

# **Vermont Corridor Design & Development Proposal**

**Presented to**

**The Community Redevelopment Agency**

**By**

**Community Development & Design Forum (CDDF)**

**School of Policy, Planning, & Development**

**University of Southern California**

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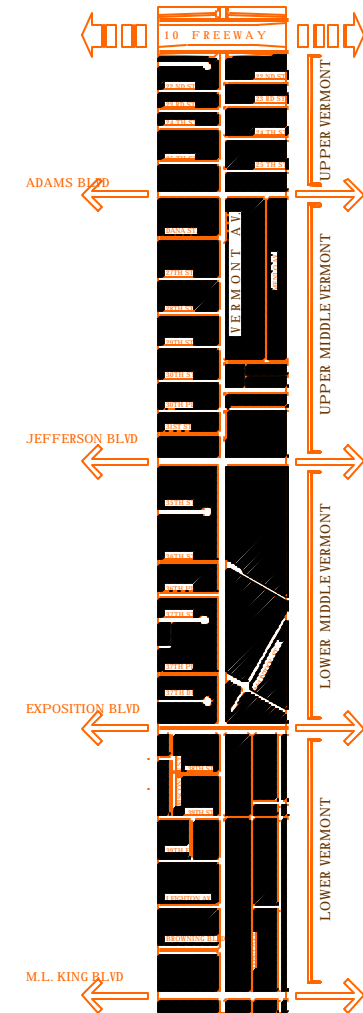
**Karen Hsu, Research Associate**

**Pakshi Rajan, Research Associate**

**November 19, 1998**

# Presentation Outline

- **Stage I: Findings**
  - Physical conditions
  - Social conditions
  - Economic conditions
  - Business survey results
- **Stage II: Vision & Recommendations**
  - **Vision**
  - **Scenarios**
    - Short Term: Minimal Intervention
    - Long Term: Final Scenario
  - **Recommendations**
    - Physical Development
    - Economic Development



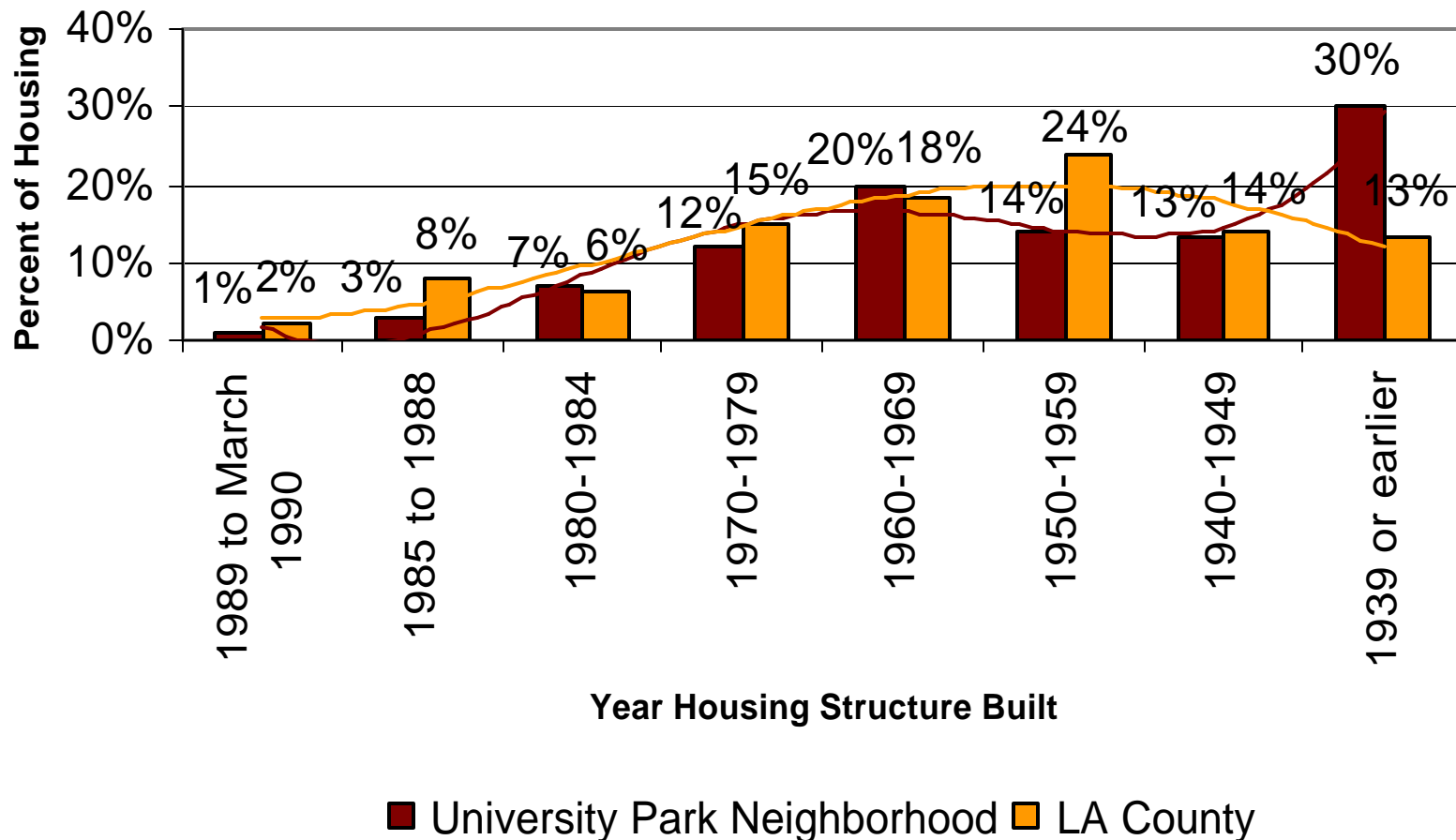
# Land Use

- Land use predominantly commercial mixed with various institutional uses flanked by residential edge within short distance



# Housing Stock

- Housing stock is old - in need of rehabilitation
- 57% of the housing stock in the study area was built before 1960.



# Underutilization & Deferred Maintenance

- Vacant lots and under-utilized lots are scattered throughout the Corridor



**Non-conforming uses, buildings lacking maintenance and incidences of graffiti are observed in all segments of the corridor**

# Lack of Identity/Image

- Most of the street-front businesses have collapsible iron shutters or grilles; parking lots have chain link fence or iron grilles that project an unsafe image of the corridor
- Instances of broken curbs, sidewalks, and street surfaces are abundant all along the corridor
- Melange of signage using a variety of elements





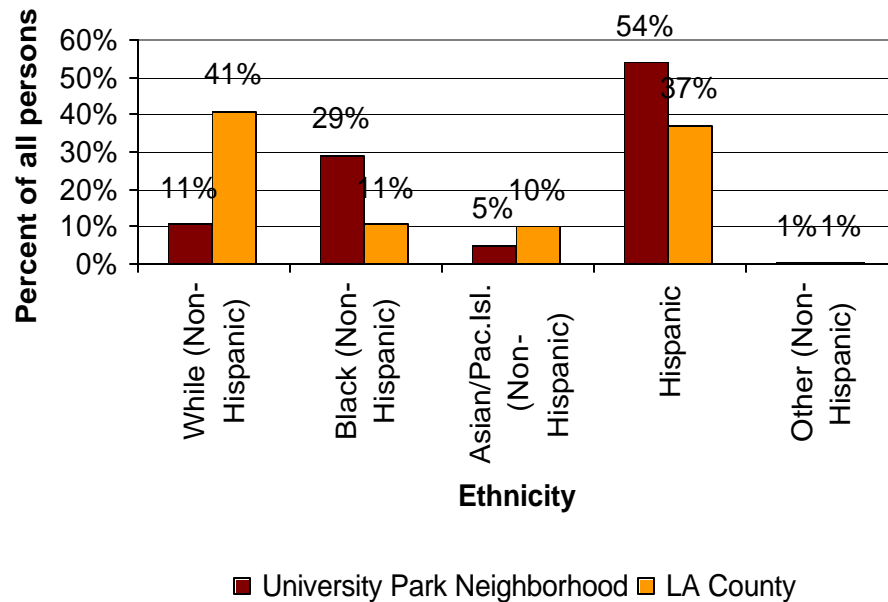
# Parking

- **Significant demand for parking in the Lower Middle and Upper Middle segments due to**
  - **USC and significant unbroken long edges that rules out any side street parking opportunities**
- **Demand for parking in Lower Vermont is low**
- **In Upper Vermont demand is partially alleviated by side street parking**

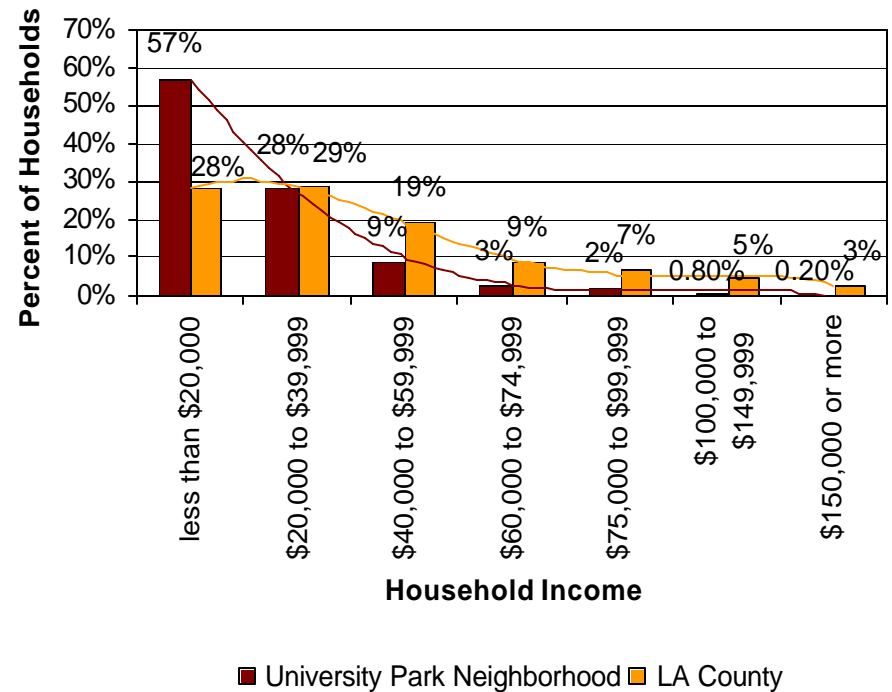


# Demographics

- Ethnically diverse community



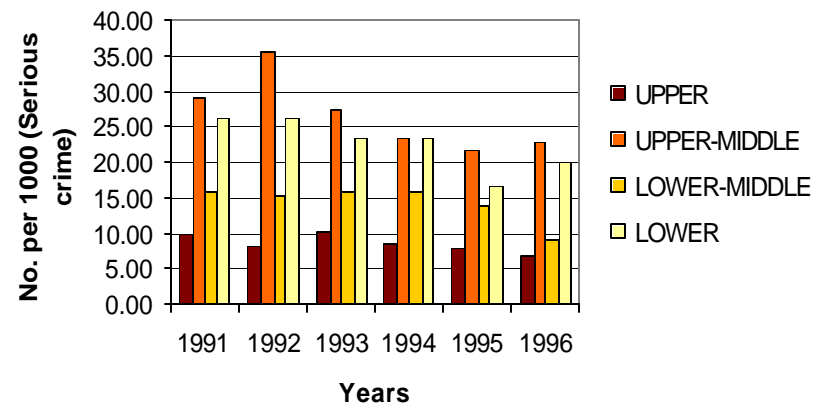
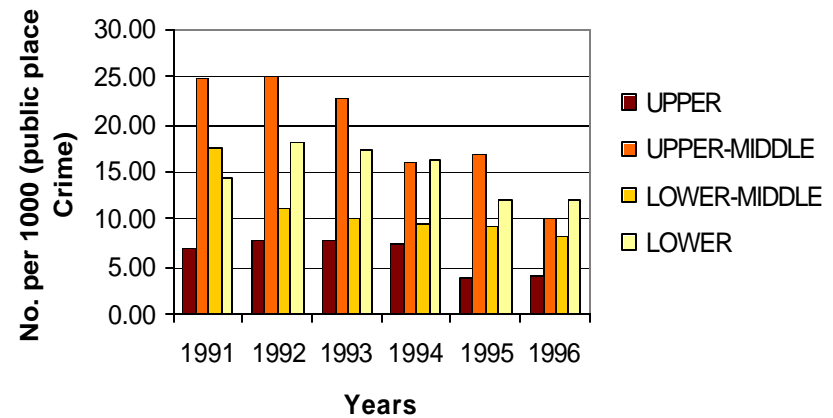
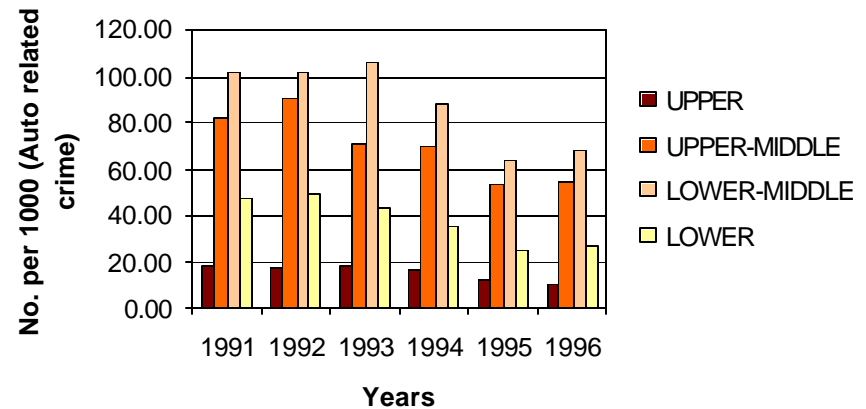
- Median household income of the Project Area is less than \$20,000





# Crime

- Level of crime is steadily decreasing in the corridor
- Upper Vermont has least number of incidences of crime (per capita) in the corridor
- Upper Middle, Lower Middle and Lower Vermont have relatively high levels of crime
- Perception of crime in the corridor in general is high
- 80% of the merchants surveyed in Upper Vermont suggested that reduced crime would improve their business



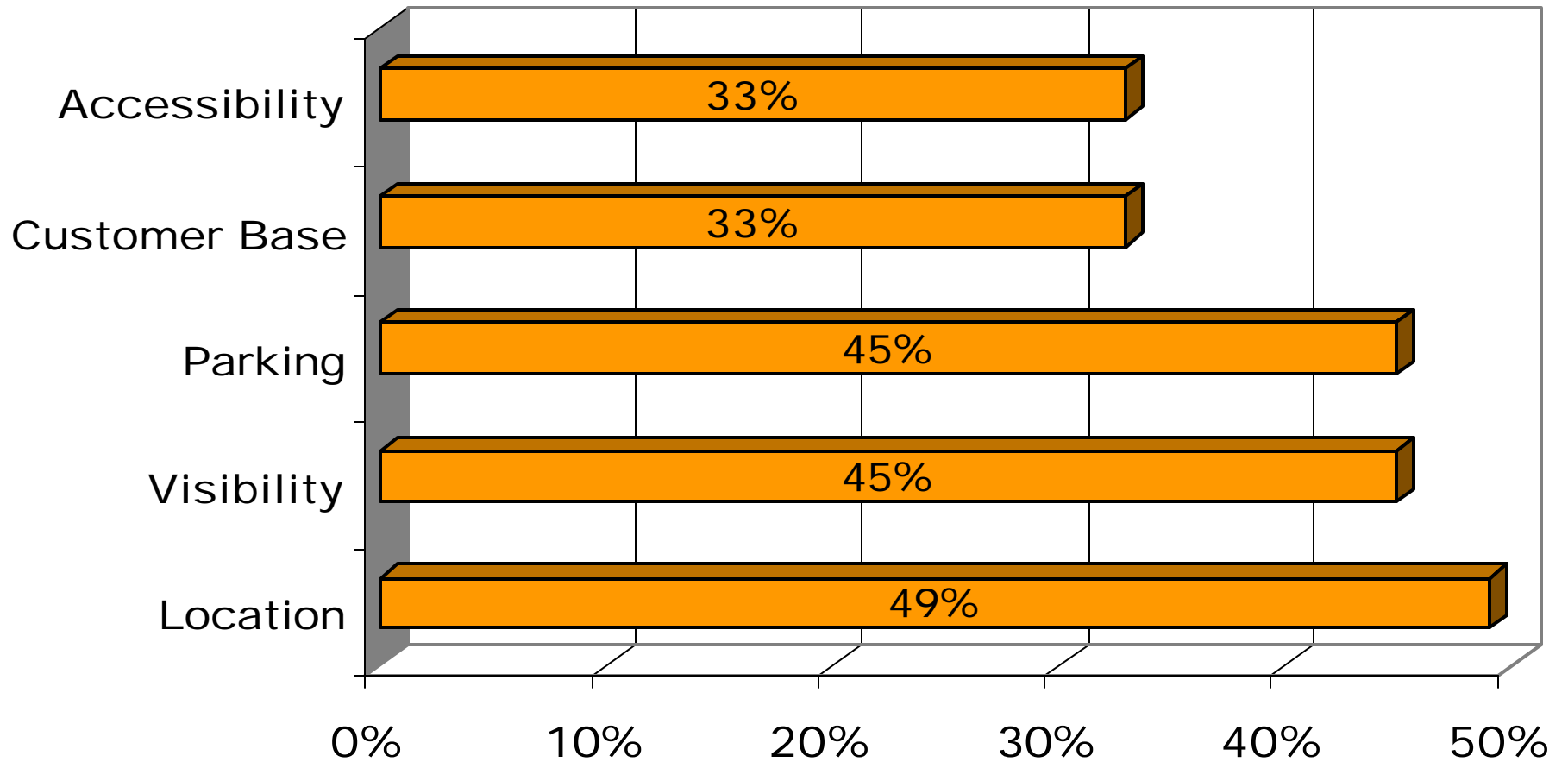
# Economic Conditions

- **Primary economic sectors in the Project Area\* are Service, Manufacturing and Retail Trade**
- **Service industry produces a higher proportion of jobs while Retail produces higher proportion of revenues compared to the larger zip code area and County**
- **During 1990 to 1994, LA County lost 10% of the jobs, while the Project Area lost 18% of the jobs**
- **Growth in only two industries had significant positive impact on employment:**
  - **personal services (+3%) and social services (+2%)**

**\*Project Area includes zipcodes 90007 and 90037**

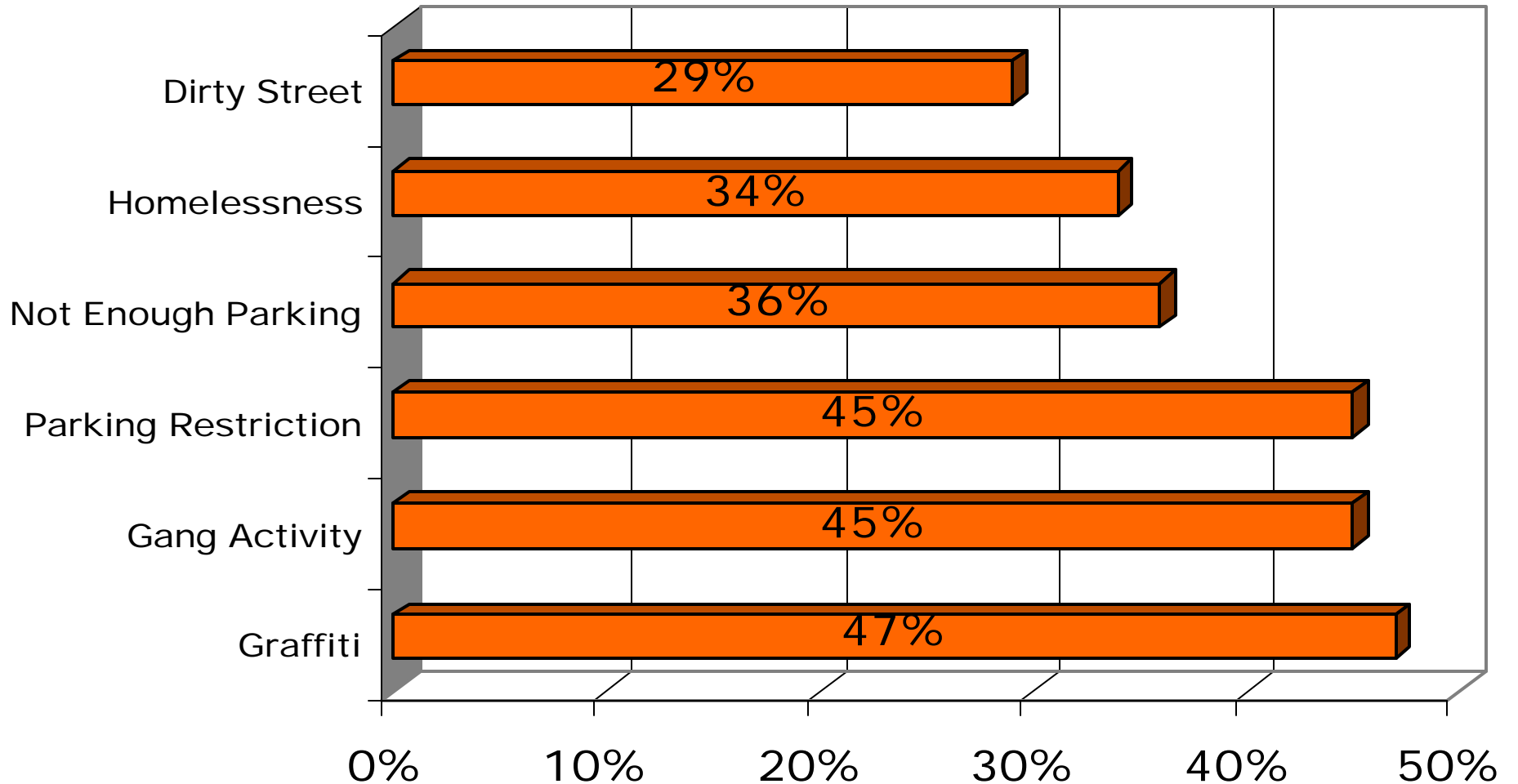
# Business Survey Findings

## ADVANTAGES of Locating Business



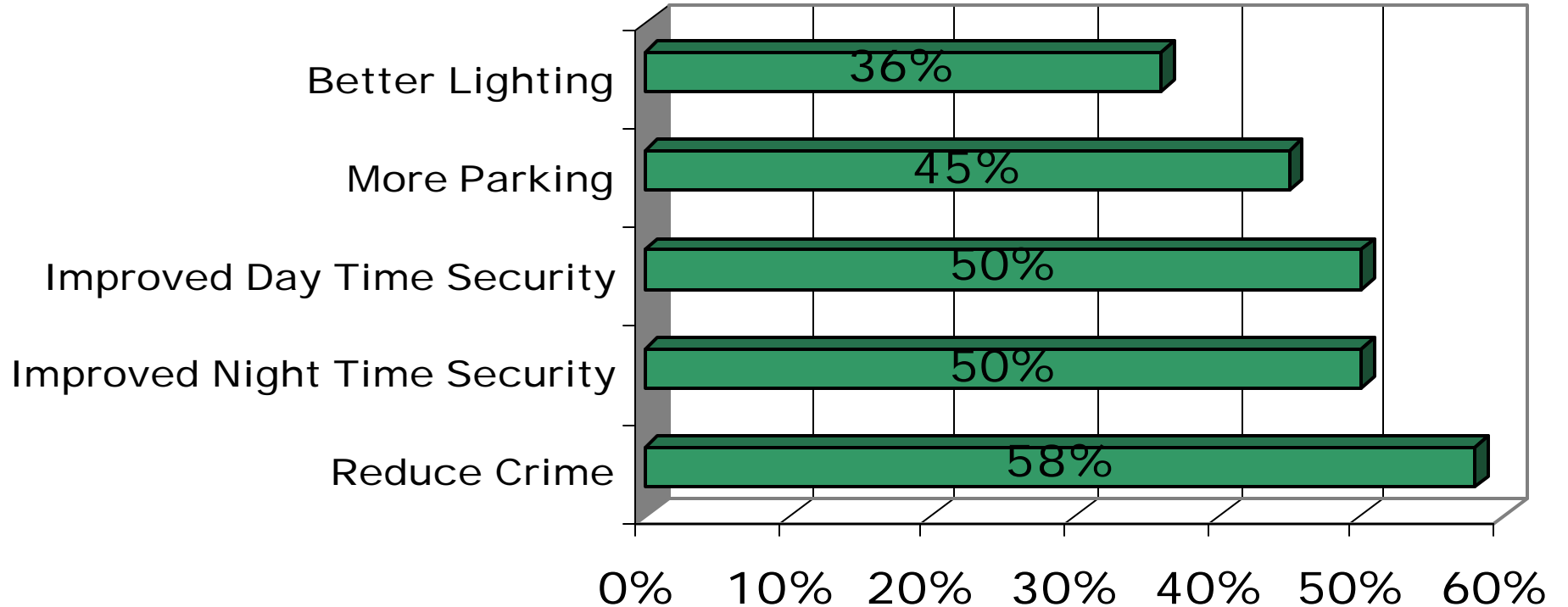
# Business Survey Findings

## DISADVANTAGES of Locating Business

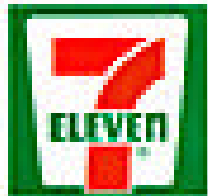
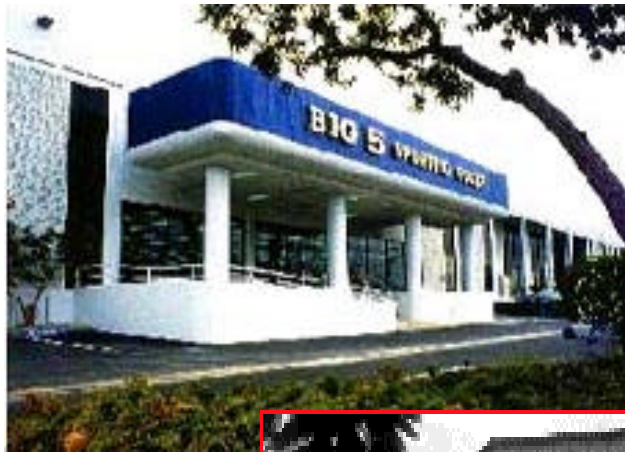


# Business Survey Findings

## SUGGESTIONS to Improve Corridor



# “The Business Wish List”





# Vision

- **Regional Context**
  - **Reposition the Corridor within the larger CBD framework: Nexus with downtown**
    - **Vermont Corridor to be the ideal location for future business and expansion of existing business**
  - **Lively, transit oriented, pedestrian friendly place**
  - **Gateway Project**
    - **Retail anchor development to meet unmet local & regional demand**
    - **Catalytic project(s) to bring people, business, and visibility to the area**



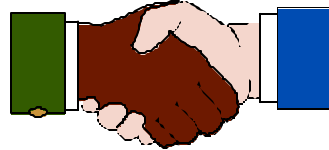
# Vision

- **Local Context**
  - **Engine for Business Enterprise**
    - Proximity to USC - access to technology, skilled labor force, & business entrepreneurs
    - Fertile ground for business incubation
  - **Mixed Use Developments**
    - Allow mix of uses and incomes
    - Accommodate relatively higher densities - student housing
    - Increase “round the clock eyes on the road” making the area safer, and pedestrian friendly
  - **Increased Street Activities through**
    - Better street configuration, sidewalk improvements, increased on-street parking, bike lanes, pedestrian amenities, façade rehab and other transit related improvements



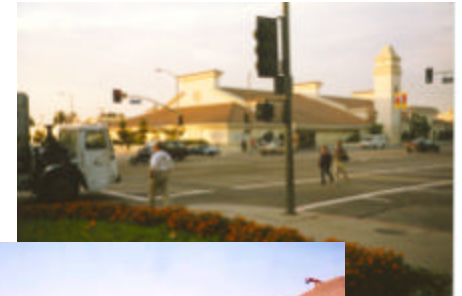
# Scenario: Short Term - Minimal Intervention

- **Imperative:**



- **Future development of the Vermont Corridor shall depend on successful and functional partnerships between the property owners, public agencies, community based organizations and other institutions**

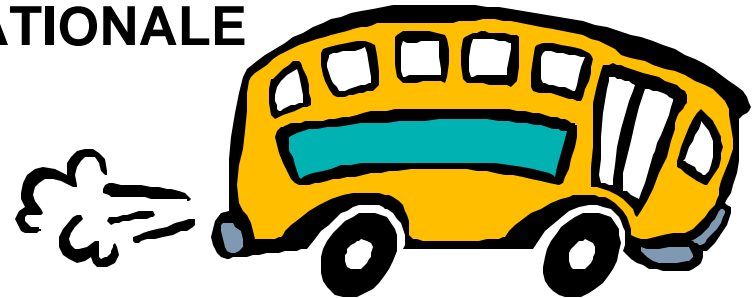
**CRA, MTA, LADOT, USC,  
Coliseum Commission, LA  
Business Team, CRTD, Churches,  
Business Association,  
Community Development  
Corporations, and individual  
stakeholders**



# Scenario: Short Term - Minimal Intervention

- **Initiate catalytic streetscape projects to**
  - enhance the physical conditions of the corridor
  - make it suitable for private investment
  - make the Vermont Corridor a transit oriented pedestrian friendly place
- **Visible, doable improvements in the public domain**
  - create favorable pre-conditions for private sector investment and business attraction

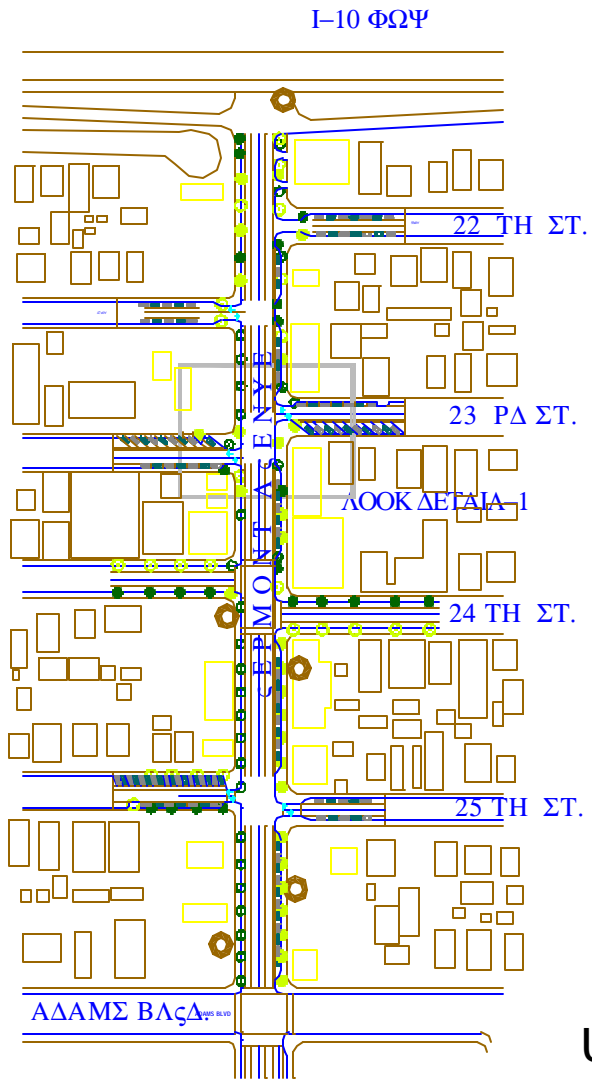
## RATIONALE



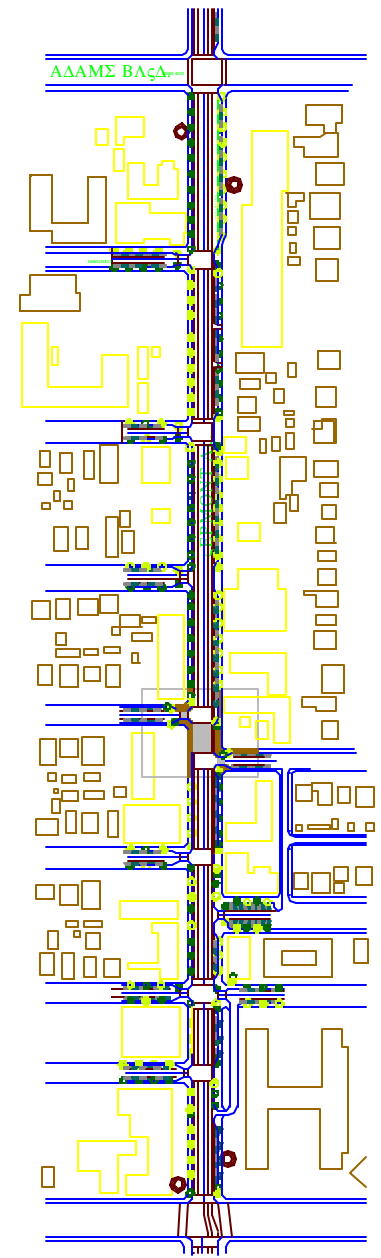
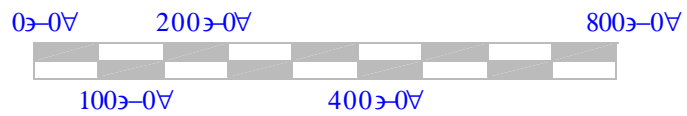
**Vermont Corridor -- heaviest traveled transit corridor in Los Angeles County**

**Improvements such as:**

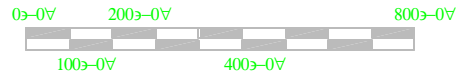
**transit shelters  
street furniture  
pedestrian lighting  
pedestrian crossings  
landscaped median  
landscaping, shady trees etc.**

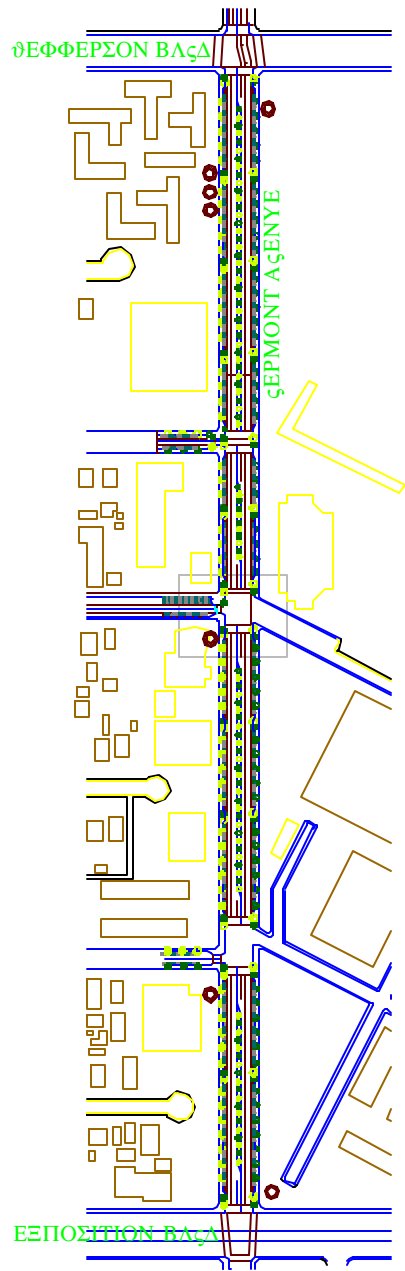


Upper Vermont

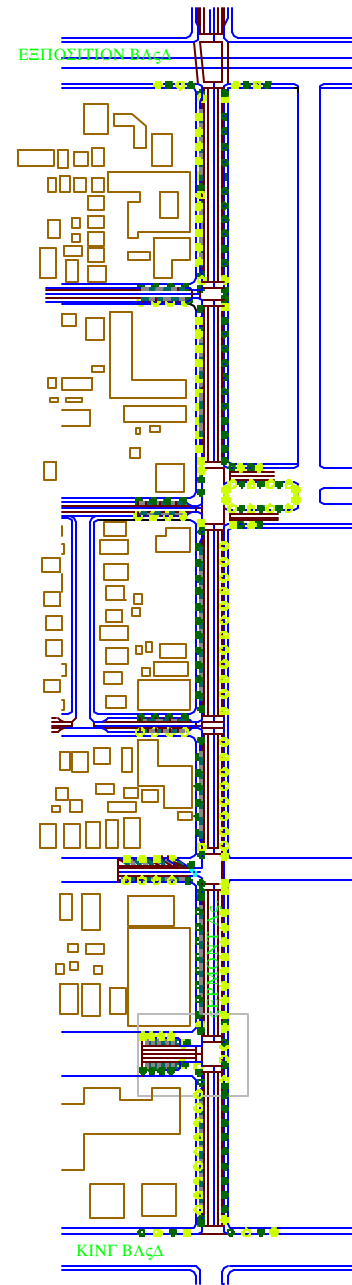
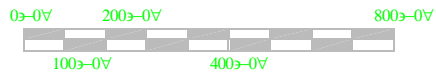


Upper Middle Vermont

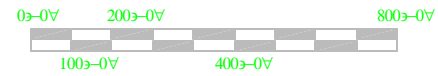




Lower  
Middle  
Vermont



Lower  
Vermont





# Corridor-wide Physical Improvements



Bus Shelters

**Provide covered bus stops with additional seating in the nearby area**

# Corridor-Wide Physical Improvements

- **Designate seating areas. Extend sidewalk to accommodate benches and bicycle racks**
- **Develop additional parking along the side streets**
  - **compensate for the existing parking lost (due to the extension of the sidewalks to accommodate designated seating areas**
- **Improve pedestrian crossings**
- **Enhance designated areas with planting trees that also provide shade**
- **Provide public telephone booths/kiosks that can also be used for advertisements that could in turn generate revenue for maintenance of public areas**

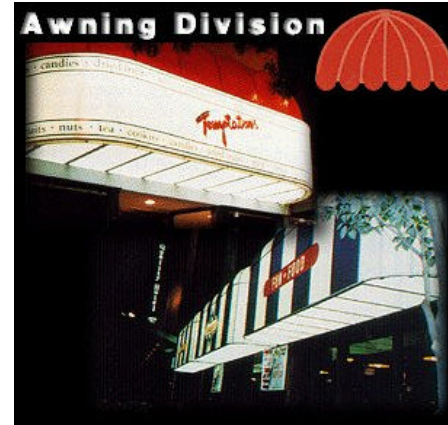
# Corridor-Wide Physical Improvements



Street Lights

**Improve sidewalk lighting by using pedestrian scale (globe) lights - a means to ensure night time safety**

# Corridor-Wide Physical Improvements



Awnings

**Regulate the placement (height) of awnings but encourage variety in terms of color and type**



# Corridor-Wide Physical Improvements



S  
T  
R  
E  
E  
T



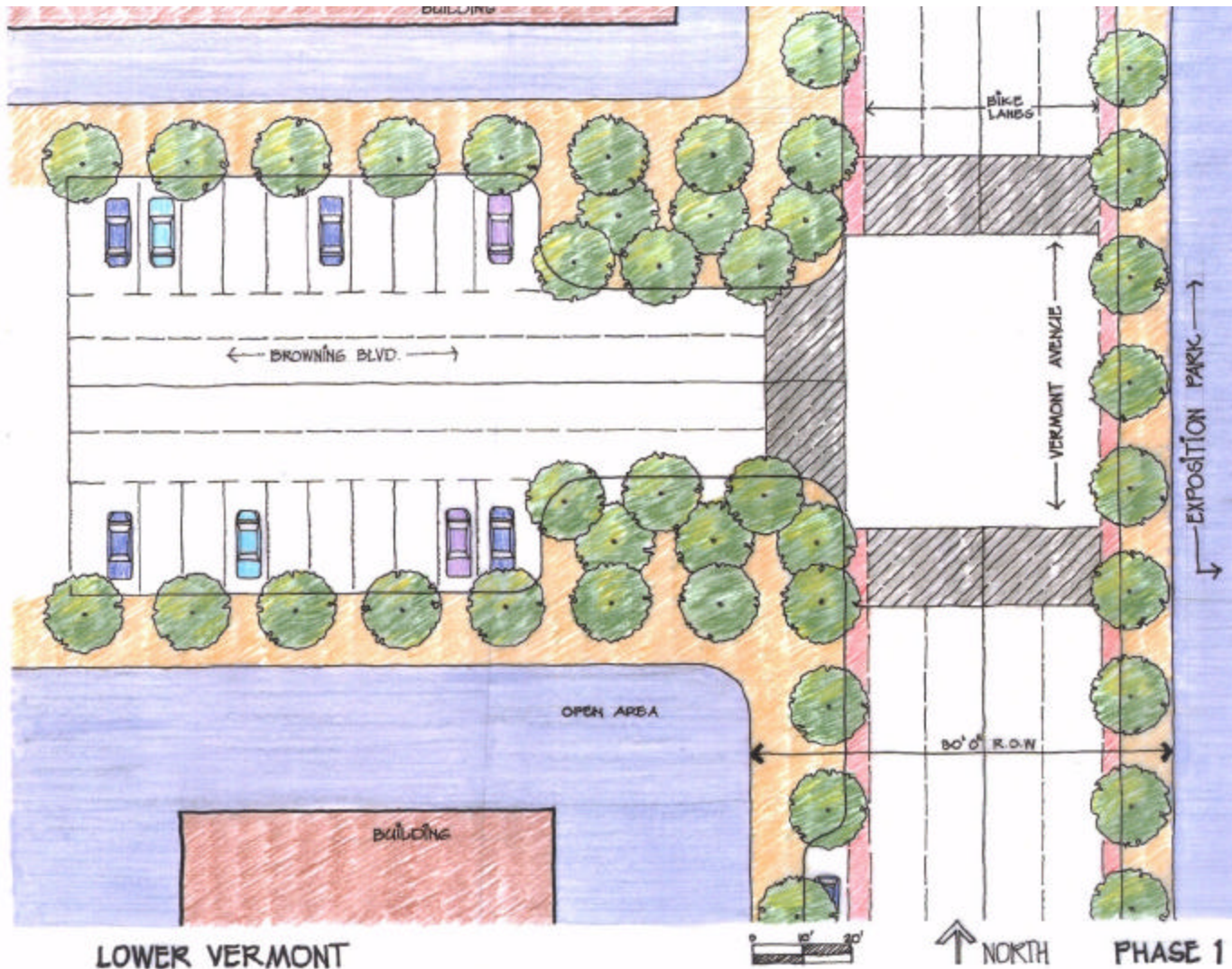
A  
C  
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V  
I  
T  
I  
E  
S



**Encourage outdoor display of store goods**

**Designate specific areas of the sidewalk where store goods, and sign-boards can be displayed**

# Phase I--Lower Vermont

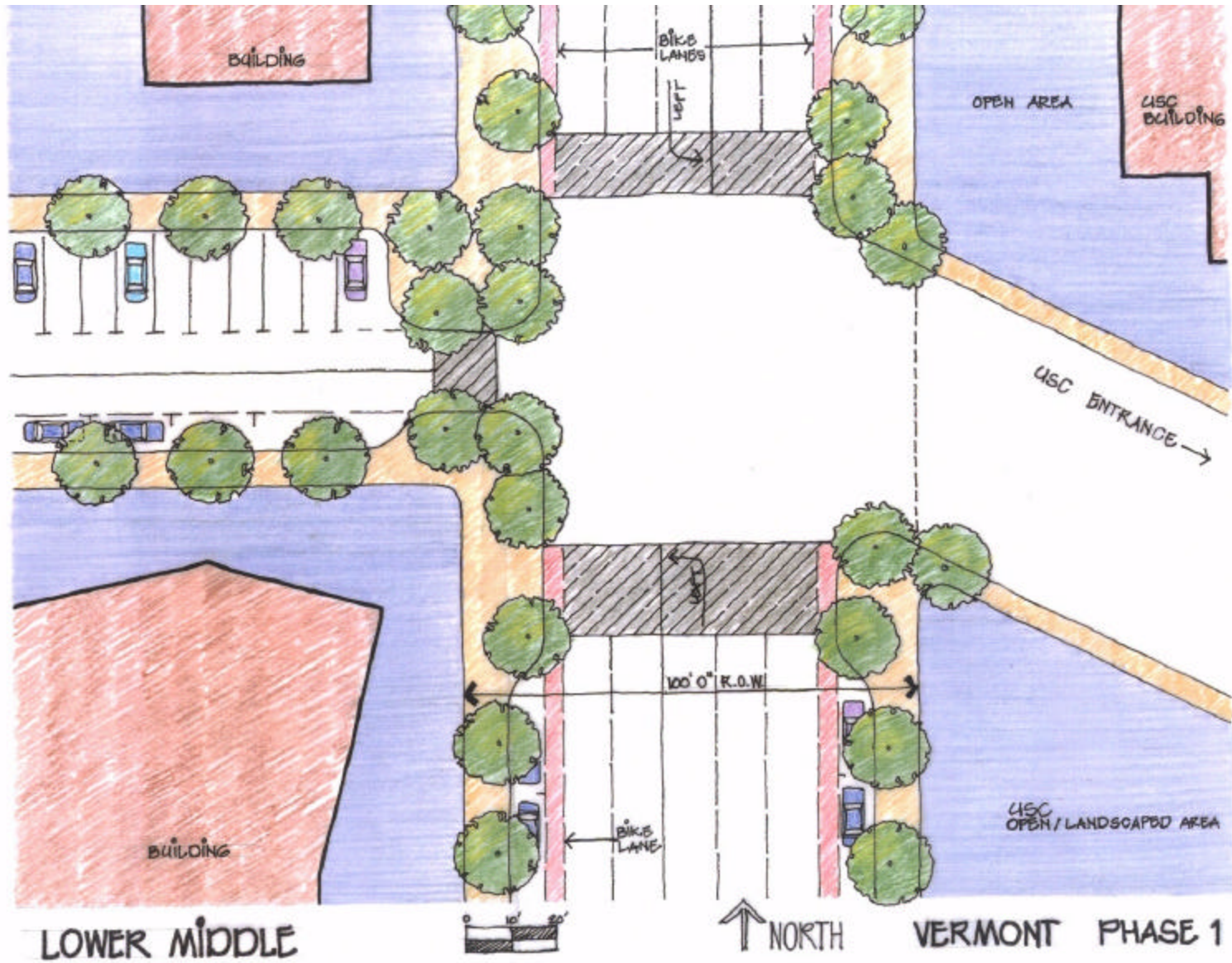




# View of Lower Vermont



# Phase I--Lower Middle Vermont

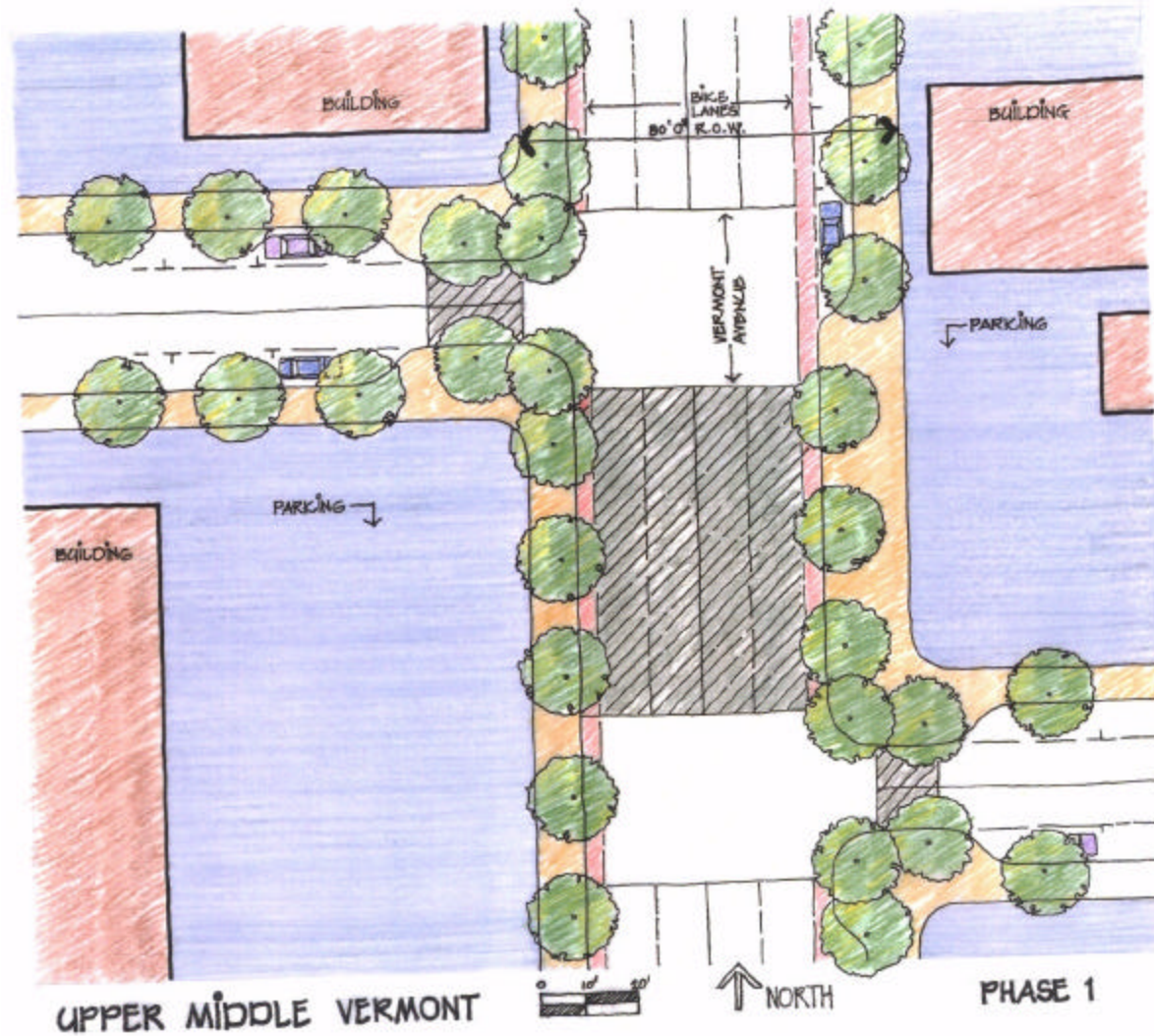




# View of Lower Middle Vermont



# Phase I--Upper Middle Vermont

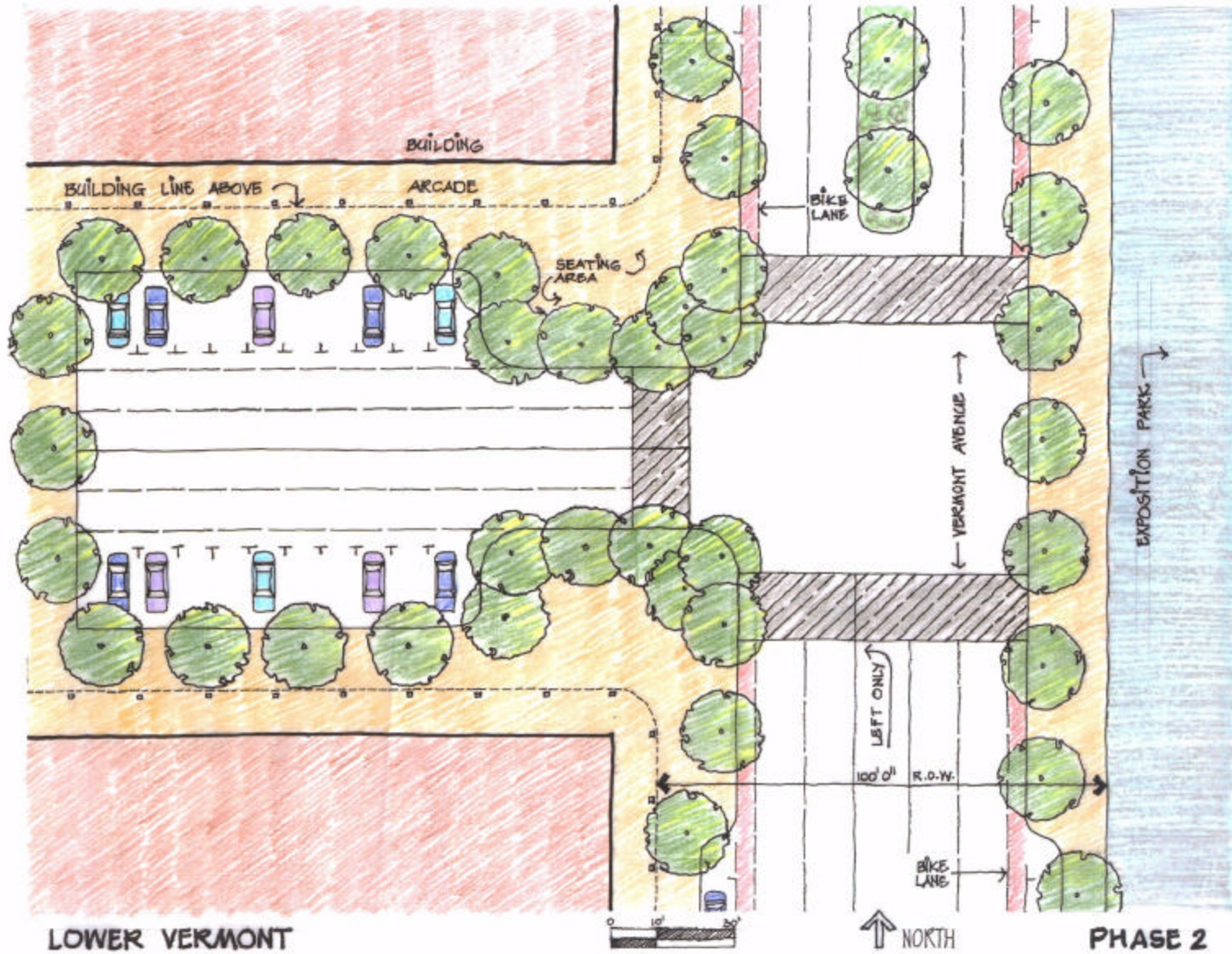




# View of Upper Middle Vermont

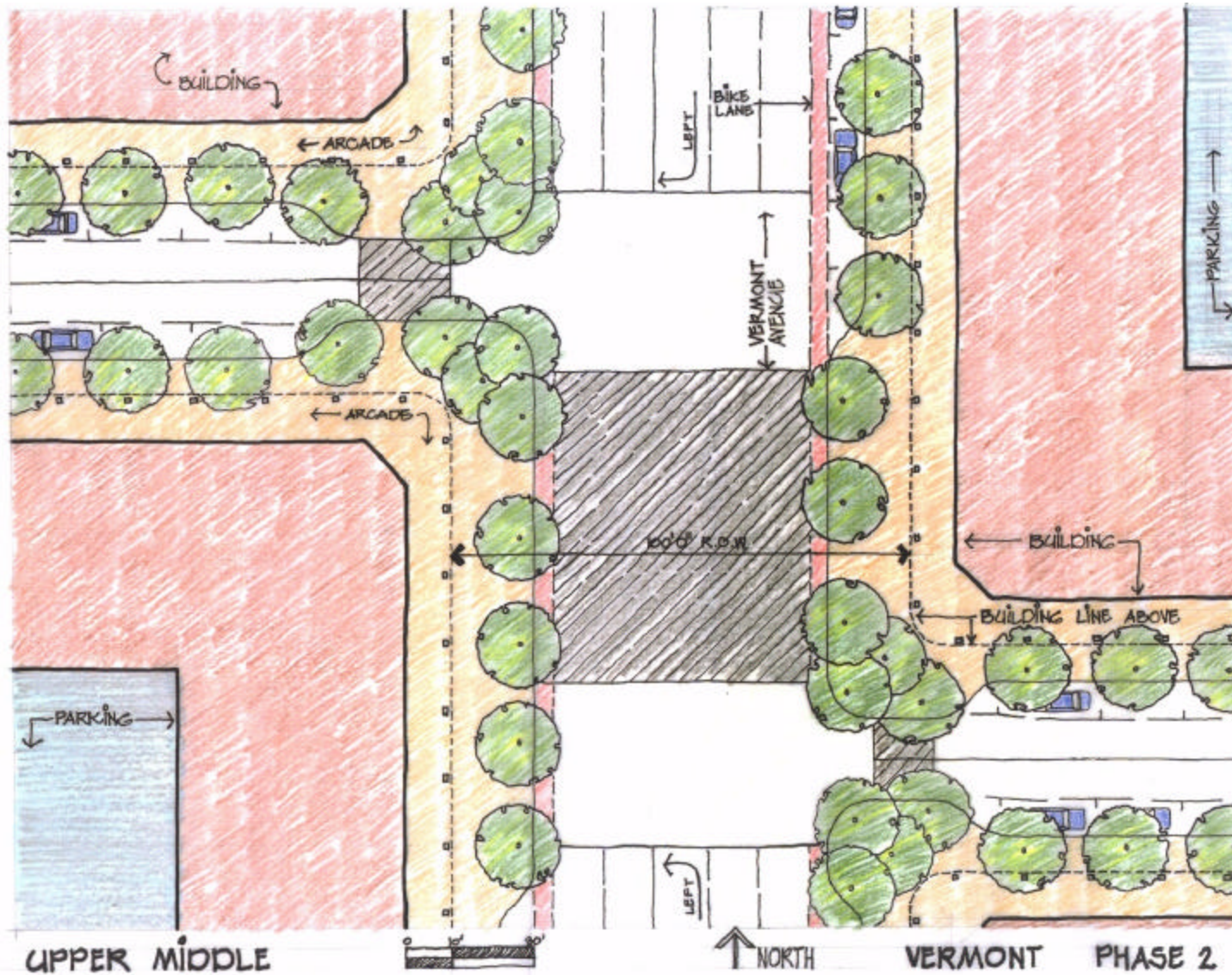


# Phase II--Lower Vermont



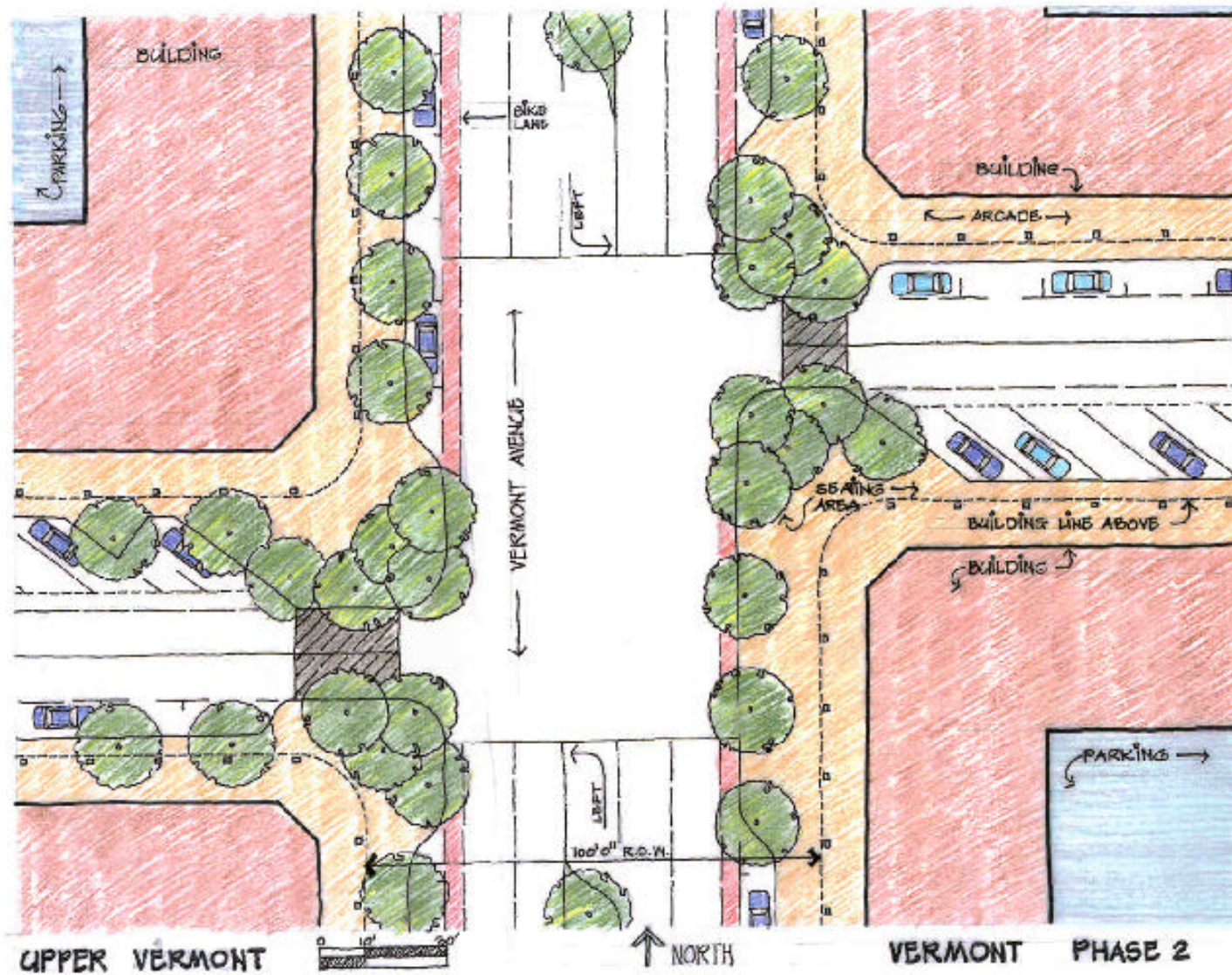


# Phase II--Upper Middle Vermont





# Phase II - Upper Vermont





## View of the Side Street



# Economic Development Strategies

- **Seek out funding from public agencies**



- MTA, LADOT, EDA, HUD
- other City departments to initiate catalytic projects

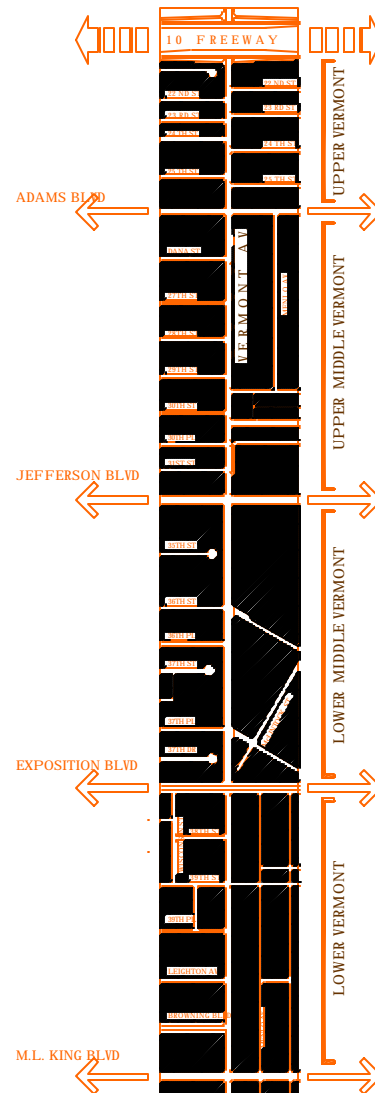
- **Leverage private investment**
  - support from private developers, and financing from lenders to implement early projects
  - Recruit new investors
  - Market the strengths and resources - involve the LA Business Team

- **Promote strategic projects that create development momentum, demonstrate visible improvements and produce early successes**

- Public work projects such as streetscape and sidewalk amenities
- development projects such as the Gateway in Upper Vermont
- business incubator, senior housing, retail, and high-tech development in Lower Vermont are examples to jump start the local economy and create a success story

# Economic Development Strategies

Marketing of these districts in the short-term is critical in raising the visibility of the corridor



Develop public-private partnerships that are mutually beneficial, create jobs and make good business sense

Capture a greater share of economic activity

Develop a mix of uses/projects that promote greater economic integration, and create an economic spillover effect – multi-destination trips

Reduce leakage by capturing a greater share of economic activity generated by employee, student, visitor and business spending

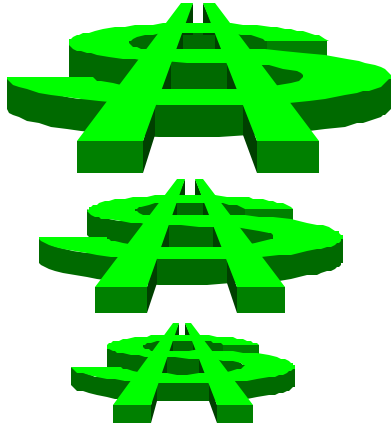
# Economic Development Strategies

- Create niches in
  - high-technology sector
  - multi-media
  - communications
  - film
  - other entrepreneurial ventures
- to capitalize on the strengths and resources of USC



# Economic Development Strategies

- **Create an Economic Development Infrastructure**



- Develop links with business assistance clearinghouse, such as Business Expansion Network to provide financial information and assistance to new and existing businesses

- **Promote access to capital by utilizing the**

- Community Development Bank
- Local Development Corporation
- Community Financial Resource Center
- Los Angeles Business Assistance Centers

- **Create implementation teams for:**

- corridor-wide marketing
- business recruitment strategy
- events planning
- and streetscape improvements

# Economic Development Strategies

- **Encourage stakeholder participation in economic development efforts:  
BID for Vermont**
  - **The Business Improvement District (BID) is a vehicle to bring together property owners and other stakeholders to raise money and implement programs to stimulate desirable economic impacts**
  - **The BID would contribute to make the area a clean and safe place, on one hand, and market programs through materials such as logos, color, brochures, web pages that help upgrade the image of the corridor**
  - **The BID will also provide a unified voice to the stakeholders**