CHAPTER 6
Streetscape Improvements

A. Current Streetscape Setting

The streetscape setting along Magnolia Avenue has changed significantly since the street's beginnings in 1876. The original streetscape design, which set a historic national precedent in scenic urban landscaping, provided unity and identity to Magnolia Avenue as a grand boulevard that was a destination in itself…a place where residents and tourists alike could enjoy a scenic drive. In fact, over the years the Magnolia Avenue/Market Street corridor has sometimes been referred to as Riverside's scenic "17-mile drive." In its early days, beautiful citrus farms and estates lined much of Magnolia Avenue with wide parkways on both sides and a landscaped median running the length of the corridor. The original landscaping consisted of Magnolia, Cypress, Eucalyptus, Pepper and Palm trees.

Today, the landscaping varies greatly along the corridor. The best preserved area of the street's original landscape design is in the Magnolia Heritage District between Arlington Avenue and San Rafael Way, where the Magnolia Avenue Parkway and Center Median has been designated as a historic landmark. This section of Magnolia Avenue maintains the spirit of the original plantings.

However, in general, there is now a much greater diversity in tree species and, therefore, no discernable pattern to the street trees along portions of Magnolia Avenue. In addition, while most of this landscape is mature, providing a fairly continual sense of "green" in some locations, it is completely absent in other locations where the parkway has been entirely removed and the sidewalk abuts the street.

Similarly, the reduction of the median in many locations has greatly impacted the historic landscape. The median runs from the western City limits to Arlington Avenue, however, its width and landscaping have been reduced considerably over time for left turn lanes and additional travel lanes at various locations.

Magnolia Avenue, 1890's.

In addition, the median has been completely removed from Arlington Avenue to Ramona Drive.

B. Streetscape Concept

The recommended streetscape concept for Magnolia Avenue is to maintain much of the existing mature heritage landscaping, infill landscaping as appropriate, and preserve the remainder of the median in order to return the corridor to a grand tree-lined parkway. In addition, the corridor's environment can be enhanced and District identity reinforced with other distinctive streetscape elements, such as street furnishings, lighting and distinct paving.

The overall streetscape concept is designed to meet the following objectives:

- Restore the historic grandeur of Magnolia Avenue.
- Implement the Parkway and Scenic Boulevard designations of the General Plan.
- Accommodate and balance varied modes of travel: autos, transit, bicycles and pedestrians.
- Enhance the setting of historic elements along the corridor.
- Unify the corridor as whole, while also reinforcing district identity.
- Create a prominent western gateway into the City.

C. Landscape Palette

The primary goals of the proposed landscape palette are to preserve the existing heritage landscaping, and to fill in landscaping as much as feasible in order to restore the historic "park-like" sense of the corridor. Another important goal is to provide unity and continuity for the corridor as a whole, while also establishing District identity. The proposed landscape palette:

1. Uses Southern Magnolia trees within each District to provide continuity and strengthen the namesake for the corridor.
2. Uses a sky-line tree that is visible from a distance in all directions and is also suitable for a long-distance view from

an automobile to provide continuity and strengthen the "sense of boulevard" for Magnolia Avenue.

3. Uses an alternating pattern of Palm trees and canopy trees along the street edges. The continued use of this alternating pattern along the corridor will help unify Magnolia Avenue. At the same time, the varied use of canopy trees within each District will help to provide a distinct identity for each District as well as provide a smaller-scaled shade tree appropriate for pedestrians and bicyclists.

To reduce the need for tree removal or relocation, the recommended canopy tree for each District is generally based on the predominant tree species currently in the District. In addition, the Palm species used in each District will alternate between Mexican Fan Palm and California Fan Palm, according to the predominant species currently present in that area. Because there is presently such a diverse mix of tree species throughout the corridor, some tree removal will need to occur over time. A long-term phasing plan will be required to address strategies for removal and possible relocation of these existing trees.

It is also important to note that, while it has been proposed to underground utilities along Magnolia Avenue as one of the corridor-wide policies, its implementation will occur on a case-by-case basis. Whenever undergrounding of utilities is not feasible, consideration shall be given to species that can coexist with the overhead utility lines that are currently in place. Dwarf varieties of the proposed tree species is one option. Consider Magnolia grandiflora 'Saint Mary', instead of Magnolia grandiflora. The Saint Mary variety only grows to 20', while retaining the same characteristics as the grandiflora species.

Table 6.1 identifies the landscape palette for Magnolia Avenue by District. The landscape concept for each District is described in more detail following Table 6.1. The proposed landscape palette meets the design objectives described above and also considers maintenance, including those species that minimize pruning, have minimal litter, are dependable, and considered pest free.

Table 6.1: Magnolia Avenue Landscape Palette

District	Parkway Trees		Median Trees	Median Landscape
	Palm	Canopy		
La Sierra	Mexican Fan Palm (Washingtonia robusta)	Brisbane Box (Tristania conferta)	Citrus * Southern Magnolia (Magnollia grandiflora)	Bark Mulch or Native Soil Turf, double dwarf fescue (Drought tolerant)
Galleria	California Fan Palm (Washingtonia filifera)	Southern Magnolia (Magnollia grandiflora)	Southern Magnolia (Magnollia grandiflora) Pink Tabebuia (at ends) (Tabebuia ipe)	Turf, double dwarf fescue (Drought tolerant) Daylily
Arlington	Mexican Fan Palm (Washingtonia robusta)	Pink Tabebuia (Tabebuia ipe)	Southern Magnolia (Magnollia grandiflora) Pink Tabebuia (at ends) (Tabebuia ipe)	Turf, double dwarf fescue (Drought tolerant) Daylily
Magnolia Heritage	California Fan Palm (Washingtonia filifera)	Silk Oak (Grevillea robusta)	California Pepper (existing) (Schinus molle) Southern Magnolia (Magnollia grandiflora)	Turf Turf
Magnolia Center	Mexican Fan Palm (Washingtonia robusta)	Coast Live Oak (Quercus agrifolia) Southern Magnolia (Magnollia grandiflora)	(none)	(none)
Wood Streets	(none)	Coast Live Oak ** (Quercus agrifolia)	(none)	Cobble Stone patterned colored/stamped concrete

* irrigation shall consist of bubblers within soil berm ring at drip line of tree
** provide root barriers at all Coast Live Oak tree plantings

La Sierra District

The La Sierra District Streetscape is illustrated in Figure 6.1. The existing landscape in the La Sierra District includes Mexican Fan Palms, California Fan Palms and Eucalyptus trees at the street edge, with a variety of plantings in the median in some locations and absence of median landscaping in other locations. The proposed landscape palette consists of alternating Mexican Fan Palms and Brisbane Box for the parkway trees, and Citrus and Southern Magnolia trees in the median.

Although Eucalyptus trees, which historically served as wind-rows for agricultural fields, are the dominant canopy trees in this District, the Brisbane Box is recommended as a replacement tree. The primary reason for the replacement is the City's policy to reduce the use of Eucalyptus trees citywide given their susceptibility to Lerp disease and the brittle nature of these trees. Brisbane Box is appropriate, given their size, adaptability to street environments in Southern California, and their relationship to the Eucalyptus family. They should be slowly introduced, and ultimately replace all Eucalyptus species.

An important feature of the La Sierra District is that it serves as a gateway, or entry point, to both the Magnolia Avenue corridor and the City of Riverside. With this in mind, a gateway treatment is proposed within the median that expands on the existing Citrus grove found at the western end of the District. Citrus trees would be planted at each end of the median in the stretch between Buchanan and Pierce Streets. The use of Citrus trees relates to the City's history as well as provides continuity for the entire Magnolia/Market Corridor, as a grove of Citrus trees is planted along Market Street at the gateway to Downtown. A natural material, such as bark mulch or decomposed granite, would cover the ground plane beneath the Citrus groves.

In between the Citrus groves, the median planting should be simplified by utilizing one tree type. Southern Magnolia is proposed based on its flowering character, historic value, and use within the median in other areas along the Magnolia Corridor. Like other median plantings where Magnolia trees are present, the ground plane would be planted with turf.

In addition to the landscape, an arbor is proposed at the western end of the District on both sides of the street adjacent to the parkway. The intent of the arbor is to strengthen the gateway concept as drivers enter the City. The proposed arbor should be similar to what has recently been designed at the eastern end of the corridor on Market Street. This would provide continuity for the entire Magnolia/Market Corridor, as well as overall City

continuity. A similar arbor has also been developed along nearby Riverwalk Parkway, just north of the La Sierra District.

California Fan Palm and Southern Magnolia tree.

Galleria District

The Galleria District Streetscape is illustrated in Figure 6.2. The existing landscape in the Galleria District consists of Queen Palms and Southern Magnolias at the sidewalk, and Southern Magnolia trees in the median. The proposed landscape palette consists of alternating California Fan Palms and Southern Magnolia for the parkway trees. As described previously, this alternating pattern in the parkway will help provide continuity along the corridor.

It is recommended that the Southern Magnolia trees be retained in the median. However, in order to enhance the pedestrian environment in this regional shopping district, a smaller-scaled flowering accent tree, such as Pink Tabebuia, is also encouraged in the median at the major intersections, with an under-planting of an evergreen Pink Flowering Daylily. It is important to note that the Daylily species should be maintained at less than 30 inches in height and planted 50 feet from the nose of the median or length of the turning pocket to maintain automobile visibility at the intersections.

Pink Tabebuia.

Arlington District

The Arlington District Streetscape is illustrated in Figure 6.3. The existing landscape in the Arlington District is varied. The sidewalk is currently planted with an assortment of tree types, including Tabebuia, Chinese Pistache, and Silk Oak. There are also a variety of Palms, including Mexican Fan Palm, California Fan Palm, Date Palm, and Queen Palm. The median in this District is planted with Southern Magnolia and turf, with Crape Myrtle and Rosemary at the intersections.

Flowering Dalily.

The proposed plantings for this District include a simplified palette of alternating Mexican Fan Palms and Pink Tabebuia along the sidewalk to maintain corridor continuity, with Southern Magnolias and turf in the medians. The Pink Tabebuia is also proposed in the median at the intersections as a flowering accent tree, with an under-planting of Daylily. Once again, the Daylily species should be maintained at less than 30 inches in height and planted 50 feet from the nose of the median or length of the turning pocket.

An additional recommendation for this District is to enhance Arlington Park, which is located just off Magnolia Avenue between Roosevelt Street and Van Buren Boulevard. There

is a significant opportunity to expand and improve the park to create a major public open space in Arlington and strengthen the "green" parkway concept along the corridor. Some or nearly all of the buildings on the north side of Magnolia Avenue between Roosevelt Street and Van Buren Boulevard could be removed in order to extend Arlington Park out to Magnolia Avenue. This would provide a major public space in the heart of the neighborhood-oriented Arlington, and create a new edge on the north side of Magnolia Avenue that would visually contribute to the continuous landscape that defines the corridor.

Magnolia Heritage District

The Magnolia Heritage District Streetscape is illustrated in Figure 6.4. The existing landscape in the Magnolia Heritage District is also varied. The best preserved area of the corridor's original landscape design is in this District between Arlington Avenue and San Rafael Way, where the "Magnolia Avenue Parkway and Center Median" has been designated as a historic landmark. This section of Magnolia Avenue contains a continuous stand of historic California Fan Palms in the sidewalk, and a densely landscaped median with California Pepper trees and Southern Magnolia trees. It maintains the original feel of the corridor as a scenic tree-lined parkway. The Magnolia Heritage District is also home to the Parent Navel Orange Tree, located on Magnolia and Arlington Avenues at the gateway to the district.

Magnolia Avenue Parkway and Center Median.

In the area between Adams Street and Madison Street, there are a few additional tree species along the sidewalk, most notably large Silk Oak Trees. Also in this area, several frontage roads have been added, primarily on the south side of the street. These frontage roads were introduced over 30 years ago as part of a plan to create a continuous frontage road along Magnolia Avenue, and were never fully completed. Where they have been added, parkway trees have been removed and the heritage landscape is especially fragmented.

Frontage roads along Magnolia Avenue have eroded the historic landscape.

California Fan Palm.

A major goal of the proposed landscape palette for the Magnolia Heritage District is to enhance and build upon the historic landscape. Therefore, California Fan Palms are proposed in the parkway along north side to complete the historic stand of California Fan Palms. An alternating pattern of California Fan Palms and Silk Oak trees is proposed on the south side of the street Street to maintain the alternating palm tree/canopy tree pattern along the corridor.

As a long-term goal, it is recommended that the frontage roads be closed over time as new development occurs. This would allow for a continuous landscape parkway in this historic portion of Magnolia Avenue and contribute to the visual continuity along the corridor. As described in Chapter 6, Circulation, the function that the frontage road serves to provide access to the residential properties without impacting the traffic flow along Magnolia Avenue will be provided through better site planning and consolidation of driveways to the properties. In addition, the land on which the frontage roads are located could be used for other purposes, including wider sidewalks, improved bike lanes, large landscaped setbacks or the addition of new small parks that would link the bike path and provide additional green space along the corridor.

The removal of frontage roads could allow for improvements such as wider bikelanes and parks.

Southern Magnolia.

The recommendation for the median in this District is to retain the existing Southern Magnolia trees and slowly replace the California Pepper Trees with Southern Magnolias. Although the California Pepper trees are part of the original landscape design, they are slowly deteriorating and the City has significant concerns about maintaining them. Using Southern Magnolia as a replacement tree would help create consistency within the median planting in this District, as well generate continuity within the median throughout the corridor.

Magnolia Center District

The Magnolia Center District Streetscape is illustrated in Figure 6.5. The existing landscape in the Magnolia Center District consists of Coast Live Oak at the southwest end, with a transition to mixed species including Southern Magnolia, Queen Palm, and Chinese Flame Tree as one moves to the northeast. There is no median within this District. A small traffic island is present at the Magnolia/Central/Brockton intersection.

The proposed landscape palette for this District, consistent with the other Districts, is an alternating pattern of Palm and canopy tree along the sidewalk. The proposed palm is the Mexican Fan Palm, which would alternate with the existing Coast Live Oaks at the southwest end. Southern Magnolias would be introduced in an alternating pattern with the palms from Central Avenue to Jurupa Avenue. This would help strengthen the pattern of Magnolia plantings throughout the corridor. Daylily is the recommended landscape for the traffic island for overall corridor continuity.

Coast Live Oak.

Wood Streets District

The Wood Streets District Streetscape is illustrated in Figure 6.6. The existing landscape in the Wood Streets District is predominantly Coast Live Oak, with Eucalyptus species, Mexican Fan Palm, Camphor, and Incense Cedar trees found sporadically throughout the District. There is no median in this District.

The landscaping in this district is in good condition and communicates a cohesive identity for the neighborhood. The mature oak trees provide a dense canopy over the street, providing shade for pedestrians and bicycles. Therefore, the proposed landscape plan is to preserve the existing Oaks and infill with Coast Live Oak where the species is missing.

While there is no median present, there is an opportunity to continue the median concept that is found throughout most of the Magnolia corridor by utilizing the center turn lane. Because residences line the street, a landscape median would not be practical due to left turning traffic into the driveways. Therefore, the addition of stamped colored concrete within the turning lane at the center of the street is proposed to conceptually suggest “median”, as well as contribute to the historic nature of the District. The stamped colored concrete pattern should appear like cobblestone, and be at the same level as the adjacent asphalt street pavement, allowing for left turns into driveways and approaches to the intersections.

A stamped concrete median would contribute to the historic identity of the Wood Streets District.

D. Street Furnishings

In addition to the landscape, the appearance of Magnolia Avenue can be improved and District identity reinforced with other distinctive streetscape elements, such as street furnishings, lighting and distinct paving. These elements will encourage pedestrian activity at appropriate nodes along the corridor, promote safety, and direct pedestrians, drivers and transit riders. Currently, street furniture and other pedestrian elements are limited along Magnolia Avenue, consisting of minimally enhanced crosswalk paving at just a few locations and bus stops with just a bench and trash receptacle.

In order to create and retain a unified sense of place along Magnolia Avenue, a consistent palette of street furnishings, including benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, and tree grates should be implemented. Pedestrian-scaled lighting is another key component that should be addressed, promoting safety and enhanced aesthetic, as well as creating district identity.

A consistant Palette of street furniture would help unify Magnolia Avenue and contribute to the pedestrian environment.

Benches should be placed wherever there is a high volume of pedestrian activity. This includes areas such as Arlington at Van Buren Boulevard. These benches will supplement the new furniture being introduced at the Bus Rapid Transit stops, and should compliment the selected style. Metal benches are preferred because they are more easily maintained than wood or concrete and are less susceptible to vandalism.

A complementary trash receptacle and bike rack should be selected and provided at the same locations. Additional trash receptacles can be placed where needed, generally at most intersections as well as mid-block in areas with high levels of pedestrian activity.

Another noted feature that will increase the safety and aesthetics of the corridor is lighting. Currently, there are vehicular scale high-mast poles that line the corridor that could be replaced with ones that are more decorative in nature. In addition, pedestrian-scaled lights should be provided along the corridor in areas of high pedestrian activity. They would supplement the vehicular-scaled lights to support nighttime pedestrian activity and, if varied from district to district, also provide for a unique district identity. For example, fluted concrete poles with an acorn globe could be used in the Woods Street District, while a larger, more contemporary double-headed fixture would be more appropriate for the regional scale of the Galleria District.

Other design elements worth considering include drinking fountains, tree grates, planters, flower pots, etc. All add to the

aesthetic value of the streetscape and in some cases, provide valuable amenity. It is important to consider the entire furniture palette when selecting each individual piece of furniture. This helps generate continuity, ease maintenance, and add to the overall aesthetic value.

Decorative vehicular and pedestrian-scaled lights.

E. Public Art

Another design element that can enhance the environment of the corridor is public art, which can take many forms and be introduced in many places. It can easily add value to a district, corridor, and community. It can speak to the history of a place, the story of an individual, or the identity of an object. For the Magnolia Corridor, there are great opportunities to introduce art within the public realm…to recall the days when citrus groves covered the area or tell the story of how Riverside got its name. One great opportunity exists at the freeway underpass in the La Sierra District, where enhanced lighting and public art at a scale that relates to automobile drivers should be considered. An example of successful public art in a similar environment is at the University Avenue underpass at the entrance to the University of California, Riverside.

Planters and pots in retail districts can contribute to an attractive streetscape environment.

Mural in the University Avenue freeway underpass.

Artist-designed intersection paving could enhance the identity of each District.

There is also an opportunity to enhance the identity of each District at prominent intersections by incorporating a paving "mural" in the intersections that relates to each district. The mural itself could be artist-designed, and should utilize the same materials in each district. Key intersections include La Sierra Avenue, Tyler Street, Van Buren Boulevard, Jackson Street, Arlington Avenue, and Jurupa Avenue.

F. Utility Lines

Overhead utility lines currently extend through much of Magnolia Avenue. These reduce the visual character of the corridor, particularly in the La Sierra District where overhead power lines are located in the median. Relocating overhead utility lines underground along Magnolia Avenue would contribute greatly to the desired effect of recreating an attractive, scenic parkway. Although the City has limited resources for this undertaking and it comes with significant cost, eliminating the overhead utility lines over the long term would significantly improve the appearance of Magnolia Avenue and further enhance the streetscape improvements proposed for the corridor. As noted earlier in the chapter, if the utility relocation does not occur, alternate tree species will need to be considered, with an emphasis on dwarf varieties that will not impact the overhead lines.

Figure 6.1
LA SIERRA DISTRICT STREETSCAPE

(Buchanan St. to Pierce St.)

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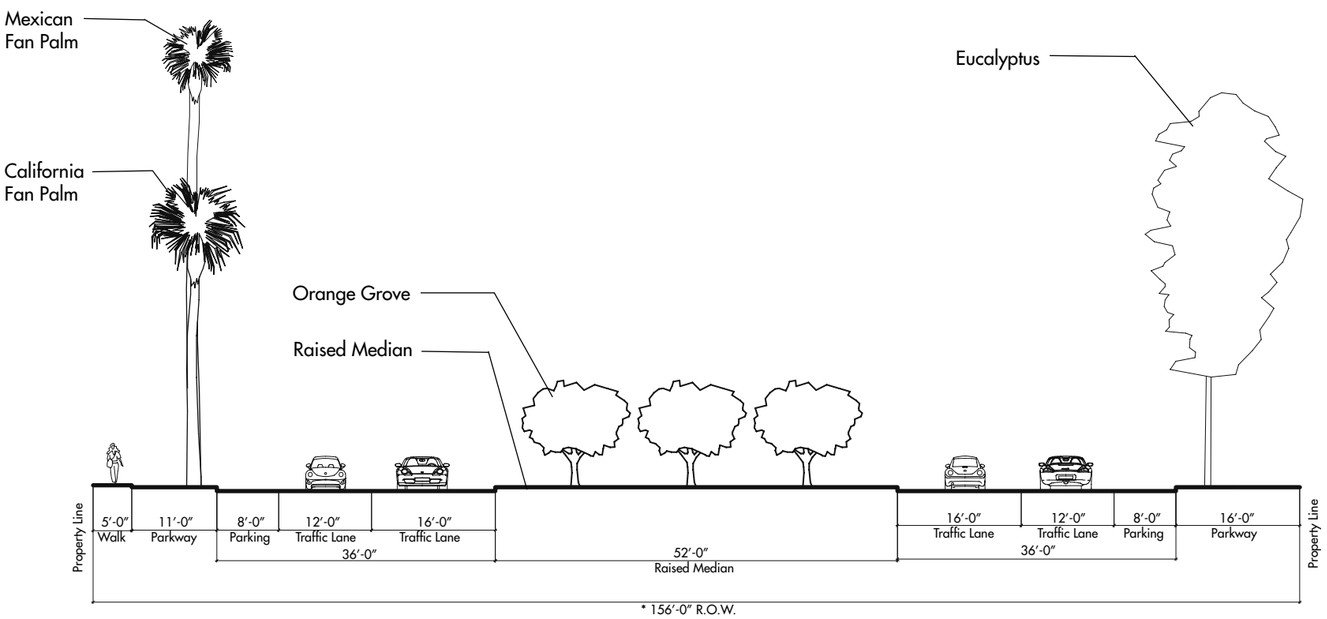

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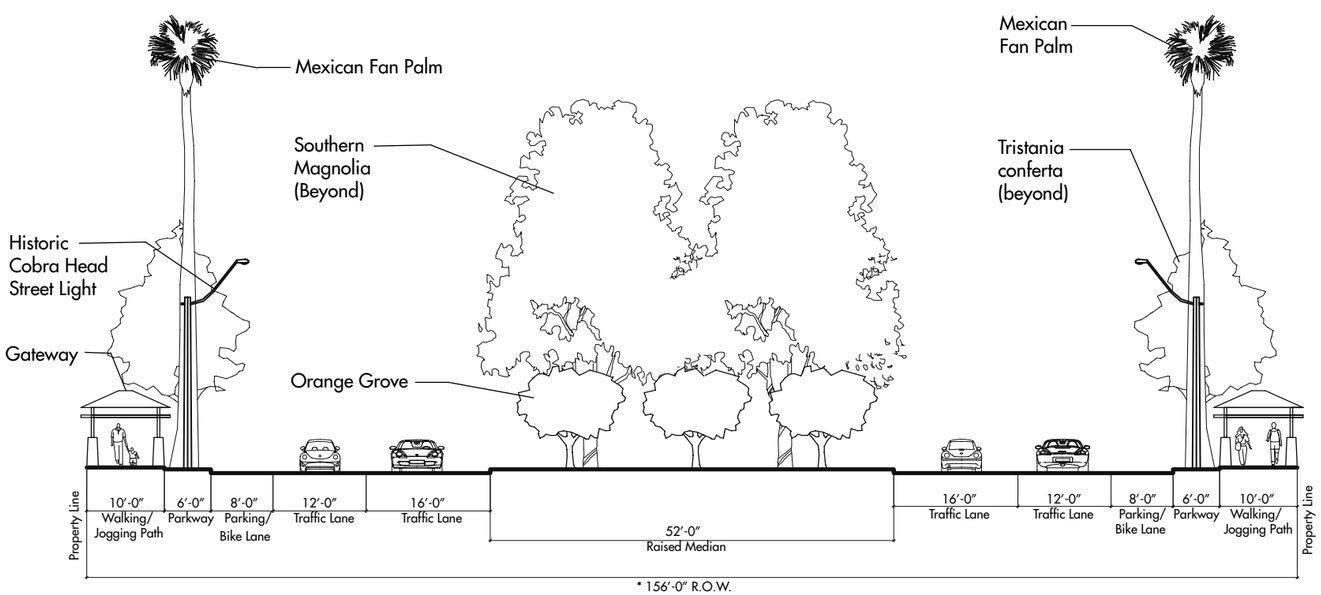

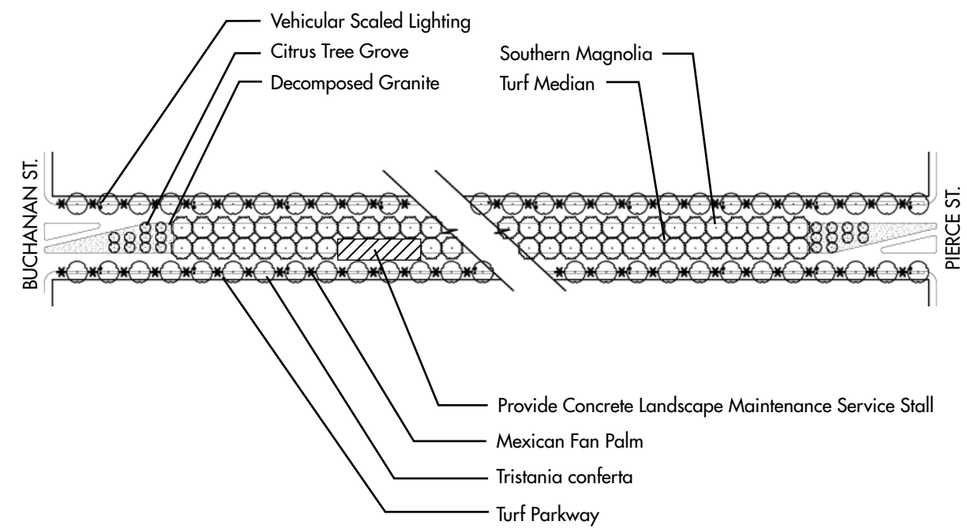

* R.O.W. Information obtained from 1999 Magnolia/Market Corridor Study

Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan

Figure 6.2
GALLERIA DISTRICT STREETSCAPE

(Dawes St. to Harrison St.)

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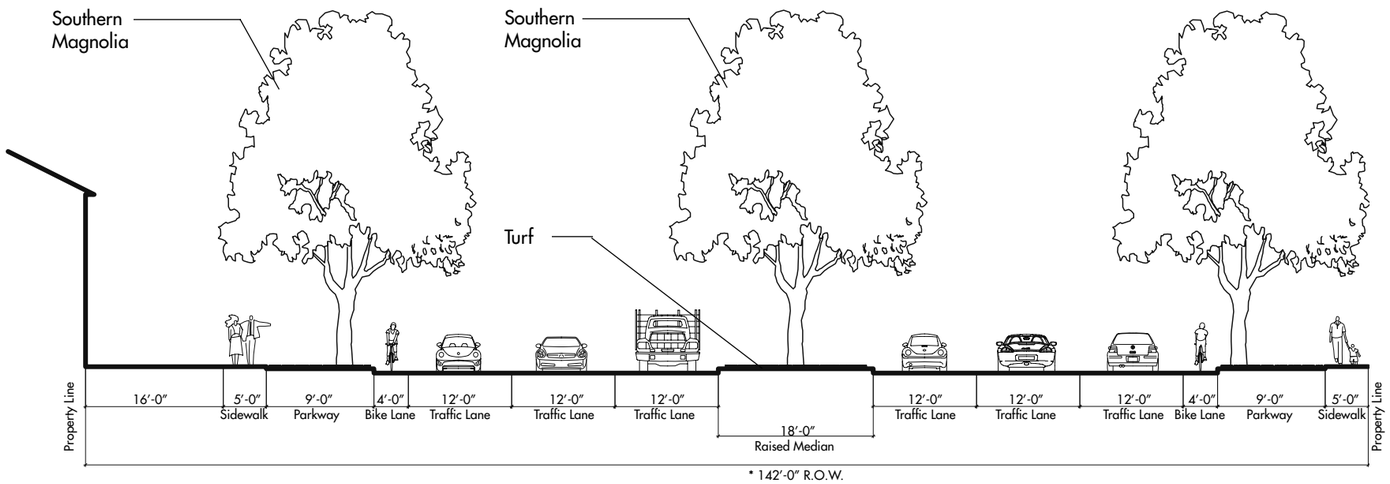

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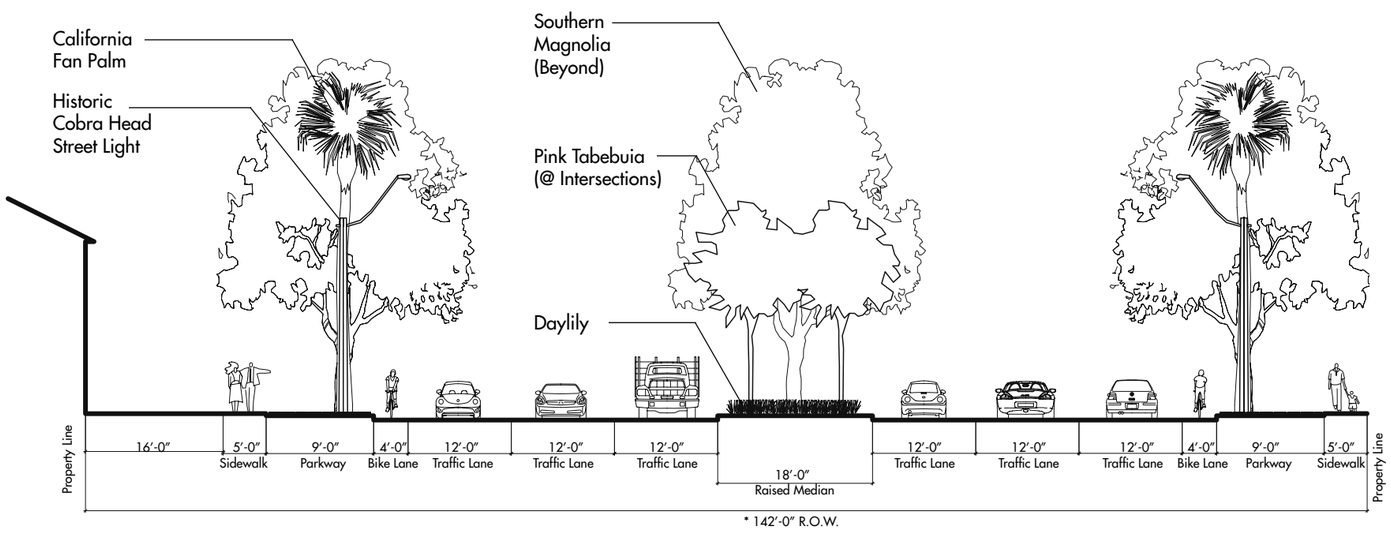

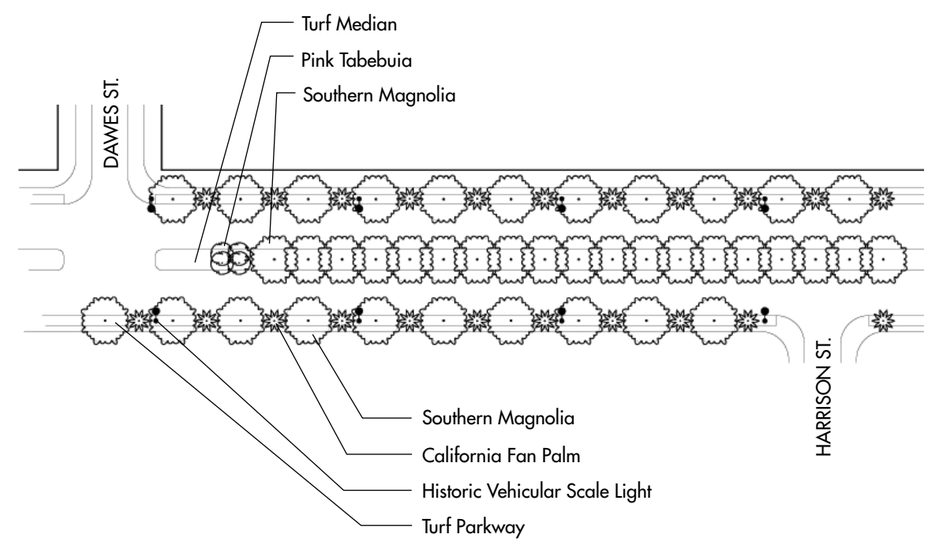

* R.O.W. Information obtained from 1999 Magnolia/Market Corridor Study

Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan

Figure 6.3
ARLINGTON DISTRICT STREETSCAPE

(Van Buren Blvd. to Farnhaml Pl.)

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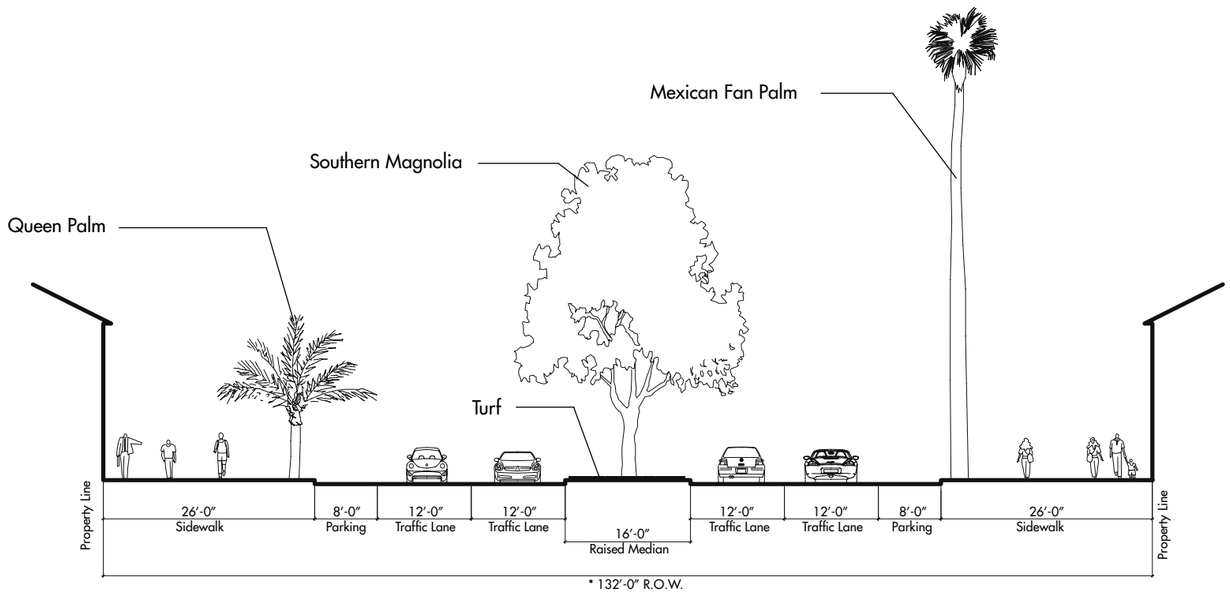

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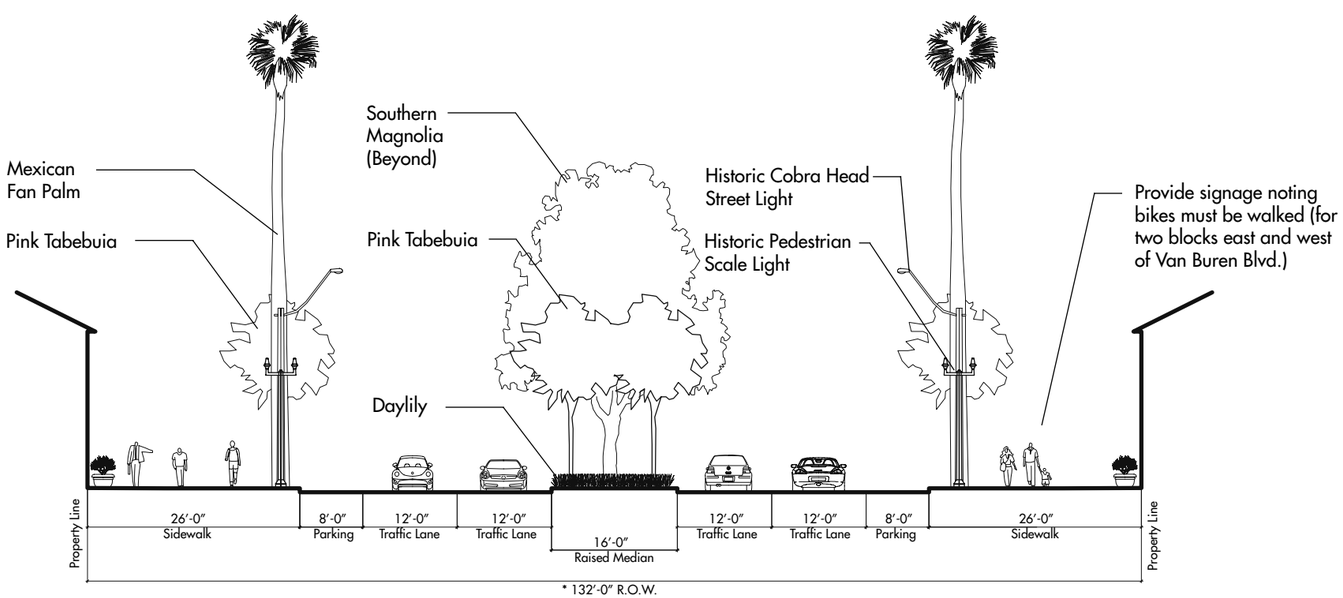

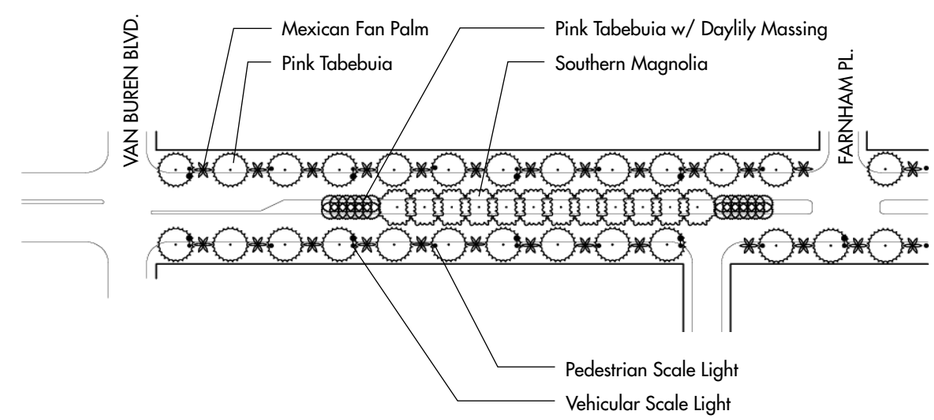

* R.O.W. Information obtained from 1999 Magnolia/Market Corridor Study

Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan

Figure 6.4
MAGNOLIA HERITAGE DISTRICT STREETSCAPE

(Canterbury Rd. to Jefferson St.)

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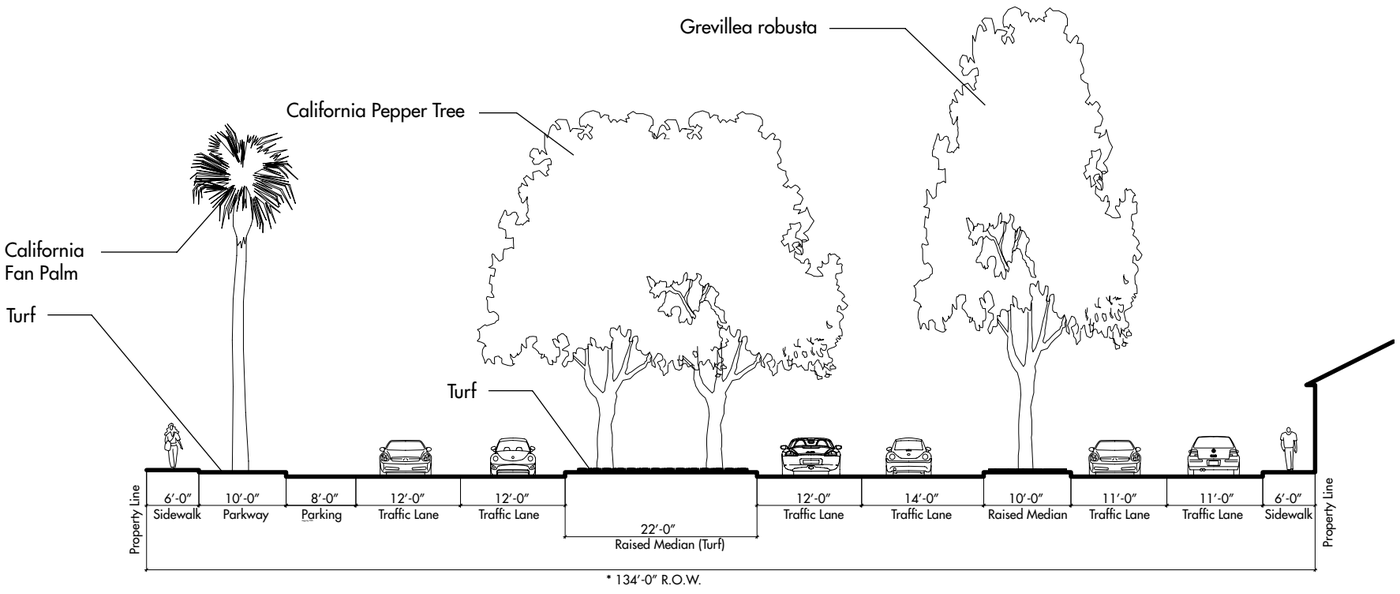

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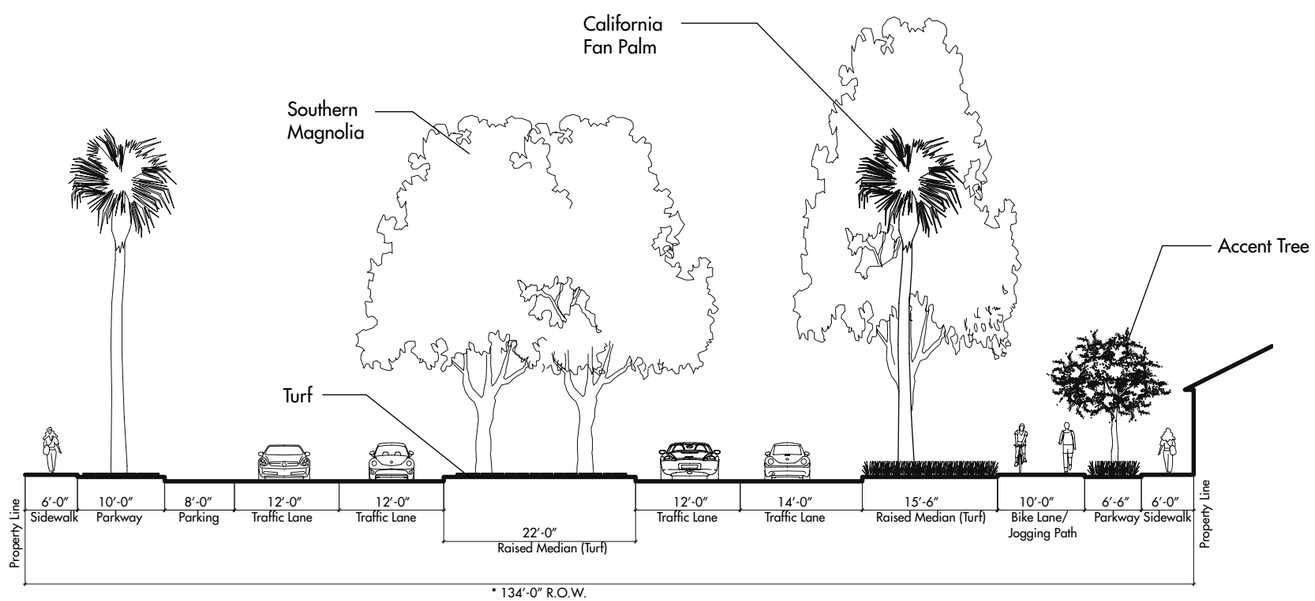

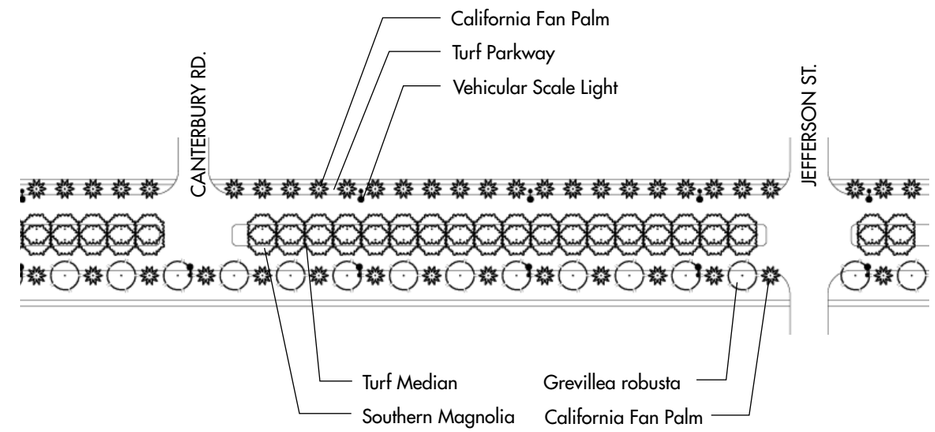

* R.O.W. Information obtained from 1999 Magnolia/Market Corridor Study

Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan

Figure 6.5
MAGNOLIA CENTER DISTRICT STREETSCAPE

(Luther St. to Nelson St.)

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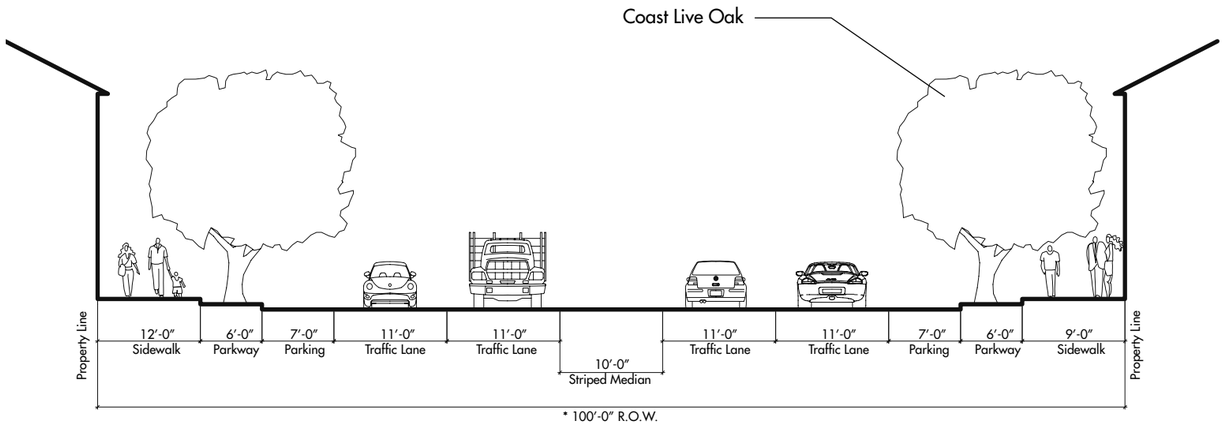

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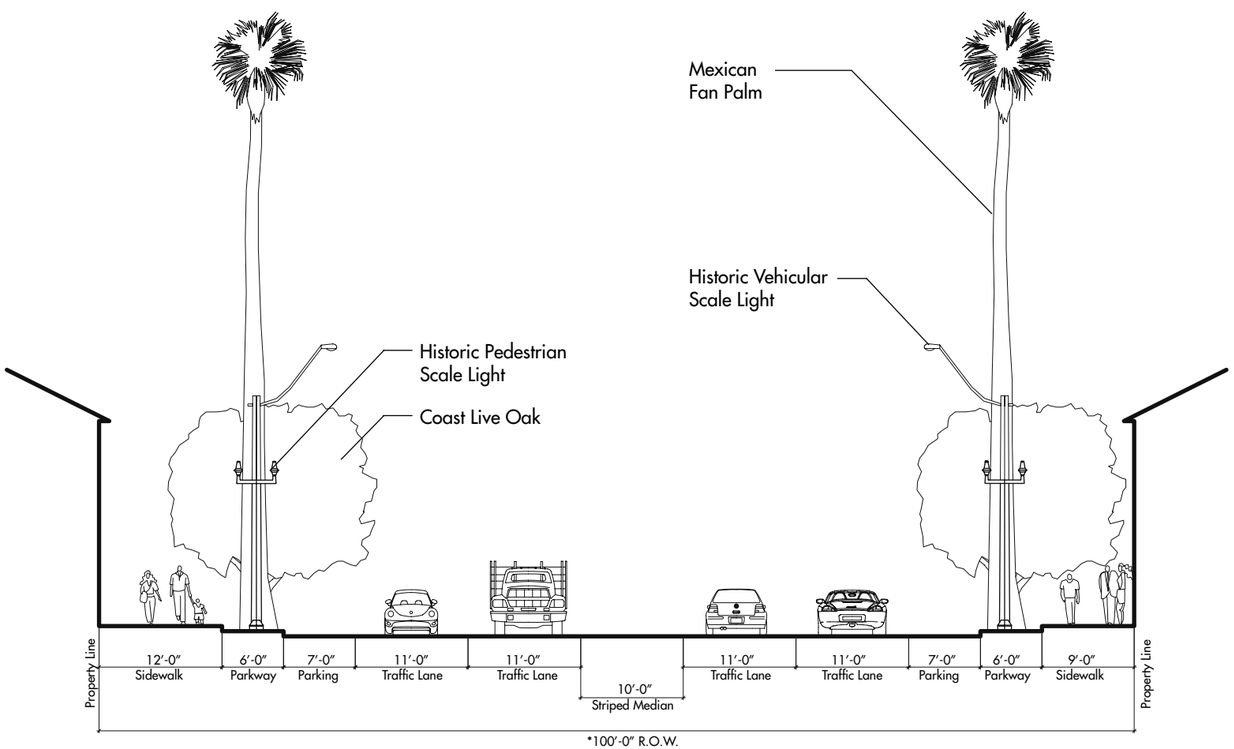

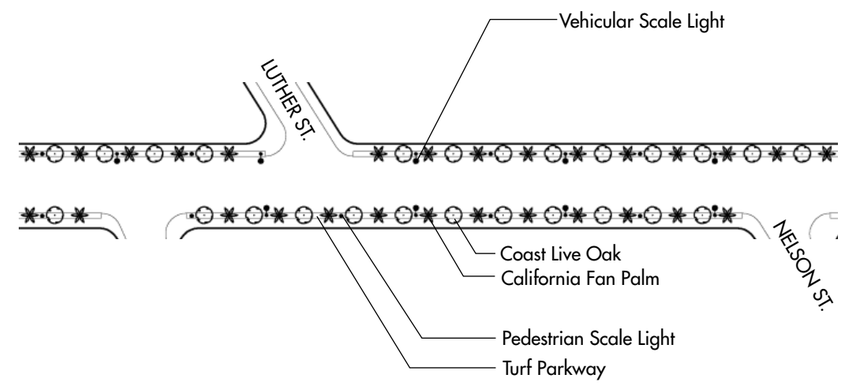

* R.O.W. Information obtained from 1999 Magnolia/Market Corridor Study

Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan

Figure 6.6
WOOD STREETS DISTRICT STREETSCAPE

(Linwood Pl. to Bandini Ave.)

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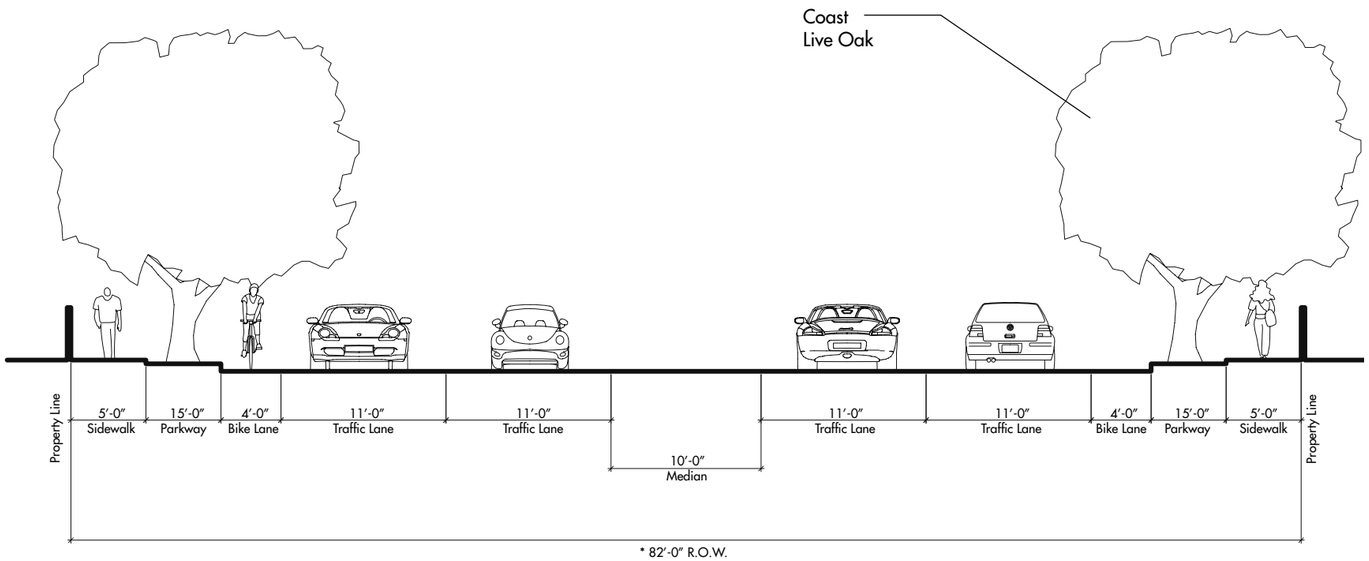

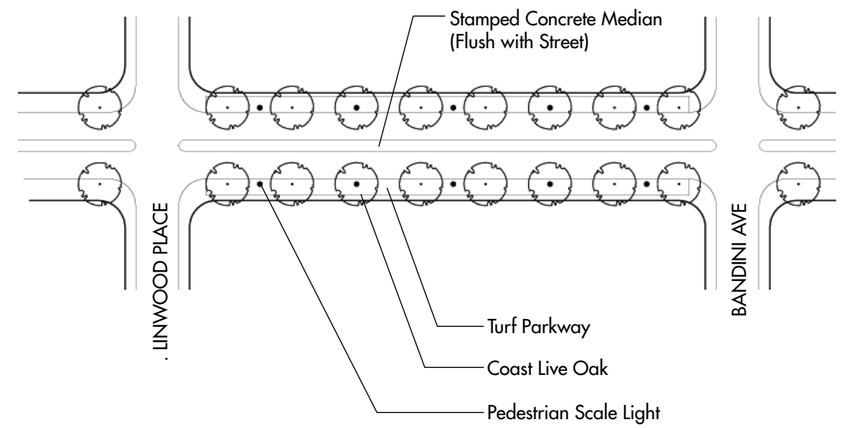

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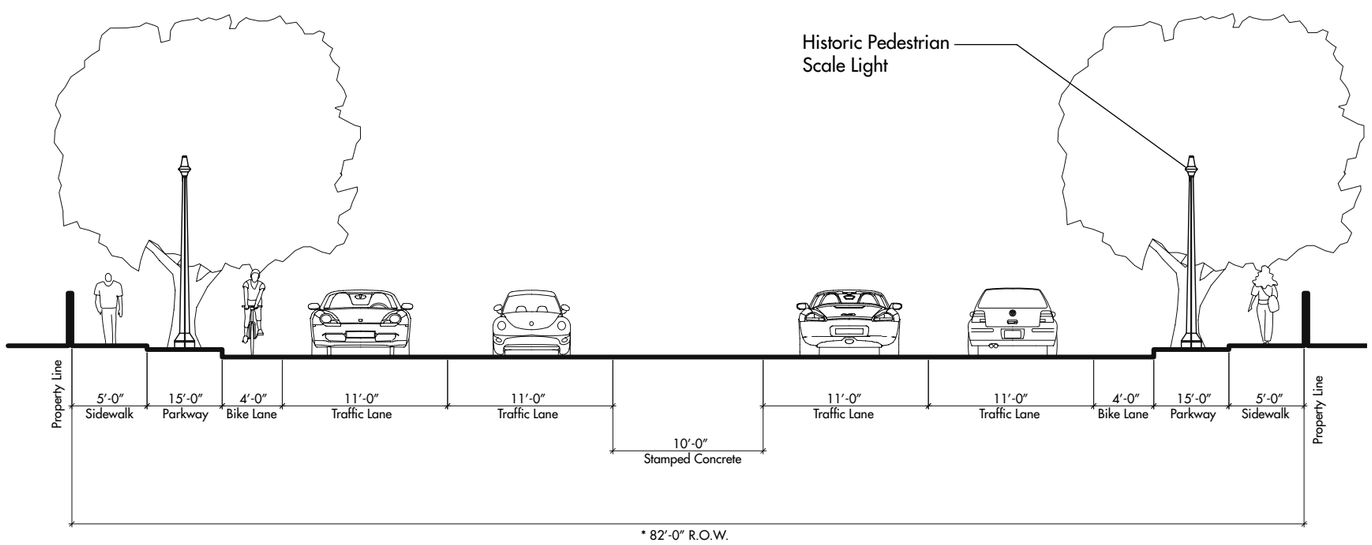

* R.O.W. Information obtained from 1999 Magnolia/Market Corridor Study