

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS 4

This chapter outlines specific development concepts for public improvements and private development in Downtown Ceres. These concepts are meant to illustrate realistic and achievable projects that are also consistent with the vision and goals for Downtown. The streetscape design and site planning undertaken to develop these concepts was conducted as an iterative process to create the key policies, standards and recommendations in the following chapters of this Specific Plan and the Downtown Streetscape Standards and Design Guidelines in Appendix A.

The illustrations show projects that support the goals and vision described in Chapter Three. Included are proposed streetscape improvements for key streets in Downtown, and a conceptual approach to phasing redevelopment on two blocks adjacent to Fourth Street.

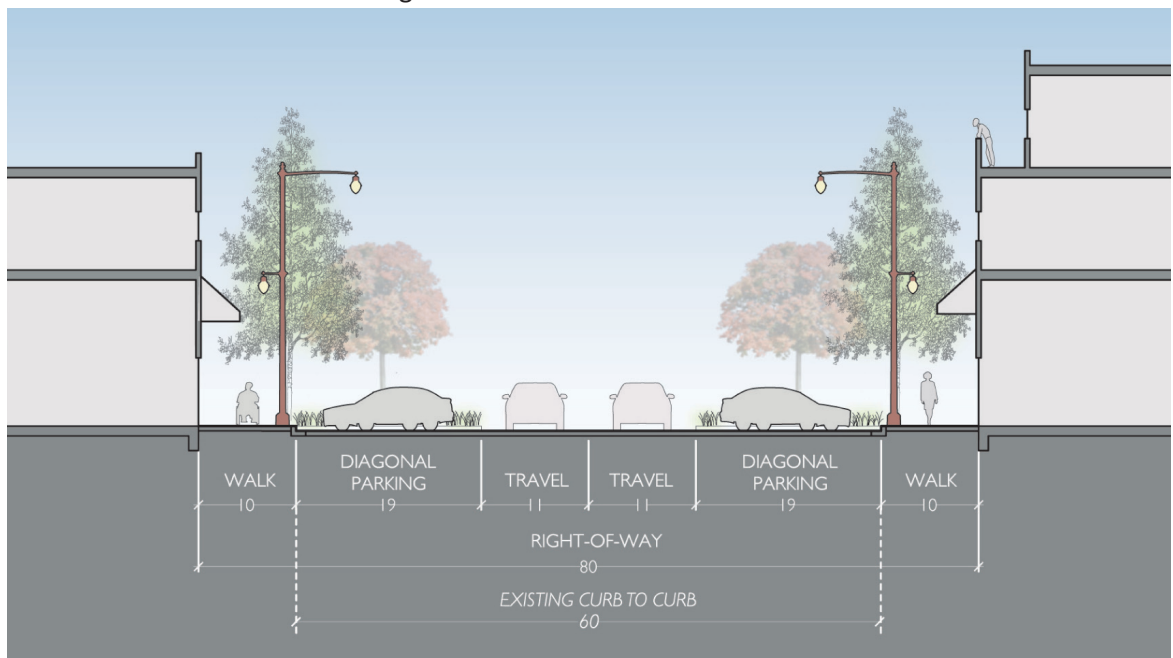
A. Public Realm Improvement Concepts

This section provides conceptual recommendations for streetscape improvements on key streets in Downtown.

Fourth Street Improvements

Fourth Street will be the activity and retail corridor and the central heart of Downtown. As such, this street must be handsome, functional and pleasant for pedestrians over its entire length. Improvements proposed include vehicle lane width reduction, sidewalk widening, new trees, conversion of parallel to angled parking, an enhanced bulbout at North and Fourth Streets, and new landscaped mid-block pedestrian crossings. These improvements can be provided through a combination of public investment and private development dedications. Figures 4-1 and 4-2 illustrate how these improvements could be implemented on Fourth Street in both cross-section and plan view.

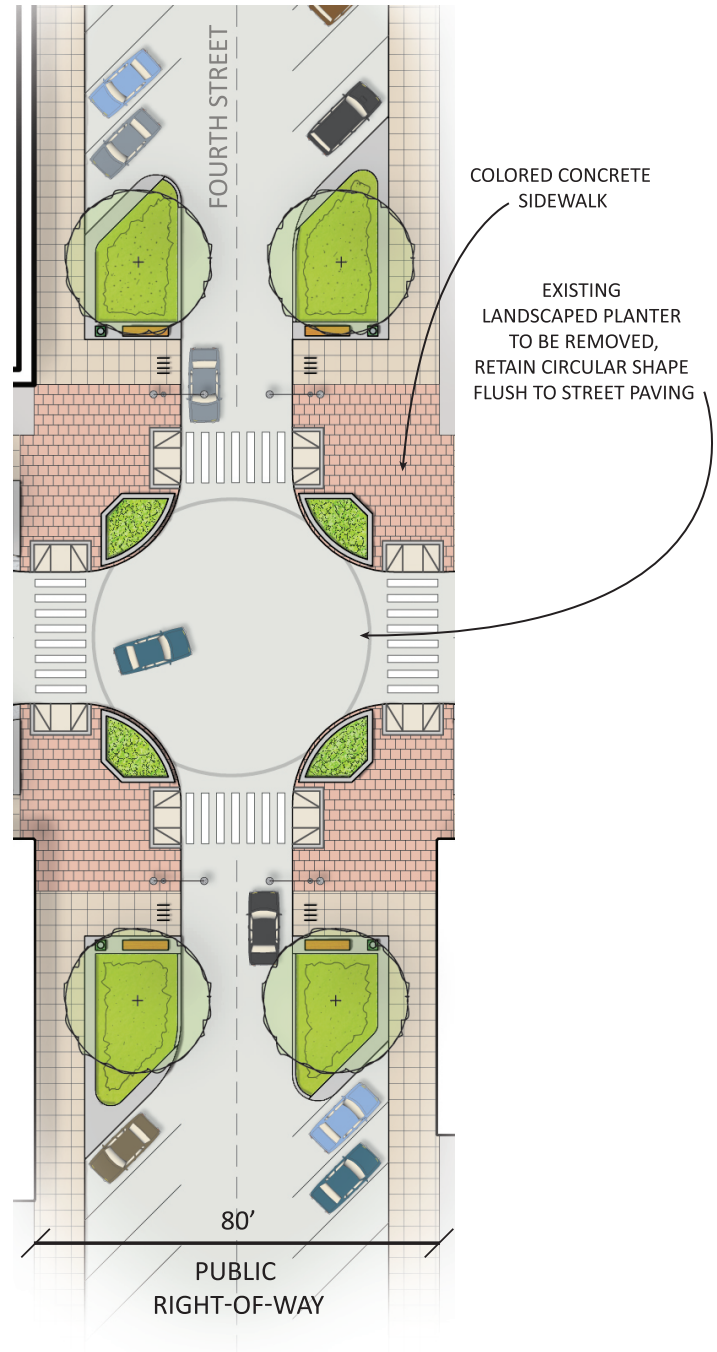
FIGURE 4-1 Fourth Street Viewing North



The recommendations are specific to Fourth Street and are intended to create an environment that is the “living room” of Ceres and one of the most identifiable streets in the city. These improvements, in coordination with high-quality private development, will ensure Fourth Street becomes a sacred space for Ceres over the long-term. Fourth Street improvements will also help achieve economic viability goals by showing developers the City’s commitment to the Downtown. Fourth Street’s resurgence will also be visible to passers-by on State Route 99. Enhanced gateways will mark entry at the north and south of Fourth Street, further reinforcing the significance of the street within Ceres.

Through elimination of the existing raised roundabout, new bulbouts are shown at intersections, including a special treatment of the Fourth Street/North Street intersection intended to accentuate this important Downtown intersection and the center of Downtown. Bulbouts allow for shorter crossing distances and can also provide additional public gathering space at this intersection. As shown, benches, bicycle racks, street lamps, trash receptacles and special pavement can all be accommodated in this area, while still allowing for clear pedestrian access and ADA compliance. New stop signs will need to be added to this intersection to facilitate these improvements and ensure safe traffic operations.

FIGURE 4-2 Fourth Street/
North Street Intersection

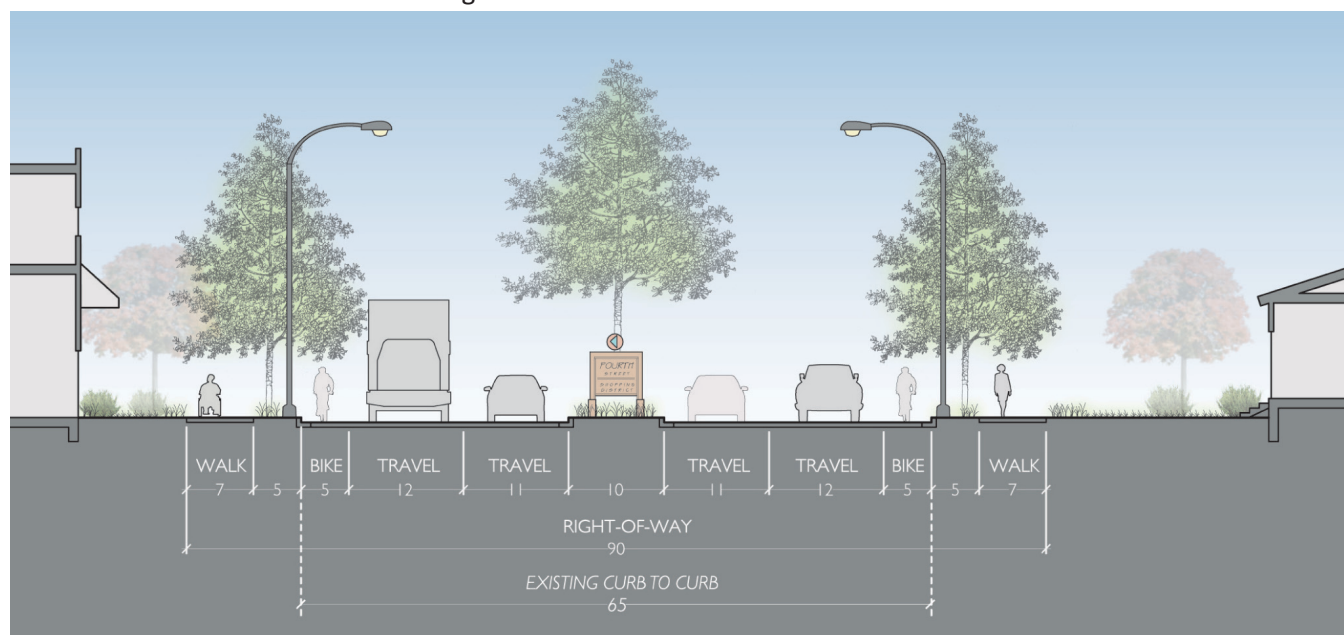


Whitmore Avenue Improvements

Whitmore Avenue will continue as a primary arterial in Ceres, but the street can be improved to become a stately boulevard through Downtown, relate better to Downtown and provide a more comfortable walking and biking environment. After completion of improvements at the Whitmore Interchange project, all northbound exiting traffic will approach Whitmore Avenue, increasing the potential to designate Whitmore Avenue as another key gateway into Downtown.

Lane widths on Whitmore Avenue are wide and could be reduced to provide room for enhancements to the public realm. Landscape improvements are proposed for Whitmore Avenue, including new street trees, a maintained central median with appropriate turn pockets at intersections, and new bicycle facilities. In keeping with the “Green Ceres” concept, it is recommended that medians be landscaped with drought tolerant plants. This type of landscaping is cheaper to maintain and requires less water/fertilizer than traditional turf. Drought tolerant plants in the median will also provide additional permeable surfaces in Downtown. Wayfinding signage is also proposed to further establish entry to Downtown from Whitmore Avenue. It is recommended that median improvements be implemented from Central Avenue and Sixth Street, where primary gateways to the proposed Downtown districts are located. Figure 4-3 shows a conceptual section of Whitmore Avenue.

FIGURE 4-3 Whitmore Avenue Viewing West



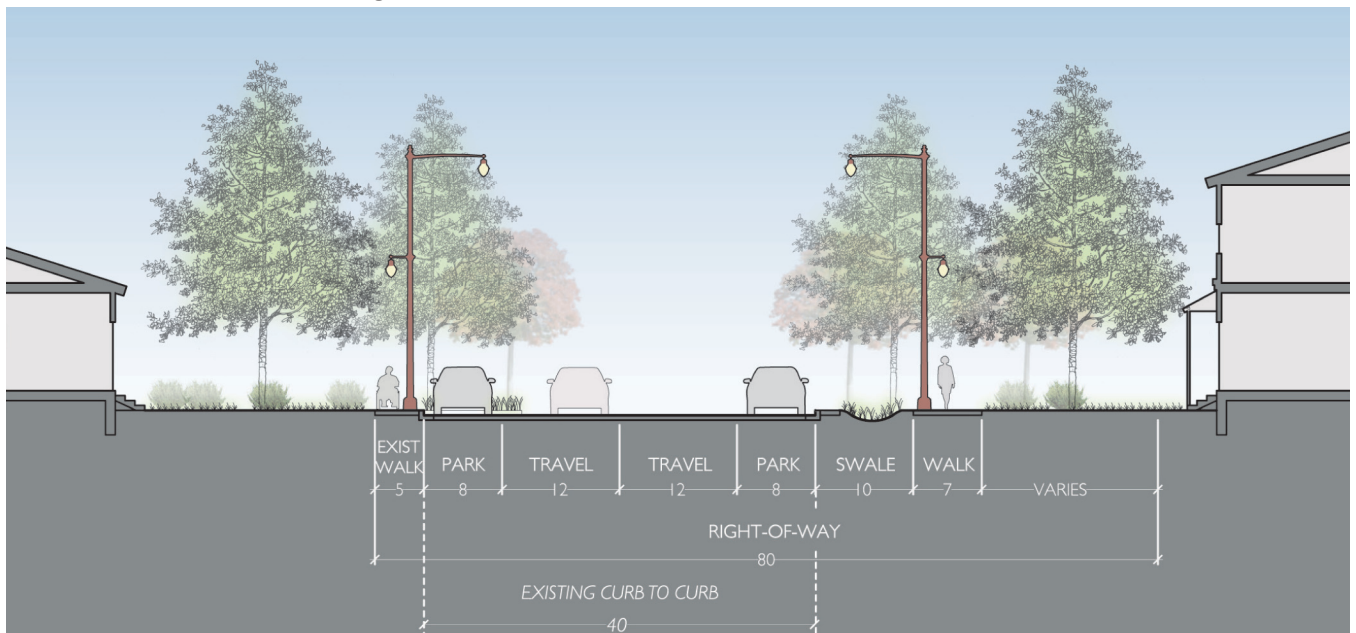
Implementing these improvements can help attract investment to Downtown and provide for increased amenities on this primary corridor within Ceres. Streetscape improvements and a well-designed wayfinding and signage system will help lure State Route 99 travelers to the highway commercial development proposed at the northwest portion of Downtown, but also make them consider visiting smaller existing and proposed businesses on Fourth Street.

Fifth Street Improvements

Fifth Street, from Lawrence Street to Whitmore Avenue, is identified as an historic district by the Specific Plan. The first home in Ceres, the Daniel Whitmore Home, is located on Fifth Street along with the Whitmore Mansion and several other homes that were built around the turn of the twentieth century. This segment of Fifth Street is currently residential, with single-family homes of varying setbacks.

Building on this character, it is proposed that Fifth Street be improved with special landscaping, including new sidewalks, creative designs for open space within the existing 80-foot right-of-way, pedestrian lighting and street trees. Figure 4-4 illustrates a conceptual section of Fifth Street. It is proposed that new streetscape configurations be explored as

FIGURE 4-4 Fifth Street Viewing North

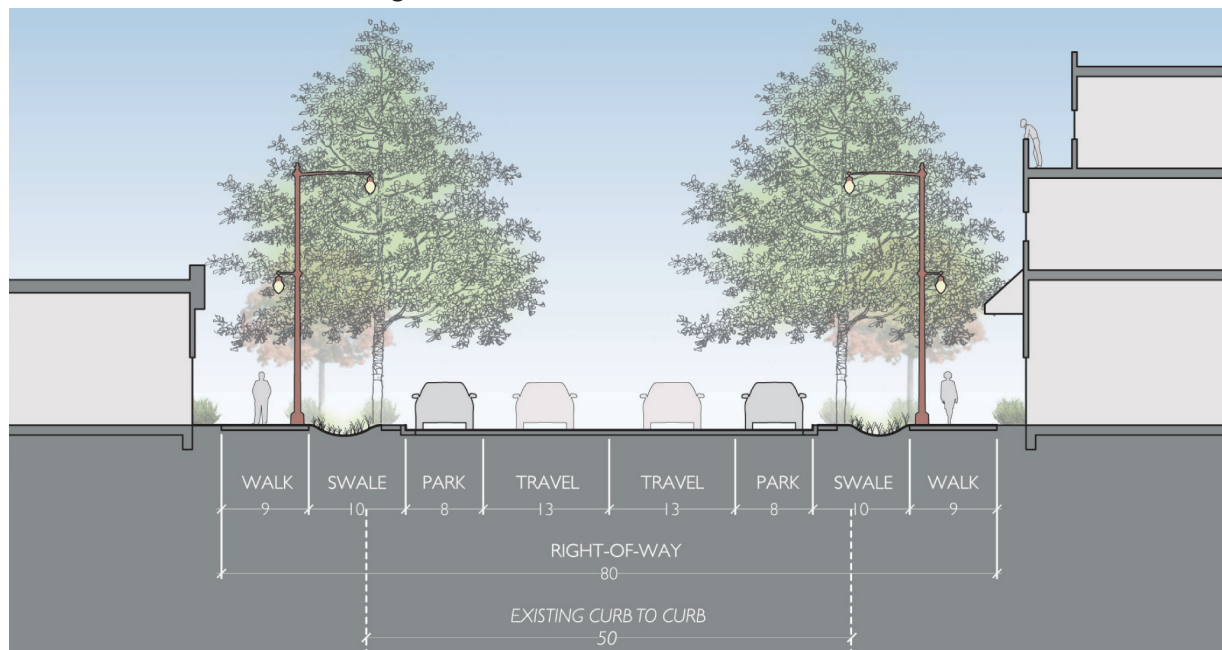


parcels fronting this street redevelop. For example, it may be appropriate for Fifth Street to “shift” at certain locations or intersections where opportunities to improve the right-of-way exist, particularly where improvements will accentuate properties or features to reinforce the historic character of the street. Any improvements to the street should also include measures to calm traffic speeds and allow provision of a rich street tree canopy. The existing roundabout at Lawrence Street and Fifth Street is proposed to be improved with landscaping and street trees, clearly marking the southern entrance to Historic Fifth Street. Historic signage may also be appropriate at this entry and along Fifth Street.

North Street Green Connection

The North Street Green Connection represents an opportunity for Downtown to exhibit sustainability and stormwater management principles in the public realm, as well as connect the major existing and proposed green spaces within Downtown. North Street through Downtown is proposed to be reconfigured with parallel parking throughout by converting the existing angled parking. Changing to parallel parking and requiring extended setbacks will permit bioswales in the right-of-way. Bioswales are provided to manage and cleanse stormwater runoff from the roadway. Please see the Downtown Streetscape Standards and Design Guidelines in Appendix A for more information on

FIGURE 4-5 North Street Viewing West



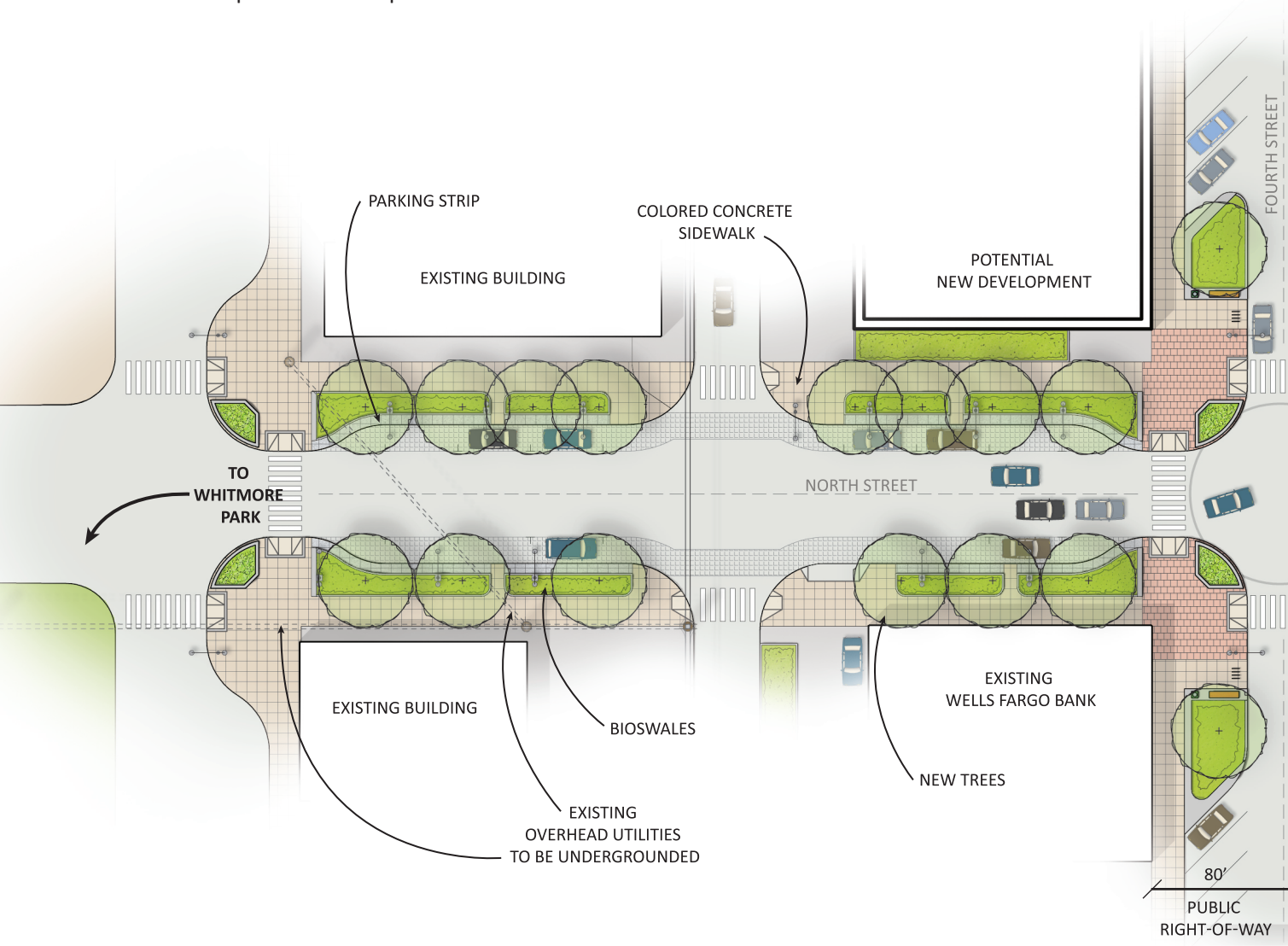
bioswales, including how they can be accommodated in a downtown setting. It is also proposed that sidewalks are widened and large canopy trees are planted. New street lighting is also proposed for North Street. Figure 4-5 shows a conceptual section of North Street.

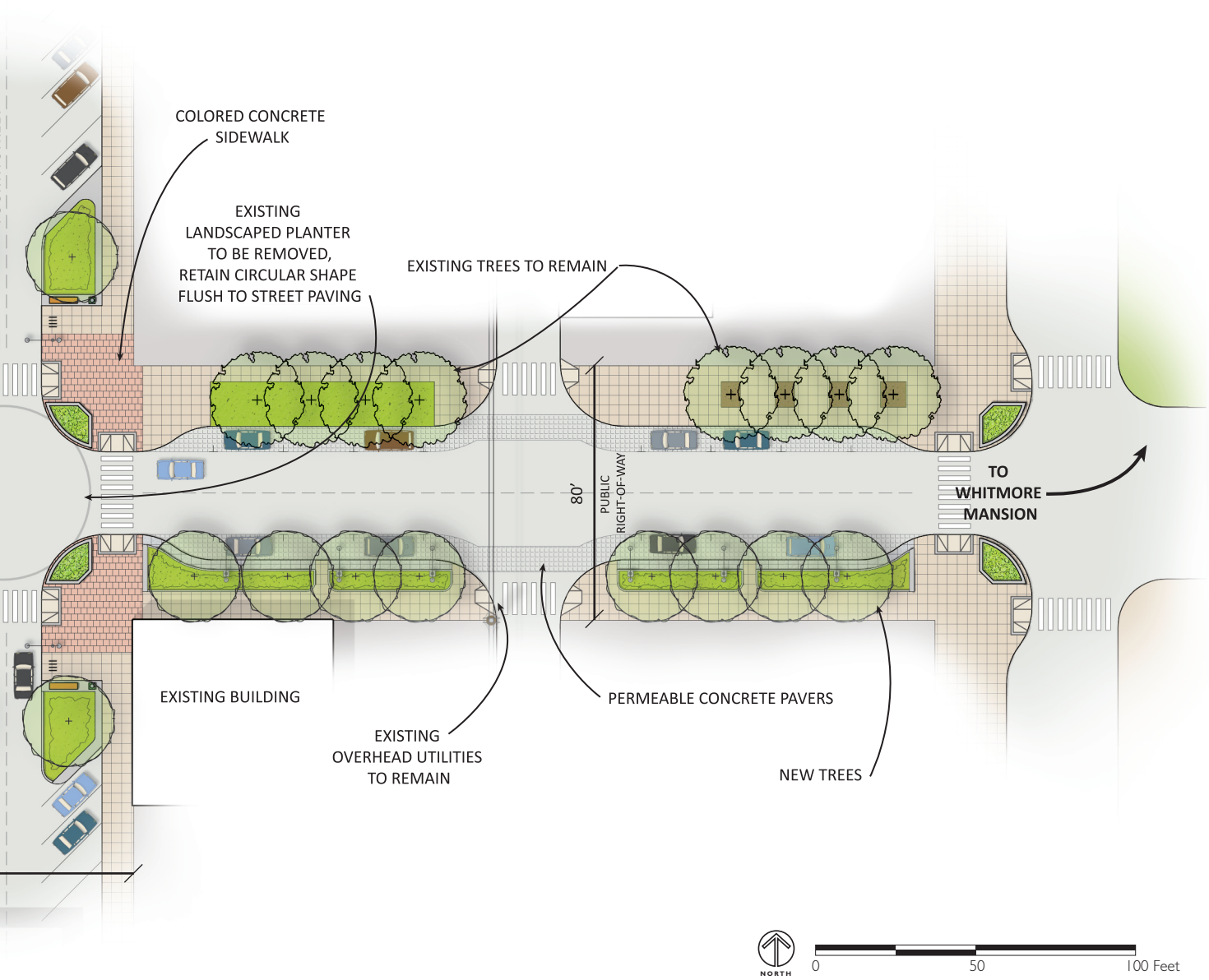
Figure 4-6 shows a conceptual streetscape plan for North Street, which connects Whitmore Park and the proposed green space at the Whitmore Mansion. The figure illustrates how the North Street Green Connection concept could be implemented in the existing street right-of-way, including a redesign of the Fourth Street/North Street intersection. Some of the existing street trees are proposed to be retained on North Street, however new street trees are also proposed. Bioswales are planted with trees and can also accommodate street lighting. Parallel parking areas are designed with permeable concrete pavers that also assist in stormwater management by allowing runoff to be absorbed back into the ground. All overhead utility wires currently running parallel with North Street are proposed to be removed to improve the aesthetic character of this important Downtown street. It is recommended that overhead utilities located in alleys are preserved since they only cross North Street at alley locations.

Improvements to North Street should be prioritized to accentuate this important east-west connector and serve as a sustainable demonstration project for Downtown and the region. It will also add to the diverse and unique character sought for Downtown. Finally, it will provide a link in Downtown between the primary open space in Whitmore Park to a new proposed green space at Whitmore Mansion.

This design is only in a conceptual phase and will need to be refined during a more detailed design process for the street. In this future phase of design, a qualified landscape architect will determine the exact locations for new plantings and other streetscape elements. This process will ensure that no conflicts exist between individual streetscape elements. Technical details about how bioswales function in an urban setting are provided in the Downtown Streetscape Standards and Design Guidelines in Appendix A.

FIGURE 4-6 Conceptual Streetscape Plan for North Street





B. Conceptual Redevelopment Phasing

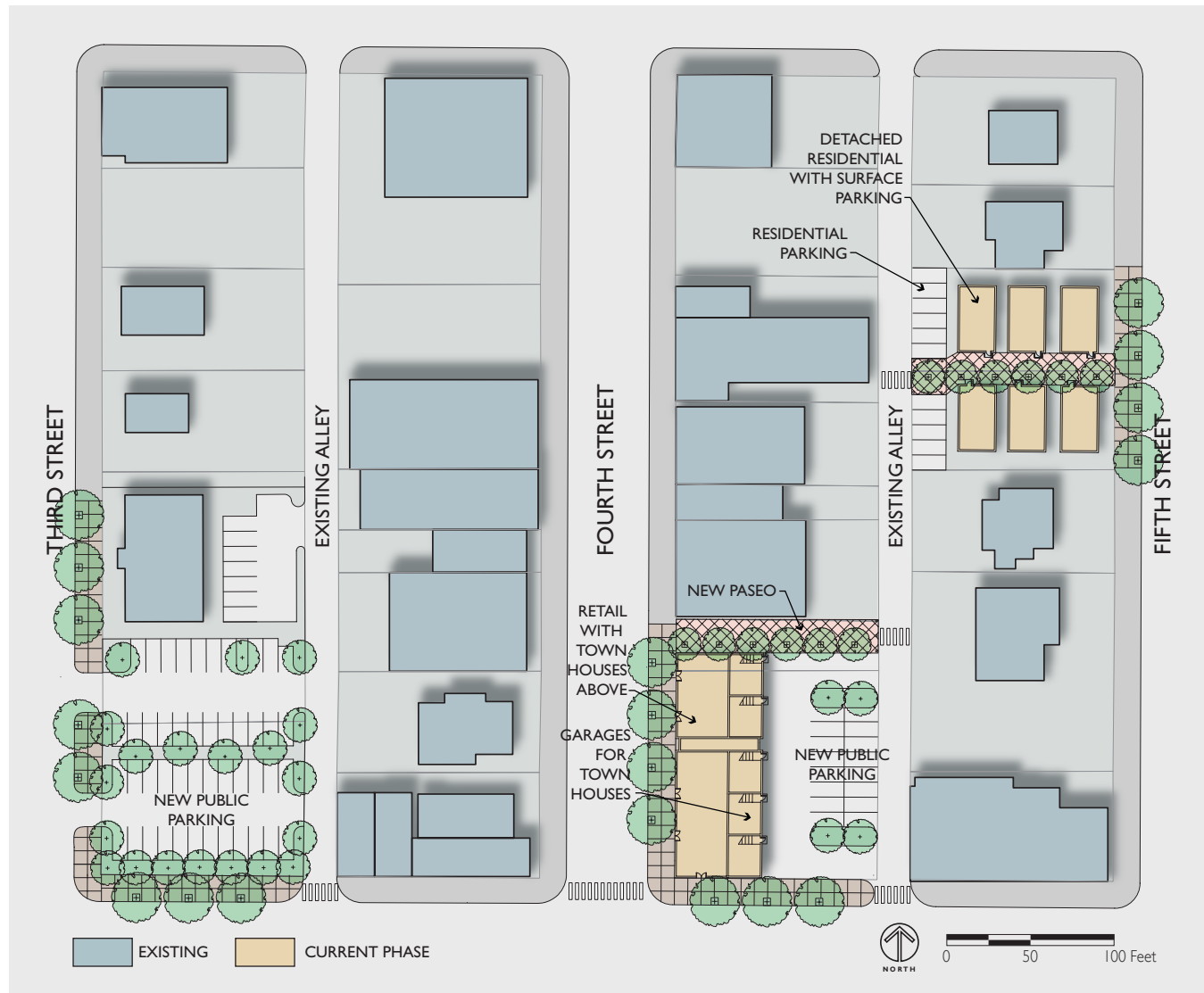
The following text and drawings illustrate the conceptual redevelopment of a pair of blocks surrounding Fourth Street. The plan shows the blocks as they could develop over time in three phases. The resulting development is integrated into the existing fabric while providing new office, retail and housing opportunities. The projects shown are relatively modest and feasible to construct, although more expensive podium-parked construction types are shown in the last phase, when future market demand has a better chance of supporting this kind of construction. It is critical that the City, including all departments, work together and in concert with developers to facilitate catalyst projects both financially and through coordinated planning. Specific Plan implementation will be strategically phased as is described later in Chapter Ten, Implementation. To that end, projects and the supporting infrastructure necessary to support them must be coordinated. The conceptual redevelopment shown in the following diagrams is not intended to represent actual projects, only to illustrate the potential for positive change in Downtown.

FIGURE 4-7 Mixed Use Development Existing Conditions

Existing Development

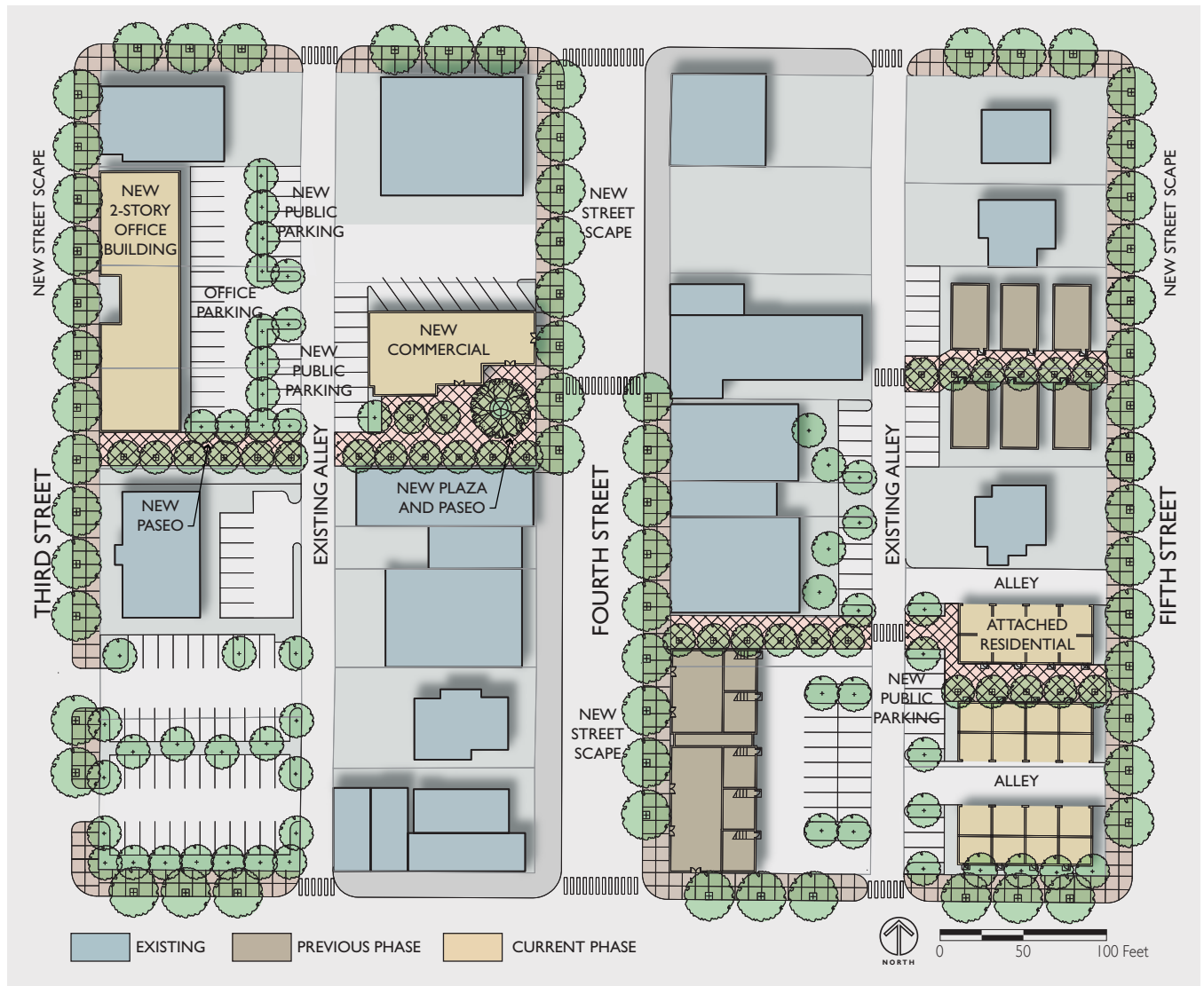
Figure 4-7 shows the existing development conditions at two typical blocks surrounding Fourth Street. The new Turlock Irrigation District (TID) building is shown with its associated parking areas.

FIGURE 4-8 Mixed Use Development Phase One



Phase One

Figure 4-8 shows the same blocks at the end of the first phase of redevelopment. In this phase a new mixed use building with retail storefronts and two story townhomes above are developed at the southeast corner of the eastern block. Garage parking is provided at the ground floor for townhome units and surface parking for retail uses is provided at the rear of the development, accessed by the alley. Sidewalk improvements are provided as a part of this development, along with a new paseo connection to provide a pedestrian access between retail parking areas and storefronts. Additionally, a detached residential project containing six units is developed along Fifth Street. Surface parking is provided along the alley and a paseo provides a connection to Fifth Street. New streetscape improvements are also undertaken as a part of new development. On Third Street, a new public surface parking lot is shown just south of the TID building, which would be coordinated with the existing TID customer parking.

FIGURE 4-9 Mixed Use Development Phase Two

Phase Two

Figure 4-9 shows Phase Two of the redevelopment of the blocks. New development in this phase includes a two-story office building, a new commercial building and a new townhome development. The office building, oriented toward Third Street, provides secured parking and additional shared public parking along the alley. A paseo is also constructed just south of the office building. A new single story commercial building is designed to engage Fourth Street as well as a new plaza and paseo to the south. A high-end restaurant would be an ideal business to take advantage of the paseo and could provide outdoor seating in the plaza. Eighteen new townhomes are provided on the southeast corner of the eastern block. These townhomes are three-story and include alley loaded garages. New shared public parking is provided along the alley as a part of this development. A pedestrian connection to Fifth Street is provided and serves as the primary front door for the townhomes. Redevelopment in Phase Two also includes streetscape improvements.

FIGURE 4-10 Mixed Use Development Phase Three



Phase Three

Figure 4-10 shows the final and third phase of the redevelopment of the blocks. In this phase, two new mixed use podium projects are developed and front onto Fourth Street. Each podium project accommodates secured parking for residents. Additionally, the podium projects each provide shared parking along alleys to help accommodate retail parking demand. Retail space in these buildings is shown as 30 feet in depth to accommodate the podium parking. With this new development, the paseo systems are completed for these blocks. The central paseo connection, which includes the plaza, provides a seamless pedestrian connection across the two blocks. Streetscape improvements are also completed for the two blocks in this phase. It should be noted that podium projects with development over parking may only be achievable in the long-run due to market conditions.