

3.4 Pacific Highway

Pacific Highway is a major transportation corridor that winds through several diverse neighborhoods, including Old Town, the Midway District, Mission Hills, Little Italy, and Downtown San Diego. It also provides primary access to nearby military installations like the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) and the NAVWAR Old Town Campus, though traffic volumes reduce by more than half adjacent to NAVWAR compared to MCRD on account of the Barnett interchange contributing significantly to higher volumes south to the Pacific Highway ramp connections with I-5.

With its current auto-oriented design, such as grade separations, frontage roads, and flyovers, Pacific Highway presents a strong opportunity for transformation by prioritizing active and alternative transportation modes. This transformation can be achieved by retrofitting existing infrastructure to create space for a new generation of sustainable mobility options, including walking, biking, micromobility, and enhanced transit access and services.

3.4.1 Previously Planned Improvements

The Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan (2018)'s Mobility and Urban Design Elements designate Pacific Highway as a Linear Gateway with both a Class I multi-use urban path and Class IV cycle tracks. In addition, Linear Gateways also feature wider sidewalks, street trees, and landscaped medians. The Mobility Element also calls out specified intersection improvements along Pacific Highway including converting Barnett Avenue and Witherby Street into at-grade intersections to reduce uncontrolled turning movement conflicts and create crossing / turning opportunities for all modes.

3.4.1 Corridor Recommendations

This section provides a summary of concept recommendations for each section of Pacific Highway, as illustrated in **Figure 3-5**. While the proposed improvements generally complement the Mobility Element of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan, some may necessitate a Community Plan Amendment. Therefore, it is recommended that SANDAG and the City of San Diego continue coordinating with related and cumulative projects, incorporating the recommended improvements into each project's planning process wherever feasible.

Typical cross-sections, both near-term and long-term, represent each section along with the plan view under long-term improvements which are presented in **Figures 3-6 through 3-16** on the following pages. While these cross-sections represent the varying lane configurations and right-of-way along Pacific Highway, they don't capture the intersection reconfiguration alternatives. The intersections have the greatest potential for providing new accessibility, particularly for pedestrians, where prohibitions currently exist. Improvements such as protected intersections, high-visibility crosswalks, two-stage crossings, lead pedestrian intervals, and dedicated bicycle signals are some of the potential treatments for this corridor. Alternatives will be studied and rendered as concepts for comparison during SANDAG's Pacific Highway Multimodal Access Corridor Study (PacMAC), the San Diego At-Grade Crossing Elimination Study (SD ACES), and the Airport Transit Connection (ATC) projects.

Traffic operational analyses for Pacific Highway, comparing conditions with and without the recommended improvements, were conducted and a summary is documented in **Appendix I**. **Appendix J** provides planning-level cost estimates for Pacific Highway.

Figure 3-5. Pacific Highway Alignment



Section A:
Sea World Drive to I-5 Overpass

Section B:
I-5 Overpass to Taylor Street

Section C:
Taylor Street to Telegraph Place

Section D:
Telegraph Place to Barnett Ave

Section E:
Barnett Ave to Couts Street

Section F:
Couts Street to Washington Street

Section G:
Washington Street to Sassafras Street

Section H:
Sassafras Street to Laurel Street

Section I:
Laurel Street to Broadway

3.4.1.1 Section A: Sea World Drive to I-5 Overpass

This segment of Pacific Highway connects Mission Bay Park through the Morena / Linda Vista and Mission Valley community planning areas via an Interstate 5 (I-5) overpass. It's key in facilitating local connections between tourist attractions like Mission Bay, Sea World, Fiesta Island, and Old Town. Due to the nature of the attractions on the route, there can be significant traffic volumes as well as some seasonal variation.

The segment currently has one general travel lane for cars in each direction. There are painted bike lanes on each side of the road, which disappear on either side of the bridge over I-5. There is no sidewalk in either direction for over $\frac{1}{4}$ mile on this segment and an even farther distance between the crossing opportunities.

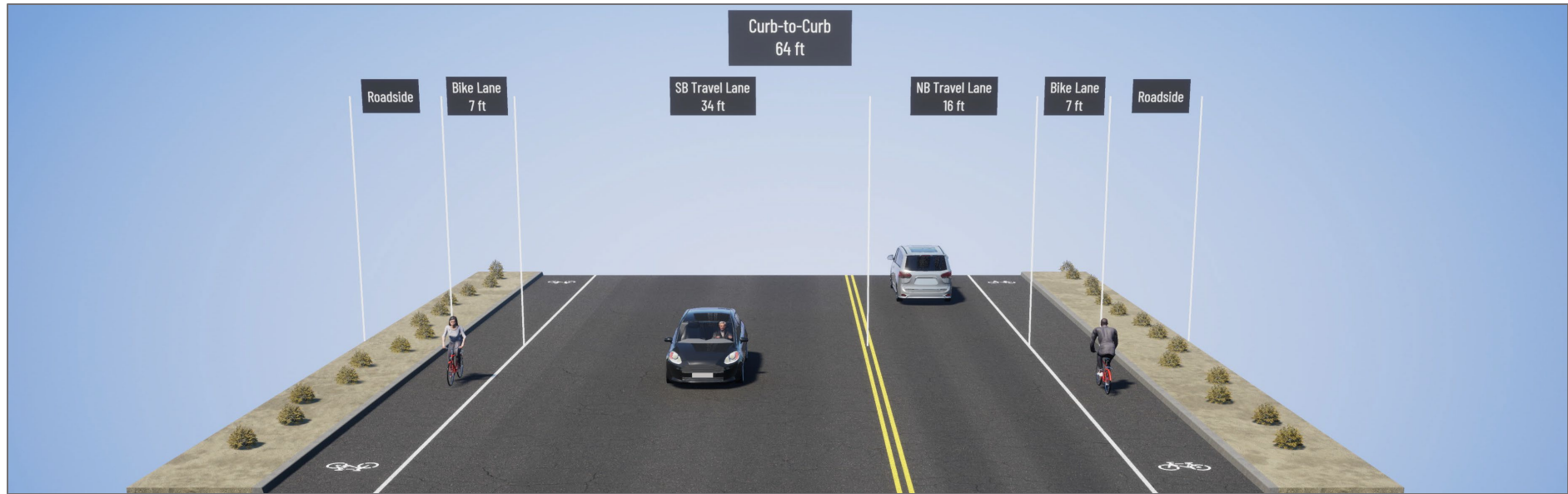
Near-Term/Non-Capital Improvements

The first step in improving this segment is to better define the width of the travel lanes for cars. This allows for a wider striped center median as well as separated bikeways on either side. The bikeways would have protection in the form of flex posts; thus enhanced safety for vulnerable road users could be achieved without requiring capital improvement.

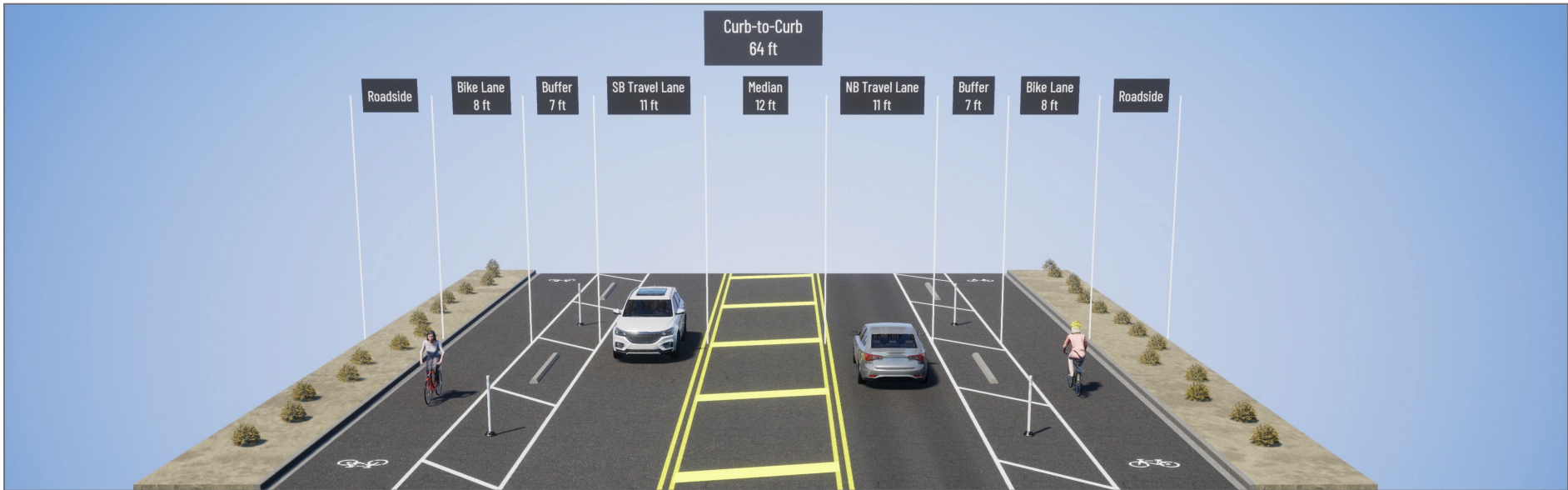
Ultimate Vision/Capital Improvements

Long-term improvements would include bikeways on each side fully separated from traffic by raised medians. These would require capital improvement but it increases safety, separation, and predictability for all roadway users and allows for beautification. A sidewalk would also be introduced on both sides in City right-of-way. On the I-5 overpass travel lane widths would be reduced enough to implement either non-standard (4') continuous bike lanes, an alternating standard bike lane in the uphill direction only or, at the very least, shoulders to better delineate travel lanes.

Figure 3-6. Section A1: Sea World Drive to I-5 Overpass (Page 1 of 2)



Existing Conditions



Near-Term Conditions: Non-Capital/Quickbuild Project

Figure 3-6. Section A1: Sea World Drive to I-5 Overpass (Page 2 of 2)

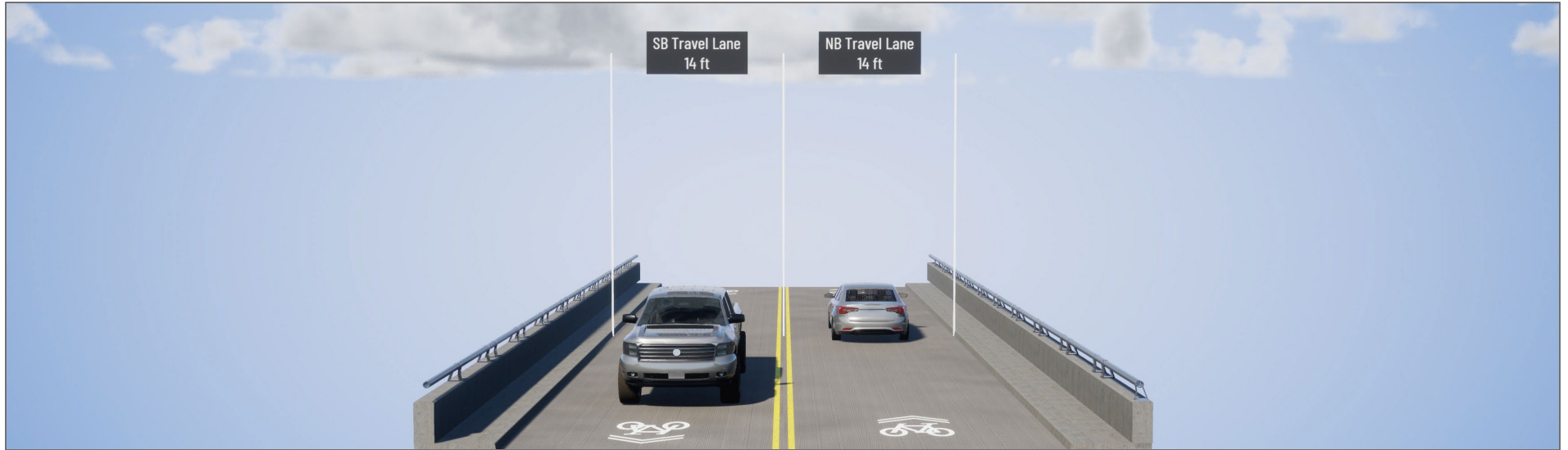


Long-Term Conditions

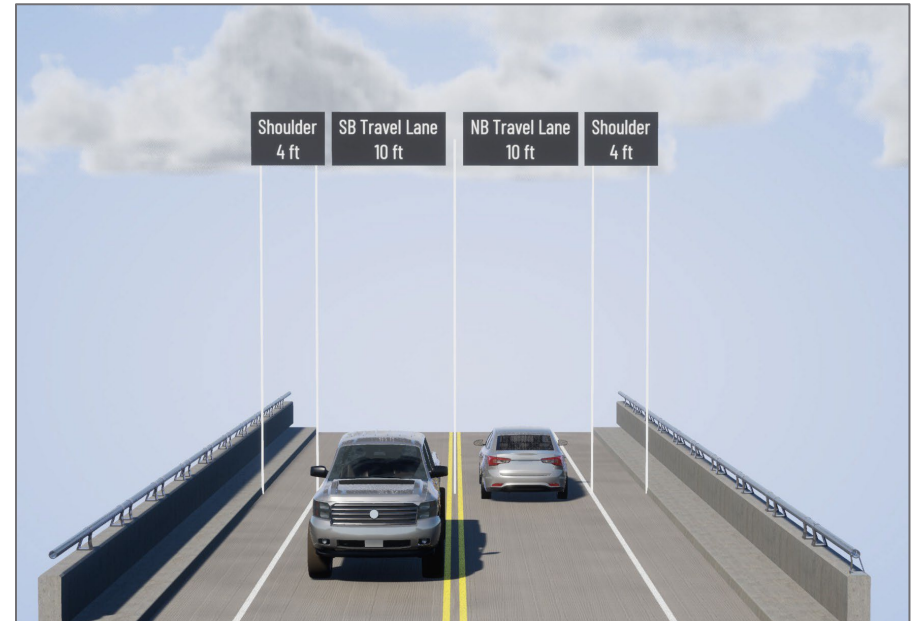
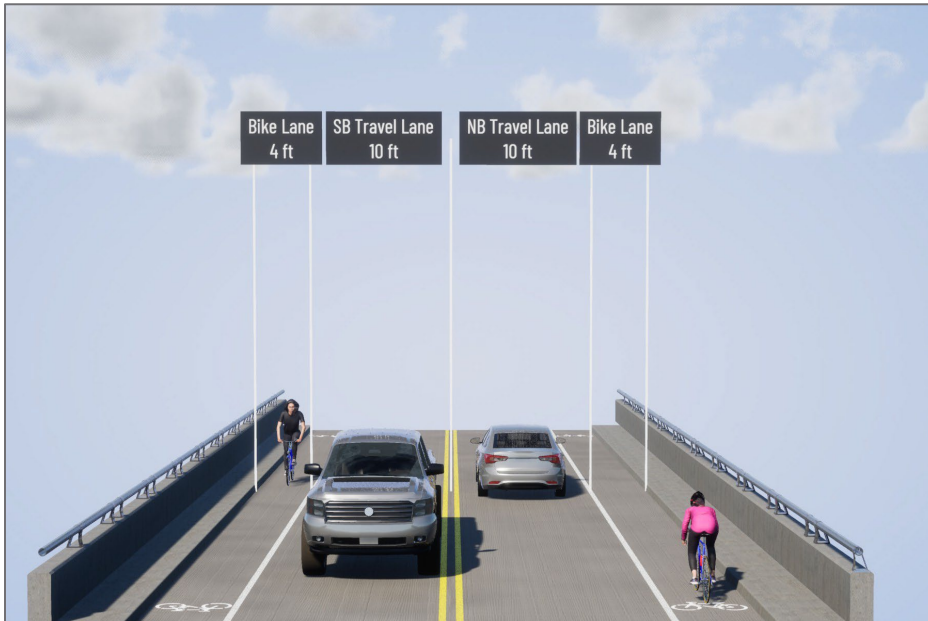


Long-Term Conditions - Plan View

Figure 3-7. Section A2: I-5 Overpass (Page 1 of 2)

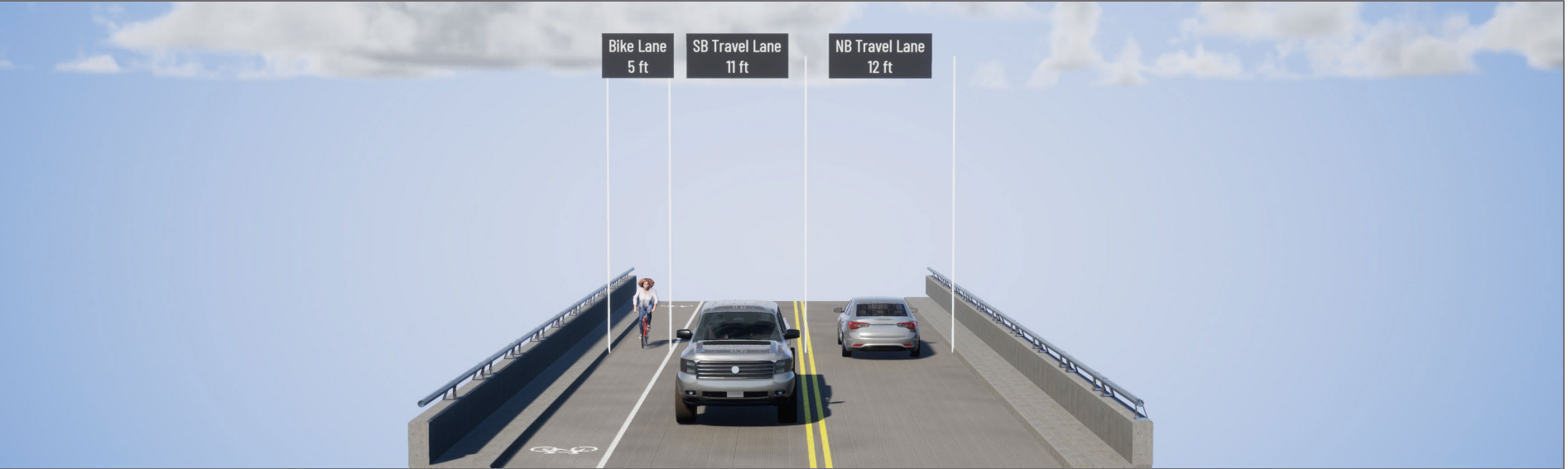


Existing Conditions

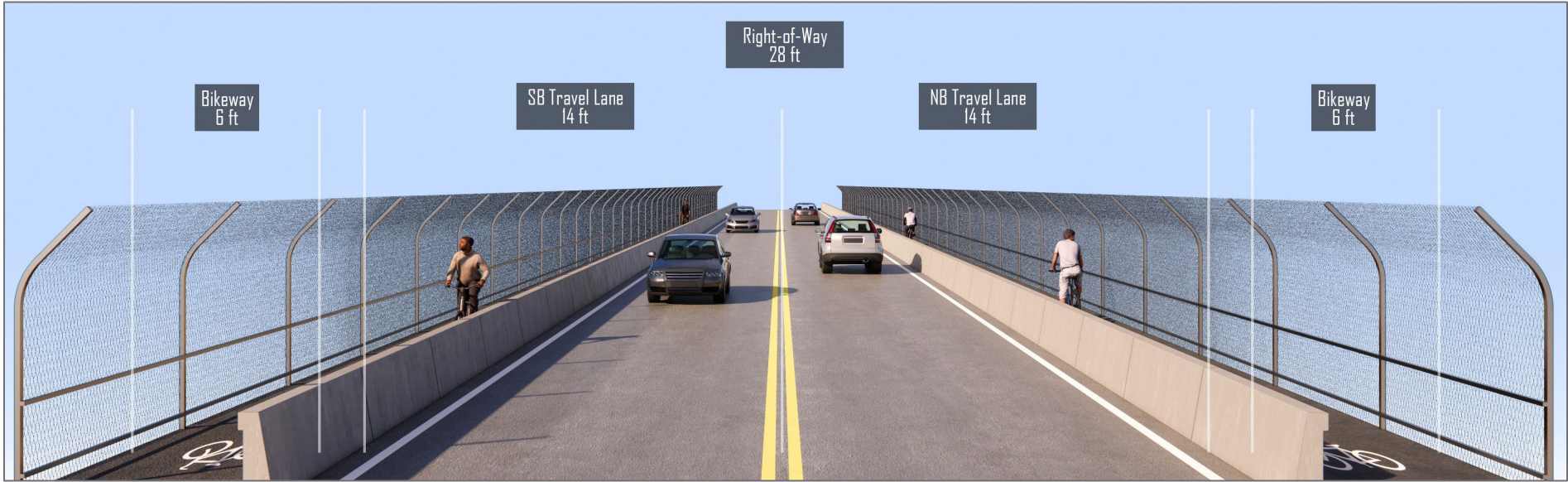


Near-Term Conditions Alternative 1: Non-Capital/Quickbuild Project
Urban Core+Connections

Figure 3-7. Section A2: I-5 Overpass (Page 2 of 2)



Near-Term Conditions Alternative 2: Non-Capital/Quickbuild Project



Long-Term Conditions: Capital Improvement Project

3.4.1.2 Section B: I-5 Overpass to Taylor Street

This segment largely facilitates the same connections as Section A, it is key in connecting Old Town, the Midway Pacific Highway communities, and Mission Bay Park while traveling through both Linda Vista and Mission Valley Community Planning Areas. In the southern portion of the segment, the City of San Diego is considering a redevelopment of Perry's Diner site into a 223-unit multi-family residential complex.

Existing conditions on this segment include one general travel lane for cars in each direction along with a two-way left turn lane.

There are narrow bike lanes present, but there is no physical barrier between cyclists and traffic. There are connections in both directions to the San Diego River Trail Class I Bike Path, as well as an undercrossing, but there are no marked crossings on this segment until the Taylor Street intersection. There is also a small 5-foot sidewalk for pedestrians on each side. Finally, parking exists on each side of the street and is predominantly used for long durations by Recreational Vehicles with occupants camping in the right-of-way, motorists must cross over the bike lane to park their vehicles.

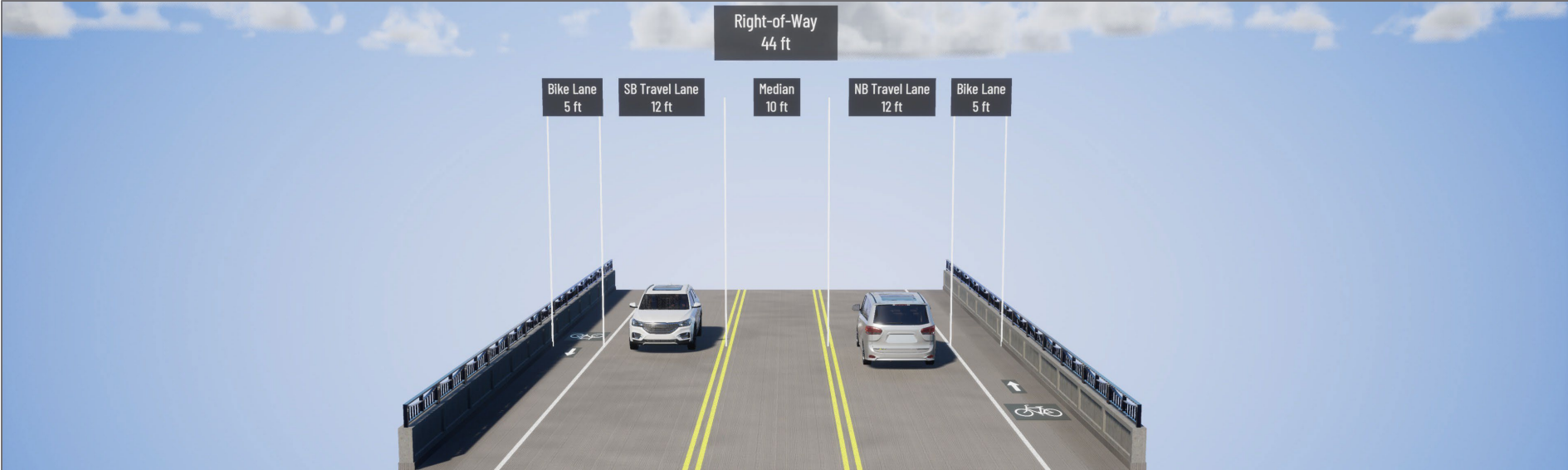
Near-Term/Non-Capital Improvements

The Near-Term/Non-Capital Improvements begin with removing the on-street parking in each direction. The two-way left turn lane is also removed in this scenario. These removals result in bikeways separated by flexible posts and slightly narrower lanes for cars to help reduce vehicle speeding.

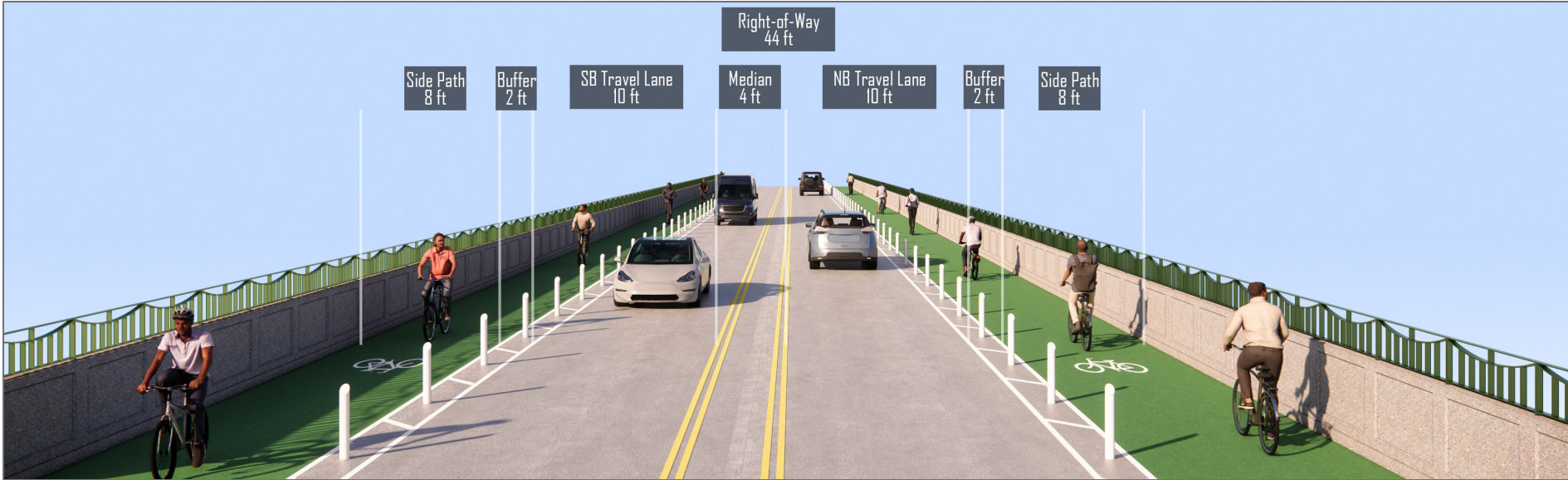
Ultimate Vision/Capital Improvements

Under the final scenario, bikeways are separated by raised and planted medians, fully protecting cyclists from vehicles and improving the aesthetic character of the segment. The sidewalks on each side are also widened slightly to offer more room for pedestrians.

Figure 3-8. Section B1: San Diego River Bridge (Page 1 of 2)

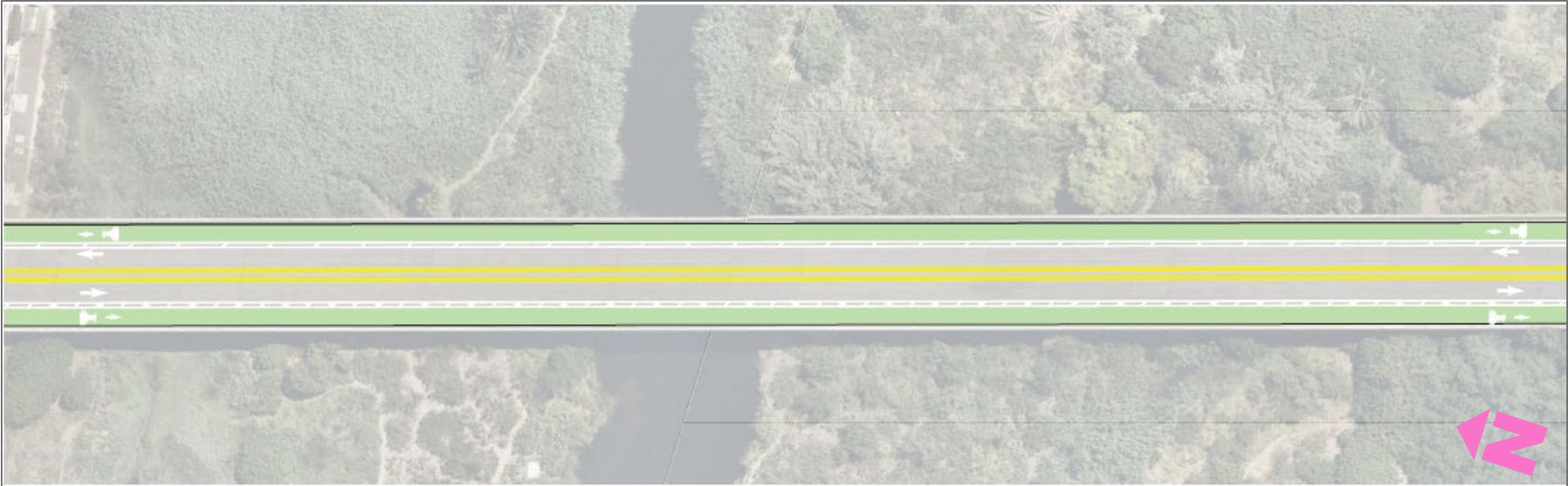


Existing Conditions



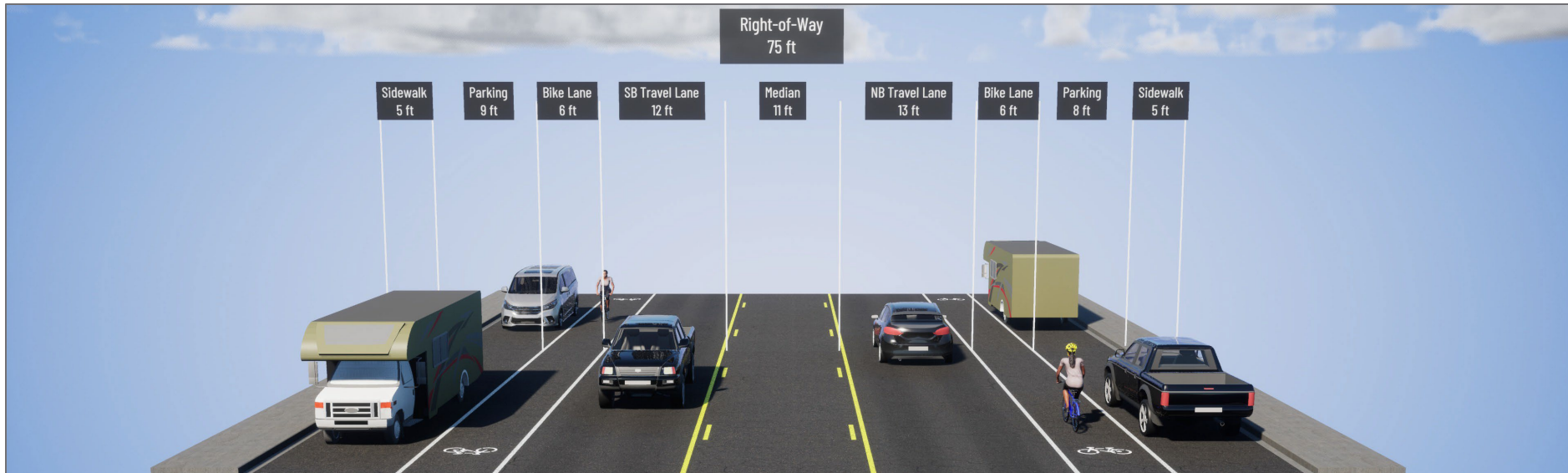
Long-Term Conditions

Figure 3-8. Section B1: San Diego River Bridge (Page 2 of 2)

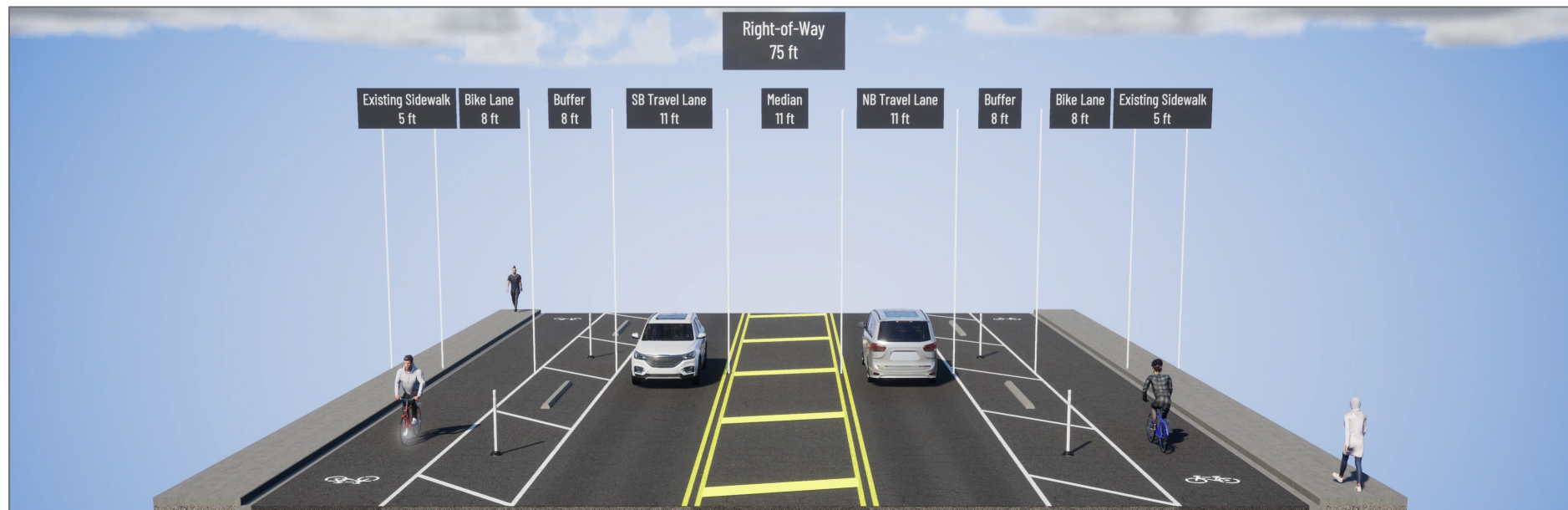


Long-Term Conditions Plan View

Figure 3-9. Section B2: Pacific Highway, North and South of San Diego River Bridge (Page 1 of 2)

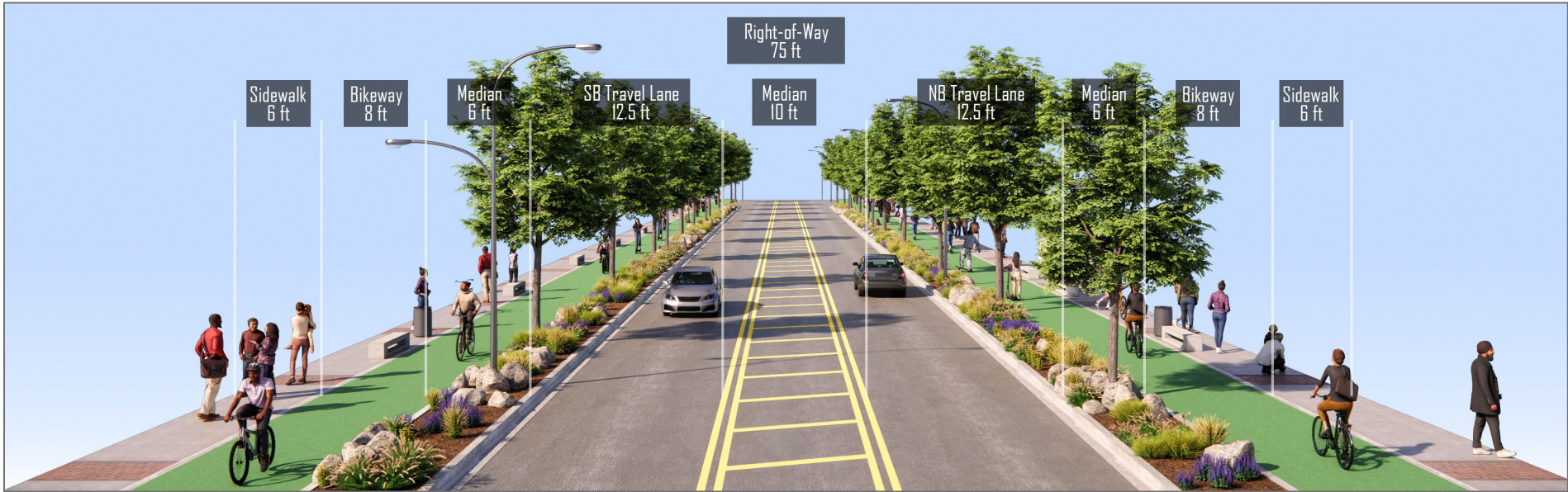


Existing Conditions



Near Term Conditions: Non-Capital/Quickbuild Project

Figure 3-9. Section B2: Pacific Highway, North and South of San Diego River Bridge (Page 2 of 2)



Long-Term Conditions: Capital Improvement Project



Long-Term Conditions Plan View

3.4.1.3 Section C: Taylor Street to Telegraph Place

Section C facilitates travel between Old Town and the Midway Pacific Highway communities as well as connecting to Point Loma via Rosecrans Street. The segment runs right in front of the Old Town Transit Center and local buses access Pacific Highway here via Telegraph Place.

Currently the segment consists of three general travel lanes for cars in each direction, with a small, raised center median. There are painted bike lanes on each side offering no protection from fast-moving cars, but each side does have a reasonably wide sidewalk. On the northbound side there is a brief transit-only lane that allows buses to easily access the bus parking facility behind the transit center.

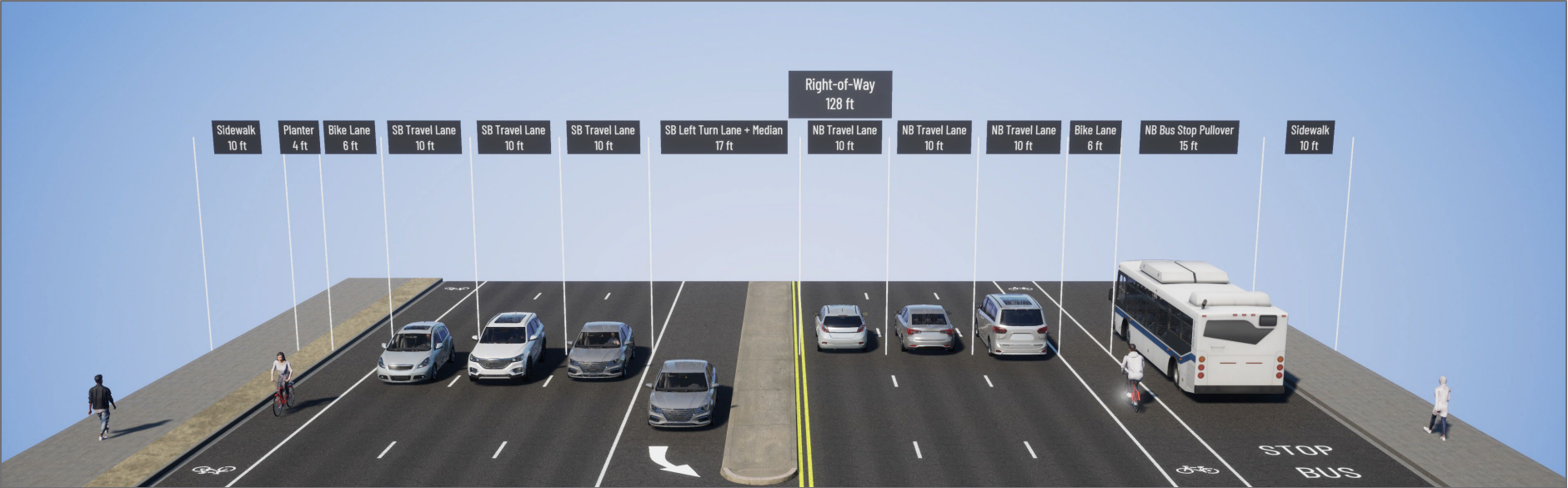
Near-Term/Non-Capital Improvements

Under this scenario, one travel lane is removed in each direction. This allows for the implementation of separated bikeways with flexible posts providing a vertical barrier between motorists and bicyclists on this popular commuter and recreational route. The transit-only lane on the northbound side remains as well as the sidewalks.

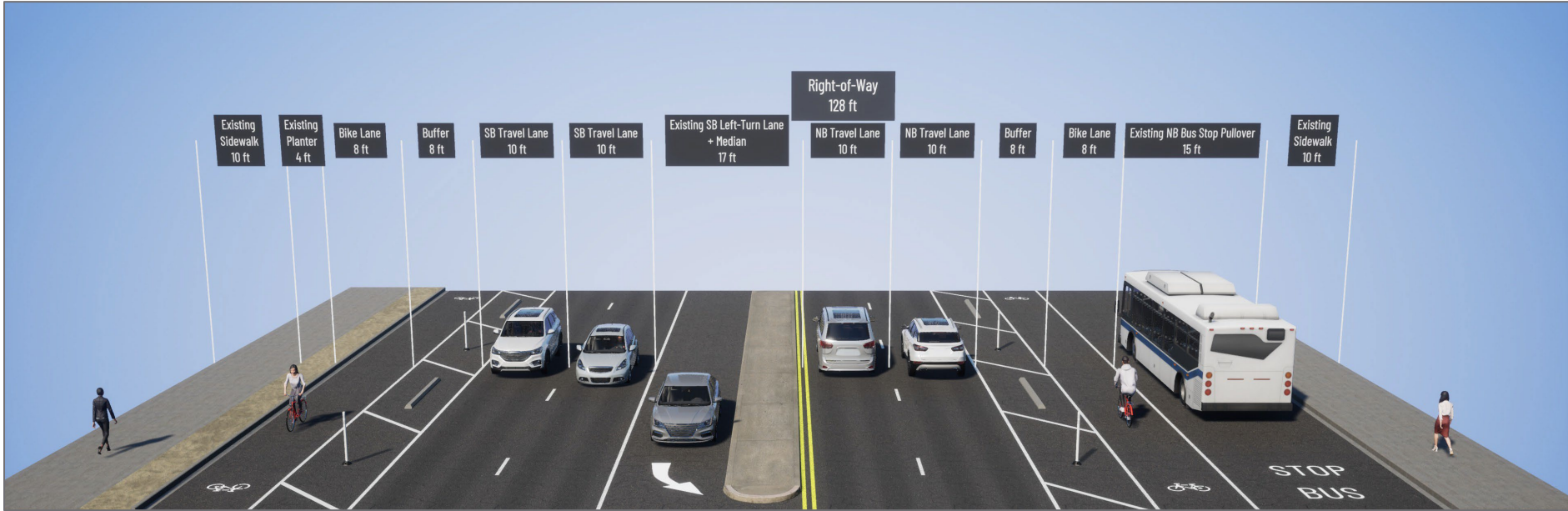
Ultimate Vision/Capital Improvements

The Ultimate Vision/Capital Improvements introduces bikeways separated by planted medians. A transit-only lane is implemented on the southbound side while preserving the northbound transit lane, and a transit-only turn lane is proposed for routes using Rosecrans to improve on time performance on a challenging segment for these routes and their operators and users. These transit lanes are separated from the bikeways by the planted median; thus cyclists are fully separated from any vehicular traffic. The sidewalk on the southbound side, opposite the transit center, is reduced by 4 feet to help accommodate these changes but the northbound sidewalk remains at a width of 10 ft.

Figure 3-10. Section C: Taylor St to Telegraph Place (Page 1 of 2)

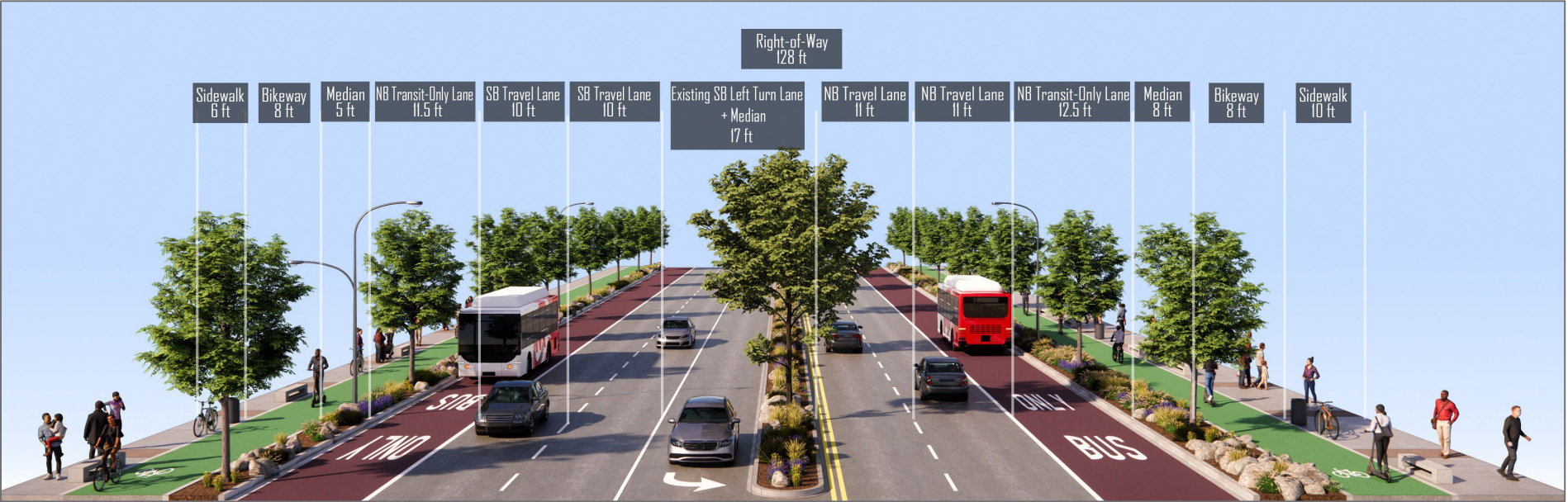


Existing Conditions

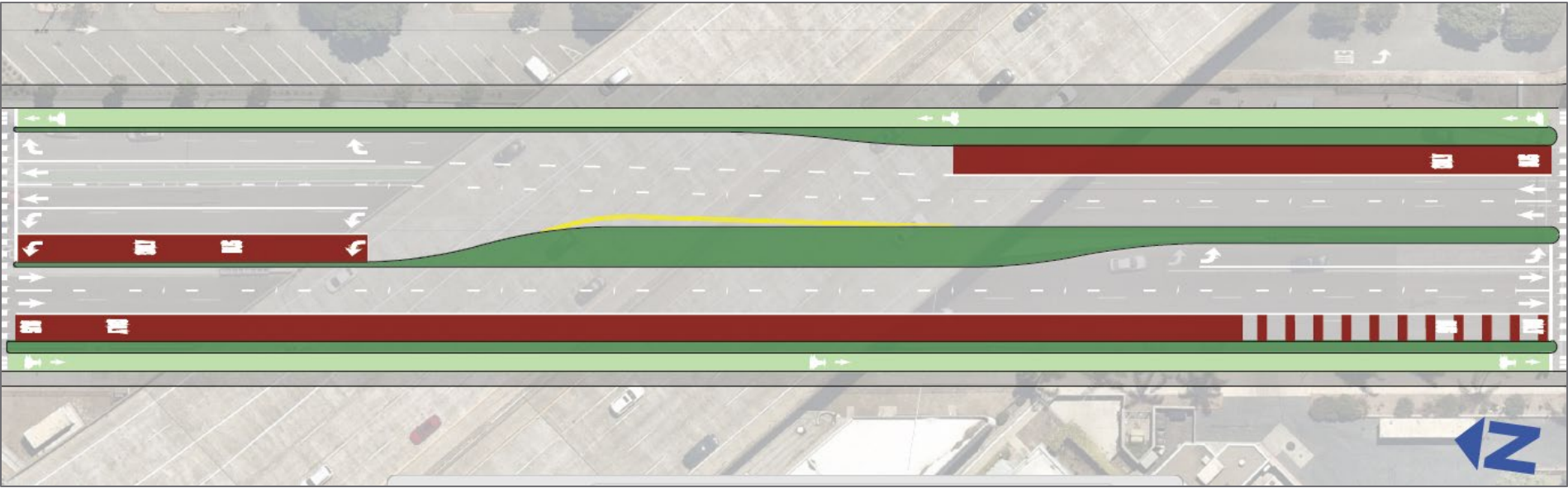


Near-Term Conditions: Non-Capital/Quickbuild Project

Figure 3-10. Section C: Taylor St to Telegraph Place (Page 2 of 2)



Long-Term Conditions: Capital Improvement Project



Long-Term Conditions Plan View

3.4.1.4 Section D: Telegraph Place to Barnett Avenue

Section D is surrounded by military, commercial, and industrial developments oriented to the NAVWAR site. This section includes the intersecting Barnett Avenue which provides a direct connection to the Peninsula community and attractions such as Sunset Cliffs, Shelter Island, Cabrillo National Monument, and Liberty Station.

The NAVWAR site will undergo a significant redevelopment that introduces more multi-family and commercial development, along with park space, making it easier to enhance mobility, safety, and accessibility along this stretch of the corridor.

The current conditions include three general travel lanes in each direction, unprotected bike lanes on each side, and intermittent sidewalks. There are no crossing opportunities for pedestrians between Telegraph Place and Enterprise Street, a nearly ½ mile long segment of Pacific Highway.

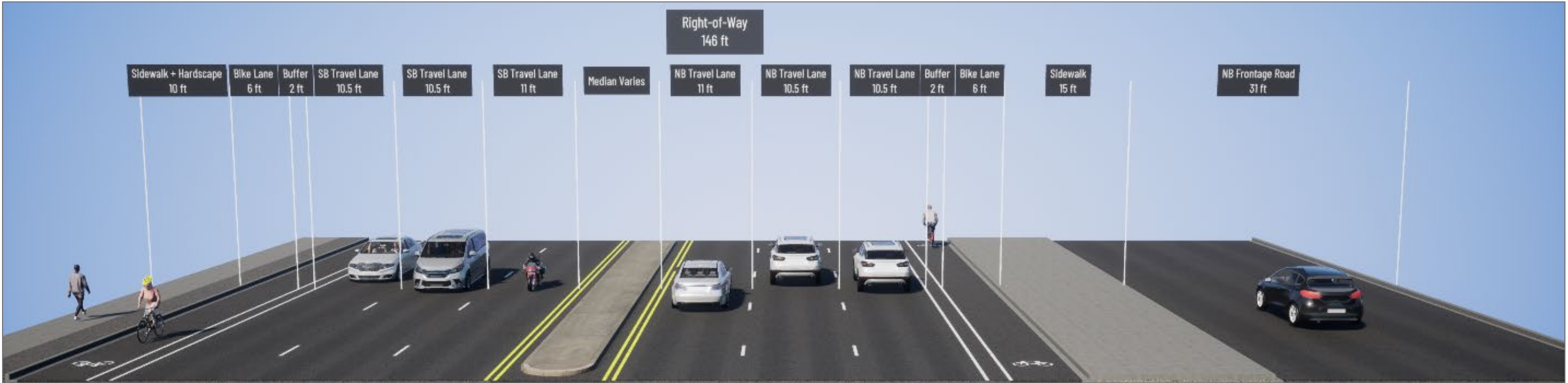
Near-Term/Non-Capital Improvements

Near-Term/Non-Capital Improvements for this segment begin with removing one travel lane in each direction. As noted previously, traffic volumes drop significantly north of Barnett Avenue. Separated bike lanes buffered by flexible posts and intermittent curbs are introduced and the sidewalks remain intact. On the east side, the travel lane, formerly a frontage road now fenced off from the NAVWAR site as underutilized City ROW, is removed and transit-only lanes are implemented travelling in each direction.

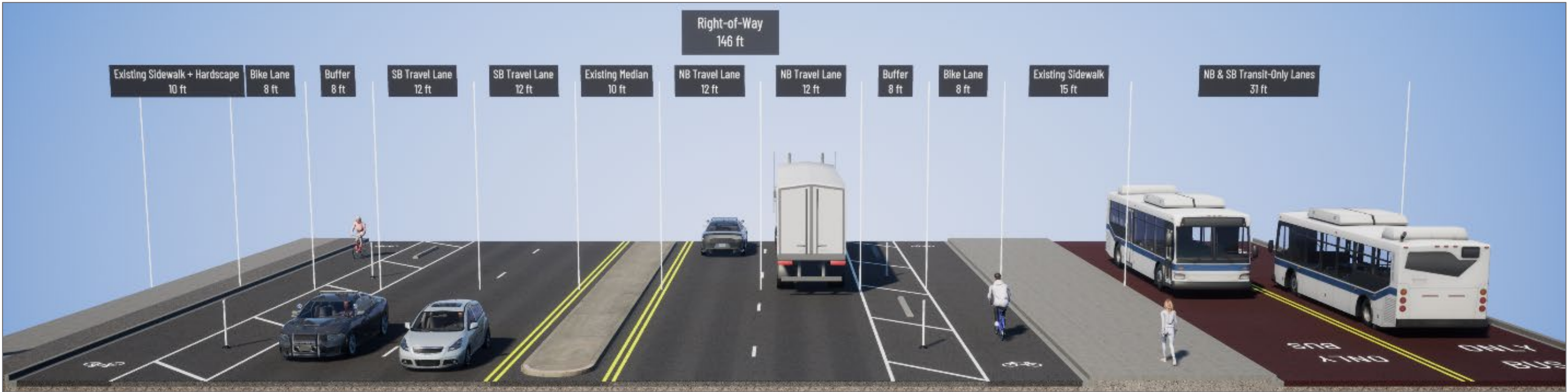
Ultimate Vision/Capital Improvements

The Ultimate Vision/Capital Improvements sees one travel lane in each direction replaced with a transit-only lane. Raised and planted medians are implemented and provide a buffer for separated bikeways on each side. On the far east side, the transit-only lanes have been relocated, and this creates space for a two-way cycle track along with a continuous sidewalk, separated by a planted median. These improvements introduce symmetry and predictability to a street with a history of collisions, with the goal of reducing conflicts, increasing multimodal throughput, and significantly enhancing safety for all roadway users.

Figure 3-11. Section D: Telegraph Place to Barnett Avenue (Page 1 of 2)



Existing Conditions

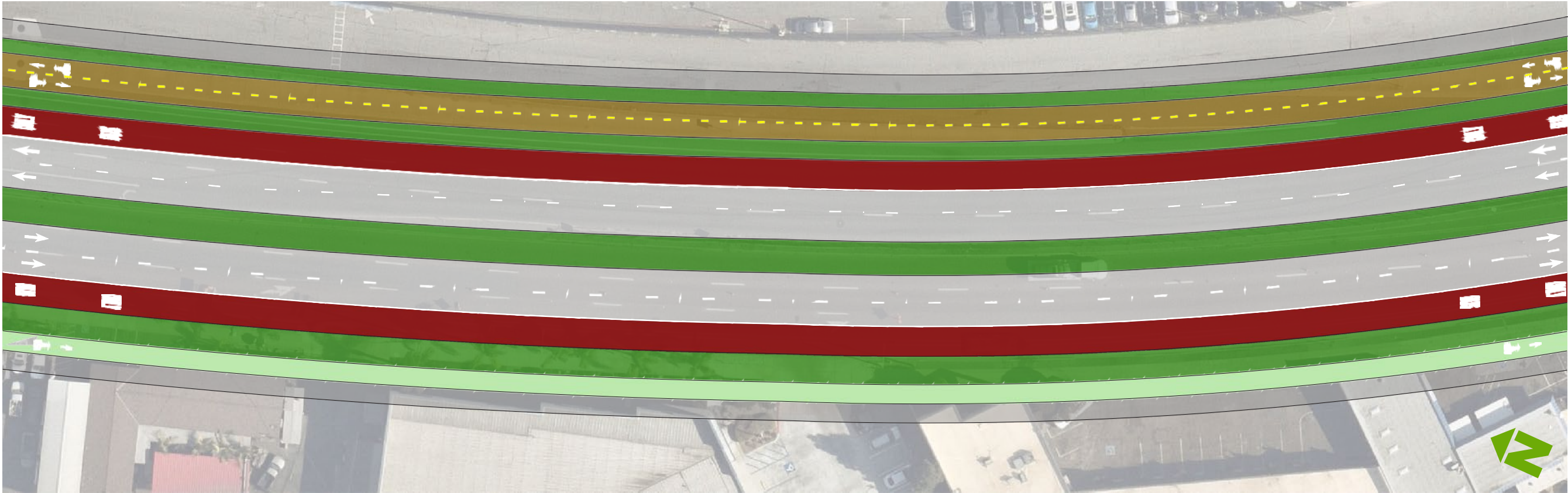


Near-Term Conditions: Non-Capital/Quickbuild Project

Figure 3-11. Section D: Telegraph Place to Barnett Avenue Recommendations (Page 2 of 2)



Long-Term Conditions: Capital Improvement Project



Long-Term Conditions Plan View

3.4.1.5 Section E: Barnett Avenue to Coutts Street

The segment intersects Witherby Street, which is utilized as a key point of access for Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) to the west via underpass and cloverleaf ramps. To the east, Witherby also serves as part of a direct route to the I-5 ramps at Old Town Avenue.

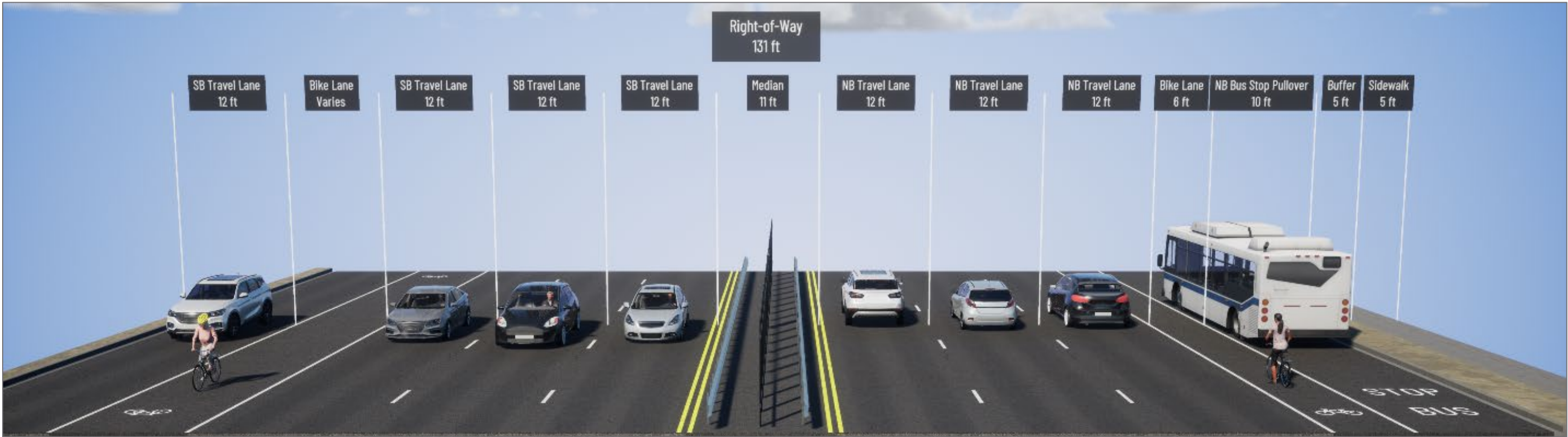
Near-Term/Non-Capital Improvements

The near-term concept would protect in place the existing median metal beam guard rails and fencing and narrow the travel lane widths to provide a combination of one-way separated bikeways and Class II buffered bike lanes on each side. The southbound merge lane and the northbound bus stop pullover would remain.

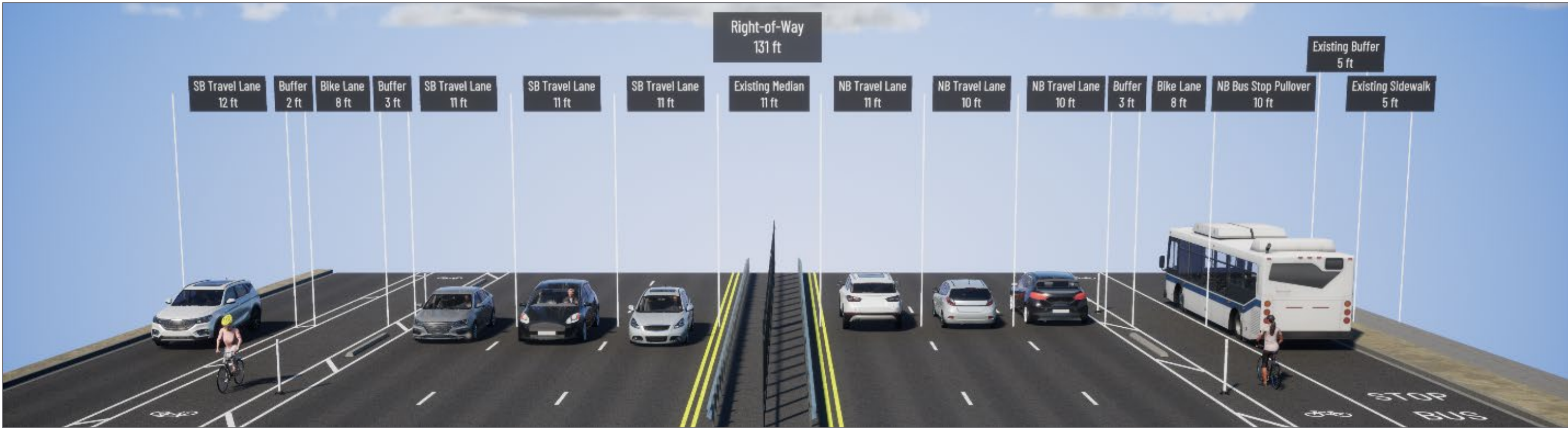
Ultimate Vision/Capital Improvements

The long-term concept reduces one general travel lane in each direction, replaces the median metal beam guard rails and fencing with a raised and planted center median, and eliminates the southbound merge lane to provide a one-way southbound separated bikeway on the west side, a street-level two-way separated bikeway on the east side, and transit only/flex lanes on both sides. A to-be-determined solution for facilitating the heavy turn volumes to / from Barnett Avenue while creating accessibility opportunities that don't currently exist for all users requires additional study that will compare alternatives and the tradeoffs with each.

Figure 3-12. Section E: Barnett Avenue to Coutts Street (Page 1 of 2)

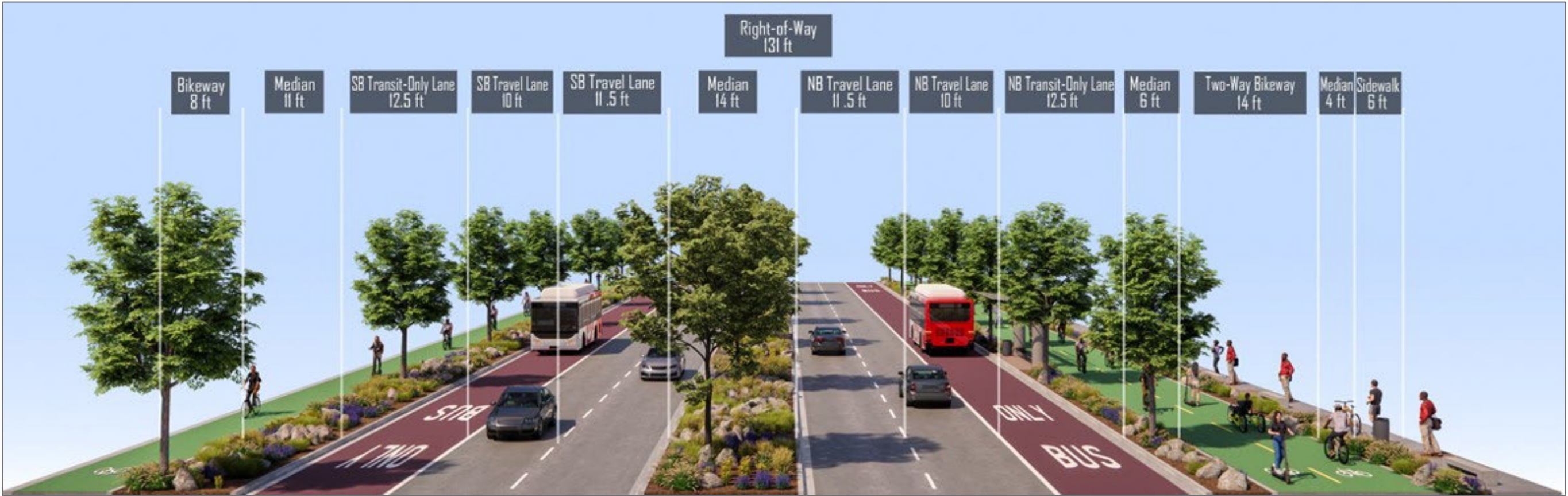


Existing Conditions



Near Term Conditions: Non-Capital/Quickbuild Project (Pacific Highway Only)

Figure 3-12. Section E: Barnett Avenue to Coutts Street Recommendations (Page 2 of 2)



Long Term Conditions: Capital Improvement Project



Long-Term Conditions Plan View

3.4.1.6 Section F: Coutts Street to Washington Street

This segment is a vital link for multimodal transportation, with connections to I-5 and transit infrastructure, such as the Washington Street Station. It is fronted on the west side by Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD), which influences traffic patterns due to military operations and access needs.

This segment is currently very auto-centric with four travel lanes in each direction and it is nearly impassable for anyone not in a motor vehicle. The segment also is adjoined by Frontage Road which has commercial and retail land uses supporting the neighborhood with business district setbacks, there is one lane in each direction and parking for cars on the northbound side. With low volumes and a speed limit less than half what is posted on the adjacent Pacific Highway segment, it is a lower-stress alternative for a short stretch of Pacific Highway, and opportunities exist to better integrate this area in the corridor. There are narrow painted bike lanes on each side of Pacific Highway here, but they are not protected and in some sections are missing entirely. There are no crossing opportunities for pedestrians or cyclists between Enterprise Street and Washington Street, a nearly mile-long segment of Pacific Highway featuring transit stops in both directions but intermittent non-ADA compliant sidewalks.

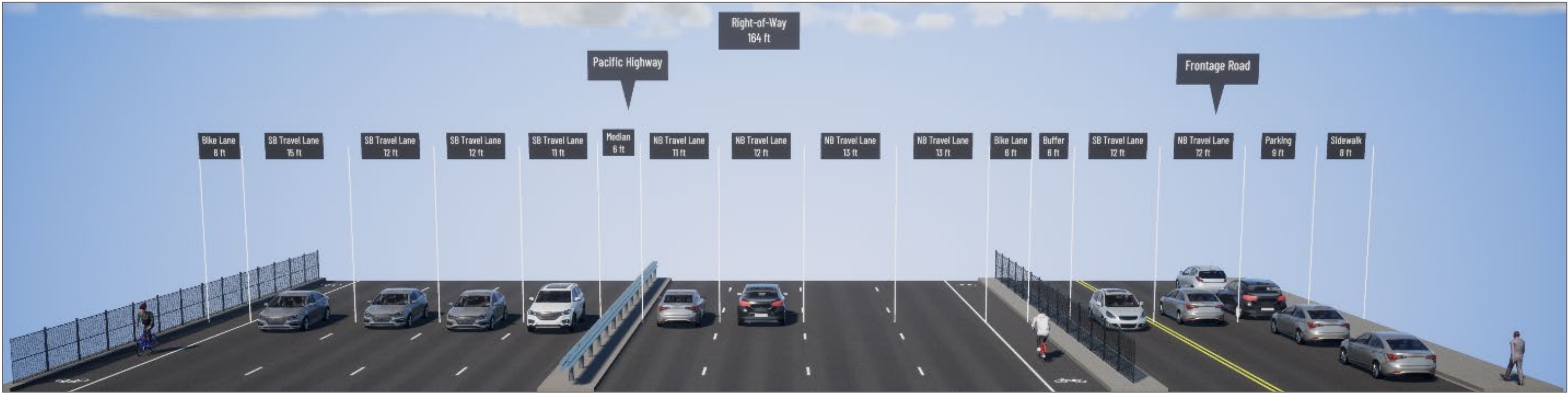
Near-Term/Non-Capital Improvements

This scenario involves separating the bikeways with flexible posts on each side. The third lane on the northbound side is reduced to make space for the separated bikeway. Finally, parking is removed on Frontage Road in areas with off-street parking or opportunities for replacing the removed parking on perpendicular streets, in order to accommodate the separated bikeway.

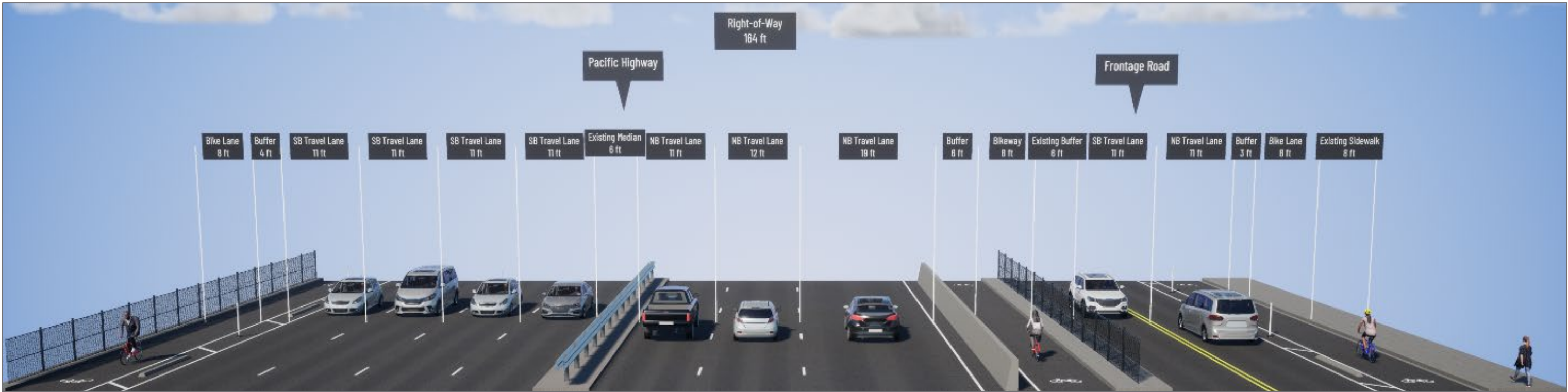
Ultimate Vision/Capital Improvements

This final scenario removes travel lanes for cars in each direction, making space for expanded planted medians as well as a transit-only lane going southbound. On Frontage Road, the southbound general travel lane is removed, short-term parking is reinstated, and a two-way cycle track is implemented and buffered by the parking. Additionally, the concept includes a one-way couplet between Frontage Road (northbound) and Kurtz Street (southbound). Northbound buses will utilize Frontage Road, and corresponding bus stops would be placed along Frontage Road. There is the potential for a business improvement district (BID) and / or a maintenance assessment district (MAD) to be formed that could provide maintenance funding for the enhanced streetscape elements on a human-scale corridor better connected to the neighboring communities.

Figure 3-13. Section F: Coutts Street to Washington Street Recommendations (Page 1 of 2)

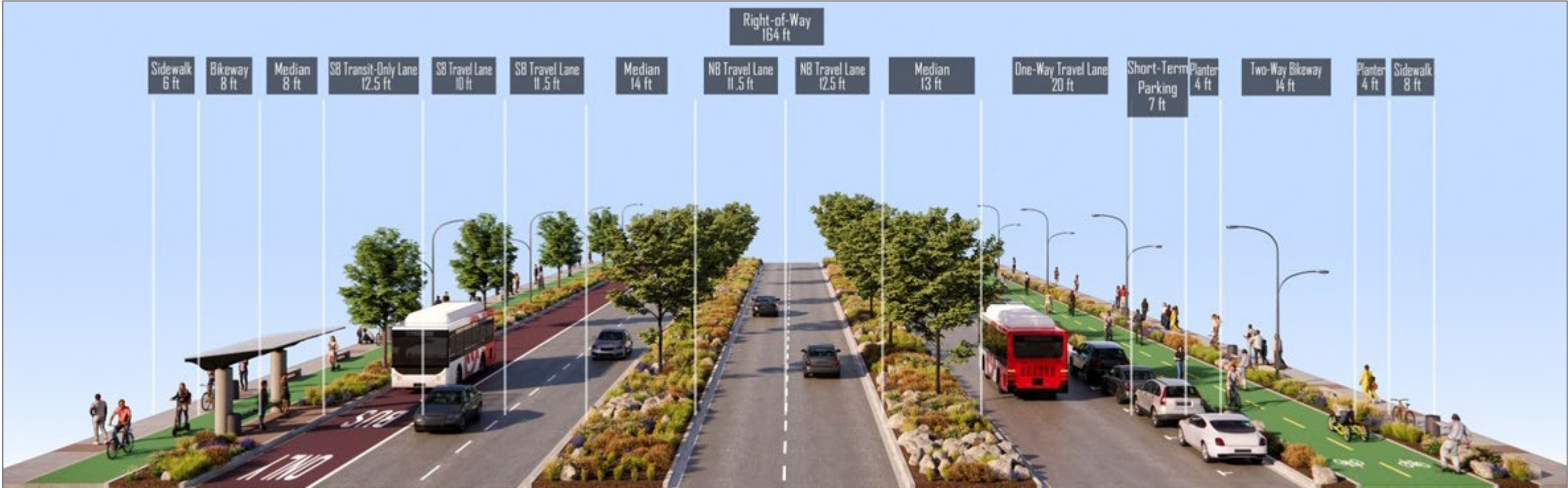


Existing Conditions



Near-Term Conditions: Non-Capital/Quickbuild Project

Figure 3-14. Section F: Coutts Street to Washington Street Recommendations (Page 2 of 2)



Long Term Conditions: Capital Improvement Project



Long-Term Conditions Plan View

3.4.1.7 Section G: Washington Street to Sassafras Street

Section G has significant above-grade separated sections for freeway on/off-ramps, and traffic volumes at-grade in Section G are largely influenced by airport traffic including airport shuttles, vehicles accessing rental car facilities, and employee centers. The airport traffic and local activity make improving connectivity through Section G essential.

Section G of Pacific Highway includes three general travel lanes in both directions and on-street parking in the northbound direction. There is no bike lane for the northbound direction and little safety measures for the southbound bike lane. While there are sidewalks in both directions, there are few traffic control elements that prioritize safety for bikes and pedestrians with a distance of nearly ½ mile between Washington Street and Sassafras Street where bicycle and pedestrian crossings are prohibited.

Near-Term/Non-Capital Improvements

Two travel lanes in each direction remain in the near-term, and bike lanes with painted buffers would be added to both directions along with floating parking to protect cyclists. The addition of bike lanes in the northbound direction will improve connectivity through Section G and match the presence of bikeways, existing or planned, on adjacent segments. These bikeway represent a significant upgrade over the existing conditions to enhance safety for cyclists without significantly impeding general traffic lanes.

Ultimate Vision/Capital Improvements

Two travel lanes for cars remain in the long-term concept. Additionally, a transit-only lane in each direction will support Section G's need for a more reliable bus service. Greenery and pedestrian amenities will make the walking experience more enjoyable and better contribute to a shared public space.

Right-of-Way 52.5 ft

Sidewalk 5 ft

Parkway 3 ft

Bike Lane 6 ft

Buffer 2.5 ft

SB Travel Lane 11.5 ft

SB Travel Lane 13 ft

SB Travel Lane 11.5 ft

Existing I-5 Fly over/Airport Parking

Right-of-Way 50 ft

NB Travel Lane 12 ft

NB Travel Lane 12 ft

NB Travel Lane 12 ft

Parking 6 ft

Sidewalk 6 ft

Right-of-Way 52.5 ft

Existing Sidewalk 5 ft

Existing Parkway 3 ft

Bike Lane 8 ft

Buffer 3 ft

SB Travel Lane Varies

SB Travel Lane 13 ft

Existing I-5 Fly over/Airport Parking

Right-of-Way 50 ft

NB Travel Lane 12 ft

NB Travel Lane 11 ft

Parking 10 ft

Buffer 3 ft

Bikeway 8 ft

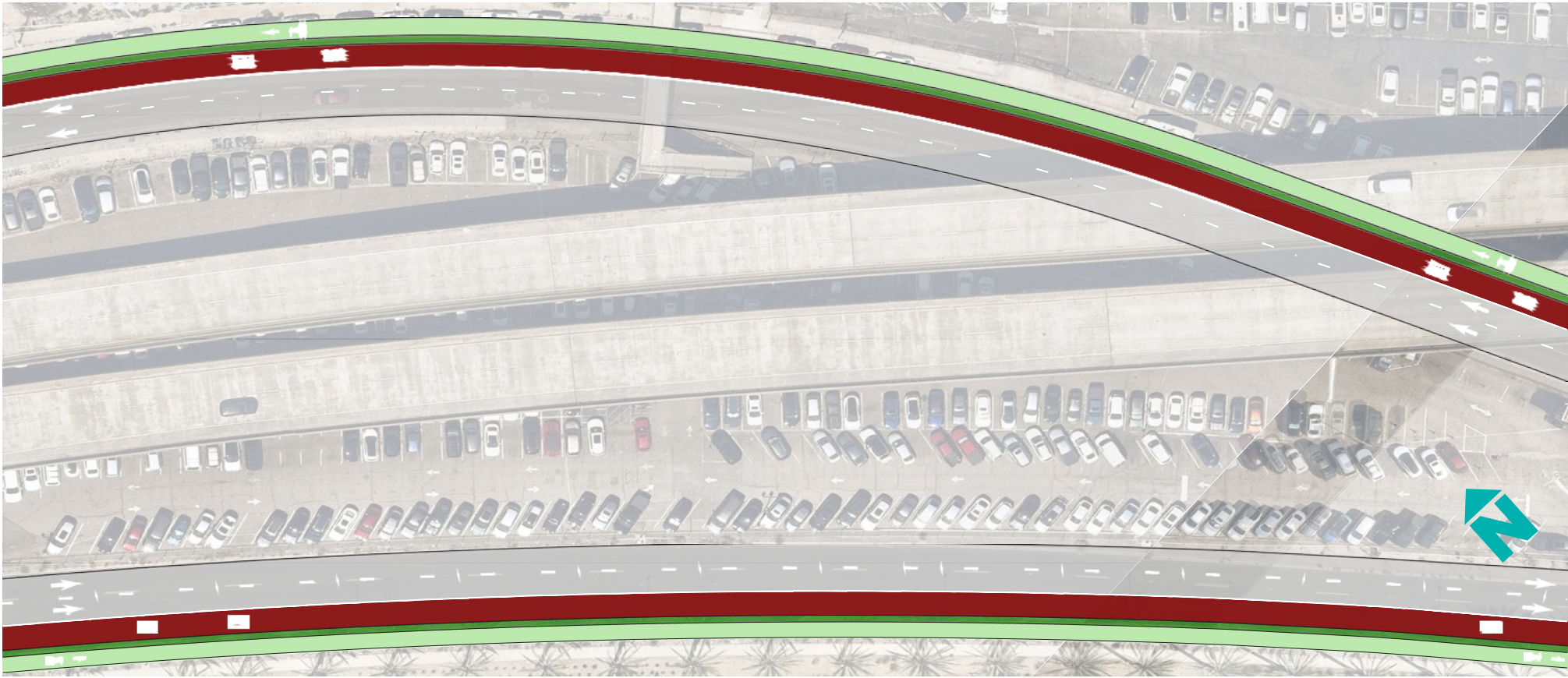
Existing Sidewalk 6 ft

Urban Core+Connections

Figure 3-14. Section G: Washington Street to Sassafras Street Recommendations (Page 2 of 2)



Long Term Conditions



Long-Term Conditions Plan View

3.4.1.8 Section H: Sassafras Street to Laurel Street

Section H supports airport activity and connectivity to key areas such as Little Italy. Airport traffic and local activity creates moderate traffic but a history of collisions illustrate the areas need for enhanced solutions for regional mobility, especially with closer proximity to the waterfront and denser land uses generating more cyclist and pedestrian trips. Pacific Highway from Taylor Street to Laurel Street is a 2.5-mile-long corridor that significantly reconfigured the early ~300x300' street grid. Though evidence of these former intersections are still visible on parallel and perpendicular streets, Section H can be a catalyst for reintroducing this east-west connectivity to the Pacific Highway corridor which, in turn, greatly improves accessibility in a multimodal network and reestablishes Pacific Highway as a gateway.

Today's experience prioritizes general travel lanes for cars, while the airport, hotel, and other community shuttles are not prioritized. The current conditions include a buffer between bikes and cars in the southbound direction but no bikeway designation for significant portions of the northbound direction extending all the way to Palm Street. The existing general travel lanes mix bus operations with general traffic, causing delays for bus service.

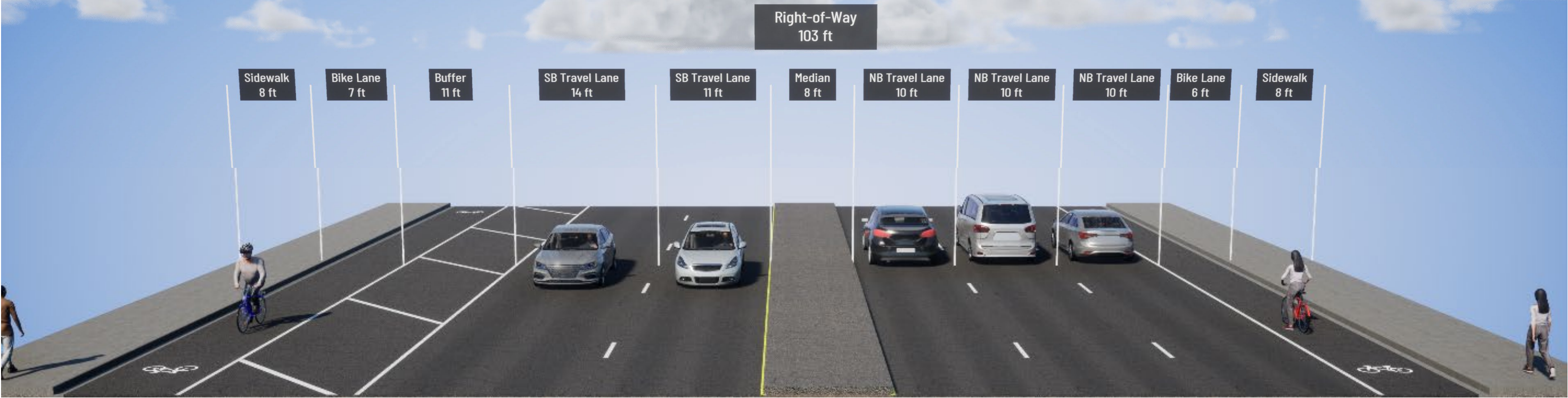
Near-Term/Non-Capital Improvements

In the near-term, the southbound bike lane is enhanced with some safety measures, and the northbound bike lane will extend through the entire section. The implementation of vertical delineation between the travel lanes and bikeway closes a gap in the regional bike network and creates a more consistent streetscape for all roadway users throughout Section H. Crossing improvements can improve accessibility across Pacific Highway and to / from the Middletown Station for transit users.

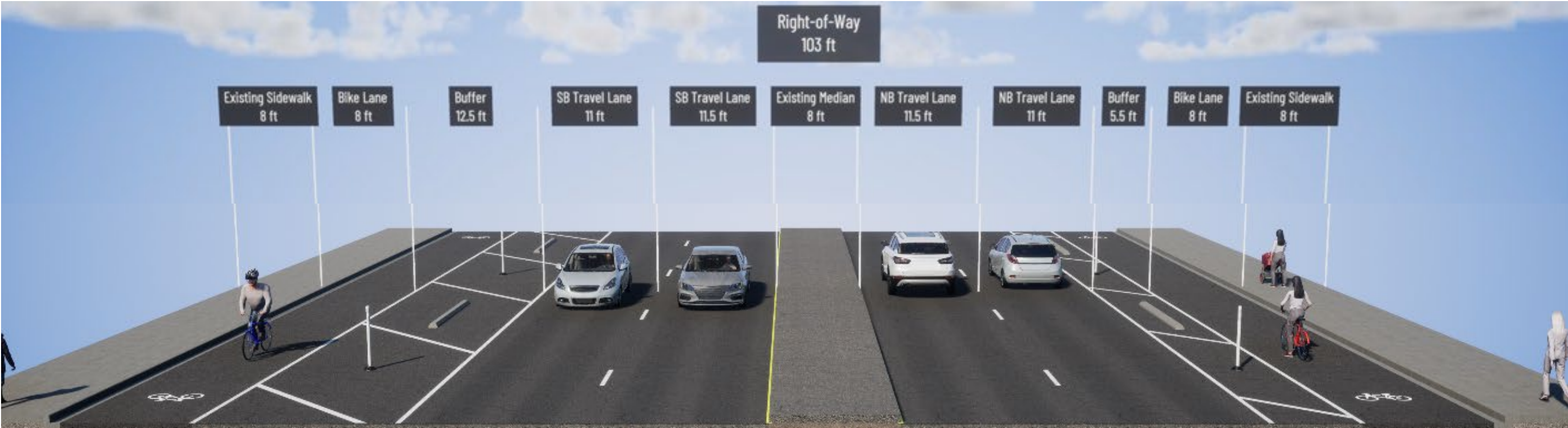
Ultimate Vision/Capital Improvements

The long-term vision enhances travel for bikes, buses, and pedestrians while maintaining two lanes for general travel from the existing conditions. A major change from the near-term to long-term conditions is the addition of transit-only lanes in both directions. The transit-only lanes act as a buffer between cars and bikes, supporting connectivity through the section.

Figure 3-15. Section H: Sassafras Street to Laurel Street Recommendations (Page 1 of 2)



Existing Conditions



Near Term Conditions: Non-Capital/Quickbuild Project

Figure 3-15. Section H: Sassafras Street to Laurel Street Recommendations (Page 2 of 2)



Long-Term Conditions: Capital Improvement Project



Long-Term Conditions Plan View

3.4.1.9 Section I: Laurel Street to Broadway

Section I experienced significant improvements with the implementation of the City of San Diego's Downtown Mobility Plan. Laurel Street to Broadway is a key route north / south route with intersections that handle dense airport activity through Little Italy and Downtown. This segment includes commercial, hotel, and industrial land uses and facilitates travel to major waterfront attractions, local businesses, and tourism destinations. Lastly, Santa Fe Depot is located within this corridor and supports mobility to the region.

Today, Laurel to Broadway includes a raised median, two travel lanes, and a flexpost-separated bikeway in both directions. The bikeway and buffers provide additional separation between vehicles and pedestrians using the sidewalk, particularly in the southbound direction which also includes a parking lane between the travel lanes and bikeway.

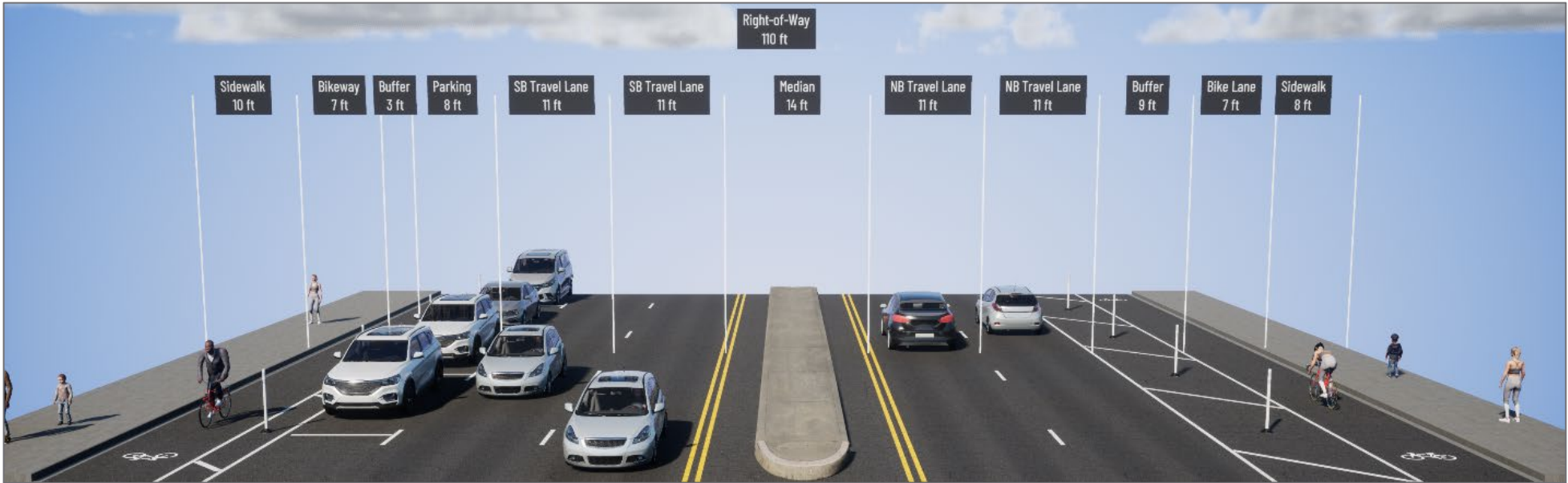
Near-Term/Non-Capital Improvements

No near-term conditions were prepared for Section I because most improvements identified in the City of San Diego's Downtown Mobility Plan have already been implemented.

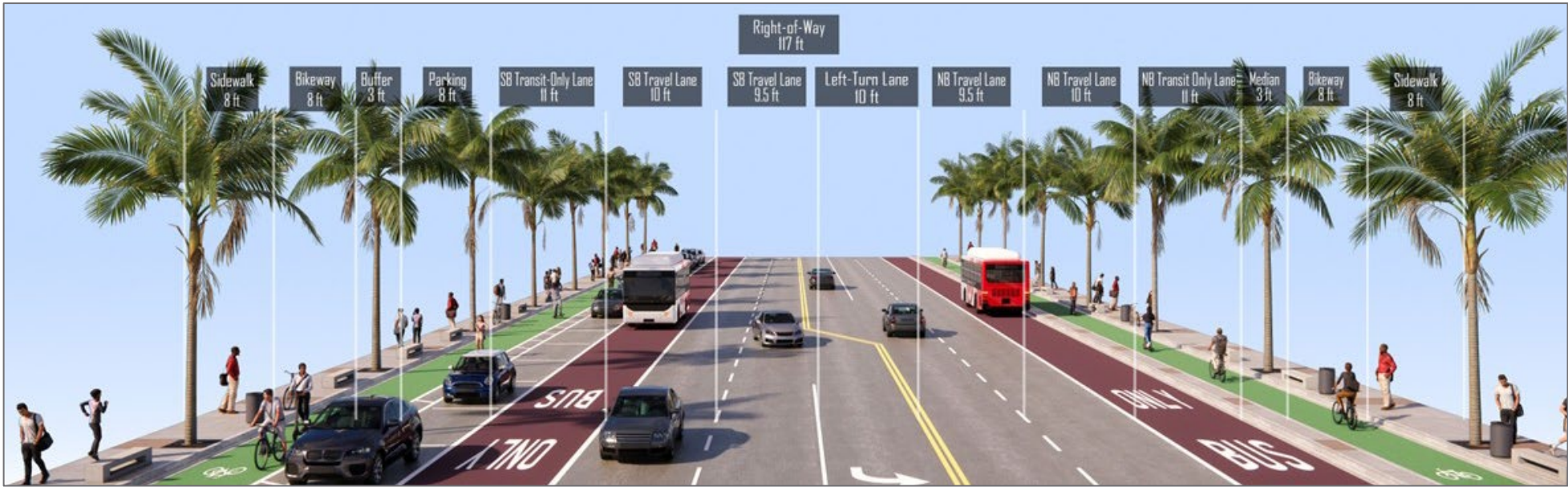
Ultimate Vision/Capital Improvements/Long-Term Vision

Long-term, capital improvements reallocate street space with a transit-only lane and a left-turn lane in each direction. The dedicated transit lanes prevent general purpose travel from interfering with bus services and provides additional separation between cyclists and cars. Section I will benefit greatly from dedicated transit lanes where currently only intermittent dedicated transit lanes exist.

Figure 3-16. Section I: Laurel St to Broadway Recommendations (Page 1 of 2)



Existing Conditions



Long Term Conditions: Capital Improvement Project

Figure 3-16. Section I: Laurel St to Broadway Recommendations (Page 2 of 2)



Long-Term Conditions Plan View