DPD	**Director's Rule 9-2015**
SDOT	**Director's Rule 02-2015**

Applicant: City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Department of Transportation (SDOT)	**Page** 1 of 2	**Supersedes:** N/A
	Publication:	**Effective:**
Subject: Pontius Avenue N Street Design Concept Plan Appendix N to Right-of-Way Improvements Manual***** ***** The Right-of-Way Improvements Manual is SDOT's Director's Rule 07-2012.	**Code and Section Reference:** SMC Chapter 23.53	
	Type of Rule: Code Interpretation	
	Ordinance Authority: SMC 3.06.040 & 3.12.020	
	Approved **Date** **Scott Kubly, Director, SDOT**	
Index: Land Use Code/Technical and Procedural Requirements	**Approved** **Date** **Diane M. Sugimura, Director, DPD**	

DRAFT

BACKGROUND

Pontius Avenue N is an important pedestrian route in the Cascade neighborhood, connecting Denny Way, Denny Substation open space, Cascade People's Center and the Cascade P-Patch. The intersection of John St and Pontius Ave N is a gateway into the Cascade neighborhood. Blocks of Pontius Ave N have been incrementally improved over the last few years. The first phase of Seattle Public Utility's "Swale on Yale" was recently completed between Harrison and Republican Streets and segments have been improved along with private development. However, a majority of Pontius Ave N has narrow sidewalks, excessively wide roadway and minimal landscaping.

The Pontius Ave N Street Design Concept Plan focuses on Pontius Ave N between Republican St and John St. Recommendations in the plan include pedestrian oriented street lighting and street trees along the Cascade Playground and increasing the visibility of the intersection of John Street and Pontius Avenue through changes in roadway paving material and color. Paving materials from the Denny Substation public space are recommended to be continued through the John St and Pontius Ave N intersection to establish a visual connection between the neighborhood and new substation public space.

This street design concept plan provides concept level design configuration for these elements within the right of way, providing greater predictability for stakeholders when making investments in City rights-of-way on streets in the study area. To create this concept plan, multiple City departments were engaged along with area stakeholders and property owners.

RULE

The Pontius Avenue N Street Design Concept Plan is incorporated into the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) Right-of-Way Improvements Manual as Appendix N**.** The provisions of the concept plan are voluntary. However, property owners are encouraged to follow them in order to enhance the neighborhood. The concept plan has been reviewed by SDOT and the Department of Planning and Development (DPD). Therefore, applicants for Street Improvement Permits that follow these concept plans can be assured that the major design elements contained in their plans meet or exceed the requirements described in the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual. The Right-of Way Improvements Manual is the standards manual used by SDOT's Street Use Division in the permit review process for private contracts. Additionally, applicants for permits to DPD that follow these concept plans for major public realm design items can be assured that these elements are approvable through the Master Use Permit and Design Review processes.

Note: Certain projects may be subject to review under City development regulations or the State Environmental Policy Act. That review could result in additional conditions relevant to the streetscape but not anticipated in the Pontius Ave N Street Design Concept Plan.

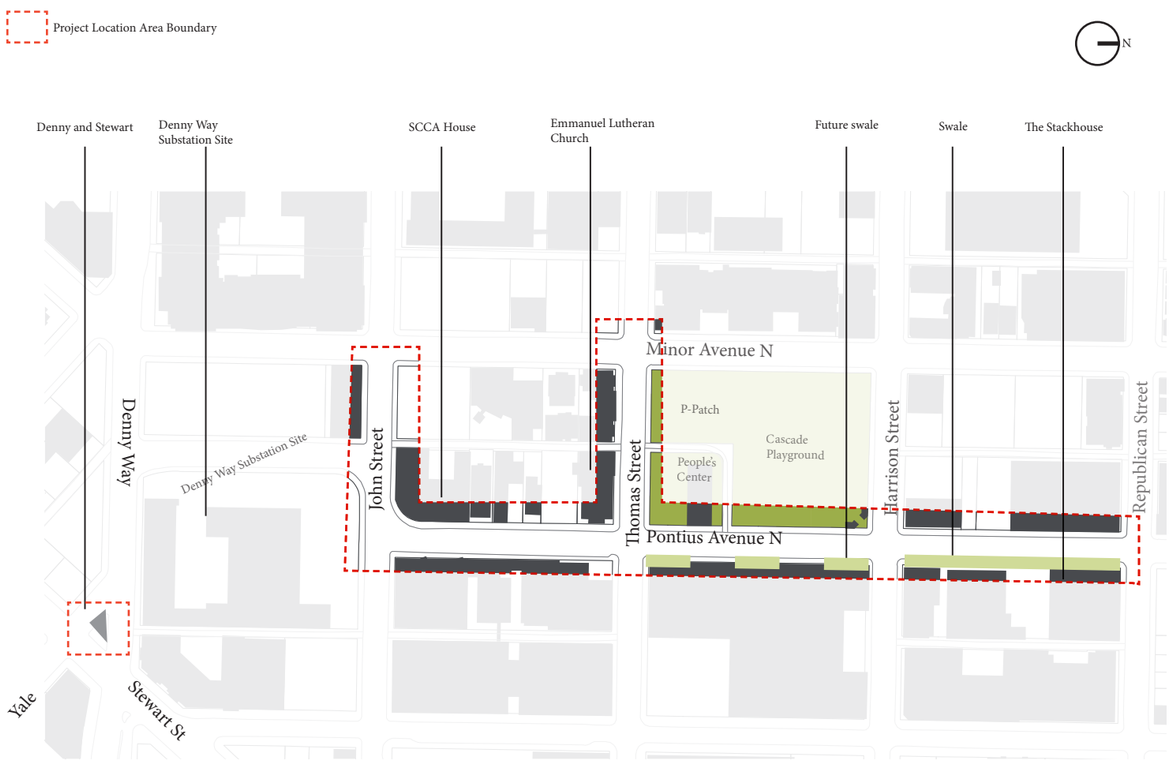
REASON

While the Pontius Ave N Street Design Concept Plan does not establish requirements, the conceptual design has been approved through review by SDOT and DPD. Approval of the concept plan as an Appendix to the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual provides recognition of the design and gives clear guidance to property owners who wish to follow these plans.

Project Context

The section of Pontius Avenue considered in this study extends between Republican Street and John Street along the Cascade Playground, the Cascade People's Center and the Cascade P-Patch. The complete project location boundary is shown in the below map.

Project Location Map



Relationship to South Lake Union Urban Design Framework

The South Lake Union urban design framework calls for a residential focus in the district surrounding the Cascade Park and P-Patch. Improvements to sidewalks, landscaping, traffic calming and safety measures are some of the ways to enhance the residential and community-focus of this area. The UDF also highlights festival street opportunities on Thomas St. in the block between Pontius Ave. and Minor Ave.

Swale on Yale

Swale on Yale is an infrastructure project to add extensive green stormwater infrastructure swales on Yale Ave and along the west-curb of Pontius Avenue between Thomas Street and Republican Street. The first phase of this project between Republican Street and Harrison Street is now complete. It is anticipated that the next phase of this project will be completed with future development on Pontius Street between Harrison and Thomas Streets. This collaborative project between private development and the City will capture and infiltrate large volumes of stormwater from Capitol Hill on the east.

Festival Street Opportunity on Thomas Street

As per the **Thomas Street Concept Plan**, Thomas Street between Pontius and Minor Avenues is an excellent opportunity for a festival street. Festival Streets enable roadway closures to vehicle traffic at specified time for events, markets and fairs. The adjacency to Cascade Park and the pleasant streetscape framed by the Lutheran Church and a mature row of maples contribute to the opportunity. Festival Street is an official City designation, and it can include specific streetscape enhancements such as removable bollards and gateway elements.

Entrance to playground at Harrison and Pontius

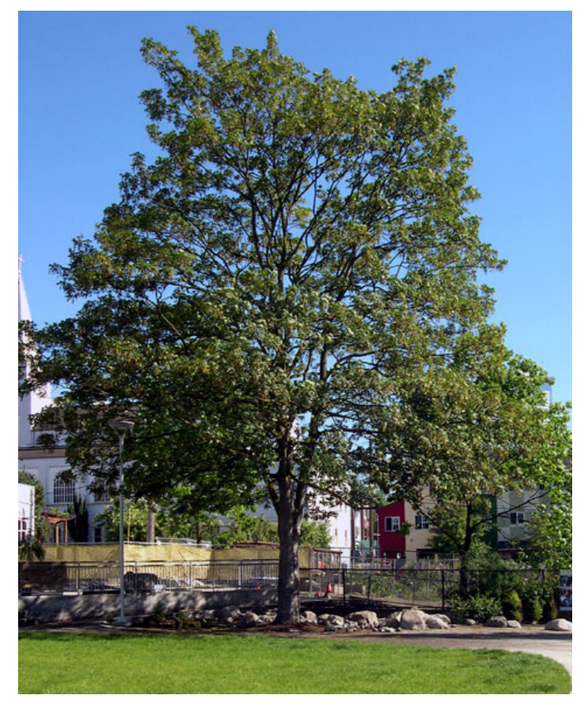
Emmanuel Lutheran Church at Thomas and Pontius

Cascade P-Patch

Cascade Playground

Cascade People's Center

Swale on Pontius


Cascade Park

Observations

Pontius Avenue
Dense mixed-use development along Pontius Avenue opens up at the Cascade Playground and P-Patch to create an intimate community space for the residents of the Cascade neighborhood.

To create festival and pedestrian space, during special events Minor Avenue between Harrison Street and Thomas Street is closed to vehicular traffic.

Parking, including loading and long-term parking, is available on both sides of Pontius Avenue, Thomas Street and John Street.

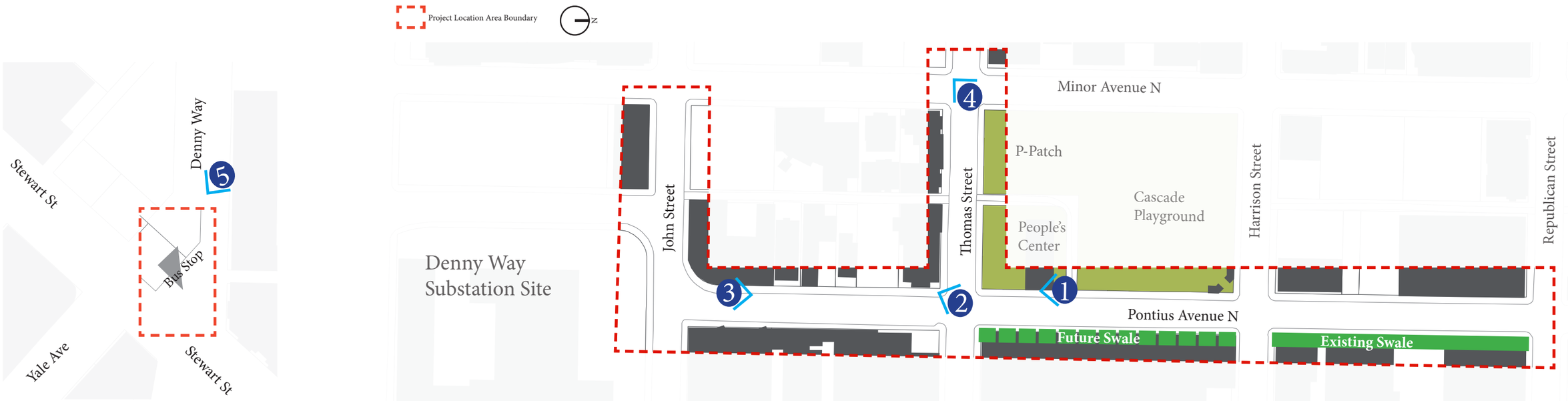
Existing cobrahead street lights along Pontius Avenue at the Cascade Playground are perceived as insufficient by the community.

Over the last few years, segments of Pontius Avenue have been incrementally improved. A substantial swale was recently completed between Harrison and Republican Streets. Sidewalk improvements, bulb-outs and landscaping have been installed between John and Thomas Streets. A future swale is planned along the eastern edge between Harrison and Thomas Streets.

Pontius Avenue is the neighborhood's major pedestrian connection to the proposed public spaces and art on the Denny Way Substation site. Integrating pedestrian wayfinding cues into sidewalk improvements and using a shared design language can establish a visual relationship between the new public spaces and the Cascade neighborhood. The intersection of John Street and Pontius Avenue is a gateway into the Cascade neighborhood. The line of sight from Pontius terminates at the new substation site, making the gateway at John and Pontius a significant urban design opportunity.

Denny Way and Yale Avenue
The intersection of Denny Way and Yale Avenue is a two-lane street in each direction. Pedestrian access to the bus stop in the traffic island is challenging from both directions. Long crossing distances and complex crossing geometry make this an unpleasant pedestrian experience.

Volume of west-bound traffic from Yale to Denny on this small stretch is quite limited opening up the potential for closing this section for west-bound traffic and introducing curb bulbs and offsets to enhance the sidewalk zone and calm traffic.



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Design Parameters and Recommendations

Design Parameters

- Maintain 2-way traffic on Pontius Avenue N. Consider prohibiting west-bound traffic on Yale Avenue in the section between Denny Way and Stewart Street.

- Maintain existing parallel parking on Pontius Avenue N. 8 foot width.

- Maintain existing back-in angled parking along Pontius Ave N. Eventually this will be replaced with a swale.

- Replace parallel parking along south edge of Thomas Street with back-in angled parking to increase the amount of available parking on Thomas Street. Maintain parallel parking along north edge of Thomas Street.

- Replace parallel parking along east side of Minor Avenue between Thomas and John Streets with back-in angled parking to increase the amount of available parking on Minor Avenue.

- Maintain the position of existing curb wherever possible. Introduce a 7 foot wide curb extension at the Cascade Playground entrance along Pontius.

- Introduce street trees or other landscaping at intervals to create pedestrian scale and improve buffering from vehicular traffic.

- Add intersection curb bulbs to reduce crossing distances, increase pedestrian zone and highlight crossings.

- Coordinate design of landscaping along the Cascade Playground to extend and integrate the pedestrian realm and enhance the perception of safety.

- Introduce mid-block curb bulbs to mirror existing mid-block curb bulbs. Pinch points effectively calm traffic.

- Integrate landscaping materials of the pedestrian crossing across John Street and the Denny Way Substation site to improve wayfinding and strengthen the neighborhood's connection to the proposed open space and public art on the Denny Way Substation site.

Design Recommendations

❶ **Pedestrian Lighting**
The selection of new pedestrian luminaries should be coordinated with existing luminaires in the neighborhood to promote a sense of continuity. It is recommended that the choice is similar to the luminaire used on Minor Avenue next to the Alcyone Development: High-pressure sodium (HPS) luminaire Zenith Z15 HPS Luminaire, Stock No. 011967 from the Seattle City Light Material Standard Number 5723.30, dated April 24, 2014.

❷ **Landscaping**
New trees should match recently planted street trees along Pontius Avenue between Thomas Street and John Street. Due to space constraints, a continuous landscape strip may be unfeasible along the Cascade Playground and People's Center. 4' X 6' tree pits are recommended. They should be designed as per the specifications in the Right of Way Improvement Manual. Where possible, natural drainage systems should be installed in curb extensions. Refer to the Right of Way Improvement Manual for standard details.

Sidewalks
Sidewalks should be designed to be standard concrete sidewalks as per the Right of Way Improvement Manual.

Existing loading zones:
Maintain the existing loading zones on Pontius Avenue and Thomas Street.

❸ **Differentiation of Materials and Way-Finding**
The intersection of John Street and Pontius Avenue presents a significant urban design opportunity. Pontius Avenue is the neighborhood's major pedestrian connection to the proposed public spaces and art on the Denny Way Substation site. Integrating pedestrian wayfinding cues into sidewalk improvements and a shared street furniture and design language will establish a strong connection to the new public spaces as well as tie them into the greater Cascade neighborhood. It is recommended that the palette of materials from the future Substation public space is used to enhance the John Street / Pontius Avenue intersection, provide visual cues to the new public space and emphasize the pedestrian intersection across John Street.

❹ **Existing Sidewalk Art**
It is recommended that if any of the existing tiled artwork that dots the neighborhood's sidewalks is displaced during construction, it should be replaced in a careful manner at its original location at the time of completion of sidewalk improvements.

❺ **Curb extensions at Park Entrance**
It is recommended that a curb extension be installed at the entrance of the Pontius playground to create usable space for amenities such as bike parking. The location of the curb extensions should align with entrances of the park.

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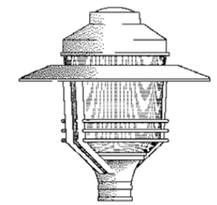

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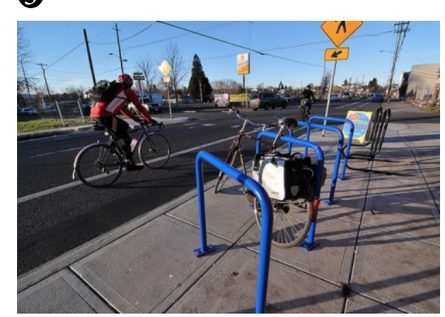
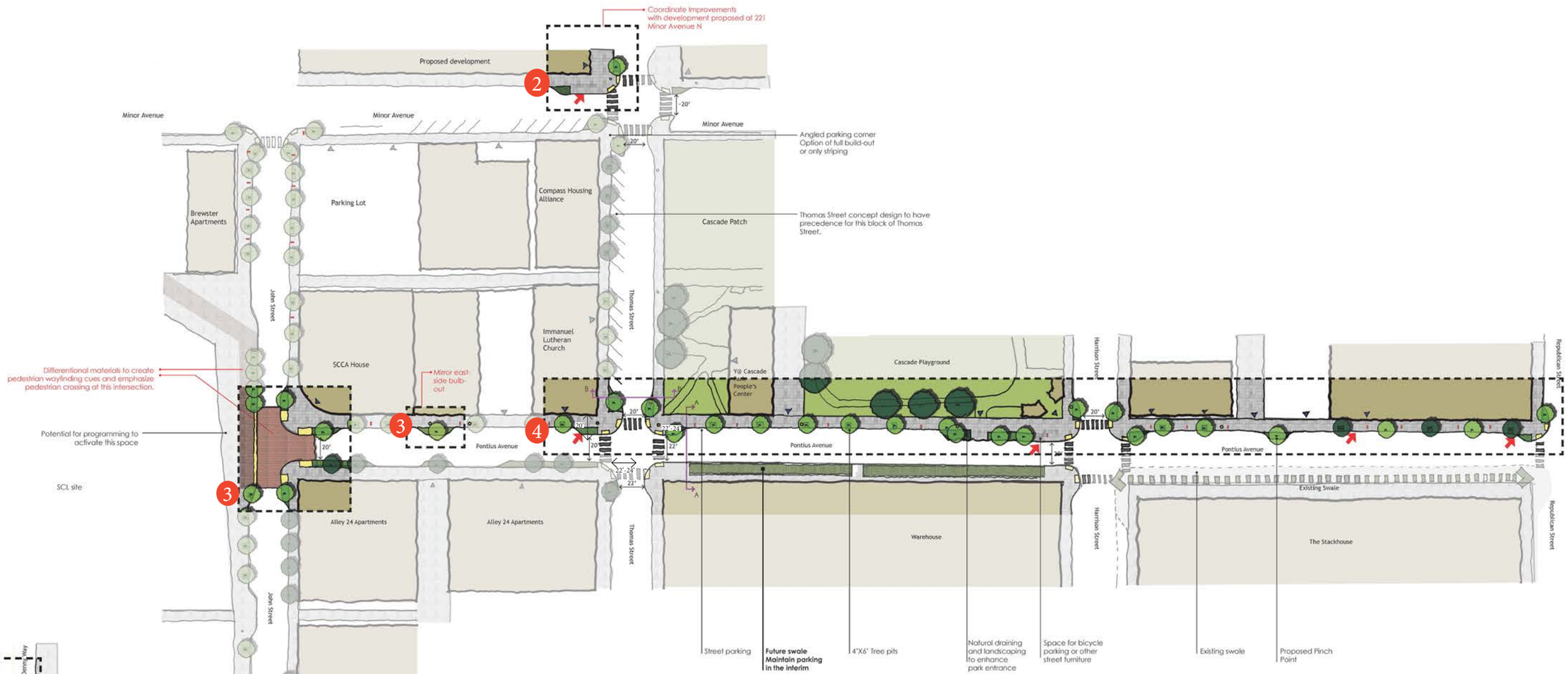


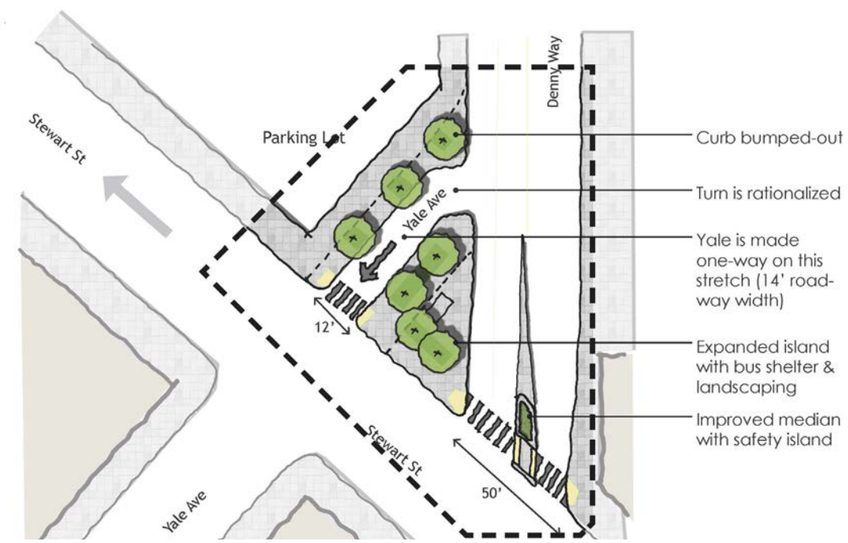
Concept Plan



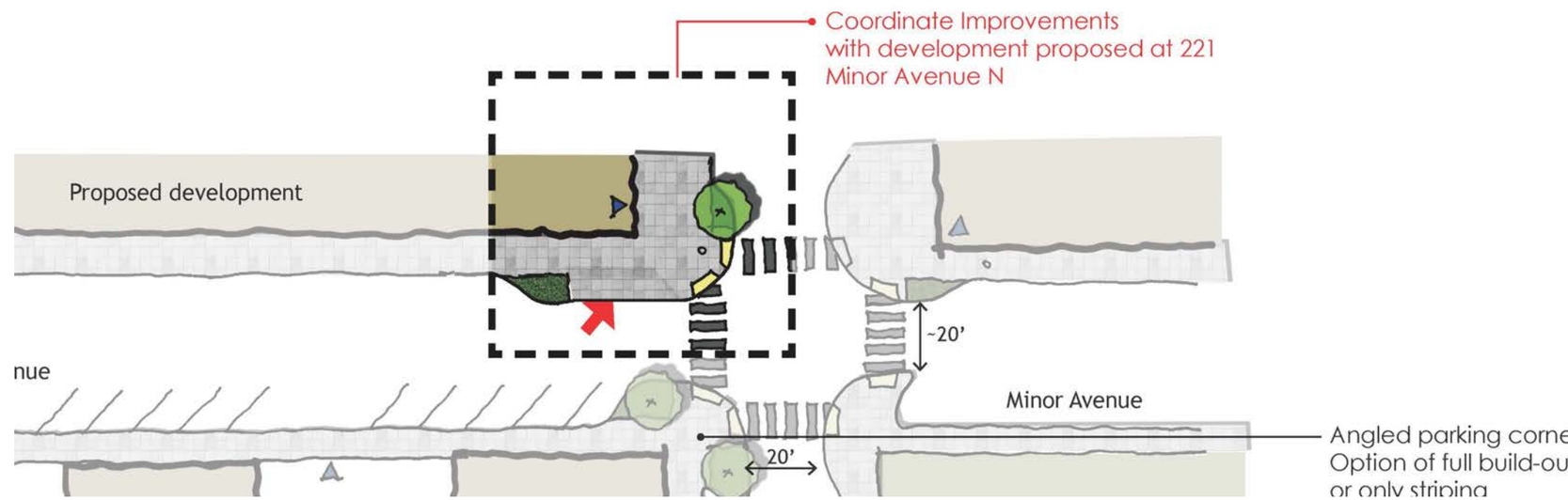
Details

1 Proposed improvements at Yale Avenue and Denny Way

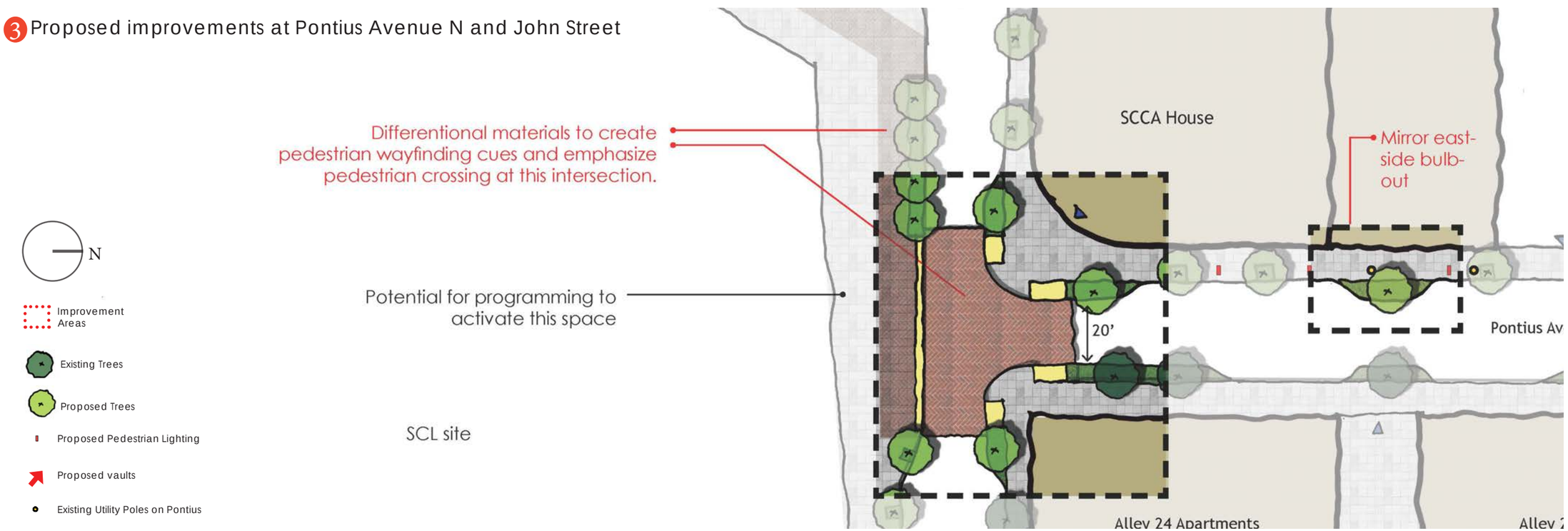
Yale and Stewart



2 Proposed improvements at Minor Avenue and Thomas Street

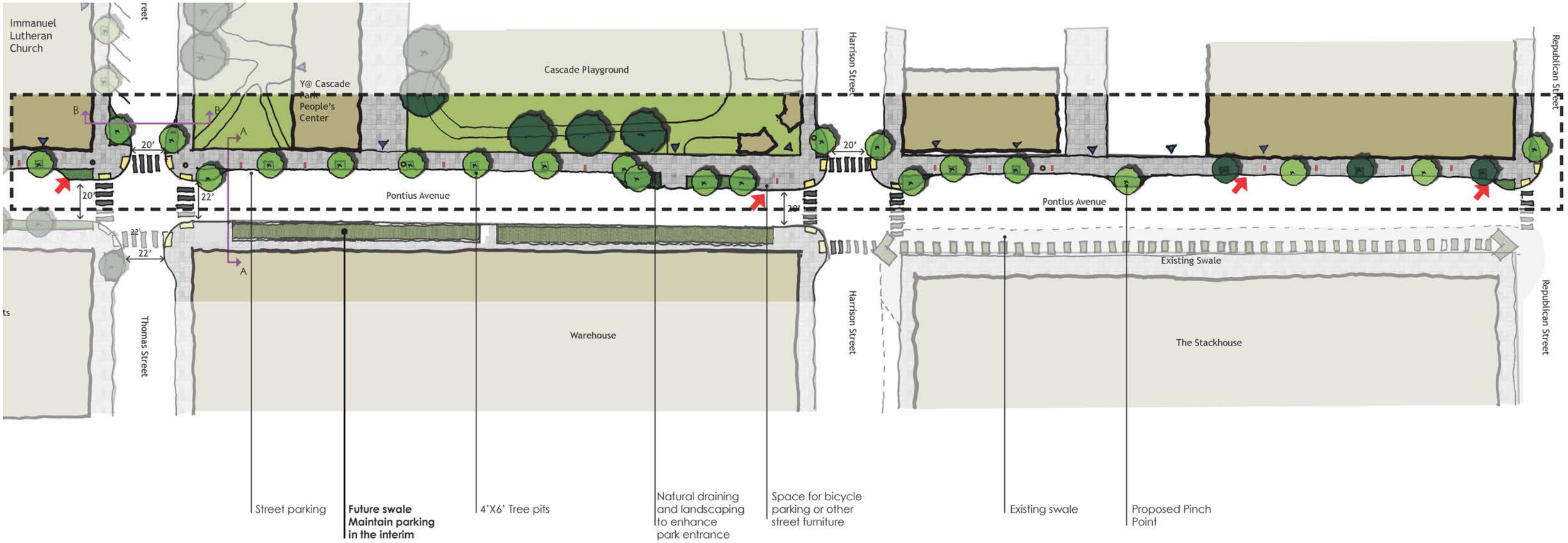


3 Proposed improvements at Pontius Avenue N and John Street

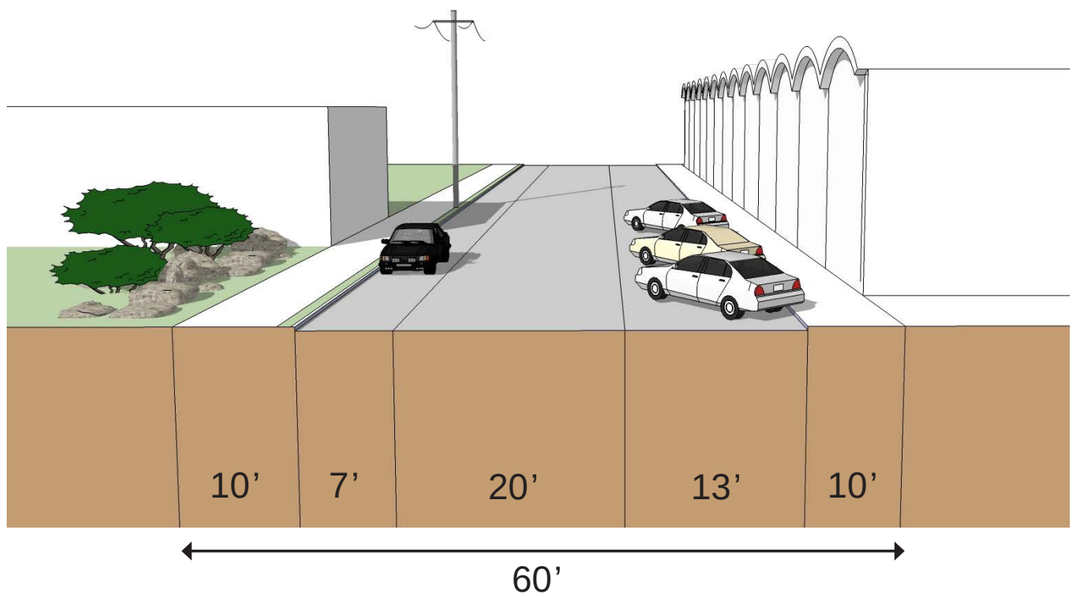


Concept Plan Details

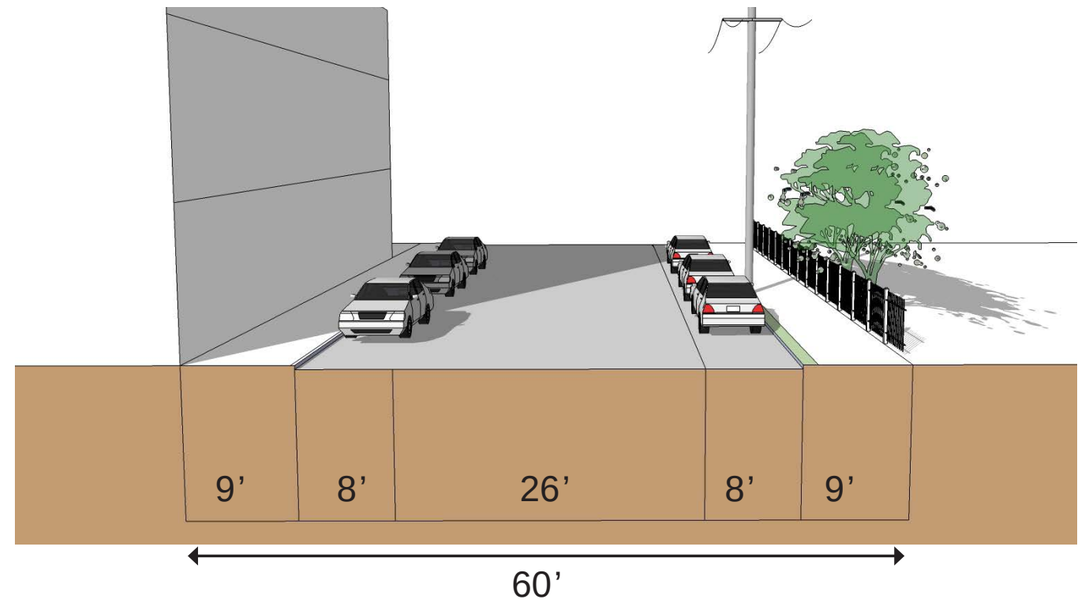
4 Proposed improvements along Pontius Avenue N



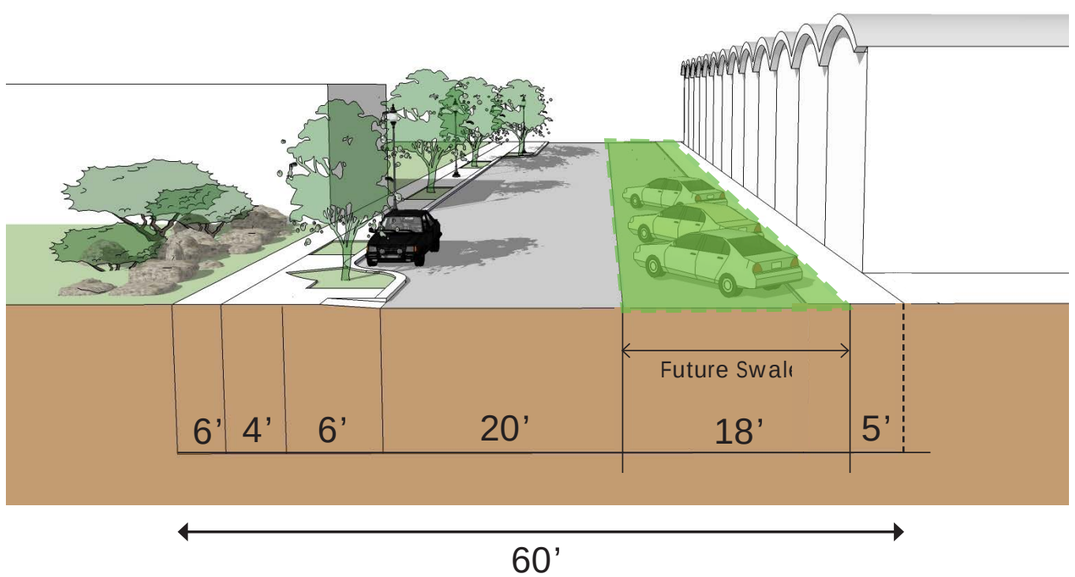
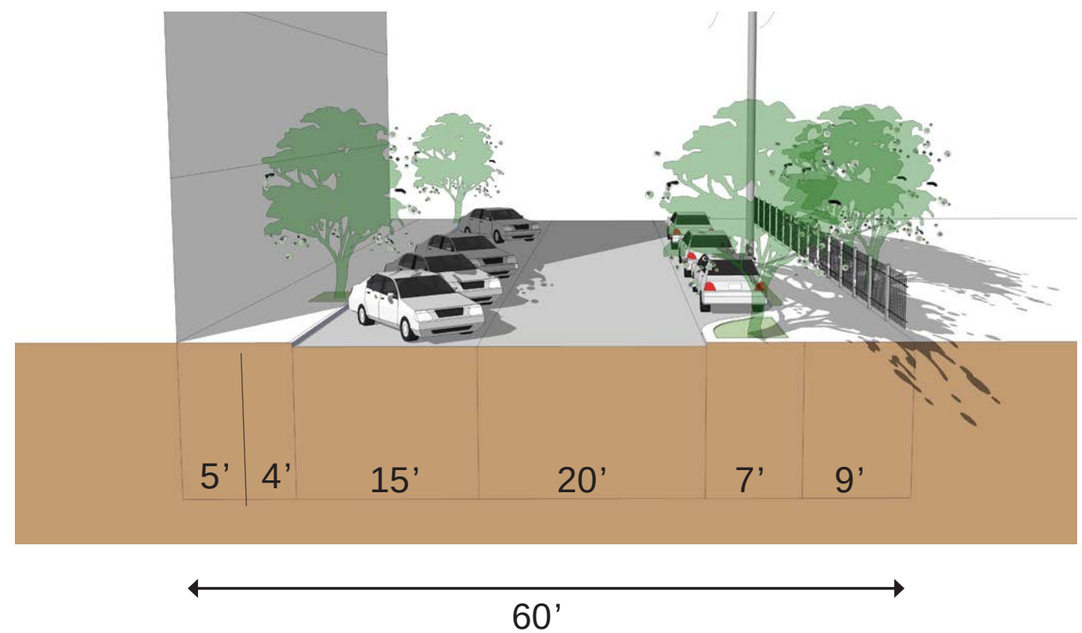
PONTIUS AVE N EXISTING SECTION **facing north**



THOMAS STREET EXISTING SECTION **facing west**



PONTIUS AVE N PROPOSED SECTION **facing north**



THOMAS STREET PROPOSED SECTION **facing west**