“Main Street Corridor” Scenarios for Historic South Main Business District

---Street Revitalization Plan to link Main Street with Adjacent Neighborhoods

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I. Introduction

i. Problem Statement

Main Street in Orange County goes through the City of Orange, the City of Santa Ana, and the City of Irvine. It passes through commercial districts and activity areas such as the Main Place Shopping Center, Discovery Science Center, Bowers Museum, Historic Downtown Santa Ana, John Wayne Airport, Future High Speed Rail Stop, as well as many other important sites. Main Street connects the historic, northern region of Orange County to the more commercialized southern region, making it a major route facilitating interaction between businesses and people. However, the heavy traffic and lack of amenities makes this popular corridor a less attractive place to residents who live in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Figure 1. Site Location: Orange County, Source: Author
Main Street’s most significant problem is that it has become “placeless.” When space contains cultural meaning, a sense of place emerges. However, if landscapes lack cultural diversity and are impersonal, placelessness results creating "thin" places. Thin places lack diversity, significance, and a sense of place for the people that live there. Placelessness dehumanizes environments and because dehumanized places have few or no human attachments, the people in these placeless places become even more vulnerable to further dehumanization.

**Circulation:** During rush hour, congested streets and fast-moving traffic not only threaten the safety of pedestrians but also deter people away from street corners. Some parts of Main Street are constructed on a giant scale, which destroys the sense of place. The out-of-scale design diminishes the personal connections that people establish with the areas in which they live and are familiar.

![Figure 2. Heavy traffic on Main Street Source: Author](image)

**Built Environment:** To residents who live in surrounding neighborhoods, Main Street lacks attractive gathering places, public open spaces, and vibrant shopping areas that have desirable
amenities. These problems deter the development of street-side commercial and recreational activities. This kind of historic street side retail is further deterred by the big-box shopping malls, which lure customers away.

Figure 3. Vacant Street Front Retail Source: Author

With the appropriate urban design enhancements, however, the communities bordering Main Street can play a more vital role than they do now. These areas can serve more effectively as a neighborhood shopping and living hub, in effect, providing a corridor that ”stitches together” and encourages linkages between surrounding commercial areas and residential neighborhoods. Taking into account the projected future population growth in this region, the Vision Plan encompassing the Main Street Corridor for South Main Street presented in this report will provide an urban design framework that accommodates neighborhood expansion connectivity as well as commercial development in the corridor area. As a part of the Main Street Corridor Research, which is being conducted on behalf of the Place Making Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), Orange County/Inland Empire, this report will focus on creating new
human-scale linkages between the South Main Street Corridor and adjacent residential areas.

ii. Definition of Audience

This Professional Report will address the ULI: Orange County/Inland Empire Chapter, the Place Making Council; UCI Professors, UCI students; Neighborhood Associations, the City of Santa Ana Merchants Association, the City of Santa Ana Community Development Agency, and anyone else interested in creating a sense of place in Orange County or similar areas.

iii. Objectives

The urban design plan outlined in this report aims to make South Main Street in the City of Santa Ana a more pedestrian-friendly and coherent place in which multiple land uses and activities adjacent to the transportation corridor are mutually compatible. This report will focus mainly on the residential areas adjacent to Main Street Santa Ana bounded by West 1st Street on the north and West Warner Avenue to the south. Furthermore, this research may prove applicable to other segments of Main Street in Orange County that have similar social, physical, and economic conditions.

The major objectives of this report are the following:

- Identify opportunities, major challenges, and threats that restrict the further development of South Main Street, especially in those areas of the corridor that are closest to neighborhood residential land uses
- Recommend urban design guidelines to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation in the study area to enhance scenic linkages between surrounding communities and between residential neighborhoods and the Main Street commercial areas
- Recommend urban design guidelines to create a more pleasant, inviting and dynamic
environment

- Recommend strategies for further strengthening the cohesiveness between commercial space and residential communities by enhancing the public and pedestrian-sensitive portions of streetscapes in a comprehensive manner

- Offer a vision for the future of South Main Street: a Conceptual Vision Plan aimed at helping stimulate business in the South Main Street area, which may also contribute to the revitalization of street-adjacent neighborhoods in the future

iv. Significance

The feeling of “placelessness” has become increasingly prevalent in Orange County and the U.S. Hours and hours spent in traffic forces residents to spend less time with friends and family, and spatially segregated business districts and shopping malls reduce everyday experience to the monotonous tasks of driving from “point A” to “point B.” This problem of placelessness, aggravated by auto centric design, has robbed local residents of the feeling of belonging to a neighborhood.

Decades ago, Main Street was one of the most iconic images of America. Its blend of housing and commercial districts served as a buzzing hub for communities. Today, Main Street in Orange County still consists of residential neighborhoods, a civic center, and retail spaces. Sprawling suburban development, however, has driven resources away from this vital place in favor of more distant shopping malls and commercially zoned areas. Even though it used to be a hub for all kind of activities, Main Street is in a state of decay, especially erosion of the retail businesses that in earlier times lined the street. A street’s multiple functions ideally should balance public circulation spaces, play areas for children, market spaces for merchants, and
gathering places for residents and pedestrians. The current blight of Main Street not only destroys the street feeling itself but also influences the atmosphere of adjacent residential areas. Without appropriate interventions to reform Main Street, neighborhoods as far as downtown Santa Ana may develop social problems such as withering retail, vandalism, or even criminal activities. On the other hand, a successful revitalization plan could increase local employment opportunities, attract more residents to live there, create a sense of place, and ultimately strengthen the cohesion between residential communities and commercial areas. Furthermore, the neighborhood area adjacent to Historic Downtown Santa Ana could become a possible commercial area offering a variety of retail services that not only serve local residents but also visitors and people who work in the Downtown area. The proposed future vision for this commercial and residually supportive transportation corridor also could become an exemplar for other areas of similar character that face similar problems.

v. Background

This report provides supportive research and recommendations to the “Main Street Corridor Study” initiated by the Urban Land Institute, Orange County/Inland Empire, Place Making Council, which is exploring how to foster an improved urban core, and to create a better sense of place in Orange County. This Study emphasizes the principles of sustainability, high-efficiency development, and comfortable human-scale to respond to projected population growth in the target areas. The “Main Street Corridor Scenarios for Historic South Main Street Business District” offer alternative Visions of South Main Street Corridor aimed at reducing the sense of placelessness that currently characterizes the region.

Vision California

According to the research outlined in the Vision California Study by Peter Calthorpe, by 2050 the
state’s population is projected to grow to nearly 60 million with 24 million new jobs becoming available. Orange County is expected to receive a significant portion of that growth. We should thoughtfully and proactively plan for these anticipated developments to ensure that Orange County becomes a more sustainable place for people to live and work.

City of Santa Ana

As indicated by the Land Use Element in the City of Santa Ana’s General Plan, Santa Ana is in a predominantly “built-out” situation with limited potential for new land developments. At the same time, it possesses the resources and capacity to create economic opportunities for community residents and businesses alike. The city is fortunate to have a strong and diverse economy supported by a large skilled workforce. (City of Santa Ana General Plan) The special demographic character of this city distinguishes the downtown area from any other city by its distinct cultural element. The city government has been innovative and progressive in establishing a business-friendly atmosphere supported by exemplary programs and services in the areas of development permit processing, redevelopment, cultural arts, and employment training.

South Main Street Commercial District

Today over 5,000 acres of the City of Santa Ana are located within six redevelopment project areas. South Main is one of them. The Community Redevelopment Agency has been trying to act as a catalyst for new private investment.

There is also a Scenic Corridors Element in the City of Santa Ana’s General Plan (Figure 4), which designates South Main Street as the Primary Street Corridor citywide. With the advent of suburban big-box shopping and the economic recession, the street front commercial area on
Main Street has experienced substantial blight.

Figure 4. Scenic Corridors, Source: City of Santa Ana General Plan
The adjacent neighborhood boundary from 1st Street on the north and Warner Avenue to the south has gained a reputation for being an area with a high concentration of low-income residents, high crime rates, and high percentages of foreign-born residents. Since 2000, in order to revitalize this area, the City of Santa Ana has been making a concerted effort to improve the condition of Santa Ana’s South Main Commercial District through changes in zoning (2000), the specification of regulations for the C-SM area (2007), and a South Main Street Facade neighborhoods is apparent; it is in the best interest of the community to implement several urban Improvement Cash Rebate Program. The need to reintegrate Main Street with its surrounding is apparent. It is in the best interest of the community to implement several urban design
improvements in Santa Ana including the proposed enhancements of its major transportation corridors.

Figure 5. Redevelopment Project Area, Source: City of Santa Ana Community Development Agency/ Author
Nationwide Main Street Program

The damaging influence of suburban development on Main Street in Orange County also occurs along other traditional Main Streets all over the U.S. Extensive research and many successful renovation projects have been completed in urban areas throughout the nation to help revitalize the commercialized districts in places like Main Street Houston, Old Town Pasadena, North Capitol Main Street in Washington D.C., the Downtown Lodi renovation, and the successful Hispanic Mission District in San Francisco. By referring to these earlier urban renovation projects and considering the unique character of Main Street in Orange County, this study will explore several potential strategies for making Main Street Corridor a livable place.

Latino Communities Place-Making

Place-making is the process of creating a physically, mentally, and socially satisfying experience at a given location. It requires a level of detail that goes beyond planning and zoning and addresses the personal experience of place.

Research on Latino communities in the United States has yet to catch up with the rapid growth of this ethnic population in the country. Planners need to better understand the Latino urban experience and develop plans in order to better respond to both the needs of Latino communities and their integration within society (Clara Irazábal, 2008). Immigrants from Latin America bring new approaches to the use of public space and the creation of community. In many immigrant neighborhoods - from Chinatown to Thai Town to East Los Angeles – the streets and sidewalks serve as multifunctional spaces for playing, walking, shopping and socializing, where residents can come together and experience and express their culture publicly. This re-appropriation of public space can offer planners a way to rethink other existing car-oriented streets. Many feel new urbanism is high-end and nostalgic while Latino urbanism is nontraditional and low budget.
However, once you remove the façades, you can see that both movements explore human behavior patterns. No matter what race or income level, people are trying to create a sense of place. If planners can incorporate both new urbanism and Latino urbanism elements into modern-day planning practices, it will facilitate combating sprawl and unsustainable development, while creating a sense of place.

Planners need to understand the role streets and sidewalks play in creating Latino neighborhoods. For Latinos, neighborhood cohesion is not created by generic front lawns but by social activity and personal expression. These are building blocks in Latino communities where streets serve multiple functions, such as providing a place where children can play, residents can hang out, and street vendors can promote economic activity. The street becomes multi-purpose rather than just a traffic corridor for cars. From a health perspective, creating healthy, comfortable places gets residents out of their cars and off their sofas to engage in public space - much the same way Latinos use their streets and sidewalks. (Rojas, 2006)

vi. Procedures:

Data collection and analyses will focus on demographic, economic, and social conditions of the South Main Street research area. Because the report will mainly focus on the linkage of residential communities and the Main Street commercial space, the neighborhoods adjacent to Main Street will be treated as part of the study area. The demographics of communities and information about the shopping habits of residents will help to inform the workability of the current and proposed distribution of commercial spaces and activities along South Main Street. Based on the data of American Community Survey 2009 5-year estimate, Census tract will be used as unit to analyze demographic, social, and economic data of adjacent neighborhoods.

Survey visits, conducted by the author, will entail a photographic audit of the existing physical
conditions. In addition, planning professionals and neighborhood associations will be interviewed to understand the current strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities of South Main Street research area. Onsite observations will also be conducted by the author and will be used to gather data on physical conditions like traffic and building conditions. Excel, GIS and CAD will be used for analyzing this data.

This research will review studies of similar Old Downtown Street redevelopment projects and their possible solutions. Case studies analysis will also be conducted to identify examples of successful urban planning worldwide - places that can support dense populations and still be attractive, efficient, healthy places to work and live. This study will identify useful design or place making features from such places.

Based on the physical, social, and economic attributes of the study area, the research procedures also include several interviews with Planning professionals, local merchants and local neighborhood residents. This will help further understand current conditions, future development plans and the political will of planning officials, local residents, and business owners.

In addition, several renovation plans will be used as case studies to identify potentially effective urban design strategies to improve pedestrian amenities and to separate them from high-speed vehicular traffic. Case studies may also help identify best practices for enhancing landscape features and the distribution of multiple commercial land uses and activities along the South Main Street corridor.

Based on the physical, social and economic attributes of the study area, the research procedures also will include the use of SWOT Analysis: a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a business venture. SWOT analyses entail specifying the objectives of the business venture or project, along with
identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable or unfavorable with respect to achieving the project’s major objectives. As with the evaluation of case studies, the SWOT analysis will identify potentially effective urban design strategies:

- To improve pedestrian amenities and separate them from high speed vehicular traffic
- To enhance landscaping features and the distribution of multiple commercial land uses and activities along the Main Street corridor

At the end, this study will prepare a coherent Vision Plan that provides a conceptual redevelopment framework for stimulating business growth in South Main Street area while at the same time strengthening human scale and pedestrian amenities of the commercial and residential neighborhoods adjacent to South Main Street.

I. Existing Condition Analysis

i. Social Conditions

a. Background:

Santa Ana is geographically central to the developable land within Orange County. The city has excellent connectivity to freeways, rail services via Metrolink and air transportation at the John Wayne Airport. Because of Santa Ana’s geographic centrality and functional importance to the County, the Orange County Transit Authority is planning major fixed rail transit corridors in the Main Street and Pacific Electric right-of-ways. These regional transportation improvements, combined with improvements to freeway access points and local streets, will support Santa Ana with abundant development opportunities for the early 21st Century. Even though a rapid rail transit corridor has not yet been implemented, Main Street still provides a major transportation corridor that connects north and south Orange County. The Historic South Main Business
District contains many older retail shops and other small businesses; most of them have been there for many years.

![Map of City of Santa Ana](image)

**Figure 6. Site Location: City of Santa Ana, Source: Author**

**b. Location:**

The South Main Street Corridor research area consists of the region covered by one parcel width of land on either side of South Main Street, bounded by West 1st Street to the north, and West Warner Avenue to the south. However, for the purpose of obtaining data and benchmarking the corridor with other regions of the city/county, a broader area was analyzed for achieving the goals of this study. This broader geographic zone incorporates the sub-research area, which is bounded by Flower Avenue on the west and Standard Avenue on the east. (This excludes the parcel of Cedar Evergreen Co-Op.) The total research area is about 2.35 square mile. According to the boundary identified by the City of Santa Ana Community Development Agency, the South Main Street research area includes four neighborhoods: Heninger Park, Eastside, Wilshire, Madison Park, and parts of both Memorial Park and Delhi.
For the most part, the older buildings in this area are in poor condition. Many are vacant and boarded up. The ground floor retail businesses tend to be marginal, such as liquor stores and low-end salons. Currently, most merchants are barely surviving. The volume and speed of automobile traffic along Main Street, as well as its highway-like roadway cross-section and related infrastructure, create a hostile pedestrian environment that poses serious disincentives to retail businesses.
Figure 7. Neighborhoods of Research Area, Source: Author
At the same time, the arrival of new residents to the neighborhood has exacerbated long-standing, pent-up demand from residents for retail stores within walking distance that cater to their need for food, goods, dry cleaning and other daily services. The commercial tenants—mostly independent “mom and pop” merchants—struggle just to pay their rent, much less invest in building renovations and merchandising upgrades to make their businesses more attractive to local residents.

c. Demographics of the Study Area

The research area includes three zip codes: 92707, 92701, and 92703. It covers five Census tracts: 742, 743, 746.01, 745.02, 746.02, and sections of tracts 750.02, 749.01, 749.02, 745.01 and 744.05.

Based on 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, the total population of the research area was 48,075 and there were a total of 9,348 households and 9,776 housing units located in research area.

![Average Number of people per Housing Unit](image_url)

Figure 8. Average Number of people per Housing Unit, Data Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey
As the chart above illustrates, it was confirmed through site visits that the housing density in the study area is high by comparison to other local communities. Specifically, compared to Orange County, with 2.9 people per housing unit and Santa Ana, with 4.3 people per unit, the number of people in the study area is 4.9 per unit.

Figure 9. Percentage of Hispanic, Data Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

The research area is located to the south of Downtown Santa Ana -- one of the largest Hispanic shopping areas in Southern California. In the research area, 93.82% of the total population is Hispanic, which is much higher than 78.60% at the city level, and three times at the county level, which is 33.20%. It can be concluded that Hispanic culture and preferences plays an important role in local lifestyles, activities, and shopping.

When comparing the median age in the research area (26.9) to that of the city and county’s (28.2 and 35.3), the population in the research area is much younger. In addition, in the research area 46% of the population is age 25 or below, which is a higher percentage than both city level 43% and county level 35%.
Figure 10. Median Age, Data Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Figure 11. Percentage of high school education, Data Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey
From the population group that is over age 16, only 37.19% living in the research area have a high school education. This average is much lower than the city average of 51%, as well as the county average of 83%.

Not surprisingly, the author has found that residents of the research area mainly work in the manufacturing or service industry, which generally require less education, and offer lower salaries. Their education level had a significant impact on the economic condition of the research area since their limited buying power adversely affects the health of neighborhood retail businesses.

**ii. Economic Condition**

Many businesses along Main Street provide goods or services that are not considered daily necessities. For example, services provided by auto repair shops and tax offices are essential, but they are only needed periodically. Coupled with the area’s unappealing physical appearance, the discordant nature of the corridor’s businesses constrain the opportunity for urban renewal, which would allow the area to regain its competitive edge.

Several interviews were conducted to acquire a better understanding of the business conditions in the study area. Analysis of this qualitative data will provide a basis for evaluating the current performance and potential economic capacity of the Main Street commercial area.

**a. Worldwide Economic Recession**

The Worldwide economic recession has had some direct impacts on South Main Street Commercial District. Fewer tax revenues, less redevelopment, reduced funding from the government mean that smaller retailers lose customers because they do not have a low-price advantage. On the residents’ side, the recession also influences the housing value, income, and
related purchasing power.

b. Local Economic Blight

Downtown Santa Ana (especially south of 1st Street) has attained the stigma of having a concentration of poverty. The research area is adjacent to downtown and has experienced similar outcomes.

Demographics have changed dramatically in recent years, creating a change in demand, yet the nature of what local stores are able to supply has not kept pace with this change. This has created higher vacancy rates and foreclosures on Main Street and in the adjacent area.

Figure 12. Median Households Income, Data Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey
The median household in the research area in 2009 is estimated to be $52,169.84, $2,000.00 less than city average and $21,569 less than the Orange County average of $73,738.00. In addition, the poverty rate is 18.38%, slightly higher than the city average of 17.30% and twice as high as the county level of 9.60%.
The study conducted by Social Compact Inc., titled "The City of Santa Ana Neighborhood Market Drilldown 2008 economic research," asserted that in the research area, there were a high proportion of households with no credit history—just 66.6% compared with the national average of 23.8%. In addition, in the category of "High Proportion of Households with no Banking Relationship," the research found that 69.6% of households in the Study Area had no banking relationship, compared with the national average of 7.7% (2007 Federal Reserve Survey of Consumer).

This information regarding both demographic and economic factors indicates that the economic climate is still having some impact. At 2009, 54% of the residents in the research area are foreign-born, and more than 90% of the foreign-born population was from Mexico. The first generation immigrations generally try to improve their economic condition by working hard in the manufacturing or service industry. However, it still takes some time for them to establish credible banking relationships and credit. From the demographic data, we can expect the population in the second and third generations to grow rapidly, and soon they will become the primary population in the research area. Even though most of them still can speak Spanish and have some similar characteristics with their parents; being born, and growing up in the U.S, they display different behaviors, and their new purchasing and living habits need to be accommodated by future businesses distribution.

c. Main Street Business Survey

An observation survey was done by the author, in order to address the current condition of the street retail business on South Main Street research area.
Figure 13. Business Distribution on South Main Street, Data Source: Author

Summary of Business Distribution in the Main Street Survey

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Total units</th>
<th>Vacant/for rent</th>
<th>Auto-related</th>
<th>Service agency</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Medical</th>
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<td>226</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Residential  Discount store  Daily needs  Non-daily use  Entertainment  No access

| 12          | 8              | 53           | 12             | 1    | 5       |
| 5.3%        | 3.5%           | 23.5%        | 5.3%           | 0.4% | 2.2%    |

Table 1. Summary of Business distribution in the Main Street Survey, Data source: South Main street business survey, Author

In total, there are 226 units (either shops or residences) located on both the east and west sides of the South Main Street research area. According to the 2009 City of Santa Ana Zoning and
General Plan map. Except for two school zones, both sides of the South Main Street research area were mainly zoned as commercial use (Figure 14); however, several single-family homes and apartments are located there.

![General Plan map](image)

**Figure 14. Land use map-South Main Street Research Area**, Source: 2009 City of Santa Ana General Plan.

Of the 226 units, 14 units are currently vacant or available for rent. One of them is a large property (big-box) located in a shopping plaza. A vast parking lot serving that property in the front is underutilized. Some small, daily needs-serving businesses such as barbershops, electronic stores, and hardware stores are also found on the street; Moreover, some stores demonstrate the Hispanic character of this area including beauty salons, flower stores, and Mexican food restaurants. Since more than half of the local population is foreign-born, there are many service agencies, which target at immigration population. For example, quick cash services, income tax agencies, immigration law offices, and travel agencies. Further analysis of the business distribution in the research area shows many auto related stores exist there including auto part stores, car washes, auto dealerships, smog check and car-rental stores, a wide variety of discount and thrift shops target low-income immigrants. For entertainment, only one small bar was identified in the research area.

### iii. Physical Conditions of the Study Area

There are several physical features of the streetscapes that can exert negative impacts on the surrounding areas. These conditions include heavy traffic, wide roadways, lack of crosswalks, no sidewalk or too narrow a sidewalk, lack of shade, lack of lighting, blank walls, fences, surface parking lots, unattractive window displays, vacant lots located between commercial stores, and
so on. Creating infrastructure for non-motorized transportation and lowering automobile speeds by changing road conditions could improve economic conditions for both business owners and residents. (Emily 2003)

a. Circulation:

Figure 15. Residents bicycling on South Main Street, Source: Author

Accessibility: WalkScore is a reliable and valid measure for estimating access to walkable amenities and is used by researchers interested in exploring the relationship between access to walkable amenities and health behaviors, such as physical activity. (LJ Carr, 2010)

Based on the data of the “Street Smart” Walk Score algorithm, the average score of the six neighborhoods in the research area is 60.7, slightly lower than the city average of 63, which still falls in the interval of Somewhat Walkable. This measurement indicates that the overall research
area has some amenities within walking distance, but residents still need a car.

As one of the most frequently used streets in the research area, South Main Street is marked by several physical “incivilities,” including cracked street surfaces and sidewalks, and broken curbs—all of which convey a lack of maintenance and care. As a main thoroughfare at both city and county levels, Main Street is a signalized arterial street that primarily serves through-traffic. It experiences heavy traffic on a daily basis and provides access to abutting properties as a secondary function, having signal spacing of two miles or less, and turning movements at intersections that usually do not exceed twenty percent of total traffic (City of Santa Ana General Plan). In spite of the fact that vehicles and pedestrians both use the road, the fast flow of traffic is a major safety concern. This problem limits the willingness of neighborhood residents to patronize retail stores located along the corridor.

Traffic volume: High volumes of traffic on a street can inhibit a person’s feeling of safety and comfort, creating a “fence effect” where the street is perceived as an impenetrable barrier. The effect of traffic volumes on community life have been measured by Donald Appleyard. In his seminal 1980 study, Mr. Appleyard looked at how traffic volumes on comparable streets in San Francisco affected community life. People living on a street with light traffic (2,000 vehicles per day) had three times as many friends and twice as many acquaintances on the street as did people living on a street with heavy traffic (16,000 vehicles per day).

ADT (Average Daily Trips) is the average number of vehicles passing in both directions at a specific point in a 24-hour period, normally measured throughout a year. ADT is the standard measurement for vehicle traffic load on a section of road, and the basis for most decisions regarding traffic planning, or to the environmental hazards of pollution related to vehicular transportation. As shown in the chart below, the ADT for South Main Street’s major sections is
far beyond 16,000 vehicles a day.

Figure 16. ADT Chart of South Main Street Main, Data Source: City of Santa Ana Traffic Census- 2009

Figure 17. Heavy traffic On South Main at PM rush hour, Source: Author
Traffic speed: Traffic speed is usually the more critical aspect for walkability and safety. Though pedestrians may feel comfortable on streets that carry a significant amount of traffic at low speeds, faster speeds increase the likelihood of pedestrians being hit. At higher speeds, motorists are less likely to see a pedestrian, and even less likely to actually stop in time to avoid a crash. At a mere 49.9 km/h (31 mi/h), a driver will need about 61.0 m (200 ft) to stop, which may exceed available sight distance. That number is halved at 30.6 km/h (19 mi/h).

The speed limit in the research area is 35 miles/hour, except for school zones at 25 miles/hour. Through observation, it seems like most drivers drive significantly faster than the speed limit posted at each intersection.

![Figure 18. Walker running when crossing the street, Source: Author](image)

The noise and air pollution created by the fast-moving through-traffic has a negative impact on
pedestrians’ walking experience. According to the observations of the author, many pedestrians run when crossing the street, even when the walking signal is on, so that they can quickly reach a safe place.

**Public Transportation:**

The use of buses as a method of public transportation is well-developed and heavily used on the South Main Street corridor. Buses are heavily used during school hours due to the many schools located in the research area including Santa Ana High, Heninger Elementary and Franklin Elementary, among other. Besides the students who take the bus for school, there are also many residents riding the bus to work or non-work trips because of its low cost and convenience. The Downtown Santa Ana area and South Main Street district are also connected to the Metro link station by bus. In addition, the research area has potential to attract more customers by encouraging pedestrian activity.

![Bus stop location](image)

Figure 19. *Bus stop location, Source: Author*

**b. Site and Building Conditions**

Abutted by retail stores and service-oriented businesses, South Main Street is lined with low-rise buildings zoned for commercial use. Behind the businesses are primarily single-family and multi-family dwellings. The commercial buildings facing Main Street are predominantly single
and double storied.

Although zoned for commercial use, there are still some non-conforming single-family detached dwellings located directly on Main Street. Some well-maintained buildings were constructed in the early 1900’s, and their architectural styles are quite diverse. There are also some vacant stores in this area. As a result, the overall physical appearance and the disjointed land uses in the area make it lack a sense of coherence.

Figure 20. Open Space in and around research area, Source: Author

c. Streetscape Features of South Main Street

The open space in and around the research area is very limited (Figure 20). As such, the street is forced to take the role of public space for local residents ‘social activities.

Streetscape deficiencies have a negative influence on the perceived quality of the area as a whole. Main Street has a high level of public transit ridership in general, especially the heavily used bus stop at the intersection of Main and First by Santa Ana High School students. The experience of these public transit users and pedestrians could be improved by incorporating streetscape enhancements such as more trees. Through observation, trees and other green elements are very
limited in the district.

A series of streetscape characteristics listed below were examined by the author in an earlier survey in order to better understand the current condition of the Streetscape of research area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st /Mc Fadden</th>
<th>Mc Fadden/Edinger</th>
<th>Edinger/Warner</th>
<th>Overall Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bus stop</strong></td>
<td>No Shelter /good</td>
<td>Shelter /good</td>
<td>No Shelter/good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Broken paving</strong></td>
<td>Not observed</td>
<td>Not observed</td>
<td>Not observed</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Road width</strong></td>
<td>60-55 feet</td>
<td>55 feet</td>
<td>60-112 feet</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sidewalk Width</strong></td>
<td>5-10 feet</td>
<td>10 feet</td>
<td>10 feet</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sidewalk Occupation</strong></td>
<td>Obstacle</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Need Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drainage</strong></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Garbage, debris, trash</strong></td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Clean</td>
<td>Need Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facade</strong></td>
<td>No front door, un-active facade</td>
<td>No front door, un-active facade</td>
<td>No front door, un-active facade</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graffiti</strong></td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Clean</td>
<td>Need improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Odor</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature</td>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>Secondary Street</td>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crosswalk</td>
<td>Major road traffic signal, other</td>
<td>Major road traffic signal, other</td>
<td>Major road traffic signal, other</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetation</td>
<td>Unevenly distributed / need</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Need to maintain / Improvement</td>
<td>Need Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>Distance between streetlight: 120-140</td>
<td>Distance between streetlight:</td>
<td>Distance between streetlight: About</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified Signage</td>
<td>Not unified</td>
<td>Not unified</td>
<td>Not unified</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors opened to street</td>
<td>Most often to the street</td>
<td>Some do not open to the street</td>
<td>Some do not open to the street</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language of the signage</td>
<td>Most English and Spanish/some just</td>
<td>Most English&amp; Spanish/some only</td>
<td>Most English&amp; Spanish/some only</td>
<td>Need Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking availability</td>
<td>Parking lot available</td>
<td>Back alley /street parking</td>
<td>Parking lot/back alley</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial display</td>
<td>Some OK/some do not have</td>
<td>Some OK/ some not have</td>
<td>Most do not have display</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts in land use</td>
<td>Residential use</td>
<td>Residential use</td>
<td>Cannot identify</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Physical conditions and Streetscape Features Survey

From the survey, the author identified some instances of visually non-compatible land uses along Main Street, such as residential buildings that adjoin commercial buildings. In addition, instances
of single-family detached dwellings located adjacent to commercial facilities such as an automobile repair shop area were observed along the corridor. Theses disjointed uses all contribute to a negative impression of the area.

Figure 21. *Barrier on sidewalk and graffiti*, Source: Author

First, the overall physical condition of the transit characteristic for both automobiles and pedestrians is rated as good. The design of bus stops and the width of both sidewalk and roads are reasonable. The bus stops are well maintained, and the paving is relatively new and there were no broken streetlights observed during survey. However, there are still some potential improvement opportunities, which could make the street more appealing. For example, the sidewalk at the intersection of First and Main St. could be improved. The street could be cleaned
and the graffiti removed. In addition, the shape of the street-tree well could be improved, and a bus shelter could be provided instead of chairs at the bus stop from the section from the First to Mc Fadden and Edinger to Warner Ave. In addition, due to the economic recession, currently the parking lot can accommodate the customers shopping on Main Street. However, if the business on Main St. expands, area parking will become a constraint in this area.

Pedestrians experience ground floors closely and intimately. They appreciate all the details of the facades and display windows. Walkers experience firsthand the texture of the facades, the colors, and the people in or near the building. First floors largely determine whether walking is interesting and eventful. However, when there are no interesting visual cues, or if ground floors are closed and walks seem long and monotonous, pedestrians are discouraged from walking (Gehl, 2010).

The active frontage grade is used to help to analyze whether the street front of the research area is shopper friendly. The grade system was featured in the Urban Design Compendium to examine the factors that make neighborhoods stimulating and active places in which residents feel comfortable and safe. It aims to provide accessible advice to developers, funding agencies and partners on the achievement and assessment of the quality of urban design for the development and regeneration of urban areas. Making frontages ‘active’ adds interest, life, and vitality to the public realm includes changes such as numerous doors and windows with few blank walls, narrow frontage buildings that give vertical rhythm to the street scene, and articulation of facades with projections such as bays and porches incorporated. All of these provide a welcoming feeling and lively internal uses visible from the outside. (Llewelyn, 2000)

Compared with the standards of the active street front grade (Appendix 1), the author found out that the street front stores of the South Main Street research area has a lot of potential to improve.
Among the three sections, there are many units with no access to streets or have unappealing fence in order to prevent thefts. In addition, most storefront facade is not consistent with surrounding and some of the facades have already worn out.

Furthermore, the signboard and commercial windows displays are also problematic. Observed by the author, some of the signboards only have Spanish. Others lack even any sign to indicate what kind of business they are. The transparency of the windows display is low and some windows panes are painted and deliberately covered with a curtain.

On the other hand, due to the Hispanic culture, that pervades Main Street, the concentration of Mexican food restaurants on the streets with their familiar smells and people gathering outside help to create a positive ambiance for pedestrians According to William H. Whyte, what attracts people most, to public spaces are other people (Whyte, 1980). In front of restaurants, the people waiting in line for their food catch other passerby’s attention. Conversations begin between both strangers and neighbors, and suddenly the street becomes a social gathering place even without plan.

Figure 22. Street front of South Main Street, Source: Author

II. Case Study
To develop a vision for future design and development of the Main Street Corridor, several case studies have been identified to serve as “role models.” These are the well-known, successful retail corridors. The purpose of this section was to see how the Main Street Corridor compares with these “role models” in terms of physical resources and demographic characteristics. This analysis should inform us about what may be required to make the Main Street Corridor a successful destination for local residents.

The report has chosen several areas for this comparative study: Main Street (Santa Monica), Third Street (Santa Monica), North Capitol Main Street (Washington D.C), and Vermont Street Corridor (Los Angeles County), Downtown Lodi, CA and San Francisco’s Mission District (Godfrey 2004).

**Main Street, Santa Monica** has two demographic groups in common with Main Street Santa Ana: Blue-collar Hispanic middle-class and inner city single parent families. Main Street Santa Monica, however, has a high-income group population that distinguishes it from Main Street in Santa Ana.

While **Third Street (Santa Monica)** is not entirely comparable with the Main Street corridor in Santa Ana, it comes closest in terms of economic background. Blue collar Hispanic middle-class families are found in both Third Street and the Corridor. Nonetheless, to adopt Third Street’s closed-off street design for Main Street is virtually impossible since Main Street is an arterial road leading to the Downtown area.

**Vermont Street, Los Angeles** shares some similar characteristics with the South Main Street District. Specifically, a high percentage of the population is comprised of Hispanic workers. While both serve as arterial roads, Vermont Street differs in that it is close to University of South California, it serves a college town street, as well as providing services for young professionals...
who work nearby. Alternately, the target customer group of Main Street is mainly the Hispanic working-force who living in the neighborhood.

Similar to Research Area, **North Capitol Main Street in Washington D.C.** is adjacent to the historic downtown and has a very convenient public transit system, and it lacks a clear identity. Unlike South Main Street Research area, there are many well-maintained historical buildings on North Capitol Main Street, which contribute to the success of its revitalization plan. The plan focuses on maintaining current commercial developments in a way that preserves the historic building environment. Although there are some historic buildings on Main Street Santa Ana, they are severely impacted by the blighted conditions throughout the Corridor. There is a strong need for economic strategies to encourage the revitalization process.

**San Francisco’s Mission District** has been the home for successive groups of immigrants. According to the 2000 Census, more than 50% of the population is Hispanic. The Mission is also famous for its Mexican food. Due to the existing cultural attractions, inexpensive housing and commercial space, and the high density of restaurants and drinking establishments, the Mission is a magnet for young people today.

**Downtown Lodi** “launched a $4.5 million public-private pedestrian-oriented project, including a retrofit of five main street blocks from building face to building face. On the main School Street, sidewalks were widened, curbs bulb-out at intersections, and colored paving stones laid in the new sidewalks and street. A striking gateway was installed, as well as 140 street trees, lighting, benches, and other streetscape amenities. The city credits the pedestrian improvements, as well as the economic development incentives, with positive outcomes such as 60 new businesses, a drop in the vacancy rate by 2/3 from 18% to 6%, and a 30% increase in downtown sales tax revenues since work was completed in 1997”(Local Government Commission’s Center for
III. Interview

To gather a better understanding of the current conditions and potential redevelopment plans for the South Main Street research area, the author conducted several interviews. The interviewees included planners from the City of Santa Ana Community Redevelopment Agency, residents from local neighborhoods, core members of neighborhood associations, and staff of the Santa Ana Merchants Association.

**Local residents:** Several residents were interviewed during site-visits and via telephone. From these interviews, most residents reported that both their kids and themselves do not go to South Main Street for shopping. Middle-income or affluent residents reported going to South Coast Plaza or Main Street Marketplace, both of which are within 20 minutes driving distance. Low-income residents, who historically have been the major customers of local discount stores now go to Wal-Mart or other big-box shopping centers where they have cheap prices and a great variety of goods. Furthermore, some residents did say that they went to Main Street to buy food. Northgate, for example is a very popular market which provides fresh food. In addition, a variety of restaurants and bakeries on South Main St. are very convenient. Moreover, residents expressed interesting seeing more stores serve the needs of the local community such as a dry cleaning stores, or school and office supply store. A mother of two teenage boys who has lived in Wilshire neighborhood for more than 10 years said that she would like to see more open spaces in the neighborhood that provide kids safe areas where they can play without her having to drive.

**Neighborhood & Merchants Association:** Mary Guzman is the chair of the Wilshire Square Neighborhood Association and also serves as the secretary of the Santa Ana Merchants Association. She thinks the improvement of the business conditions on South Main Street are
win-win for both the merchants and the residents. According to her, the blighted look does scare away clients and makes businesses appear less attractive. She believes the community would benefit from the renovation of Main Street and would see improved property values for local homes and greater community pride. In addition, Santa Ana residents would enjoy shopping and the convenience of essential services closer to their homes. If South Main St. were more attractive and safer to walk alone during the evening; residents would walk to nearby businesses and gather at restaurants to socialize. Furthermore, from the merchant’s perspective, she thinks more adequate parking for customers would be among the most important features for helping businesses succeed. Currently, it is a challenge to find adequate parking for lunchtime shoppers from nearby office towers.

Speaking to the businesses composition, Mary said an increase in businesses that cater to the younger generation would be well received. According to Mary, the high school dropout rate is almost 50%, how would business help with this? Mentors are needed for local high school and junior high kids to encourage them to finish school and pursue a college degree. Moreover, many residents would love S. Main to be “hip” and “cool” like Downtown Pasadena. In addition, she thinks that pockets parks with attractive landscape and artwork would be nice and would serve well as gathering places to sit and people watch or relax.

**Community Redevelopment Agency**: According to planner Gaby Lomeli, as one of the redevelopment areas defined by the city, The City of Santa Ana Redevelopment Agency has prepared certain funding for the improvement and redevelopment of the South Main Street area. Based on the current Facade Rebate Program, The Redevelopment Agency is now at the stage of request for proposals from variety private firms in order to better utilize the funding. Instead of rebate expense of facade improvement, the agency is aiming at hiring an architecture firm, which
will customize the facade for each aplier, then carry the whole process from design to
collection, at the end, the agency will pay for the firm directly. The agency will ask the firm to
keep the design style consistent at the block level. When being asked about the un-conforming
land use on the South Main Street, Ms. Lomeli said this is a result of preexisting housing which
were there before the zoning ordinance and the facade improvement program was applied for
commercial use. About current parking space constrains the business in this area, Ms. Lomeli
mentioned that the Agency is current own a parking lot and renting another. Now the agency is in
the process of negotiation about acquisition of third parking lot in the research area. By turning
this private parking lot in to public parking, the agency feels the parking problem will be reduced
or perhaps solved. Finally, Ms. Lomeli said she feel that teaching landlords and business owners
marketing skill and helping them direct their business strategies to accommodate the current
consumer needs is the key to creating a “Main Street” feel on South Main Commercial District.

IV. SWOT Analysis of South Main Street Research Area

i. Strengths:

In addition to its proximity to Historic Downtown Santa Ana, the Historic South Main Street
Business District has good regional transportation access. It links to the Santa Ana 5 Freeway,
Costa Mesa 55 Freeway and is located adjacent to an important regional transportation hub --
John Wayne Airport. All of these transportation corridors bring considerable daily traffic to the
street, which means that street-front business are highly visible and have the potential to catch
customers from outside the South Main Street area.

Another strengths of South Main street is the businesses in South Main Street Research Area
house a variety of daily services, such as restaurants, grocery stores, the post office, barbershops,
and other convenience retail establishments. Tax and cash service businesses also play an
important role in helping new immigrants in their daily life including short term loan, quick cash service and so on.

South Main Street is surrounded by high-density neighborhoods, which provide the commercial businesses with potential customers. The neighborhood association also has a good relationship with local businesses, which holds promise for working together in the future.

Finally, South Main Street has the potential to become a walkable, attractive street for several reasons: the width of street and sidewalk are reasonable compared to other auto-oriented urban environments in Orange County. The paving and street furniture (chairs, trashcans, streetlights) are in good condition, and a well-established public transit system provides the street-front commercial with an adequate volume of pedestrians.

ii. Challenges:

The high traffic volume of South Main Street has the potential bring in customers, however, it along the potential to deter people. Serving as a major arterial roadway, the wide commuter thoroughfare is filled with high-volume, fast-moving automobile traffic day and night. The net effect is that the major arterial streets create serious pedestrian barriers to and from the neighborhoods and tend to isolate residents within their neighborhoods. Such adverse pedestrian conditions make these major streets unattractive to potential retailers, as well as to residents, not mention the turning options are so limited.

There have always been many businesses along South Main Street target low-income immigrants. Tax services, thrift stores, and traditional Mexican clothing stores used to be very popular; however, some businesses cannot accommodate the current needs of local residents. The social and economic conditions have changed a lot. The second and third generations have gradually
become the main stream. The median age of the research area is 27, which is much younger than both city and county levels. At the same time, many first generation immigrants have moved to U.S for more than 10 years, their shopping and living in the habit of already shift also. As such, private landowners need to look for new, better-suited store tenants who will more likely prosper in the future. Other than that, residents have complained the street is dead at night, since there are no forms of entertainment that can provide a gathering space for socializing after work. From both the observation and interview, author found that very few local residents go to South Main Street.

Furthermore, the lack of parking along Main Street limits retail viability. Limited street and surface parking along the corridor constrains Main Street ability to be redeveloped as a major retail destination. Lack of parking at peak hours including lunch hours also limits people’s ability to stop for a meal or shop in the area, includes nearby workers or pass-by commuters.

In addition, unwelcoming storefronts is a major physical barrier for south Main Street: Much of South Main Street is lined by early 20th century one or two-story row houses with ground-floor series as retail space. Some units do not have access to the street. For the most part, these building storefronts are in poor condition; many are boarded-up or vacant, and most have undesirable security bars on the windows. Vacant buildings and the general impression of blight along this corridor contributes to an unwelcoming pedestrian experience and works against attracting larger or more viable retailers.

Finally, a lack of consistency and identity is one of the most important reasons South Main Street loses customers. Fragmented by several “grandfather residential units,” it is hard to create a consistent image for pedestrians. In the meantime, small lot sizes inhibit comprehensive redevelopment - there is limited opportunity for a large-scale redevelopment that could serve as a
catalyst for surrounding redevelopment. Small parcel sizes discourage redevelopment. Parcel consolidation would require considerable effort by the private sector.

iii. Opportunities:

The research area is defined by the city as one of the redevelopment areas (Figure 5). District zoning changes in 2000 aimed at stimulating the revitalization of commercial space. Currently, the South Main Business District Facade Improvement Cash Rebate Program that is offered by city of Santa Ana Community Redevelopment Agency includes fees for new facades, landscaping and irrigation, painting, new signage and awnings, exterior lighting, and parking lot improvements. In addition, the City offers free removal of old signs and awnings with the project manager’s approval. The agency is now in the process of Request of Proposal from architecture and construction firms in order to renovate the facade block by block and guarantee the quality and consistency of the facade. It will be a great opportunity for improving the physical condition of the research area.

Figure 23. Downtown Santa Ana & Research Area, South: Author
Recently, there has been a series of improvements in Historic Downtown Santa Ana. Adjacent to Downtown Santa Ana near 1st street, South Main Street will benefit by the improvement. The Artist Village attracts more and more staff who work in the civic center area to have lunch. The Historic South Main may able to attract some customers further south who want to enjoy a nice and quiet dinning environment.

Due to the influence of the economic recession, to some extent, it is the best time for redevelopment. Lower housing prices are giving the Redevelopment Agency an opportunity to purchase land and property in order to implement big projects. Currently, the agency already own a parking lot, and is acquiring another, also it plans to rent the third one from a private owner. By adding three public parking lots in the area, it will not only solve the parking problem of current customers, but it can also encourage auto drivers, to park there and take advantage of the existing public transit system.

Pushed by the increasing vacancy rate, business owners and Landlords have started to think about ways to better service customers in order to make the business survive. In a long run, this kind of thinking and learning will benefit them and their customers. The community also realizes the impact these businesses will have on the community. The neighborhood association and Merchants Association can start to work together to help create better living environment.

iv. Threats:

There are many food trucks and grocery trucks, which provide tacos, ice cream, deli, and snacks. In the short run, it provides local residents convenient and cheap food, however, in the long-run, the local restaurants, bakeries and grocery stores are hurt by the competition. The low costs (they do not need to pay rent, tax and other expenses.) and high mobility take local restaurants customers and create an atmosphere of competition. Adding to this, residents have complained
about food trucks leaves trash on the ground. In addition, it is unfair to ask local residents and merchants to pay for the cleaning costs. Certain ordinance or permit policies are needed in order to regulate the food truck businesses and protect the local businesses.

Figure 24. Food Truck, Source: Author

Downtown, especially Artist village has an opportunity to attract white-collar employees for dining or shopping on South Main Street. On the other hand, Downtown may become a competitor where local residents want to hang out there. How to distinguish Historic south Main Street and avoid the overlay of business type and customers will be a issue need to pay attention to in the future.

From the census, we can see the shift from first generation to second immigrant’s generation. The emerging younger generation has different shopping habits than their parents since they are growing up in an environment different from their parents. According to the residents, younger generation is no longer interested in and shopping at local retail store, they are seeking for new and different experiences. Since most of the business on south main street area still targeting
Latino immigrants, how to attract the younger generation will be a major task in the future.

Last, having many schools and six communities along the south Main street corridor, certain businesses like late night entertainment and auto-parts stores may have a negative influence to residents’ daily life by creating more noise, increasing traffic, and attracting more outsiders. How to balance the economic benefit of Main Street commercial area and local residents’ needs be carefully addressed in the future.

V. Recommended Strategies for Improving the Main Street Corridor

Based on the current condition, people’s wills and the analysis, here are some recommendations for improving the commercial condition and build the linkage between neighborhood and Main Street area.

i. Circulation Improvement:

Heavy usage of public transportation (OCTA Bus) and high volume of bicycle and pedestrian traffic was observed. In order to provide pedestrians a safe and friendly walking experience, the report recommends several improvements to enhance the walking environment.

The width of the current sidewalk is reasonable; however, a buffer zone of 4 to 6 ft is desirable and should be provided. This sidewalk and buffer zone provides a safe place for pedestrians to walk outside of the path of vehicles in the street. Since south Main Street is a commercial district, a plant zone is appropriate, for it will not block the view of street front commercial. Street furniture will be another important element to creating a walkable street; The street trees and street furniture that can currently be seen along South Main street research area, are often not well-maintained. Instead of providing an aesthetic walking experience, currently these elements actually enhance the impression of blight. The commercial businesses, current conditions,
maintenance costs and many other elements should be considered when selecting street furniture and vegetation. For example, the table shows an alternative street layout.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Minimum Width</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curb Zone</td>
<td>6 in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planter/Furniture</td>
<td>24 in (48 in if planting trees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian Zone</td>
<td>60 in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontage Zone</td>
<td>30 in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sidewalk</td>
<td>10 ft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. *Recommend Road Design*, Source: U.S Department of Transportation

Adding new bus shelters along Main Street may be a good choice given the high usage of public transportation in this area. It will help to support transit services, making it a more convenient and attractive location for residents and businesses. Compared to bus stops, bus shelters can better protect the safety of people waiting bus. Not only just service the public transit user, the high visibility of commuters on this corridor will made it possible and effective to implement a bus shelter advertising program.

In addition, it is recommended that modifying or adding textured pavement at pedestrian crosswalks. According to many successful practices, pedestrian safety can be significantly enhanced by introducing textured pavement at pedestrian crossings. The vibration caused by driving across the textured pavement and the visual emphasis of a different-colored pavement texture reinforce motorists’ awareness of pedestrians and reminds them to slow down.

Since the speed limit signs in the research area are currently unable to control the motorists speed, the installation of Speed Cameras is suggested. Speed cameras placed at key intersections will help address the serious risk to pedestrians of speeding automobiles. Heavy traffic volumes and the resulting congestion during peak commuting hours minimize speeding through this section of
Main Street. However, speeding is an issue during off-peak hours, especially in locations near roadway grade changes.

Furthermore, the report recommends providing Metered Parking at lunch hour or at night: There is ample street parking on South Main Street for now. However, the demand for parking will increase when the recommended retail nodes are implemented. When parking becomes an issue for businesses located along the corridor, metered parking during certain times of the day can help manage the problem. The author acknowledges that South Main street act as transportation corridor, especially at peak-hours. By only allowing metered parking at lunchtime and after 7 pm, the alternative parking plan will not block traffic.

ii. **Building Environment Recommendations:**

![Facade Rebate program Before & After](image)

*Figure 25. Facade Rebate program Before & After.*
*Source: City of Santa Ana Community Development Agency*

The facade renovation program offered by the City of Santa Ana Redevelopment Agency will be a great opportunity for the fore-insurance of local business. Taking the advantage of this chance to enhance the commercial environment and to strengthen the linkage between Main Street and
local neighborhoods will benefit the business owner, local residents, and the city.

As first step to attract a greater number of local residents to hang out on Main Street, the first step we recommend is to create several retail clusters in each neighborhood. Neighborhood retail provides day-to-day services and amenities to local residents. Examples include cafés, quick-service restaurants, dry cleaners, small food markets, hair salons, and flower shops. Local neighborhood retail merchants can survive on dollars spent by local residents and are less dependent on having good automobile access and plenty of free parking than merchants who need to attract customers from outside the neighborhood. Small cafes, stores, and services that accommodate the needs of local residents have the best chance of success when they are concentrated in convenient, welcoming, pedestrian-oriented environments. Locations could be selected based on current business distribution. Like the plaza of Northgate, which already support successful small retail merchants, could be modeled in order to further develop vibrant neighborhood retail nodes. In the future, when the downtown Santa Ana is consistently drawing residents from all the other places, neighborhood retail might become viable on certain corners along Main Street and 1st street as well.

With regard to exiting residential units, certain strategies should be implemented to encourage both the renovation of existing buildings and the infill development of vacant land for non-retail used, and this action should be done in a manner that respects the historic architectural character of the neighborhood, and revitalizes the streetscape. There are currently several historical buildings located on Main Street and in the neighborhood that have been identified by Santa Ana Register of Historical Properties. To best utilize the historical character, one strategy is to re-use the old buildings for business like galleries and other art and culture related venues. Another possibility is the historical buildings also could be transformed into landmarks, which could
improve the identification of the historic area. The historic character of this area could also be emphasized by installing uniform logos or labels on lamps, benches, trashcans, and bus shelters.

In the long term, including time post economic recovery, the continued revitalization of downtown Santa Ana, South Main Street is well positioned for higher-density mixed-use development. This is true especially for the north part of the district that bored with downtown Santa Ana. A plan including ground floor retail, second and third floor serves as offices or residential units could concentrate the population density and attract the younger generation, who like the urban feeling, to locate there. At the same time, it could also improve the current living condition of local low-income families. The current average number of occupants per housing unit in the research area is approximate five. Compared to traditional, single-family detached land-use patterns, mix-use apartments may be more affordable and suitable for low-income immigrants.

VI. Vision

“Urban streets are places where people walk, shop, meet, and generally engage in the diverse array of social and recreational activities that, for many, are what makes urban living enjoyable. And beyond even these quality-of-life benefits, pedestrian-friendly urban streets have been increasingly linked to a host of highly desirable social outcomes, including economic growth and innovation” (Florida, 2002)

i. Goal

Revitalize the Historical South Main Street Commercial District by physical improvement to enhance the pedestrian experience by employing outreach strategies to attract local neighborhood residents.
ii. Role in the Regional Context

- Nexus with historic downtown

As Santa Ana’s number one employer, Orange County currently has 11,158 employees. Services as the civic center for a long time, there are many county departments located in Historic downtown. Taking advantage of the proximity to Artist village, it is a target for shopping and entertainment. South Main Street area could be an ideal location for city and county staff to hang out or have lunch and dinner.

- Lively, pedestrian friendly transit street

Main Street corridor takes a good amount of traffic going to both directions: John Wayne airport to Historic downtown Santa Ana. Currently, the auto traffic overwhelms the neighborhood. With additional parking, improved lighting, and other streetscape improvement, the plan is envisions to lessen some of the ongoing traffic, while enhancing the pedestrian friendliness of the street.

iii. The Local Context

The face block land use in the Main street corridor study area is predominantly commercial, through mixed with various institutional uses flanked by residential units within a short distance. There is, however, an opportunity and potential for residential, entertainment and mixed-use developments in the corridor. The predominantly street-front businesses provide an opportunity for creating a pedestrian friendly environment. Closed stores are scattered in the corridor. At instances, these are opportunity for land assembly for major anchors and mixed use developments.

- Street activities

Businesses that would bring in pedestrian customers would be encouraged to occupy the ground
floor of the shops in the corridor. Businesses where the users/customers park their cars on street and use sidewalks to reach the businesses tend to create more pedestrian traffic on the street. Adding more restaurants, sidewalk improvements, an increase of street parking, better street configuration (streetscape character) is expected to increase street activities. The pedestrian buffer zone is further expected to attract the local student population who generally commute on bicycles, bus, and other non-auto modes.

- **Mix-use project**

New mixed-use (commercial use at first floor and residential/office use at the second floor) developments in the corridor are expected to be the occupied by shopkeeper or owner. This is expected to increase round the clock ‘eyes on the street’. (Jacobs, 1961) In addition, increased stakes on the project area arising from this residential population would lead to safe streets and cleaner environment, and the most important thing is it will further encourage pedestrian activity.

- **Business accelerator**

South Main Street’s strategic location in the region with proximity to Downtown Santa Ana, has made it possible to organize tourist attractions on the Street, especially at the intersection of Main and 1st. The unique restaurants present the vibrations and welcoming culture of Hispanic’s. By introducing characterized restaurants, putting outdoor dining areas, having ethnic culture performances, South Main Street will be the best place in Orange County to enjoy Mexico food and culture. In addition, Second and Third generation immigrants will enjoy major purchasing power in the future. Business from education, tutoring, school supply, to leisure and entertainment venues will be needed through the area.

- **Physical improvement**
From the walkable aspect: Adding buffer zone to improve pedestrian safety and reduce the influence of traffic flow. Marking the crosswalks or using different crosswalk material and provide adequate crosswalk signing and lighting in order to provide a safe walking environment both day and night. A bus shelter with seating, trash receptacles, and bicycle parking are also desirable features. Instead of palm trees, plant trees that also provide shade and can help provide a safer and comfortable outdoor walking feeling.

Besides safety, improving the facade of storefronts, increasing the transparency of window displays and improves the aesthetics of fences will dramatically improve the walking experience of pedestrians.

Add to that, by small public plazas / pocket parks or other forms of formal and informal gathering places on Main Street will attract local residents, especially, the younger generation.

iv. Implementation Strategies

The strong relationship between neighborhood associations and Merchants Association could help facilitate revitalization and redevelopment in the neighborhood. To involve high school students in activities like graffiti removal, street cleaning and painting could enhance neighborhood pride. Collaborating with schools for programming will allow students to get credit by providing neighborhood service, or join in “neighborhood beautification” days.

The Community Redevelopment Agency, local merchants association could also work together to establish a database of all owners and properties and solicit expertise and technical assistance from local university architecture and business schools. Organizing workshops to educate business and property owners about the importance of collaboration will help them to gain in long-term benefits. Another vacant unit database should be created that includes information
about ownership, square footage, and the desired and permitted use for each building. In addition, create a marketing campaign that will promote the renovation of derelict row homes on Main Street for mix-use. Furthermore, planner, merchants association, and neighborhood association could compile a comprehensive list of potential sources of funding and available program for streetscape, storefront, business and any other improvement and apply for all available grants.

Along with this, increase pedestrian safety by putting more “eyes and ears” on residential streets, initiate a “Know Your Neighbor” campaign to encourage both renter and property owner and business owner to meet their neighbors. Even promoting programs like the retail business on Main Street offering discounts to their neighbor and local residents will work.

Create business clusters in order to make the clusters a destination for shoppers. The south main street commercial district as whole should include variety of business types that can accommodate different needs from different social groups; however, other than community-based businesses (grocery store, printing store), concentrating similar businesses into the cluster will be more attractive to customers. e.g., there are many furniture and carpet stores located on South Main Street. Instead of spreading along the corridor, if those stores could concentrate into several blocks, it may drive people who want to purchase furniture go to there since they have a variety of choices in one area. In addition, the location chosen should consider surrounding environment, for example, entertainment venues should concentrate near 1st street since Artist’s Village, which borders with South Main Street and 1st street is already a hot entertainment venue.

Last, limited involvement of Latino residents often happens in the planning practice. By exploring alternate forms of participation, methods which rely on the importance of relationships and families in Latino culture, encouraging involvement of Latino residents and business owners.
A study of Latino communities in west Costa Mesa found that Latino residents responded much more positively to personal appeals for their participation compared to impersonal, anonymous flyers and it is also important that the dialogue and all the materials should be in Spanish (Day, 2003).

v. Scenario

Based on physical, economic, and social condition analysis, the author recommends dividing the Historic South Main Street area into three discrete sections. In each section, the focus and architecture forms will be different; however, the overall streetscape would remain consistent. The three sections will be:

**Upper South Main**

From 1st St to Chestnut Av: Downtown buffer zone.

Taking advantage of the location nearby Downtown Santa Ana, especially its proximity to artist village and comparably adequate parking, Author recommend creates a lexis dining and entertainment experience here. The dining and entertainment experience should be unique in order to avoid unnecessary competition with downtown area. Traditional Hispanic food, clubs, and accessories stores together with tropical colors and diverse architecture styles will create a heavy cultural atmosphere here.

The density of this section should remain consistent with downtown, including three stores: ground floor retail, and restaurants, second and third floor clubs, or lofts.

**Middle South Main**

From Chestnut Av to Edinger Av: Neighborhood oriented zone.
There are six dense communities in the research area. Daily retail & service needs of local residents could be accommodated by introducing or upgrading certain business such as dry clean stores, bigger stores like Ross or T.J.Maxx.

In addition, the needs of a large young population below 25 should also be accommodated by clothing stores taking fashion brands, coffee houses, gathering places. Besides these needs, according to Interview (Section IV), the drop rate of local high schools in the research area is about 50%. Some training or tutoring institutes or study centers which providing academic and language assistance will also help students to better prepare for their future.

As the first step attracting local residents, the author recommends concentrating small businesses into existing popular shopping clusters like Northgate, then expanding and adjusting later the development model later, based on how business is doing. At the top of local residents’ wish lists, due to the limitation of space, is adding open space and outer door dining areas around the retail cluster will be the best approach.

Second stores units should be encouraged, in order to provide more affordable housing will create an urban street feeling and increase street activity.

Figure 26. Three Sections of South Main Street, Source: Author
Lower South Main

From Edinger Av to Warner Av: Furniture/carpet business niches.

There are many furniture, carpet, and upholstery stores on the South Main Street. To relocated and concentrate those business in a section will create a niche, which will welcoming for customers and at the same time eliminate the impact of trucks and loading on other businesses.

Maintaining parcels lots behind storefronts and indicatives the front with transparence display will help to maximize the feeling of welcoming for customers when they walking down the street and provide plenty of parking spaces at the back will ensure the quality of shopping experience.
Figure 27. *Upper South Main Street Vision*, Source: Author

- **Recommend Height**: 2-3 Stores
- **Business type**: Dinning & Entertainment
- **Land Use**: Streetfront Business Parking behind

**Transportation & Safety:**
- Bus Shelter
- Bike Rack
- Green Bike Lane

**Walking Experience:**
- Tree Shade
- Awning
- Outdoor dining
Figure 28. Middle South Main Street Vision, Source: Author

Recommend Height: 2-3 Stores

Business type: Tutoring/ Dry clean/ School & Office supply/Grocery/ Coffee Shop/ Fashion Cloth

Land use: Pocket Park/Gathering Place/Mix-use
Figure 29. *Lower South Main Street Vision*, Source: Author
South Main Street Street Section

Figure 30. Street Section of South Main Street, Source: Author
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Appendix A. Streetscape Recommendation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active frontage guidelines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade A frontage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- More than 15 premises every 100 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- More than 25 doors and windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A large range of functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade B frontage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 10 to 15 premises every 100 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- More than 15 doors and windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A moderate range of functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade C frontage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 6 to 10 premises every 100 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Some range of functions</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Less than half blind or passive facades</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grade D frontage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 3 to 5 premises every 100 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Little or no range of functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Predominantly blind or passive facades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade E frontage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 1 or 2 premises every 100 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No range of functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Predominantly blind or passive facades</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Jan Gehl, Cities for people, Washington. DC; Island Press 2010