

# ACTIVATE EL PRESIDIO

## Respectful Activation of Public Spaces

Revised  
June 2022



# **Activate El Presidio Summary...June 2022**

In March of 2020, the community's plan to activate the El Presidio neighborhood was halted due to Covid. Leading up to this time Project for Public Spaces (PPS) worked with Rio Nuevo and hundreds of stakeholders to create a vision and an action plan to attract the public to this historically significant neighborhood.

There is much interest and engagement from businesses, museums, residents, the City of Tucson, the IDA, etc. A 17-member Working Group will create and implement the plan. The group is chaired by Amy Hartman Gordon, Executive Director, El Presidio Museum/Foundation. Larry Lucero, retired TEP executive, is vice chairman. Rio Nuevo will be represented by Fletcher McCusker, Mike Levin, and Jannie Cox, acting as advisors.

Improvements will primarily follow PPS recommendations of "Lighter/Quicker/Cheaper," such as paint, plantings, art, shade, outdoor furniture, lighting, small entertainment venues, and wayfinding...and will be carried out with the necessary approvals of stakeholders. In April of 2022 Rio Nuevo funded the project for up to \$500,000.

# Summary

## Placemaking

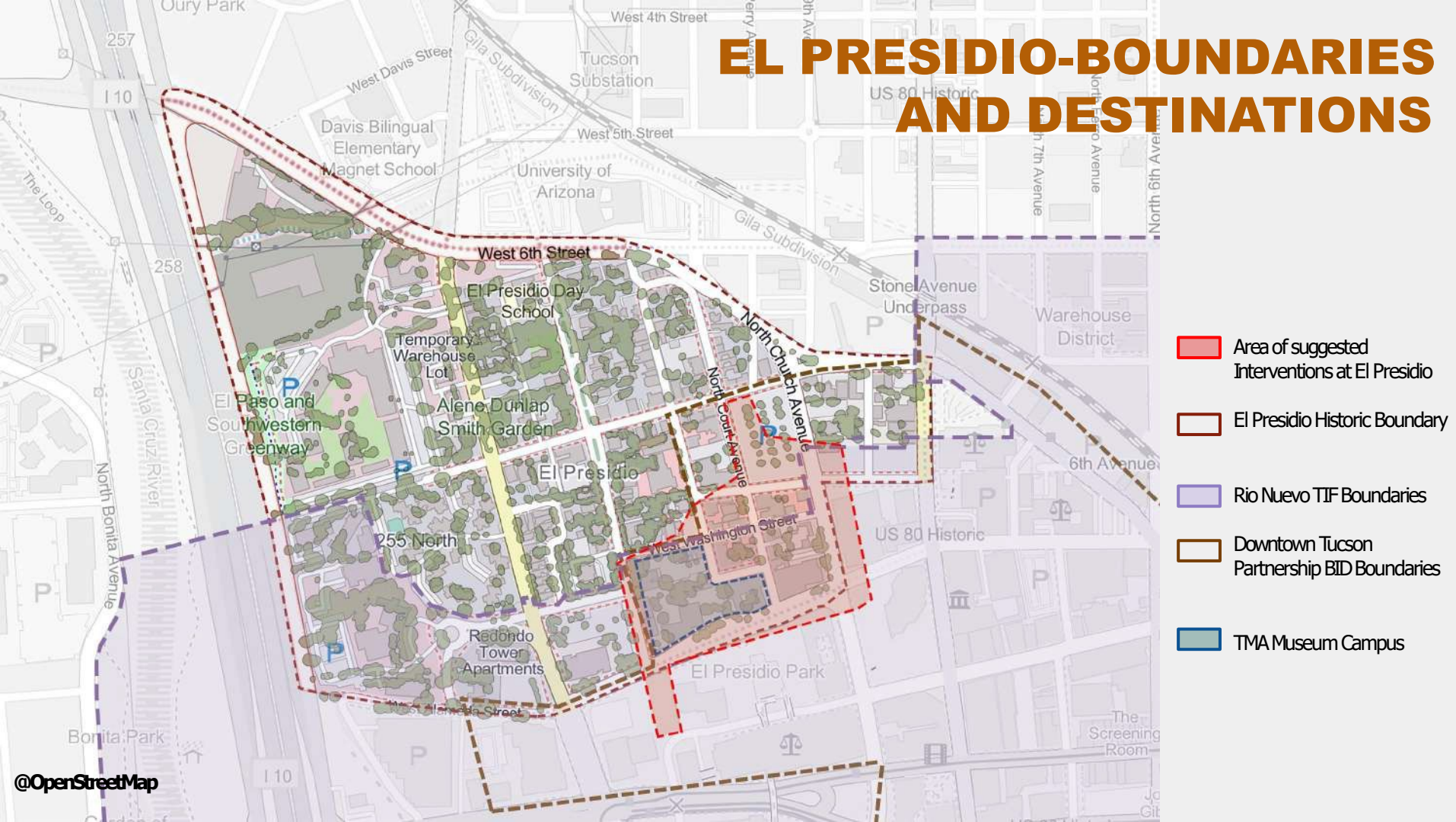
- \* A process to make a cultural space active, dynamic, and better connected to the people.
- \* A method of highlighting an area that is loved and cherished, to celebrate the past and the future, and bring residents and visitors to it.

## What is "Lighter Quicker Cheaper":

- Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper (LQC) recommended by Project for Public Spaces is based on taking incremental steps, using low-cost options that tap into local talent. It is a creative, locally powered alternative to capital-heavy, top-down planning.
- Suggestions are meant to be implemented in a fast, durable yet temporary way, with installations and activities that can happen immediately and benefit existing retail, restaurants, and cultural institutions while fitting the character of the neighborhood

**Purpose of Working Group-** To develop and execute a LQC plan that will communicate the historic nature of the area and improve information/wayfinding, cleanliness, shade and lighting for visitors in the merchant areas of the District while protecting residential areas.

# EL PRESIDIO-BOUNDARIES AND DESTINATIONS





## LEGEND

1. Court Avenue and El Presidio  
San Agustín del Tucson Museum  
entrance

2. Telles Street

3. Washington Street between  
Meyer and Court

4. Alameda and Court Avenue  
Visitor Center crossing

5. Alameda and Main Avenue

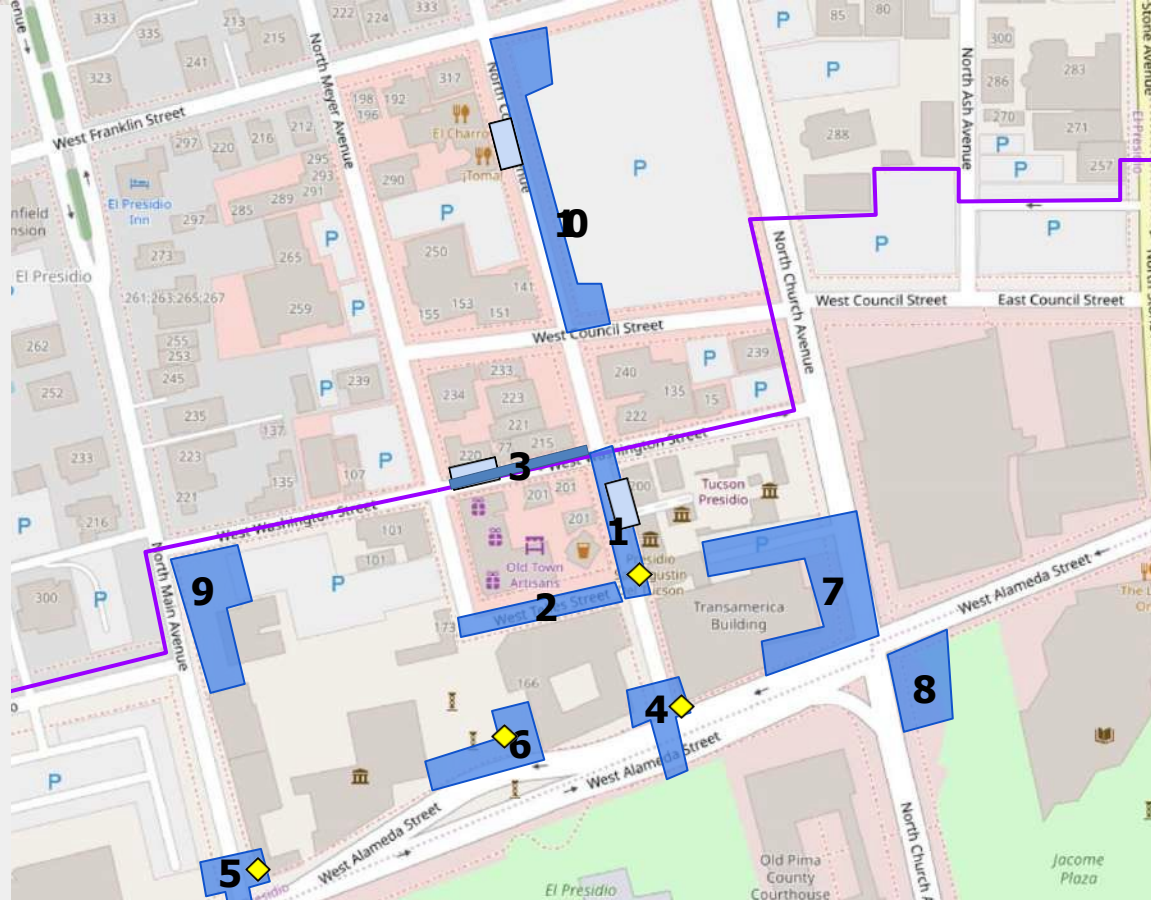
6. Alameda Museum of Art  
entrance courtyard

7. Transamerica Building at the  
corner of Church Ave. and  
Alameda

8. Alameda and Church  
intersection at Library Park

9. Corbett House Gardens and  
Museum Parking

10. Court/Franklin...Lot 175

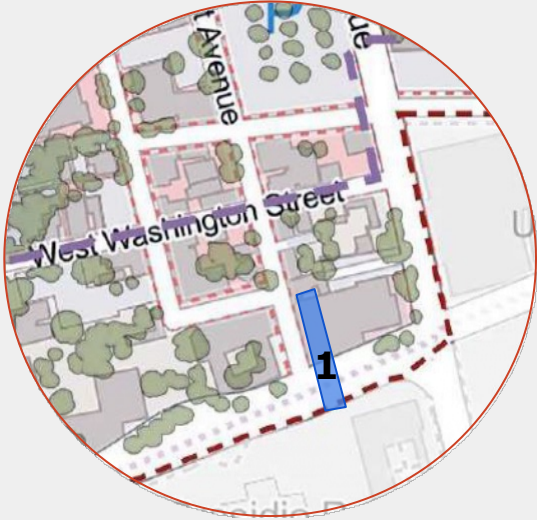


◆ Key locations for a  
temporary neighborhood  
wayfinding system:  
planters/pots with trees,  
seating and "A" frames with  
information

□ Possible location for a  
street parklet (street  
seating)

□ Rio Nuevo TIF  
Boundaries

# 1. COURT AVENUE - EL PRESIDIO MUSEUM ENTRANCE



Court Ave...wide with narrow sidewalks.  
Has Presidio Museum and Duplex.  
Service entrance for La/Co and entrance to Tall Boys .  
Court is a main entry point.



## LEGEND



Painted Sidewalk  
Extension

Mural, benches, and seating

Museum Entry Point with benches,  
'A' frame information for Museum  
activities and events

Interim Street Painting to widen  
the sidewalk

Old Town  
Artisans Potential Parklet Location



Interim Street Painting to widen  
the sidewalk



## 1. Court Avenue - El Presidio Museum Entrance

### *Daily Uses and Activities*

Attract visitors/locals to La/Co, Presidio Museum, Ceres, etc. Placemaking to enrich visitor experience with approachable, dynamic, and fun enhancements, plus lighting and temporary wayfinding. A parklet can mark the Museum entry and encourage visitors to linger.



Sidewalk extension  
with street painting



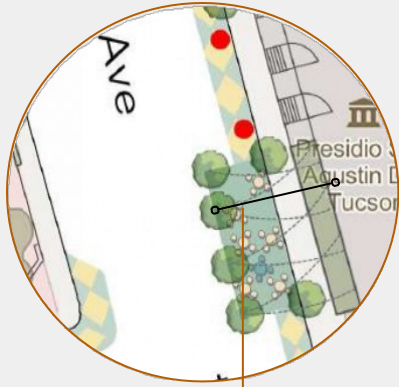
Temporary  
signage and  
wayfinding



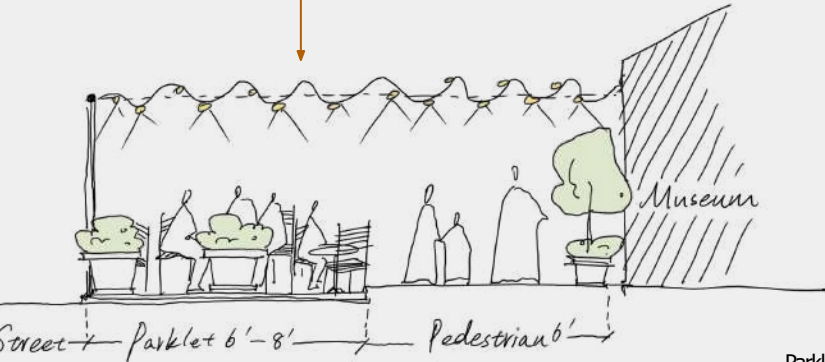
Museum entry sign



# 1. Court Avenue - El Presidio Museum Entrance



A parklet is a sidewalk extension providing space and amenities. They may be installed on parking spaces and typically extend from the sidewalk to the width of the adjacent parking space.



Parklet  
Play Street



Examples of Parklets with seating,  
shade, and planting



Seating in front of Duplex and Museum





## 1. Court Avenue El Presidio Museum entrance

*Special Event/Street Closure*

Could close for special events, receptions, Museum re-enactments. Health related activities such as Play Street to attract children...kid and adult play and exercise activities.





## Existing View



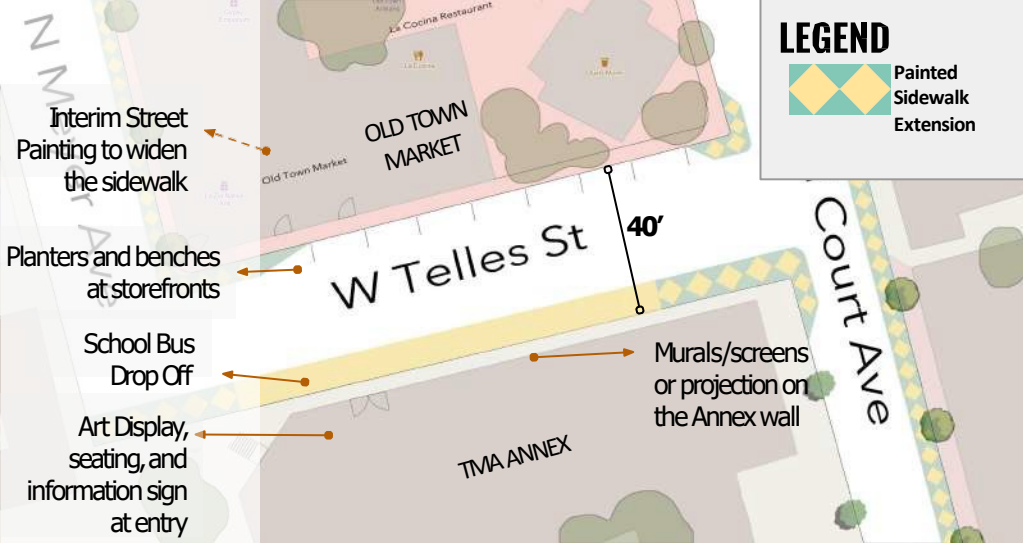
## 2. TELLES STREET



Low traffic and narrow sidewalks. Old Town Market storefronts and Tall Boys on north side. Blank wall of the TMC Annex on the South side and side entrance to TMA. Small south entry plaza is void of amenities or wayfinding. La Casa Cordova is attractive focal point...facing west.







## 2. Telles Street

### Old Town Artisans Storefront

Enhance with benches, shade, planters, additional signage and lighting. Remove a few parking spaces in front of the OTA entrance and place merchandise displays on the sidewalk, with shade and lighting. Cafe seating at Telles and Court.

### Circulation

Telles St. could accommodate back-in angle parking on the south side to allow removal of a few parking spaces from the north side creating a more attractive and visible pedestrian area.

### Museum Annex Wall and TMA Service Entrance

Projections, temporary murals, plantings, and benches along the blank wall to enliven street. Seating area and information point at the TMA back Entrance.

Make TMA courtyard at Telles more visible and prominent. It is an important connection from the Visitor Center, Presidio Park and City Hall. TMA back entrance could have seating area with information about TMA and La Casa Cordova.



Storefronts Improvements

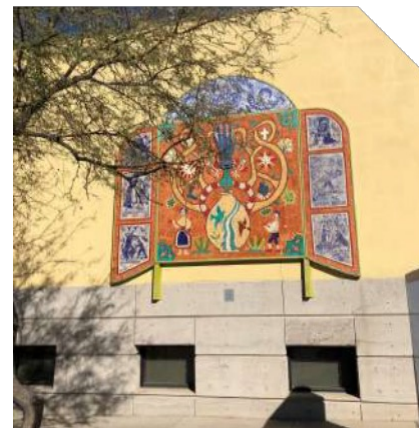


## 2. Telles Street



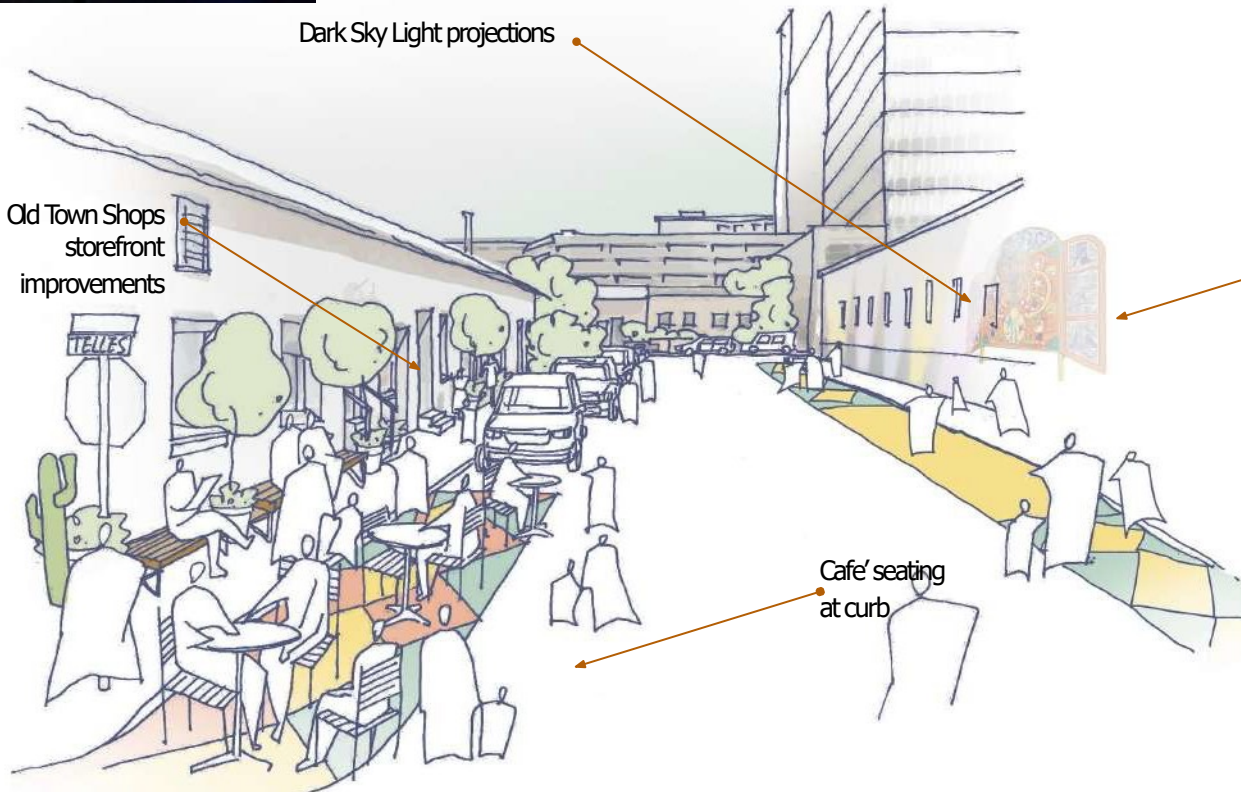


Dark Sky Light projections



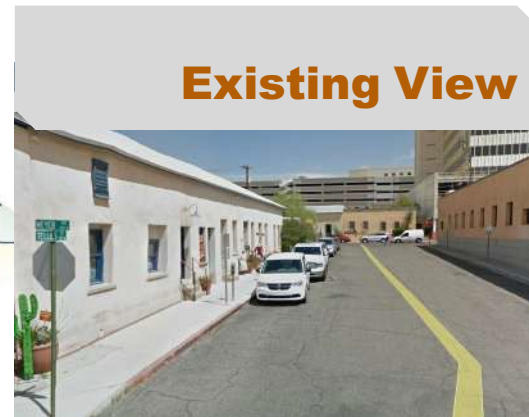
Relocate Existing Mural to Annex Wall

Old Town Shops  
storefront  
improvements



Cafe' seating  
at curb

**Existing View**

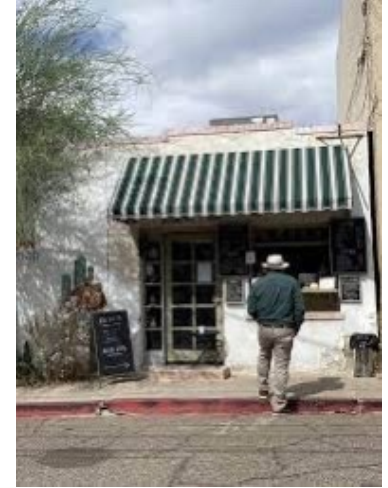




### 3. WASHINGTON STREET FROM MEYER TO COURT



**Washington Street** is closed to traffic allowing La/Co to expand into street. Plantings, trees, street paint, shade, and lighting could further enhance the area.



Entrance to Ceres

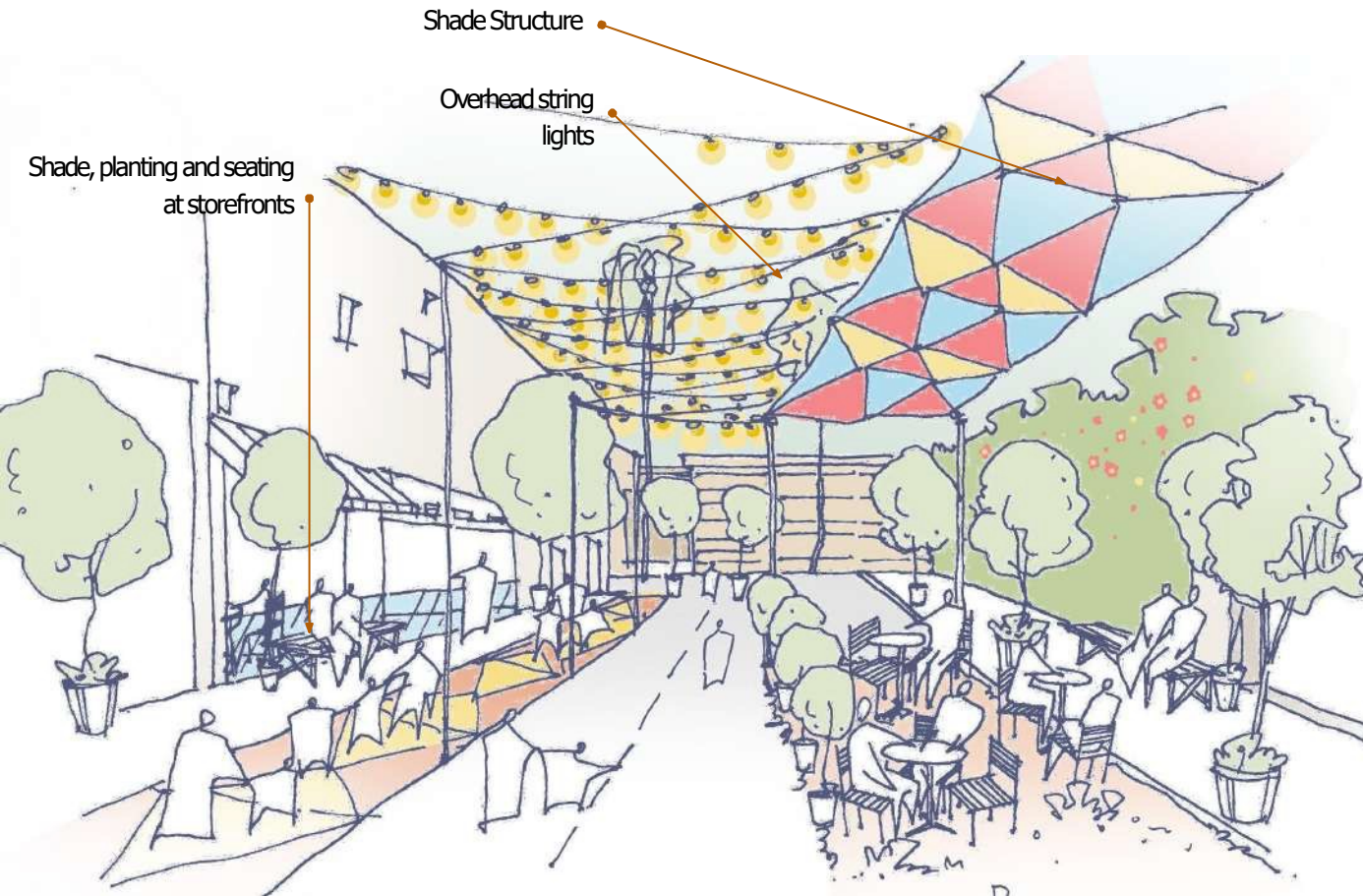












Shade Structure

## Existing View



## 4. ALAMEDA AND COURT

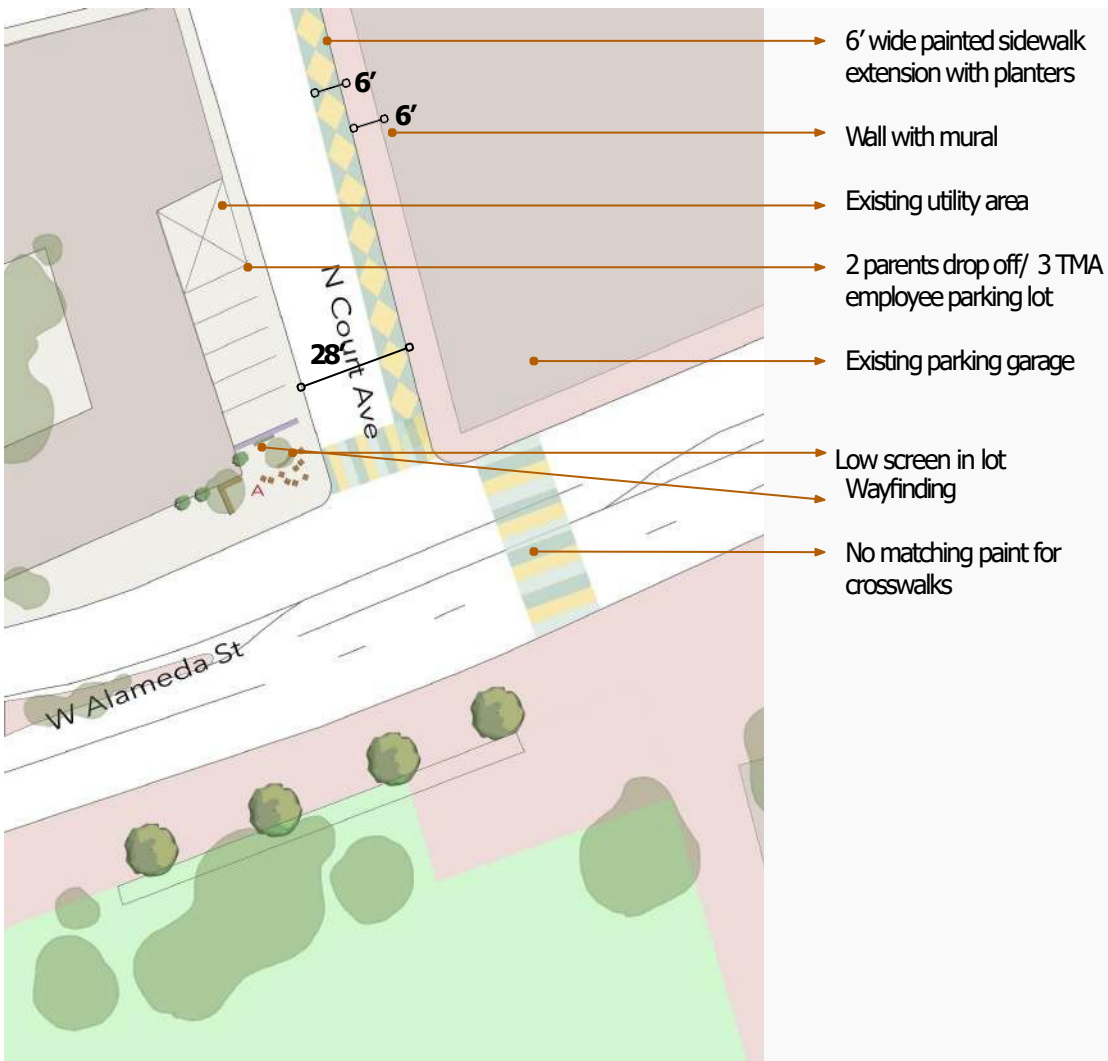


### **A main entrance into the El Presidio**

This gateway to the El Presidio historic neighborhood is neither attractive nor pedestrian friendly...framed by cars parked along the Court Avenue sidewalk and a parking structure. No focal point is visible from Alameda, with other than new mural.







## 4. Alameda and Court Ave

### *Visitor Center Crossing*

Enhance this intersection to become a main Gateway into the District to attract visitors, office workers, and residents. An additional crosswalk on the West side of the intersection would be ideal, if feasible. The 24' wide sidewalk at the Northwest corner is suitable for seating, information sign, art and gateway features.





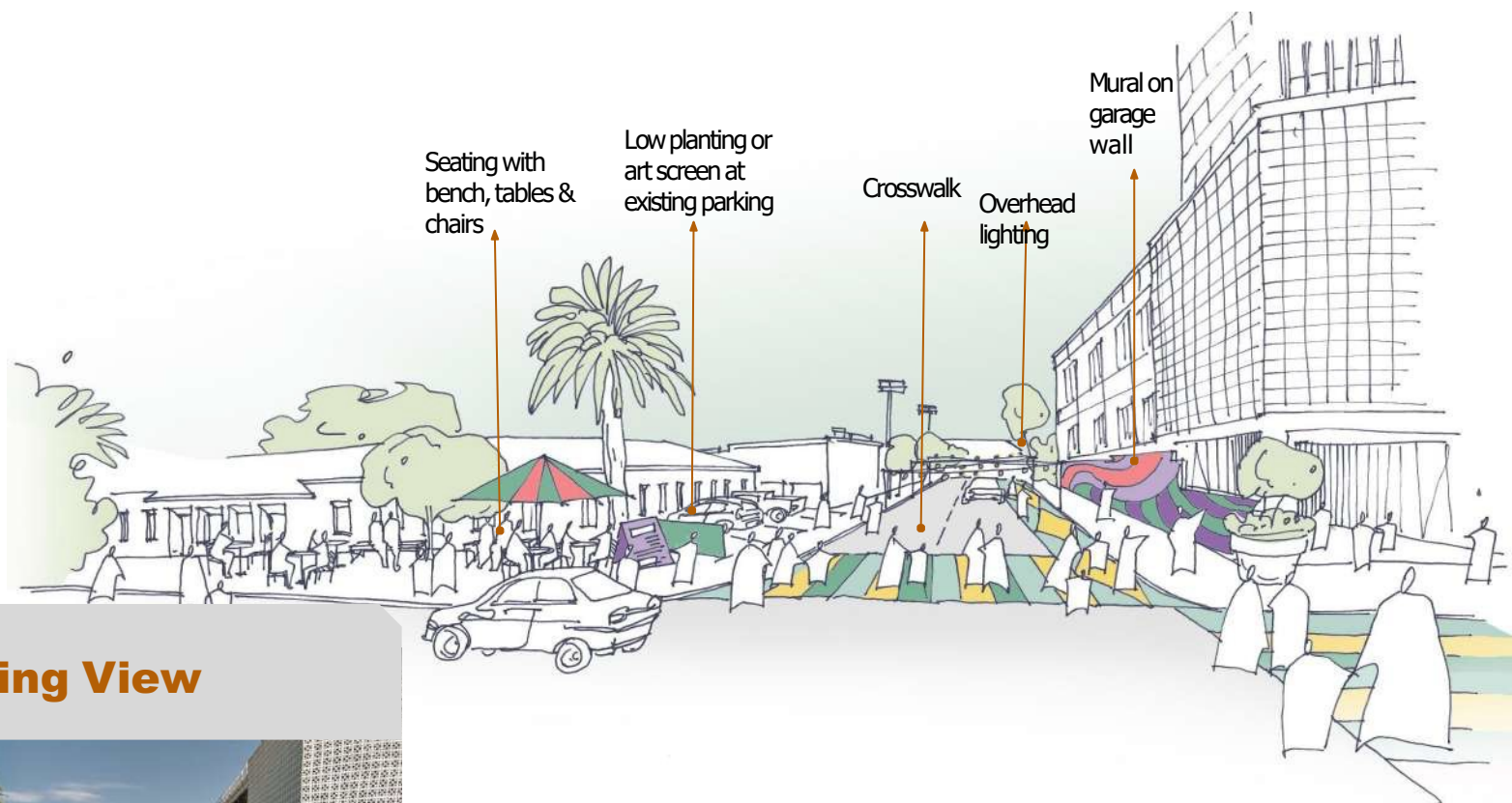


Creative seating for NW corner

There will be no crosswalks to match color scheme, but may have brightly painted crosswalks that conform to City standards.



Low screen at NW parking lot



**Existing View**



## 5. ALAMEDA AND MAIN AVENUE

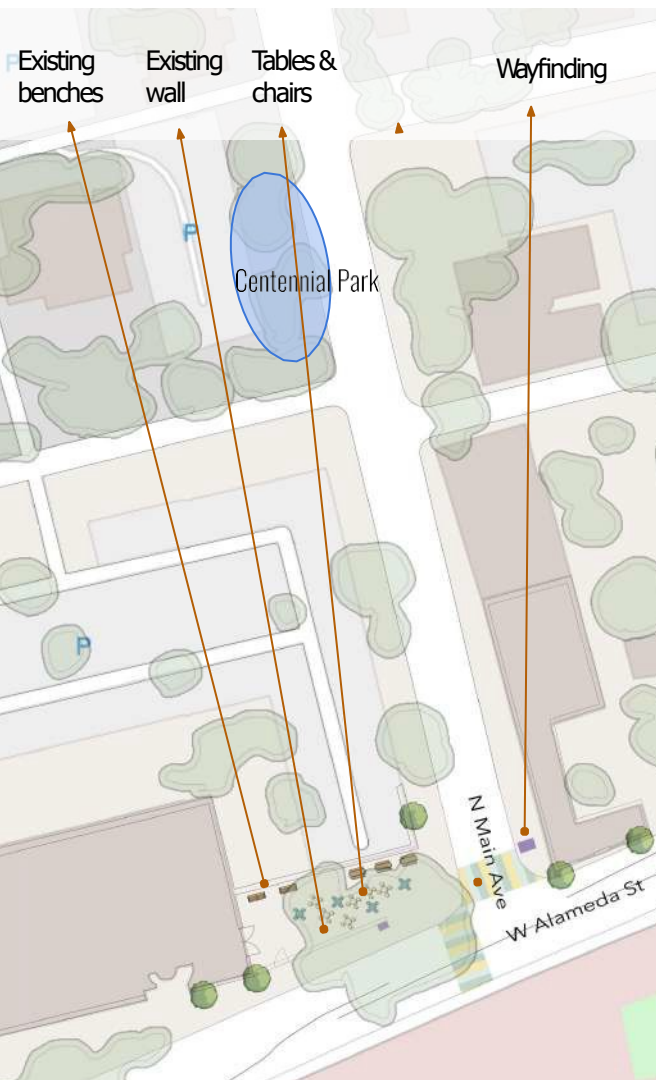


**Alameda and Main** also identified as a main entrance to the Presidio area and an important historic node. The West wall of the El Presidio and the El Camino Real are located close by.

This intersection is near TMA entrance on Main. Café a la C'Art, and the TMA gift shop are located in historic building at the NE corner of Main and Alameda. On the NW side of the intersection...existing small shaded plaza with a seating as part of the entrance to the Tucson Water parking lot. On the South side of intersection is a garden and seating area within El Presidio Park. A pedestrian trail leads to bus/streetcar on Congress...lacks amenities and shade.







## 5. Alameda and Main

**Connect the El Presidio area to Public Transportation on Congress Street,** using a guided walk on public property....signage, wayfinding, pavement paint, historic interpretation, shade, art, light, and landscaping to showcase this less utilized access to El Presidio. Make the pedestrian crossing at Alameda safer.

### NW Corner Plaza

Movable and colorful seating under the existing shade trees at the small (80'x30') NW corner plaza. Benches exist...could be upgraded with more comfortable seating, historic interpretations and wayfinding, and art displays.

Both TMA and Café a la C'Art entrances at this location. Possibly open window shutters of the historic building at corner of Main and Alameda, currently used as a gift shop, and provide some interpretative signage or artistic marker to make this corner more alive.

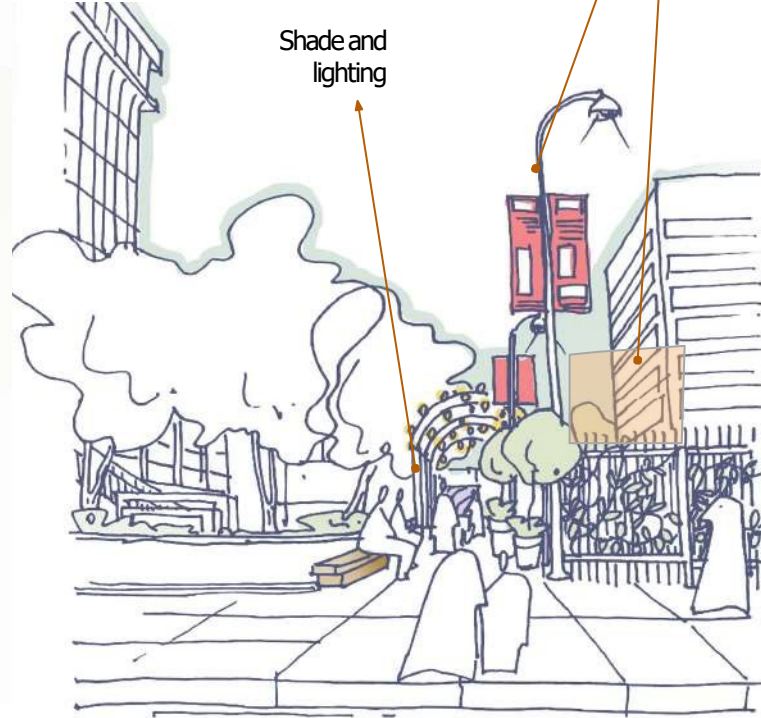
**Sidewalk connecting to Centennial Park at Main Avenue and Paseo Redondo...**make comfortable and easy to navigate with plants, benches, and enhancing historic plaques. The small park has a few historic interpretive signs and lovely plantings.

Signage and wayfinding to explain the El Presidio and Camino Real history and the route to Streetcar

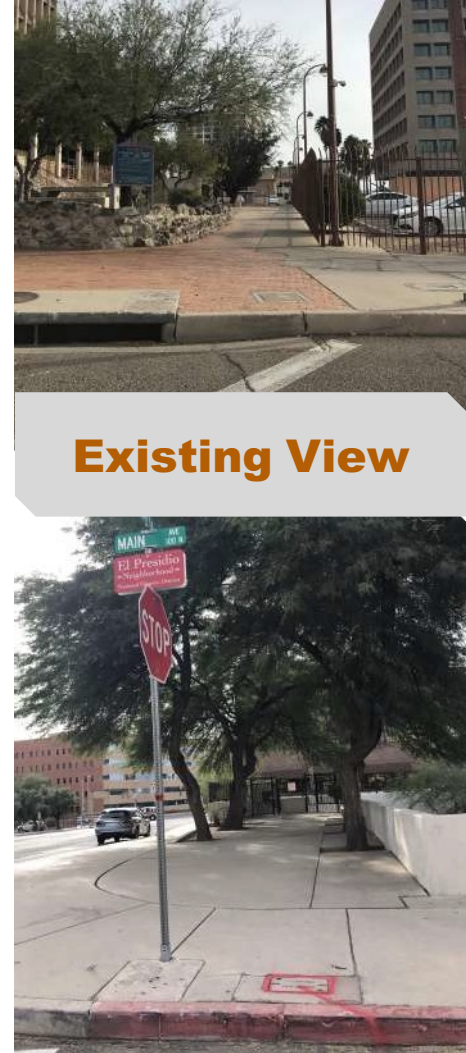
Additional seating  
Existing shade trees



Shade and lighting



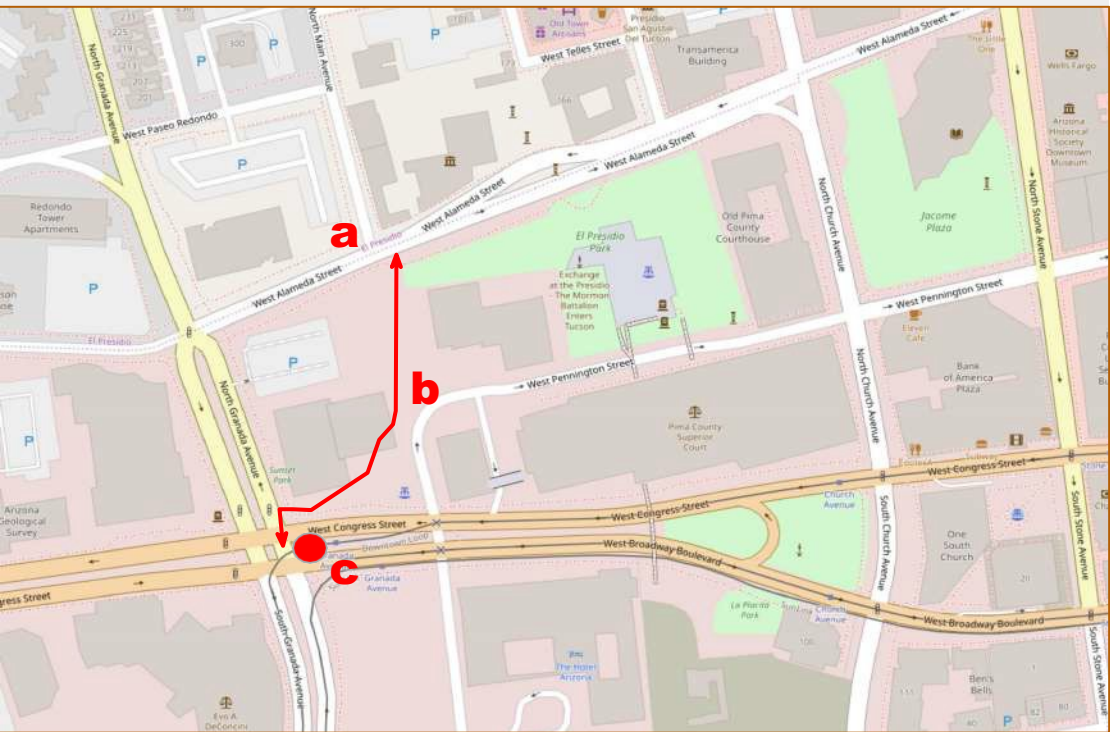
**Existing View**





# 5. Alameda and Main

## Pedestrian Route to the Street Car

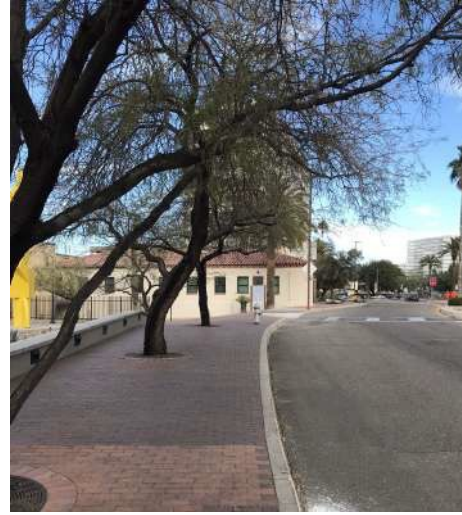


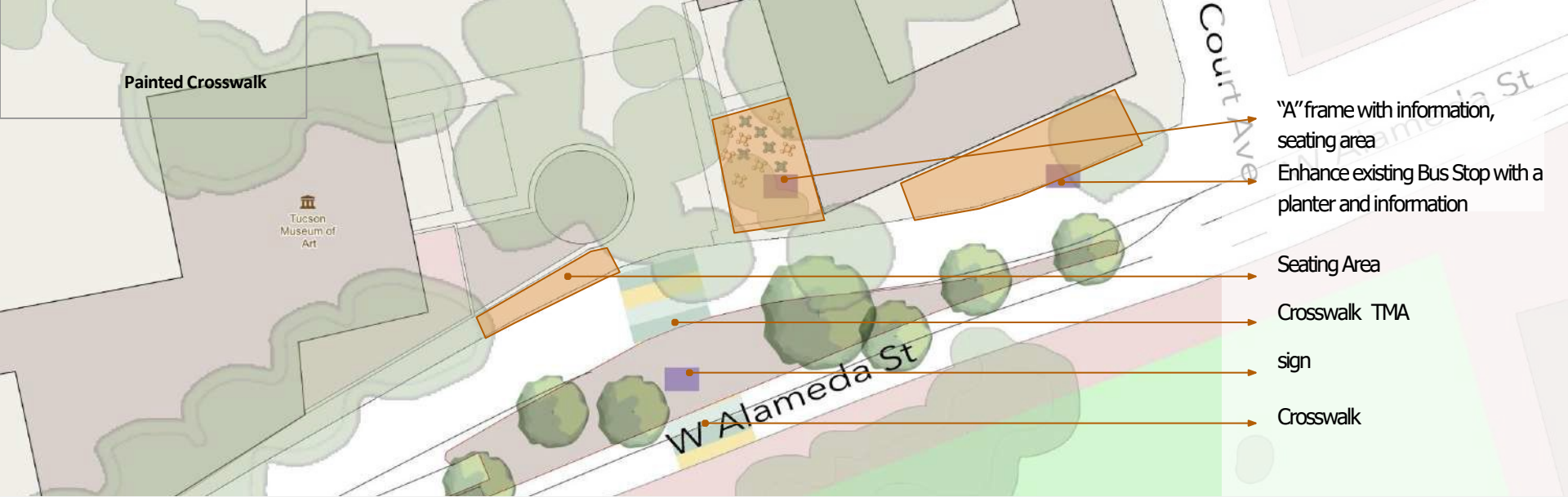


## 6. TUCSON MUSEUM OF ART



TMA's main entrance is located midblock on Alameda Street off an entry plaza... not visible from street or park, and the Plaza currently has some accessibility issues that will be addressed as part of the Masterplan. Crosswalk with the Lighted 'Desert O' sculpture on the median connects Presidio Park.



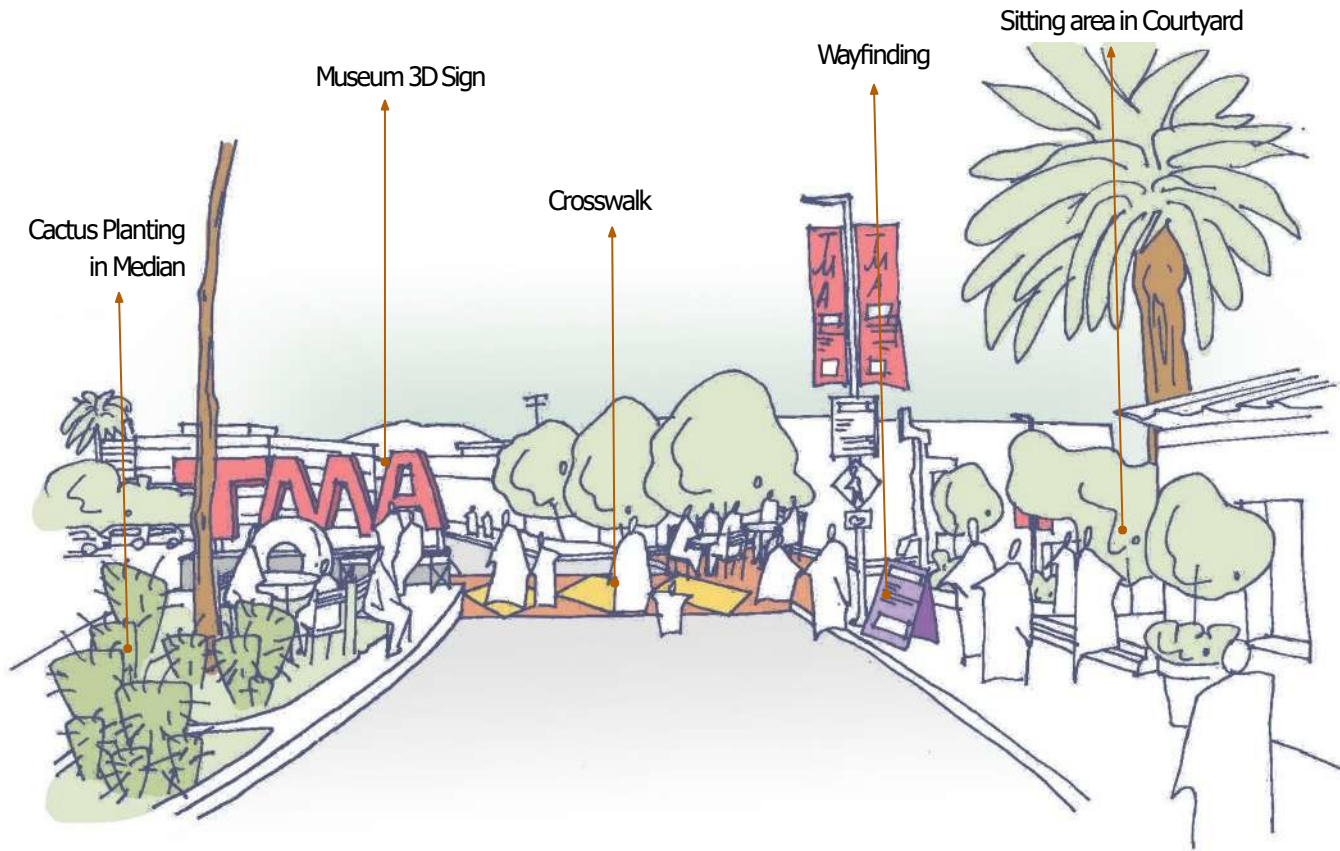


## 6. Alameda/TMA Courtyard

Wayfinding with TMA info could be at street level using temporary signs/maps. Add colorful seating cubes, informal seating, and art. Banners on light poles, tree lights, and planters will make the entry more visible. Sidewalk at Alameda could be a meeting point for TMA groups/visitors by providing attractive seating at the street level to activate the sidewalk. Ideal location for temporary art installations visible from Alameda and City Hall.







## Existing View



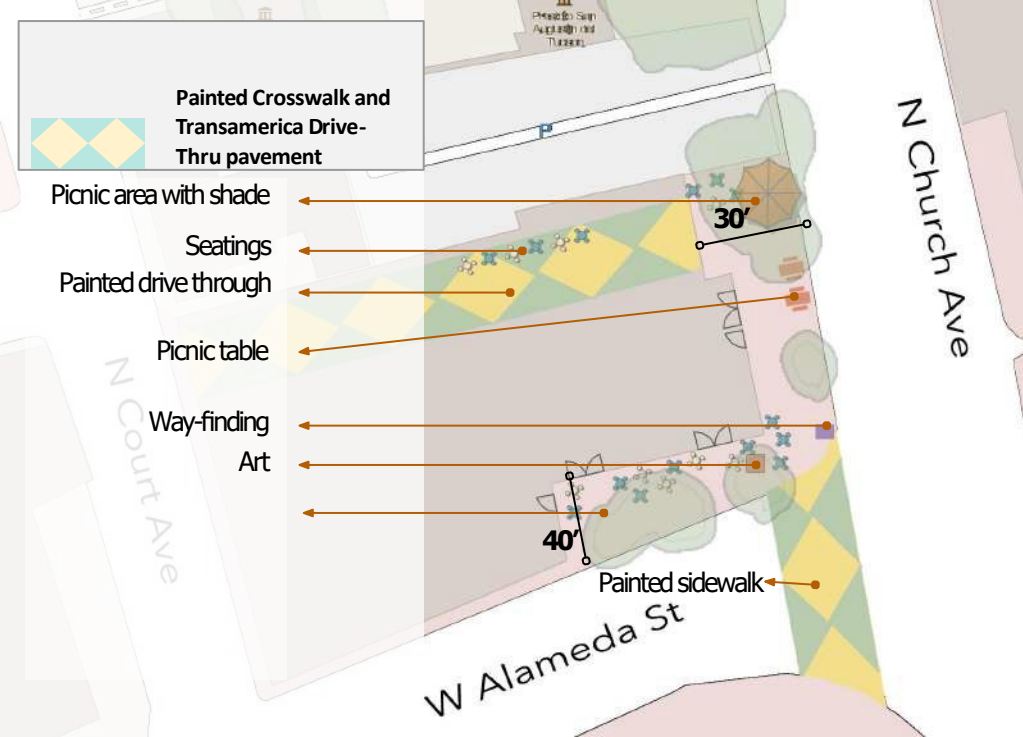
# 7. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING AT CHURCH AND ALAMEDA



**The Transamerica Building** at Church and Alameda. Office space...when fully occupied accommodates 800 people. Has space for a large restaurant on the ground level with outdoor seating...could be expanded The parking garage has a west facing mural painted by El Tour de Tucson.







## 7. Transamerica Building

Support (with City) extending restaurant outdoor seating at corner including plantings and shade. Continue the seating along the Alameda and remove existing low plants to increase visibility. Signage to direct people to the El Presidio. A garden plaza just outside of the drive-thru with art, informal seating, and lights would invite visitors to linger in the shade.

Plaza with seating and planters in front of the Transamerica building

Drive-Thru with markets, seating, pedestrian connection to Court Street



## Existing View





## 8. ALAMEDA AND CHURCH AT LIBRARY PARK



Lawn area of Jácome Plaza at the corner of Alameda and Church features semi-circular stone seating walls facing Court St. sidewalk. Corner seems under-utilized except for large events. The existing stone amphitheater seating is facing the sidewalk and invites a focal point for music and entertainment.



N Church Ave

W Alameda St

Way-finding and Planters

Stage

Shade Structure

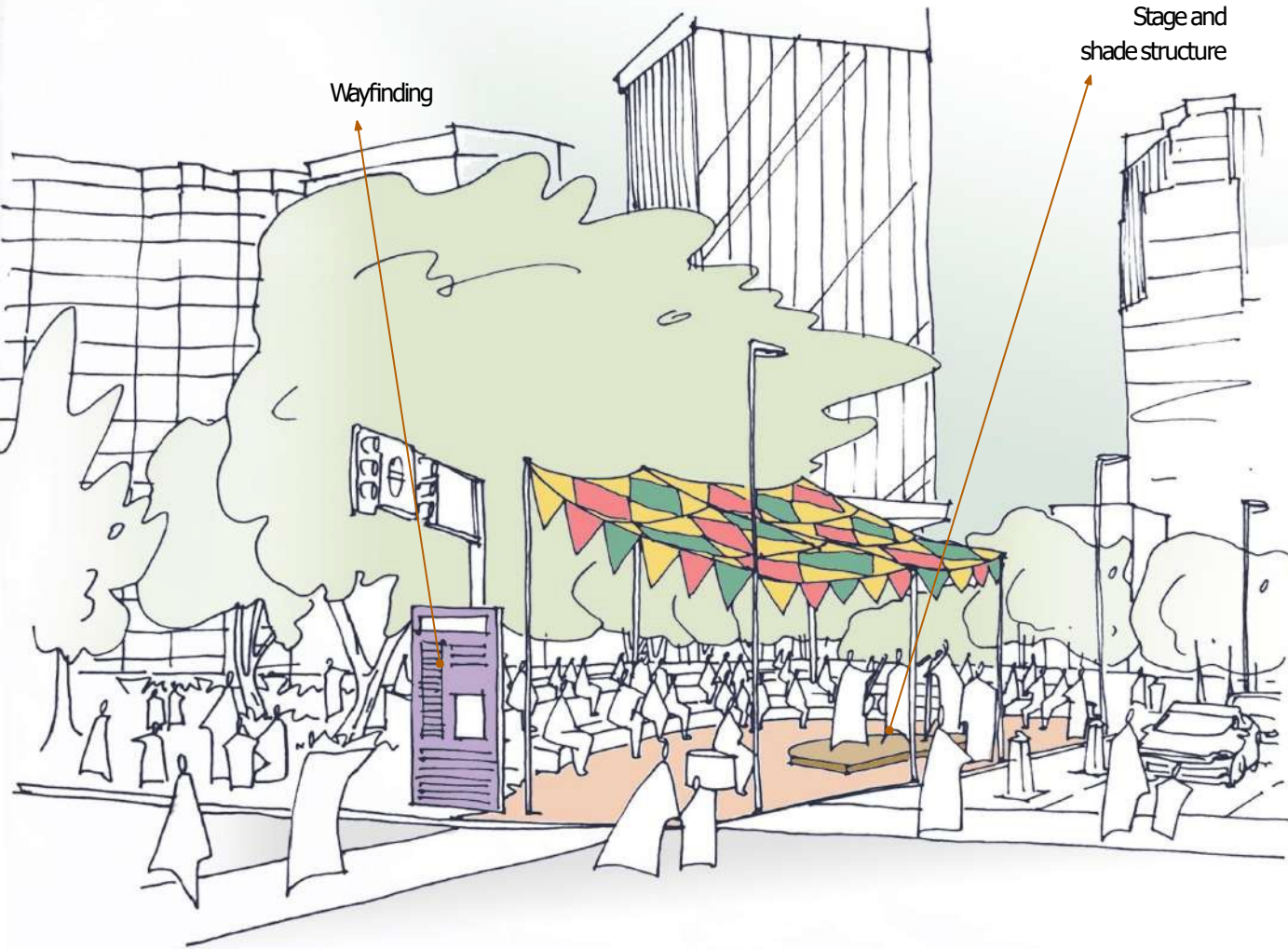
Library

## 8. Alameda and Church at Library Park

Utilize the Amphitheater for El Presidio related events. Use wayfinding to guide users to the space and provide information for events at the Amphitheatre and other district activities. Add shade to encourage visitors to linger in the space.







**Existing View**



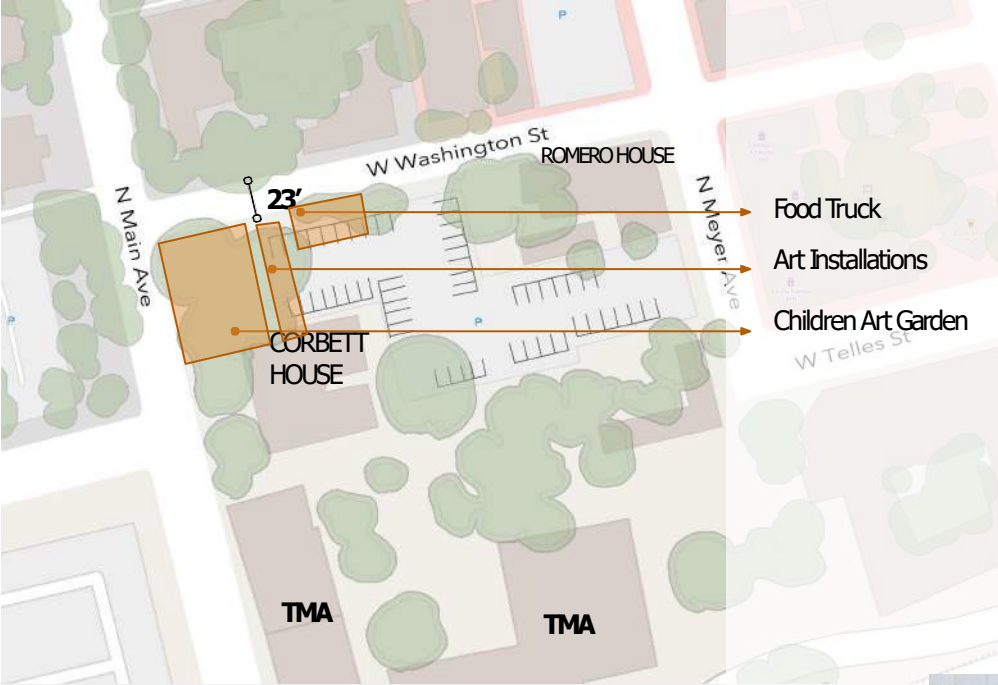
## 9. CORBETT HOUSE GARDENS & MUSEUM PARKING



The historic Corbett House and garden...corner of Washington and Main. Owned by TMA and overlooks Meyer and Centennial Park....in the heart of the El Presidio historic neighborhood. East of the garden area is a TMA surface parking lot, with access from Washington and Meyer.







## 9. Corbett House Gardens and Museum Parking

**Corbett House Gardens...**paved area with existing benches, trees, and lush lawn. Space is 70'x60,' is higher than surrounding streets and enclosed. Suitable for kid's activities, from interactive art installations, to a temporary play area. Paved area makes it suitable for food/ice cream trucks.













# 10. COURT ST...WASHINGTON TO FRANKLIN



**Block 175 at Court and Franklin...** busy area that accesses destination restaurant El Charro. Vehicles use IDA surface parking lot for near-by offices, restaurants, YMCA, etc. Chicanes installed in 2020 for street calming on Franklin.

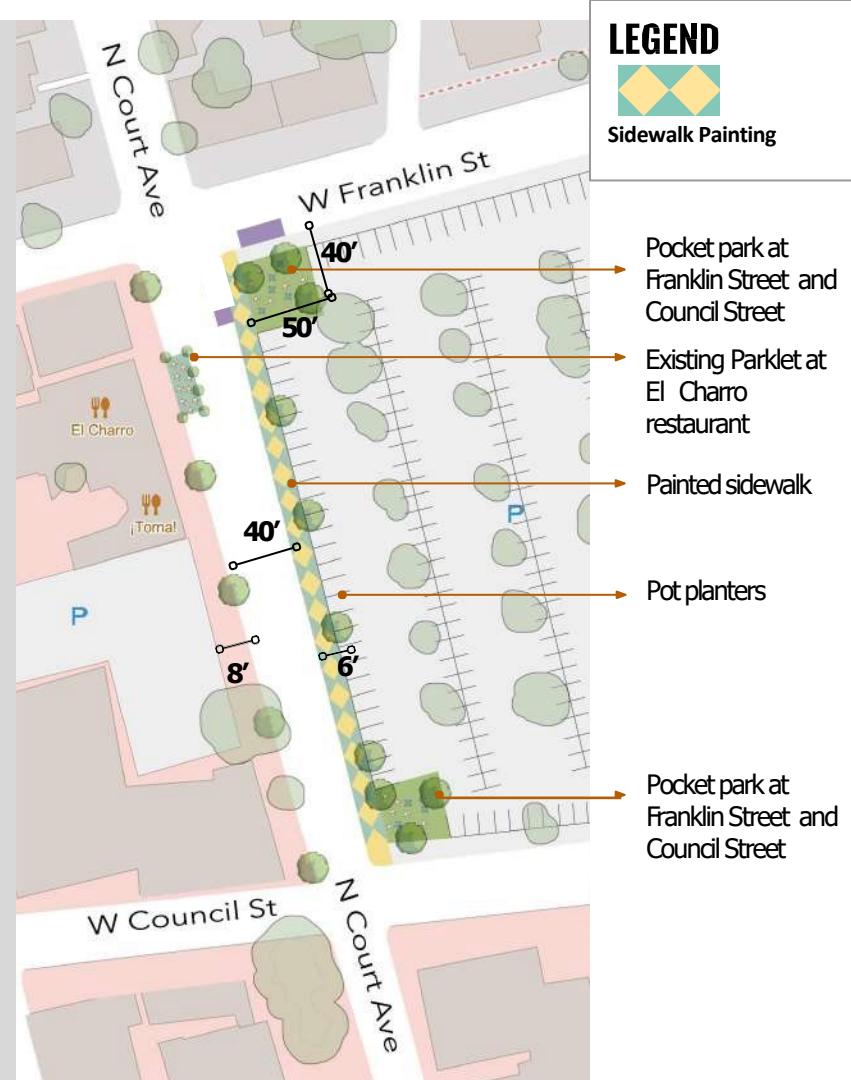




## 10. Court...Washington to Franklin

Opportunity to create a temporary, fun, active destination for public and restaurant patrons. Use small part of parking lot and convert to temporary music venue, after dinner activities, games, and small-scale entertainment. South side of the parking lot...local artisan market(s) that connect to others in neighborhood. Meet residents' needs and qualifications, such as Farmers Market, neighborhood gathering place.

- Temporary landscape improvements at El Presidio "Gateway"
    - Wayfinding sign
    - Planters and seating
  - Pocket park at Franklin Street and Council Street
    - Artisans temporary retail area
    - Seating area
    - Craft market
    - Plantings,
    - Neighborhood plaza
    - Green market
- 
- Pocket park at Franklin Street and Court Avenue
    - Moveable seating
    - Benches
    - Games
    - Pet area
    - Small stage for performance/classes
    - Street food
    - Shade sails and trees in planters
    - Art displays
  - Temporary streetscape along lot 175 connecting the two pocket parks
    - Planters
    - Benches
    - Vertical art displays/screens
    - Painted sidewalk connecting the two pocket parks







## 10. Court St...Washington to Franklin

### *Proposed and Existing Views*



Temporary streetscape along Lot 175 connecting the two pocket parks: painted sidewalk-planters and plantings+Art

Existing street parklet in front of El Charro Restaurant

Pocket park

# Suggestions for Shade for Large Spaces



Bottom Right: Retractable shade created by a local maker for Maynards Kitchen





# Suggestions for Seating and Small Shade



Seating info

# Suggestions for Lighting



link to [Dark Sky Lighting retailers](#)



# Existing Wayfinding and Signage at El Presidio



Wayfinding should be consistent without replacing the existing red Pima County signs, or the Historic District markings. Wayfinding could announce activities and events, be directional and support the story told by the Visitor Center and other cultural institutions in the area. Good, yet temporary, wayfinding is very important. Recommend working group select and hire a graphic consultant. New signage should be bilingual.



# Suggestions for Improved Wayfinding and Signage





# Ideas for Street Painting



Visitor Center Dome color palette

