

Chatsworth

GEORGIA

Design Considerations



A special thank you to the Lyndhurst Foundation. This project was made possible by their generous support.

GEORGIA DOWNTOWN RENAISSANCE PARTNERSHIP & SUMMER FELLOWS PROGRAM

The Downtown Chatsworth Renaissance Summer Fellowship Program is extremely unique in terms of its extensive partnerships. The project is funded by the Lyndhurst Foundation and supported by the Thrive 2055 initiative, the Georgia Municipal Association, and the Georgia Cities Foundation. Furthermore, the program is being coordinated and directed by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia. Not only are multiple organizations collaborating to create design solutions for downtown Chatsworth, both Murray County and the City of Chatsworth have partnered to leverage resources to improve their community.

Dan Shinkle, a 3rd year Master of Landscape Architecture student at the College of Environment and Design at the University of Georgia worked alongside citizens, staff, and elected officials of the City of Chatsworth and Murray County for 12-weeks. Mr. Shinkle created a four-block downtown conceptual plan which includes short- and long-term goals such as streetscape extensions, sidewalk connectivity, existing infrastructure reuse, gateway signage, façade renovations, and expansion of the Chatsworth City Park with the addition of an outdoor stage and public restroom.



PARTNERS

Lyndhurst Foundation | Benic “Bruz” Clark III, *President*
Macon C. Toledano, *Associate Director*
Kathleen Nolte, *Program Officer*
Catherine C. Cox, *Executive Assistant*

The Lyndhurst Foundation identifies and invests in initiatives, institutions, people and programs that contribute to the long-term livability and resilience of the greater Chattanooga region. The Foundation will accomplish this mission by focusing its efforts on education, conservation, arts, culture, economy, urban design and development, neighborhood revitalization, and physical health. The intent is to have a positive influence on our region’s living, working, playing, learning, movement, fuel, and stewardship.

Thrive 2055 | Bridgett Massengill, *Executive Director*
Ruth Thompson, *Communications & Outreach Manager*

Thrive 2055 is a citizen-led, public-private regional collaborative engaging people from across the 16-county, tri-state Chattanooga region of Southeast Tennessee, Northwest Georgia and Northeast Alabama to make the most of our economic opportunities while preserving what we love about our home communities. Thrive 2055’s focus is to convene conversations which ignite strategic action related to regional economic development, natural treasures, regional transportation, and education and training that can be implemented for the long-term prosperity of the region.

Murray County | Brittany Pittman, *Sole Commissioner*
Matthew Sanford, *Project Manager*

Known as the “Gateway to the Appalachians” and containing Fort Mountain State Park, a full one-third of Murray County’s area is preserved as protected forestland, with lakes and streams crisscrossing the county. The Murray County of tomorrow will remain an inviting and livable community in the foothills of the beautiful North Georgia Mountains; a community where superior academic accountability and an educated, engaged workforce supports a business-friendly, entrepreneurial, and diversified economy. By working together, Murray County’s residents will enjoy a successful, sustainable future through a renewed sense of community pride and achievement.

City of Chatsworth | Tyson Haynes, *Mayor*

Chatsworth is an inviting city located adjacent to Fort Mountain State Park, within the Cohutta Wilderness and surrounding Chattahoochee National Forest. Chatsworth has maintained its small-town community feel for over 100 years; however, Chatsworth is quickly transforming into a more modern small town that will continue to grow and sustain itself for future generations through the leadership of its citizens and elected officials. Founded as a depot on the rail line, Chatsworth looks to balance its industry and tourism with a great, livable atmosphere downtown.

Thriving Communities Initiative | Lori McDaniel
Chatsworth Committee Members Steve Anglea

The Thriving Communities Initiative is an exciting opportunity for interested communities across the 16-county, tri-state Chattanooga region to participate in an accelerated forum to create an economic growth strategy for leveraging their unique, local assets found through arts and culture. Eight community teams made up of four local residents are selected by the Thriving Communities Sponsor Team to engage in a professionally facilitated design thinking crash course each year. Upon successful completion of the course, each participating community is eligible to receive up to \$20,000 in funding from the Lyndhurst Foundation to implement a tangible arts and culture project identified through the course.

Georgia Municipal Association | Chris Higdon

Community Development Manager

Created in 1933, the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) is the only state organization that represents municipal governments in Georgia. Based in Atlanta, GMA is a voluntary, nonprofit organization that provides legislative advocacy, educational, employee benefit, and technical consulting services to its members. GMA's purpose is to anticipate and influence the forces shaping Georgia's communities and to provide leadership, tools, and services that assist local governments in becoming more innovative, effective, and responsive.

Georgia Cities Foundation | Perry Hiott

Director of Community Development

Founded in 1999, the Georgia Cities Foundation is a nonprofit subsidiary of the Georgia Municipal Association. The foundation's mission is to assist cities in their efforts to revitalize and enhance downtown areas by serving as a partner and facilitator in funding capital projects through the revolving loan fund. Its services include the Revolving Loan Fund Program, the Heart and Soul Bus Tour, the Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Tour, Downtown Development Authority Basic Training, and the Renaissance Award.

College of Environment and Design | Dan Nadenicek, Dean

The College of Environment and Design has been consistently ranked among the top schools in the nation for both undergraduate and graduate level landscape architecture. The CED also provides nationally-accredited, inventive, and demanding programs in historic preservation, environmental planning and design, and environmental ethics. Students are challenged to explore their unique, individual interests and creatively problem-solve contemporary issues, working with faculty to solve community issues in design charrettes. They also interact with clients, community organizations, and planning agencies. We aim to connect our students with a large and accomplished alumni network as much as possible. Visiting professors, professionals, and lecturers provide frequent opportunities for students to network with and learn from renowned designers in a broad range of career options.

Carl Vinson Institute of Government

Danny Bivins, *Senior Public Service Associate*

Kaitlin McShea, *Senior Designer*

For more than 85 years, the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia has worked with public officials throughout Georgia and around the world to improve governance and people's lives. From Georgia's early days as a largely agrarian state with a modest population to its modern-day status as a national and international force in business, industry, and politics with a population of over 10 million, the Institute of Government has helped government leaders navigate change and forge strong directions for a better Georgia.



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INTRODUCTION

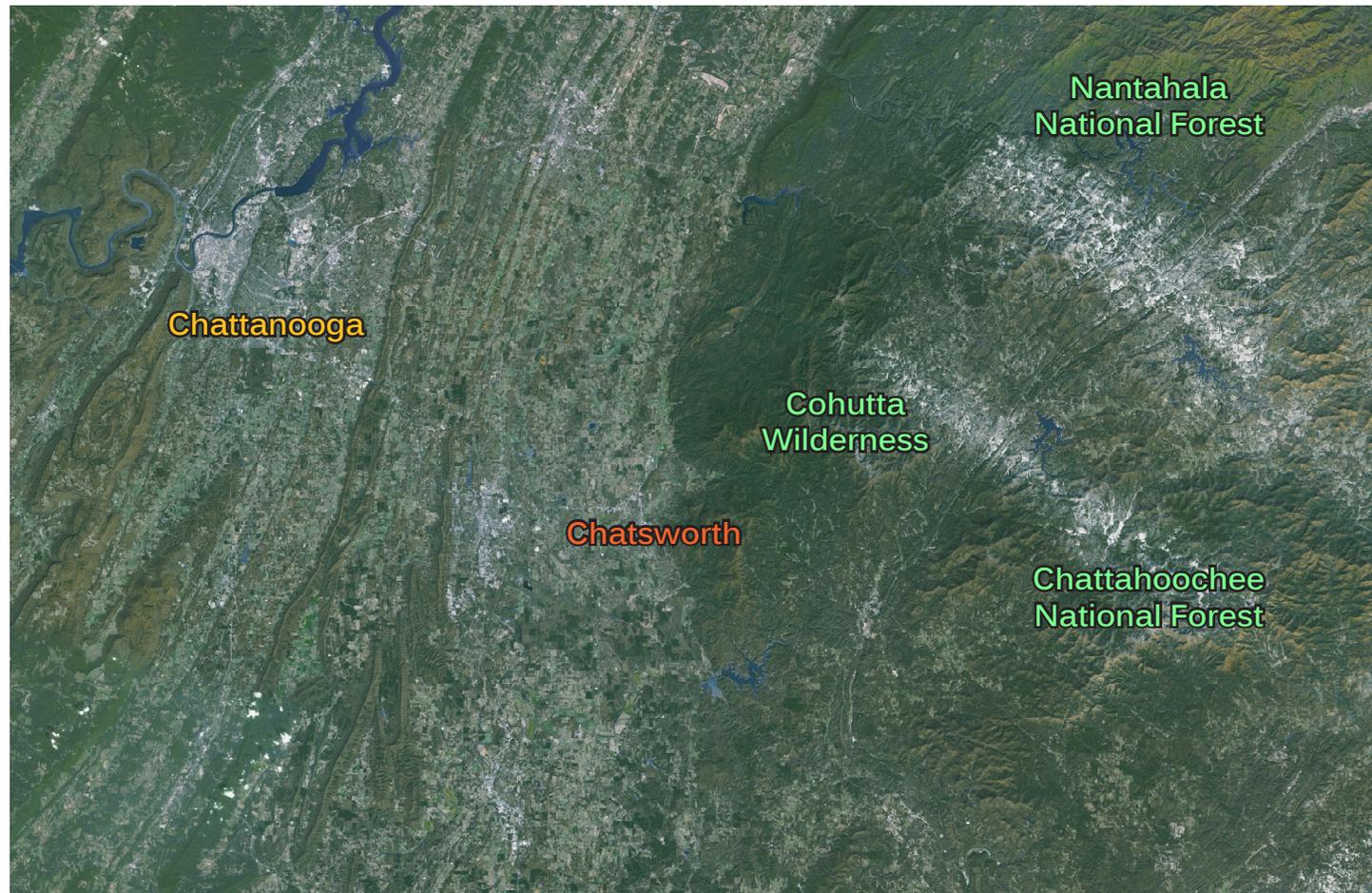
Known as the “Gateway to the Appalachians,” the City of Chatsworth is the county seat and largest city in Murray County, Georgia. Only 15 minutes away from Fort Mountain, Chatsworth’s downtown features an incredible mountain view. The Chattahoochee National Forest, among the most visited forestlands in Georgia, is their neighbor. Right in the midst of what was historically Cherokee country, Chatsworth benefits from the history and cultural heritage of its former inhabitants. Chief Vann, one of the wealthiest businessmen within the Cherokee Nation, lived near downtown. Vann’s historic house, listed on the National Register, is an important attraction along the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail today.

This report is designed to bring the ideas of Chatsworth’s City Council and community leaders into view, with a focus on several components: a stage for Chatsworth City Park, streetscape enhancements for 2nd and 3rd Avenues, façade renovations and existing infrastructure reuse, more comprehensive connectivity, and upgraded signage. Identifying potential locations for new retail and restaurants, investing in the feeling of *arrival*, and creating connectivity that is shaded, walkable, and responds to the region’s rich artistic and cultural heritage can transform Chatsworth into a *destination location*. In doing so, Chatsworth and its residents may reap benefits from the strong tourism industry in Northwest Georgia. These improvements are just one part of making Chatsworth a more exciting, lively, and attractive place for its own residents. Encouraging local activity within the downtown further strengthens the city’s place within Murray County and the greater Thrive 2055 region.

CONTEXT: REGION



Murray County is the only Thrive 2055 Georgia County within the Blue Ridge ecoregion. The many recreational opportunities nearby currently serve the greater Chattanooga-Knoxville-Atlanta region. This region is among the most ecologically diverse in the nation, containing over 400 endemic species—the most found in any ecoregion in North America. This diversity has led to the protection of almost half of Murray County’s forested and mountainous terrain. Streams of high conservation priority run throughout this region, including one that flows directly through downtown Chatsworth and neighboring communities.





CONTEXT: LOCALITY

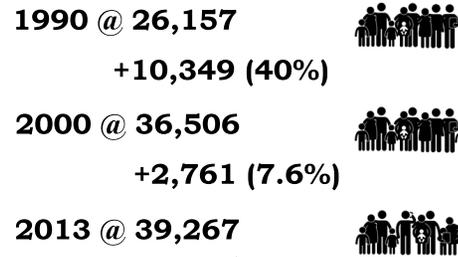
Originally a railroad town, Chatsworth's historic downtown sprang up adjacent to the heavily trafficked rail line and served the railroad workers and related industries. Constructed on a cardinal grid, the heart of downtown is compact and centralized. However, once the automobile came to dominate the American landscape, Chatsworth developed a sprawling development pattern catering to vehicular traffic on Route 411. This decentralized the business district, essential services, and industry, spreading businesses all across the 411 corridor. Now locals and visitors must drive several miles along this heavily-trafficked state route to meet their daily needs, much of which takes them away from downtown.

CONTEXT: DEMOGRAPHICS

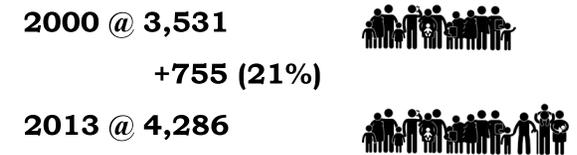
Between 1990 and 2000 Murray County saw a boom in population, rising by 40%— far above the national average. Since 2000 Murray County’s boom has dropped off. However, the City of Chatsworth has continued growing, with the population increasing by over 21% since 2000. This increase accounts for more than 27% of Murray County’s total growth since 2000, showing Chatsworth’s importance in this region.

The economic effects of the 2008 recession hit Murray County particularly hard. However, the ecotourism industry in Georgia continues to grow at a high rate and is currently untapped by both Chatsworth and Murray County.

MURRAY COUNTY



CHATSWORTH



Chatsworth accounts for 27.3% of Murray County’s Total Growth

Average Annual Wages			
	Murray County	Dalton, GA MSA	United States
Average Annual Wage, All Sectors (2008)	\$30,890	\$34,403	\$45,552
Average Annual Wage, Manufacturing Sector (2008)	\$33,204	\$35,366	\$54,392

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Employment Trends			
	Murray County	Dalton, GA MSA	United States
Total Employment (September 2002)	12,197	74,215	129,040,497
Total Employment (September 2007)	12,537	75,273	136,229,924
Total Employment (September 2009)	10,116	62,568	128,088,742
Percentage Change in Employment (September 2007 - September 2009)	-19.3%	-16.9%	-6.0%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

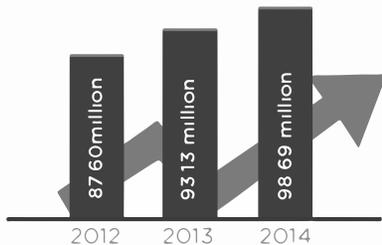
GEORGIA'S TOURISM INDUSTRY IN 2014 WAS **\$57.1 BILLION** AN INCREASE OF **6.7%**

TOURISM SUPPORTED MORE THAN **426,000 JOBS**

TOTALING **10.6%** OF ALL PAYROLL EMPLOYMENT IN GEORGIA

Domestic Visitors¹:

98.7 MILLION DOMESTIC VISITORS AN INCREASE OF **6%**

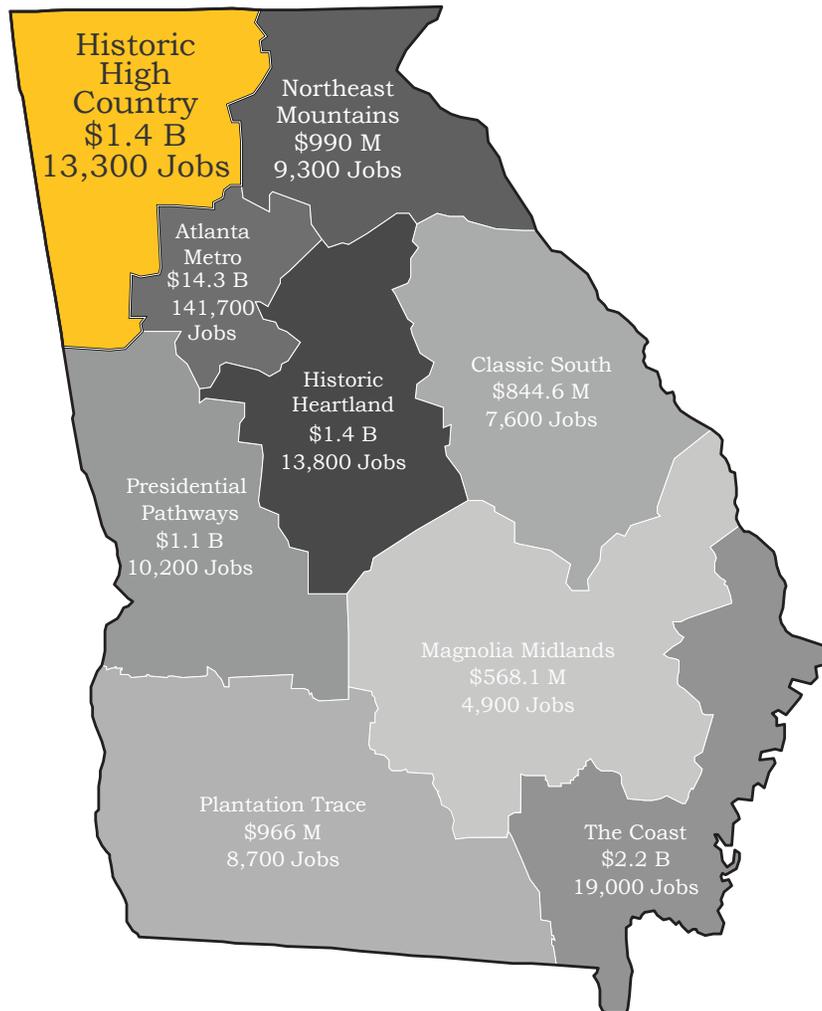


The average non-resident visitor spends **\$120 per-day**



Top 10 Origin States

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1 Georgia | 6 North Carolina |
| 2 Florida | 7 Ohio |
| 3 Alabama | 8 Michigan |
| 4 Tennessee | 9 Texas |
| 5 South Carolina | 10 Maryland |



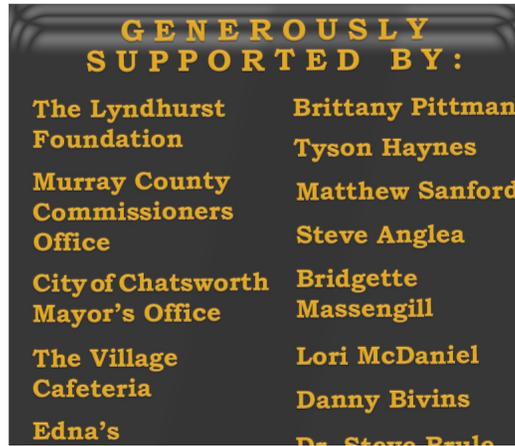
CONTEXT: TOURISM

Murray County has never seen significant economic impact from some of the most visited attractions in the region, including State Parks and National Forestlands. Tourism is on a steady incline in Georgia, accounting for 10% of the state's economic activity. Half a million jobs throughout the state are supported by the industry, which could augment the economic rebound in Murray County. Chatsworth's proximity to these attractions places it in prime territory to capitalize on the quickly growing industry.

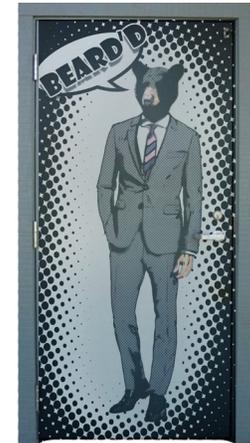
CITY PARK STAGE DAVID BONDS

ENTRY PLAZA

The proposed City Park stage, designed by local architect David Bonds, features a space in the downtown district for large groups to gather and enjoy local festivities, music, dance, movies, and theatre. It also features a plaza, public restrooms, and signals the entrance to the ever-improving City Park. In order to garner further public support and fundraising, Bonds' design is shown in the park here.



Sponsor List Plaque on Stage Wall

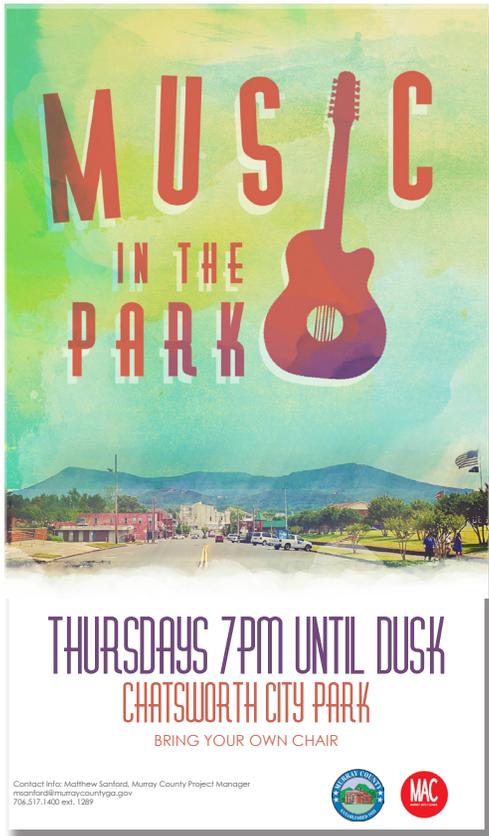


Public restroom doors with black bear motif



CITY PARK STAGE DAVID BONDS

PROGRAMMING



In many ways, it's not enough to build a stage and expect the people to come. Robust programming, especially in the first year, may encourage bigger crowds and more public support. One way to ensure momentum is carried through into multiple years of programming is effective

and attractive promotional material. If distributed through social media, placed in local businesses, and displayed at community gathering points throughout downtown, the flyer shown here may contribute to keeping the public informed on upcoming events.



AFTER:



CITY PARK STAGE

HOW DO WE GET THERE?



To the right is a depiction of how the city can program the park with little to no budget in the meantime, which can help in the fundraising efforts.

A temporary stage is shown featuring a borrowed flatbed trailer and PA system with simple alterations allowing the city to cost-effectively program the park.



AFTER:



STREETSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN

The goal of the concept plan is to illustrate a short-term and long-term growth plan for Chatsworth's downtown connectivity, streetscaping, traffic safety, beautification, and pedestrian-friendly development. This particular plan works to utilize and build upon existing infrastructure, taking cues from recent successes at Chatsworth City Park and on Market Street, and extending these improvements to adjacent blocks.





STREETSCAPE SIDEWALK PLAN

EXISTING 
&
PROPOSED 

This plan depicts current sidewalks in yellow, and proposed additional sidewalks in orange. The plan is intended to be phased in over time, allowing city leaders to decide which additional sidewalks must be prioritized while providing a long-term plan for expansive connectivity. The dashed orange lines represent informal walkways that should be inviting to pedestrians. These are alleyways and park expansion paths.

2ND AVENUE

FORT STREET ENTRANCE

There is an opportunity to create a safer, grander entrance onto 2nd Avenue from Fort Street, also known as Route 52, the heavily-trafficked state route. Currently the street is wider than necessary, and traffic moves so quickly through it that stop signs were needed in the center of the road.

In this proposal, landscaped bump-outs and central planted medians slow the entry onto the street from both ends. New ADA accessible sidewalk ramps are installed with painted crosswalks and stop lines. Street trees complete the new atmosphere, providing shade for pedestrians and further encouraging traffic to slow down. All of these improvements create a sense of arrival and importance.



BEFORE:



AFTER:



LANDMARK
TAVERN

US MINE
MUSIC TAPERY-BALES
WELCOME

2ND AVENUE

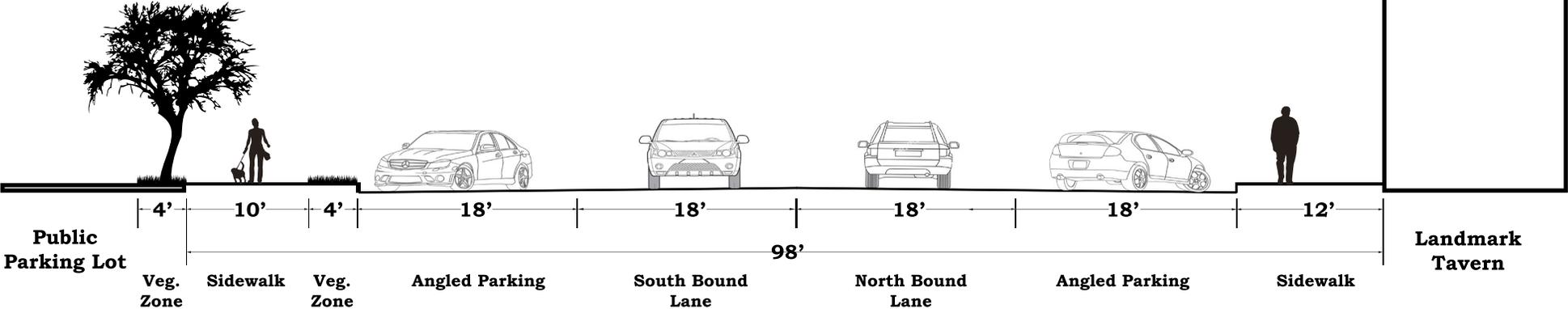
FORT TO
MARKET
STREET

PLAN & SECTION VIEWS

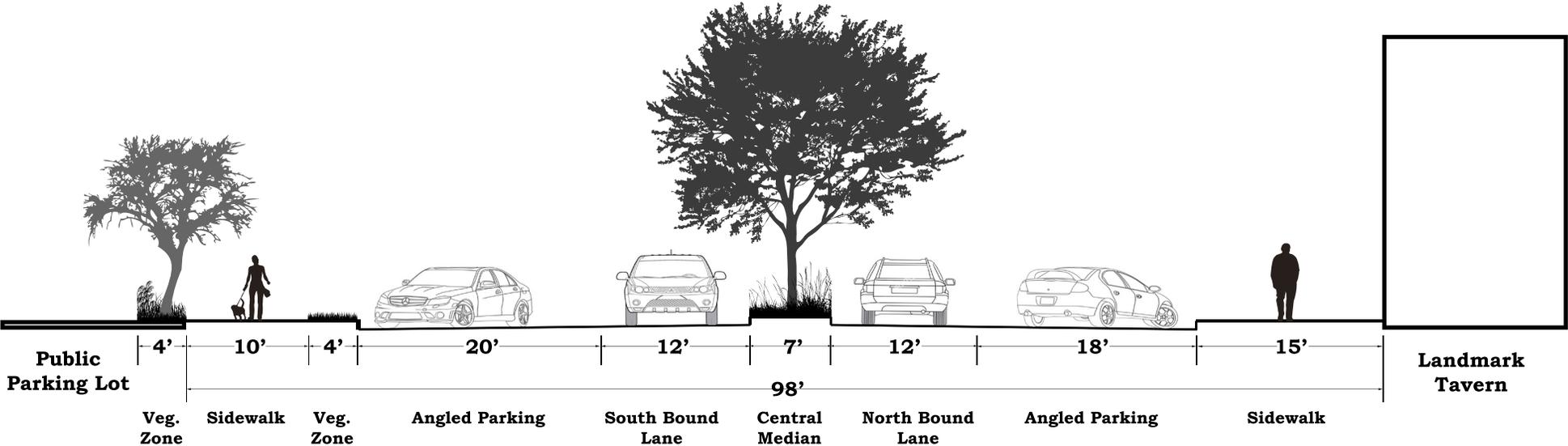


Lanes & Street Parking

Existing:



Proposed:



2ND AVENUE

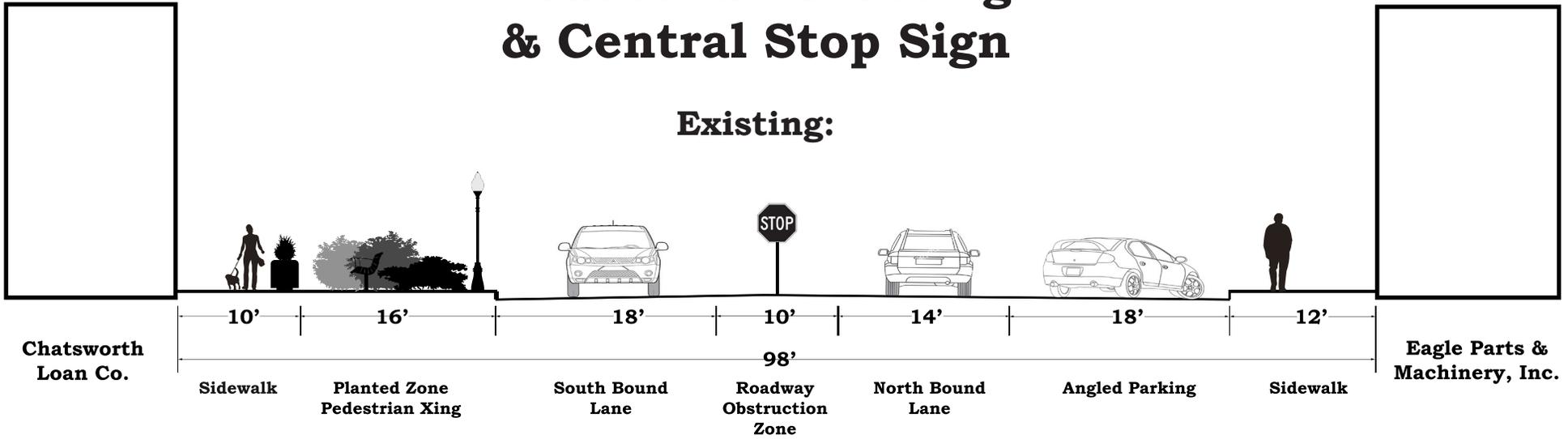
FORT TO
MARKET
STREET

PLAN & SECTION VIEWS

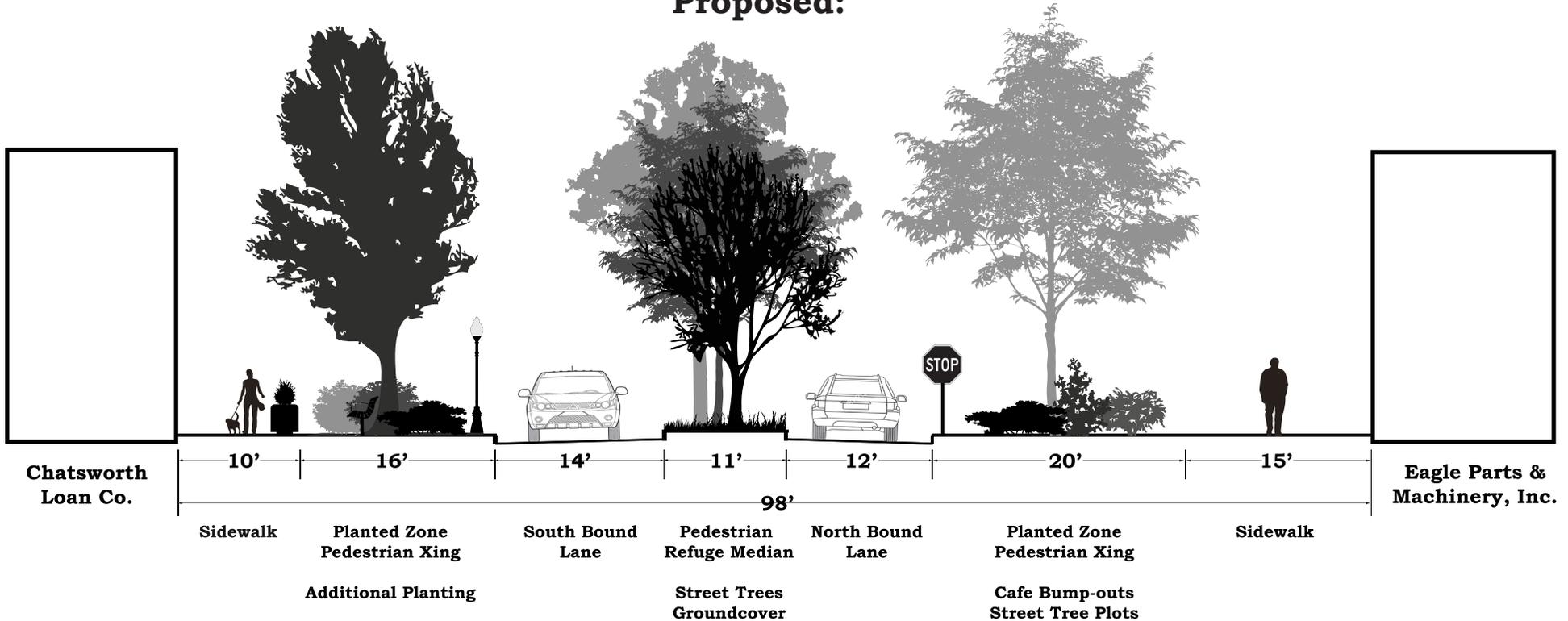


Pedestrian Crossing & Central Stop Sign

Existing:



Proposed:





AFTER



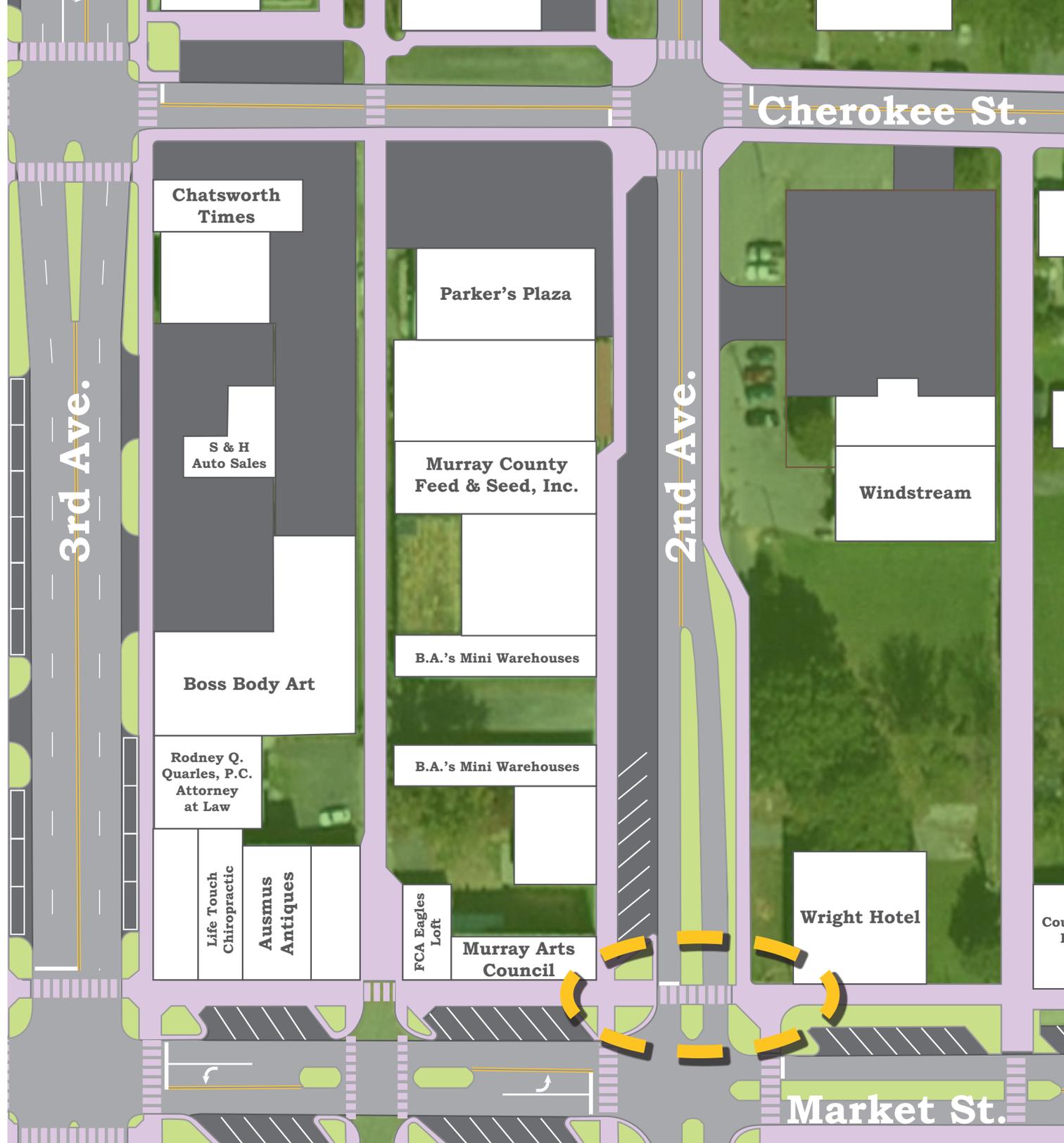
BEFORE:

2ND AVENUE

MARKET TO CHEROKEE STREET

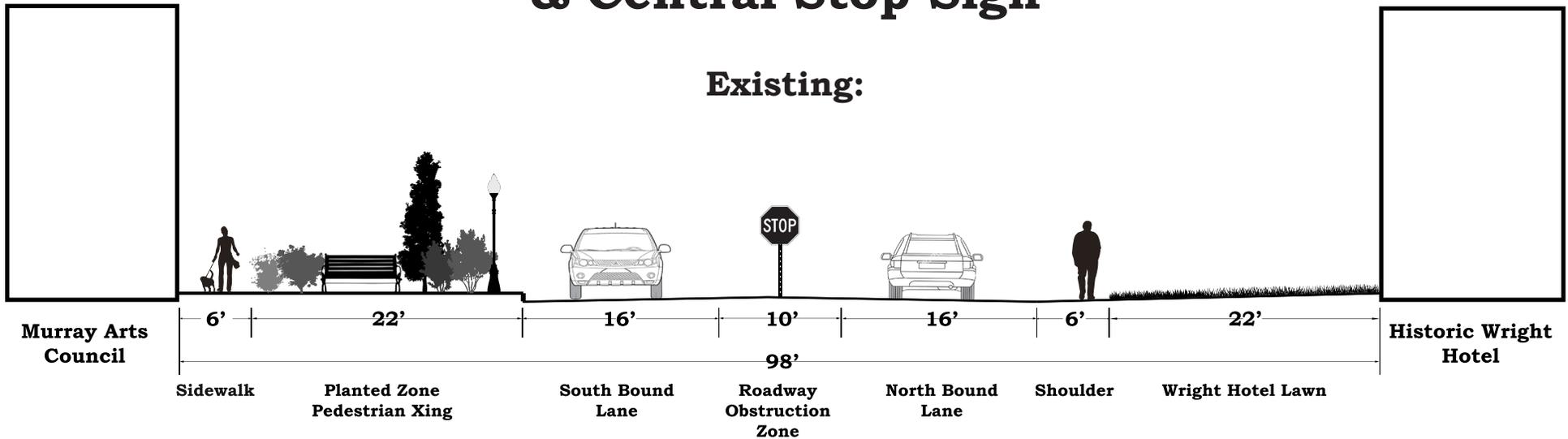
PLAN & SECTION VIEWS

This proposal recommends medians with pedestrian refuge zones throughout the intersection. Planted beds beautify downtown, slow traffic around corners, and may convince passersby to stop and stay awhile. The shade trees, colorful plantings, and additional sidewalks and crosswalks create an enjoyable pedestrian experience.

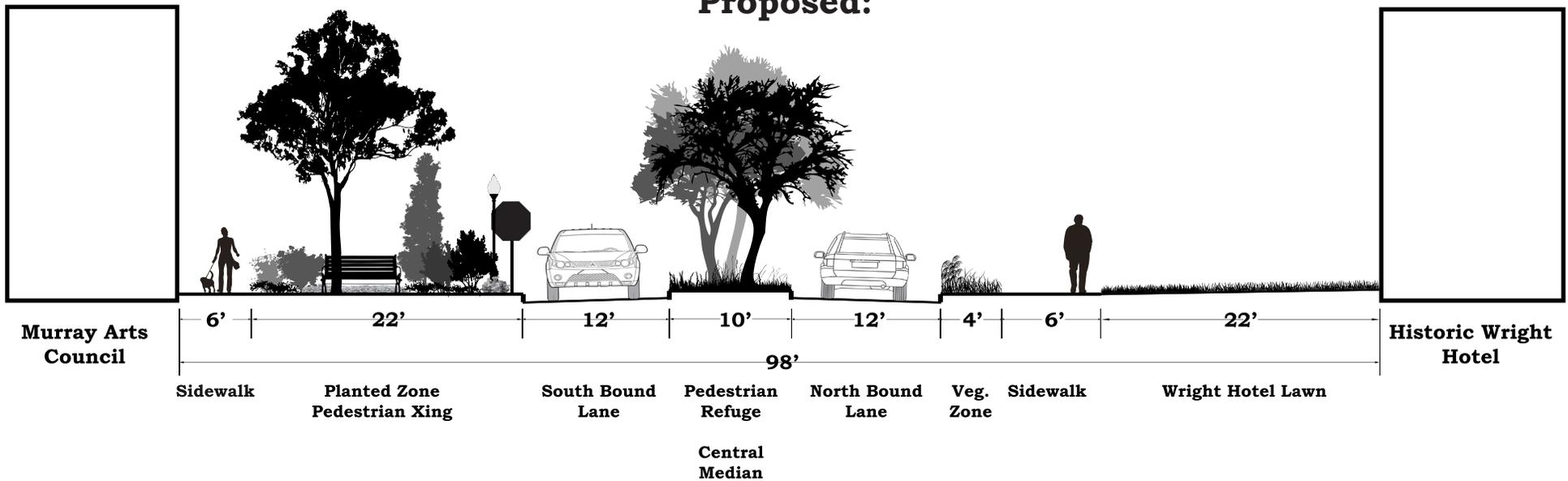


Pedestrian Crossing & Central Stop Sign

Existing:



Proposed:

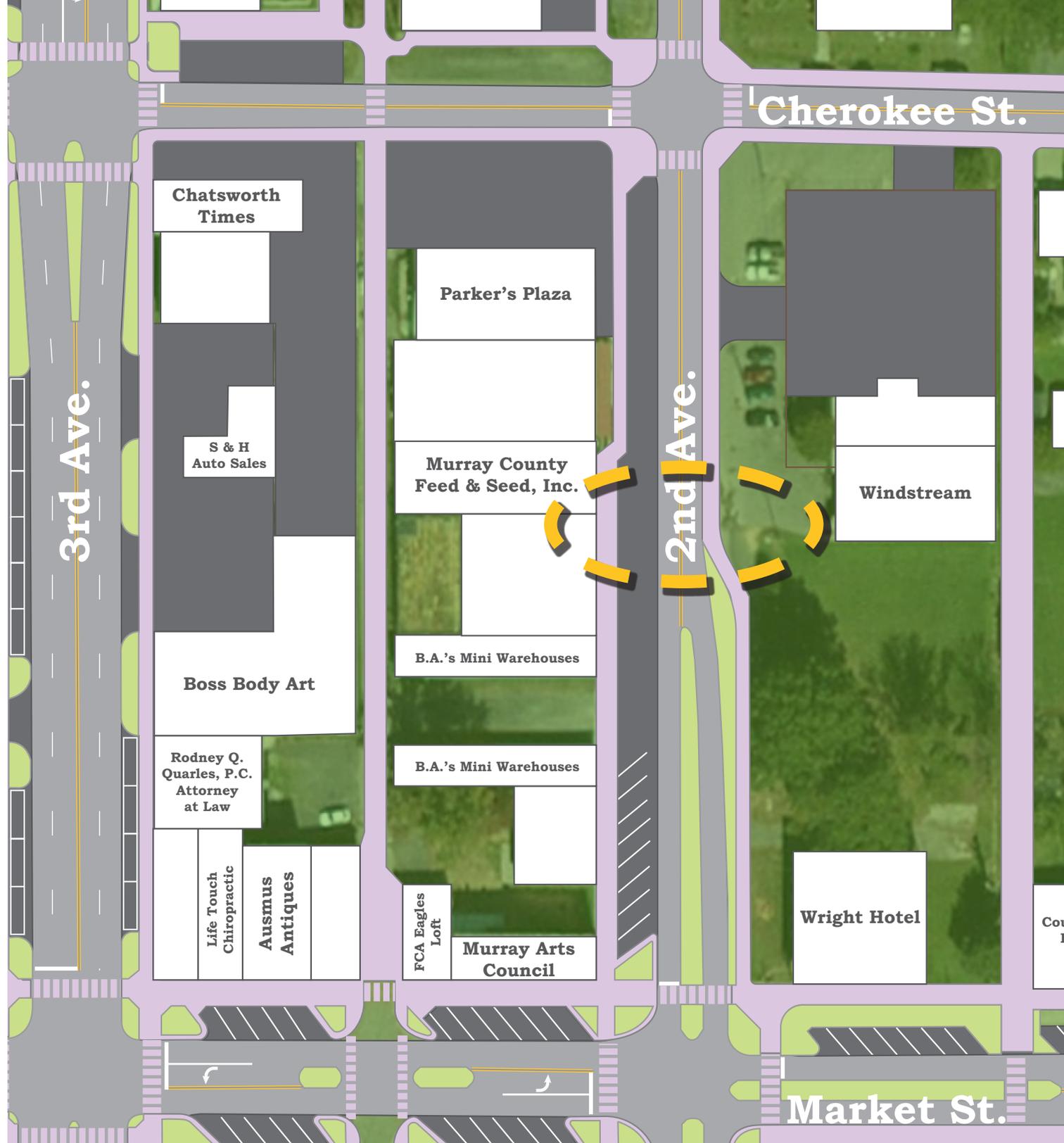


2ND AVENUE

MARKET TO CHEROKEE STREET

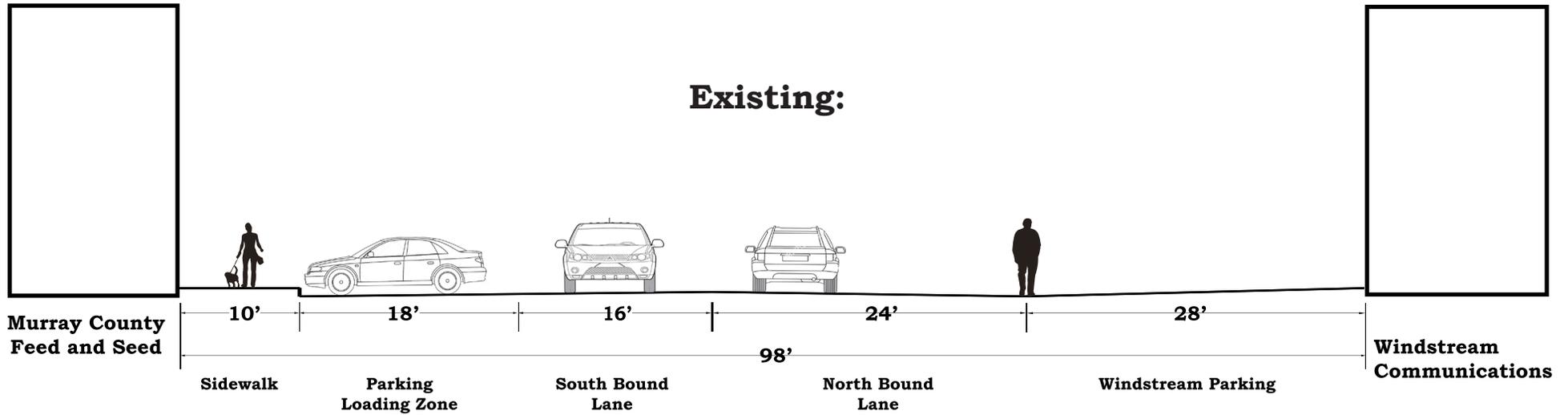
PLAN & SECTION VIEWS

The goal in this section is to carry forward the design from Market Street through the rest of the district, including 2nd Avenue. The streets here are again wider than necessary, though this creates an excellent opportunity for medians, wide sidewalks, and street tree planting zones.

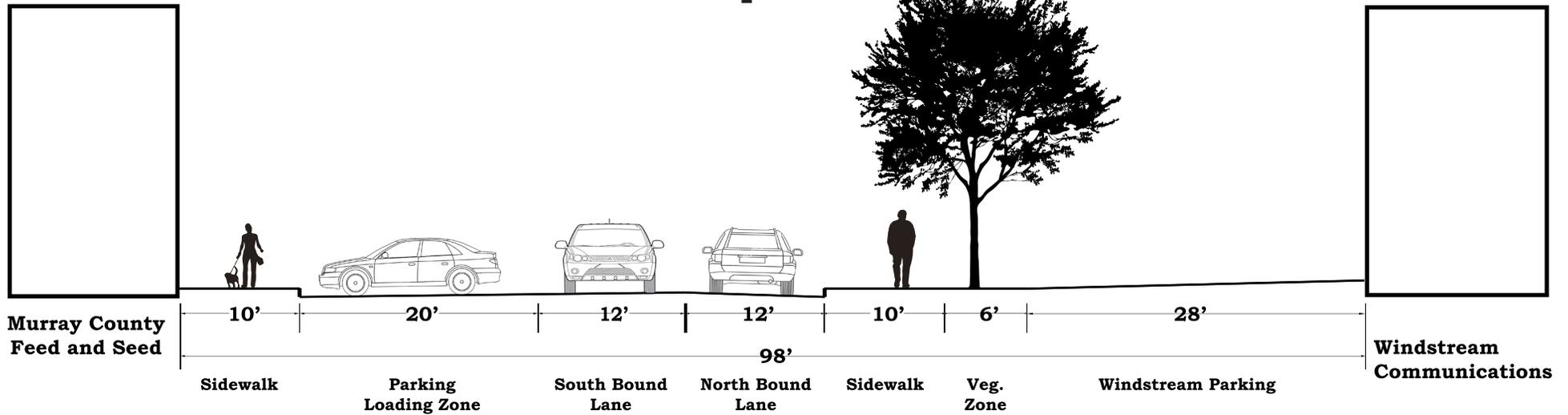


Lanes & Street Parking

Existing:



Proposed:



2ND AVENUE

CHEROKEE TO PEACHTREE STREET

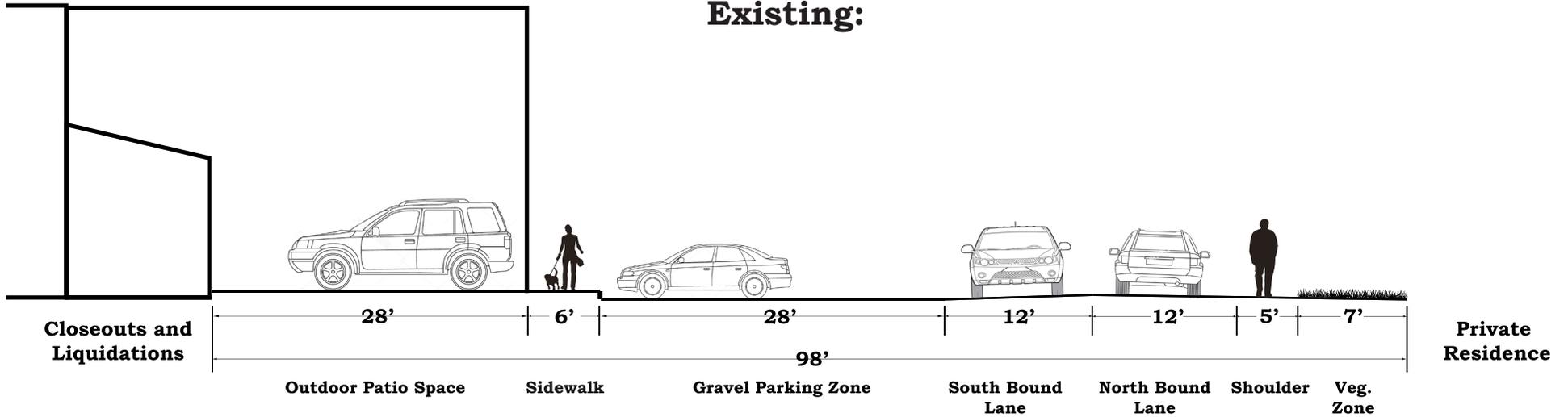
PLAN & SECTION VIEWS

Taking cues from the Chatsworth City Park, this design looks to extend the park out to the rest of the community. Currently, the brick paving, light posts, and ADA ramps create a cohesive, inviting space. Continuing the sidewalk all the way up 2nd Avenue to the park, complete with street trees, mid-block crossings, and plantings that include native streambank species creates a park-like feeling throughout the downtown. These improvements could encourage the park to expand, allowing for more varied activities and recreational options near downtown. Stop signs, crosswalks, and ADA ramps at all intersections encourage pedestrian traffic and slow vehicular traffic.

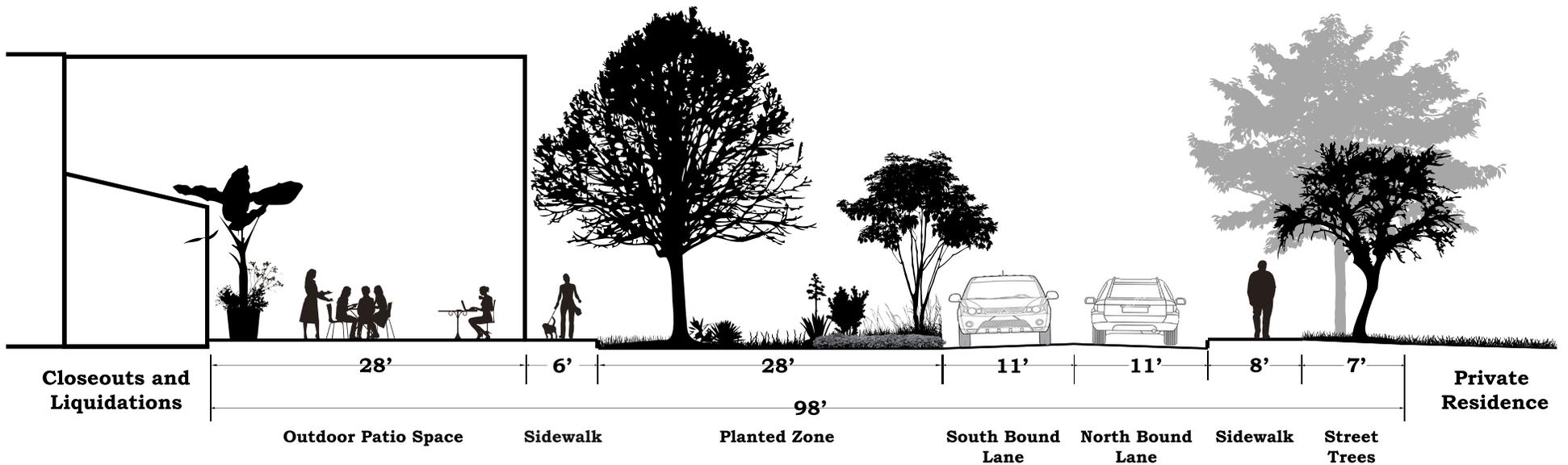


Patio Cafe & Streetscape

Existing:



Proposed:



2ND AVENUE

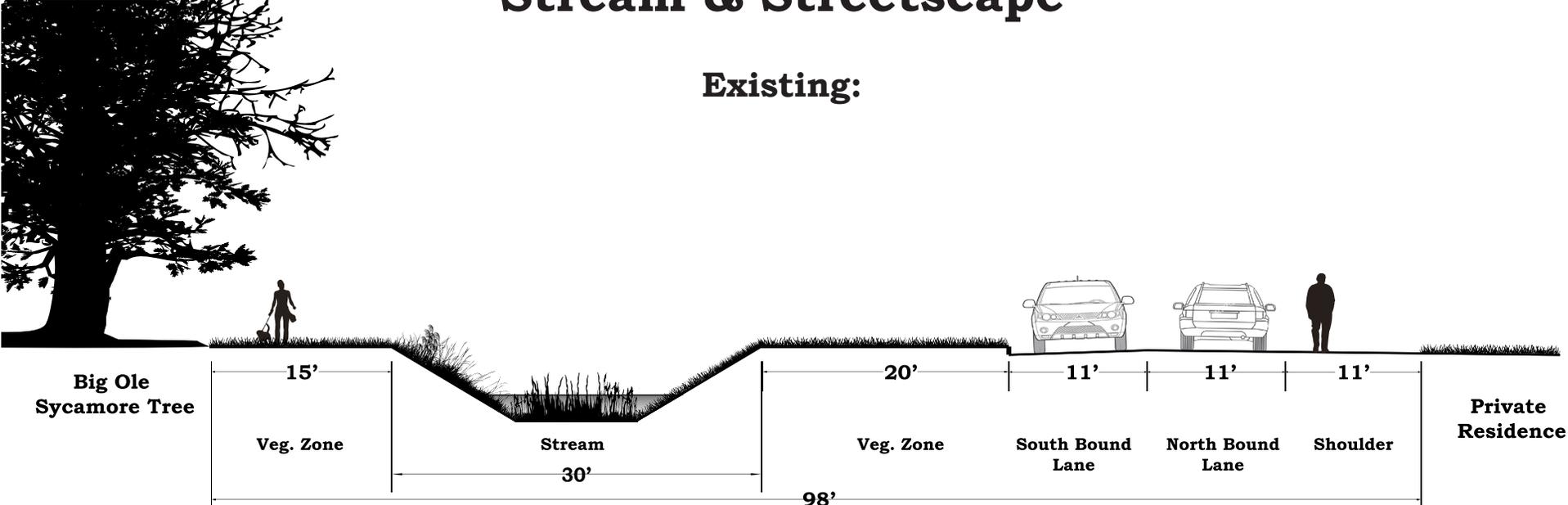
CHEROKEE TO PEACHTREE STREET

PLAN & SECTION VIEWS

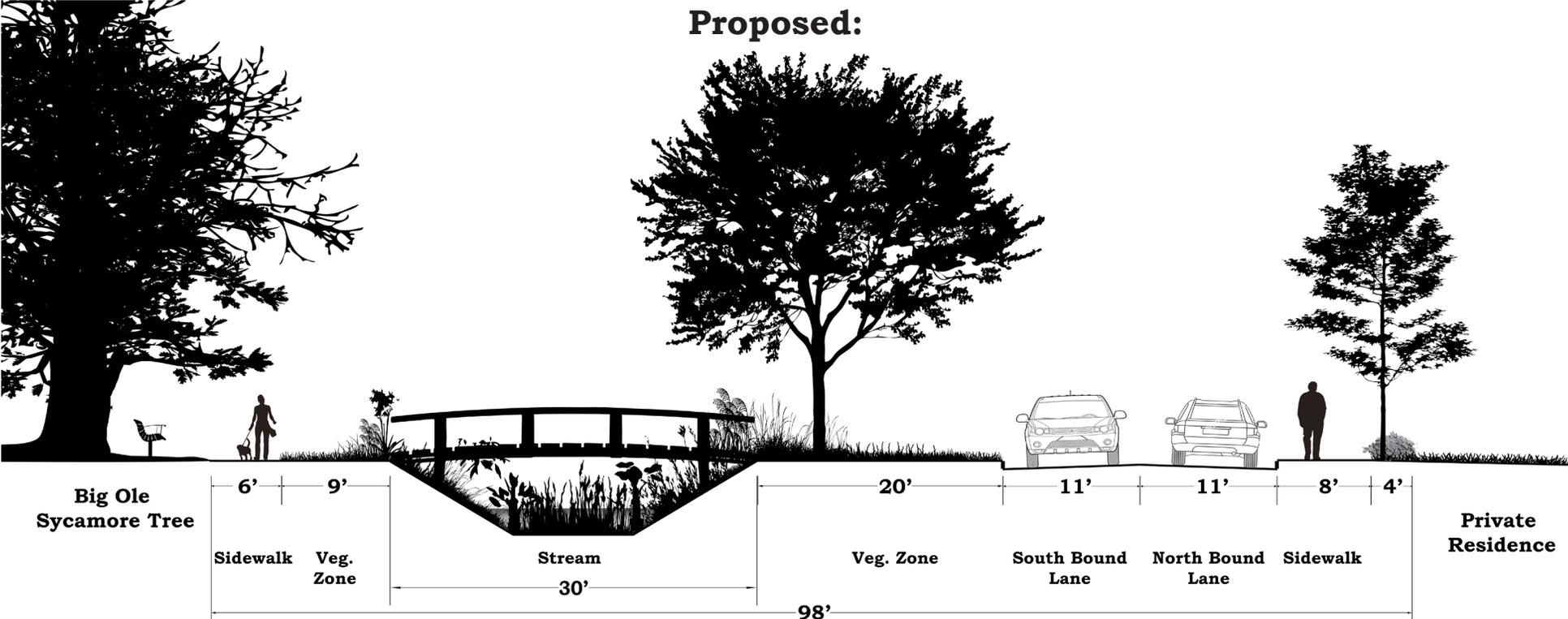


Stream & Streetscape

Existing:



Proposed:





BEFORE:



AFTER:



2ND AVENUE

PEACHTREE TO WALNUT STREET

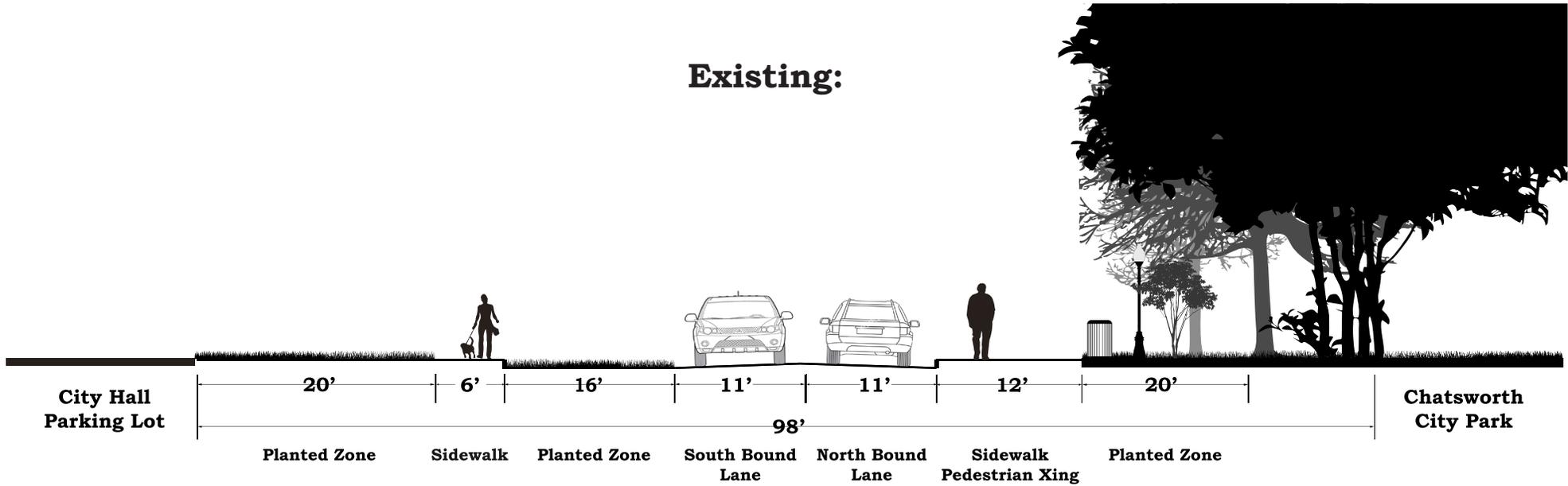
PLAN & SECTION VIEWS

Here the City Park continues its expansion, with mid-block crossings that align with City Hall and sidewalks that continue up 2nd Avenue and over to 3rd Avenue, attracting more residents to the park. Planting more trees, seeding in native grasses, planting flowering native shrubs, and reducing mowing to just the edges utilizes the turf strip to its full potential.

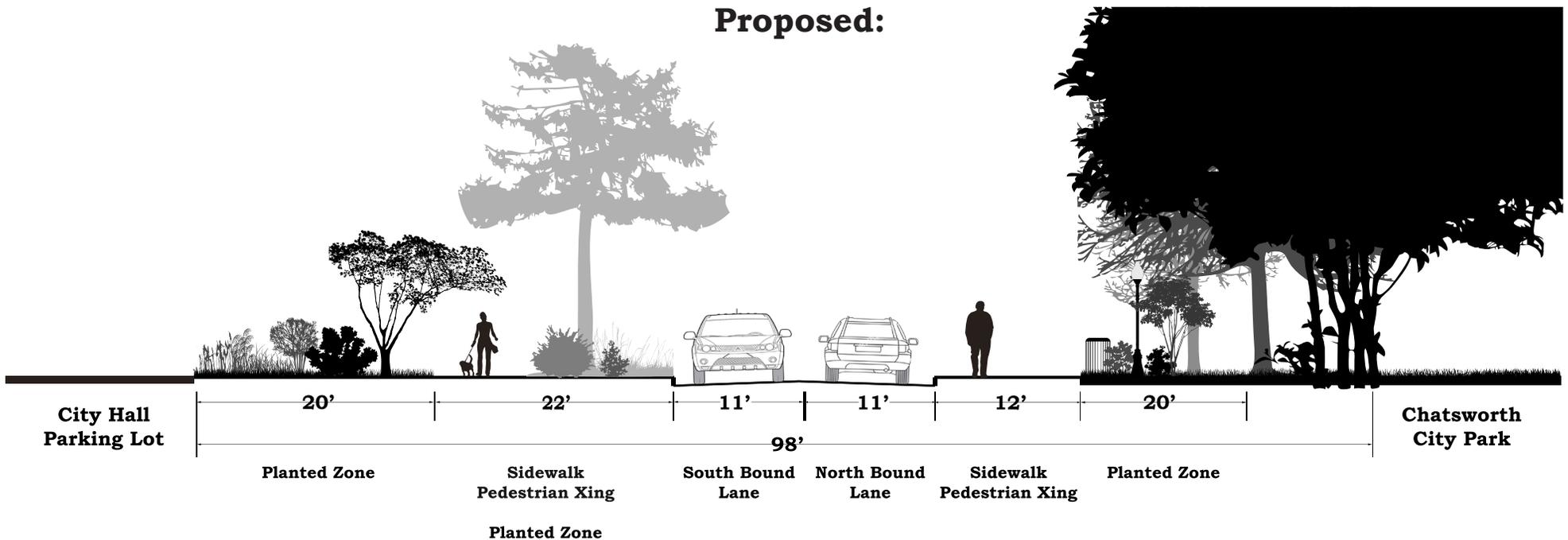


City Park Entrance

Existing:



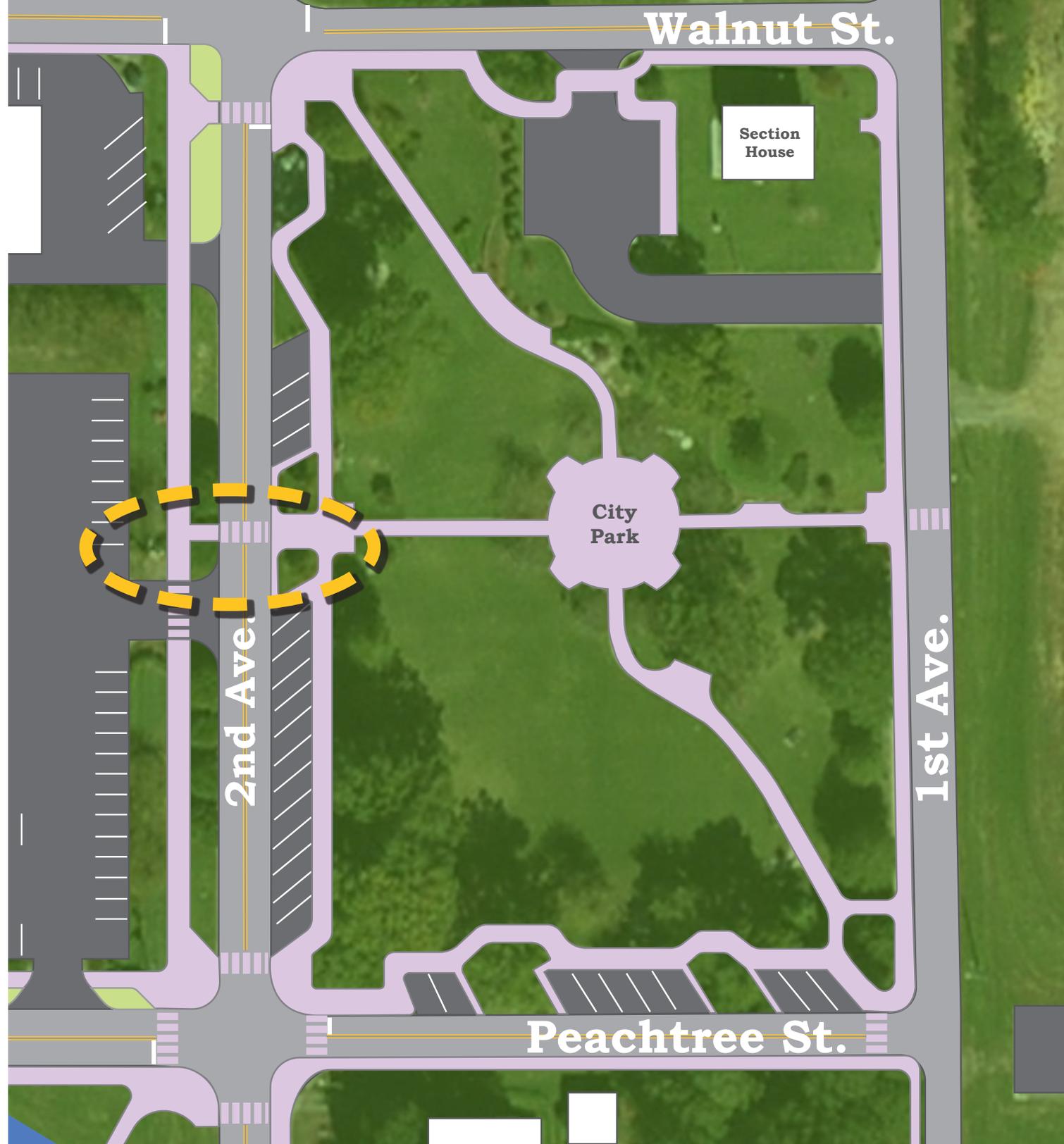
Proposed:



2ND AVENUE

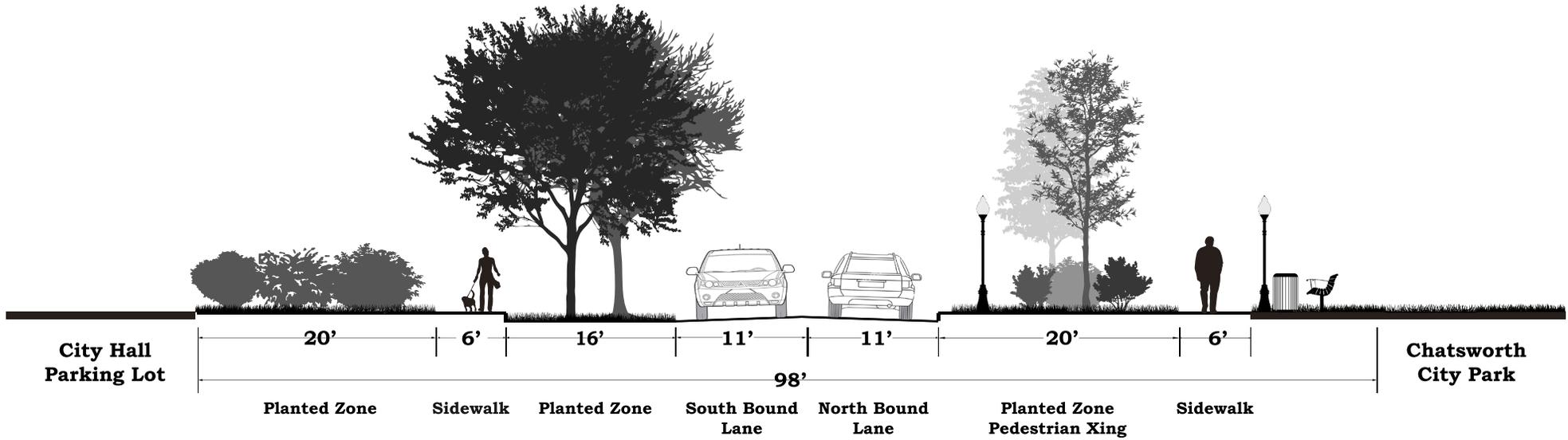
PEACHTREE TO WALNUT STREET

PLAN & SECTION VIEWS

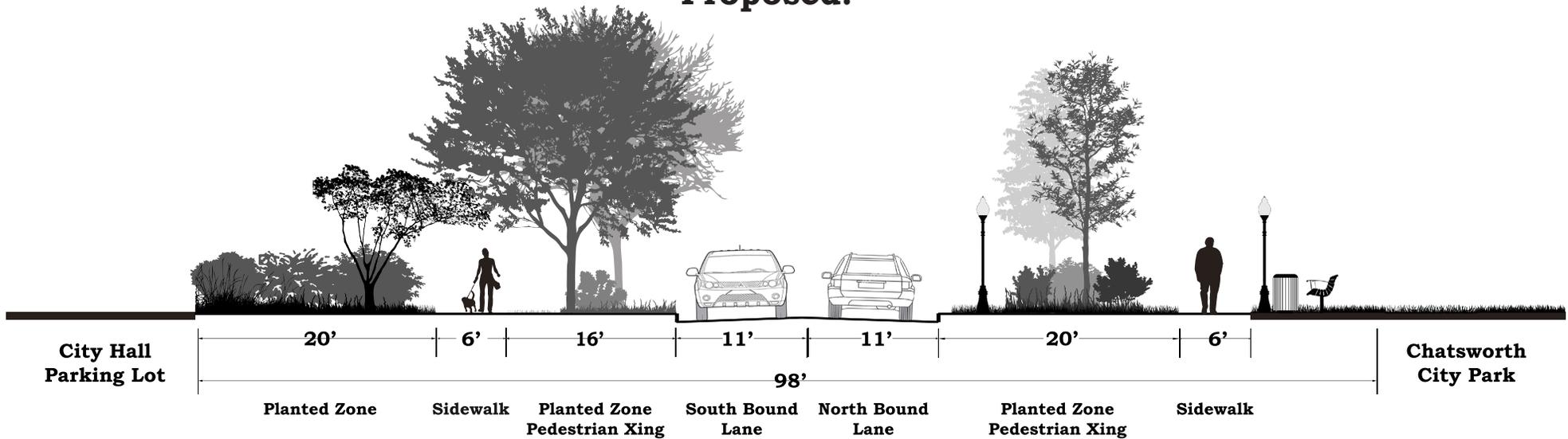


City Park Mid-block Crossing

Existing:



Proposed:



2ND AVENUE

FAÇADE RENOVATIONS & FILLING VACANCIES

A facelift and filling vacancies in the Landmark Strip Warehouse could quickly expand downtown's influence through 2nd Avenue and complete the block between Routes 411 and 52. Keeping this street active on both sides throughout the day can make for a safer and more comfortable environment downtown.



BEFORE:



AFTER:



The renderings illustrated here show the north end reimagined as a barbeque restaurant, playing off the smoke stacks above. Also shown is a thrift shop and outdoor store, as well as improved windows and signage for the Landmark Tavern. The thrift shop could attract local families and retirees, the outdoor store could appeal to visitors from the nearby state parks, and the restaurant provides nourishment for all.



BEFORE:



AFTER:

ALLEYWAYS

ENTRY FROM CITY PARKING LOT

When dealing with long-term sidewalk projects for creating connectivity from downtown to adjacent areas of the community, other short-term options for connectivity can be used to provide a similar service with low cost.

Repurposing the alleyways, which already link the downtown to the park and beyond, allow pedestrians to move around downtown with minimal interaction with vehicular traffic.





Currently, the alleyways are a hodge-podge of seemingly uncoordinated back-of-house infrastructure and employee parking. By creating decks with seating areas, shade, nice plantings, and an 'alleyway presence,' businesses can attract visitors straight from the public parking lot to an exciting outdoor eating experience that is protected from the noise, pollution, and potential danger of 3rd Avenue. Simply putting out tables and chairs over parking spaces can begin this transformation.

3RD AVENUE

GRAND ENTRY TO HISTORIC COURTHOUSE

As a very wide four-lane state route with parallel parking on both sides, 3rd Avenue presents many challenges for future connectivity. This street is not currently inviting to locals or pedestrians. Slowing traffic down through this section of downtown Chatsworth, providing pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, and elevating the feeling of entry into the Market Street district is key.





AFTER:

WELCOME SIGNAGE

3RD AVENUE & FORT STREET

Many of the daily travelers passing along 3rd Avenue are currently unaware of the full range of amenities throughout Chatsworth's downtown. Slowing traffic down, enhancing the streetscape, and branding the Market Street district along the courthouse block of 3rd Avenue could draw in the many passersby on Route 411. Staking a claim for the City of Chatsworth as a retail, restaurant, and entertainment hub along this heavily trafficked route is a great first step toward economic development in the downtown.



Responding to Chatsworth's location, at the base of Fort Mountain State Park, the signage illustrated here embraces a naturalistic approach. The simple introduction of trees, boulders, and native plantings paired with local craftsmanship can keep the city rooted in its traditions and culture, while further enhancing Chatsworth's unique sense of place.

AFTER:



