

GREENING THE BOULEVARD

Master Plan Concepts for Venice Boulevard between Lincoln and Sawtelle



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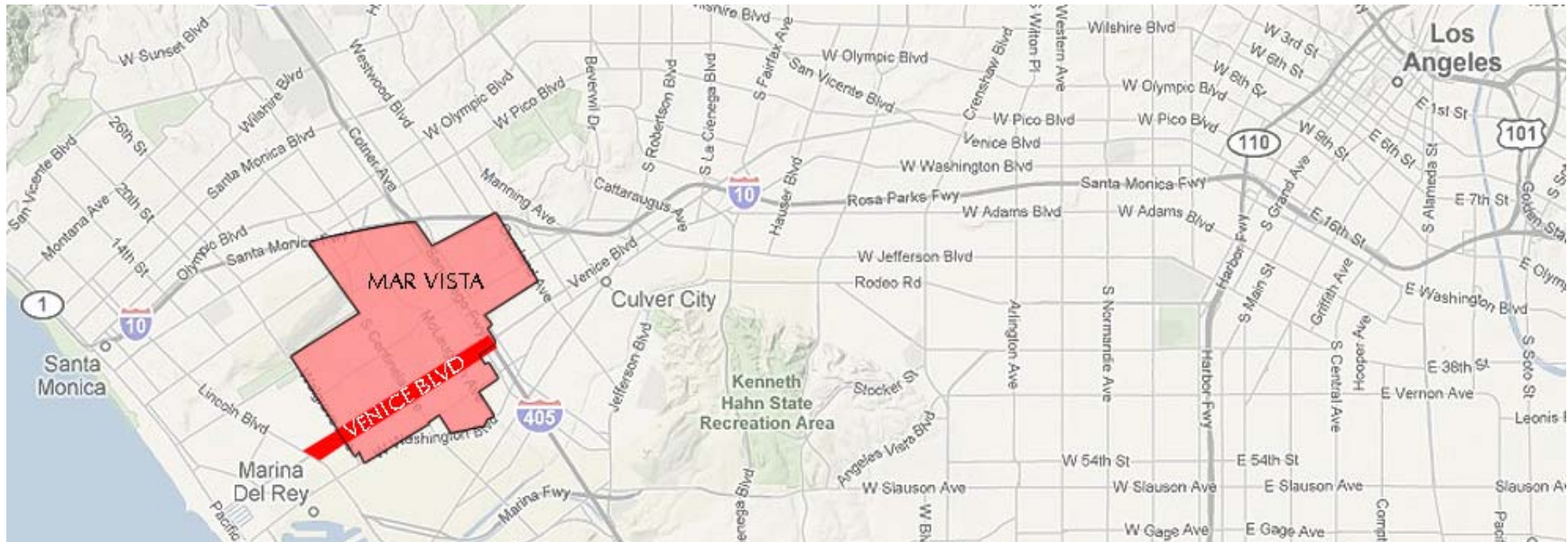
Overview

Project Location

Venice Boulevard stretches eastward from the Pacific Ocean to downtown Los Angeles, California. Along its 13-mile length it traverses many diverse urban communities. This master plan concerns itself with the portion of the boulevard that transects the historic core of the Mar Vista neighborhood from Lincoln Boulevard to Sawtelle Boulevard.

Mar Vista History

The community of Mar Vista was first named and annexed as a district of the City of Los Angeles in the 1920s. During the first half of the 20th century, it was an integral component of the Pacific Electric Railway mass transit system that connected much of southern California. The Venice Short Line streetcar or the “Red Car” travelled through Mar Vista along Venice Boulevard. Today Mar Vista is an economically diverse neighborhood and its boundaries as defined by the Mar Vista Community Council (MVCC) are shown on the diagram below.



Master Plan Background

This master plan is the result of community efforts commencing in 2002 with the founding of the “Merchants of Venice” group. Since then the master plan has been guided and developed through the efforts of these community members and the subsequent commitments of time and effort by city staff, council office and additional community members and groups.

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Overview (cont'd)

Master Plan Implementation Goals

The master plan demonstrates strategies for transforming Venice Boulevard in Mar Vista into a vibrant, successful and sustainable neighborhood street. The master plan design improvements are to be implemented in several phases over a period of time. The purpose of the master plan is multifold. It will establish a framework for a series of future streetscape improvements. Secondly, it will help determine the following criteria for the proposed components:

- Ability to be funded
- Ease of implementation
- Degree of independence from other proposed components

It will also help realize and participate in specific 'catalytic events' to provide energy and enthusiasm for the future fundraising of the proposed components. Several of these events have already been implemented. The year-round Mar Vista Farmers' Market on Grand View Boulevard at Venice Boulevard started in August 2006. This Sunday market has been used several times as a forum to collect community input on overarching concepts and individual components of the master plan. The newly landscaped medians along Venice Boulevard between Centinela Boulevard and Inglewood Boulevard, implemented as a preview of the master plan, were another a 'catalytic event'. Most recently, several sidewalk parkway plantings outlined in the master plan were installed by community volunteers during the 2008 Mar Vista, Venice, Del Rey Mayor's Day of Service.

Urban Design Strategies

We envision Mar Vista as an outdoor dining destination with attractive and successful shops, lively evening uses and an expanding farmers' market, rather than a district where vehicular traffic speeds through en route to other destinations. Venice Boulevard in Mar Vista is a unique street with its broad dimensions and continuous median. Its wide sidewalks, traffic lanes and parking lanes can easily accommodate reconfigured bike and vehicular traffic lanes, enhanced stormwater percolation, a drought-tolerant plant palette, energy-efficient pedestrian lighting, pedestrian-friendly intersections, additional trees with overhead canopy and festive banners and street furniture. The subsequent pages of this booklet illustrate the two major design thrusts of the master plan:

- Create a sustainable, green street
- Create a vibrant, beautiful neighborhood street that will be a magnet for Mar Vista

These illustrations have been previewed by the community at both the Mar Vista Farmers' Market and the Mar Vista Public Library to start to gather input and garner enthusiasm for the master plan.

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Proposed Design Improvements

The numbers below correspond with the numbers on *Illustration 1 - Venice Boulevard between Lincoln and Sawtelle Master Plan*.

1 *Sidewalk Improvements*

- Create social spaces for informal gatherings and sidewalk cafes with 7' minimum width
- Provide public amenities such as benches, trash receptacles and pet-friendly waste stations
- Incorporate public art and enhanced pavement
- Encourage economic investment

2 *New Sidewalk Trees*

- Establish a strong identity for the district
- Create a street that looks cared for and well-maintained
- Replace existing diseased or mutilated sidewalk trees while increasing total number of trees
- Provide dappled shade for pedestrians, sidewalk cafes and parked cars
- Allow visibility of commercial storefronts

3 *New Stormwater Parkways*

- Reduce stormwater runoff with linear gardens or permeable paving
- Provide a vibrant setting for civic gathering spaces

4 *Sidewalk Bike Lanes*

- Separate bicycle riders completely from vehicular traffic
- Encourage alternate, sustainable transit
- Provide a wide, planted buffer zone between pedestrian and vehicular circulation
- Incorporate solar-powered lighting to illuminate path at night

5 *New Pedestrian-scale Sidewalk Lighting*

- Creates safer and brighter pedestrian and biking environment at night
- Encourages desirable nighttime activity such as sidewalk cafes
- Recalls pre-WWII era Venice Boulevard Pacific Electric Railway "Red Car"

6 *New Bus Stops*

- Provide new seating, planting and shelters
- Encourage use of the public transportation
- Integrate sustainable, solar-powered LED lighting

Proposed Design Improvements (cont'd)

The numbers below correspond with the numbers on *Illustration 1 - Venice Boulevard between Lincoln and Sawtelle Master Plan*.

7 *Curb Extensions at Intersections*

- Promote pedestrian safety by shortening crosswalk distance
- Provide additional areas for plantings along sidewalks
- Reduce apparent width of roadway from the driver's perspective

8 *Crosswalks Paving Enhancements*

- Provide clearly marked and more continuous pedestrian environment
- Ensure safer pedestrian circulation
- Recall pre-WWII era Venice Boulevard Pacific Electric Railway "Red Car"

9 *New Median Plantings*

- Establish a strong identity for the district
- Create a street that looks cared for and well-maintained
- Replace existing concrete with plantings
- Increase total number of trees along the boulevard
- Minimize glare and eye strain from on-coming traffic for drivers

10 *New Signage and Banners*

- Strengthen neighborhood identity
- Announce local events along boulevard such as the farmers market

11 *New Gateways*

- Emphasize significant intersections along the boulevard
- Create opportunity for public art or specimen tree plantings

12 *New Hedges or Low Walls with Vines at Existing Parking Lots*

- Screen existing parking lots adjacent to Venice Boulevard
- Provide additional areas for new plantings

13 *Lighter-colored Roadway Pavement*

- Reduces urban heat island effect

14 *Pocket Park at Venice Boulevard and McLaughlin*

- Provides potential pet-friendly open space

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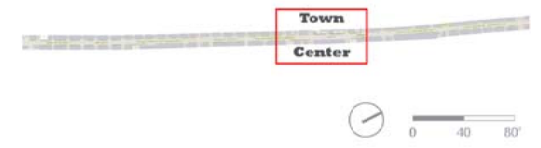
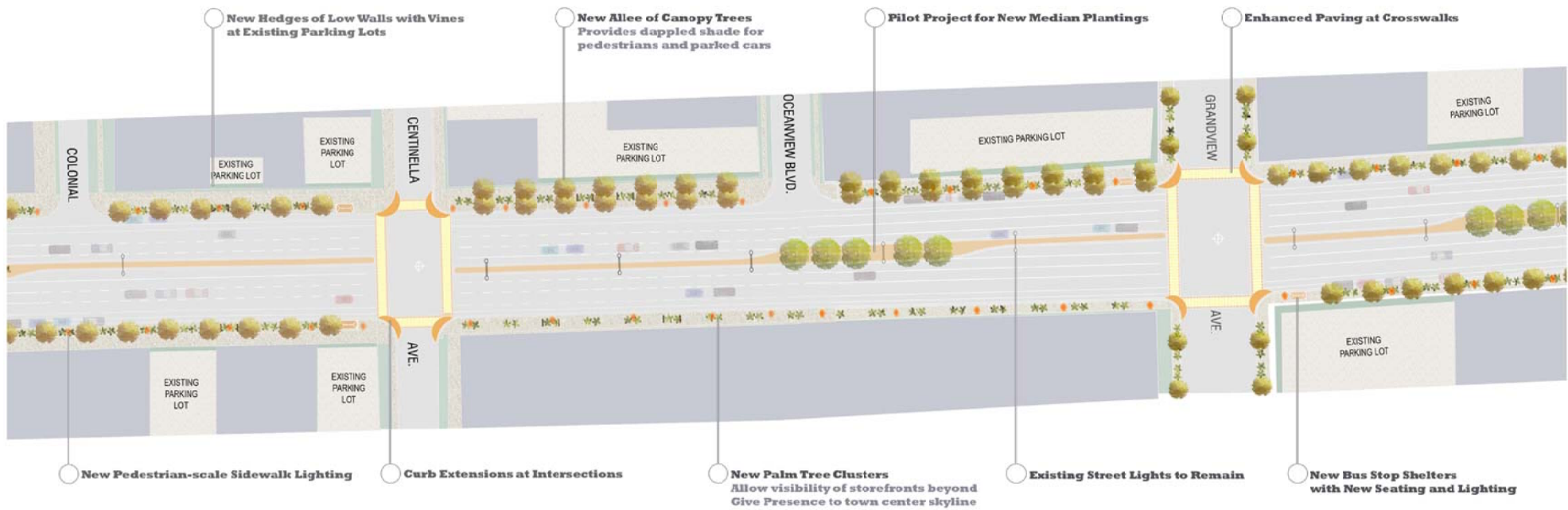
Goals

- Green the boulevard
- Create a vibrant, people-friendly street

Process

- Involve community in design development of master plan
- Implement master plan design improvements in several phases over a period of time







EXISTING STREETScape OF MAR VISTA TOWN CENTER



PROPOSED STREETScape OF MAR VISTA TOWN CENTER at Grand View Avenue and Venice Boulevard creates a friendlier pedestrian environment with pedestrian-scale lighting, palm trees and colorful shrubs.



EXISTING STREETScape OF RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT



PROPOSED STREETScape OF RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT along Venice Boulevard near Walgrove Avenue creates a more vibrant district with new median plantings, sidewalk shade trees, pedestrian-scale lighting and benches.





EXISTING SIDEWALK TREES ALONG VENICE BOULEVARD



PROPOSED TOWN CENTER TREE
Phoenix dactylifera, Phoenix Palm

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL TREE - OPTION 1
Cedrus deodara, Deodar Cedar

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL TREE - OPTION 2
Platanus racemosa, California Sycamore

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL TREE - OPTION 3
Pinus torreyana, Torrey Pine



TWO DISTRICTS ALONG VENICE BOULEVARD exist in Mar Vista where the residential communities flank the commercial town center district. The two types of districts will be planted with a unique sidewalk tree as shown above. This scheme celebrates and strengthens the identity of the commercial and residential districts. At the town center, new sidewalk plantings of palm tree clusters will allow visibility of the storefronts beyond while giving presence to the skyline above. In the residential areas, new sidewalk plantings of canopy trees will provide dappled shade for pedestrians and parked cars.





PROPOSED MEDIAN PLANTING WITH SPATHODEA CAMPANULATA CANOPY TREES



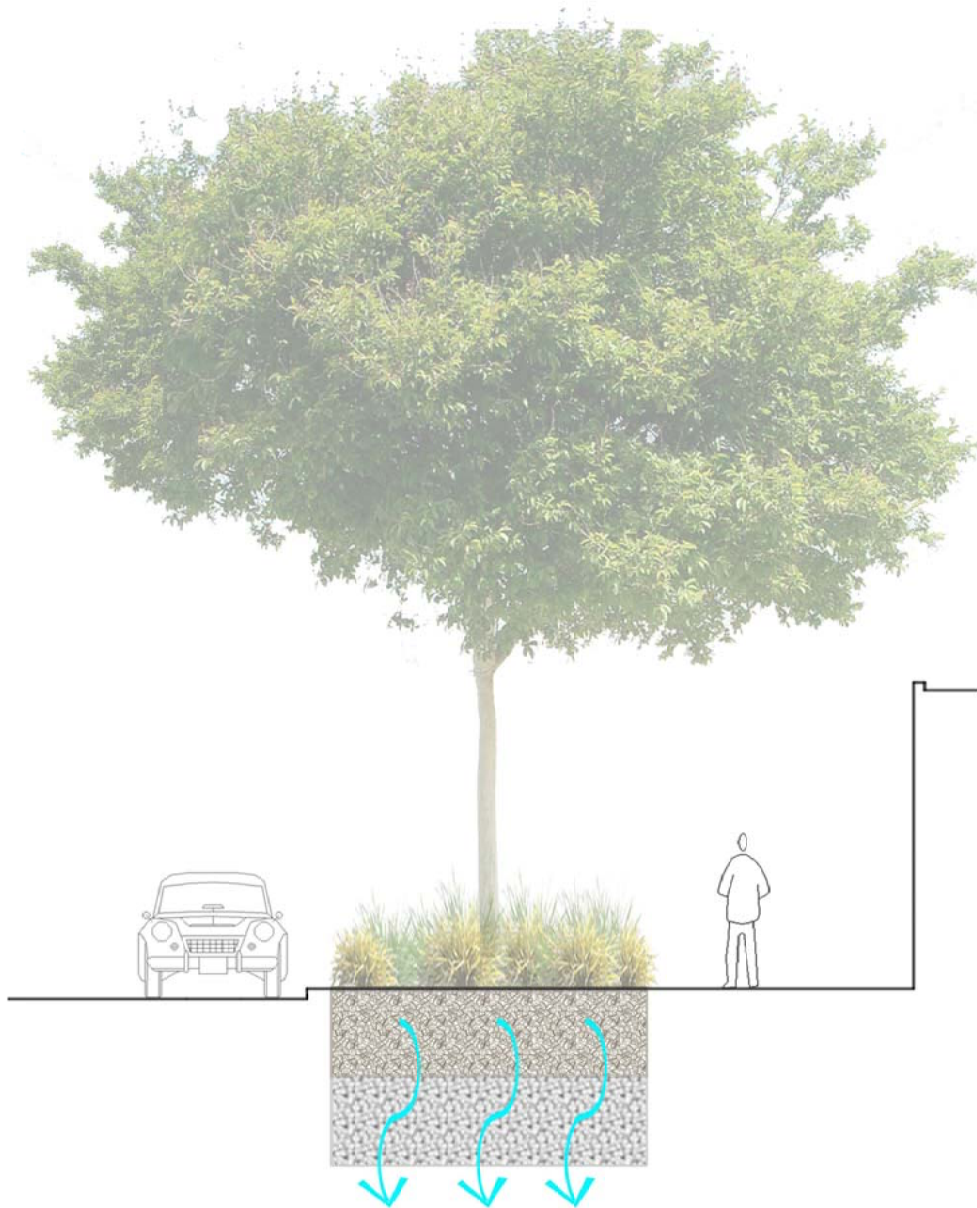
EXISTING MEDIAN PLANTING ALONG VENICE BOULEVARD



PROPOSED MEDIAN PLANTING WITH TIPUANA TIPU CANOPY TREES

PROPOSED MEDIAN PLANTINGS ALONG VENICE BOULEVARD will replace existing areas of concrete median with new canopy trees, shrubs and groundcovers. These plantings will create a street that looks cared for and well-maintained. Not only will the new plantings increase the total number of trees along Venice Boulevard, but they will minimize glare and eye strain from on-coming traffic for drivers.

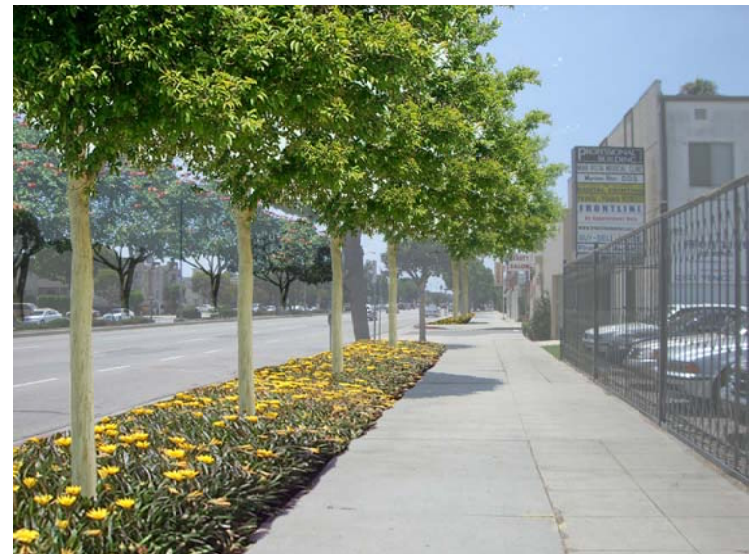




PROPOSED STORMWATER PARKWAYS will reduce and clean stormwater runoff that percolates down through the layers of soil and gravel in the planting bed.



EXISTING SIDEWALK along Venice Boulevard with its vast expanse of concrete sidewalk paving



PROPOSED STORMWATER PARKWAYS replace existing areas of paving to create a more vibrant setting along Venice Boulevard. In more commercial areas along Venice Boulevard, porous paving will be used instead of planting beds to further reduce stormwater runoff. Reengineering the soil will assist drainage as well.

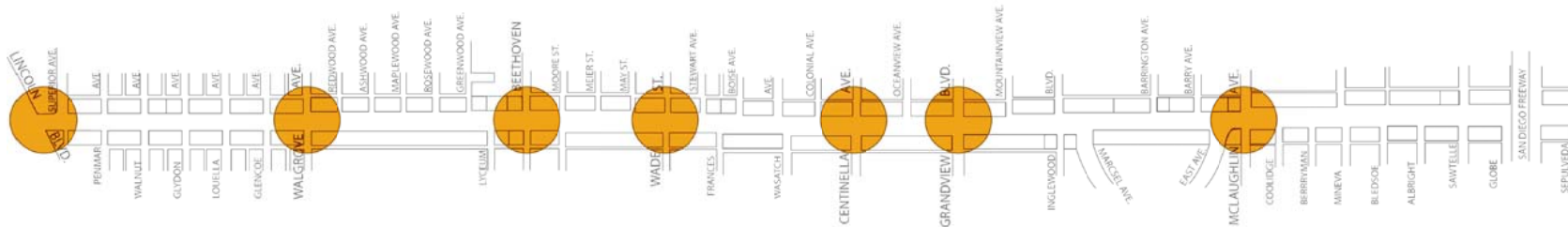




CORNER CURB EXTENSIONS extend the curb and pedestrian ramp further into the roadway and allow greater visibility for crossing pedestrians. As shown above, they create an opportunity for planting.

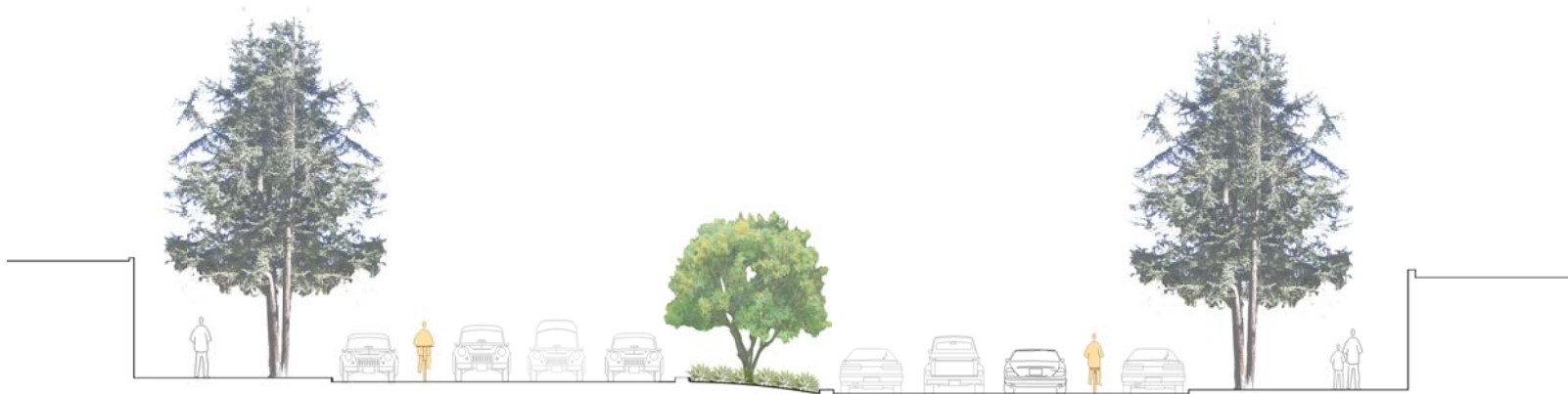


PROPOSED CORNER CURB EXTENSIONS along Venice Boulevard create a safer crossing for pedestrians by reducing the length of the crosswalk. Enhanced crosswalk paving at these intersections clearly mark the major pedestrian circulation paths.

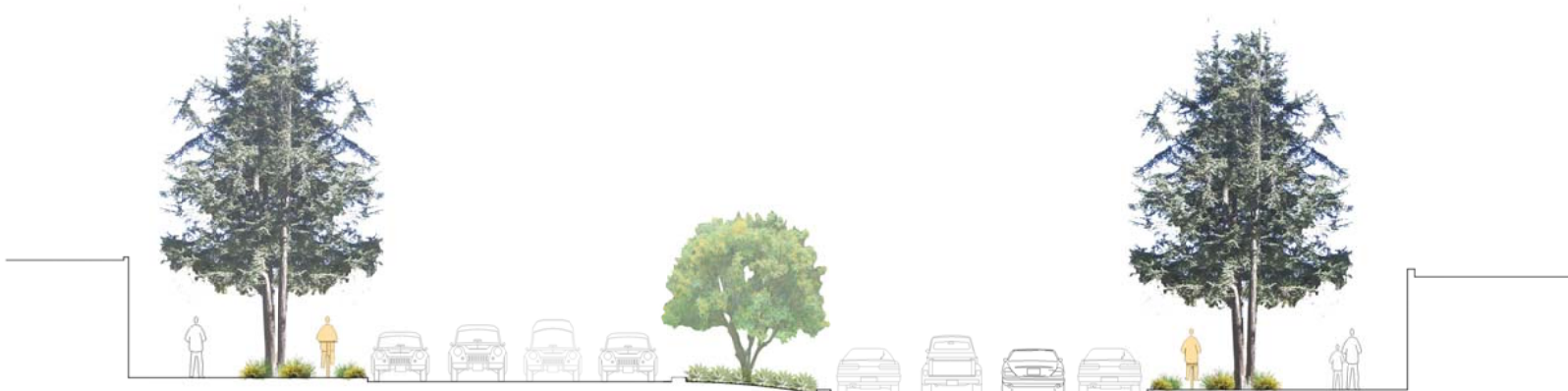


PROPOSED CORNER CURB EXTENSIONS that occur at intersections of higher foot traffic will create a more pedestrian-friendly environment along Venice Boulevard. The intersections highlighted above indicate the proposed corner curb extensions.





EXISTING BIKE LANES on Venice Boulevard are currently located at the same level as the roadway between parked cars and three lanes of moving vehicular traffic. The doors of parked vehicles open into the bicycle lane. Bicycle riders also have an unpleasant proximity to moving traffic.



PROPOSED SIDEWALK BIKE LANES along Venice Boulevard are safer since they separate bicycle riders completely from both vehicular traffic and pedestrians. By slightly reducing the width of each driving lane, the width of the sidewalk can be increased to allow space for a bike lane. The sidewalk bike lanes are further separated from pedestrians and cars with plantings.



Pedestrian Lighting



Solar Lighting



Permeable Pavement



Trash Receptacles



Signs and Banners



Public Art



Median Trees

Continuous through all zones



tipuana tipu
tipu tree



spathodea campanulata
african tulip tree

Benches



Bike Racks



Bus Shelters



Dog Bag Stations



Shrubs, Grasses and Succulents



pennisetum setaceum
fountain grass



festuca glauca
blue fescue



muhlenbergia rigens
deergrass



phormium 'yellow wave'
flax



agave attenuata
fox tail agave



aloe vera
medicinal aloe

Drought Tolerant Shrubs and Groundcovers



salvia leucantha
mexican bush sage



lantana camara
gold lantana



senecio douglasii
creek senecio



rosemarinus officinalis 'prostratus'
rosemary



ceanothus 'yankee point'
wild lilac



myoporum parvifolium
creeping myoporum



dietes bicolor
bi-colored lily



Cost Estimate

Item	Unit Cost	Sub-item Cost	Subtotal
1 Sidewalk Improvements			\$1,666,000
Benches every 40' (450 total)	\$3,000	\$1,350,000	
Trash Receptacles every 150' (120 total)	\$2,300	\$276,000	
Bike Racks every 500' (40 total)	\$500	\$20,000	
Pet-friendly Waste Stations every 500' (40 total)	\$500	\$20,000	
Public Art*			
Enhanced Pavement*			
2 New Sidewalk Trees			\$1,800,000
Shade Trees, 36" Box, 12' at Installation (520 total)	\$2,500	\$1,300,000	
Palm Trees, 12' Brown Trunk (250 total)	\$2,000	\$500,000	
3 New Stormwater Parkways			\$2,048,000
Stormwater Parkway Plantings (128,000 s.f.)	\$8	\$1,024,000	
Allowance for Excavation and Replacement of Existing Soil (128,000 s.f.)	\$8	\$1,024,000	
4 Sidewalk Bike Lanes*			NIC
5 New Pedestrian-Scale Lighting			\$1,550,000
Light Fixtures every 60' (310 total)	\$5,000	\$1,550,000	
6 New Bus Shelters			\$484,000
Bus Shelters (22 total)	\$22,000	\$484,000	
Bus Shelter Planting			
7 Curb Extensions at Intersection			\$450,000
Curb Bulbouts at 4 corners of 9 Intersections (36 total)	\$12,500	\$450,000	

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Cost Estimate (cont'd)

Item	Unit Cost	Sub-item Cost	Subtotal
8 Enhanced Paving at Crosswalks			\$1,850,000
Crosswalks w/ Interlocking Pavers at 9 Intersections and 1 Mid-Block (37 total)	\$50,000	\$1,850,000	
Deduct. Alt. - Crosswalks w/ Stamped Asphalt at 9 Intersections and 1 Mid-Block (37 total)	\$25,000	\$925,000	
9 New Median Plantings			\$1,735,000
Shade Trees, 36" Box, 12' at Installation (200 total)	\$2,500	\$500,000	
Shrubs and Groundcovers (95,000 s.f.)	\$10	\$950,000	
Irrigation (95,000 s.f.)	\$3	\$285,000	
10 New Signs and Banners*			NIC
11 New Gateways*			NIC
12 New Hedges or Low Walls w/ Vines at Existing Parking Lots			\$550,000
Low Walls w/ Vines (2,200 l.f.)	\$250	\$550,000	
Deduct. Alt. - Hedge Plantings (2,200 l.f.)	\$75	\$165,000	
13 Lighter Colored Roadway Pavement			NIC
14 Pocket Park at Venice Boulevard and McLaughlin			\$77,500
Shade Trees, 36" Box, 12' at Installation (5 total)	\$2,500	\$12,500	
Benches (10 total)	\$3,000	\$30,000	
Shrubs and Groundcover (7,000 s.f.)	\$5	\$35,000	
Grand Total			\$12,210,500*

*Cost Estimate Grand Total does not include the cost for public art, enhanced pavement, sidewalk bike lanes, gateways, lighter colored roadway pavement, roadway striping, site utilities, site demolition, site preparation, soil, irrigation and construction unless otherwise noted.

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References

- Electric Railway Historical Association of Southern California
www.erha.org
- Mar Vista Community Council
www.marvistacc.org
- Mar Vista Historical Society
www.marvistahistoricalsociety.net

Acknowledgements

This booklet was prepared by Katherine Spitz Associates, Inc. Landscape Architecture for the Mar Vista community. We look forward to Venice Boulevard becoming a more lively, friendly center for Mar Vista. We thank the many community members who have given their time and consideration to the project over the last 6 years.

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