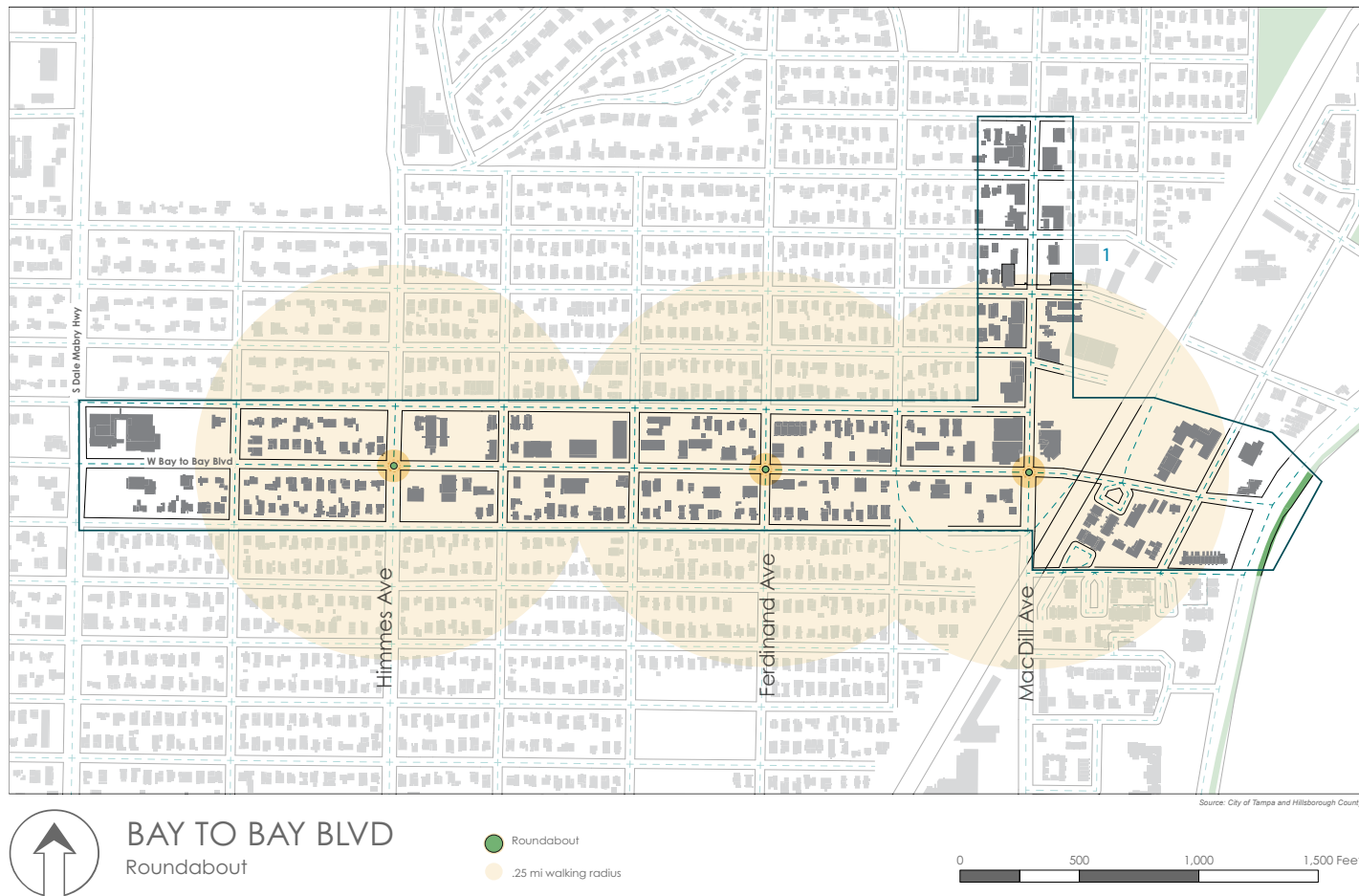


Palma Ceia Commercial corridor must be designed and operated to enable safe use and support equal mobility for all users - pedestrians, cyclists, users of public transport and drivers. Such a street design can reduce the risks for pedestrians as well as the risk for cyclists (if a well-designed bicycle-specific infrastructure is included). Healthy organisation and prioritisation of street components plays along with provision of healthy public realm.

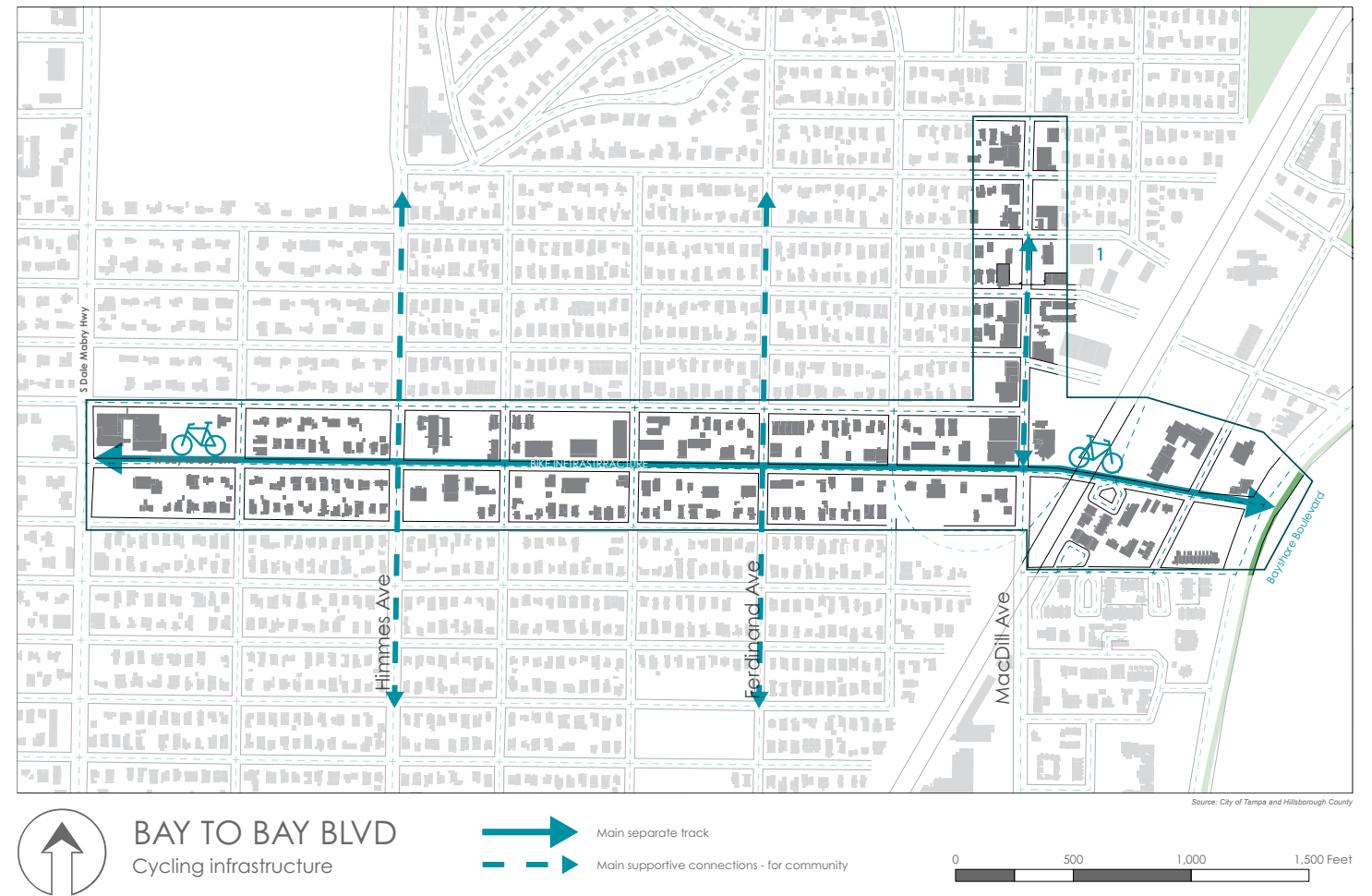
- Traffic calming elements (start with main intersections)
- Adding 3 roundabouts along Bay to Bay: on intersection Bay To Bay and Himes Ave, Bay To Bay and Ferdinand Ave, Bay To Bay and MacDill Ave. That will:
 - redistribute and devide trafic flow;
 - introduction to commercial zone;
 - calming traffic along school routs and neighborhood commercial corridor.
- Bike track along Bay to bay to conect West side with Bayshore
- Adequate amenities maintenance/organization
- Street trees (mostly deciduous)
- Benches or other seating in publicly accessible areas



PROPOSED MOBILITY



- The circular shape is designed to control the direction of traffic and reduce speeds to 15 to 20 mph.
- 15' of clearance from the corner to the widest point on the circle is provided.
- Rain garden at the middle
- Welcome sign



- Bicycle track creates save and continuous route from Bayshore Blvd to West shore Blvd.
- Along with system of main supporting shared roads to provide save routs to school
- General save vehicle-free access

PROPOSED

4. GREEN AREAS

In addition to contributing to air quality and helping to ease temperatures, vegetation has the power to humanize cities by attracting people to outdoor activities, thus make them healthier. In addition, trees, plants and flowerbeds are strategic for urban drainage, maintenance of biodiversity as well as urban trees can help reduce the impact of heat waves.

In *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, William Whyte examines the design of public spaces and how they influence social behaviors among their visitors. Public spaces are for people, clearly, but the ways people respond to these spaces are varied. In many instances, it was a matter of quality over quantity — meaning that the human appeal of a public park isn't necessarily relative of its size, but rather its level of versatility. In Palma Ceia case we possess an interesting location under the highway which is not used in any way, but could be something distinct and particular.

We have to work and use what we have.

- Starting with simple pervious paving that allow water to flow through, to alive green coverings, beside esthetical approach will help to cool down whole street thus attract more people to be outside during the day time
- Linear planting of trees along the street, taking into account the area required for them
- Rain gardens
- Regulation for street vegetation around retail
- Treat plants as place identifier
- Reuse of existing potentials as environmental hub (example under highway space, frontal parking zone)

* All decisions can start with tactical gestures, evaluate changes, and then expand/or not their sphere of influence

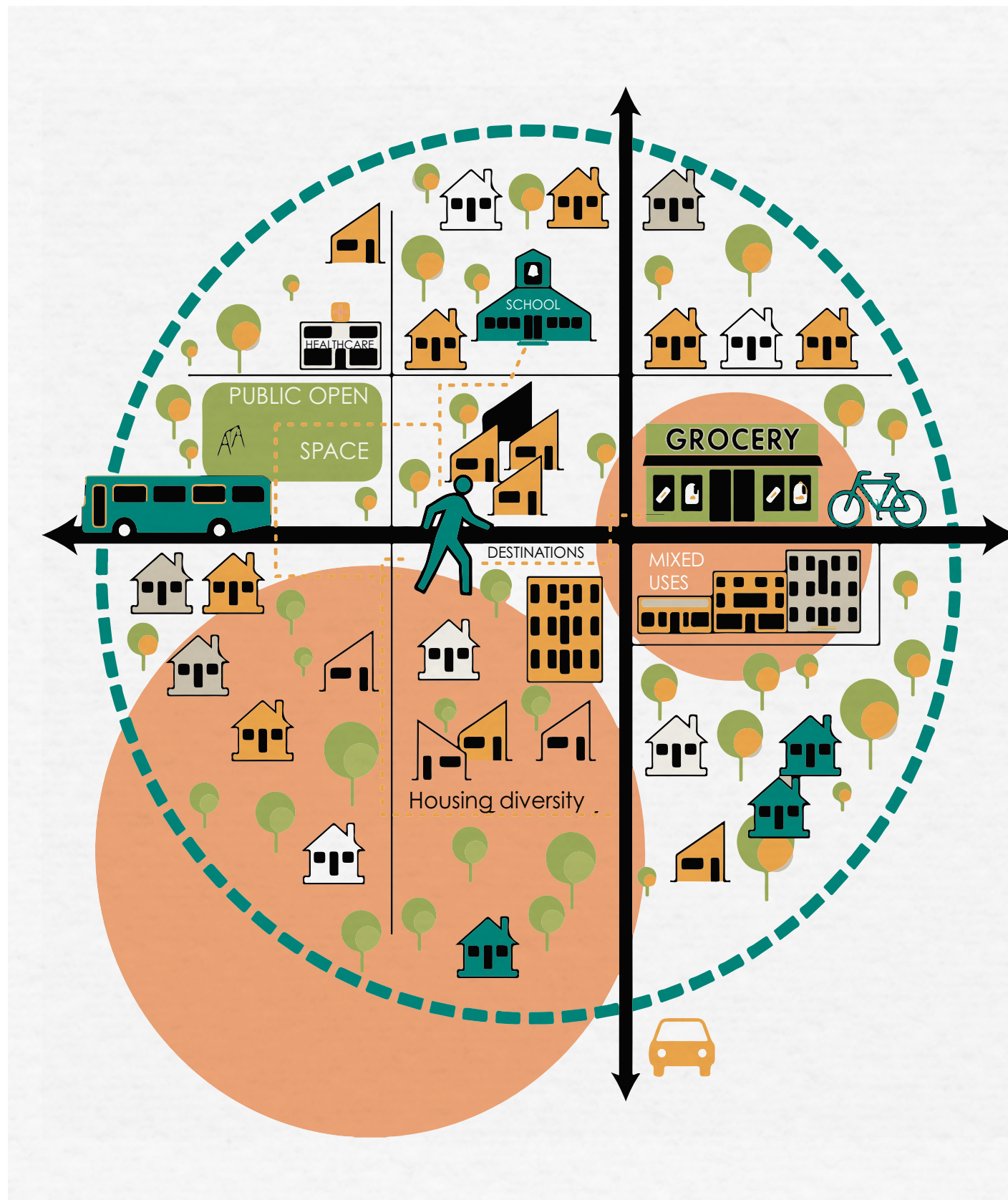
EXISTING



PROPOSED



5. DIVERSITY OF USES



FOR THOSE WHO LIVE



FOR THOSE WHO VISIT



FOR THOSE WHO LEAVE



Neighborhoods dominated by the car, without a mix of uses and housing types, tend to lack both diversity and a sense of community. Bay to Bay boulevard can be conditionally divided into two parts, more than half of the western part of the street is single-family houses, and the eastern part is dominated by commercial buildings and retail. Providing a smooth transition from one to another along with adequate maintenance of commercial building appearance will be one of the key points into shaping safe and livable neighborhood main street. Effective blend of uses with visible central core and proper activities can keep street active and act as a way of investing in security.

- Shade trees
- Water management
- Rain gardens
- Regulation for street vegetation for retail/commerce
- plant as place identifier
- park under highway

PROPOSED

6. LOCAL IDENTITY



Public spaces should be planned for the small businesses that characterize the neighborhood. Large enterprises (such as supermarkets or other chain companies) can contribute to the economy in general, but they have little participation in the scale of the neighborhood. Small businesses and ventures have significant long-term impacts, as well as add to the personality and identity of the place. When planning a public space, it is necessary to consider the social dynamics and cultural specificities of the area, in order to generate a strong relationship between people and place.

Art as tool of change

Give residents a sense of identity and belonging to the area.



- Park district, because of Fred Ball Park and Golf club history
- Art district, because of amount of art galleries along the commercial corridor
- Find/create visual catalyst (Identity markers)
- Involve existing art galleries and organizations (like Public program in WA, Australia)
- Urban Game Nights(QLD, Australia)
Mini Golf once a month
- Human experience
- Branding neighborhood
- Building up around community values
- Allow tactical urban gesture where possible
- extra sitting, parklets, vegetation



7. STIMULATING THE LOCAL ECONOMY



Quality public spaces not only benefit people by offering leisure and living areas, but they also have the potential to boost the local economy. The safe and attractive conditions foster walking and cycling, leading to easy access of local commerce by calming down the traffic and widening the and organizing sidewalk.

- Restoring safe and widening sidewalks to encourage on-street activity
- Outdoor seating
- Slowing down the movement at street
- change the requirments for buissness parking, and encourage shared parking lots
- At least curb buffer between road and sidewalk

8. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Social participation is a central element for the construction of safer, equitable public areas. Involve residents in the design, planning and administration of urban public spaces or the neighborhoods in which they live is essential to maintain the quality of these spaces. Public spaces have different uses and meanings in each neighborhood and community. Resident involvement ensures that the nature and use of public space will meet the community's distinct needs. If a space does not reflect the demands and desires of the local population, it will not be used or maintained. Social participation is a central element for the construction of safer, equitable public areas.

- Place for weekend markets/other occasions
- Green Curriculum -school and district program
- Neighborhood/community open air art exhibitions
- Partnership with local organisations and bussineses
- Commuting Challenge



9. LIGHTING

Efficient and people-oriented lighting facilitates the occupancy of public spaces at night, enhancing safety. When installed on the pedestrian and cyclist scale, public lighting creates the necessary conditions to move more safely when there is no natural light.

- Organizing light features and electrical poles along both streets
- Put as many communications underneaths as possible
- Provide pedestrian oriented light features, preferably dark sky



10. ACTIVE FACADES



Connection between the ground level of the buildings, the sidewalk and the street contribute to safety and the attractiveness of urban design. Visually more interesting streets are used more often by people. In addition, this relationship influences people's perception of the city and how they are to use it: Jane Jacobs says that it is mainly streets and sidewalks that indicate how public space is perceived and used. In Palma Ceia case the main focus is to activate intersection between Bay to Bay Blvd and MacDill Ave, where most of business are.

- Encourage local businesses by changing parking requirements + shared parking space+ allowing on street exposition/parklets . They can be started as weekend measure and eventually grow to all-week buffer zone.
- Awning to define storefront and provide shade
- Illuminate sidewalks with light from the store windows
- Sidewalks should be wide enough to allow peoples to pass each other.
- Shady sidewalks



Palma Ceia