

Public Realm

Public Realm

Great Streets

Alamo Heights can boast some of the most beautiful streets in the region. The widths of its streets typically match what has been determined to be "ideal" in new urbanism profiles. However, on the two major roads, Broadway and Austin Highway, good street design has been trumped by the ever-growing demands of the automobile. Once the center of public life, these streets have been turned into the raceways that carry traffic to points unknown, as quickly as possible.

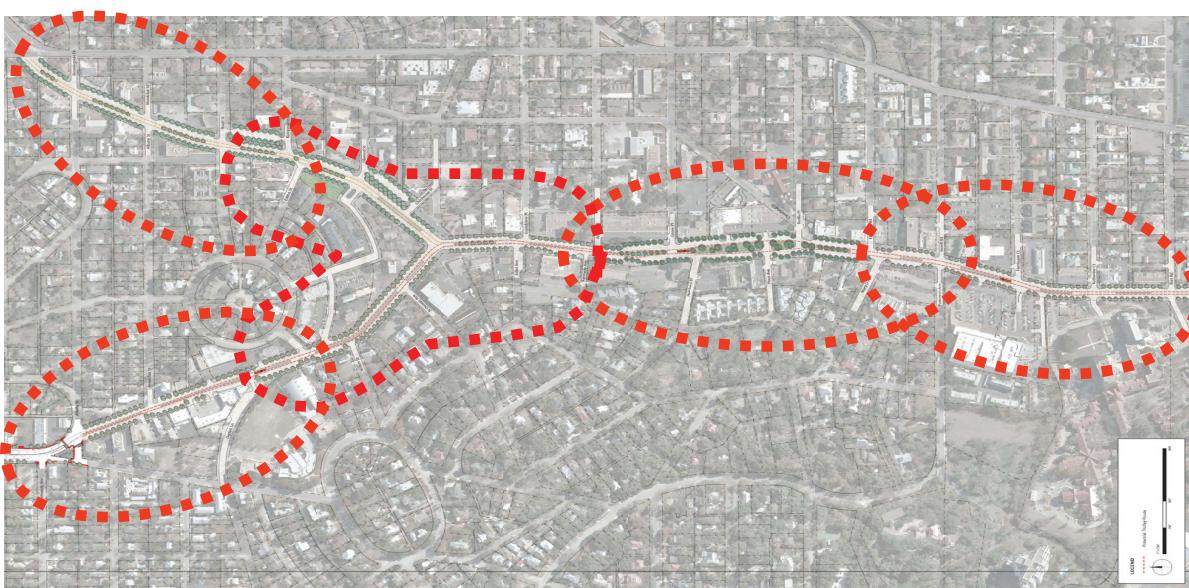
Early street designs of Alamo Heights balanced the growing number of automobiles with other community goals and modes of traffic. The developers designed a variety of street patterns that provide the framework for the community's unique character, as well as interesting experiences for the automobile driver and passenger. Community leaders built elegant homes on major streets where the mix of street cars, automobiles and pedestrians was the pulse of community activity, making streets the "place to be seen."

Broadway and Austin Highway

At recent neighborhood meetings, Alamo Heights citizens overwhelmingly indicated that they want Broadway to once again become a vibrant, exciting place, filled with life and activity. They want the street to take its place as an important part of the public realm, creating a unique community identity, a healthy business environment and public space for citizens to use and enjoy.

Action Step

- Make Broadway and Austin Highway vibrant, dynamic civic spaces.



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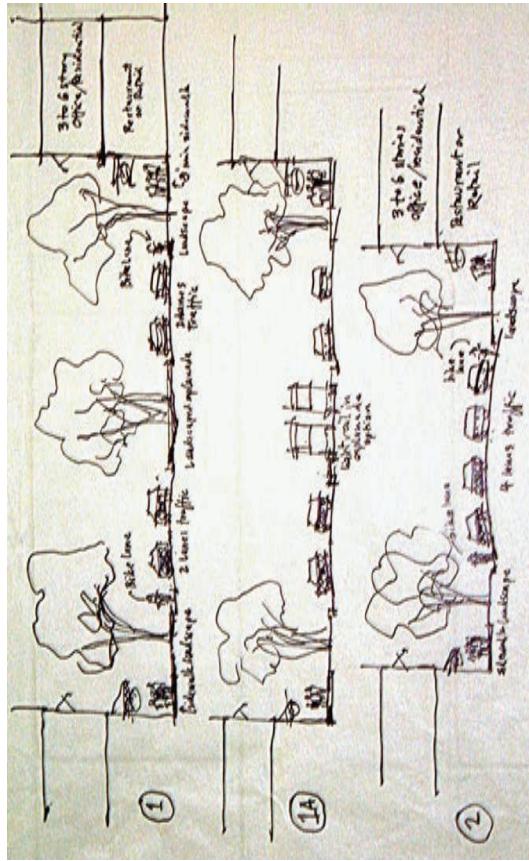
Broadway is currently a long expanse of commercial properties, comprised of disconnected strip retail centers haphazardly strung together in a typical suburban model. Current development codes require on-site parking at the rate of one car for every 300 square feet. The result has manifested itself into a series of one-story commercial buildings, typically with parking in the front. Each development has one, if not two, entrances off Broadway. Pedestrian traffic is practically non-existent between businesses. Customers park in front of the one shop they are visiting and return directly to their cars. There are a few exceptions where a customer might stroll from one business to the next in one complex, but it is rare for anyone to walk between shopping centers. Any economic synergy is, therefore, lost.

According to the world-renowned new urbanist-focused architecture firm, Moule and Polyzoides, the typical pedestrian will limit his/her walking range to about 1500 feet, which is about five blocks in small Texas towns. Typically, they will not cross more than 75 feet of parking lot. Instead, they stop at the last business before the lot, stare across the expanse and turn around. The design challenge is to create an environment that is pedestrian-friendly, encourages walking between centers and minimizes the distance to cross streets.

As a result, the look and feel of Broadway should subtly change every 1500 feet to provide a diverse and engaging experience. Placement of sidewalks, bicycle paths and trees should vary from one area to the next to provide variety. Location, style and size of medians should vary, as well as the predominant landscaping.

The public realm is the entire space between private properties and includes streets, sidewalks, plantings, bicycle paths, bus shelters and gathering spaces, as well as water, sewer, and storm water that is owned or maintained by the City. The public realm serves as the skeleton of a vital community. It is shared space where various transportation modes, including bicycles and pedestrians, share space with cars, buses and streetcars. In order

to create an economically viable downtown, it is important that Alamo Heights focuses on diversifying its transportation options, so as to not rely solely on one mode of transportation.



The flow of traffic through the public realm is important and, the management of which, is a key component of a successful downtown. It is not in the best interest of the community, the pedestrians or retail business owners for Broadway to continue to function as a speedway-like thoroughfare to see how many and how quickly cars can move through Alamo Heights. Neither should it be a current goal to bring cars to a stand still. Rather, the goal is to manage an orderly flow of traffic for the benefit of the community and commuters, alike.

The design of Broadway and Austin Highway is an anomaly within Alamo Heights. At times, the thoroughfares expand to 8 lanes of traffic, four in each direction. That width would carry a capacity of 57,000 cars. The Bexar Metropolitan Planning Organization is only projecting a 15 year capacity requirement for the combined

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Broadway-Austin Highway corridor of 27,000. Immediately outside Alamo Heights' boundaries, the road width decreases to four lanes, two in each direction, making Alamo Heights a "bubble," which literally is out of sync with the larger regional traffic patterns.

It currently takes an average of 50 seconds to travel on Austin Highway from New Braunfels to Broadway and 1 minute 57 seconds to travel on Broadway from Austin Highway to Burr. The average total commute time through Alamo Heights is 2 minutes and 47 seconds. Modeling of traffic using the proposed conceptual design indicates that the new average commute time would be 3 minutes and 43 seconds if traffic speed is slowed to 25 mph. The average increase in commute time would be 56 seconds. As speeds decrease, space between vehicles also decreases and, oddly enough, more vehicles would be accommodated on the roadway.

Alamo Heights citizens will have to decide if a small addition to the average commute time is offset by the revitalization of the commercial corridor. This is a trade-off between being a "drive-through" community and a "destination" community.

Action Steps

- Create a pedestrian friendly environment.
- Create a diverse series of places along Broadway.
- Integrate various modes of transportation, including pedestrians, streetcars, buses and bicycles, as well as cars and trucks

Alamo Heights Boulevard

The parkway that defines La Jara is an iconic piece of Alamo Heights. A WPA (Works Progress Administration) project eliminated a similar parkway that was located down the center of

Alamo Heights Boulevard. Restoration of that parkway would create more green space, provide a safe walking path and assist with storm water run-off.

Action Step

- Restore the parkway on Alamo Heights Boulevard.

Cleveland Court

Cleveland Court was identified at the Community Design Charette as an important link for the Montclair and Madeleine Terrace neighbors to Broadway. The design group imagined this street to become a more important, tree-lined, pedestrian-friendly environment to encourage neighborhood residents to walk to downtown.

Action Step

- Improve Cleveland Court as a pedestrian and vehicular link to Broadway.

Patterson Avenue

Patterson Ave is a wide street, often used as a cut-through to the dam and Olmos Park. Narrowing the street and providing a pedestrian path on one side, along with a rain garden for storm water retention (See Water and Drainage) would slow traffic, provide a safe walking path, while also assisting with storm water run-off.

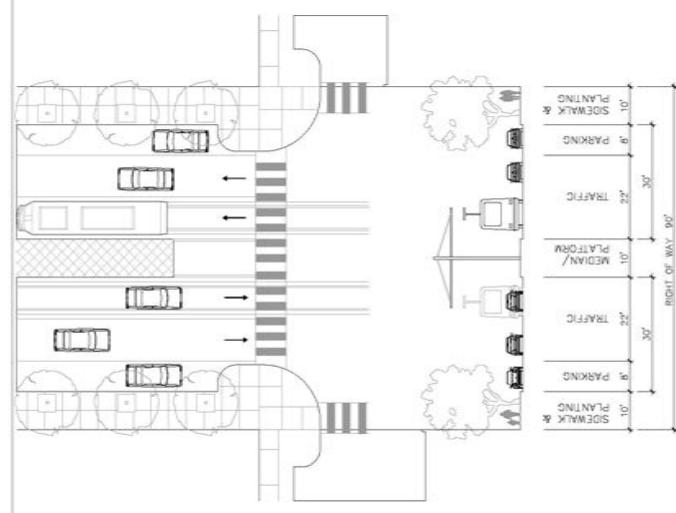
Action Step

- Create a pedestrian path and rain garden on one side of Patterson Avenue.

Broadway: Katherine to Barrilla

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As you enter Alamo Heights from the south, the character will be a tree-lined street with additional on-street parking, a 10 foot median, a bike lane and ample sidewalk and landscape features. Special street lights, street furniture and street amenities will add to the charm.



Street Section Standards

Right of Way Width

Traffic

Lane Width

Median

**Parking
Sidewalk & Planting**

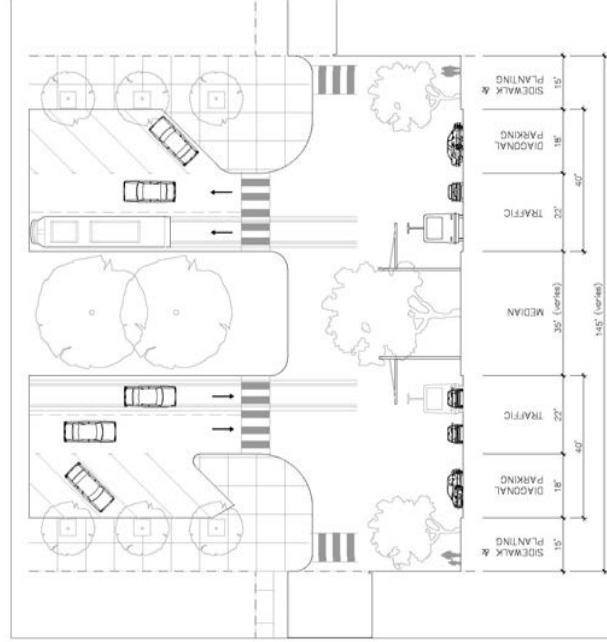


**LOOKING
AHEAD** 46

Broadway: Barrilla to Grove

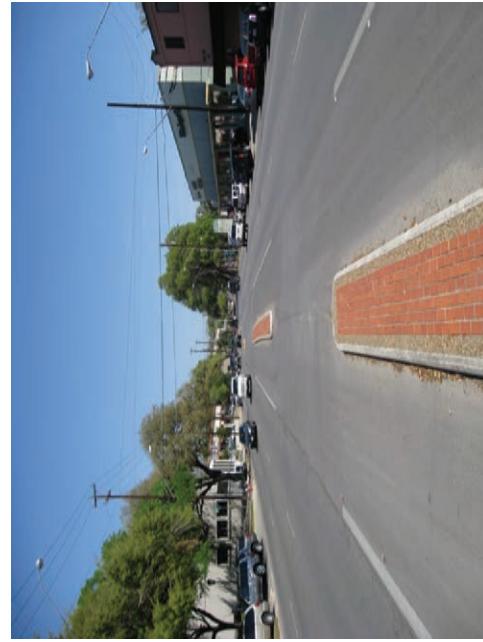
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This is the largest right-of-way on Broadway totaling 145 feet in width. The conceptual plan calls for a 35 foot median in the center of the road planted with large oak trees. The sidewalks and plantings in front of the retail will be expanded to 15 feet, and ample head in parking will be provided. This space has the potential to become the heart of Alamo Heights.



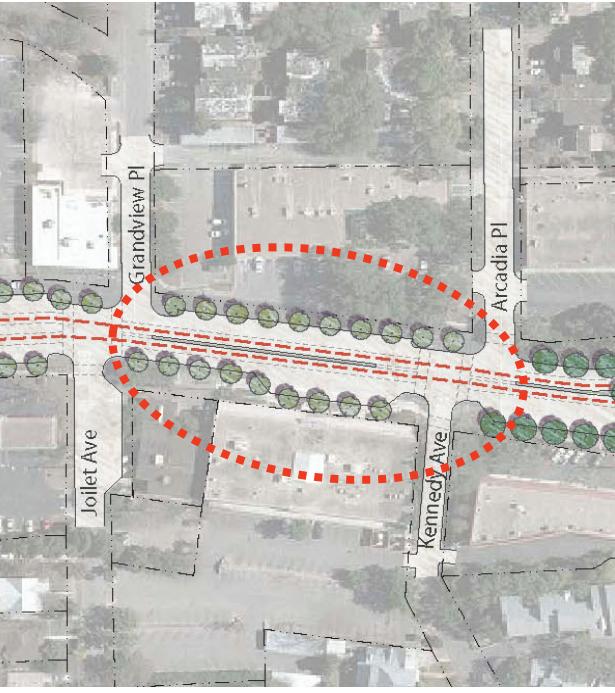
Street Section Standards

Right of Way Width	145 feet
Traffic	4 lanes (1 shared with street car)
Lane Width	11 feet for each
Median	Up to 35 feet
Parking	18 feet (angled on both sides street)
Sidewalk & Planting	15 feet (with planting and a bike lane)

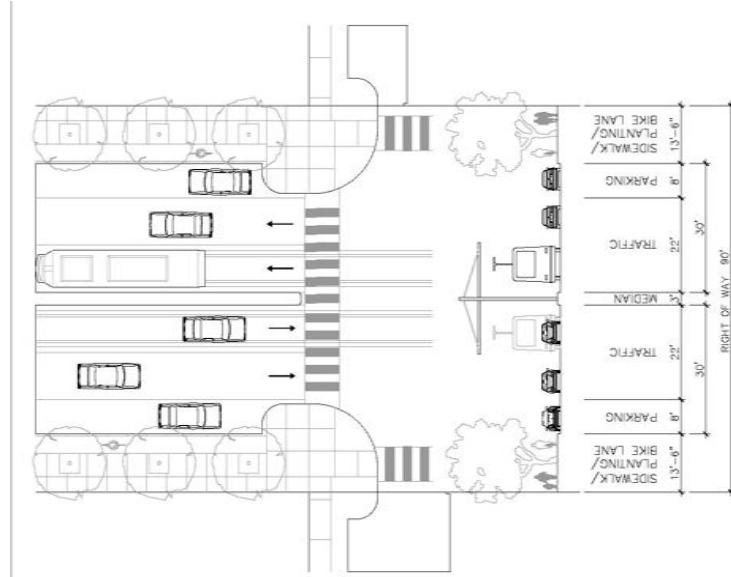


Broadway: Arcadia to Grandview

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The area between the gathering place and the "Y" will have its own character. The landscape planting will change, while parking patterns will vary between head in and parallel parking. The paving materials will transition from the two more dominant areas creating a unique blended pallet of materials.



Street Section Standards

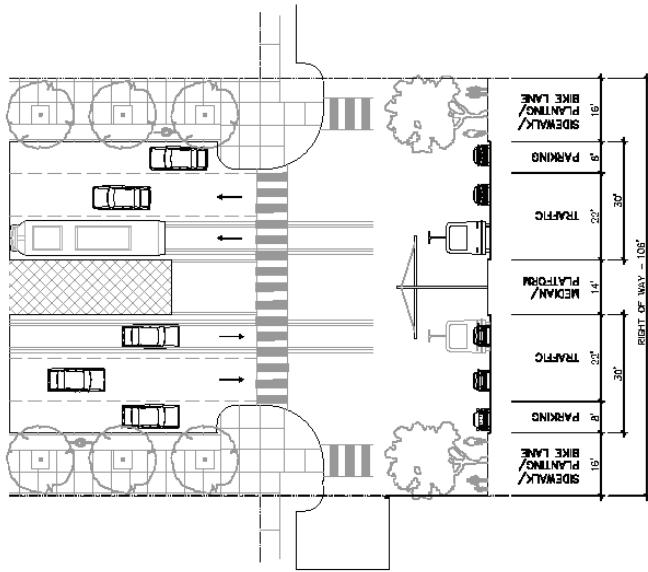
Right of Way Width	90 feet
Traffic	4 lanes (1 shared with street car)
Lane Width	11 feet for each
Median	3 feet
Parking	8 feet (parallel on both sides of street)
Sidewalk & Planting	13 feet 6 inches (with planting and a bike lane)



Broadway at Austin Highway: The “Y”

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Although the design charrette process recommended a round-about at this location, further study by the traffic engineer determined that straightening the roadway intersection to form a more equal balance of the three legs of traffic would create a more pedestrian-friendly, dynamic space with opportunities to create focal point buildings to both the north and the west. The proposed design would also feature the historic Mobile Station as the focal point for southbound traffic on Broadway.



Street Section Standards

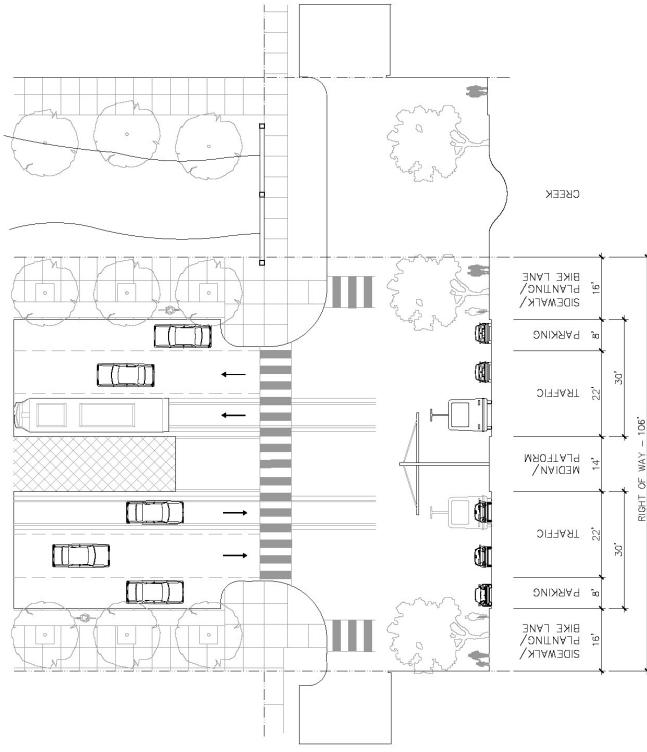
- Right of Way Width: 106 feet
- Traffic: 4 lanes
- Lane Width: 11 feet for each
- Median: 14 feet with left turn lane
- Parking: 8 feet (parallel on both sides of street)
- Sidewalk & Planting: 16 feet (with planting and a bike lane)



Austin Highway: Creek Option

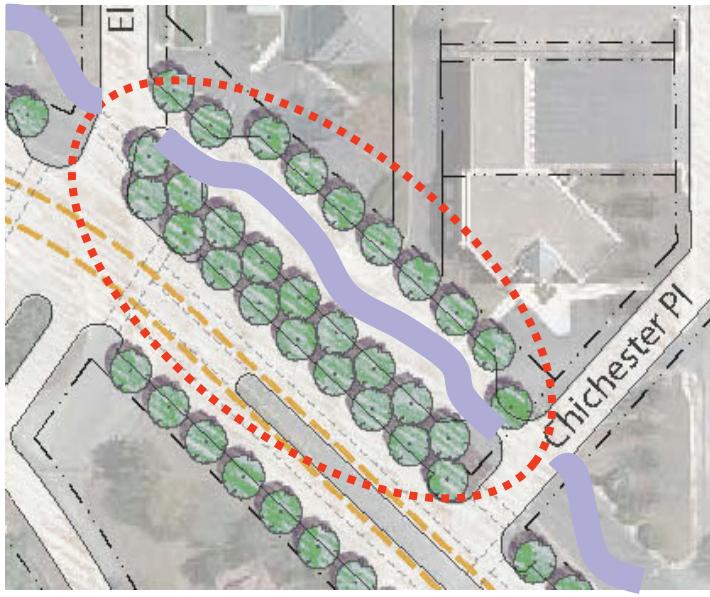
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The width of Austin Highway is such that part of the storm waters could be controlled through an above ground streambed located to the side of the road. During normal conditions this waterway would be a dry creek bed, but during a modest storm, some amount of water could be conveyed within the stream, before being diverted to an underground system.



Street Section Standards

- Right of Way Width: 106 feet
- Traffic: 4 lanes (2 shared with street cars)
- Lane Width: 11 feet
- Median: 14 feet (with street car platform)
- Parking: 8 feet (parallel on both sides of street)
- Sidewalk & Planting: 16 feet (with planting strip and bike lane)

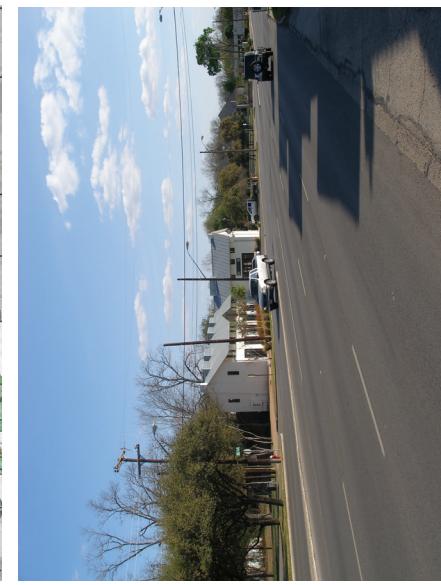


**LOOKING
AHEAD** 50

Austin Highway: Angled Parking Option

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This scenario for Austin Highway suggests the possibility for angled parking. As new commercial properties are developed, the need for parking in front of new retail establishments will become a priority. The layout of the head-in parking also allows for the possibility of back-in parking, which is a concept similar to head-in, but in this case, the driver backs into the angled parking. It has proven to reduce the number of vehicular accidents, since most accident occur when a driver is backing into the flow of traffic. By backing into the space the driver is able to simply pull out into traffic with much greater visibility, thus, reducing the chances for an accident.



Street Section Standards

Right of Way Width 116 feet

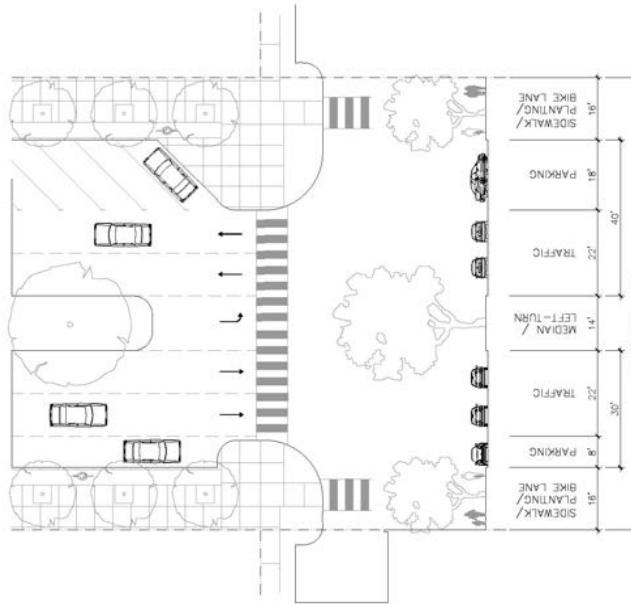
Traffic 4 lanes

Lane Width 11 feet for each

Median 14 feet with left turn lane

Parking 18 feet (angled and parallel)

Sidewalk & Planting 16 feet (with planting and bike lane)

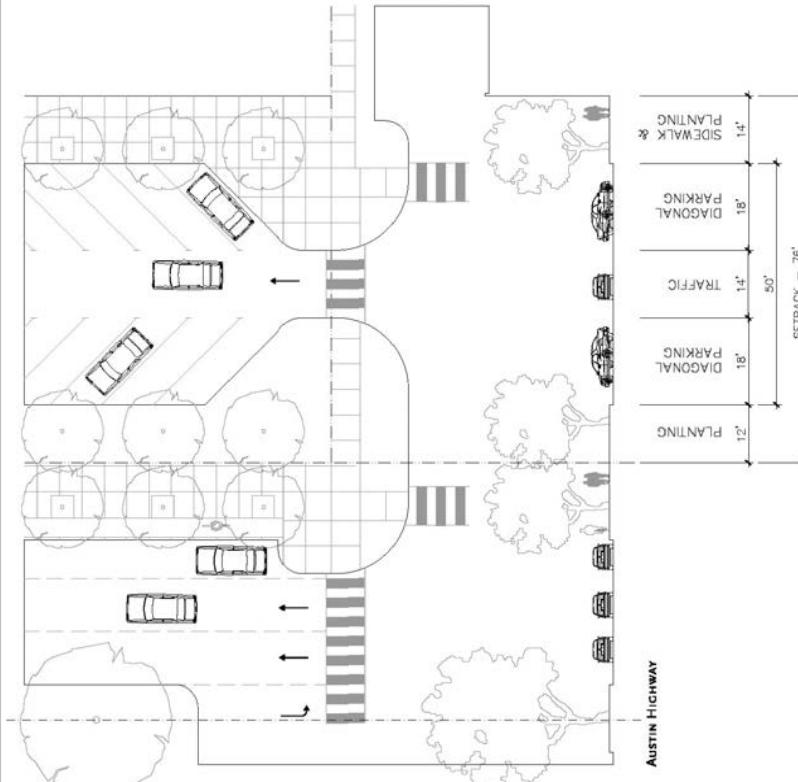


Austin Highway: Slip Parking Option

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The concept of slip parking separates the parking from the flow of traffic. Located adjacent to the roadway, this type of parking puts parking adjacent to retail where it is most needed without interfering with the regular traffic patterns.



Slip Parking Section Standards

Right of Way Width	75 feet
Traffic	1 lane drive (one-way)
Lane Width	14 feet for each
Median	None
Parking	18 feet (diagonal on both sides of drive)
sidewalk & planting	14 feet (with planting)

