

CORONA DEL MAR COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR STUDY

Corridor Atlas

*[Working Draft for Discussion
Purposes Only]*



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1

INTRODUCTION

[Working Draft for Discussion Purposes Only]



This section provides an overview of the Study, including its purpose, objectives, and planning process.

ABOUT THE STUDY

In Summer 2024, the City launched a comprehensive Land Use and Mobility Study (Study) to identify opportunities to enhance and improve the Corona del Mar (CdM) commercial corridor. The CdM commercial corridor (Project Area) spans approximately 1.27 miles from Avocado Avenue to Hazel Avenue. The culmination of the Study is this Corridor Atlas which provides zoning, parking, and infrastructure recommendations for implementation to support a successful, vibrant, lively, walkable and connected “main street” destination.

The Study takes a targeted approach, addressing challenges identified along the corridor based on key findings from the analyses and community outreach, while building on what is already working successfully along the corridor.

STUDY BACKGROUND

Over the past two decades, several efforts and studies have shaped the CdM corridor into its current condition, such as:

- 1997** The CdM Business Improvement District (BID) was established to fund activities and programs benefiting member businesses located and operating within the area.
- 2004** East Coast Highway was relinquished from CalTrans and the CdM BID developed the Vision Plan 2004 for the corridor, setting the foundation for physical improvements to the corridor.
- 2006** Many elements of the Vision Plan were implemented, including the landscaped medians, sidewalk landscaping, streetscape furniture, and the addition of the town center and clock tower.
- 2021** The CdM BID was disestablished. Responsibility for maintaining landscaping along the corridor was transferred to the City’s Public Works Department.
- 2024** This current Study was initiated to address the limited private investment within the corridor, which has been hindered by outdated land use regulations, limitations with development standards, and high parking requirements.

Figure 1: Study Area



STUDY OBJECTIVES

1

Develop zoning regulations unique to CdM.

The City will develop tailored land use regulations and development standards specific to the Project Area, supporting a vibrant corridor with high quality development.

2

Remove barriers to investment.

The City will identify regulatory barriers that limit development and reinvestment, with the goal of attracting businesses with active uses and helping existing businesses thrive.

3

Implement parking solutions that balance all users.

The City will identify parking strategies that balance the needs of visitors, employees, business owners, and residents while reducing the burden on individual businesses. The Study will consider opportunities to enhance access to existing parking lots, identify potential sites for new parking facilities, and explore new technologies that can assist in parking management.

4

Enhance walkability & safety.

The City will identify opportunities to promote walkability and cycling. Enhancement would focus on improving safety, encouraging foot traffic, and supporting a more connected and accessible corridor.

5

Determine feasibility of redevelopment opportunities.

The City will study the feasibility of integrating new uses and other development, while preserving existing character of CdM. This includes exploring various types of development and expanding outdoor dining areas that contribute to a lively and engaging main street.



STUDY PROCESS DIAGRAM



Business and Property Owner Canvassing

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS



Corridor Discovery included a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions across several key areas, including land use and regulations, built form, the public realm, transportation, safety, and parking.

Business and Property Roundtables

VISIONING

Visioning and strategy sessions conducted with City staff and Mayor Pro Tem Kleiman to provide input and direction on the development of the draft recommendations.

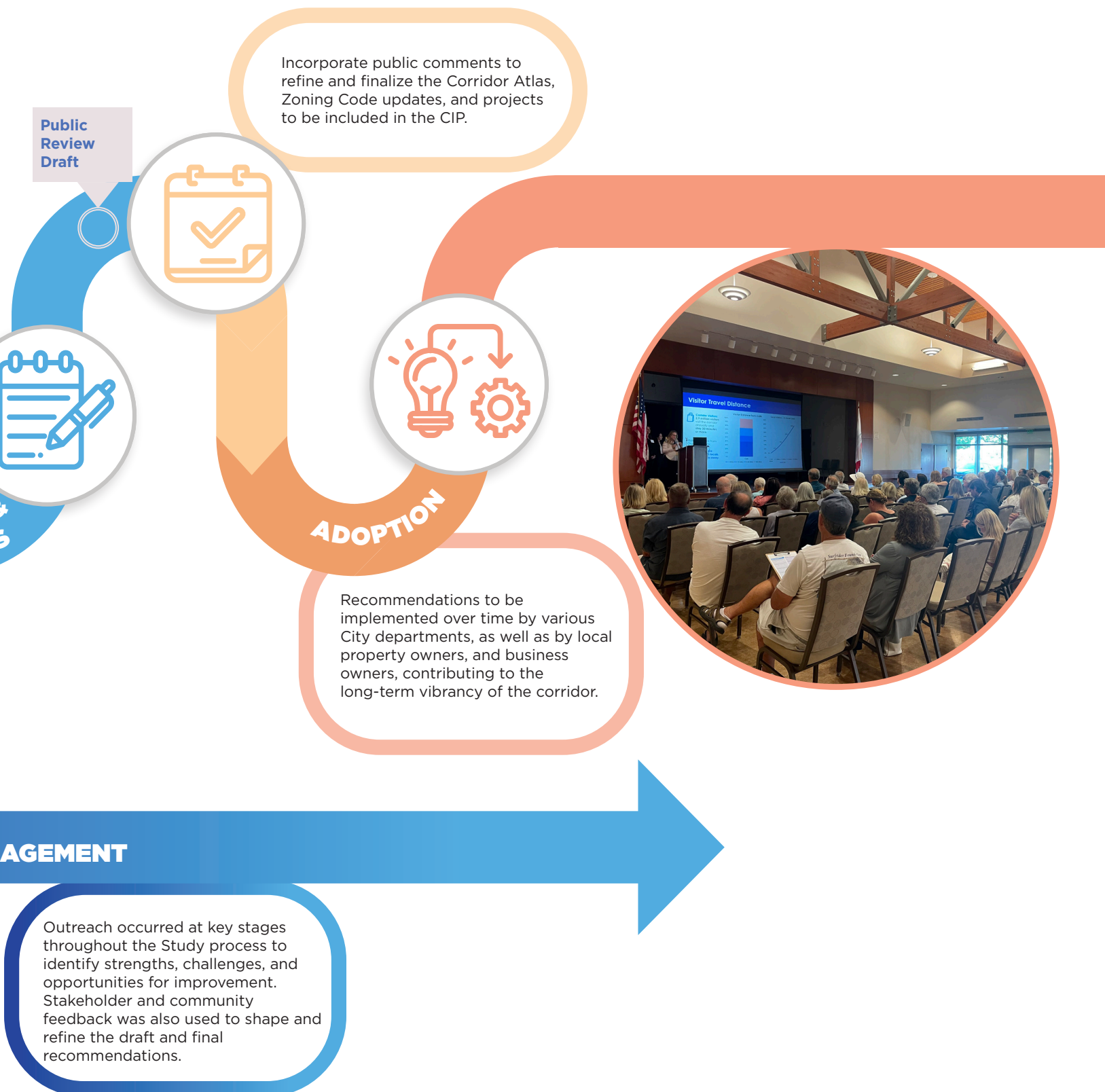


Community Open House and Meeting

PLANNING & REGULATIONS

Council Study Session to review the draft Corridor Atlas to provide direction on the draft actions, including recommendations to be incorporated into the City's Zoning Code (Title 20) and the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT



2

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

The background image shows a street scene with a large, ornate sign for 'Sherman Library & Gardens'. The sign is dark with light-colored lettering and decorative scrollwork. It is mounted on a pole. In the background, there are palm trees, a clear blue sky, and a street with cars and buildings. The entire image has a blue tint.

This section provides key findings from the corridor discovery phase which documents existing conditions, including observations and opportunities for the corridor which set the stage for recommendations.

2.1 CORRIDOR VISITORS

What We Studied

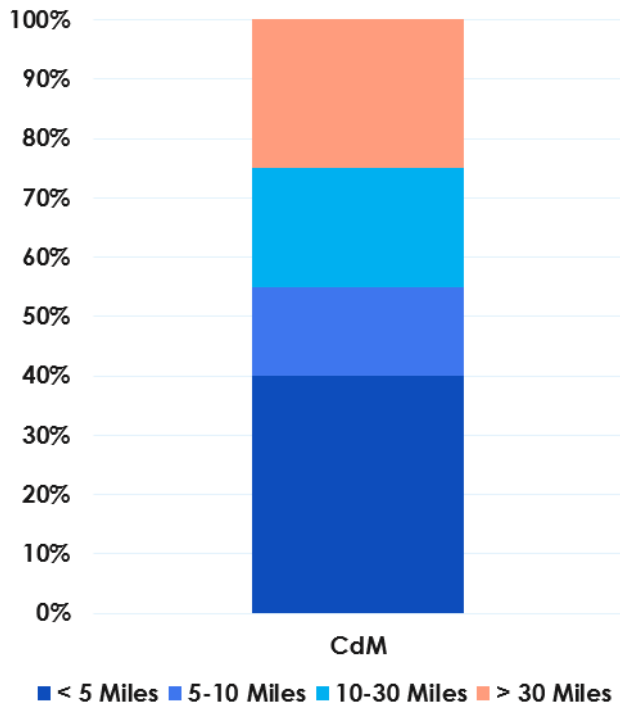
Corridor visitation patterns, including number of visitors, frequency, and their socio-economic make-up, including income and age. In addition, existing business mix was analyzed.



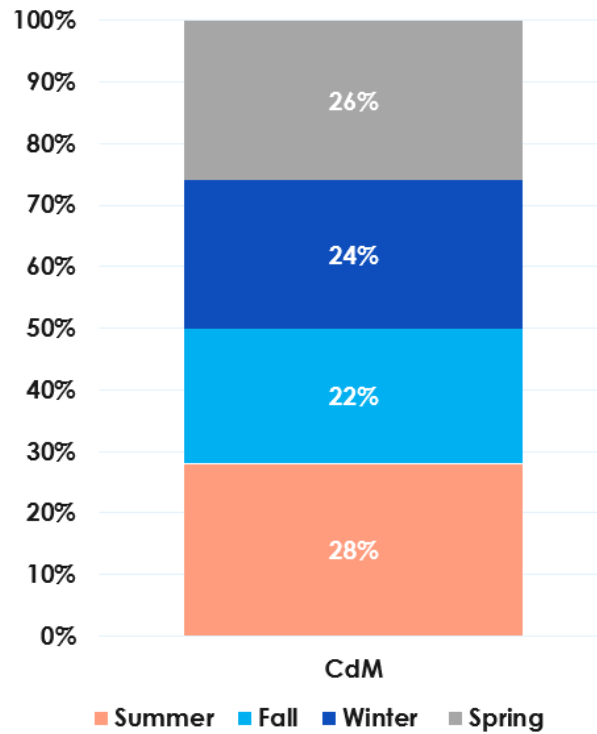
KEY FINDINGS

- Corridor visitors include **2.9 million annual visitors who stay 30 minutes or more.**
- **Most visitors are from Corona del Mar, Newport Beach, nearby coastal or adjacent cities, and the broader Orange County area.** 40% of visitors are Newport Beach locals, less than 5 miles away.
- **Average household income of the captured market is \$153,100 and median age is 38 years.**
- **Visitors come to the corridor year-round, primary during the daytime hours during the weekdays and weekends at a similar rate.** CdM attracts visitors year-round with roughly half of visitors (49%) coming during the weekdays and the remaining half (51%) during the weekends. Visitors primarily use the corridor during the daytime (10am-5pm) (55%).
- **The majority of food and beverage businesses along the corridor are independently owned.** Roughly 70% of food and beverage businesses along the corridor are independent, versus chain operated business, which provides unique character and creates a sense of place.

Visitor Distance from CdM



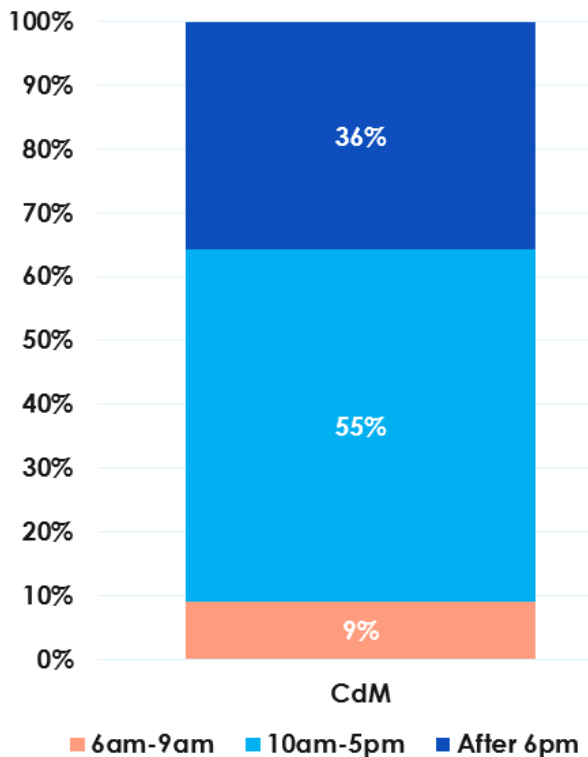
Season of Visitation



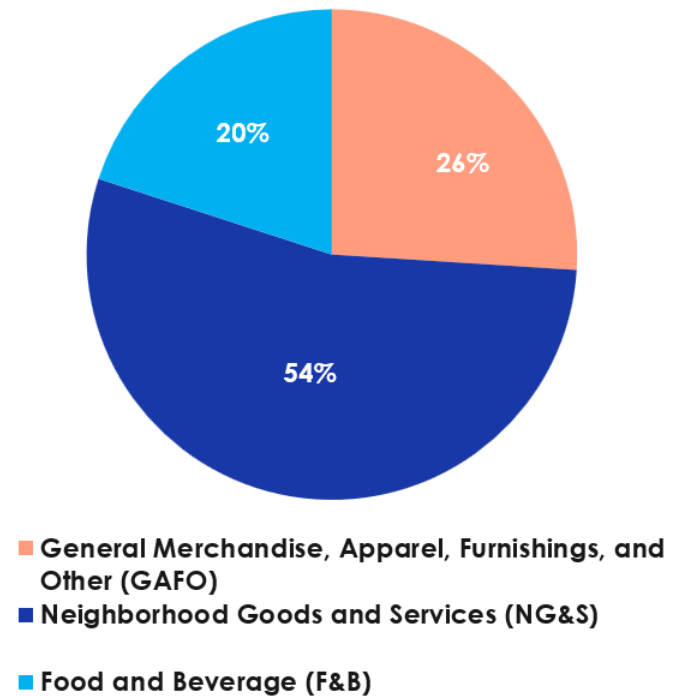
Most visitors to the corridor are locals from Corona del Mar and Newport Beach

The corridor has visitors year-round, with a slight increase during the summer months

Time of Visitation



Percent of Businesses by Type



Visitors primarily use the corridor during the daytime hours (10 am-5 pm)

Over half of business types along the corridor are neighborhood goods and services

2.3 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

What We Studied

Existing physical conditions that were analyzed along the corridor included development patterns, observed building height, parcel characteristics, observed ground floor uses, and building façade activation.



KEY FINDINGS

- **Small parcel sizes and building footprints** are the most prevalent development patterns along the corridor, which supports smaller format users.
- **Continuous building edges are present** along various segments of Coast Highway; however, several areas with surface parking lots fronting the corridor disrupt the building edge.
- **Two City-owned parking lots are available along the corridor** – Old School Park Lot and Bayside Drive Lot – which are located to the rear of parcels which front Coast Highway.
- **Existing development is not reaching development potential.** Most existing buildings along the corridor are a single story, with some instances of two-story and three-story buildings (e.g., the Port Plaza and New Port Theater). However, there is opportunity to build approximately up to three stories north of Coast Highway and two stories south of Coast Highway.
- **Average parcel sizes along the corridor are small and many are irregular in shape,** both of which can make redevelopment challenging.
- **Existing ground floor uses are predominately commercial, with a focus on neighborhood goods and services** (e.g. banks, salons, fitness, etc.) (54%). While these services support the needs of CdM residents, they do not encourage longer stays and draw larger audiences. Food and beverage use types that can activate the area beyond 9-5 make up the lowest percentage of retail uses (26%).
- **Building façade activation varies along the corridor, with most facades characterized by dull and/or inactive features,** such as little to no transparency and uniform facades with little to no detail.



Small parcel sizes and building footprints are the most prevalent development patterns along the corridor



The most common observed ground floor use is commercial, with a focus on neighborhood goods & services



Building facade activation varies along the corridor, with some vibrant facades characterized by lots of character, high transparency and facade details, however most facades are characterized by dull and/or inactive features



2.4 PUBLIC REALM

What We Studied

Public realm elements that were analyzed along the corridor included outdoor dining, benches, public art, plazas, lighting, and landscaping, as well as community programming within the public realm.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Existing CdM street branding elements** include bicycle racks, benches, and trash cans that use a green color palette representing the CdM brand. There is an opportunity to increase the street branding for CdM and assist people walking through pedestrian wayfinding elements, such as at bookend entrances and at main intersections, such as Marguerite/Coast Highway.
- **Outdoor dining along the corridor is present, but not widespread.** Outdoor dining is configured as patio dining within private property, dining within private property setbacks, and dining along the sidewalk. There is opportunity to increase the presence of outdoor dining which adds vibrancy to a corridor.
- **Some instances of existing sidewalk dining create conflicts along the corridor due to limited sidewalk space availability.** Some existing sidewalk dining is either not permitted or out of compliance with the Citywide Sidewalk Café Standards. There is opportunity to explore enforcing the Citywide Sidewalk Café Standards encroachment permit program to ensure safe, pedestrian through traffic within an organized environment.
- **Recurring community programming along the corridor includes events hosted by the City and local organizations.** Examples include CdM Farmers Market within the surface parking lot at the intersection of Coast Highway and Marguerite Avenue, Monthly 3rd Thursdays, and the CdM Fall Fest hosted by the Corona del Mar Chamber of Commerce.
- **Pedestrian entrance to the corridor lacks wayfinding elements and art.** There is opportunity to work with property owners and City Arts Commission to facilitate more art, including sculptures, utility box art and murals along the corridor.
- **Centennial Bench, one of CdM's public art pieces, and the clock tower frames the corner plaza.** There is opportunity to activate plaza with a pop-up vendor or rotating art.
- **The Port (Newport Theatre) serves as a local destination for public screenings and private events.** There is opportunity to integrate food and beverage uses on the ground floor of the theater or surrounding the theater to serve evening users.



Outdoor dining along the corridor is configured as patio dining within private property, dining within private property setbacks, as shown above, and dining along the sidewalk



Existing CdM street branding elements include bicycle racks, benches, and trash cans that use a green color palette.



Centennial Bench and the clock tower frames the corner plaza at Marguerite Avenue and Coast Highway

2.7 CASE STUDIES

What We Studied

Three successful main streets were selected as case studies, based on their success factors across four broad categories - Land Use Mix and Tenanting, Economic Development, Mobility and Parking, and Public Realm and Programming. To ensure applicability to this Study, the case studies

shared similar characteristics to the corridor, including within Southern California and the Coastal Zone, no more than a mile in length, and generally under three stories in building height.

The case studies included 2nd Street in Belmont Shore of Long Beach, the Main Street in Santa Monica, and the Coast Highway in Laguna Beach.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Unique and independent businesses create a distinctive identity** that attract both local and regional visitors by creating authentic experiences. These businesses also respond quickly to local trends and consumer demands, keeping the district dynamic and relevant.
- **Importance of active uses, like restaurants and entertainment to support extended dwell time and pedestrian activity.** These uses generate vibrancy by encouraging visitors to stay longer on the corridor while also meeting everyday needs. Active frontages also enhance streetscape activity, foster social interaction, and strengthen the identity of a district.
- **Evening uses, such as restaurants, wine bars, and tasting rooms increase foot traffic along the corridor and are essential to the success of main streets** as they extend the areas operating housing and create a vibrant atmosphere. By attracting more visitors in the evenings between 6 PM to 10 PM, these uses increase foot traffic, which benefits nearby businesses.
- **Local business support** through a Chamber of Commerce or Business Improvement District (BID) plays a vital role in the success of shopping and entertainment districts by providing marketing, programming, and funding.
- **Place-based land use and zoning regulations** to promote active, local-serving pedestrian-oriented corridors. Design and development standards that support human-scale design including street facing façades, outdoor dining, and parking, Floor Area Ratio (FAR), and other incentives to support context specific development.
- **Enhanced pedestrian experience** through improved safety and streetscape, including outdoor dining, wayfinding, branding, landscaping, etc. is key to creating a walkable corridor while also reinforcing corridor branding.
- **A suite of parking and mobility strategies** to address demand and supply challenge, include integrating technology to offer real-time parking availability, parking demand pricing, and enforcement to ensure the efficient use of available parking spaces. In addition, providing safe and active transportation connections and free trolley services along corridors further reduces reliance on private vehicle trips to the corridor.



2nd Street in Belmont Shore is home to several local restaurants, cafes, and retailers.



Main Street in Santa Monica is managed by the Main Street Business Improvement Association (MSBIA), which is responsible for promoting and marketing the corridor, along with fostering partnerships with among businesses, city governmental, and neighborhood associations.



In addition to a free trolley service that operates along Coast Highway, the City of Laguna Beach offers a free parking app that provides real-time parking availability and mobile payment options.

3

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT



This section highlights the touch points with business and property owners along the corridor, as well as the broader community.

OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING AND OUTREACH PROCESS

Outreach was conducted at multiple stages of the planning process to better understand the corridor’s existing strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. The feedback gathered helped inform, review, and refine the draft recommendations to ensure they reflect the needs and priorities of the business and property owners along the corridor, as well as the broader community.

3.1 STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

BUSINESS AND PROPERTY OWNER CANVASSING

Business canvassing along the corridor was conducted on December 5th, 2024, and engaged a total of 42 business owners, managers, and property owners. 19 businesses were interviewed and provided input on the corridor’s strengths, challenges and opportunities for improvement.

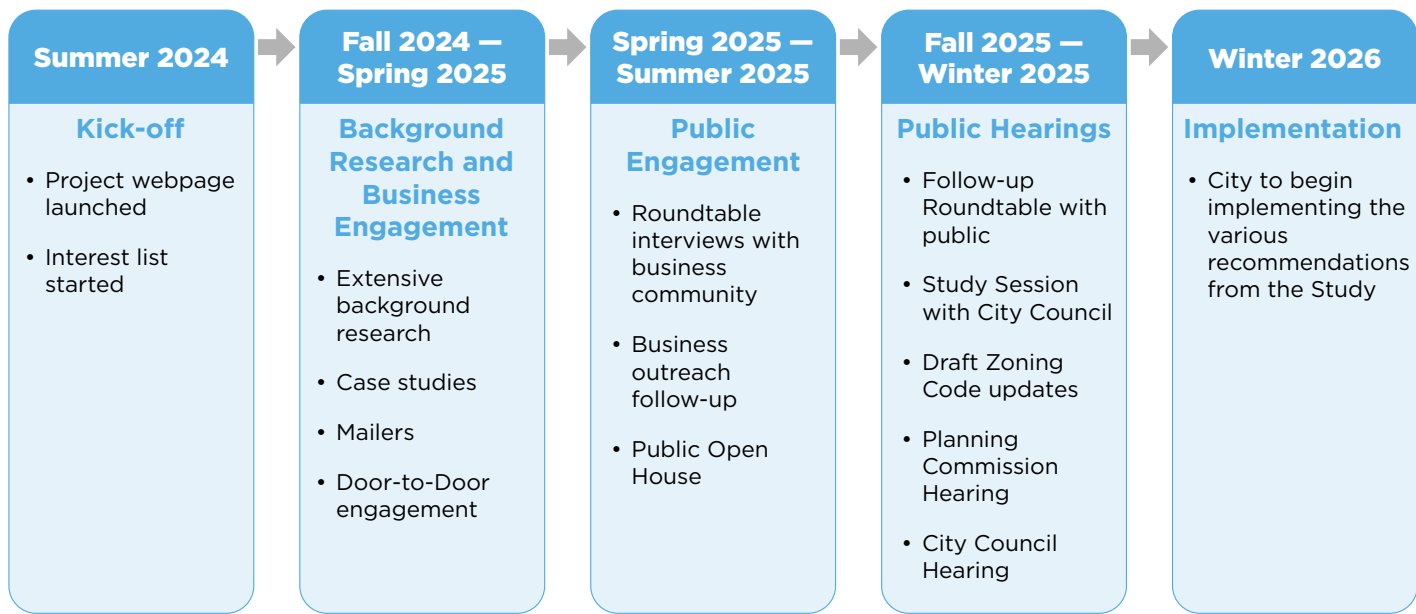
Businesses highlighted the corridor’s location as its key strength, noting that its visibility and proximity to CdM residents help to

attract local customers. Existing challenges identified by businesses included a perceived shortage of parking, such as limited street parking for employees and metered parking, as well as traffic-related safety concerns, such as speeding vehicles and blind corners that compromise pedestrian safety and contribute to traffic accidents.

Business expressed interest in developing an employee-designated parking program, introducing a trolley service for the corridor, as well as street beautification elements and pedestrian safety elements, including additional landscaping, bike racks, more crosswalks, better signage and signal timing. There was also strong interest in revisiting zoning regulations to expand outdoor dining opportunities.

BUSINESS AND PROPERTY OWNER ROUNDTABLES

Roundtable discussions were conducted on February 24, 2025 and February 26, 2025, engaging 14 commercial business





Business and property owners participate in a roundtable discussion on February 24th, 2024.

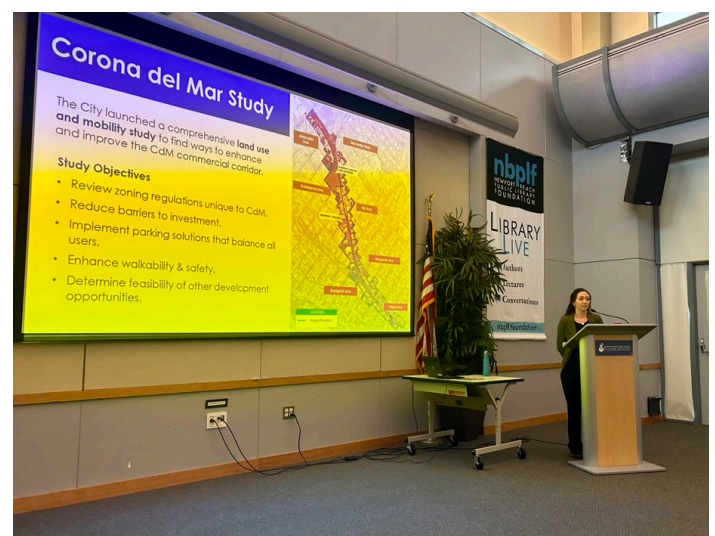
and property owners/operators from the corridor. The roundtable discussions provided an opportunity for participants to share their perspectives on the corridor's current strengths, challenges, and areas of opportunity along the corridor.

Participants highlighted the corridor's unique identity, strong local customer base, and existing walkability. They also raised concerns about ongoing challenges such as limited parking availability, traffic and pedestrian safety issues, and regulatory barriers, such as lengthy permitting processes for new businesses or uses.

Several opportunities were identified to enhance the corridor, such as improving connectivity through increased wayfinding and signage, street lighting, landscaping, seating, and the integration of pedestrian-only areas. Businesses also emphasized the importance of uplifting the corridor's identity through thoughtful design and placemaking strategies.

A follow-up roundtable with business and property owners/operators from the corridor was conducted on July 29, 2025.

The purpose was to share key insights from the February roundtables and to present draft recommendations from the Study for feedback and refinement ahead of the CdM Community Open House. A total of 15 business and property owners/operators from the corridor attended. Attendees received a feedback form to provide input on the actions. Based on this input, the goals and actions for the Study were revised and refined for the CdM Community Open House.



Business and property roundtable in July 2025 to present draft recommendations for the corridor.



City staff presenting on the corridor study snapshot for community participants.

3.2 COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

The community open house on August 12th, 2025, and a total of 77 Corona del Mar residents, as well as business and property owners from the corridor attended. The purpose of the open house was to share a snapshot of the corridor research and Study findings, and to solicit feedback on the draft goals and actions developed for the corridor. More than 50 participants provided feedback on the draft goals and actions to enhance and improve the corridor, including their level of support for each action.

Participants expressed support for:

Zoning Changes: Adjusting zoning requirements to promote preferred land uses, such as active uses that support pedestrian activity and longer stays on the corridor and establishing specific standards for new

development to enhance the pedestrian experience and promote investment along the corridor.

Increasing Parking Availability: Expanding the City's trolley program to the corridor, dynamic wayfinding and signage to increase access to public and private parking facilities, an employee shuttle program, and leasing private parking lots to increase public parking supply.

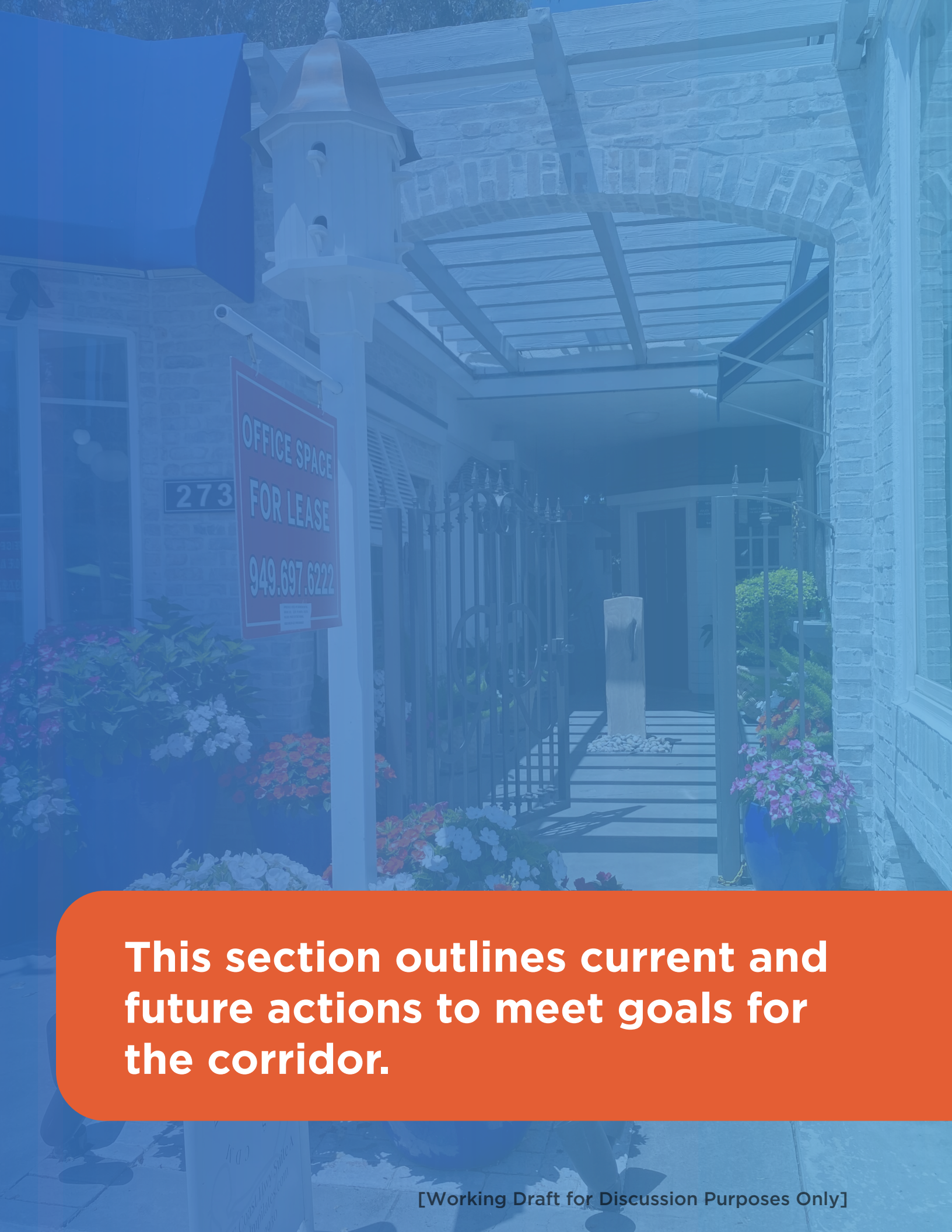
Improved Safety and Corridor Accessibility: Installing infrastructure to promote pedestrian activity and safety along the corridor, and targeted improvements at key intersections.

Enhancing Identity: Creating opportunities outdoor dining and corridor branding, such as wayfinding and signage, as well as advertising for corridor events and programming.



4

GOALS, STRATEGIES, ACTIONS

A blue-tinted photograph of a residential building entrance. A white signpost in the foreground holds a red sign that reads "OFFICE SPACE FOR LEASE" and "949.697.6222". The building has a stone facade, a small arched porch with a wooden pergola, and a black metal gate. Flower boxes with red and white flowers are visible under the windows. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

This section outlines current and future actions to meet goals for the corridor.

SUMMARY OF GOALS

Goal 1

Promote a Pedestrian Friendly and Vibrant Corridor that Supports High Quality Development and Investment.

Enhance the corridor with active uses to complement existing legacy businesses and support high quality building design. Incentivize active land uses and consider increasing development potential.

Goal 2

Increase Parking Availability and Accessibility Along the Corridor, and Enhance Corridor Navigability

Improve parking supply and provide greater access and wayfinding to parking along the corridor.



Goal 3

Ensure Safe, Accessible, and Efficient Mobility for All Users — Regardless of Mode — Along the Corridor

Facilitate safer connections and travel options for all modes along Pacific Coast Highway and to/from the corridor.

Goal 4

Develop a Clear Identity for the Corridor and Create a Sense of Place

Promote an active and well managed sidewalk environment; consider facilitating opportunities for wider sidewalks; encourage visitors and residents to come to the corridor; encourage reuse of historical features and signage.

GOALS AND ACTIONS TABLE

GOALS	
GOAL #1 Promote a Pedestrian Friendly and Vibrant Corridor that Supports High Quality Development and Investment	Action 1: Adjust zoning requirements to promote preference
	Action 2: Create tailored development standards unique to consolidation.
	Action 3: Establish objective design standards for new
	Action 4: Prohibit future development of land uses that require parking facilities, vehicle/equipment repair, and automobile wa
GOAL #2 Increase Parking Availability and Accessibility Along the Corridor, and Enhance Corridor Navigability	Action 1: Select technologies and wayfinding signage to improve Beach parking.
	Action 2: Lease private parking lots to increase public
	Action 3: Expand existing local trolley/local circulator t

ACTIONS

preferred land uses, including outdoor dining on private property.

ue to CdM that modify parking requirements for preferred land uses and incentivize lot

development or significant remodels to enhance the pedestrian experience.

it are not compatible with an active, pedestrian-oriented corridor including drive-thru
shing/detailing, while allowing existing businesses to continue operating.

to increase access to both private and public parking facilities including Cdm State

parking supply.

to provide access year-round with new stops along Coast Highway to serve the CdM

GOALS AND ACTIONS TABLE

GOAL	
GOAL #2 Increase Parking Availability and Accessibility Along the Corridor, and Enhance Corridor Navigability	Action 4: Institute an employee shuttle and/or employee carpooling program for employees, visitors and residents.
	Action 5: Implement a valet program for private or public events.
GOAL #3 Ensure Safe, Accessible, and Efficient Mobility for All Users — Regardless of Mode — Along the Corridor	Action 1: Implement intersection improvements, including traffic signals, roundabouts, and pedestrian crossings.
	Action 2: Install infrastructure that supports pedestrian safety, including crosswalks.
	Action 3: Add bike infrastructure on/near Fifth Avenue, including bike lanes and bike racks, to provide a convenient route along Fifth Avenue.
GOAL #4 Develop a Clear Identity for the Corridor and Create a Sense of Place	Action 1: Map locations within the corridor that can accommodate sidewalk extensions for outdoor dining, seating, and other uses.
	Action 2: Establish a wayfinding and signage program to guide visitors and residents through the corridor.

ACTIONS

ee parking program to ensure that preferred parking along the corridor is reserved for

public property.

ling at MacArthur/Coast Highway and Orchid/Coast Highway.

n activity and safety along the corridor, including bulbouts and additional markings for

e to redirect cyclists and E-bikes from sidewalks and Coast Highway to a safer more

commodate outdoor dining on public property and identify areas that can
parklets, or other similar uses through a future Public Works initiative.

for the public realm.

GOAL #4: Develop a Clear Identity for the Corridor and Create a Sense of Place

STRATEGY: Promote an active and well managed sidewalk environment; consider facilitating opportunities for wider sidewalks; encourage visitors and residents to come to the corridor; encourage reuse of historical features and signage.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1

Action 1: Map locations within the corridor that can accommodate outdoor dining on public property and identify areas that can accommodate sidewalk extensions for outdoor dining, parklets, or other similar uses through a future Public Works initiative.

The map will consider existing sidewalk widths and Americans with Disabilities (ADA) requirements to ensure a minimum clearance of 4 feet for pedestrians to support compliance with the Citywide Sidewalk Cafe Development Standards. Locations that can accommodate outdoor sidewalk dining adjacent to buildings must meet the minimum clearance requirements and have sufficient space for dining areas.

Identify locations along the corridor where additional street right-of-way is available while accounting for the potential loss of street parking to accommodate sidewalk extensions. Sidewalk extensions can help to reduce vehicular speeds while increasing pedestrian safety and providing amenities.

2

Action 2: Establish a wayfinding and signage program for the public realm.

The program will identify pedestrian-oriented directional signage that is uniquely designed to highlight nearby destinations. Signage can be either be static or digital with opportunities for dynamic updates. Potential signage elements could include CdM gateway signage, wayfinding pylons or kiosks, and branded light pole banners that are consistent with the corridor's existing brand and identity, as well as City signage standards. Signage should be placed in locations to support pedestrian activity and other public realm improvements.



Action 1: Outdoor dining on public property adjacent to sidewalk



Action 1: Sidewalk extensions can serve as traffic calming measures



Action 1: Sidewalk extensions can create space for outdoor dining and landscaping



Action 2: Wayfinding pylon to highlight nearby key destinations



Action 2: Branded light pole banners to enhance corridor identity