

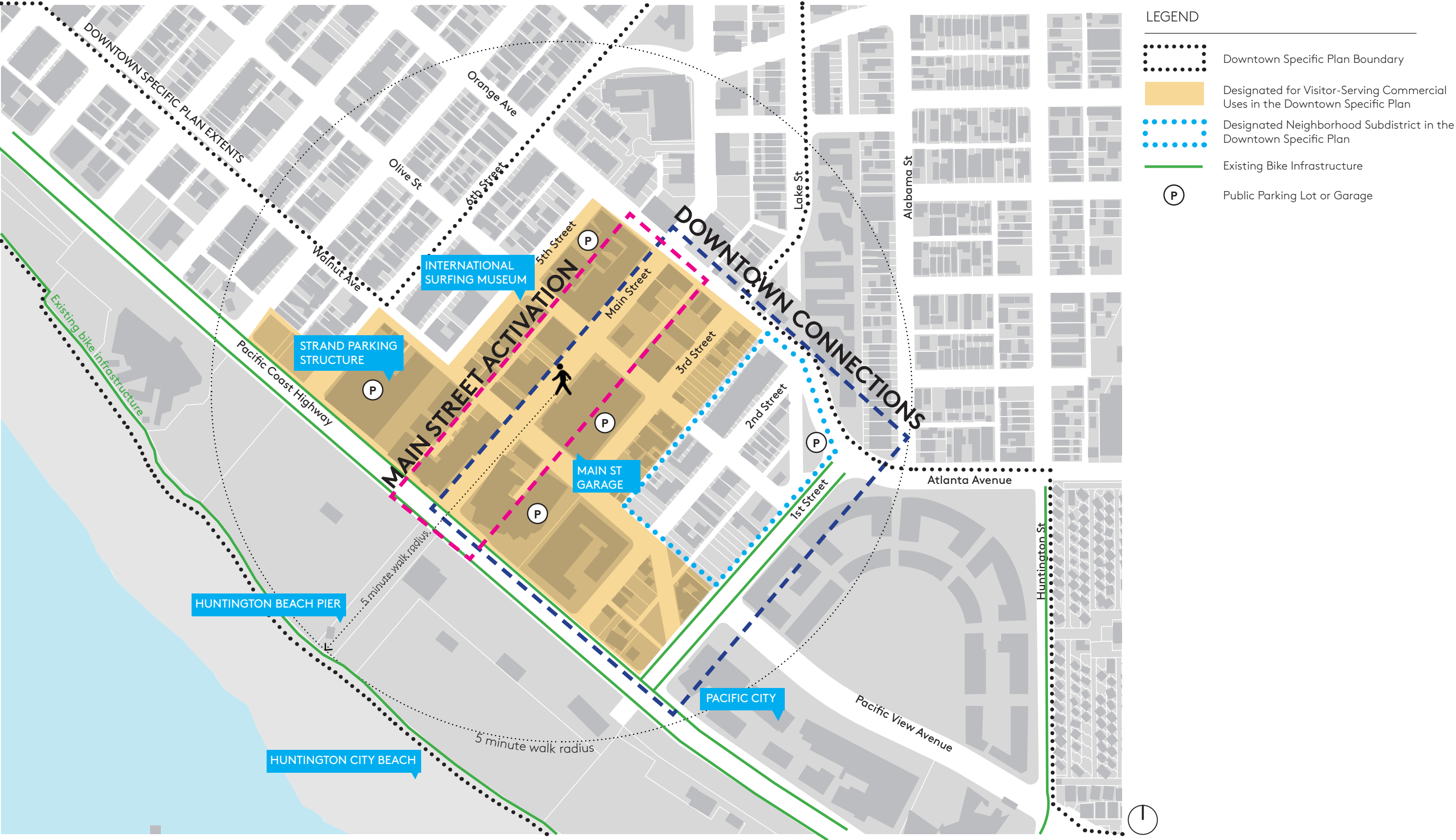
studioneleven

# Downtown Urban Design Study Huntington Beach, CA

SWOT ANALYSIS

City of Huntington Beach, May 2021

# Existing Context: Study Areas



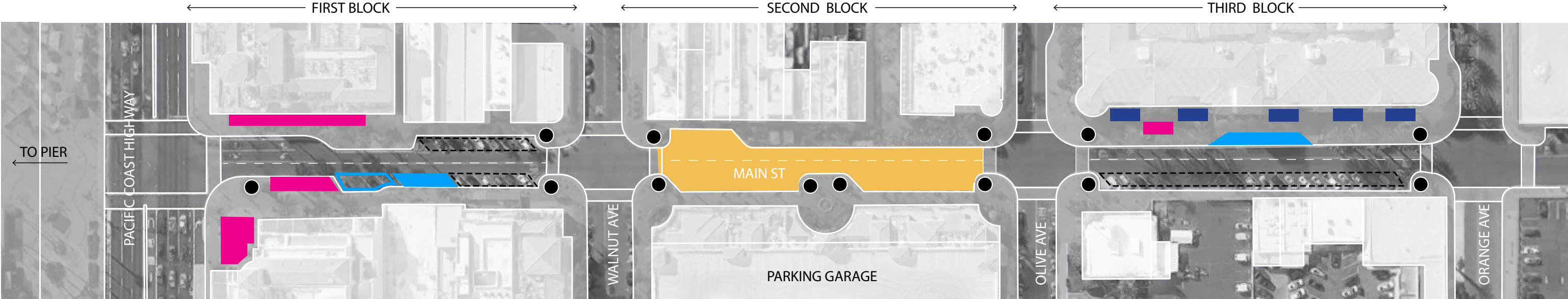




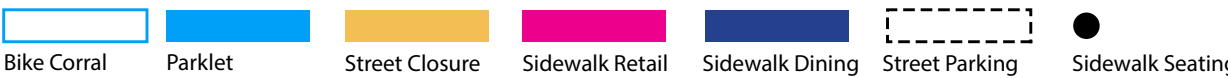
# Main Street Activation



# Main Street Activation: Strengths



EXISTING STREET ACTIVATION ON MAIN STREET ( April 2021)



## 1 - SCALE

Pedestrian scaled main street with existing streetscape and placemaking components such as widened sidewalks, trees and street lighting.



## 2 - ACTIVITY

Low vacancy rate on Main Street - existing active retail and F&B businesses, as well as sidewalk vendors that activate the three blocks of Main Street. This area is designated for Visitor-Serving Commercial Uses on the ground floor through the Downtown Specific Plan. Main Street already has a local and international draw/visitation.



## 3 - MAIN STREET PILOT

Successful street closure on the second block and street dining initiative on all three blocks sustained through COVID-19, without major impacts to traffic.



# Main Street Activation: Strengths



## 4 - PROGRAMMING

Existing Main Street Programming – Weekly Farmers’ markets as well as other annual and seasonal events hosted on the street and attended by a large audience.

## 5 - BRAND

Surf City identity is a strong local brand. It lends uniqueness to Huntington Beach as a destination. This was reflected in signage, transit benches, etc.

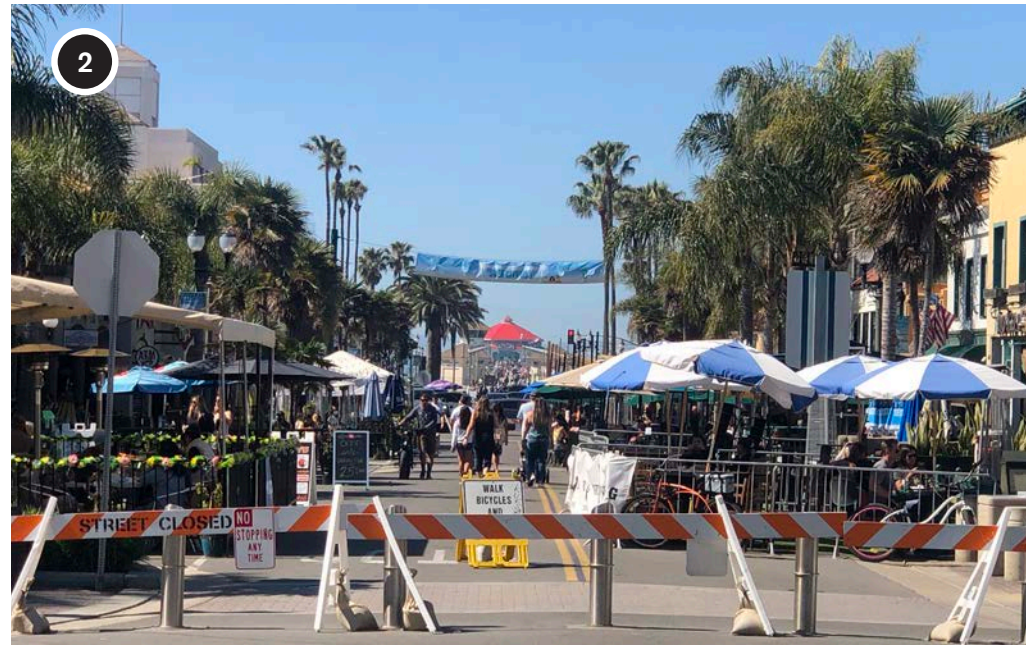
## 6 - PARKING

Existing City parking garages with over 1200 parking stalls, and street parking on adjacent streets support current need. Bike corrals and parking for skateboards are provided on Main Street in addition to vehicular parking.



# Main Street Activation: Weaknesses

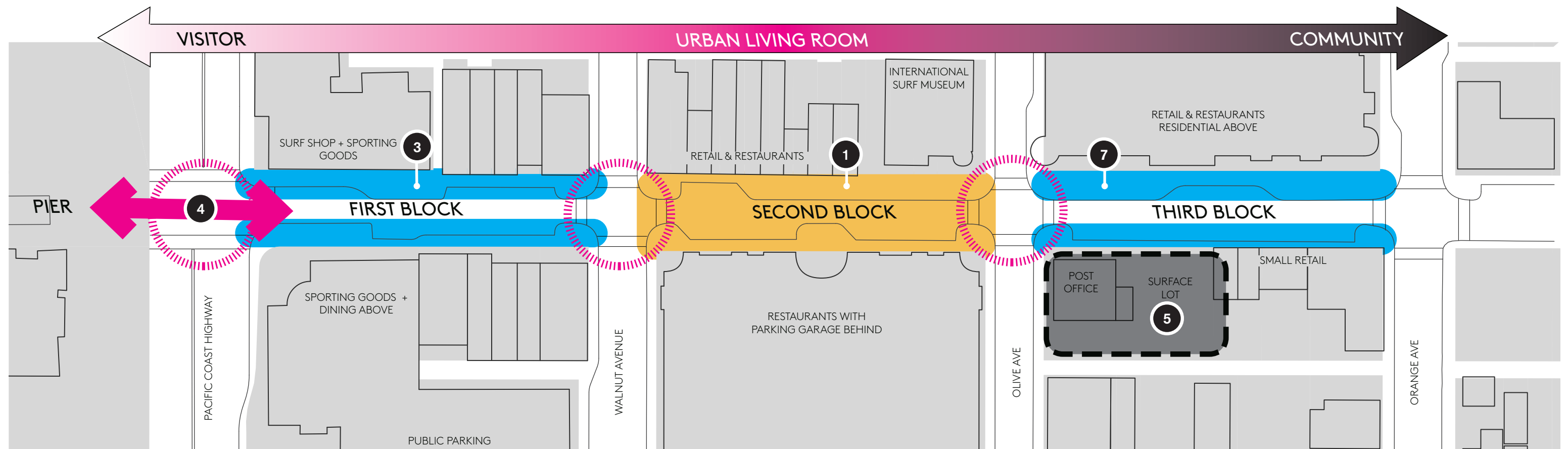
- 1 Lack of certainty of street space availability for businesses to make investments in outdoor dining or parklets
- 2 Lack of consistency in visual character and aesthetic for al fresco dining, street trees, furnishings, landscaping etc. to create a welcoming and cohesive environment
- 3 Limited public space amenities such as seating and shade
- 4 Need for improved feeling of safety and inclusivity for all users in the evenings/at night
- 5 Better wayfinding for both pedestrians and vehicles from Pacific Coast Highway to highlight Main Street as a destination
- 6 Diversity of tenancing needed to make the first block more active throughout the day and evening
- 7 Landscape acts more as a barrier, especially along the third block, separating the ground floor facade activity and sidewalk from the street





# Main Street Activation: Opportunities/Possibilities

- 1 Build on the success of the COVID-19 pilot to create a permanent urban plaza that compliments the pier plaza, and serves as an outdoor community living room with dining, art, shade, and lighting on the second block
- 2 Develop Al Fresco design guidelines focused on a more unified palette of treatments and materiality
- 3 Create more opportunities along the first block for programming and retail activity to spill into the public realm
- 4 Better connect the first block with the public activity on the Pier through visual and pedestrian enhancements, such as a mural scramble crosswalk or creative crosswalks
- 5 Reposition the Post Office property on the third block as an opportunity for adaptive reuse or mixed-use development
- 6 Improve and unify the streetscape through a cohesive tree palette
- 7 Improve ground-level landscaping on the third block to create more porosity of activity on the ground floor.





# Main Street Activation: Opportunities/Possibilities

LANDSCAPE AND LIGHTING AS UNIFYING STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS ACROSS ALL THREE BLOCKS



URBAN DINING PLAZA/COMMUNAL SEATING ON THE SECOND BLOCK



CONSISTENCY THROUGH BRANDING, DESIGN GUIDELINES OR KIT OF PARTS FOR DINING



FLEXIBLE URBAN/PEDESTRIAN PLAZA WITH PROGRAMMED ACTIVITY ON THE FIRST OR SECOND BLOCK





# Main Street Activation: Opportunities/Possibilities

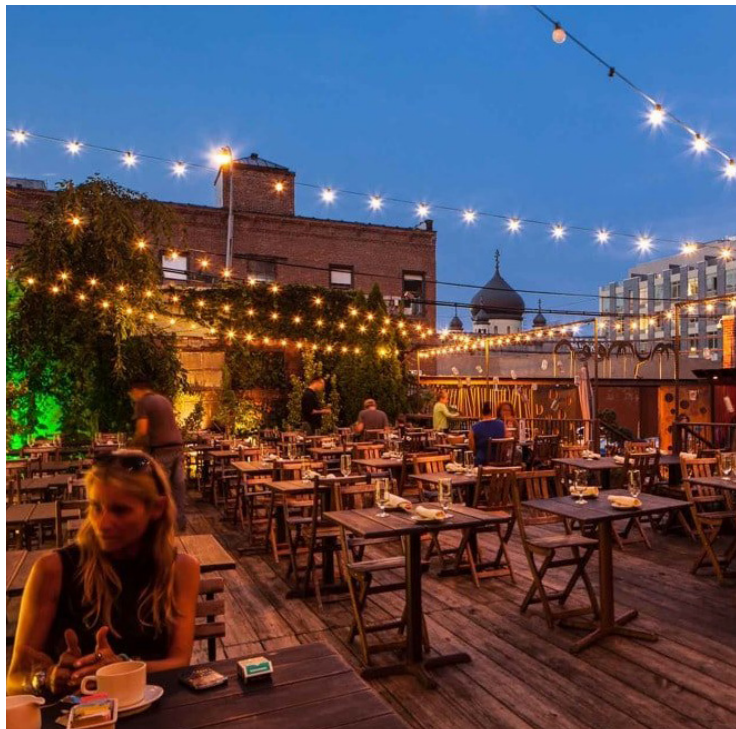
TREE-LINED PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE OR SHARED STREET ON THE FIRST BLOCK



PEDESTRIAN SCRAMBLE CONNECTING TO THE ACTIVITY OF THE PIER



ADAPTIVE REUSE OF THE POST OFFICE AND PARKING LOT ON THE THIRD BLOCK



INTERSECTION MURALS / CREATIVE CROSSWALKS AT ENTRY TO MAIN STREET





# Main Street Activation: Threats

- 1 Lack of consensus or support from businesses and residents on permanent street reconfigurations.
- 2 Lack of resources for governance, management and maintenance of new/added public spaces and public amenities.





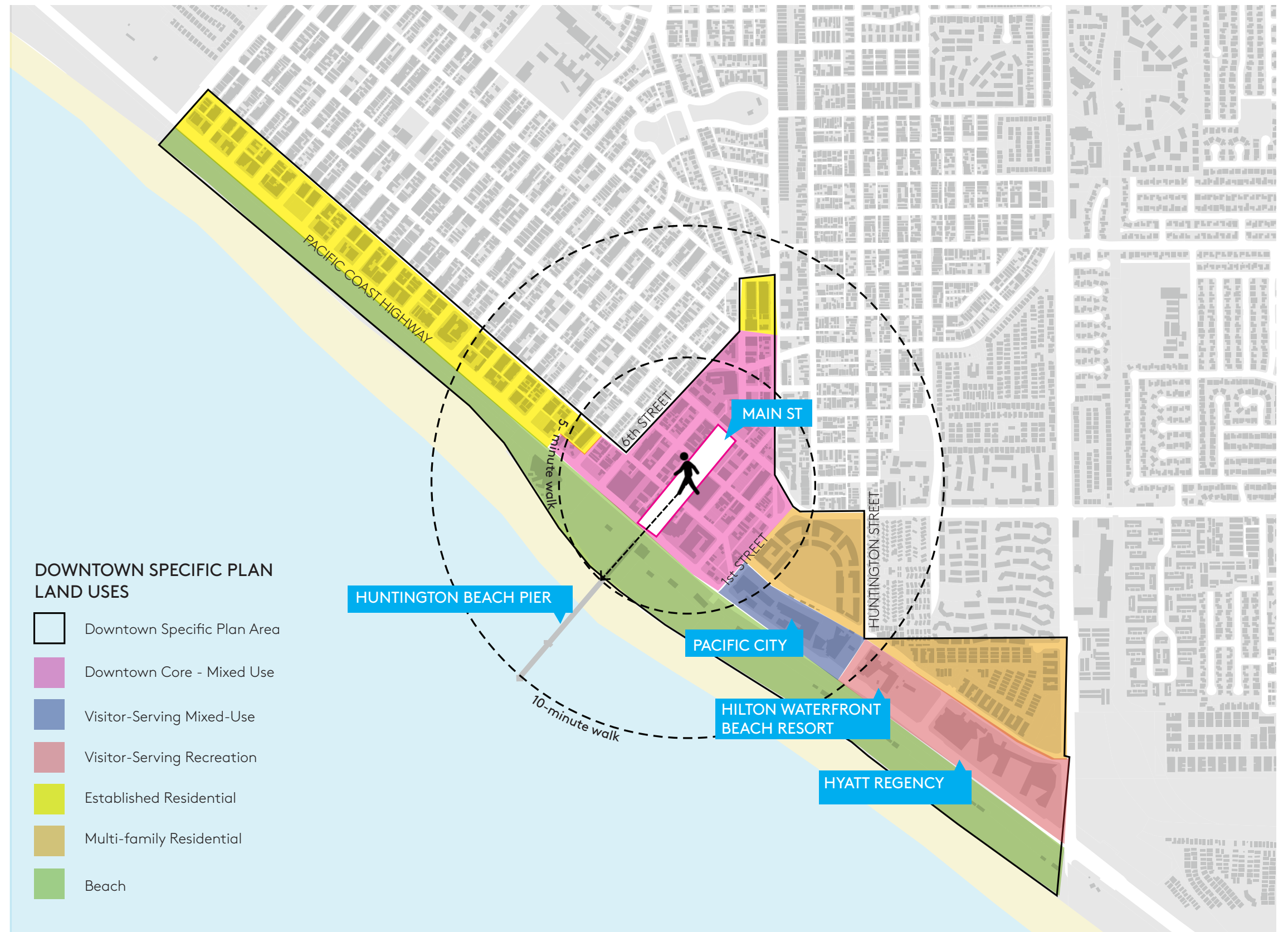


# Downtown Connections



# Downtown Connections: Strengths

- 1 Main Street is located within walking distance to key destinations such as Pacific City and accessible by resort visitors
- 2 Existing network of streets provides multiple routes for pedestrian access to Main Street
- 3 There is a density and diversity of people -- visitors and residents in the catchment area for Main Street





# Downtown Connections: Weaknesses

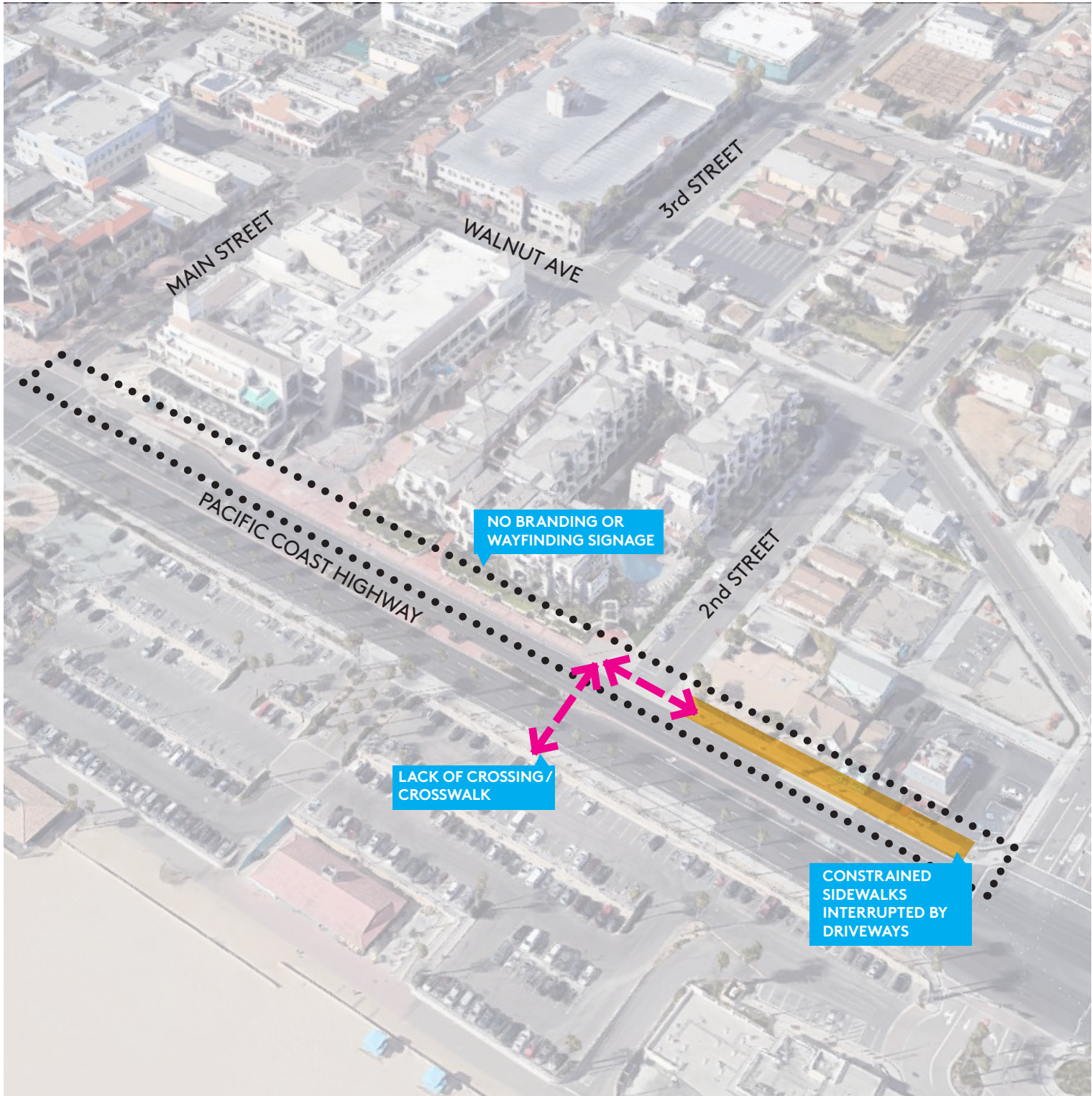
- 1 Fast moving traffic, constrained sidewalks and lack of mid-block crossings along Pacific Coast Highway contribute to a reduced pedestrian experience.



- 2 No clear entry experience from the south and lack of pedestrian wayfinding and branding elements that can highlight the presence of Main Street further south along Pacific Coast Highway



## PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY



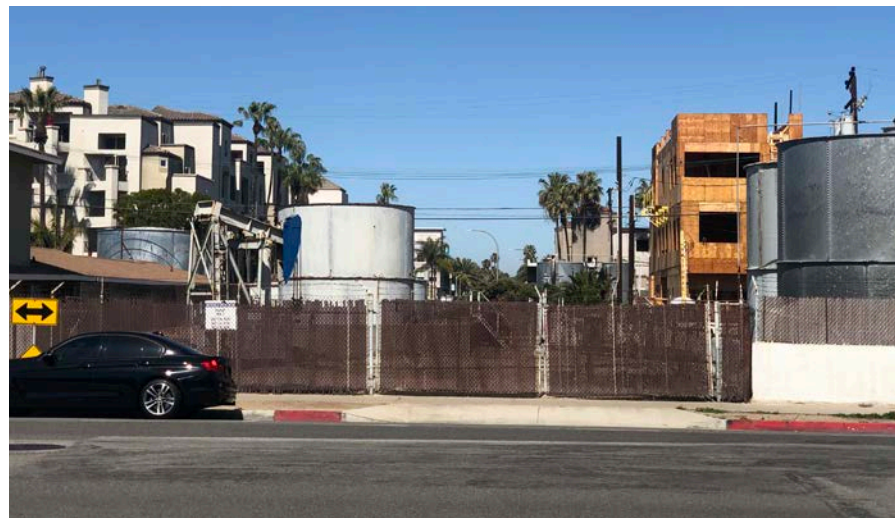


# Downtown Connections: Weaknesses

- 3 Atypical street grid and missing crosswalks at Walnut St and 1st St creates lack of legibility and barrier to safe pedestrian connections, where pedestrians are forced to use landscaped median as refuge.



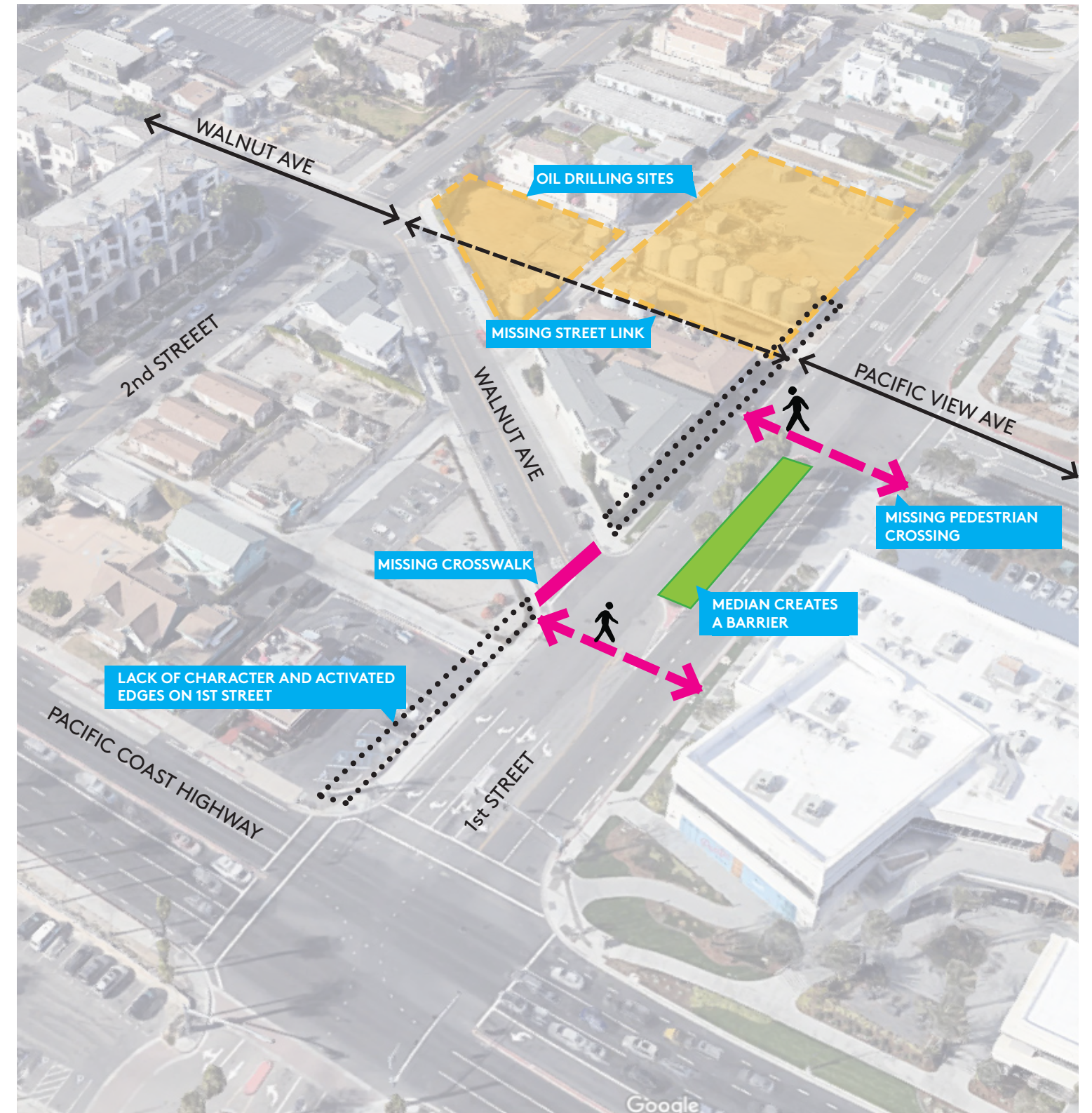
- 4 Existing oil operations create challenges for realignment of street grid. Industrial uses are visually problematic and inconsistent with the long-term goals for Downtown.



- 5 1st Street needs more character as the gateway/entrance to Downtown from the other destinations to the south.



## 1st ST and WALNUT AVE

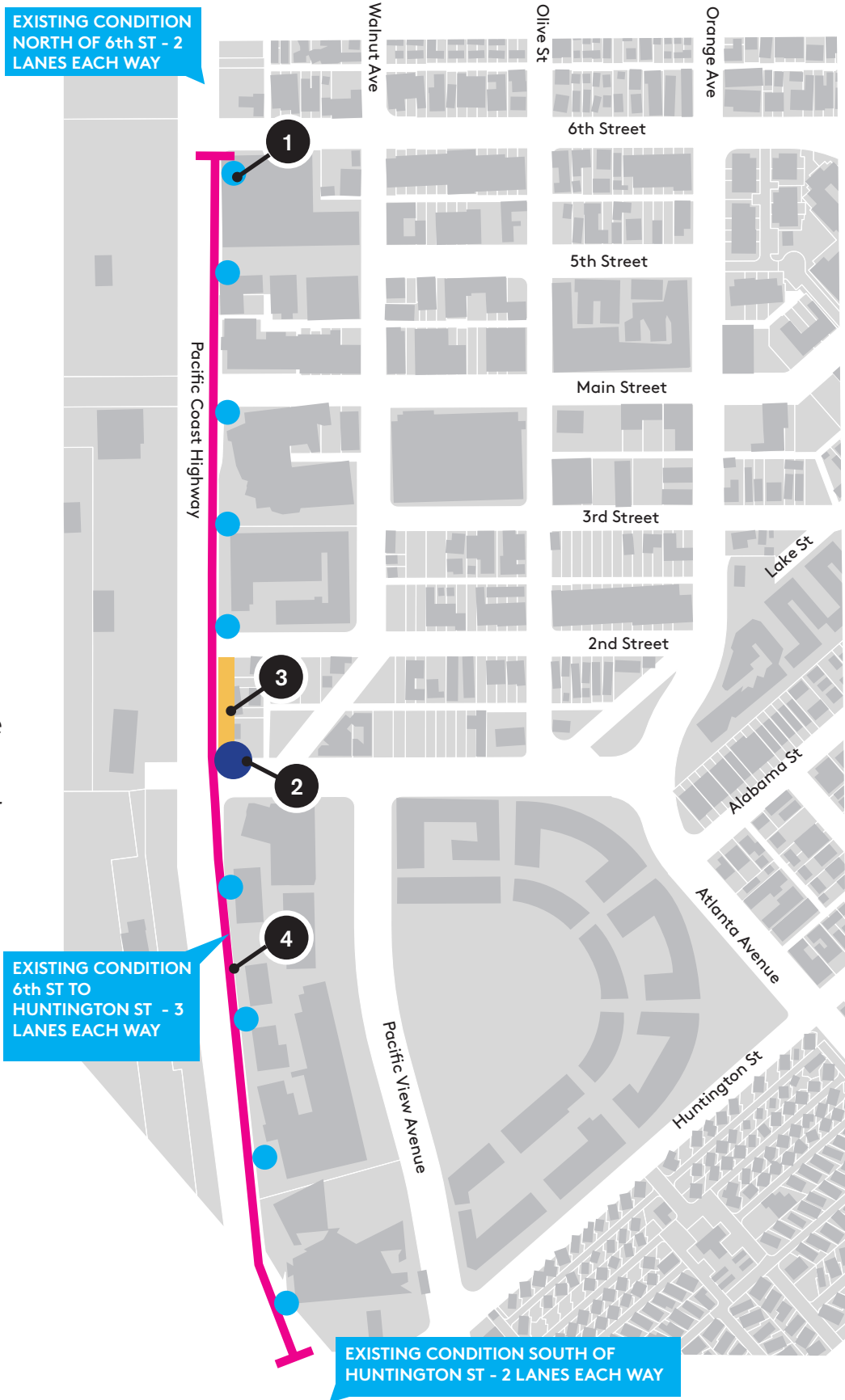




# Downtown Connections: Opportunities/Possibilities

## PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

- 1 Improving pedestrian wayfinding to Main Street from the south along Pacific Coast Highway and Walnut with a branded experience by implementing a signage/wayfinding program.
- 2 Create a visual gateway element at 1st Street and PCH to mark the entrance into Downtown on the South (mentioned in the Downtown Specific Plan)
- 3 Pedestrianize Pacific Coast Highway with wider sidewalks, especially at the pinch points, with coordination from property owners fronting the street or Caltrans
- 4 Explore working with CalTrans to reconfigure Pacific Coast Highway from 3 to 2 lanes on each side, from 6th Street to Huntington St, to create space for improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure.





# Downtown Connections: Opportunities/Possibilities

## PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

BANNER SIGNAGE FOR BRANDING AND PEDESTRIAN WAYFINDING



PROTECTED BIKE LANES



GATEWAY ELEMENT AT 1st & PCH



IDENTITY ELEMENT AT THE PIER PLAZA



LANDSCAPE BUFFERS ALONG SIDEWALK

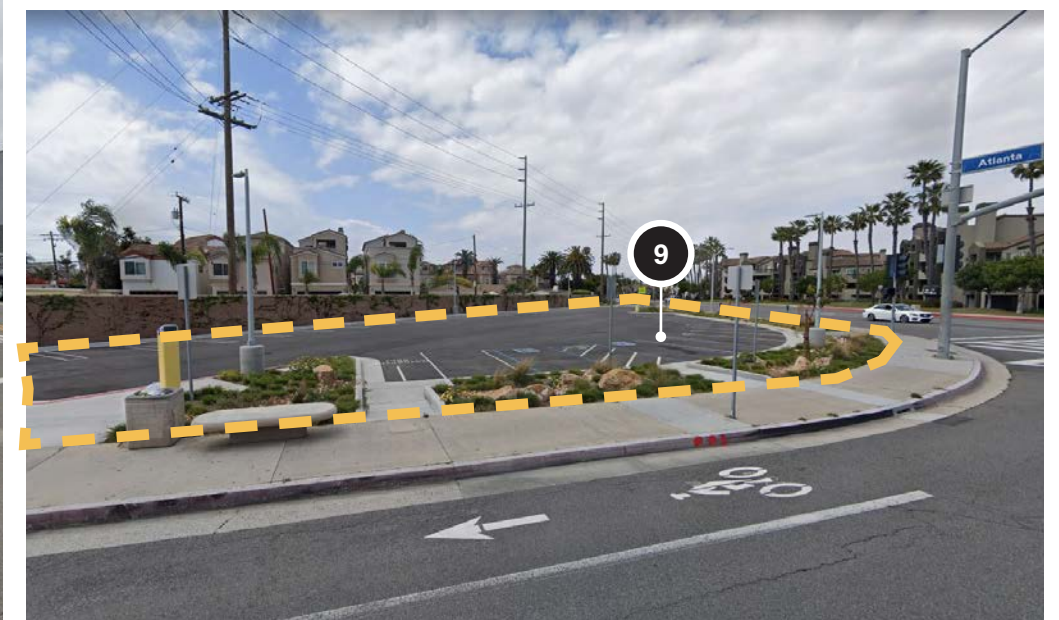
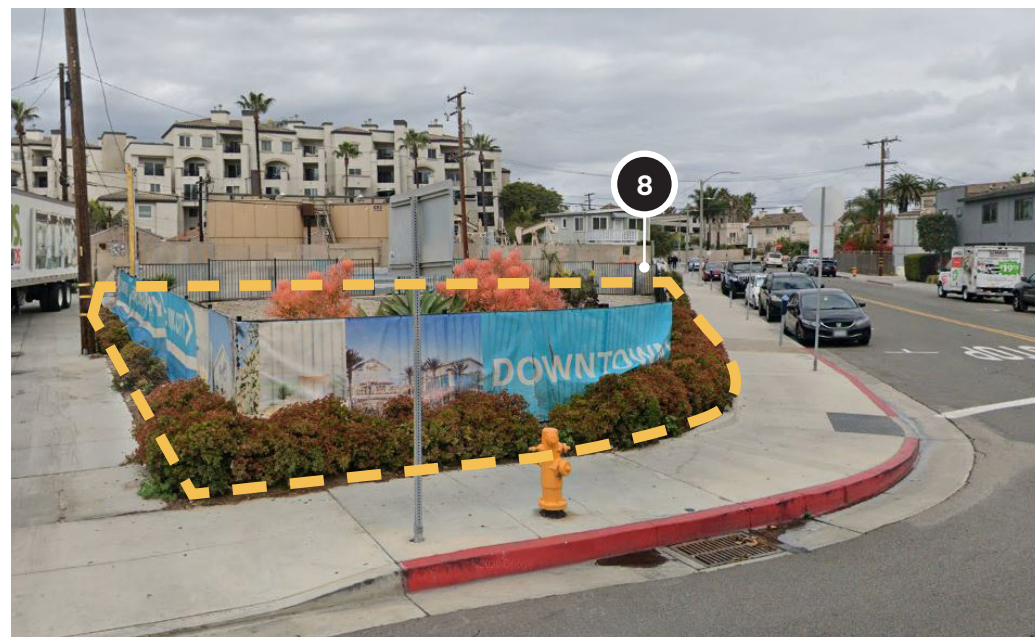
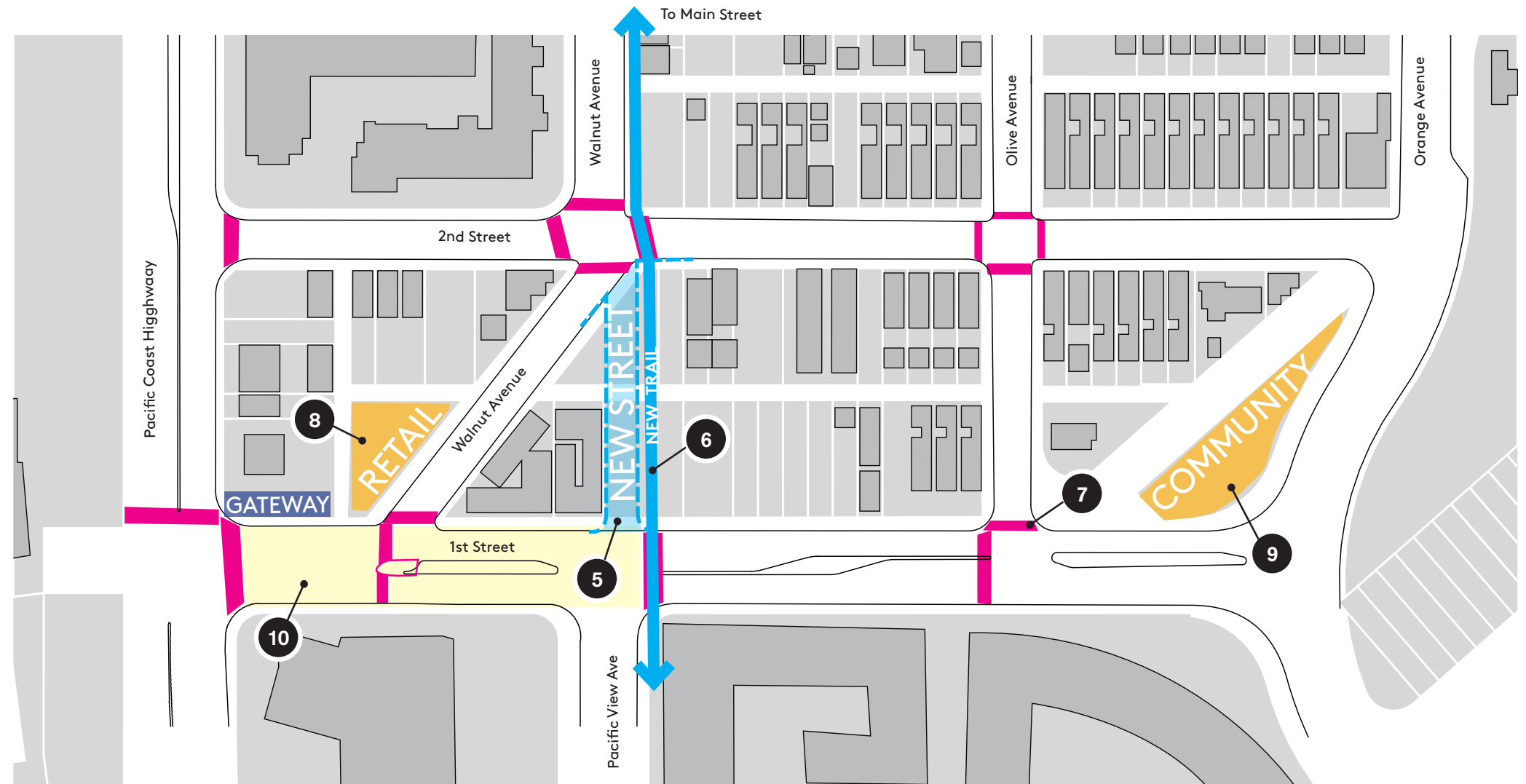




# Downtown Connections: Opportunities/Possibilities

## 1st STREET & WALNUT AVENUE

- 5 Realign Walnut Avenue to connect to Pacific View Ave through existing oil sites, using a land purchase or swap (outside of downtown).
- 6 Explore a ped/bike trail cutting through an easement on the oil sites to maintain pedestrian and bike connectivity to Main Street.
- 7 Improve pedestrian crossing infrastructure at all intersections along 1st St, 2nd St and Walnut Avenue leading to Main Street.
- 8 Activate the triangular corner city-owned parcel with retail or civic uses to extend the Downtown experience to first street.
- 9 Explore converting the City-owned public surface parking lot at 1st and Orange to a neighborhood-serving retail/ corner park use as an entry point into Downtown from the residential neighborhood.
- 10 Explore the potential for a street mural on 1st Street between PCH and Pacific View Avenue to create a strong visual gateway while calming traffic and creating a pedestrian-first street.

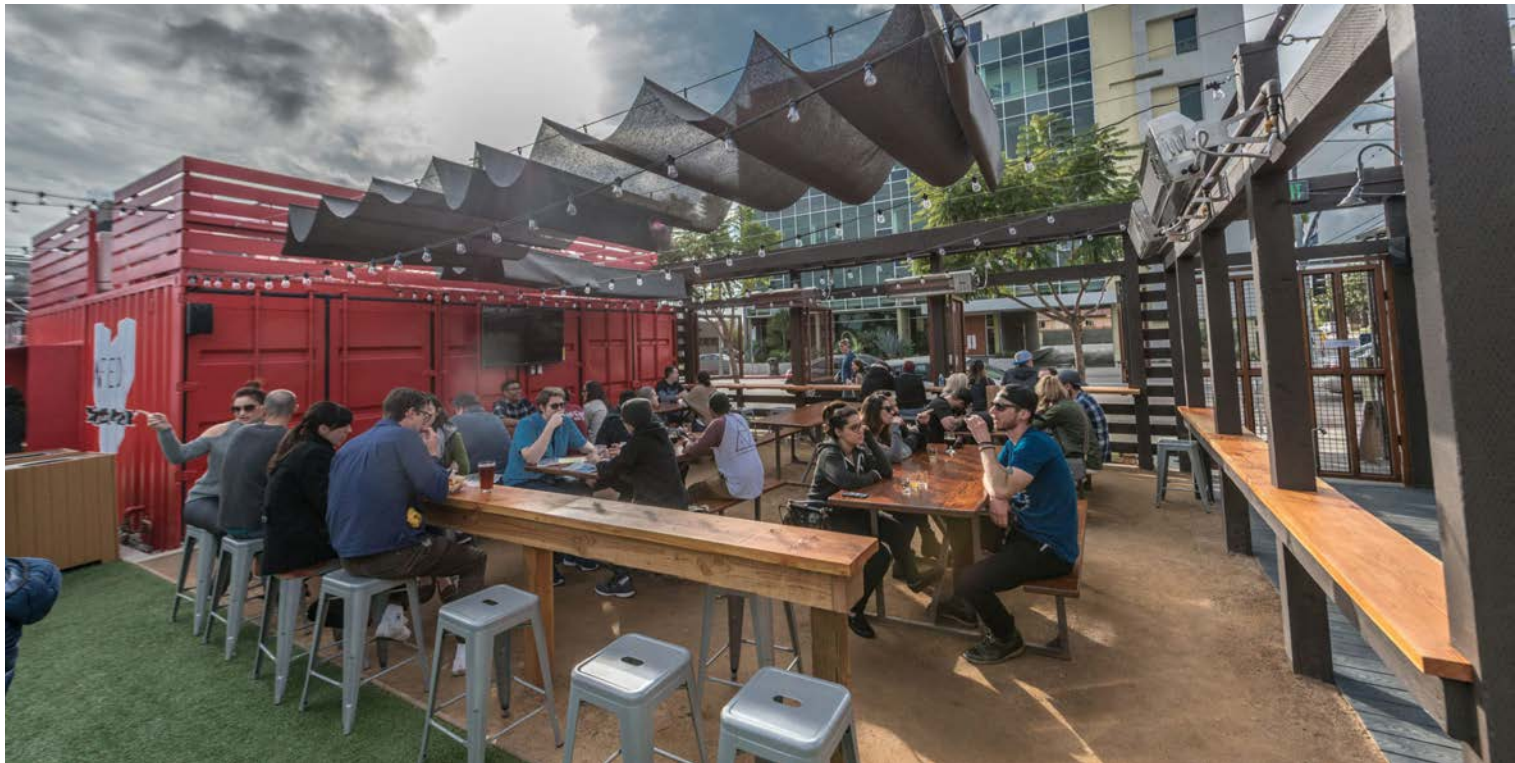




# Downtown Connections: Opportunities/Possibilities

## 1st STREET & WALNUT AVENUE

RETAIL/RESTAURANT ACTIVATION AT 1st & WALNUT





# Downtown Connections: Opportunities/Possibilities

## 1st STREET & WALNUT AVENUE

MULTI-USE TRAIL OR GREEN ALLEY CONNECTING PACIFIC VIEW AVE TO WALNUT ST



CREATIVE/ARTISTIC CROSSWALKS ALONG 1st STREET



ASPHALT MURAL ON 1st ST BETWEEN PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY AND PACIFIC VIEW AVE





# Downtown Connections: Opportunities/Possibilities

## 1st STREET & ORANGE AVE

COMMUNITY GREEN SPACE AND/OR LOCAL RETAIL AT 1st & ORANGE



COMMUNITY AMENITIES - DOG PARK AND/OR PASSIVE PLAY AT 1st & ORANGE





# Downtown Connections: Threats

- 1 If Caltrans and City are not aligned on a vision for Pacific Coast Highway any pedestrian improvements might prove to be an uphill battle.
- 2 Process to consolidate oil extraction operations on one site to create greater permeability and alignment of the street grid, might be long-drawn out or complex.





Thank you