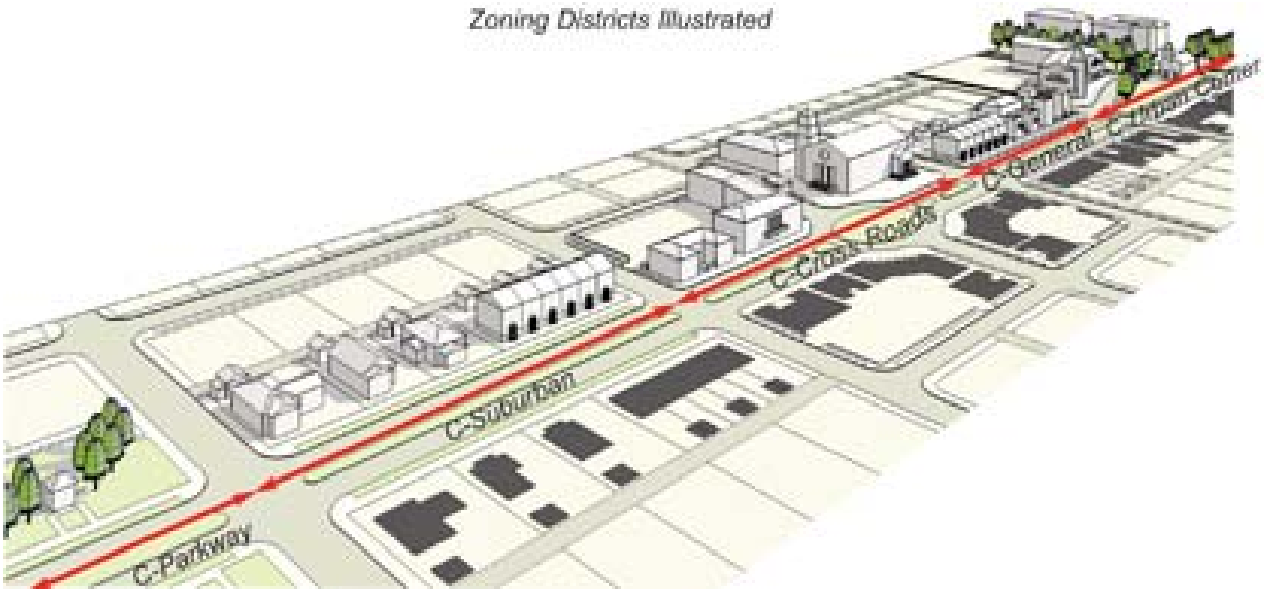
Requiring Harmonious Building Form

Cities have been adopting "form-based" zoning codes, that In contrast to traditional zoning which separates and regulates land uses, form-based zoning systems focus on the character of the built environment's building size, design, street/block scale, streetscape and open space standards, as well as cohesion with surrounding development (Image 33). This allows a variety of uses to co-locate within a zone. The codes are not merely advisory; they mandate development regulations (e.g., setbacks, building height and bulk, parking requirements) and are supplemented by design guidelines to shape how the district should look, feel and be experienced.

Image 33: Sample Form Based Code Illustration



Source: TCRP, 2014

Encouraging Denser Development

Mixed use development, when combined with relaxed off-street parking requirements, and minimum and maximum setbacks, and transit access makes possible higher density developments. Denser, more intense development, is a prerequisite for new multi-modal infrastructure, great place-making, and economic development to occur. For downtown Anna to be a dynamic, thriving, and economically sustainable destination, higher density levels need to be achieved. A basic principle of planning economically sustainable urban spaces, is that people attract people. Another concept is livability, or the

degree to which people can live, work, shop, and play within an accessible geography. The more these things can occur in a smaller area, the more livable it is. A good goal for Downtown Anna would be for the district to be highly livable.

Minimum/Maximum Building Setbacks | a setback is the distance which a building or other structure is set back from a street ROW, property line, a shore or flood plain, or any other place which is deemed to need protection. They were justified as allowed for adequate light, air circulation, and preventing the spread of fires. Typically, setbacks have been prescribed in traditional Euclidian zoning ordinances as minimum distances. It is not uncommon for developers to locate large parking lots in front of buildings and the street. Typical old-style downtowns featured buildings built out to the property lines (no setbacks). As the American culture became more auto-centric, the setbacks increased. Now, many municipalities interested in creating pedestrian-friendly districts are moving toward having maximum setbacks in addition to relaxed minimum (or no) setbacks. In addition to fostering a built environment that is scaled to pedestrians, maximum setbacks also promote denser development.

Relationship Between Density and Cost-Effective Transit | The members of the Downtown Advisory Group expressed a desire for DART to provide commuter rail service to Anna – as the rail line already exists. However, for a rail transit stop to be cost effective, densities of between 30-45 people per acre are required around the transit station (Cervero and Guerra, 2011). Currently, Anna only has a population density of around 8.75 people per acre. Dense, mixed use developments along transit lines are often referred to as transit oriented developments or TODs. Buses can serve areas with lower population densities – and this might be a solid interim solution. Long-term, linking Anna to Sherman and Dennison to the north and the Dallas Metroplex to the south with rail transit will offer relief from the congested IH 75 corridor and open up Anna to more growth from demographic populations who prefer and are reliant on transit service.

Transit Station | Anna's first depot has been relocated to private land and is awaiting restoration. Its current condition is dilapidated. Image 34 depicts Riggins Street along the railroad circa 1900. The plan calls for reincorporating rail and bus transit into the Downtown Framework. Furthermore, the walkable blocks, pedestrian crossing, hike and bike trails, mean that Downtown Anna will be "transit oriented" and not merely "transit adjacent."

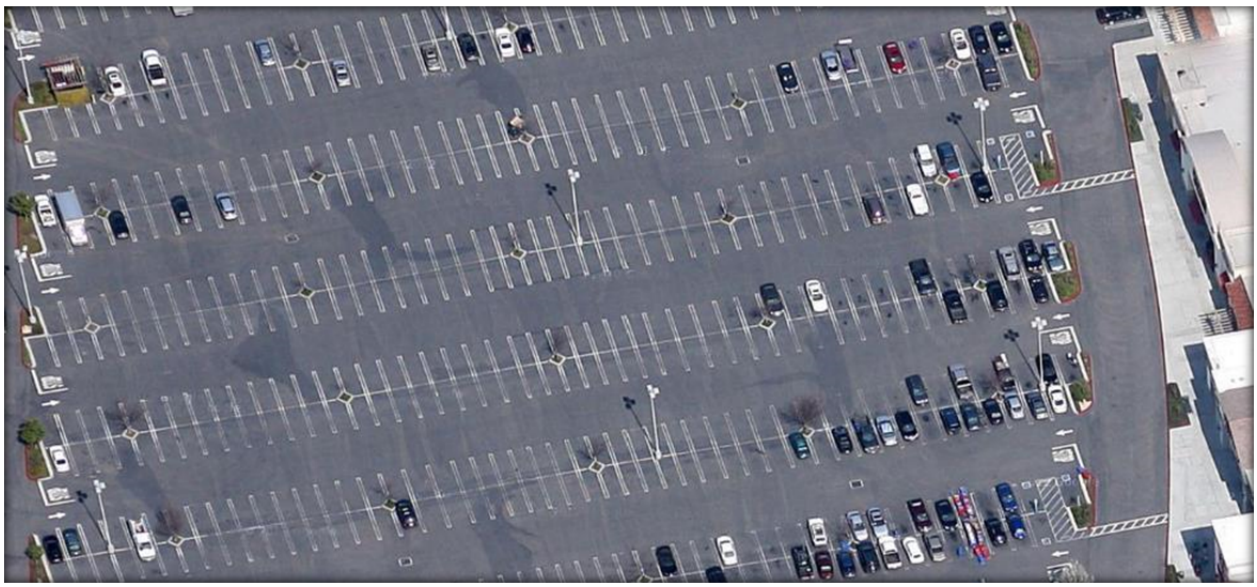
Image 34: Downtown Anna Circa 1900
(Old Buildings along Riggins Street and Anna Depot)

Zoning Changes | Bringing about higher densities will require paving the way for market forces to create them through eliminating barriers within the Anna Code of Ordinances and providing incentives through Anna Economic Development Corporation. Currently, Anna's zoning ordinance restricts maximum building height to 35 feet – about two stories for a commercial building at 13' floors. This restriction is due to the maximum height that the Fire Department's current ladder truck can reach. Most of the examples of mixed use developments depicted in this plan show buildings in the three-four story range in the densest areas. When Anna purchases new fire equipment, raising the maximum building height requirements in Downtown to 45' would accommodate three-story buildings – eliminating a critical barrier to denser, more economically feasible, mixed use development.

High Cost of Free Parking | Suburbanites living in a world of separated land uses, strip centers, and big-box retailers probably take free parking for granted. The presence of these large parking lots is an artifact of regulations that essentially subsidizes cars, car ownership, and car trips. Mandating off-street parking reduces the market price of parking spaces to the consumer. If land use developers had to confront the high land cost of providing large parking lots, off-street parking would be based on market economics and calculations. Donald Shoup, a professor of urban planning at UCLA and author of the book The High Cost of Free Parking wrote, "Minimum parking requirements act like a fertility drug for

cars" and described how minimum parking standards are devastating American Cities. Where off-street parking is provided, it should be behind buildings, not fronting the streets. Structured parking in garages is another way to achieve higher density levels while not covering huge portions of lots with parking lots (Image 35).

Image 35: Big "Empty" Lots



Google, 2014

Balanced Density | A goal of this plan is to create a future concept for Downtown that is friendly to all modalities of travel; but not at the expense of density, pedestrian friendliness, and safety. Requiring a lot of off-street parking would, especially when compounded by building height restrictions, would essentially negate the possibility of having density levels sufficiently high enough to make transit feasible and a dynamic pedestrian mall economically viable. Therefore, the plan advocates a balanced approach including maximum setbacks, on-street parking along the perimeters of blocks, relaxed height restrictions, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities into one coherent concept.

Density and Sustainability | Denser, mixed-use developments typically have a higher appraised value per square foot than lower density developments. This will lead to greater tax dollars for the City in the future and better support utility infrastructure and services. Table 11 provides a comparative breakdown of city tax contribution per acre for different development types. Mixed use developments provide the greatest tax contribution per acre. Image 36 and 37 depict vibrant mixed use districts.

Table 11: Comparison of Annual Property Tax Contribution per Acre by Land Use Types

Land Use	Location	City	Structure/DBA	Total Improvements Main Area (s.f.)	Total Parcel Land Area (s.f.)	Appraised (Land and Improvements)	City Property Tax Rate	Per Square Foot Land Value	Per Acre Land Value	Annual Tax Contribution Per Acre
Single Family Residential	Oak Hollow	Anna	House	1369	6120	$104,429	0.65%	$17.06	$743,289	$4,824
	Oak Hollow	Anna	House	1369	11545	$112,160	0.65%	$9.72	$423,187	$2,746
	Oak Hollow	Anna	House	1919	6600	$139,023	0.65%	$21.06	$917,552	$5,955
			avg	**1369**	**8833**	**$108,295**	**0.65%**	**$13.39**	**$583,238**	**$3,785**
Single Family Residential	Stonebridge Ranch	McKinney	House	4276	14213	$352,734	0.58%	$24.82	$1,081,059	$6,303
	Stonebridge Ranch	McKinney	House	3557	11540	$363,896	0.58%	$31.53	$1,373,597	$8,008
	Stonebridge Ranch	McKinney	House	4019	7150	$207,000	0.58%	$28.95	$1,261,108	$7,352
			avg	**3917**	**12877**	**$358,315**	**0.58%**	**$28.18**	**$1,227,328**	**$7,155**
Multi Family Residential	Fairways at Wilson Creek	McKinney	Apartments	321982	994431	$22,670,800	0.58%	$22.80	$993,070	$5,790
	Retreat at Sonebridge Ranch	McKinney	Apartments	398732	1127202	$37,065,943	0.58%	$32.88	$1,432,390	$8,351
	The Haven at Eldorado	McKinney	Apartments	298632	909716	$23,641,562	0.58%	$25.99	$1,132,031	$6,600
			avg	**360357**	**1060817**	**$29,868,372**	**0.58%**	**$27.84**	**$1,212,730**	**$7,070**
Commercial Large Retail	Eldorado Pkwy/I-75	McKinney	Albertsons	62727	286866	$4,527,891	0.58%	$15.78	$687,551	$4,008
	Eldorado Pkwy/S Ridge Rd	McKinney	Market Street	65000	435818	$5,754,013	0.58%	$13.20	$575,113	$3,353
	W University Dr/N Redbud Blvd	McKinney	Walmart	203473	922383	$15,005,338	0.58%	$16.27	$708,635	$4,131
			avg	**63864**	**361342**	**$5,140,952**	**0.58%**	**$14.49**	**$631,332**	**$3,681**
Commercial Miscelaneous	W White St/Ferguson	Anna	Independent Bank	5662	56149	$1,204,887	0.65%	$21.46	$934,743	$6,066
	W White St/I-75	Anna	Love's Truck Stop	7291	244197	$1,954,788	0.65%	$8.00	$348,696	$2,263
	S Powell Pkwy/White St	Anna	Sonic Drive-In	1390	29795	$536,206	0.65%	$18.00	$783,928	$5,088
	W White St/Willow Creek Dr	Anna	Willow Creek Retail	8820	38607	$1,360,000	0.65%	$35.23	$1,534,478	$9,959
	W 4th St	Anna	Crowe's Bar	2720	3912	$126,633	0.65%	$32.37	$1,410,055	$9,151
			avg	**5177**	**74532**	**$1,036,503**	**0.65%**	**$23.01**	**$1,002,380**	**$6,505**
Mixed Use	Dallas N Tollway/Legacy Dr	Plano	Mixed Use	248238	554602	$48,298,822	0.49%	$87.09	$3,793,525	$18,535
	E Virginia St/N Tennessee St	Mckinney	Downtown 2 Story	10388	15598	$1,594,538	0.58%	$102.23	$4,453,012	$25,961
	E Virginia St/N Kentucky St	Mckinney	Downtown 2 Story	16597	8411	$1,584,588	0.58%	$188.39	$8,206,474	$47,844
			avg	**129313**	**285100**	**$24,946,680**	**0.54%**	**$94.66**	**$4,123,268**	**$22,248**

Image 36: Dense Mixed-Use Development, High Density, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Image 37: Saratoga Springs, New York

Implementing a Wayfinding System

Wayfinding encompasses all of the ways in which people orient themselves in physical space, choose a path, and navigate from place to place – it is not just about signs. The process of wayfinding includes orientation, route decision, route monitoring, and destination recognition. Furthermore, a good wayfinding system includes reinforcement, so that travelers know they are on the correct path to their chosen destination. There are five primary architectural wayfinding elements: (1) paths/circulation, (2) markers, (3) nodes, (4) edges, and (5) zones/districts. These, along with visual accessibility, are the design criteria for highly legible and comprehensible urban environments. Wayfinding markers can not only show you where something is, but where something was. Historic markers are indicators such as a plaques or signs to commemorate events, persons of historic interest, and to associate the point of interest with a specific location (Image 38). Many municipalities have adopted comprehensive wayfinding master plans coordinating navigation throughout the city. Wayfinding markers come in all shapes, sizes, colors, and locations – and the specifics of their placement can be quite creative (Images 39-42). Maps 8 and 9 depict locations for wayfinding markers in Anna to direct visitors downtown.

Image 38: Historic Marker, Galveston, Texas

Image 39: Pedestrian-Scale Wayfinding Kiosk in Calgary, BC

Photo: Corbin Design, 2014

Image 40: Miscellaneous Wayfinding Markers

Photo: Zombie Zodiac, 2014

Photo: Concrete Graphics.com, 2014

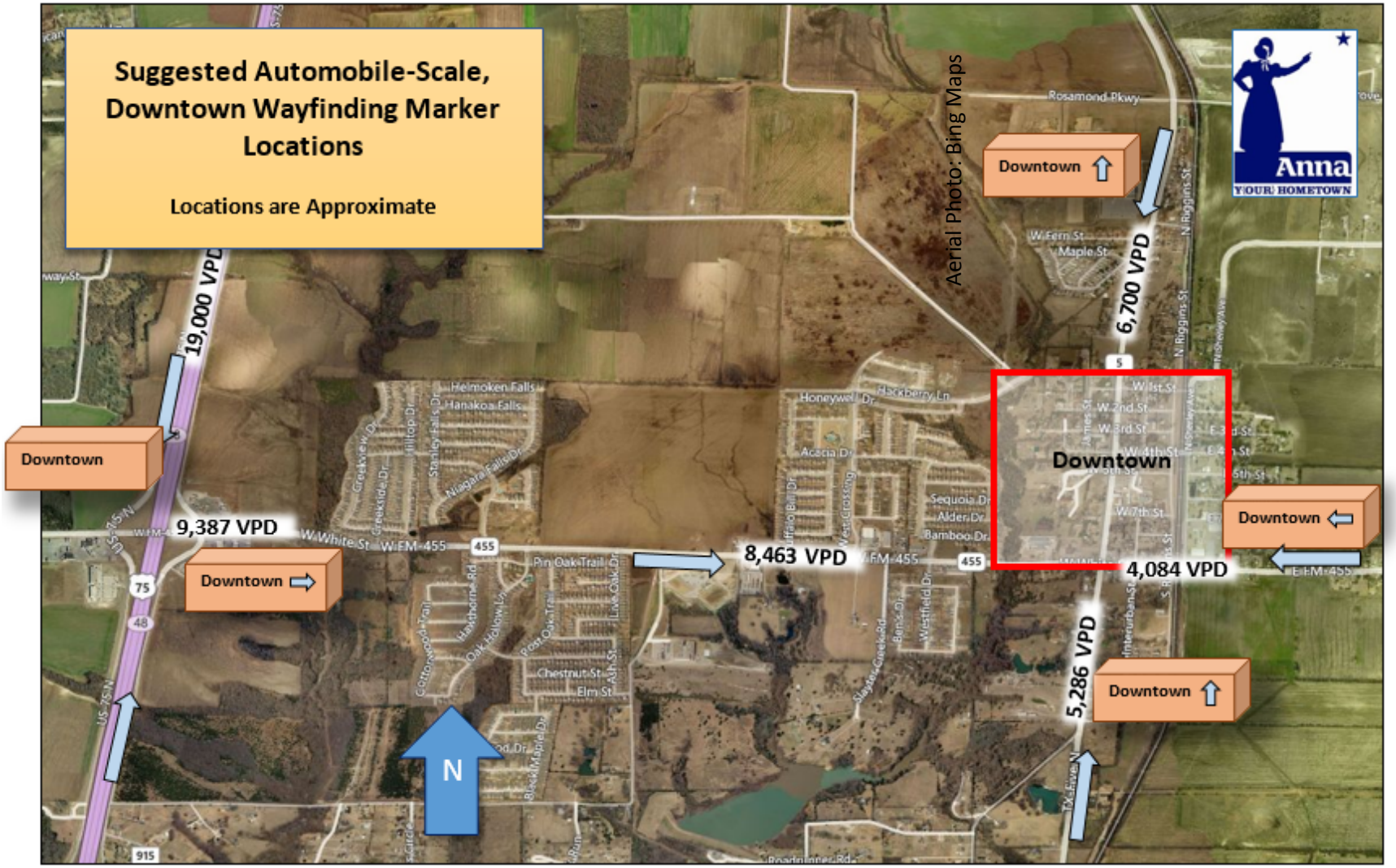
Image 41: Wayfinding Markers at Varying Scales

Photo: City of Madison, WI, 2014

Image 42: Gateway Monument Wayfinding Marker, Billings, MT

Photo: Vacation Rentals Home, 2014

Map 8: Suggested Gateway, Automobile-Scale Downtown Wayfinding Marker Locations

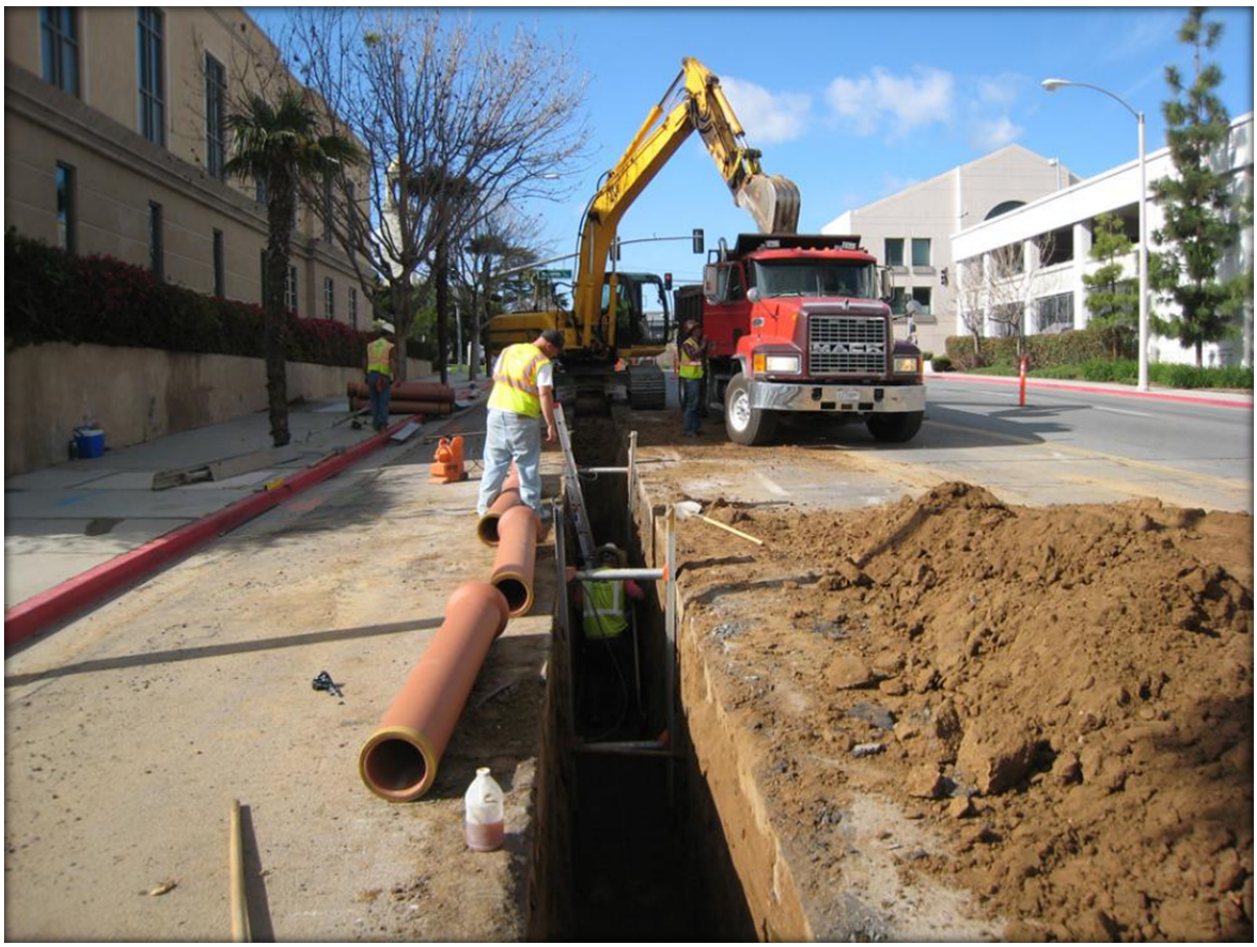


Map 9: Downtown Wayfinding Marker Location Along Powell Pkwy

Improving Drainage

A benefit of improving the streetscape with sidewalks, curbs, and gutters, will be improving the storm water drainage situation. The future plan shows a significant water feature in the southwest corner of the concept plan that will, in addition to a scenic feature, serve as a detention facility – taking advantage of the natural swale that runs through it (Image 43). Improvements are costly in the short run; however, the long-term effects of inaction can be much more expensive.

***Image 43:* Storm Sewer Installation in Riverside, California**



Source: al Abbasi Construction and Engineering, 2012