

Chapter 5
PUBLIC SPACES

Over the next twenty years or more, as the Specific Plan is implemented, much of the existing development within the Plan Area will change. As this process moves forward, new streets, parks, plazas and courtyards will be added to the public realm to achieve the coordinated vision for public spaces.

PUBLIC SPACE GOALS AND POLICIES

The guidelines in this Chapter apply to both public and private sector projects. They are drawn from observations of successful public space projects and well-accepted design principles. While they are not hard and fast rules, alternative approaches will be expected to satisfy the intent of the guidelines. In the event that no guideline exactly addresses a specific condition, the principles set forth in this Chapter along with the Public Spaces Goals and Policies will be used to determine consistency.

Goal PSP-1: Provide adequate, appropriate and high quality integrated system public spaces to serve shoppers, employees and residents.

Policy PSP-1.1: Provide public spaces organized around the Central Commons public spaces element and intended to meet the active and passive recreation needs of the Community.

Policy PSP-1.2: Design all street rights-of-way and sidewalks as a part of the usable public realm and encourage the uses for “Flex Zones” associated with new development.

Encourage wide sidewalks in areas where substantial pedestrian traffic is anticipated. Additionally, Flex Zones for sidewalks encourage a wide variety of visually interesting uses along all streets and provide a multitude of opportunities for active and passive activities. Street right-of-way improvements, landscaping and Flex Zones do not satisfy the park dedication requirements for the City. Additional discussion on Flex Zones is provided in Chapter 6: Development Standards related to street and sidewalk design.

Policy PSP-1.3: Require specialized paving, landscaping, and street furnishings to encourage shoppers, employees, and residents to utilize the sidewalks as a part of their daily active and passive recreation, entertainment, and social networking.

Policy PSP-1.4: Prepare and adopt a streamlined sidewalk permit process to encourage sidewalk dining and other activities for local businesses.

Policy PSP-1.5: Encourage public and semipublic parks, public spaces, pedestrian paseos, and other small scale amenities spread throughout the Plan Area.

Semipublic Parks and Public Spaces are privately owned and maintained facilities that offer the same or similar amenities as public Parks and Public Spaces while offering user benefits to the property owner and community at large.

Policy PSP-1.6: Require on and off-site Public and Semipublic active and passive recreational amenities as part of residential projects.

Dedication of land or the payment of in-lieu park fees shall be considered for improvement of active and passive recreational amenities to meet the needs of Plan Area residents consistent with General Plan Policy 6.5-I-5. The decision to require land dedication or to accept in-lieu fees is solely at the discretion of the City.

The Park and Public Spaces component of the Plan Area is envisioned as a combination of public and semipublic spaces and facilities. Dedication credit may be considered for improvement of public Park and Public Spaces consistent with General Plan Policy 6.5-I-19 and at the discretion of the City, when deemed to be critical for the implementation of the Park and Public Spaces component of the Plan.

The City's current emphasis is to address all park dedication requirements by obtaining land or collection of fees for the park fund; however, there may be future opportunities for mutually beneficial joint use of Semipublic Park and Public Space amenities. It is anticipated that Semipublic Park and Public Space amenities will be privately maintained by the property owner(s), Homeowners' Association or an established benefit or landscape district. Based on the merit of a Semipublic Park and Public Space proposal and potential benefit to the public at large such proposals may be considered for a partial dedication fee credit solely at the discretion of the City. Any partial fee credit for Semipublic Park and Public Spaces shall be subject to an improvement agreement outlining the terms of use, ongoing maintenance responsibilities and assurance of public access. Semipublic Park and Public Space amenities shall not be used to satisfy street and right-of-way improvement and dedication requirements.

Goal PSP-2: Create a Public Space and infrastructure framework that encourages walking and biking.

Policy PSP-2.1: Require alternative routes such as paseo and pedestrian/bicycle paths to conveniently move from one area to another.

Policy PSP-2.2: Encourage “park once and walk” shopping patterns through land use approvals and a comprehensive Parking Management Program.

Wide sidewalks along all significant pedestrian routes that include extensive landscaping and active ground floor uses such as retail shops, commercial service stores, restaurants, and cafes make the pedestrian experience more enjoyable and support park and walk concepts. Additional information on the parking management program is provided in Chapter 8: Circulation and Transportation.

Policy PSP-2.3: Provide for strong pedestrian and bicycle linkages between the Mixed Use Core and the Iron Horse Trail.

Policy PSP-2.4: Work with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) to enhance the access and usability of the Iron Horse Trail.

Implementation of a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over Crow Canyon Road consistent with the Iron Horse Trail Corridor Concept Plan will further improve pedestrian connectivity.

Policy PSP-2.5: Establish a comprehensive way-finding program to direct vehicular traffic to parking resources and assist pedestrian/bicyclist in finding their destinations.

PUBLIC SPACE FRAMEWORK

The Public Space Framework reflects the specific plan’s increased development intensity and wide diversity of land uses. Many public spaces will be integrated with or adjacent to the street system, while others will be developed as a part of the detailed plans for individual parcels. Further guidance for the design of these spaces are included in the Street and Development Block Standards contained in Chapter 6: Development Standards.

Major components of the public space framework include:

The Commons

A linear park at the heart of the core of the specific plan area, The Commons will combine landscaping and activity areas to complement the mixed use environment, and provide both park space for residents and activity areas to serve the community (e.g., art shows) and the surrounding commercial areas (e.g., special promotional events).

Iron Horse Trail Link

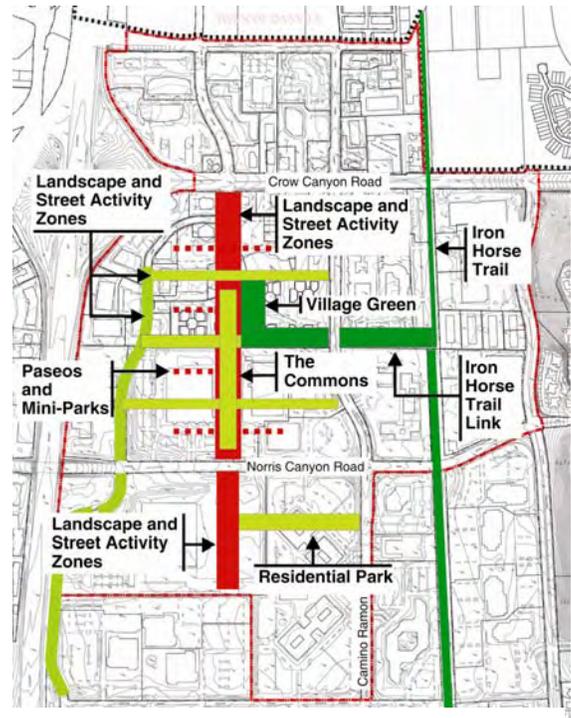
A linear landscaped space with both soft and hardscape features will include a wide combined pedestrian and bicycle path linking the Iron Horse Trail to the heart of the Plan Area.

Village Green

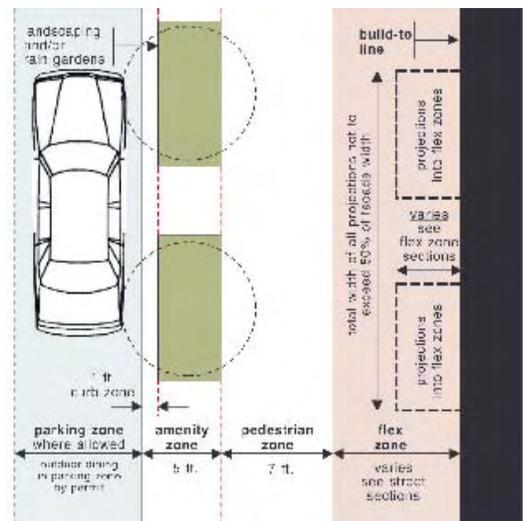
The Village Green will provide a significant multiuse space at the edge of The Commons. The landscaped public space could serve as a potential outdoor dining location for restaurant uses (subject to a City license agreement) in the ground floor of the immediately adjacent shared parking structure, potential vending kiosks, children’s play lots, and community events such as summer evening music concerts.

Landscape and Street Activity Zones

The Flex Zone Standards for sidewalks encourage a wide variety of uses and activities along all streets to add visual interest and provide a multitude of opportunities for active and passive enjoyment of the streetscape. While part of the public realm, they are not considered public spaces for the purpose of parkland dedication or fee credits.



Public Space Framework.



Flex and amenity zones.

Active/Passive Public Space

Larger open spaces will be integrated into the design of residential developments. Some will be outward-oriented for the use and enjoyment of all, while others will be more internal to the multifamily environment.

Paseos, Pedestrian Pockets and Mini-Parks

Mid-block walkways with landscaping and additional retail and commercial service uses will be encouraged as pedestrian paths to link parking resources and special use courtyards to The Commons and other surrounding street activities. While part of the public realm, they are not necessarily or automatically considered public spaces for the purpose of parkland dedication or fee credits. Only those spaces that clearly meet the intent of the General Plan, Specific Plan and Parks Master Plan can be considered in relation to park dedication requirements based on the merit of the specific proposal and solely at the discretion of the City.

PUBLIC SPACE GUIDELINES

All parks and public spaces will go through a thorough programming and design process typical for the City and consistent with the Specific Plan Vision. The public space design guidelines on the following pages are intended to more fully describe the Specific Plan's public space vision and to stress the design principles that are important to support the proposed mixed use and walkable environment.

THE COMMONS

The Commons public space extends through the Mixed Use Core (Block D) from Crow Canyon Road to Norris Canyon Road. It should be designed at a width of approximately 48 feet or more, and will serve a variety of purposes including the establishment of a strong visual image for the specific plan area; the creation of an amenity for shoppers, employees, and residents; a location for special community events; and an attraction to encourage residential development above shops along its length as a means to adding liveliness and economic vitality to the area.



Examples of central landscape features: Bay Meadows, CA (left) - Birkdale Village, NC (right).

Design Objectives

- Provide a variety of subareas for both passive enjoyment and community activities.
- Establish a strong visual focal point for the community and the specific plan area.
- Provide a strong visual outlook for upper level residences, commercial service uses, and offices.
- Incorporate abundant landscaping.
- Provide a suitable backdrop for public art.

Planning and Design

The detailed planning and design of The Commons public space is expected to address a variety of needs for passive and active activities for residents, employees and visitors to the area. As a focal point of the Plan Area, The Commons is also expected to host community events. As part of the design process, consideration should be given to how community events can be accommodated within this space.

Design elements and activities that could be considered for The Commons could include, but should not be limited to:

- Open multipurpose lawn areas.
- Intimate seating areas.
- Games tables (e.g., chess).
- Large trees/Shade trees.
- Flower beds.
- Fountains.
- Gazebos.
- Public Art.
- Retail Kiosks (subject to City license agreement)
- Food Kiosks. (subject to City license agreement)
- Paved plaza areas to accommodate events such as art shows, automobile displays, holiday events and farmers' markets



Public Space as a focal point to residential and commercial development.



Interactive fountains as a design element.



Public art as a focal point.

Access

- Crosswalks with distinctive paving and/or markings should be provided to allow easy access to the public spaces from commercial frontages on both sides of the adjacent roadways.
- For additional safety, bollards, potted plants, and special paving should be used at pedestrian crosswalks to alert pedestrians that they are about to enter the realm of vehicles.



Distinct paving at intersections.

Landscaping and Paving

- Provide trees within The Commons open space of a type and size that are capable of creating a strong visual image and theme.
- Design to provide a series of outdoor rooms within the space.
- Provide sidewalks, landscaping and design elements to buffer users of The Commons from adjacent parked cars.
- Provide prominent focal point elements near the entries to The Commons from Crow Canyon Road and Norris Canyon Road as well as at or near its intersection with Street B (e.g., fountains, public art).
- Provide a variety of paving types and patterns to create visual interest.



Seating areas with amenities.

Amenities

- Include fountains and other water elements which incorporate features to minimize water usage.
- Provide plentiful benches and seat walls to encourage use of the space.

Other Guidelines

- Provide distinctive entry monument elements with lighting at the Crow Canyon Road and Norris Canyon Road entries.
- Incorporate pedestrian scale lighting into the design.



Water elements and seat walls.

VILLAGE GREEN

The Village Green is envisioned to be a gathering place, providing a place to relax, meet, and enjoy community events and outdoor cafes. Located adjacent to the shared public parking facilities in the central block, it is anticipated to be approximately 2-acres in size at the crossroads of pedestrian activity for the Plan Area.

Design Objectives

- Provide a well-landscaped public space for both relaxation and activity.
- Provide a natural visual focal point and social meeting place.
- Accommodate a wide variety of activities.
- Provide space and activities for a wide range of users from children to senior citizens.
- Accommodate outdoor dining and activity space for commercial uses in the ground floor of the adjacent parking structure.



Village Green as an active gathering place.

Planning and Design

The detailed planning and design of the Village Green public space is expected to address a variety of needs for passive and active activities for residents, employees and visitors to the area. Village Green is also expected to host community events. As part of the design process, consideration should be given to how community events can be accommodated within this space. Design elements and activities that could be considered for Village Green could include, but should not be limited to:

- Open multipurpose lawn areas.
- Intimate seating areas.
- Large trees/Shade trees.
- Flower beds.
- A tot lot.
- Fountains.
- Public Art.
- Retail Kiosks (subject to City license agreement).



Place for community events.



Multipurpose lawn areas.

- Food Kiosks. (subject to City license agreement)
- Paved plaza areas to accommodate events such as art shows, automobile displays, and farmers' markets

Access

- Provide easy pedestrian access from all adjacent sidewalks.
- Provide access from the adjacent public parking facility.

Landscaping and Paving

- Provide abundant trees and flower landscaping.
- Provide a paved pedestrian zone between the public spaces and adjacent commercial uses.

Amenities

- Spaces for families and users of all ages.
- Abundant comfortable benches and chairs.
- Children's play structures.
- Cafe tables and chairs.

Other Guidelines

- Consider providing some community space and/or space for a public safety officer on the ground floor of the adjacent public parking structure.
- Incorporate pedestrian scale lighting into the design.
- Incorporate public art into the design.



Kiosks and seating areas.



Children's play areas.



Public art as a focal point.

RESIDENTIAL PARK

The Residential Park will be incorporated into the development plans for Block G south of Norris Canyon Road, west of Camino Ramon. The Residential Park size and shape will be established during the detailed planning for the development area. The size should be a minimum of 2 acres including public sidewalks and bike paths; however, other design concepts may be considered based upon a well-integrated design for the Development Area.

Design Objectives

- Provide active and passive recreation opportunities for both residents and workers in the Specific Plan Area.
- Provide a substantial open space to visually distinguish the area south of Norris Canyon Road as a unique neighborhood.
- Accommodate the local park space needs of families living in the Plan Area.

Planning and Design

While the planning and construction of the Residential Park will be the responsibility of the property owner, the review and development process will include participation and input regarding the programming and design of the space by the appropriate City departments and commissions. The types of activities and features that might be accommodated in the Residential Park could include, but would not be limited to the following:

- Multipurpose lawn areas.
- Paved plaza areas.
- Bocce ball or other game courts.
- Large trees/ Shade trees.
- Flower beds.
- A tot lot.
- Fountains.
- Gazebos.
- Public Art.
- Food Kiosks (where appropriate and subject to City license agreement).



Active and passive spaces.



Multipurpose lawn areas.



Bocce Ball court.

Access

- Access to entries for uses lining the park should be encouraged and accommodated.
- Integrate the park space into the overall open space and pedestrian network of Development Area G4.

Landscaping and Paving

- Provide a variety of landscape areas to meet the needs of nearby residents and workers, including multiuse lawn areas.

Amenities

- Provide abundant seating opportunities along the edges and within the park space.
- Include activity amenities for families and children.
- Incorporate pedestrian scale lighting into the design.
- Incorporate public art into the park design.

SIDEWALKS

The sidewalks are very much a part of the Specific Plan area's public realm, but does not replace the core requirements for Parks and Public Spaces. They can provide passive recreation, and will serve as attractive pathways among uses that will encourage walking rather than driving for short trips.

Specialized paving, landscaping, and street furnishings will be needed to create a buffered streetscape with its own identity to encourage shoppers, employees, and residents to utilize the sidewalks as a part of their daily recreation, entertainment, and social networking activities.

Design Objectives

- Provide street tree landscaping to provide shade and reduce the perceived width of streets.
- Provide landscape buffers between pedestrians and adjacent traffic and parking.
- Provide protected pedestrian pockets for seating, bicycle racks, street furniture, and outdoor dining.
- Incorporate way-finding and business directory signage to support the economic vitality of the area, and encourage a *park once and walk* concept.
- Add materials color and texture to the public realm.

Paving

- Paving will vary according to location with anticipated high pedestrian volume sidewalks receiving more attention and visually interesting materials.
- Paving materials and patterns should vary from area to area, to provide visual interest, sense of distinction and enhance the feeling of an environment constructed over time.
- Distinctively paved street crosswalks should be provided to enhance pedestrian safety, and reinforce pedestrian continuity.

Landscaping

- Landscaped pockets should be placed between pedestrian sidewalk zones and curbs on all sidewalks to provide a physical buffer between pedestrian and moving or parked cars. They should be continuous in areas where parking or drop off is not allowed.



Landscape buffer between parking and sidewalk.



Wide sidewalks with distinct paving.

- Landscaped pockets should be considered and evaluated for use as rain gardens to absorb stormwater runoff.
- A uniform palette or theme should be selected for the street trees along The Commons, The Commons North and The Commons South.
- A mix of street trees should be selected for other locations.
- Landscaped planters and pots with seasonal-colored plants should be grouped in seating areas within the sidewalk amenity and flex zone areas. They should also be encouraged in areas adjacent to shop, office and residential entries.
- In hardscape areas, utilize permeable paving in all situations where practical.

Flex Zones (private ownership)

- Special paving (e.g., changed color and/or texture) and landscaping are required in all Flex Zones to add visual interest to the sidewalk areas, and to express the individuality of each building or storefront.
- Street furniture is allowed and encouraged in Flex Zones. Benches may be individualized to enhance and reinforce the individual storefronts.



Flex Zones add interest to the streetscape.

- Landscaping and planter pots are encouraged along building edges with special emphasis at building and storefront entries.

Lighting

- Pedestrian scale lighting should be used along all streets as the foundation lighting fixture in the specific plan area, supplemented by taller lighting where necessary for vehicular and pedestrian safety.
- A single family of compatible lighting fixtures should be chosen to enhance the area's overall sense of place and continuity.

Street Furniture

- Specialized benches, waste receptacles, bus shelters, news racks, and other street furniture should be coordinated in regard to materials, styles and colors, with special design emphasis given to those within the Mixed Use Core.



Coordinated lighting and street furniture.

Public Signage

- Way-finding signage should be installed to assist in finding addresses, parking, and businesses.
- All public signage should be designed and coordinated to enhance the overall sense of place.

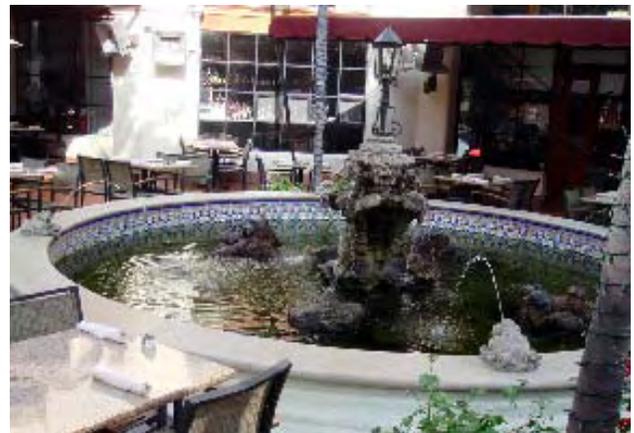
Sidewalk Dining

- Outdoor dining is encouraged on the sidewalk and Flex Zones adjacent to buildings (where appropriate) as identified in Chapter 6: Development Standards, and may be allowed by permit in Sidewalk Amenity Zones. Finished materials (e.g., metal and wood) are expected for tables, chairs, and separation fencing; plastics are strongly discouraged.



PASEOS, COURTYARDS AND PEDESTRIAN POCKETS

Paseos, courtyards, and pedestrian pockets are extensions of the public realm that add to the passive recreation options for shoppers, employees and residents. Their inclusion in all development projects is encouraged, but does not replace the core requirements for Parks and Public Spaces. Paseos are especially useful in providing interesting pedestrian connections between interior block parking resources and main street frontages. These elements need not be large to be successful, and are usually most successful when they have a sense of intimacy.



Courtyards with seating and water features.

Design Objectives

- Provide additional frontages for retail, commercial service, and office uses within the interiors of individual development blocks to increase pedestrian activity and economic vitality.
- Encourage walking, rather than driving, for short trips.
- Enhance the visual richness of the pedestrian experience.



Paseos with shops.

- Provide areas for quiet social interaction, outdoor dining, and passive recreation.

General Guidelines for Paseos and Courtyards:

- Small fountains utilizing water-saving technologies are encouraged in all of these intimate open spaces.
- Projecting, wall plaque, window and awning signs are encouraged to give uniqueness and visual interest to each paseo and courtyard.
- Sign sizes should be kept small in response to their pedestrian orientation, and relative size of the spaces.
- Iconic signs which express the individuality of businesses are encouraged.

Guidelines for Paseos:

- Provide a minimum width of 15 feet for through-block paseos. A minimum width of 8 feet is acceptable for entries to courtyards or individual single businesses.
- Courtyards along paseos are encouraged.
- Provide commercial uses, display windows, and active uses such as outdoor dining, whenever possible.
- Provide adequate lighting and plentiful landscaping utilizing a combination of ground plantings, pots, trellises, and building-mounted planter boxes to add variety and individuality to each paseo.
- Provide a variety of hardscape materials with an emphasis on small scale materials such as cobblestone, bricks or paving blocks.
- Flowering plants and trees are strongly encouraged.

Guidelines for Courtyards:

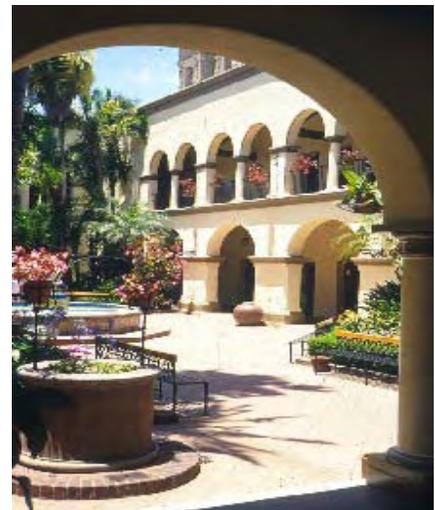
- Provide a minimum area of at least 400 square feet.
- Enclose on at least two sides by buildings.
- Provide a minimum width equal to the lowest building height fronting on the courtyard or 20 feet, whichever is greater.



Paseos with shops.



Paseos opening into a courtyard with pedestrian amenities.



Courtyard with landscaping and pedestrian amenities.

- Provide landscaping, lighting and pedestrian amenities.
- Include visual design interest on upper floors of building fronting on the courtyard (e.g., awnings, planter boxes, and/or balconies).

Guidelines for Pedestrian Pockets:

- Provide a minimum area of 300 square feet.
- When possible, locate pedestrian pocket near highly traveled pedestrian routes and nearby stores and/or higher density housing.
- Where possible, maintain sight-lines to the streetscape, public spaces and neighborhood activities.
- Provide adequate lighting, substantial landscaping, accent landscaping, seating areas and other pedestrian/bicycle amenities.
- Provides shade structures and/or shade trees.
- Provide opportunities for public art, fountains or other visual accents as part of pedestrian pocket design.



Pedestrian Pockets with landscape and seating (public or privately owned).

IRON HORSE TRAIL LINK

The Iron Horse Trail (IHT) Link will allow pedestrians and bicyclists to move easily between the Iron Horse Trail and the heart of the specific plan area at The Commons and the Village Green public spaces. Once within the Plan Area, pedestrians and bicyclists are free to move throughout the area via links to on-street bike paths. The IHT will also provides pedestrians and bicyclists living in the Plan Area easy and direct connection to Central Park, the City Center project and adjacent communities to the north and south. This open space may also provide passive recreation space for residents and employees in the area and/or a means to absorb storm water runoff.



Design Objectives

- Encourage increased pedestrian and bicycle travel to and from the shopping, employment, and residential uses within the Plan Area.
- Provide landscaped open space within the Specific Plan Area.
- Provide passive and active recreation opportunities for shoppers, workers, and residents.

Access

- Access to entries for uses lining the trail should be encouraged and accommodated.
- A pedestrian crosswalk equal to the width of the shared pedestrian and bicycle path should be provided at its intersection with Camino Ramon.
- Provide pedestrian crosswalks on Streets B and D, consistent with pedestrian safety, to improve connectivity between the IHT link and surrounding properties.

Landscaping and Paving

- Distinctive trees should be provided along each side of the shared pedestrian and bicycle path.
- A distinction of paving materials or color may be provided between primary spaces for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Consideration should be given to the incorporation of rain gardens and/or bio-swales along the trail as receptors and filters for storm water runoff.

Amenities

- Provide shade, benches, drinking fountain facilities and other amenities along the length of the shared pedestrian and bicycle path.
- Concentrate amenities at street crosswalks and building entries adjacent to the trail link.