



 **Chicago Avenue Streetscape**
Village of Oak Park, IL

INTRODUCTION

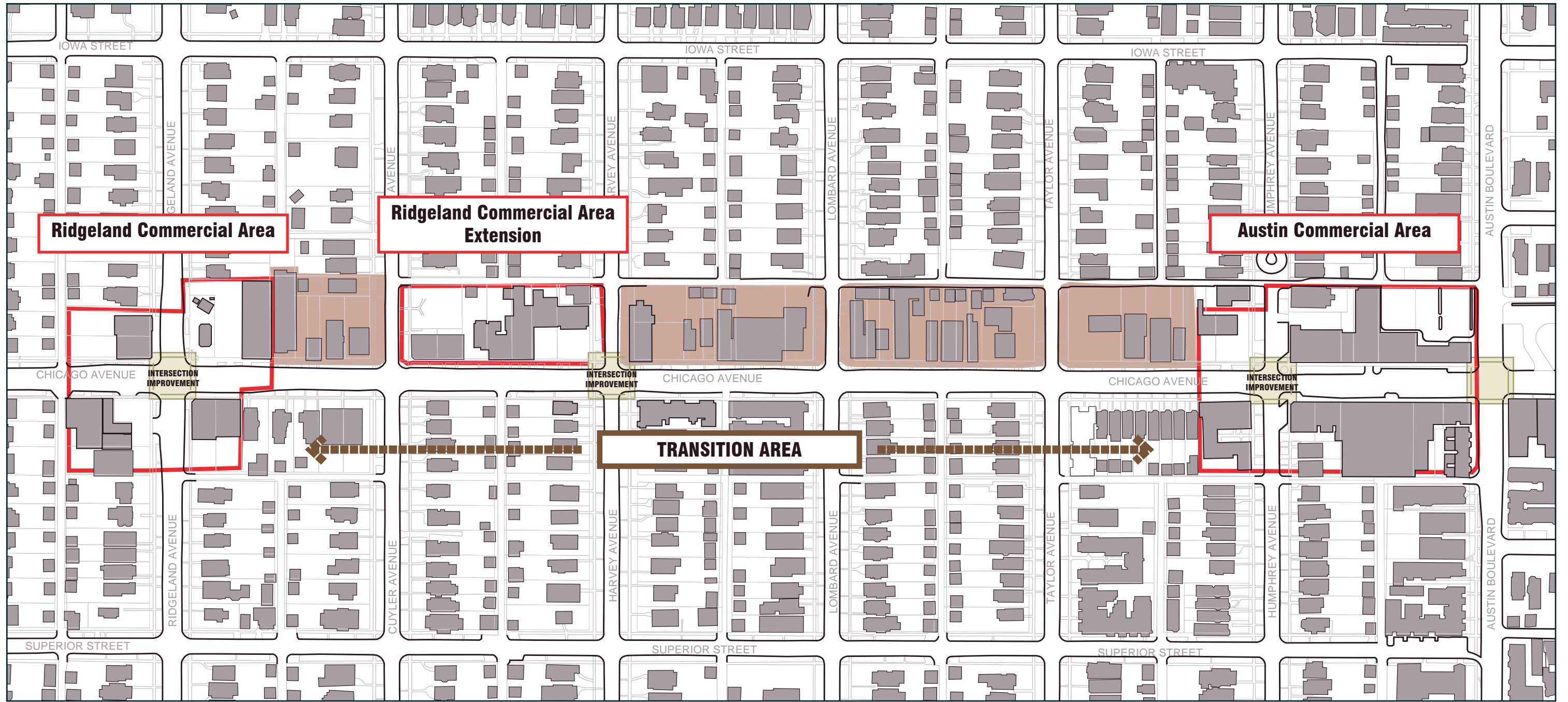
In February of 2006 the Chicago Avenue Neighborhood Plan was adopted by the Village Board for the revitalization of Chicago Avenue. The Planning team was led by SCB and included Business Districts Inc., Neighborhoods Capital Institute, and Fish Transportation Group. After a series of studies and community meetings a set of guidelines and principles to revitalize this area were developed collectively with the Team, Village representatives and Community. The Chicago Avenue Neighborhood Plan identified that the District could greatly benefit by improving the existing streetscape, thereby promoting pedestrian activity in the retail and residential areas. This document pertains to the streetscape design of Chicago Avenue between Austin Boulevard and Ridgeland Avenue.

The Plan for the area recognizes that the District is primarily residential in character with retail occurring at key intersections of Austin, Humphrey, and Ridgeland. These three retail nodes were identified as special areas which could accommodate more detailed streetscape improvements than the predominantly residential areas in the District (strategy diagram: page 3). Using this strategy SCB further developed the initial concepts as recommended by the Neighborhood Plan for the streetscape design along Chicago Avenue. The streetscape concepts strengthen these existing retail nodes and provide a more pedestrian friendly environment in the rest of the residential areas of the District by adding pedestrian lighting and special pavers at the intersections and bump-outs in the retail areas. Improving the basic street elements can be a strong step forward in the overall redevelopment of the District.



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Ridgeland Commercial



Ridgeland Commercial Extension



Austin Commercial



CURB CUTS BETWEEN AUSTIN AND TAYLOR

Curb cuts are a critical access issue to properties but can be poorly located, too wide, or there can be too many curb cuts. For that reason the team inventoried the curb cut locations and made the following recommendations on placement of curb cuts in the District.

A. Reduce the existing curb cut onto Chicago Avenue from the Chicagoland Auto lot to 24'.

B. Close this existing curb cut and access off Lombard to the Chicagoland Auto Lot.

C. Close this existing curb cut and access to Lombard to the Marathon gas station

D. Reduce the width of the curb cut on to Chicago Avenue from the Marathon gas station lot to 24'.

E. Reduce the width of the curb cut on to Chicago Avenue from the Marathon gas station lot to 24'.



CURB CUTS BETWEEN HARVEY AND RIDGELAND

A. Remove existing apron and close this curb cut and access off Chicago Avenue to the Seven- Eleven Lot.

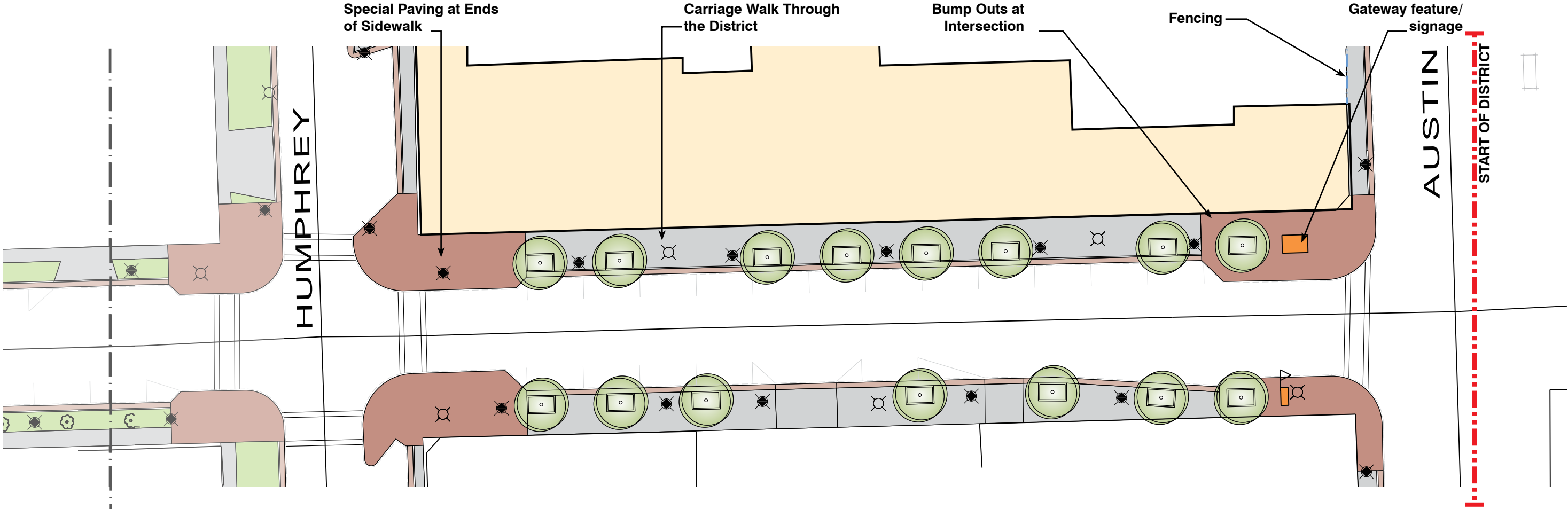
A1. Close curb cut on Harvey into 7-11 parking lot after reaching agreement on a combined parking lot with property owners.

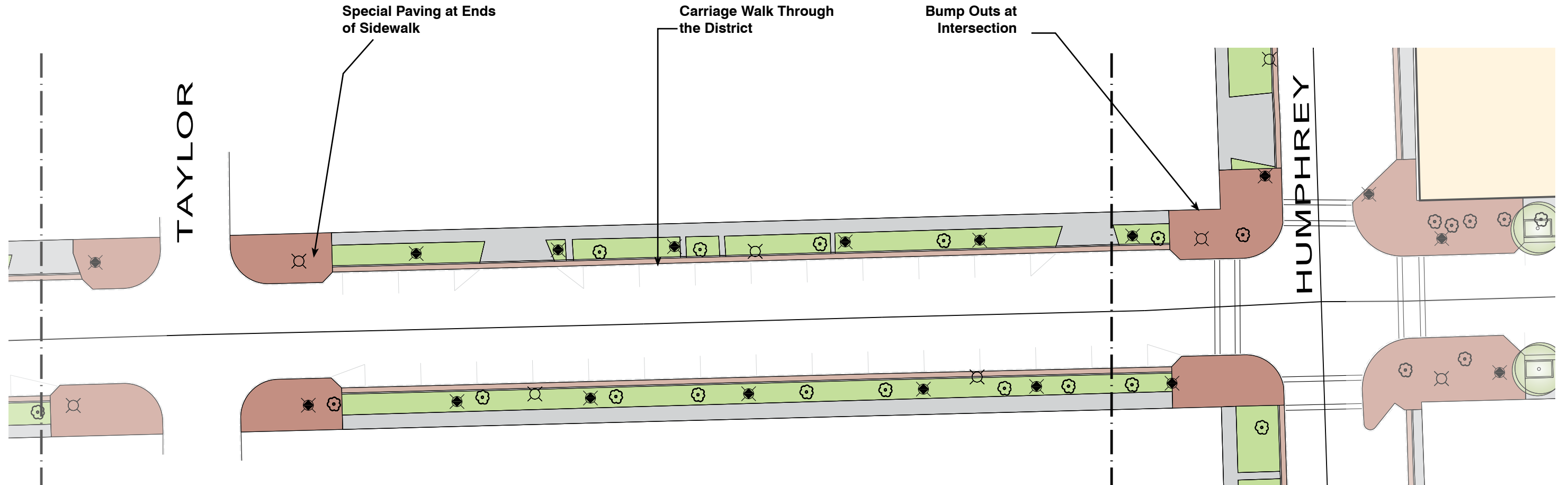
B. Reduce the width of the curb cut on to Chicago Avenue from the Shopping Center lot to 24'.

C. Combine the Seven Eleven and Shopping Center parking lots with a single access off Chicago Avenue.

D. Implement a loading zone at Oak Leyden to make it ADA compliant.

E. Close this existing curb cut and access to Ridgeland Avenue to the Clark gas station.





Concept Design for Streetscape Improvements Between Humphrey and Taylor



Northwest Corner of Austin/Chicago

Improvements such as widened sidewalks, larger corners, pedestrian lighting, landscaped parkways, and esthetically pleasing signage and street furniture will enhance the District. These additions will create more walkable and pedestrian oriented environments for residents, merchants and shoppers.



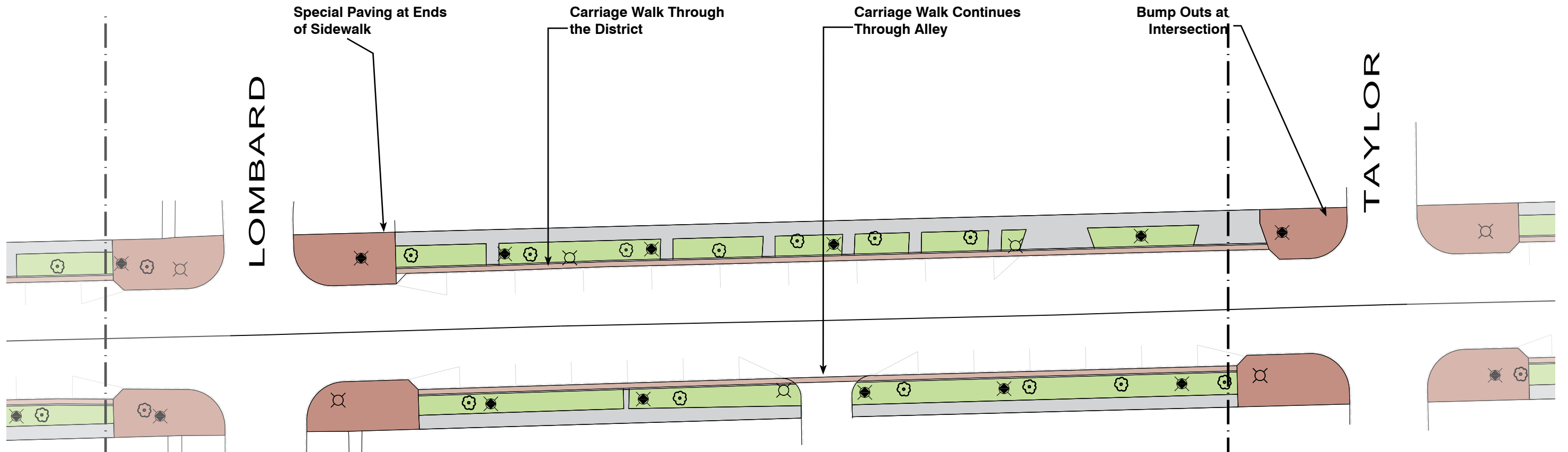
Austin Ave Looking West Down Chicago Ave.

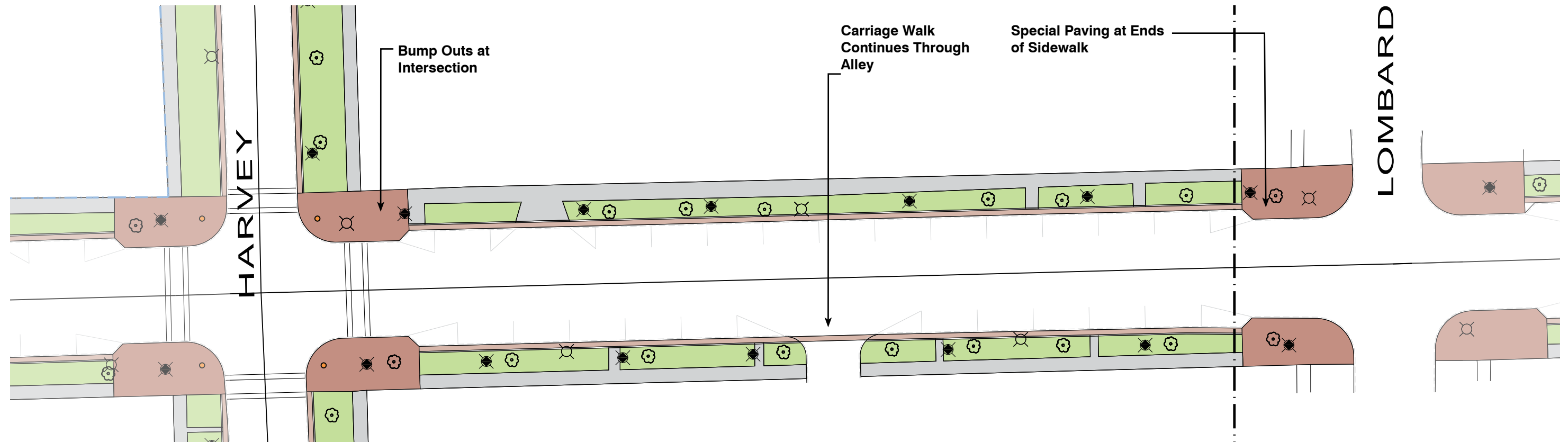
Eliminating the right turn lane will enable the sidewalks to be wider and allow for street trees. Included with the increase in sidewalk width is the addition of a bicycle lane on either side for a safer biking environment.



Southeast Corner of Austin/Chicago

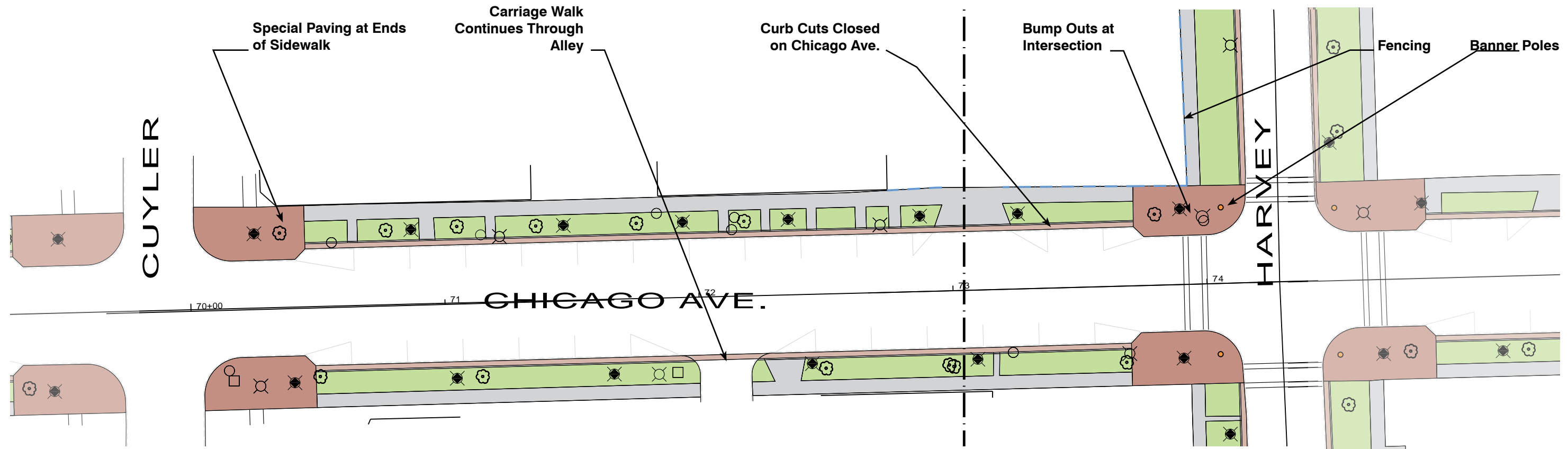
The addition of planters and new tree wells will make Chicago Avenue a pleasant place to shop both day and night. The addition of elegant pedestrian light fixtures will create an atmosphere of safety for both residents and shoppers and enhance the area's desirability.





SOUTH LOMBARD - HARVEY

Concept Design for Streetscape Improvements Between Lombard and Harvey



SOUTH HARVEY - CUYLER

Concept Design for Streetscape Improvements Between Harvey and Cuyler



Northwest Corner of Harvey/Chicago (Site Photo)

In this area there are three wide curb cuts close to the Harvey and Chicago intersection which is causing congestion and conflict with pedestrians. The traffic going in and out of the 7-11 is an issue and common complaint of neighbors.



7-11 Sign on Harvey/Chicago

Tall signs are desirable to retailers but considered unsightly by neighbors. These types of signs, though effective, are often directed toward drivers and do not create a cohesive streetscape and pedestrian oriented environment.



Northwest Corner of Harvey/Chicago (Street Level)

Combining the two parking lots into one and closing curb cuts will improve the sidewalk conflict. It will also increase the number of parking spaces as well as provide space for additional street trees, pedestrian lighting, and village signage markers.

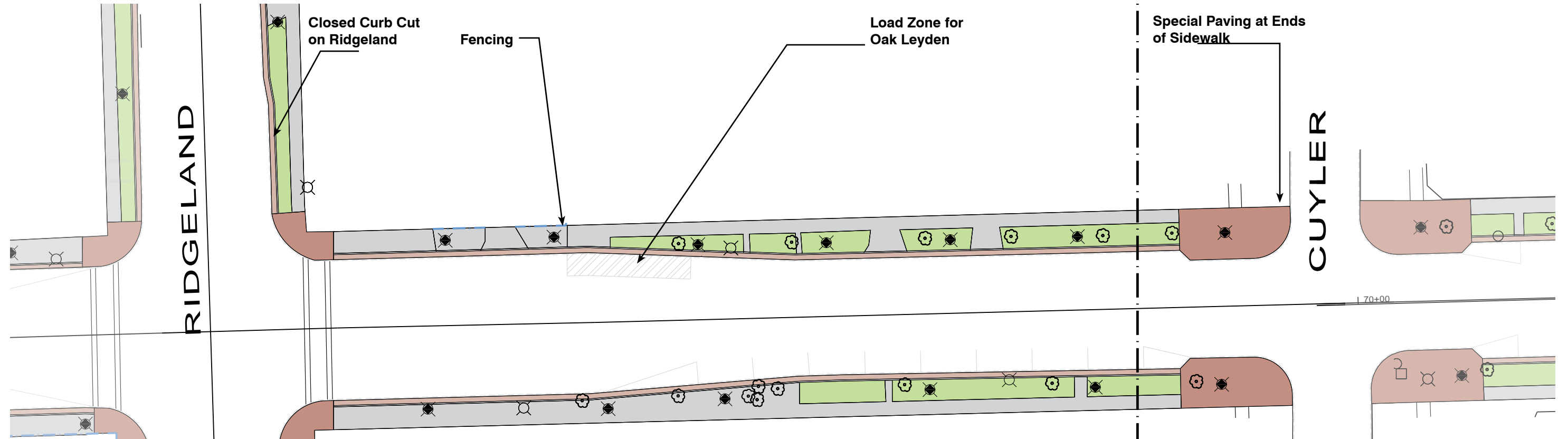
** Note: Harvey curb cut to be closed and access to parking lot consolidated with Chicago Avenue curb cut*



Northwest Corner of Harvey/Chicago

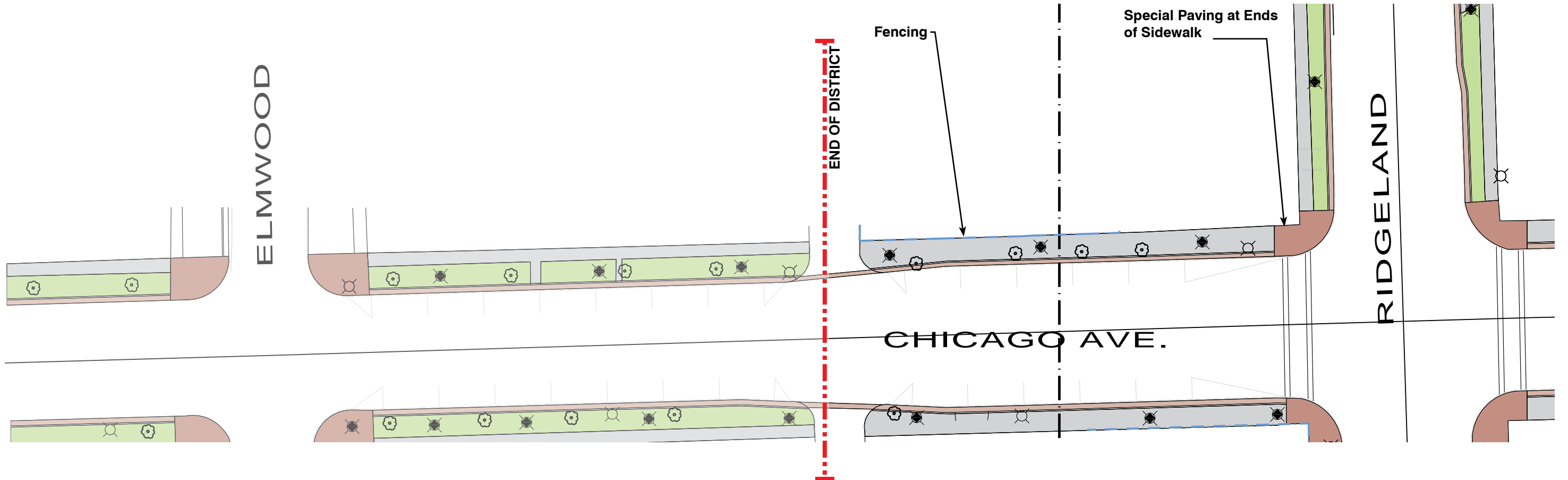
Creating a signage fence defines the corner and reduces the visual clutter. The wrought iron fence will help in defining the street edge and the additional hedges will create a more pedestrian friendly and beautiful environment. The use of this green wall will also contribute in screening the large open parking lot which can detract from the image of the District and streetscape.

** Note: Harvey curb cut to be closed and access to parking lot consolidated with Chicago Avenue curb cut*



SOUTH CUYLER- RIDGELAND

Concept Design for Streetscape Improvements Between Cuyler and Ridgeland



SOUTH ELMWOOD - RIDGELAND

Concept Design for Streetscape Improvements Between Elmwood and Ridgeland



Looking West Down Chicago Ave in Ridgeland Commercial District

The implementation of more pedestrian light fixtures will help infuse a sense of safety and elegance to the District. A special drop off and loading zone is identified in front of Oak Leyden to provide a safe patient drop off in front of the building.



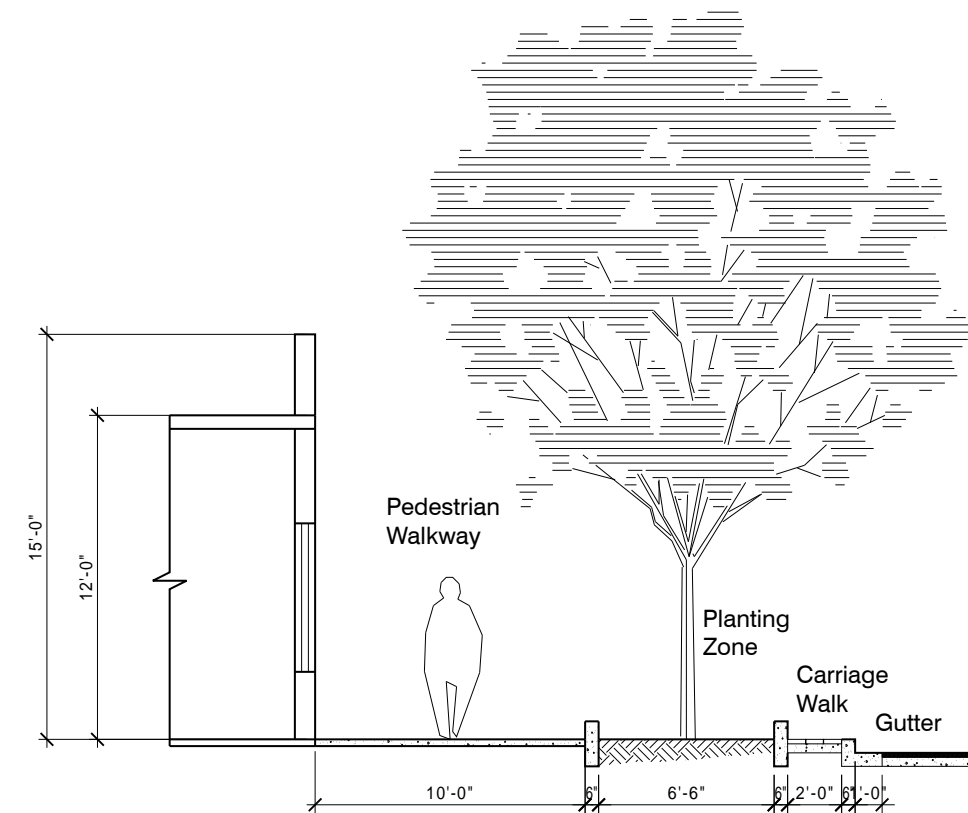
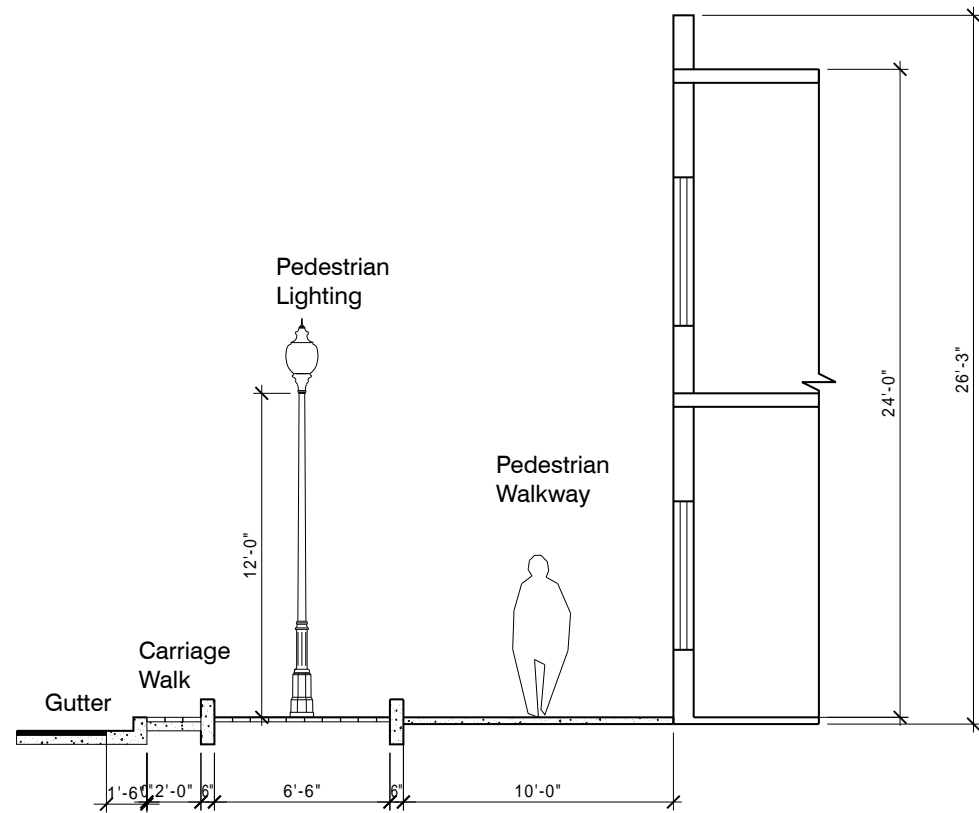
Ridgeland/Elmwood Intersection

Recognizable crosswalks will be implemented around the District to create a sense of safety for those crossing the street at all times of the day. The addition of these crosswalks unify the District as a whole and will distinguish the business district from other residential neighborhoods in the Village.



Looking East Down Chicago Ave in Ridgeland Commercial District

The building on the southwest corner of Chicago Avenue at Ridgeland is set back from the edge of the street and a parking lot fronts the intersection. The addition of fencing with ornamental plant material will be installed along Chicago Avenue at Ridgeland to create a more esthetically pleasing environment and define the pedestrian zone.



Typical Street Sections

New sidewalks will include a carriage walk (or decorative paving strip), new pedestrian light fixtures, and wide sidewalks for pedestrians. New paving patterns will be used for the carriage walk and around the light fixtures. Additional planting such as hanging baskets could be attached to the light fixtures. To the right is a photo of a typical light fixture, pavers and sidewalk construction.



Pedestrian Sidewalk Light



Electrical With Pavers

Typical Street Sections

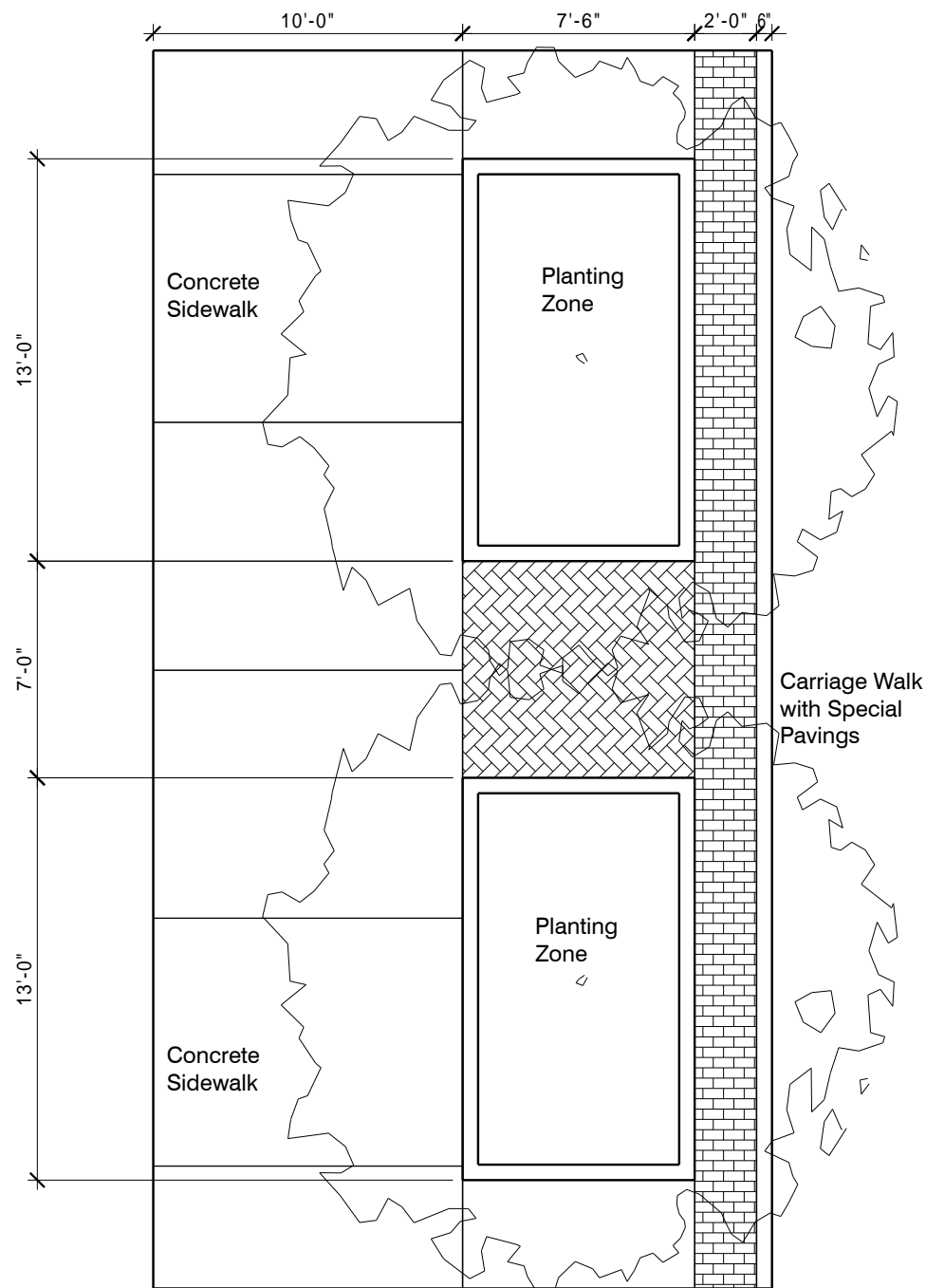
All blocks in the District will include street trees, either existing or new. The trees will be given a planting bed for growth and possible ornamental plantings. A carriage walk will be located along the street side adjacent to the parking lane. Larger sidewalks will be constructed at the corners or along retail facades to provide more space for walking, cafes, and other activities. Examples are shown of how street trees and planting beds will enhance Chicago Avenue.



Sidewalk Typology



Sidewalk Typology



Planting Plan

The design along Chicago Avenue between Austin and Humphrey will include new street tree planters. Trees will be located in pairs along the strip and contained within a small planting bed. New paving material and designs will be used for the areas between the tree beds and for the carriage walks. The two examples of trees that may be implemented in the design are the Chicago Blues Black Locust and the Triumph Elm. Both trees are commonly used in these streetscape applications because of their durability and high branching capabilities. The paving patterns and paver types are specified for their resistance to high traffic areas and esthetically pleasing look.

Tree Typologies



Chicago Blues Black Locust



Triumph (Morton Glossy) Elm

Sustainable Streetscape Concepts

- Mitigate urban heat island
Specify high reflective paving materials and/or provide shading of the paving surface by trees, building awnings, etc. See LEED-NC SSc7.1 technical specifications.
- Street trees
Specify trees (and parkway planter plant material) that does not require pesticide application or have pesticide alternatives for pest and disease control. Specify trees and plant materials which are drought tolerant and do not require irrigation after three years. Specify trees and plant materials which are native or native adapted.
- Permeable paving
Design paving systems which to allow for water infiltration, e.g. paver blocks/bricks, permeable concrete. Design sub-surface to support tree root growth and take advantage of rainwater that filters through paving surface.
- Life cycle analysis of major materials
Investigate the composition, place of manufacture and extraction, embedded energy / carbon footprint, longevity, cost, recycled content, end-of-life recycling / disposal, toxicity, installation process, etc. to guide material selection.
- Sedimentation control / erosion control
Utilize sedimentation control / erosion control measures during construction to prevent sedimentation introduction into sewer system.
- Lighting
Light pollution: Specify full cut-off fixtures, minimize or eliminate up-lighting, utilize ANSI/ASHRAE/IESNA 90.1 2004 standards for exterior lighting, minimize light trespass into neighboring properties and buildings. Energy efficiency / Mercury content: Specify energy efficient lamps with long life and will low levels of mercury content.
- Recycle construction waste.
- Investigate photovoltaic and small scale wind turbines for power supply to lighting. Battery storage is an issue.
- Create attractive bus stops to encourage transit use.
- Install bike racks and/or storage lockers.

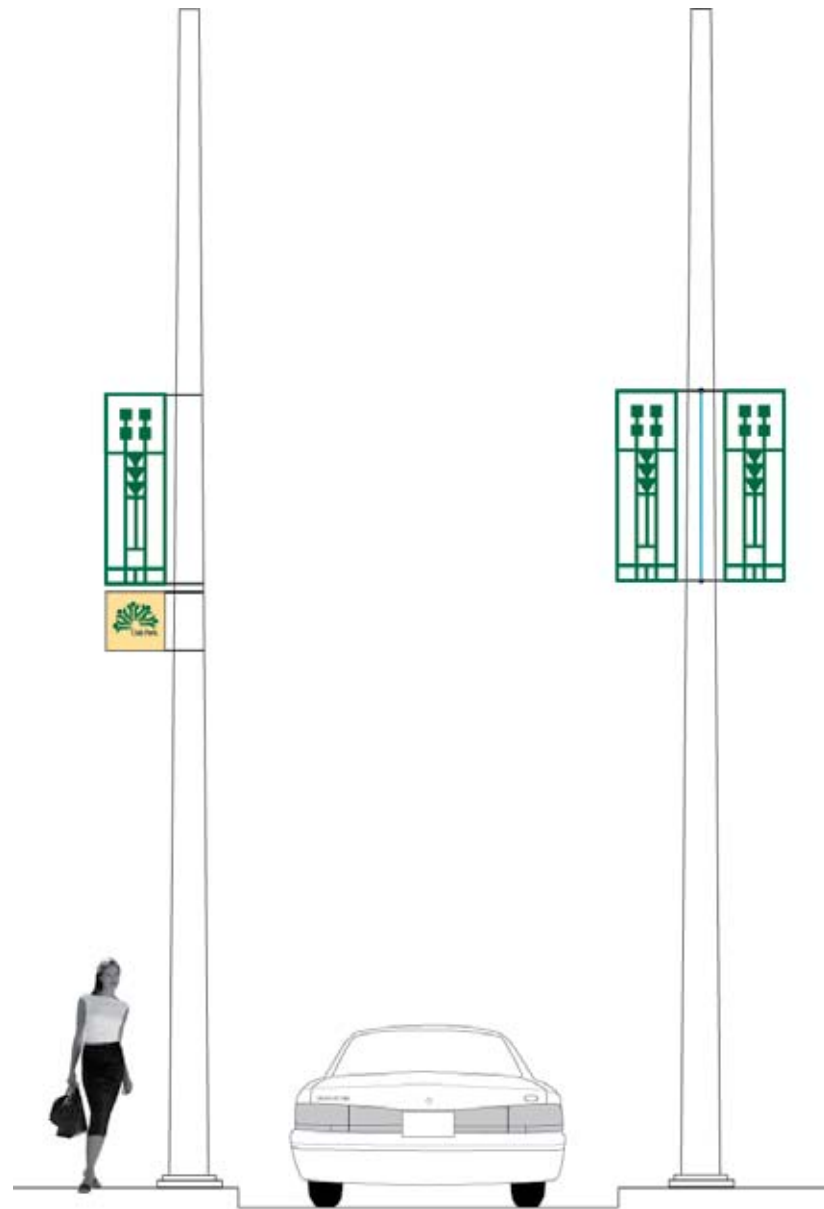
Paving Typologies



Paving Pattern

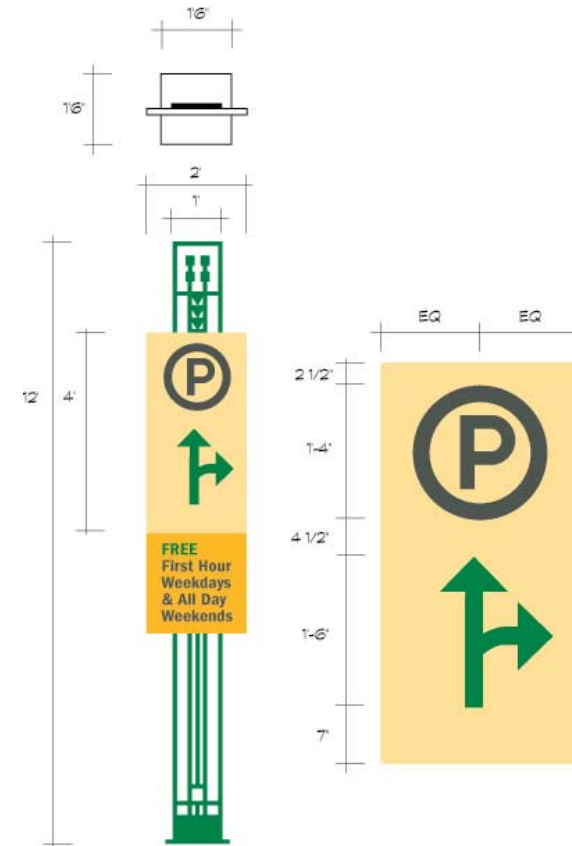
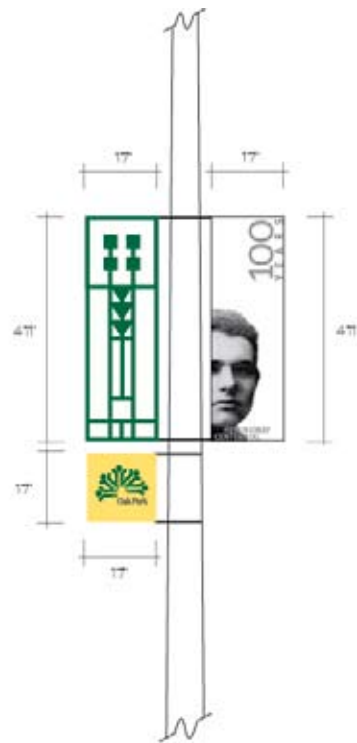


Paving Pattern / Typologies



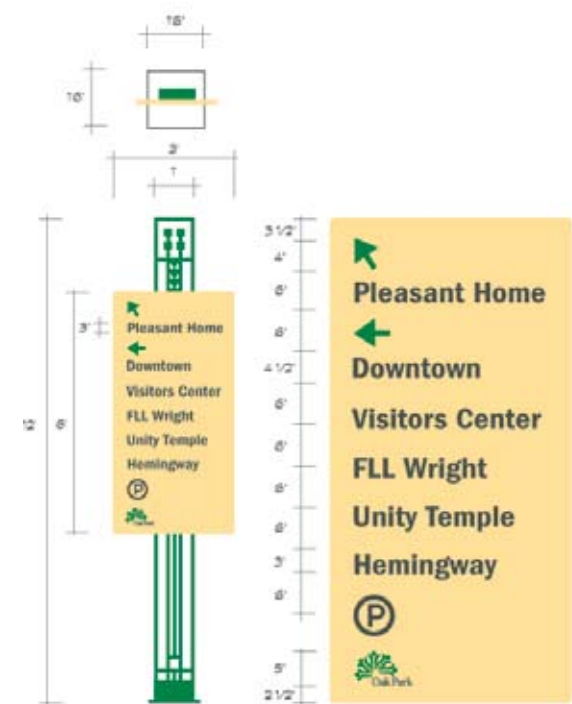
Gateway Entrance

Pole banners and pylons will be implemented at strategic locations around the District. They will be used to create a sense of place and identify an entrance into the District. The banners will have the Oak Park emblem and interchangeable banners that can be replaced with the change in seasons or special events. The pylons will be used primarily as symbols of gateways, and announcing the entrance to Oak Park



Parking Directional

Special directional signs will be installed around the District. They will be used to direct vehicles to exiting public parking locations in the neighborhood. The signage will be designed to be useful and create a stylistic ambiance around the new streetscape.



Vehicular Directional

Destination banners will be implemented on Chicago Avenue between Austin and Humphrey. They will be used to direct visitors to popular destinations in and around the Village of Oak Park. They will be coordinated with other signage to create a unified characteristic for the District.

VILLAGE OF OAK PARK

Oak Park Streetscape
2006302.000
March 20, 2006

Summary Count	Linear
Carriage Walk	5,000
Crosswalk	400
Fencing	700

Summary Count	Number
Pedestrian Light Fixtures	116
Crosswalks	11
Trees	15
Banner Poles	6
Benches	6
Bike Racks	5
Entry Pylons	2

Summary Count of New Sidewalk	Linear
Walk between Austin and Humphrey	800
Walk between Austin and Alleys	300
Walk between Humphrey and Alleys	600
Walk between Harvey and Alleys	600
Walk between Ridgeland and Alleys	910



Bicycle Racks

The range of bicycle racks is very diverse. Many are very artistically beautiful and ornate. They can be installed in a variety of places from street corners to store fronts. These bike racks can be a design feature and add character to the District.

City Benches

These stylistic benches are just a few that the city can implement into its streetscape design. Benches are very important in any streetscape design. They bring a sense of comfort and elegance to the outdoors, which can be sometimes rugged and uncomfortable.

Questions and Comments from the Community March 9, 2006

During the design process the SCB team met with several community members to help create a successful new streetscape. We would like to thank them for their efforts. These are some of their comments and questions they had about the final design.

Q: When will the project start and when will it finish?

A: The project is scheduled to have completed construction by November 2006. The final landscape elements and planting will be completed by Spring 2007.

Q: There was some discussion as part of the details of the plan regarding the type of trees that were being considered for the streetscape. It has been mentioned that the trees will not have low branches that will block the view to the retailers' windows. Oak Park is wonderful in the fall with the color of leaves. Has there been any thought to the usage of foliage that will have fall colors?

A: It is a good idea that will be brought up with the landscape architects as species to consider.

Q: How do you currently get to the alley in the back of the Laundromat on Austin?

A: Access to the parking lot is possible in two ways; off the alley from Humphrey or by making a left turn off Austin into the alley and parking lot.

Q: Are the improvements going to add traffic to the alley?

A: The parking lot is currently not used to full potential. The alley will be improved as part of the streetscape as will the parking lot itself. The idea is to have this parking lot serve the retailers in the area better.

Comment: The access to the parking lot will work better by directing people off Austin instead of the alley.

Q: Does the streetscape address the overall appearance of the buildings and retail facades along Chicago Avenue.

A: As part of the Chicago Avenue Neighborhood Plan, the appearance of buildings was addressed and the Plan strongly recommends that all retailers in the District make use of the façade improvement programs that are currently offered by the Village. ACE is a good example of a business that has undergone this program recently.

Q: Is the 7-Eleven going to agree to put the fence on their property? Will there be any coordination with the property owners?

A: The 7-Eleven will be contacted by the Village on this matter, and if agreeable the fence will be covered as part of the costs for the streetscape project.

Comments: There is an increased risk of loitering close to the Austin Intersection and the addition of bump-outs and benches could add to this issue. There is poor maintenance of planting in other parts of Oak Park which have undergone streetscape improvements. There is no guarantee that these improvements on Chicago Avenue will be well maintained and continue to look appealing one year from the completion of the project.

The lighting that is being added to the District needs to be thoughtful towards the residents in the neighborhood and should not create glare in to windows.

A: Lighting fixtures will have shields on the residential sides that prevent glare in to adjacent residential windows. Maintenance and loitering issues will be monitored for

the District and will require both merchants and Village coordination.

Q: Along Austin Avenue, where does the Village boundary line lie? Wasn't the lighting plan along Austin Boulevard done as a joint project with Chicago?

A: Oak Park extends on the East up to the centerline of Austin Boulevard. Yes, additional pedestrian fixtures were added to existing streetlights along Austin and this was done as a joint project with the City of Chicago.

Q: Will proposed trees provide an array of colors similar to the Fall?

A: To be determined by DLK.

Q: Are there proposed enhancements for improved parking access to the retail parking lot located northwest of the intersection of Chicago Avenue and Austin Boulevard?

A: Vehicular directional signs will guide westbound consumers to the Humphrey Avenue entrance for the Chicago Avenue corridor. The alley can also be accessed by entering the Austin Boulevard entrance north of Chicago Avenue. Residents expressed much concern over increased traffic volumes along the Chicago Avenue corridor and through the alley for parking lots access.

Q: Are there any plans to provide parking barriers or restrictions at the Marathon parking lot to prevent patrons from parking on the sidewalk pavement?

A: SCB stated that potential fencing and/or reduced curb depressions shall mitigate the problem.

Comment: the residents complained about the incessant installation of signs and banners throughout the Commercial District, stating that excessive signage causes visual pollution.

Q: Residents expressed concern that proposed hardscape and furniture improvements could cause an increase in loitering activity near the intersection of Chicago Avenue and Austin Boulevard.

A: SCB stated that increase maintenance of parkways and business fronts with collaborative efforts by the Village and retailers shall deter loitering throughout the District.

Q: Residents raised concern over the brightness of pedestrian lighting. The residents suggested that existing pedestrian lighting along Austin Boulevard is too bright and excessive lighting is causing pollution into bedroom windows of adjacent homes. A resident suggested that ecological hooded lights and residential shields be installed to reduce the intensity of light directed towards homes.

A: SCB stated that lighting fixtures shall incorporate shields at the residential side of the fixture to prevent glare into adjacent residential windows.

Q: Can left turn signalization be added to the Ridgeland Avenue intersection to reduce congestion?

A: The Village Planner stated that this issue would be forwarded to the Engineering Department.

Village Board Recommendations March 20, 2006

On this date the Village Board of Oak Park approved the Chicago Avenue Streetscape conceptual plan and had these comments and recommendations.

Comment: Add bump outs at Cuyler, Lombard, and Taylor.

Comment: Close Harvey curb cut into 7-11 parking lot. Combine parking lot with two property owners and provide access off of Chicago Avenue.