

Update to the General Plan Mobility Element

PALM DESERT CITY COUNCIL
STUDY SESSION – MAY 9, 2024



Purpose – Update General Plan Mobility Element

Receive input on Staff's recommended action plan to amend Chapter 4 of the Palm Desert General Plan – Mobility Element

- Consistency with other City plans
 - ATP
 - CIP Walk and Roll
 - Bike and Golf Cart Plan
- Consistency with Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) adopted guidelines
- Updates in state law – Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
- Engineering Standard Details

Proposed Action Plan

Enter a contract with City approved vendor, Fehr & Peers to amend the Palm Desert General Plan Mobility Element.

Scope of work to include:

- Safety Assessment of existing conditions
- Update travel Demand Model
- Prepare Transportation Study Guidelines per VMT
- Make Roadway Network Recommendations

Proposed Action Plan - Continued

- Update the Circulation Element policies to include the following:
 - VMT transportation impacts
 - Level of Service (LOS)
 - Maximum allowable roadway cross sections
 - Consistency with other state laws (e.g. SB 330, SB 35)
 - Coachella Valley Passenger Rail Service
 - Transit System
 - Transportation Demand Management (TDM)
 - Safety and Vision Zero Strategies
 - Emergency Evacuation Routes

- Prepare updated CEQA analysis

Background – General Plan Circulation Element

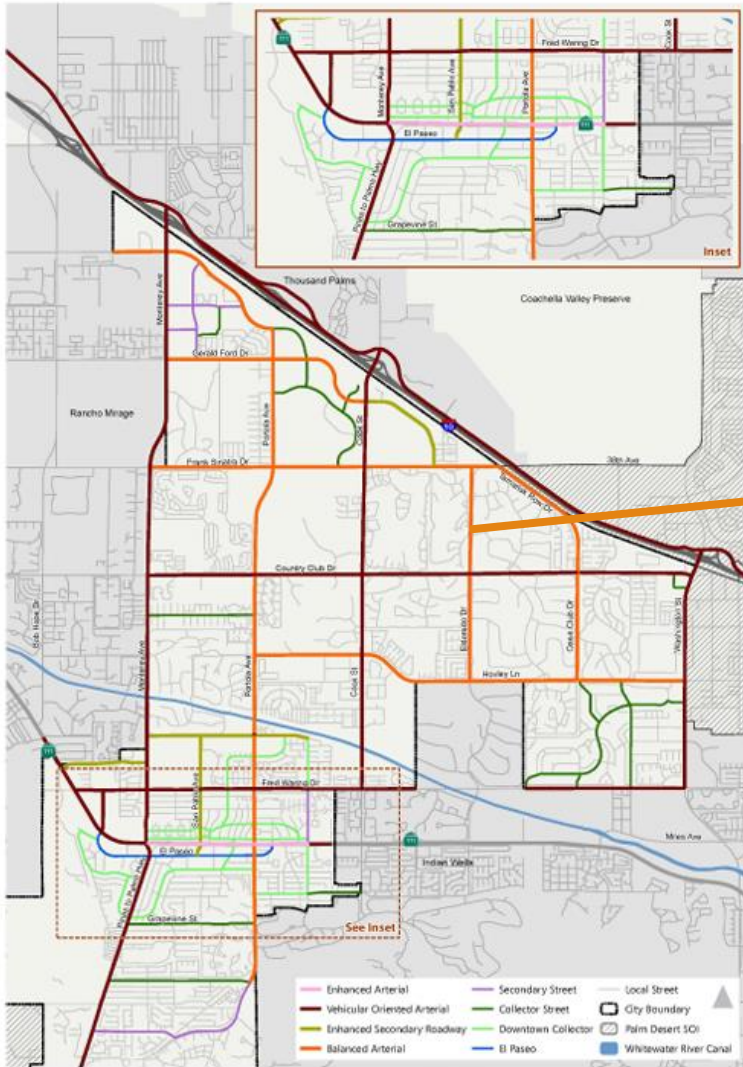
California law requires all Cities to adopt a General Plan, a comprehensive long-term planning document (GC §65300 *et sec.*)

A Mobility Element, or “Circulation Element” is a mandatory element of a general plan must identify the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities

City adopted a comprehensive update to the General Plan on November 10, 2016 (City Council Resolution No. 2016-87)

Background – General Plan Circulation Element

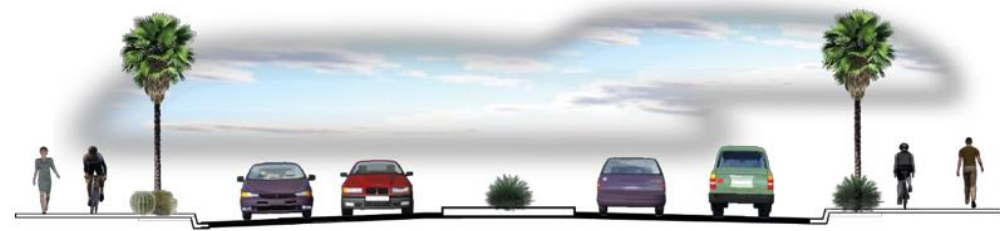
Figure 4.1 Proposed Circulation Network



The Circulation Element establishes the framework for future roadway dedications.



BALANCED ARTERIAL
(4 LANES, DIVIDED)
WITH BICYCLE LANES

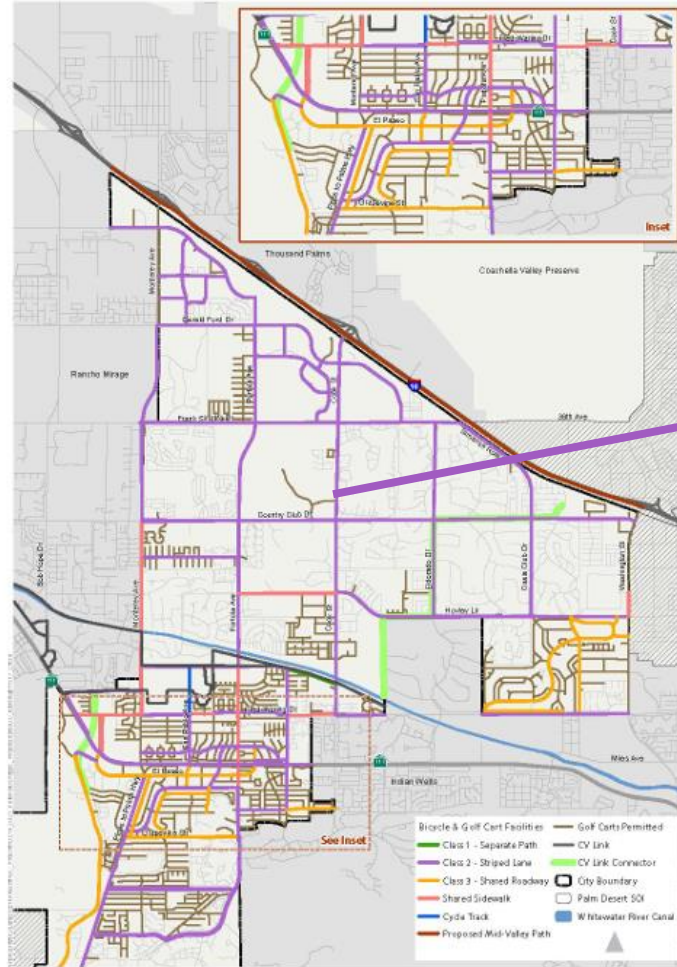


BALANCED ARTERIAL
(4 LANES, DIVIDED)
WITH SHARED SIDEWALKS

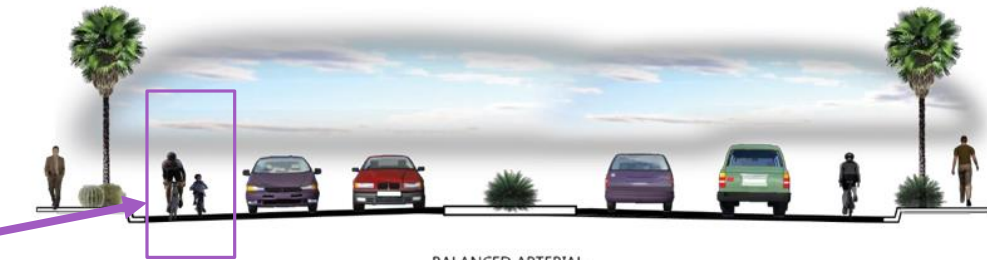
Typical pedestrian facilities found on Balanced Arterials are sidewalks with landscaping and tree shading. Typical bicycle facilities are Shared Sidewalks and Bicycle Lanes.

Background – General Plan Circulation Element

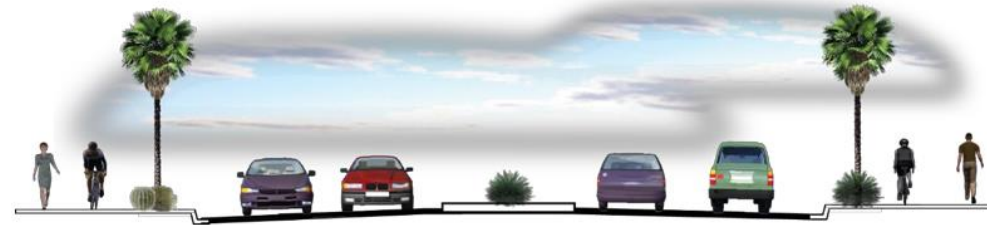
Figure 4.2 Proposed Bicycle & Golf Cart Network



The Circulation Element also establishes the framework for future alternative transportation plans such as bicycle lanes



BALANCED ARTERIAL
(4 LANES, DIVIDED)
WITH BICYCLE LANES



BALANCED ARTERIAL
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WITH SHARED SIDEWALKS

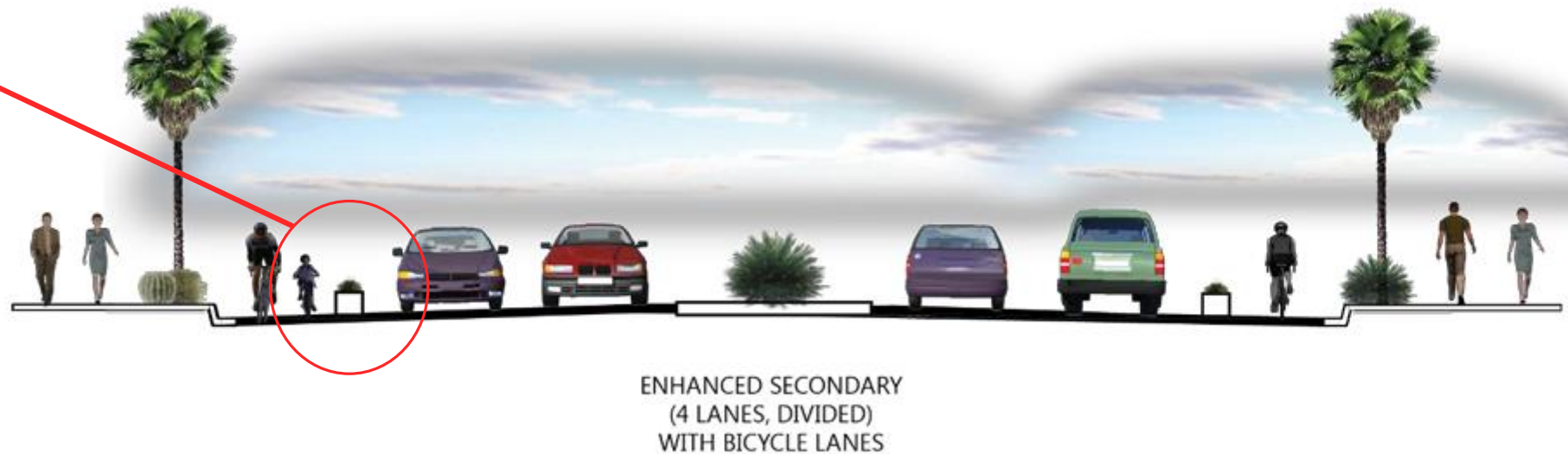
Typical pedestrian facilities found on Balanced Arterials are sidewalks with landscaping and tree shading. Typical bicycle facilities are Shared Sidewalks and Bicycle Lanes.

Need for Update – Consistency

Update is necessary for consistency updates between exhibits of the Mobility Element.

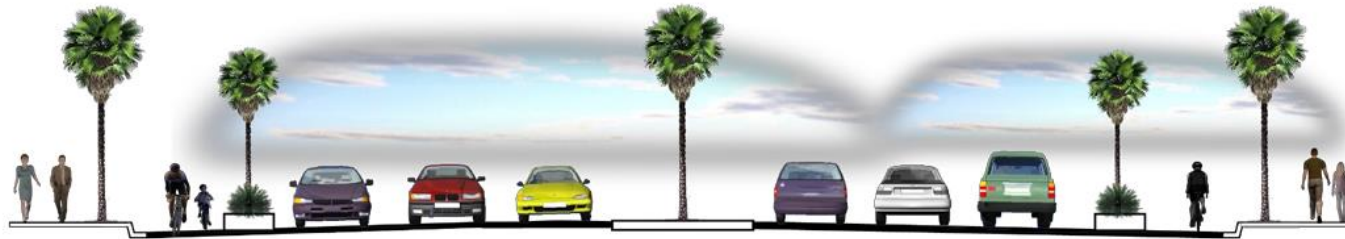
- Example: Proposed Roadway vs. Bike And Golf Cart Plan

This roadway is identified for striping only in Bike Plan.
Issue: Which standard is applied?



Need for Update – Consistency

- Example: Proposed Roadway Improvements between Mobility Element, and Downtown Area Plan



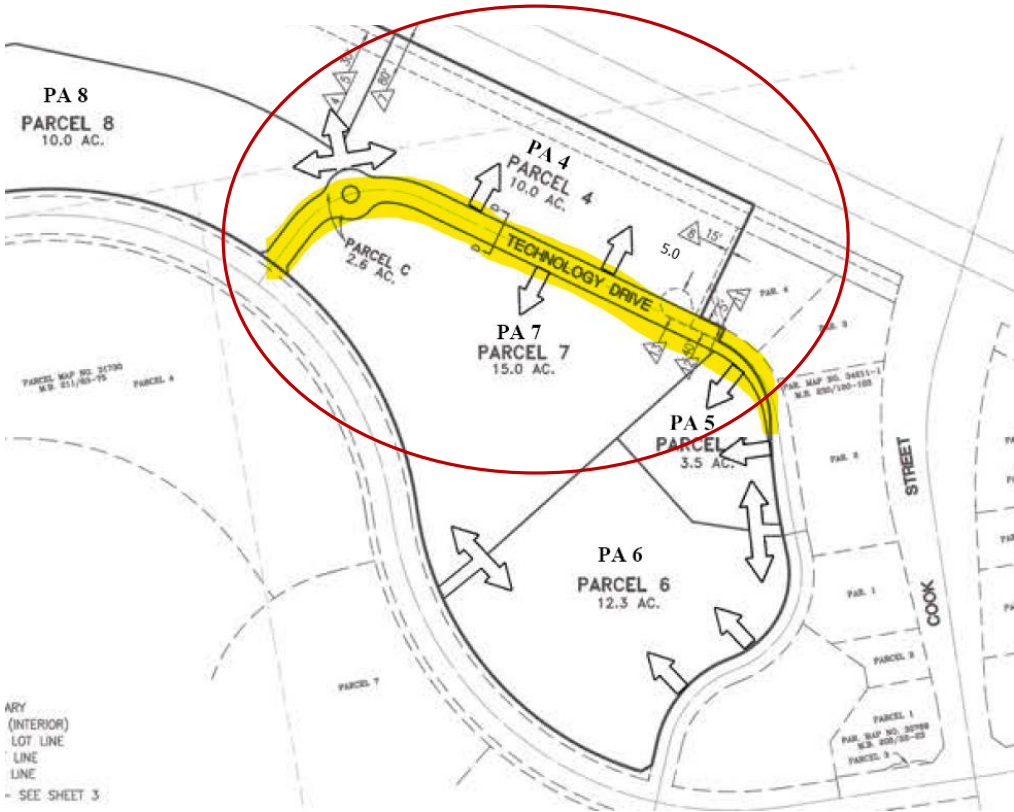
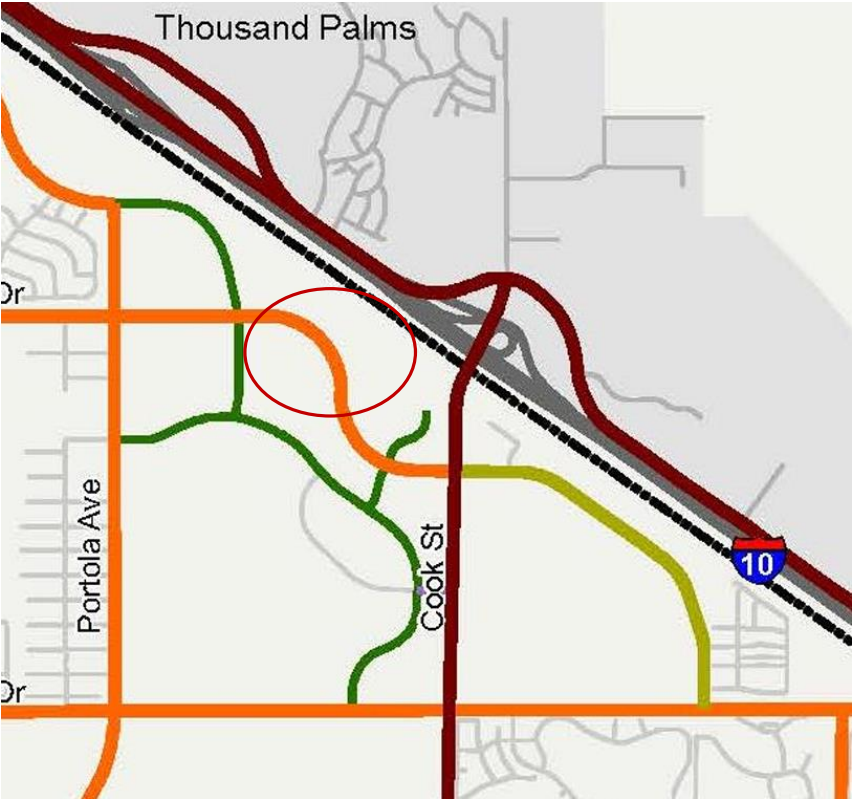
ENHANCED ARTERIAL
(6 LANES, DIVIDED)

Future Highway 111 with Class I "Cycle Track" Facilities (Alt. #2)



Need for Update – Consistency

- Example: Completeness of roadway circulation plan. Example below shows the plan for Technology Drive in the 2016 General Plan Circulation Map (left) and 2015 Millennium Palm Desert Specific Plan (right).



Need for Update - Legislative Updates

Since the adoption of the plan there have been several changes in state law which necessitate updates to the plan

- Senate Bill (“SB”) 932 – “Plan for the Future Bill” - Proactive policies to improve traffic safety and implementation of “Vision zero” goals and policies.
- SB 743 – Vehicle Miles Traveled established as the metric for analyzing traffic impacts.
- SB 330 – Restrict what regulations can be applied to eligible housing developments.

SB 932 – Plan for the Future Bill

After January 1, 2025, General Plan circulation elements must incorporate the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Safe Systems Approach:

- Collision analysis identifying high-injury streets and intersections (HIN)
- Develop bicycle, pedestrian, and traffic-calming plans that align with goals and safety conditions.
- Identify priority projects and goals for initiation and completion within 25 years of the date of the adoption of the modified circulation element.

Establish new goals and policies within the Circulation Element. Ensure plans are consistent.

Coordinate with Vision Zero plan currently underway.

SB 743 – Vehicle Miles Traveled

State legislation requires Cities to evaluate new project impacts based on Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) metric rather than traffic delay metrics such as Level of Service (LOS)

- LOS can remain a goal/value for the City, however inconsistency cannot be considered a CEQA impact

Guidelines and Policies needed to implement VMT

- The traffic demand model must be updated to forecast and incorporate VMT
- Establish local maps that clearly identify VMT in areas of City for purposes of project review
 - Areas which are exempt from VMT analysis
 - Areas which are “Very Low VMT” for project review. E.g. SB 2334 – Density Bonus Law for certain housing projects.

SB 330 – Housing Crisis Act

General requirements for approval of housing development projects that comply with the objective general plan, zoning, and subdivision standards.

Mobility element employs a “flexible”, approach to required circulation for future roadways. This flexibility is not objective under state law.

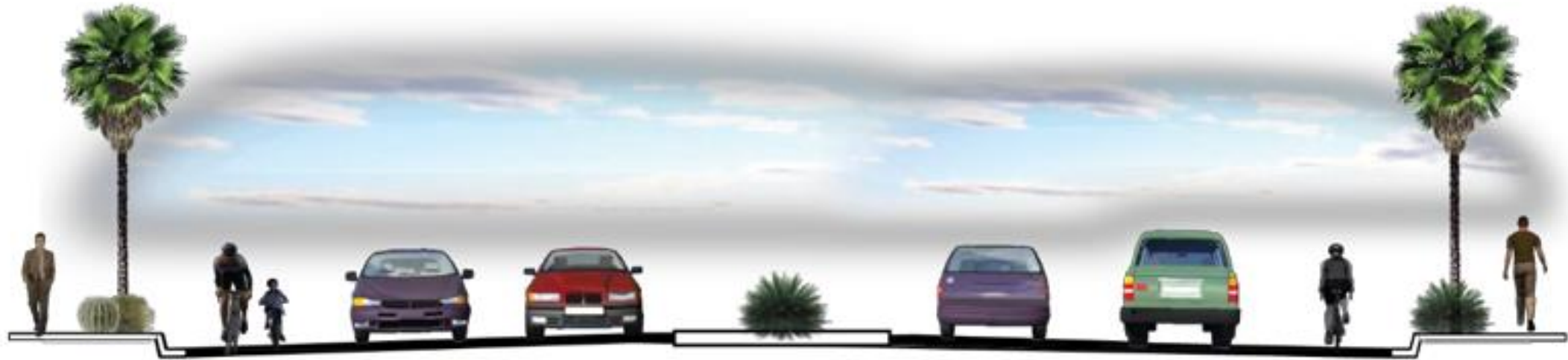
“Objective design standards are defined under State law as “standards that involve no personal or subjective judgement by a public official and are uniformly verifiable by reference to an external and uniform benchmark or criterion available and knowable by both the development applicant or proponent and the public official prior to submittal” (California Government Code, Section 65913.4).”

Creates issues of applying standards for housing development.

SB 330 – Housing Crisis Act

Non-objective standards for public improvements due to lack of detail on the cross-section (example below).

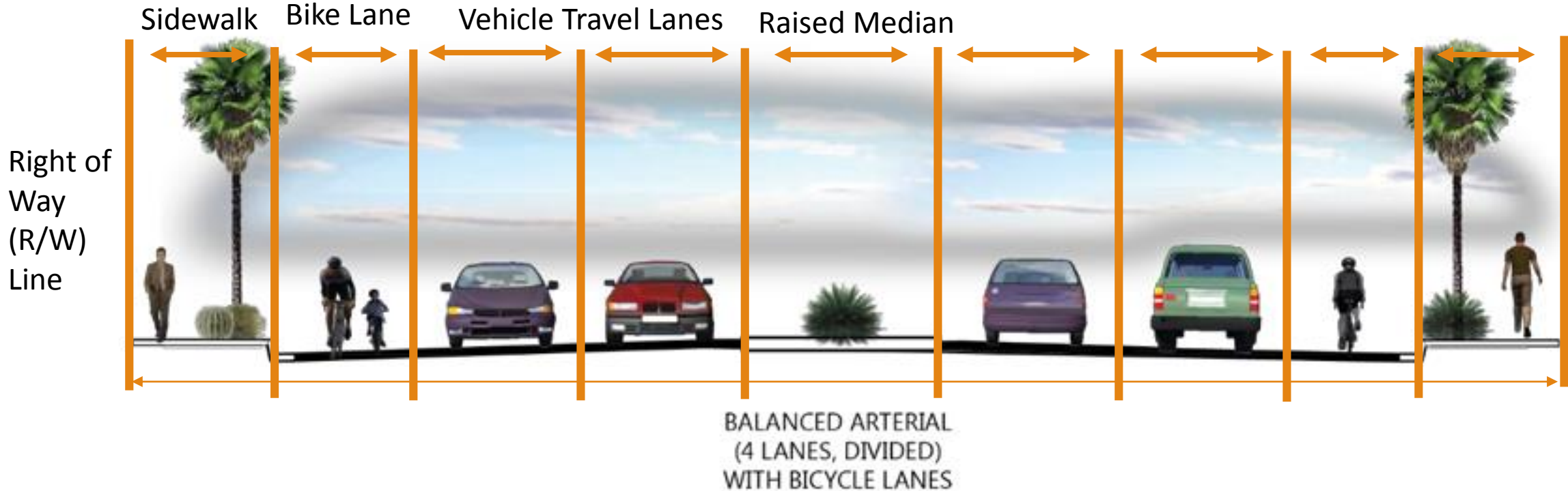
Unclear frontage improvements. How wide should these lanes be? How wide should the sidewalk be?



BALANCED ARTERIAL
(4 LANES, DIVIDED)
WITH BICYCLE LANES

SB 330 – Housing Crisis Act

Include increased information in the circulation element. Example Below: dimensions to the roadway cross-section to boost objective design standard components and require projects implement public improvements.





Questions?
