

## 5. FIRST AND CEDAR STREETScape Concept. DOWNTOWN'S FRONT PORCH.

An important component of the Downtown Streets project was to have a discussion with community members, business owners, property owners, and visitors about how First Avenue and Cedar Street should look, feel, and function once the streets are relinquished by ITD. First Avenue and Cedar Street are widely recognized as the streets that anchor the commercial heart of Downtown Sandpoint. They also have the most opportunity to further transform Downtown by becoming a preeminent pedestrian-oriented community destination and gathering place.

First Avenue and Cedar Street - along with the refocused Sand Creek shoreline - are part of Downtown Sandpoint's "front porch". It defines Sandpoint's curb appeal. It's the place people see when they pass through. It's where people gather and hang out. It's for people-watching and strolling and browsing store windows. It's the place for locals and visitors to come together without any good reason - a place just to be.

During the Downtown Streets public outreach process, some themes consistently came up in

conversations: **pedestrian-oriented, bicycle-friendly, vibrant, active, safe, artistic, green.**

First Avenue and Cedar Street are also places to do business and pursue dreams. Most of the businesses are locally-owned and have been battling a crippling recession for the last several years. Those that survived the 2008-2009 epoch are generally excited about the potential for change on First and Cedar but are worried that their fragile economic livelihood might be jeopardized in the face of too much change. While much of the business community is supportive of a vibrant and active street, they also expressed concerns about customer access, deliveries, and financial impacts on their property or business.

The objective of the Downtown Streets project was to determine a preferred street cross-section for First Avenue and Cedar Street and set a general design direction for the streetscape(s). Details about materials, street trees, landscaping, stormwater, loading zones, and other design components will be developed at a later date. Some initial ideas for those features are presented here to help guide that future process.



*First Avenue - looking south (May 2012)*

The preferred streetscape cross-section for First Avenue and Cedar Street attempts to balance the desire for a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented, bicycle-friendly streetscape with the perceived need for more downtown parking.

The preferred cross-section is a compromise solution that reorganizes the existing 80-foot public right-of-way to include wider sidewalks (16-feet versus the existing 12-feet), parallel parking on one side of the street, and 45-degree front-in angled parking on the opposite side of the street. This solution increases the on-street parking supply by over 50% and establishes a sidewalk width that supports healthy street trees, outdoor seating, lighting, site furniture, and a high level of pedestrian activity.

The location of the angled parking changes along the streets to provide the most parking for vehicles going in the predominant direction of travel and to maximize solar gain on the sidewalks next to parallel parking spaces. Parallel parking spaces can be easily converted into seasonal sidewalk extension areas.

On Cedar Street, the angled parking is on the south side of the street. On First Avenue, the angled parking is generally located on the east side of the street, but shifts in the long block face between Main and Cedar (See diagram on page 61). This shift is an attempt to balance the parking distribution and provide additional spaces for pedestrian amenities.

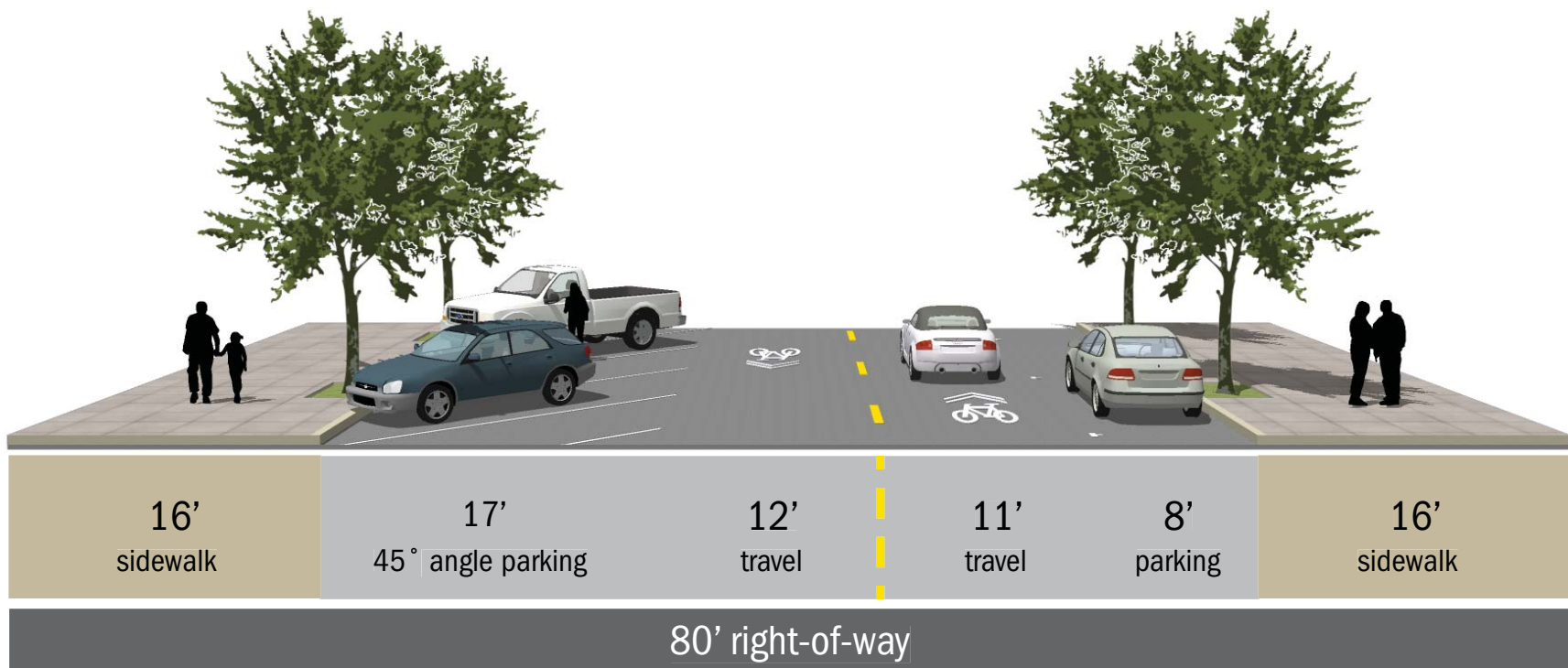
One of the benefits of this cross-section is that it's flexible. In the summer, when visitor populations and pedestrian activity is highest and there is more demand for sidewalk space for outdoor cafe seating and bicycle parking, select on-street parking spaces can be dedicated to these activities using temporary sidewalk extensions or temporary bike corrals (See Section 4 of this document for more information on those treatments). When there are fewer people out, the space can revert to parking or delivery areas.

Angled parking demands larger curb extensions at intersections, which provide opportunities for displaying public art, concentrating pedestrian and bicycle amenities, and/or centralizing stormwater facilities. These areas could also be used to

temporarily store snow in the winter when the space is not used as heavily.

Angled parking has a traffic calming effect when actively used. Motorists have to back into traffic slowly - sometimes blindly - which consequently slows traffic along the street. Bicycling on streets with angled parking is less predictable because of this issue. Back-in angled parking is a safer parking method for both motorists and bicyclists, but the community has expressed that it is too difficult to use and would prefer front-in angled parking.

Sharrows should be marked in the travel lanes to guide bicyclists away from the parking areas and to communicate that First Avenue and Cedar Street are shared, slow speed streets.



*Preferred Streetscape Cross-Section for First Avenue and Cedar Street*





*First Avenue today*





*Artist rendering of First Avenue with the Preferred Streetscape*

## FIRST AND CEDAR STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

The vision for the First and Cedar streetscape should be to create a flexible, durable streetscape that invites pedestrian-oriented activities, supports existing businesses, encourages opportunities for new businesses, and facilitates bicycle use by keeping the design speed of the street to 20 miles per hour or less.

Angled parking should be sited along First and Cedar in the following manner (refer to diagram at right):

- First Avenue (Church-Main) - east side
- First Avenue (Main-Cedar) - east side + west side (chicane style)
- Cedar (First-Fourth) - south side

The following streetscape features *should be included* as part of the future First and Cedar streetscape project:

- two-way travel lanes
- sharrows
- 16-foot concrete sidewalks
- designated delivery zones

- street trees
- pedestrian-scale lighting (16-foot minimum)
- programmed curb extensions (areas for bicycle parking, stormwater facilities, seating, and/or public art)
- stormwater planters
- high-visibility crosswalks
- site furnishings (benches, waste and recycling cans, bicycle racks, etc.)
- pedestrian wayfinding signs and maps
- public art

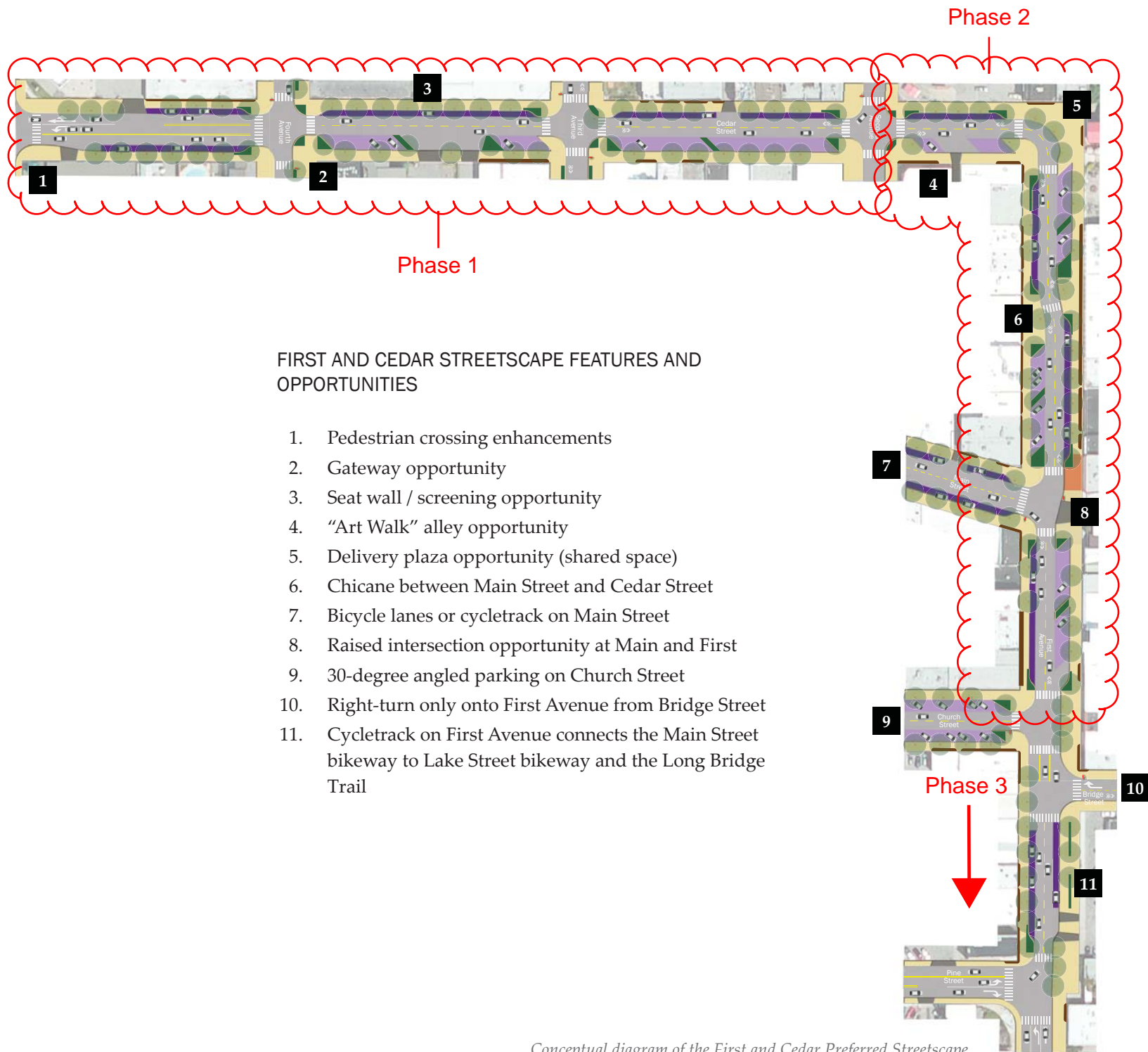
The following streetscape features *should be considered* for the future First and Cedar streetscape project:

- pavers
- raised intersection at First and Main
- undergrounding overhead utilities
- curbless sidewalks
- seasonal sidewalk extensions
- bike corrals or shelters
- heated sidewalks

## SHORT-TERM OPPORTUNITIES

Once the US 2 “Curve” project is constructed and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and ITD is created, the City will have more control over how the streets in Downtown feel and function. However, a major streetscape investment along First and/or Cedar may not be feasible until funding is identified and secured. The following are some short-term solutions for the curb-to-curb width on First Avenue and Cedar Street and some “ready to go” streetscape amenities that the City and community members can invest in to make the streets in Downtown safer, more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly, and more attractive without precluding a more substantial infrastructure project in the future.

- Restripe First and Cedar to reflect the preferred cross-section, but with wider travel lanes (14-feet)
- Implement seasonal sidewalk extension program
- Add more seating, bicycle racks (features that can be removed and then returned after a construction project)
- Implement pedestrian wayfinding signage and map program



### FIRST AND CEDAR STREETScape FEATURES AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. Pedestrian crossing enhancements
2. Gateway opportunity
3. Seat wall / screening opportunity
4. "Art Walk" alley opportunity
5. Delivery plaza opportunity (shared space)
6. Chicane between Main Street and Cedar Street
7. Bicycle lanes or cycletrack on Main Street
8. Raised intersection opportunity at Main and First
9. 30-degree angled parking on Church Street
10. Right-turn only onto First Avenue from Bridge Street
11. Cycletrack on First Avenue connects the Main Street bikeway to Lake Street bikeway and the Long Bridge Trail

*Conceptual diagram of the First and Cedar Preferred Streetscape*