

# Whittier Boulevard Improvements and Gateway Landmarks

Montebello, CA



Whittier Boulevard spans two miles through the heart of Montebello between neighboring East Los Angeles and Pico Rivera. Freeways, shopping malls, economic decline, single-use zoning and 1971 earthquake damage had sapped the corridor's vitality, especially in downtown. FTB was selected to prepare a Specific Plan and subsequent streetscape improvement project. Developed through a public workshop process, the improvements accented downtown with a colonnade of palm trees, reconfigured parking lots to enable them to serve as temporary plazas, and provided gateway markers for Whittier Boulevard's city entrances and downtown parking lots.



AFTER: View of the completed streetscape and landmark improvements. Trees and streetlights are located and sized to visually "narrow" the wide arterial road, strengthen boulevard character, and enhance pedestrian comfort.

## BEFORE

- Whittier Boulevard was an auto-oriented strip corridor struggling with disinvestment, yet its downtown storefronts marked the historical and physical heart of the city.



BEFORE: The street's format did not support walkable retail.

## ASSIGNMENT

- Design streetscapes to support the revitalization of Whittier Boulevard's downtown segment.
- Develop gateway designs to mark the east and west city entrances on Whittier Boulevard.
- Reconfigure two city parking lots to enable their use as special events plazas.
- Prepare Phase I and II construction documents.

## OUTCOMES

- Phase I streetscape improvements (4<sup>th</sup> Street to 10<sup>th</sup> Street) were completed in 2006.
- The Phase I project received the Southern California Chapter of the American Public Works Association Project of the Year Award for cities of 50,000 – 100,000 in population.
- Phase II streetscape improvements (Pico Rivera border to 4<sup>th</sup> Street) were completed in 2011.

**CLIENT:** City of Montebello, CA

**IN COLLABORATION WITH:** AAE Inc., SFE Landscape Architects, Rempel Architects, Dream Engineering

**FTB:** When this project was completed the firm name was Freedman Tung & Bottomley (FTB).



Plan view of street and landmark improvement concepts within the downtown segment of the Whittier Boulevard corridor. Each segment is tailored to support its land use and district character.



Distinctive entry sign features announce gateway locations at the east and west ends of the Whittier Boulevard corridor. The thematically related Crossroads landmark highlights the intersection of Whittier and Montebello Boulevards.