Figure 3.7 *The Hillsdale overpass should be redesigned to reduce the visual prominence of the concrete.*

Figure 3.8 *The landscape treatment at the intersection at 31st Avenue is an example of how consistent landscaping can enhance the appearance of a theme intersection.*

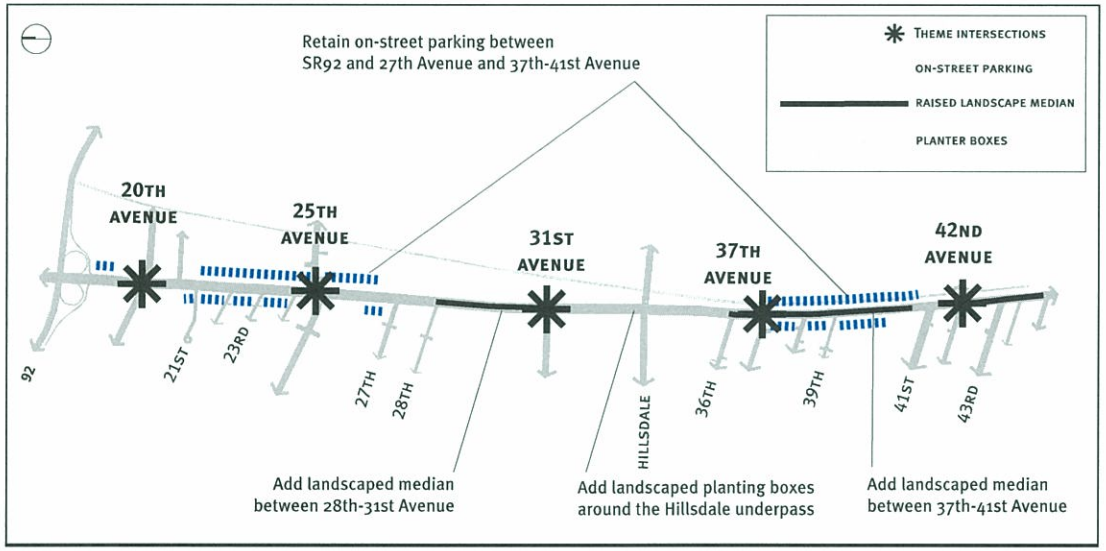


Figure 3.9 *Phase 1 of the El Camino Real Master Plan includes the addition of landscape medians in the southern portion, improvements to key pedestrian intersections, and landscape improvements to the Hillsdale underpass.*

PHASE 1

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

In Phase 1, the public improvements work within the existing right-of-way and retain the on-street parking along El Camino Real. As seen in Figure 2.3, Phase 1 of the *El Camino Real Master Plan* calls for the following:

LANDSCAPE MEDIANS

The majority of on-street parking is located in the north of the study area, therefore in Phase 1 the median would be added primarily to the south of the study area between 28th and 31st Avenue just north of Hillsdale Shopping Center and 37th and 42nd Avenue.

THEME INTERSECTIONS

Theme intersection improvements include pedestrian medians, pedestrian street lighting, distinct paving, redesigned transit stops and El Camino Real monument signs within the medians. The pedestrian median is typically a 4-6' median running parallel to a 150' long left turn lane which transitions to the full 11' foot median approximately 250' back from the intersection.

HILLSDALE UNDERPASS IMPROVEMENTS

Landscape improvements assume a redesigned fence/railing along Hillsdale Boulevard and planter boxes cantilevered from the sides of the tunnel.

PHASE 1 STREET CONFIGURATION

Working with a typical right-of-way dimension along El Camino of 98', the sections at the right show how the road would be configured in Phase 1 of the *Streetscape Plan*.

Figure 2.4 shows that the street section would, in the northern portion of the study area, remain as is with three lanes of traffic in each direction and on-street parking.

Note: *The current landscape 4' median between 20th and 22nd Avenue is too narrow to incorporate landscape planting according to the Streetscape Plan, and will be left as is in Phase 1.*

Figure 2.5 illustrates the current street configuration in the southern part of the study area, with a shared turn lane down the center of the street, three southbound and two northbound lanes and on-street parking. Figure 2.6 illustrates how the median could be added in Phase 1 without the removal of the on-street parking.

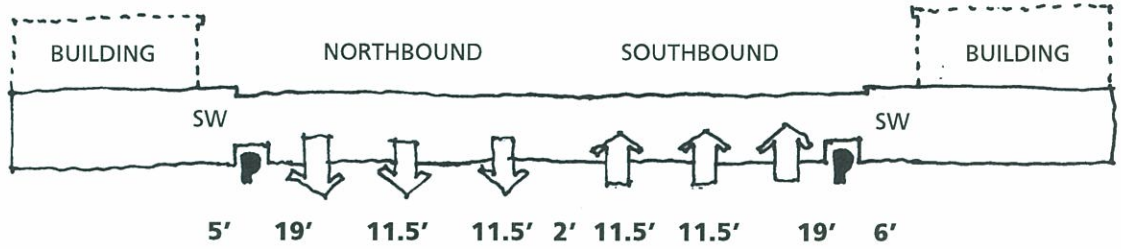


Figure 3.10 *Existing street section in the northern part of the study area. View looking south towards Belmont.*

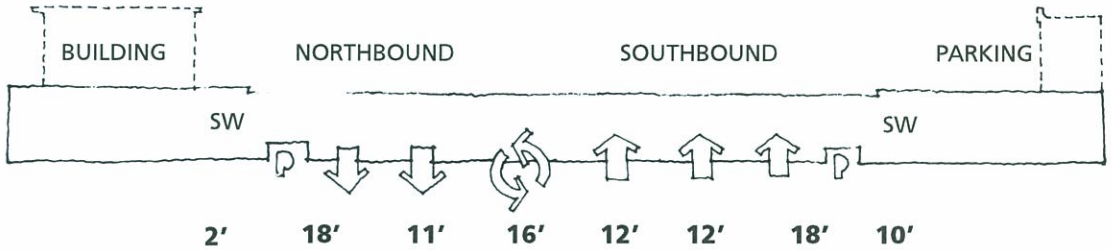


Figure 3.11 *Existing street section in southern part of the study area. View looking south.*

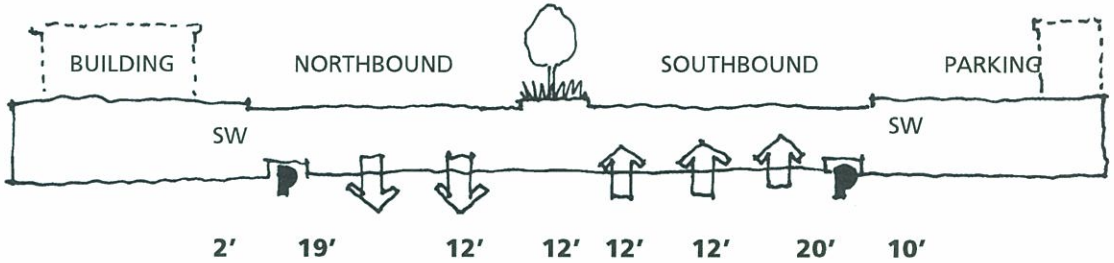


Figure 3.12 *Improved street section in the southern part of the study area with the addition of the median. View looking south.*

STREETSCAPE CONCEPT:

The landscape median will be the most visually-prominent aspect of the *El Camino Real Master Plan*. In order to create a continuous design statement along the corridor, the *Master Plan* calls for a single tree species and consistent low scale landscaping for the entire length of the median. The trees shown in Figures 3.28-3.31 and low-scale landscaping in Figures 3.32-3.35 represent the types and character of trees and landscaping that would be appropriate for the median.

Sidewalk trees should be selected from the recommended tree list. While the trees can vary along the corridor, the trees should be the same species within each of the districts. The *Master Plan* calls out four types of trees (Figures 3.36-3.39) that would be appropriate for planting in sidewalks. The sidewalk trees should have root patterns that do not disrupt the paving, and canopies that are light and airy and easy to prune above the storefront windows and commercial signs.

At the theme intersections, the sidewalk trees should be different from the adjacent sidewalk trees and should be consistent on all four corners to help to create an identity for the intersection. Although the Hillsdale intersection is not classified as a theme intersection, the landscaping should be treated consistently and should complement the existing landscaping around the Hillsdale Shopping Center.

Figure 3.23 *Consistent planting at the theme intersections helps to tie the corners together.*

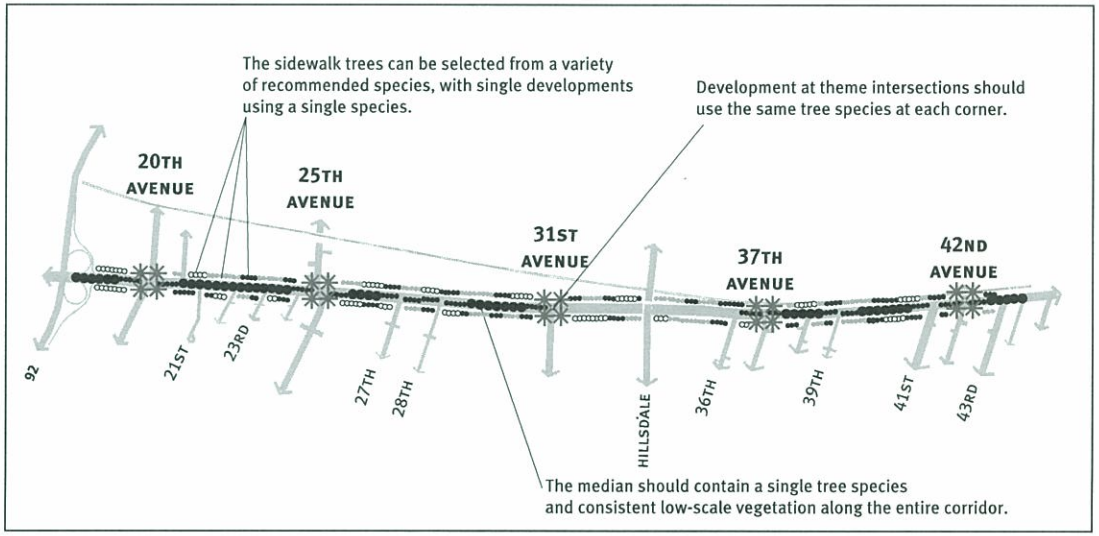


Figure 3.24 *Streetscape concept, illustrating the different types and locations of trees and planting along El Camino.*

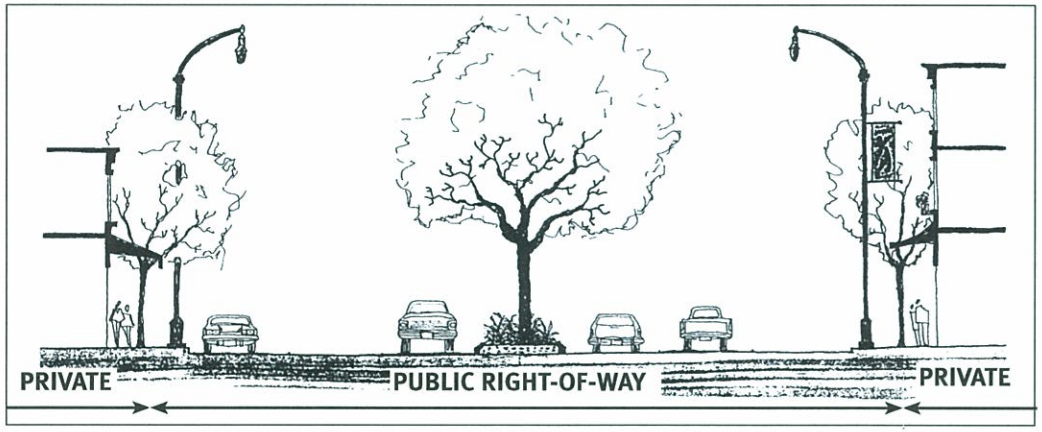


Figure 3.25 *Typical street section on El Camino at a mid-block location, showing a full 11' median with mature trees, low landscaping and street trees planted in the 10' effective sidewalk area.*

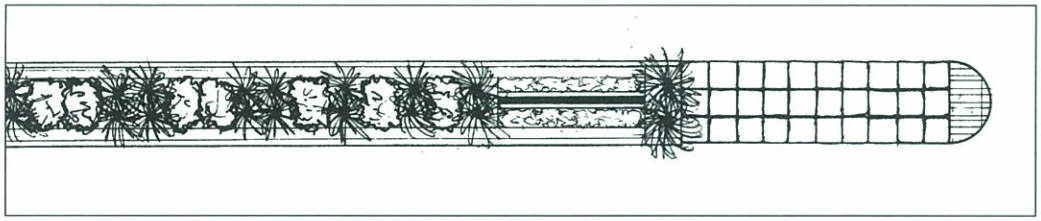


Figure 3.2**6** *The 6' wide median runs parallel to the turn lanes at theme intersections and includes low brush planting with grasses, the El Camino Real sign and a paved portion at the end for pedestrian crossing.*

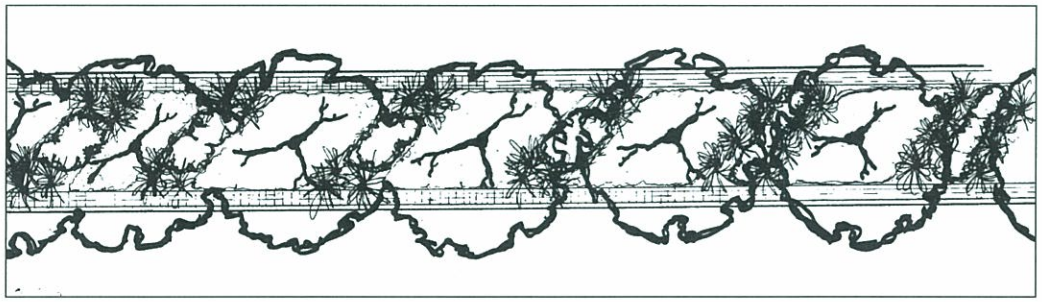


Figure 3.27 *The 11' wide median runs along the typical mid-block location and includes mature trees and low brush planting and grasses. The edges of the median are surfaced with brick pavers to facilitate maintenance by keeping the vegetation from encroaching on the curb lane.*

LANDSCAPE MEDIANS

The proposed streetscape design for the El Camino Real Master Plan includes two types of landscape medians: (1) an 11 foot wide median located at mid-block locations that includes mature trees and landscaping, and (2) a 6 foot wide median that includes only low landscaping. The 6 foot median runs parallel to a designated left turn lane accommodated at 20th, 25th, 27th, 28th, 31st, Hillsdale, 37th, 39th, 41st and 42nd Avenue. The, landscape medians will be added according to the two phases as listed below:

Phase 1:	***Length***	***Area***
28th-31st Avenue:	1200 LF	11,700 SF*
37th-39th Avenue:	750 LF	6,200 SF
39th-41st Avenue:	950 LF	8,950 SF
41st-42nd Avenue:	300 LF	1,800 SF
42nd-Belmont:	600 LF	5,100 SF
Phase 1 Total	*3,800 LF*	*37,550 SF*

Phase 2:	***Length***	***Area***
SR92-20th Avenue:	850 LF	8,600 SF
20th-25th Avenue:	1,600 LF	16,850 SF
25th-27th Avenue:	650 LF	6,400 SF
27th-28th Avenue:	300 LF	1,800 SF
Phase 2 Total	*3,400 LF*	*33,650 SF*
Total Median:	7,200 LF	71,200 SF

** Linear feet (LF) are approximate measurements based on preliminary design concepts. Square footage (SF) is calculated assuming a 6' wide median running parallel to a 150' long left turn lane which transitions back to an 11' wide median for the remainder of the length.*

Figure 3.40 *Canary Island Date Palm - Phoenix canariensis. The Canary Island Palm is well suited for tougher and confined urban conditions as long as the soil is well draining.*

Figure 3.41 *Chanticleer Pear - Pyrus calleryana. The Chanticleer Pear with showy white flowers in the spring and attractive red foliage in the fall is also well suited for difficult urban conditions.*

Figure 3.42 *Pistacia chinesis - Chinese Pistache. A tough tree, well suited to street conditions, the Chinese Pistache offers a distinctive leaf pattern and attractive fall colors.*

Figure 3.43 *Koelreuteria paniculata - Goldenraintree. A light airy tree with attractive yellow flowers that can withstand tough urban conditions.*

THEME INTERSECTION TREES

The following tree species are recommended for the theme intersections, presenting a contrast with the sidewalk trees in other portions of the corridor. With more distinctive buildings at theme intersections the trees here are smaller in stature. The trees also have more distinctive leaf and bark features, vibrant fall coloring and most will flower in spring. The Canary Island Palm is also acceptable at the 31st Ave theme intersection to complement the existing planting around the Hillsdale Shopping Center.

Chanticleer Pear - *Pyrus calleryana*

Type: Deciduous
Fall Color: Red attractive fall colors
Growth: Fast growing in full sun, tolerates drought and wetness.

Pistacia chinesis - *Chinese Pistache*

Type: Deciduous
Fall Color: Orange, Red, Attractive fall colors
Growth: Average growth in full sun, tolerates drought

Koelreuteria paniculata - *Goldenraintre*

Type: Deciduous
Fall Color: Yellow, Attractive fall colors
Growth: Average growth rate in full sun, tolerates drought and flooding.

At the 31st Ave Intersection:
Phoenix canariensis -*Canary Island Date Palm*

Type: Evergreen
Fall Color: None
Growth: Slow growth in full sun and moist soil. Tolerates drought.

THEME INTERSECTIONS

As part of Phase I of the *Streetscape Plan*, the ECRC calls out five intersections on El Camino as being "theme intersections:" 20th, 25th, 31st, 37th and 42nd Avenues. These intersections were chosen on the basis of their relatively large volume of pedestrian traffic. Although Hillsdale Boulevard was not identified as a theme intersection, it has also been studied for possible visual and landscape improvements.

There are several ECRC goals that direct the redesign of the theme intersections. The goal to retain the current number of traffic lanes and add the landscape median on El Camino do not allow any widening of the sidewalks along the corridor. These goals also constrain the additional goal of enhancing the pedestrian environment along the corridor.

Within the public right-of-way, the theme intersections are envisioned to have a pedestrian median on at least one side (north or south) of the intersection, although some location will have a median on both sides. The median provides a space for pedestrians to wait who cannot cross the entire street during a single traffic signal sequence.

Working within Caltrans standards for lane widths and retaining the current number of lanes, including a left turn lane, the pedestrian median is typically 4-6' wide at theme intersections..

Figures 3.46-3.65 illustrate the potential reconfiguration of the intersections as well as future private redevelopment to improve the pedestrian environment at theme intersections.

Each theme intersection is to have one distinctive El Camino Real sign (Figure 4.44) located at these medians, oriented to pedestrians crossing the street and visible to passing motorists.

Figures 3.66-3.73 illustrate the types of street amenities and sidewalk trees that would be incorporated as part of the *Streetscape Plan*. These improvements would be located primarily at the theme intersections, but would not be necessarily limited to these intersection, particularly for sidewalk trees which would be planted along the entire corridor.

The bulk of the pedestrian improvements, in terms of wider sidewalks and street amenities such as redesigned transit shelters and benches would be part of future redevelopment of the parcels at the corners. The *Design Guidelines* in the next chapter of the *Master Plan* are intended to direct private redevelopment to achieve an improved pedestrian realm along the corridor, particularly at the theme intersections.

Figure 3.48 *The El Camino Real sign can recall the El Camino Bell marker image, signifying the importance of the theme intersections.*

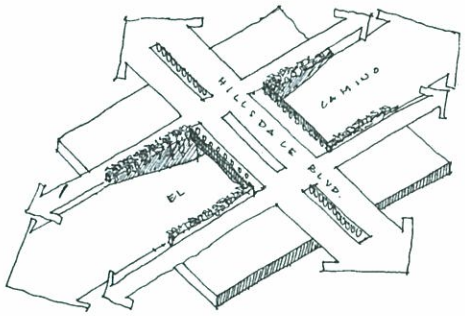


Figure 3.49 *Hillsdale Boulevard improvements could include a redesigned railing along the El Camino overpass and planter boxes built along the sidewalk and railing to add some vegetation to this concrete jungle.*

20TH AVENUE

Theme intersection improvements to include:

- Potential expansion of El Camino Real right-of-way at NW corner to accommodate SW bus turns onto 20th Avenue.
- Widening and redesign of existing medians to proposed dimensions on north and south sides of intersection.
- Redesign of the SamTrans stop on the northeast corner to include a new shelter, benches, trash receptacles and newspaper racks located within the effective sidewalk.
- Enhanced paving treatment in crosswalks.
- El Camino Real monument sign in south median.
- New streetlights with pedestrian fixtures.

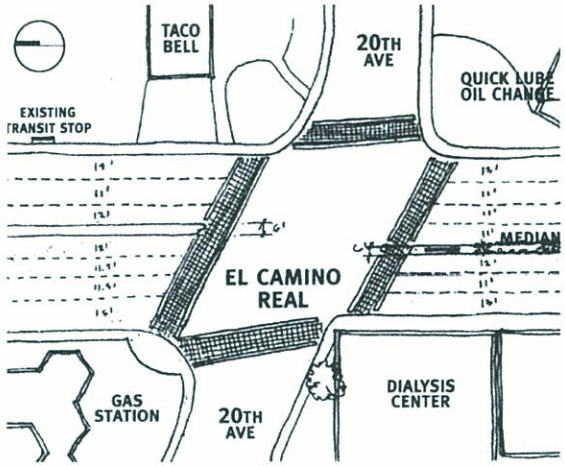


Figure 3.50 *Phase 1 redesign of the public right-of-way at the 20th Avenue intersection.*

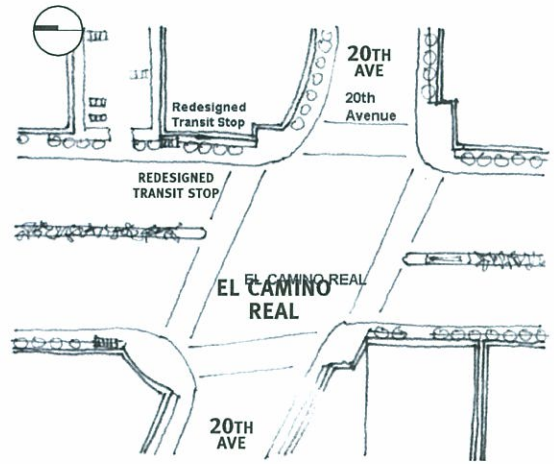


Figure 3.51 *Potential private redevelopment at the 20th Avenue intersection, including additional sidewalk width, landscape setbacks, expanded corner plazas and redesigned transit stops.*

Figure 3.52 *The SE corner at 20th Avenue showing existing conditions.*

Figure 3.53 *The SE corner at 20th Avenue showing streetscape improvements and private redevelopment according to the design guidelines.*

GEN-2.1: SETBACK FOR BUILDINGS LESS TWO STORIES

GEN 2.1.1: EFFECTIVE SIDEWALK WIDTH

In order to maintain a 10-foot effective sidewalk width along El Camino, buildings less than two stories should be set back from the El Camino property line sufficient to create 10 feet of effective sidewalk width inclusive of the existing width of the public sidewalk (measured from the back-of-curb to the property line). However, if the setback creates a hardship which can be proved by the applicant, the City may mitigate the hardship by reducing the width of the setback.

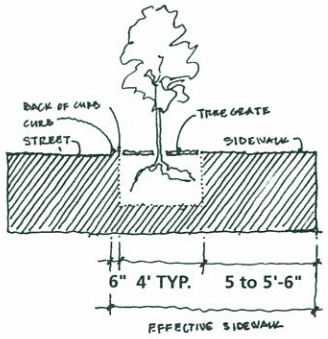
GEN 2.1.2: TREE PLANTING WITHIN THE EFFECTIVE SIDEWALK AREA

Tree wells with ADA compatible metal grates should be consistently located within the effective sidewalk area adjacent to the buildings. Refer to the *Streetscape Plan* for recommended tree species within the effective sidewalk.

GEN 2.1.3: PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES WITHIN THE EFFECTIVE SIDEWALK AREA

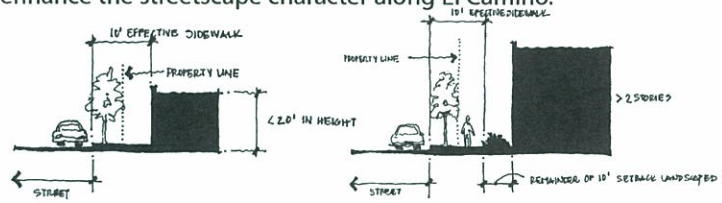
At transit stops, pedestrian amenities as listed in the Streetscape Plan such as transit shelters, benches, lighting and trash receptacles should be provided. When such pedestrian amenities are included within the effective sidewalk width area, a minimum 5-foot wide path of travel measured from the back-of-curb shall be kept unobstructed for pedestrian movement.

Note: *The required ten foot effective sidewalk width is determined by the distance necessary to allow both ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) accessibility along El Camino and street trees within the sidewalk area. The ten foot dimension includes a minimum 5' unobstructed path of movement, and a typical 4' ornamental tree grate measured from the back of curb. (Back of curb is the point where the top seam of the curb meets the sidewalk--see diagram).*



Intent:

The intent of the setback guidelines is to establish a minimum 10' effective sidewalk area for pedestrians. This setback will improve pedestrian safety along the street, ensure accessibility for disabled pedestrians and facilitate additional landscaping to enhance the streetscape character along El Camino.



PROPOSED SETBACKS

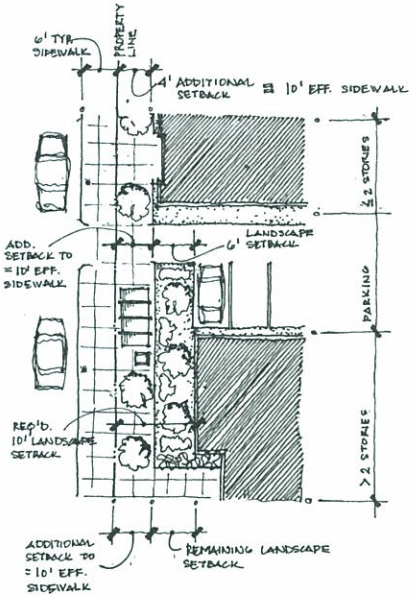


Figure 4.15 *Setbacks along El Camino.*

GEN-2.3: SETBACK FOR CORNER PROPERTIES

GEN 2.3.1: BUILDING FRONTAGE

Corners are prime locations for high visibility. Corner buildings, including those that front both a public sidewalk and a surface parking area, should have prominent corner features which may include entries, architectural features, etc. This treatment is especially important for buildings at theme intersections.

Figure 4.18 *The corner of buildings at intersections should not be left blank.*

GEN-2.4: SETBACK FOR PARKING FRONTING EL CAMINO

Figure 4.19 *Building corners should be expressive.*

GEN-2.5: BUILD-TO LINE

G-2.5.1: PARCELS ALONG EL CAMINO

A minimum of 50% of the total property line frontage on El Camino should be occupied by buildings located along the setback line. The building may only be set behind the setback line if the additional setback provides a public amenity such as a wider sidewalk, outdoor seating or outdoor dining, etc. If a building is to be set back beyond the recommended dimension, it is recommended that the setback not exceed 20 feet along El Camino, in order to create a comfortable pedestrian environment. It is recommended that building frontage at the setback line be contiguous, although the individual building facades may be articulated.

G-2.5.2: CORNER PARCELS

For corner parcels, the building should continue at the side street setback line for a minimum of 50% of property frontage. In the case of shallow parcels, the 50% building frontage requirement may be reduced to accommodate necessary parking access from the side street.

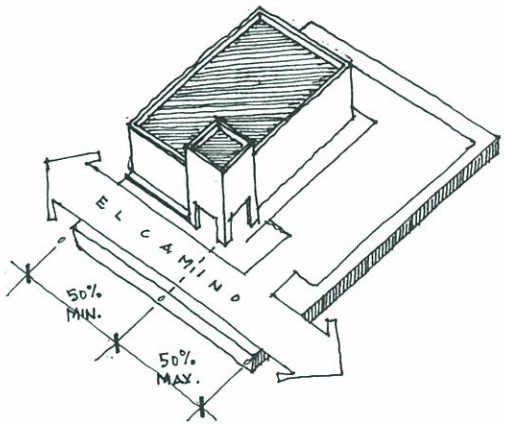


Figure 4.22 *Buildings should occupy a minimum of 50% of the property frontage.*

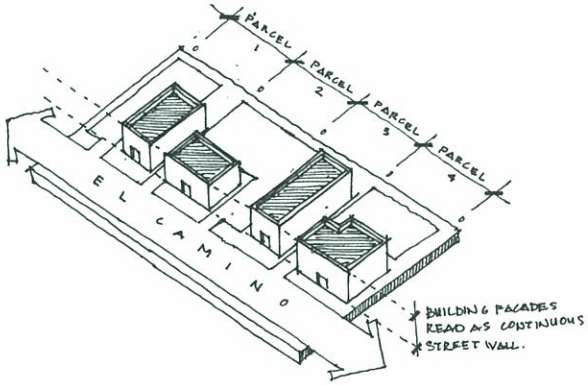


Figure 4.23 *A row of buildings located at the setback line helps create a street wall which defines the space of the street.*

GEN-5.1: LOCATION

GEN-5.1.1: PRIMARY SIGNS

The primary commercial sign should be designed as an integral part of the building and, especially in the case of mounted signs, should not cover or obscure architectural elements. The primary building sign should be limited to the name of the main tenant or the name of the building complex. Lettering, for example, can be integrated into the details of buildings such as along cornices, base treatments and entrances. Signs and lettering should be easily identified, but not detract from architectural features such as windows or expressed structural bays. Sign and lettering materials should be compatible with the building's material and convey a sense of permanence.

GEN-5.1.2: PARKING ENTRY SIGNS

Entry signs for parking lots are encouraged to be low profile, set within the landscape setback as to not block sight lines for vehicles entering and exiting parking areas. These monument signs shall be located within close proximity to entry driveways to establish a formal entry and identify building tenants. Typography and graphics for monument signs shall be limited to project/tenant names and identity graphics. Monument signs should consist of individually lit lettering as opposed to internally illuminated box signs.

GEN-5.1.3: INDIVIDUAL TENANT SIGNS

Multi-tenant buildings shall have a coordinated sign program. All signs within a single development shall have coordinated design placement and fabrication concept as part of a "Planned Signing District" and architectural review process. Individual tenant signs may be located on individual storefronts, over display windows and at entries and generally should be part of a master sign program for the entire building/complex. These sign elements may include projecting ("fin") signs, awning located signs, or, smaller, surface mounted signs. Painted and placard window signs are allowed such that they do not exceed a maximum of 25% coverage of the glazing and are compatible with the colors and materials of the building. Signs located within windows should be located at the lower portion of the window to allow visibility into the businesses.

Intent:

The intent of the guidelines on commercial signs is to create a context in which signs are more effective in communicating their messages and create a successful and attractive commercial image for the corridor.

Figure 4.35 *The use of parapets can provide a location for the primary building sign.*

Figure 4.36 *Monument signs near driveways can be used to indicate tenants within larger retail complexes.*

STEP 3: STIMULATING CHANGE

Once the Streetscape Master Plan and implementing regulations that define the framework for change are adopted and environmental clearance is certified, the full range of new development of the type(s) and character envisioned along the corridor by the ECRC will be permitted. There will, however, remain a variety of factors that inhibit such new development from occurring in the study area. Some of these factors have been discussed previously in ECRC workshops. They include:

- *Economic Vitality.* El Camino is economically healthy. There are few vacant buildings, rents are not low, and reinvestment - especially on the larger parcels - is ongoing. Under these conditions, property owners are able to achieve reasonable returns on investment, and therefore have no incentive to replace existing older buildings with new ones.
- *Parking Requirements for Single Uses.* On parcels that do not provide parking consistent with the current zoning code, these requirements would reduce the size of the building that could be located on the site. As a result, building owners are effectively encouraged to retain the existing structures, even if they do not provide the functional and aesthetic amenities that would be desirable for modern retailing and the image of El Camino.
- *Parcel Sizes.* In the northern part of the study area, parcels are too small to allow for efficient redevelopment. Previous presentations have demonstrated, for example, that parcels 50 feet wide are too narrow to support new development with parking in the rear.
- *Financing.* Financing has historically been difficult to secure for mixed-use (commercial and residential) buildings.
- *Resistance to Change.* Even on parcels where redevelopment is feasible, developers may be reluctant to test new product types, such as mixed use buildings, in face of ongoing market support for conventional, single-use structures.

In light of these obstacles, it may be necessary for the City to take action in order to stimulate land use change that will move El Camino toward the community-based vision described by the Master Plan. At the most fundamental level, the City's Economic Development staff can encourage land use change through public education by preparing and disseminating real estate-type marketing materials that call attention to opportunities for land uses particularly desired in the El Camino corridor or by actively recruiting businesses that are desired in the corridor. To some degree, this type of effort parallels the climate-changing efforts outlined in Step 1. In this step, however, it is focused on the development community.

Beyond education, however, actions that affect the developers' bottom line may be required. Land use change is most likely to occur when the relationships of revenues and costs associated with the existing land uses change sufficiently to yield a greater return on a new use - even after considering the additional capital investment required to produce that new use - than on the existing use.

A strong Bay Area economy is probably the greatest stimulant to change on El Camino (as well as in other locations in San Mateo). A strong economy could support market demand for changes in land use. As office rents and housing prices have increased dramatically, they may have improved the prospective revenue side of the picture sufficiently that landowners perceive the possibility of greater returns from new buildings on El Camino than from existing buildings. At the same time, developers may perceive the possibility of greater returns from projects on El Camino than from alternative investments (e.g., in projects in other locations or other uses of funds).