

GET AROUND
DOWNTOWN BROWNSVILLE

This section focuses on how people access and move through Downtown Brownsville today and in the future. It describes the existing transportation network, including streets, parking, transit, and pedestrian and bicycle conditions, as well as key barriers to mobility. The section also highlights planned and ongoing transportation improvements that support safer travel, better connectivity, and a more walkable Downtown.

MOVING AROUND DOWNTOWN

Downtown Brownsville has long been shaped by the movement of people and goods. Its location on the border, near the coast, and at the center of regional and international connections has made it a place of arrival, exchange, and transition. From early trade and transportation routes to today's highways, transit systems, pedestrian crossings, and the emerging space industry, transportation has played a central role in how Downtown has grown and how it functions today. Transportation planning for Downtown builds on this legacy. It supports citywide, regional, and international movement while reinforcing Downtown as a walkable, active place that reinforces daily life, local businesses, and civic identity.

Downtown Brownsville and the Rio Grande Valley

Downtown Brownsville has the potential to be the key urban center for the entire Rio Grande Valley. As the historic heart of the region and a key international gateway, Downtown has long supported regional travel, cross-border movement, and access to civic, cultural, and institutional destinations that draw people from across the Rio Grande Valley.

This role shapes how people arrive in Downtown. Major streets leading into the core connect to regional highways, international routes, and surrounding communities, and they form the primary gateways into Downtown. The performance of these corridors affects both regional mobility and the experience of entering Downtown Brownsville.

Transportation planning at the regional level focuses on making these gateways work well. Routes into Downtown must move traffic efficiently while clearly signaling arrival into a distinct urban environment. Managing regional access while reinforcing Downtown's identity as a place and not just a pass-through is essential to its long-term success.

Downtown as a Destination

At the citywide level, Downtown Brownsville is a destination for civic life, culture, and commerce. Residents from across the City come to Downtown for services, events, and everyday activities concentrated in the historic core, making it one of the most visible and active parts of the City.

Downtown's role as a destination depends on how people experience arrival and movement once they reach the area. Daily travel patterns are shaped by work, services, and routine visits, while periodic surges during festivals, markets, and other peak periods bring higher levels of activity and demand. These changing conditions influence how parking, circulation, and access are perceived throughout Downtown.

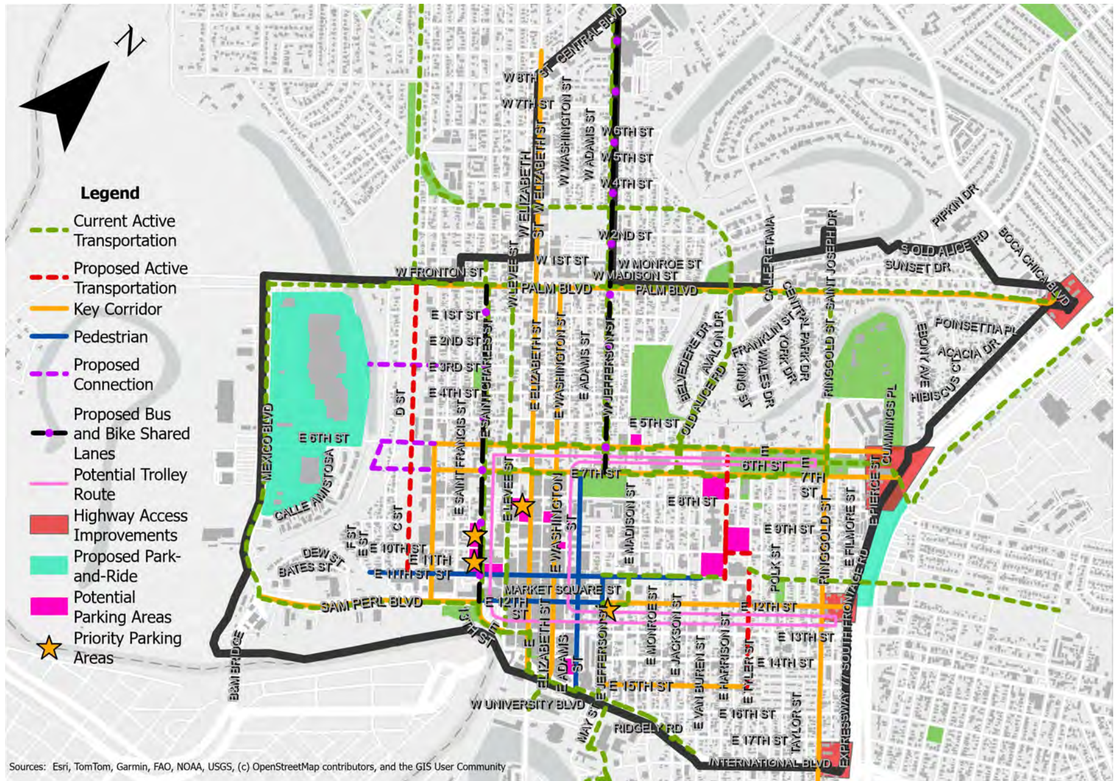
Citywide transportation goals focus on supporting clear, intuitive access into Downtown and a comfortable experience within the core. When access, parking, and movement work together, Downtown functions as a connected district where people can spend time, move easily between destinations, and experience Downtown as a cohesive place.

Transportation for Daily Life in Downtown

For people who live, work, study, and operate businesses Downtown, transportation is part of daily life. Streets, sidewalks, transit stops, and parking areas shape how people move through their routines, access services, and interact with their surroundings throughout the day.

Daily conditions matter more than peak moments for Downtown residents and workers. Reliable sidewalks, comfortable crossings, manageable traffic speeds, predictable parking, and convenient transit access all influence how easy it is to get around and how welcoming Downtown feels on an everyday basis. These elements shape not only mobility, but also perceptions of safety, comfort, and ease of use.

Local transportation goals focus on supporting daily routines while reinforcing Downtown as a place to spend time, not just pass through. When everyday movement works well, Downtown functions as a walkable, connected, and livable district that can support long-term activity and investment.



Map 18. Downtown Mobility Map

PARKING IN DOWNTOWN

Parking plays a supporting role in how Downtown Brownsville functions as a destination and an everyday place. The Downtown parking system must balance short-term access for businesses, long-term growth, and peak event demand while reinforcing walking, circulation, and Downtown character. Parking should be managed as a shared resource that supports Downtown activity without encouraging unnecessary vehicle movement within the core.

On-Street Parking as a Downtown Asset

On-street parking plays a critical role in supporting Downtown businesses and shaping street character. It should be managed as short-term, high-turnover parking that prioritizes storefront access, supports everyday activity, and contributes to pedestrian safety and comfort.

- Short-Term, High-Turnover Priority: Manage on-street parking along commercial streets to support quick visits and business access through consistent time limits, predictable enforcement, and clear, visible signage.
- Consistency and Legibility: Improve striping, signage, and curb markings so parking regulations are easy to understand, applied consistently across Downtown, and intuitive for residents and visitors alike.
- Safety, Visibility, and Traffic Calming: Use curb parking strategically to maintain clear sight lines at intersections, visually narrow travel lanes, reduce vehicle speeds, and buffer sidewalks from moving traffic, particularly on pedestrian-oriented streets.
- Flexible Curb Management: Allow curb space to adapt to changing needs, including loading, ride share, and special events, while maintaining reliable on-street access for daily Downtown activity.

Parking Garages as Downtown Access

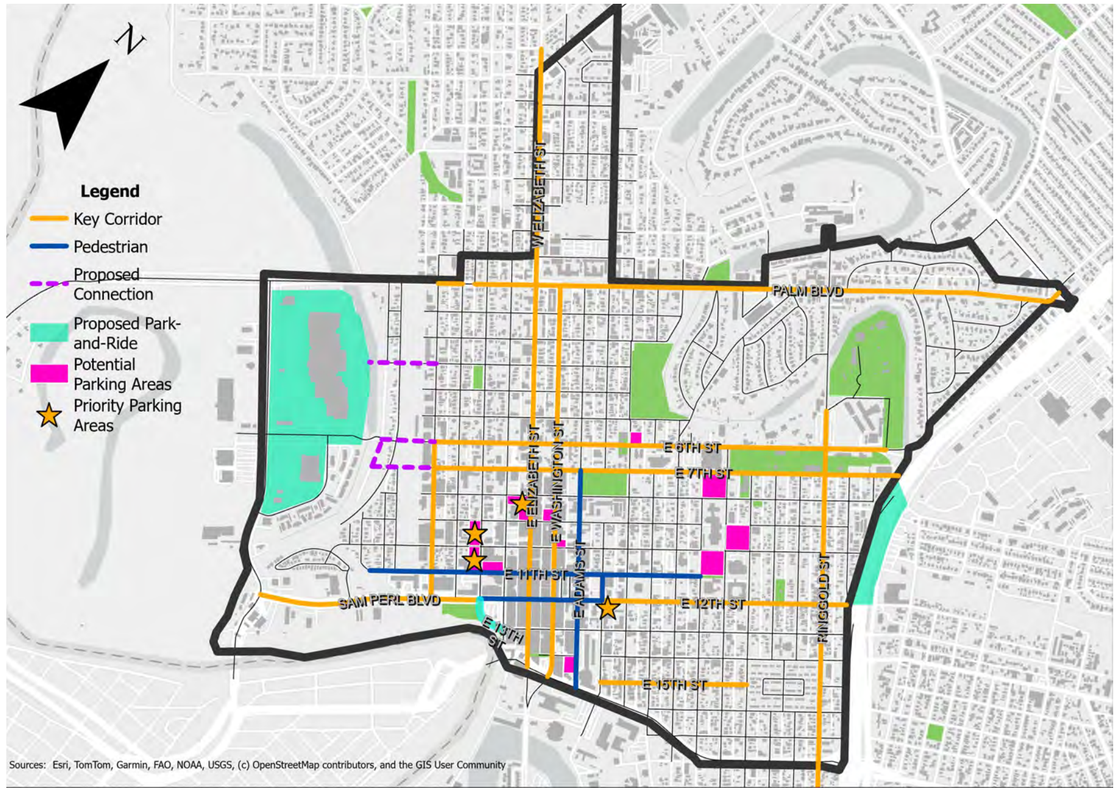
Structured parking should support Downtown access and growth while reinforcing pedestrian-priority corridors and minimizing traffic impacts on walkable streets. Parking garage locations should strengthen clear, comfortable walking connections into the Downtown Core.

- St. Charles Street Civic Parking (9th–11th Streets): Prioritize City-owned lots along St. Charles Street between 9th and 11th Streets. These sites are appropriately sized and directly connected to the pedestrian-priority corridors of 11th and 12th Streets.
- 7th Street Cultural District Parking: Support structured parking on county-owned lots near 7th Street to serve visitors entering Downtown along 6th and 7th Streets and accessing cultural destinations, with potential support from a future trolley circulator.
- Adams Street Paseo Support (7th–8th Streets): Utilize the City-owned lot along Adams Street between 7th and 8th Streets to support Adams Street's role as a pedestrian-priority paseo and strengthen access to nearby Downtown destinations.
- Wayfinding and Pedestrian Access: Emphasize early wayfinding to parking garages and clear, comfortable pedestrian routes that reduce circulation within the Downtown Core and support walkability.

Park-and-Ride and Event Parking

Park-and-ride plays a supporting role in managing peak parking demand during major Downtown events while protecting pedestrian-oriented streets and public spaces. These strategies should intercept vehicles before they reach the Downtown Core and provide clear, convenient access to Downtown destinations.

- Event-Focused Park-and-Ride Strategy: Use park-and-ride primarily during large festivals, markets, and civic events to manage temporary surges in parking demand and reduce congestion within the Downtown Core.
- Amigoland as a Key Park-and-Ride Option: Utilize Amigoland as a major park-and-ride option due to its available space, proximity to Downtown, and direct access from regional corridors, particularly during peak event periods.
- Under-Highway and Edge Locations: Explore opportunities for park-and-ride facilities in underutilized areas beneath or adjacent to highways and other edge locations that allow vehicles to be intercepted before entering Downtown streets.
- Shuttle, Trolley, and Wayfinding Support: Support park-and-ride operations with shuttle or trolley service, clear wayfinding, and advance communication so visitors understand where to park and how to reach Downtown destinations easily.



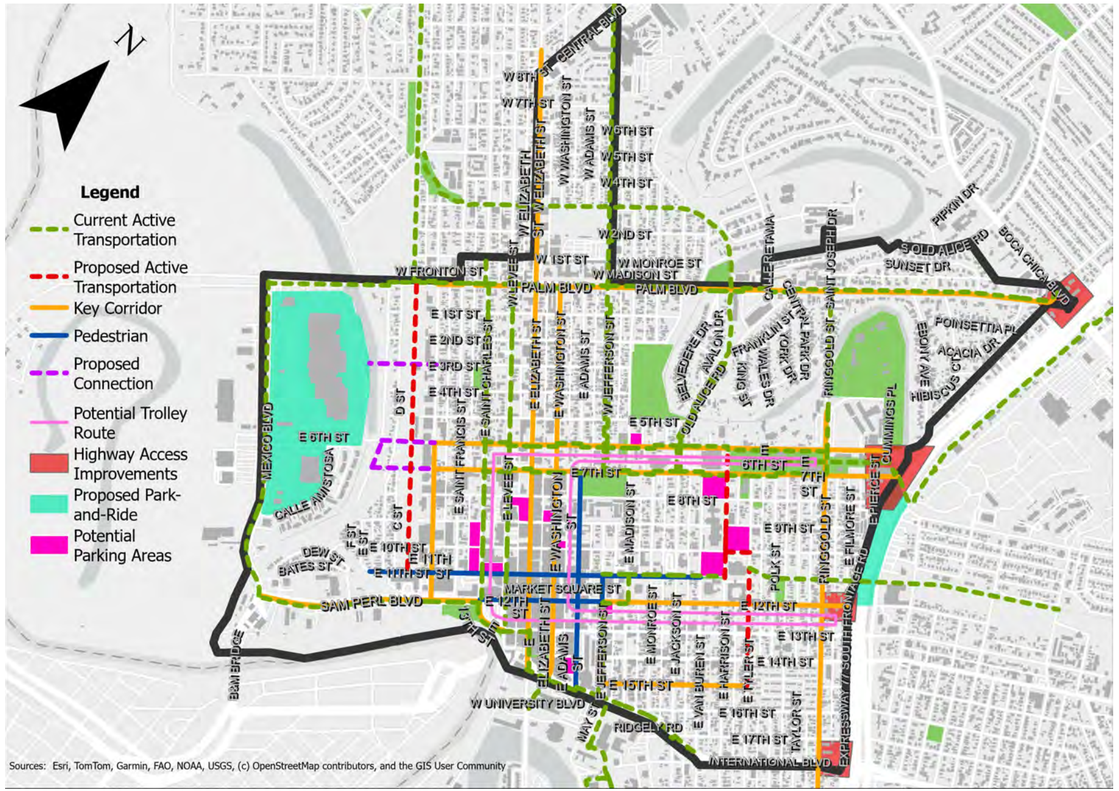
Map 19. Parking Recommendations Map



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active transportation plays a central role in how Downtown Brownsville functions and feels. Walking and biking are essential to Downtown's economic vitality, daily activity, and identity as a place to gather, explore, and connect. Improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure supports local businesses, enhances safety, and strengthens connections between Downtown destinations, surrounding neighborhoods, and regional assets.

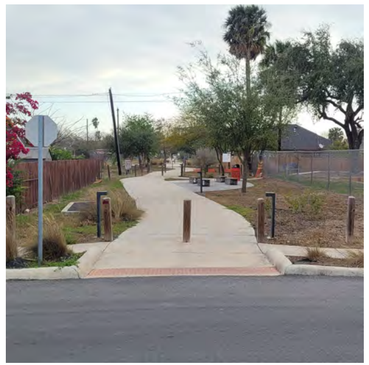
- **Strengthening the Pedestrian Environment:** Prioritize continuous, accessible sidewalks throughout Downtown, with particular attention to curb ramps, cross slopes, and sidewalk obstructions. Improvements should focus on comfort and safety, including better lighting, shade, and seating, to support walking as the primary way people move between Downtown destinations.
- **Improving Safety at Major Crossings:** Address wide streets and high traffic volumes by shortening crossing distances, improving crosswalk visibility, and adding pedestrian refuge islands where appropriate. Signal timing should reflect appropriate walking speeds and accommodate people of all ages and abilities, especially along major corridors such as International Boulevard and Palm Boulevard.
- **Creating Low-Stress Bicycle Facilities:** Expand bicycle infrastructure that is comfortable for a broad range of users by prioritizing protected bicycle facilities, shared-use paths, or traffic-calmed streets over unprotected striped lanes. Bicycle routes should feel intuitive and safe for residents, visitors, and less experienced riders.
- **Building a Connected Active Transportation Network:** Coordinate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure with transit, parking, and emerging mobility options. Secure bicycle parking and clear wayfinding should be provided near major destinations and transit stops to support first- and last-mile trips.
- **Integrating Active Transportation with Other Modes:** Coordinate walking and biking infrastructure with transit, parking, and emerging mobility options through secure bicycle parking, clear wayfinding, and convenient first- and last-mile connections.
- **Supporting Regional and International Connections:** Plan active transportation improvements that strengthen long-term connections to regional trails and the International Bridge. While not all connections can be implemented immediately, establishing clear priorities helps position Downtown for future investments that expand access and reinforce Brownsville's role as a regional center.



Map 20. Active Transportation Map



11th Street between Washington and Elizabeth



Trail Path at Polk Street

Pedestrian Priority in Downtown Brownsville

Walking is the primary way people experience Downtown Brownsville, particularly for commerce, events, and civic activity. Pedestrian improvements should reinforce Downtown as a place designed first for people rather than vehicle movement.

- Treat the Downtown Core as a pedestrian-priority environment, where street design decisions emphasize slow speeds, frequent crossings, and comfortable walking conditions.
- Reduce the impact of wide and high-volume streets that currently divide Downtown from surrounding areas by prioritizing pedestrian movement across these corridors.
- Strengthen pedestrian access to destinations that define Downtown's identity, including cultural sites, parks, public spaces, event areas, and the International Bridge.
- Improve daily walkability for residents, workers, and students by ensuring that pedestrian routes feel continuous, intuitive, and safe throughout the Downtown area.
- Expand the functional pedestrian network by making use of alleys and lower-volume streets as part of everyday circulation, not just special-event spaces.

Bicycle Access and Downtown Connectivity

Bicycling in Downtown Brownsville should support short trips, neighborhood access, and connections to regional destinations, while retaining appropriate traffic conditions and street context.

- Support bicycle travel as a practical way to access Downtown from nearby neighborhoods and activity areas to reinforce routes that are most effective for daily users.
- Emphasize bicycle movement along streets and routes where traffic conditions allow for comfortable riding without undermining Downtown's pedestrian character.
- Strengthen bicycle access to Downtown destinations, transit services, and public spaces to support first- and last-mile trips.
- Coordinate bicycle improvements with redevelopment, street reconstruction, and utility projects to incrementally improve conditions over time.
- Maintain flexibility to support future regional and international bicycle connections as part of broader trail and mobility initiatives.

Alley Activation

Downtown Brownsville's alleys present an opportunity to expand the walkable network, support Downtown activity, and introduce new public spaces within the existing street grid. Recent City-led work, including the *Market Square Alleyway Concept*, demonstrates how targeted improvements can activate alleys while maintaining essential service and access functions. Alley activation should proceed through a combination of Downtown-wide strategies and focused investment in priority locations.

Alley Activation Across Downtown

Across Downtown, alley activation should be approached as a flexible, incremental strategy. Not all alleys will function the same way, but many can support improved pedestrian movement and limited activation over time.

- Recognize alleys as part of the Downtown pedestrian network, providing secondary walking routes that complement primary streets and reduce pressure on major corridors.
- Focus on visibility, continuity, and safety by improving lighting, entrances, and wayfinding so alleys read as intentional public spaces rather than back-of-house areas.
- Use low-cost, phased improvements such as surface treatments, murals, lighting, seating, and planters to test activation potential before permanent investment.
- Balance activation with operational needs, including loading, waste collection, utilities, and emergency access, through clear zoning and management strategies.
- Coordinate long-term maintenance and programming responsibilities to ensure activated alleys remain functional and inviting.

Priority Alleyways

- Market Square Alleyway (Washington–Adams, 12th–13th): The alley identified in the Market Square Alleyway Concept should remain the highest-priority activation project. Its location adjacent to Market Square positions it as a natural extension of an existing activity hub and a pilot for future alley projects Downtown.
- Alleys Supporting Adams Street as a Walkable Spine: Alleys running parallel to Adams Street between Adams and Washington and between Adams and Jefferson should be prioritized to reinforce Adams Street as a pedestrian-oriented corridor. Activation along these alleys, particularly between International Boulevard and 10th Street, can provide additional walking routes, support adjacent businesses, and strengthen Adams Street's role as a Downtown destination.







Market Square Alleyway Design Concepts from City of Brownsville Market Square Alleyway June 20, 2025

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Fixed-route bus transit forms the central axis of mobility in Downtown Brownsville today, supported by a strong regional hub at the La Plaza at Brownsville Multimodal Terminal and the highest level of transit service in the Rio Grande Valley. Recent planning efforts, including the completed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) study, reinforce Downtown's role as the anchor of the City's transit network and provide a framework for phased, integrated transit improvements.

Transit

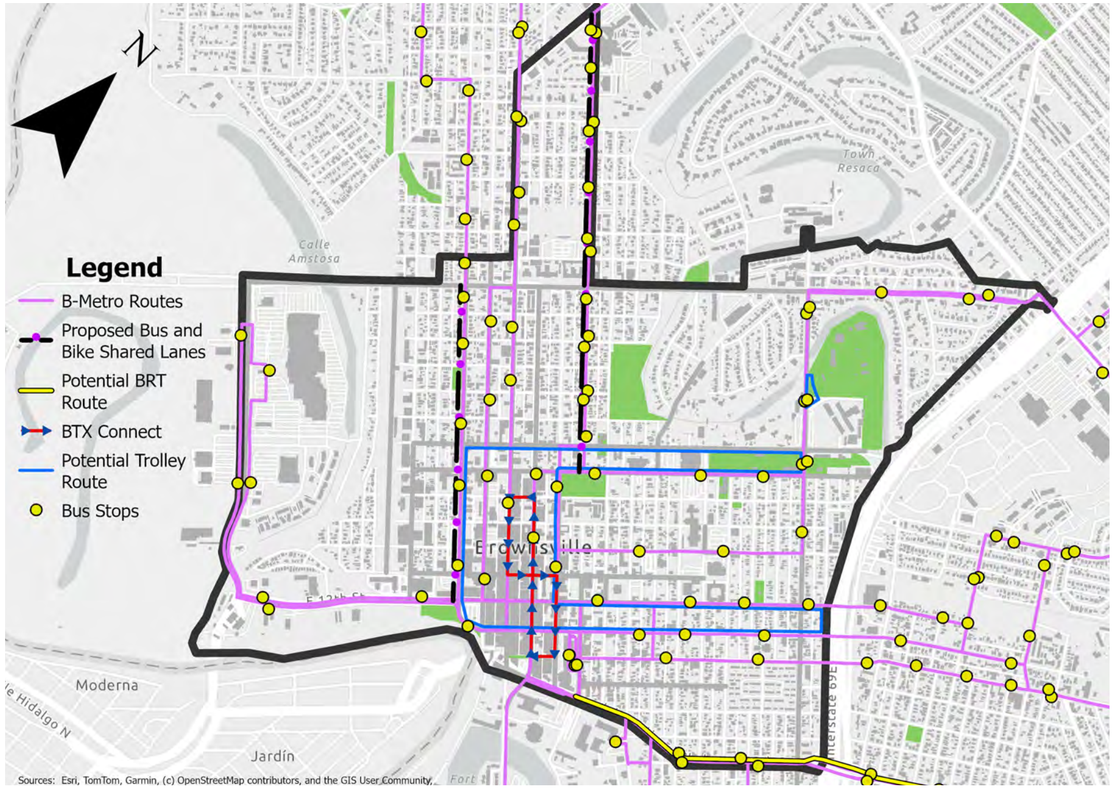
- **Downtown as the Regional Transit Hub:** Downtown Brownsville functions as a primary transfer point for local and regional bus service, supporting access to jobs, education, healthcare, and civic destinations. Transit planning should reinforce Downtown as a place where routes converge and riders can easily transition to walking and other modes.
- **Optimizing Strong Existing Service for Daily Use:** With B-Metro already providing the highest level of transit service in the region, improvements should focus on usability rather than expansion. Priorities include better access to the terminal, clearer wayfinding, and stronger connections between stops and nearby Downtown destinations.
- **Positioning Downtown for Future Transit Enhancements:** The recently completed BRT study, which proposes improved east–west connections from the Downtown terminal, highlights the need to maintain flexibility in Downtown streets and curbs. Transit planning should ensure Downtown is prepared to support future higher-capacity service while continuing to serve everyday travel needs.

Downtown Trolley Circulator and Demand-Responsive Transit

- **Fixed-Route Trolley Circulator Service:** A Downtown circulator operating on a consistent, fixed route can support short trips between key destinations such as Market Square, cultural sites, parking areas, and civic spaces. This service should complement existing B-Metro routes by focusing on internal Downtown movement rather than regional travel.
- **Event-Based Trolley Pilot Service:** A trolley operating on a fixed route during festivals, markets, and other peak activity periods can serve as a pilot program to manage congestion and support pedestrian-focused streets. Event-based service allows the City to test routing, branding, and operations before committing to a permanent circulator.
- **Demand-Responsive Transit (DRT) as a Supplemental Tool:** Demand-responsive transit may supplement fixed-route service during off-peak periods or in situations where traditional routes are less effective. Any DRT service should remain closely coordinated with B-Metro operations and be used to improve access without duplicating or competing with core bus service.



La Plaza at Brownsville Multimodal Terminal serves as the primary hub for local and regional transit, anchoring Downtown's role as the center of the City's bus network. It provides a central location where routes converge, enabling convenient transfers and access to key destinations across Brownsville and the broader Rio Grande Valley.



Map 21. Transit Map

Regional Connections and Inter-agency Coordination

Downtown Brownsville's regional connections shape first impressions, safety, and access to the Downtown Core, yet many of these facilities extend beyond City jurisdiction. Key access points including highway connections at Palm Boulevard and 6th and 7th Streets, as well as Gateway International Bridge (located on International Boulevard), require coordination among multiple agencies and governments. While the City does not control the international bridge, it plays a critical role in shaping outcomes through sustained coordination and advocacy. Recommendations in this section focus on aligning City priorities with partners such as TxDOT, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO), federal agencies, and international counterparts.

Highway Access at Palm Boulevard

The Palm Boulevard connection functions as a major northern gateway into Downtown and carries high traffic volumes. Improvements at this location require close coordination with TxDOT and RGVMPO to address safety, operations, and the transition from high-speed highway travel into a downtown context. City priorities should focus on pedestrian safety, access management, and gateway design while working within TxDOT standards and regionally programmed projects.

Highway Access at 6th and 7th Streets

The 6th and 7th Street connections serve as important access points linking Downtown to regional destinations and civic and cultural facilities. Coordination with TXDOT and RGVMPO is needed to address operational challenges, improve safety, and align improvements with regional mobility goals, while supporting Downtown's role as a pedestrian-oriented destination.

International Boulevard and the International Bridge

International Boulevard and the International Bridge represent one of Downtown Brownsville's most complex regional connections, involving the City, Cameron County, TxDOT, RGVMPO, the General Services Administration, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and international partners in Heroica Matamoros, Mexico, and the federal governments of the United States and Mexico. As bridge reconstruction and related improvements move forward, maintaining and strengthening pedestrian connectivity between the port-of-entry and Downtown should remain a City priority, with emphasis on safe crossings, clear wayfinding, and legible connections to Downtown destinations.

Sustained Interagency Coordination and Regional Alignment

Progress on regional connections will require early engagement, consistent communication, and alignment with RGVMPO planning and programming processes. The City should continue to advocate for Downtown-supportive outcomes, ensure pedestrian considerations are integrated into regional projects, and position priority improvements for future state and federal funding opportunities.



Aerial View of Highway Access at Palm Boulevard



Aerial View of Highway Access at 6th and 7th Streets

KEY MOBILITY PROJECTS FOR DOWNTOWN

The connections described in this section represent significant opportunities to improve access, circulation, and connectivity between Downtown Brownsville and surrounding areas. These projects focus on completing key corridors that cannot be addressed through incremental street or sidewalk improvements alone. While these projects will require substantial investment and coordination across multiple agencies, these projects play an important role in strengthening Downtown's function as a regional destination and activity center.

6th and 7th Street Connection to the Amigoland Area

The Amigoland area does not have a direct, central connection into Downtown Brownsville that supports flexible traffic circulation and event-related access. This limits routing options during large Downtown events and concentrates traffic on Palm Boulevard and International Boulevard, reducing the feasibility of using Amigoland strategically for park-and-ride operations and congestion management.

The one-way pair of 6th and 7th Streets represent a clear opportunity to address this gap. As a one-way pair, these streets already function as a primary route through Downtown and serve as a natural "showcase" corridor for arrivals from the highway, passing parks, museums, and cultural destinations before reaching the Downtown Core. Extending this route across the levee would create a continuous, legible connection between Amigoland and Downtown, while also providing an alternative approach that could relieve pressure on Palm Boulevard and International Boulevard.

A feasible receiving roadway exists on the Amigoland side of the levee, but it is not currently aligned to accommodate both directions of the 6th and 7th Street one-way pair. Any future connection would therefore require a carefully designed crossing and intersection that safely merges traffic from both streets, manages turning movements, and functions reliably during peak event conditions. Addressing this misalignment would require significant engineering, capital investment, and inter-agency coordination, but would substantially improve Downtown access, event operations, and overall network resilience over the long term.

Pedestrian Crossings at International Boulevard (Adams Street and Ringgold Street)

International Boulevard functions as a major arterial providing access to the international bridge to Matamoros and carries high traffic volumes, particularly during peak periods of international travel. Pedestrians currently cross International Boulevard at multiple locations, but these movements are often uncomfortable to walk or bicycle on and conflict with traffic operations, especially during peak hours. As a result, International Boulevard acts as a significant barrier between Downtown and areas immediately to the southeast, even where pedestrian demand exists.

Adams Street and Ringgold Street represent two important corridors that extend directly to International Boulevard and highlight the opportunity to improve pedestrian connectivity. Adams Street has the potential to function as a pedestrian-oriented axis, particularly given its role in connecting Downtown to the university district on the east side of International Boulevard. Ringgold Street provides a key neighborhood connection through areas directly east of Downtown and supports everyday movement between residential areas. Strengthening pedestrian crossings at these two locations would help unlock this connectivity potential.

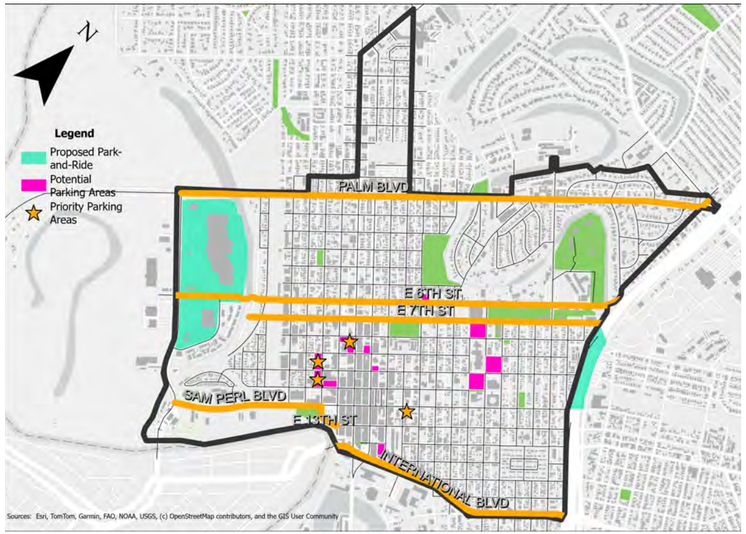
The primary challenge is balancing pedestrian access with the operational demands of a high-volume international arterial. Pedestrian crossings at Adams Street and Ringgold Street must be designed to function safely and legibly without compromising bridge access or regional traffic flow, particularly during peak travel periods. Addressing this challenge will require coordination with RGVMPO, Cameron County, TXDOT and federal partners as bridge operations and related improvements continue, with an emphasis on protecting pedestrian connectivity as a long-term priority.

CORRIDORS INTO DOWNTOWN

Downtown Brownsville is where regional travel, citywide movement, and local activity come together. The streets that connect to Downtown must handle traffic coming from across the Rio Grande Valley, nearby neighborhoods, and international destinations, while also providing access to Downtown jobs, services, cultural destinations, and events. How these corridors work has a direct impact on congestion, safety, travel times, and how welcoming Downtown feels to residents and visitors.

Looking at these streets as connected corridors rather than as individual intersections helps explain how people actually get into and move through Downtown. Each corridor serves a different purpose and experiences different conditions, but they work together as part of a larger system. When one corridor becomes congested or difficult to navigate, traffic often shifts to others, affecting access and travel throughout Downtown. Thinking in terms of the full network makes it easier to understand these relationships and plan improvements that work together.

The corridors discussed in this section, Palm Boulevard, 6th and 7th Streets, and International Boulevard, are the main routes people use to enter and travel through Downtown. Each plays a different role, from regional and international access to Downtown circulation and event-related travel. The following pages describe current conditions and future direction for each corridor, recognizing that improving Downtown access requires approaches tailored to how each corridor functions.



Map 22. Map of Key Corridors into Downtown

Palm Boulevard

Palm Boulevard is one of Downtown Brownsville's most important access corridors, running northeast to southwest as it connects regional and international traffic to the Downtown Core while also serving adjacent neighborhoods along its length. Its function shifts as it approaches Downtown, making it a critical but complex corridor to manage.

Existing Conditions



Palm Boulevard at Ringgold Street

Palm Boulevard carries a mix of regional, citywide, and local traffic. It provides direct access from the expressway into Downtown and also accommodates traffic associated with international travel from the bridge on the west side of the Amigoland area. As a result, Palm Boulevard functions both as a major entry route into Downtown and as a through-corridor for traffic moving across the City. This dual role makes Palm Boulevard a key pressure valve in the broader access system, particularly when other corridors are constrained.

As Palm Boulevard approaches and moves through Downtown, its context changes significantly. Beginning at the northeastern end of the corridor, Palm Boulevard passes through a historical residential neighborhood, provides access to Washington and Elizabeth Street in the Downtown Core, and then connects with the Amigoland area and Mexico Boulevard at its southeastern end. Despite these context shifts, traffic speeds often remain high, contributing to recurring speeding concerns and safety issues. The lack of clear transitions between Palm Boulevard's regional access role and its Downtown and neighborhood contexts creates tension between mobility, safety, and quality of life along the corridor.

Recommendations



Palm Boulevard at Calle Retama

Future improvements along Palm Boulevard should respond to its changing role along its length rather than applying a single, uniform approach. Strategies should recognize Palm's Boulevard importance as a regional access route, a Downtown gateway, and a street that directly affects adjacent neighborhoods.

- Gateway Role and Corridor Transitions: Reinforce Palm Boulevard's transition from a regional corridor to a Downtown street through gateway treatments and context-sensitive operations that reflect surrounding land uses and activity levels.
- Landscape Character and Shade: Strengthen Palm Boulevard's identity with layered palm plantings that combine taller and shorter palms to provide shade and reinforce the corridor's distinctive character, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Speed Management and Safety: Address speeding and safety concerns by aligning operating speeds with surrounding land uses and corridor activity, particularly where Palm Boulevard functions more as a city street than a through-route.
- Downtown Access System Performance: Manage Palm Boulevard as part of the broader Downtown access system to accommodate regional traffic while minimizing cut-through traffic and speeding on adjacent streets.

6th and 7th Streets

6th and 7th Streets function as a paired corridor through the center of Downtown Brownsville and play a central role in how people arrive, move through, and experience the Downtown Core. Running through the City's civic and cultural district, these streets pass major parks, museums, and event spaces and shape the experience of Downtown for residents and visitors alike.

Existing Conditions

6th and 7th Streets operate as a one-way pair and form one of the most intuitive and continuous routes through Downtown. Their alignment through the Mitte Cultural District, including proximity to Washington Park and other civic destinations makes them a natural path for visitors attending events, accessing cultural attractions, and moving between Downtown destinations. As a result, these streets are closely tied to peak activity periods and special events.

In addition to their cultural role, 6th and 7th Streets serve an important circulation function within the Downtown network. They distribute traffic through the Downtown Core, provide access to parking and adjacent neighborhoods, and offer an alternative to Palm Boulevard and International Boulevard for both entering and traversing Downtown. While residential edges exist nearby, the dominant context is civic and cultural, and the corridor already supports a broader mix of users and activities than many other Downtown streets.

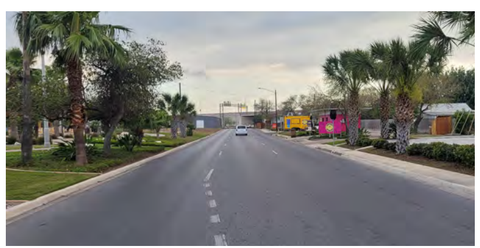


6th Street at Ringgold Street

Recommendations

Future improvements along 6th and 7th Streets should reinforce their role as the preferred route through the heart of Downtown, particularly for visitors, cultural destinations, and event-related travel.

- Preferred Downtown Arrival and Showcase Corridor: Reinforce 6th and 7th Streets as the primary path for experiencing Downtown's civic and cultural assets. Improvements should emphasize legibility, clear wayfinding, and a consistent sense of arrival that signals entry into the Downtown Core and highlights parks, museums, and civic destinations along the corridor.
- Event and Peak-Period Performance: Prioritize the ability of 6th and 7th Streets to function reliably during festivals, events, and other peak activity periods. Corridor strategies should support flexible traffic management, clear routing for visitors, and efficient access to event venues, parking areas, and surrounding destinations, reducing confusion and congestion during high-demand times.
- Downtown Circulation and Network Role: Strengthen the role of 6th and 7th Streets within the broader Downtown access system so they effectively distribute traffic through Downtown and complement Palm Boulevard and International Boulevard. Improvements should support balanced use of the Downtown street network, reduce pressure on other entry corridors, and position 6th and 7th Streets to accommodate future connectivity and access changes while maintaining their civic and cultural character.


7th Street at Ringgold Street

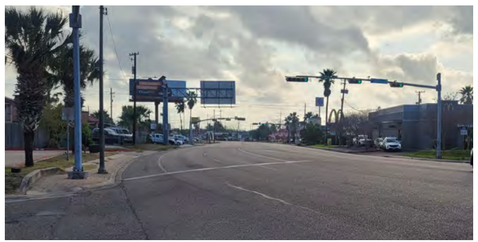
International Boulevard

International Boulevard currently functions as the southern edge of Downtown Brownsville and serves as a major arterial carrying traffic to and from the Gateway International Bridge adjacent to Downtown. Its role in supporting cross-border travel shapes how Downtown access is experienced today, while also influencing how connections across the corridor are perceived.

Existing Conditions

International Boulevard functions primarily as a high-capacity arterial serving international travel demand. Traffic volumes fluctuate significantly throughout the day, with congestion peaking during periods of heavy bridge use. These peak conditions can dominate corridor operations, resulting in delays, queuing, and limited flexibility for local access. Because traffic patterns are driven largely by cross-border activity, conditions along International Boulevard are often unpredictable from a Downtown perspective.

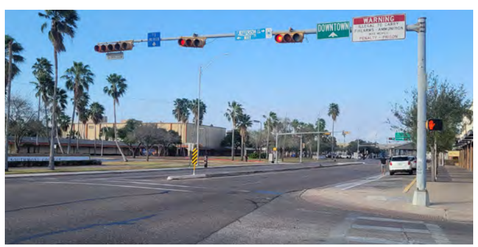
Under current conditions, the scale, traffic volumes, and peak-period congestion along International Boulevard reinforce its role as a physical and operational edge to Downtown. Movement across and along the corridor can be difficult, particularly during peak travel periods, which limits connectivity between Downtown and adjacent areas. Over time, changes in operations, coordination, and investment could help reduce this barrier effect, allowing the corridor to function more as a connection than a dividing line without altering its essential arterial role.


International Boulevard at Monroe Street

Recommendations

Future planning along International Boulevard should recognize its primary role as a border-serving arterial while seeking to reduce its barrier effect on downtown access over time.

- Peak-Period Congestion Management: Focus on strategies that improve reliability and manage congestion during peak international travel periods, recognizing that these conditions are driven by cross-border demand and cannot be fully resolved through local actions alone.
- Reducing Barrier Effects at the Downtown Interface: Seek opportunities to lessen the physical and operational barrier created by International Boulevard where it interfaces with downtown, improving access and legibility without compromising the corridor's arterial function.
- Long-Term Coordination and Corridor Stewardship: Coordinate with TXDOT, RGVMPO, Cameron County, and federal partners to manage international traffic operations and long-term corridor performance. This includes aligning traffic routing strategies so that vehicles destined for Mexico are directed toward appropriate regional connections, such as University Avenue, rather than concentrating bridge-bound traffic along International Boulevard through downtown. Ongoing coordination is essential to ensuring that future bridge operations, reconstruction efforts, and related investments support both cross-border mobility and downtown access.



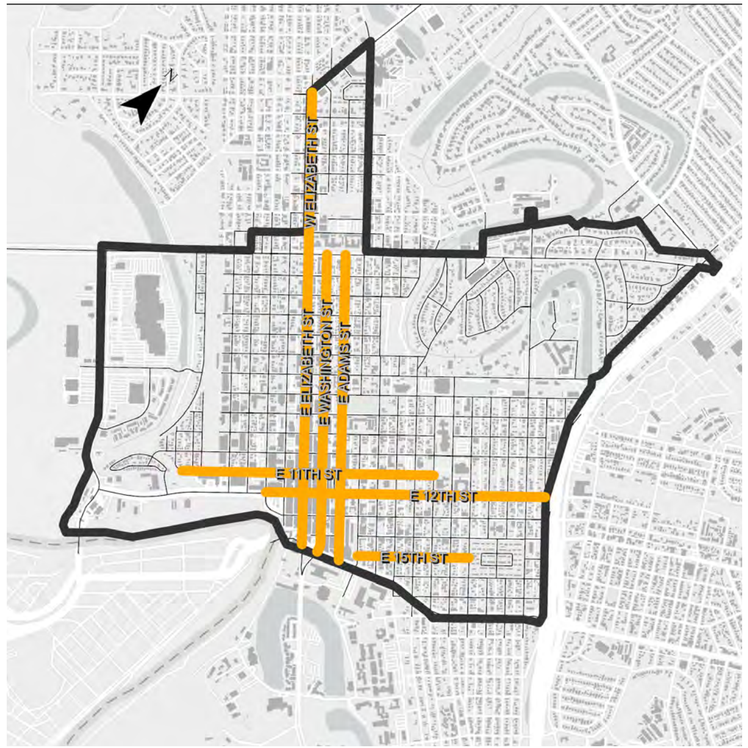
International Boulevard at Jefferson Street

CORRIDORS WITHIN DOWNTOWN

Within Downtown Brownsville, several key streets shape how people move between destinations and how Downtown functions as a place to spend time, shop, and do business. These corridors support everyday circulation, access to shops and services, and connections between civic spaces, parks, and neighborhoods. The way these streets operate has a direct influence on walkability, economic activity, and the overall experience of being in Downtown.

While corridors into Downtown focus on how people arrive from other parts of the City or region, corridors within Downtown should work for how people move once they are there. These streets must balance local vehicle access with the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and nearby residents and businesses. Because they carry shorter trips and higher levels of local activity, small changes to the street's design or operation can have an outsized impact on comfort, safety, and Downtown vitality.

These internal corridors help define Downtown as a connected district rather than a series of isolated destinations. By clarifying these corridors' roles and prioritizing improvements that support walking, access, and economic activity, Downtown Brownsville can strengthen its internal connections and create a more cohesive and inviting Downtown environment.



Map 23. Map of Key Corridors within Downtown

Washington and Elizabeth Streets

Washington and Elizabeth Streets operate as a one-way pair and function as the primary main streets of Downtown Brownsville. Together, they form the commercial and civic axis of Downtown, supporting everyday business activity, visitor access, and major destinations such as Market Square while also carrying traffic through the Downtown Core.

Existing Conditions

Washington and Elizabeth Streets operate as a coordinated one-way pair, with Elizabeth Street carrying traffic northwest and Washington Street carrying traffic southeast. Along their length through Downtown, the corridor serves an important mobility function, moving traffic efficiently and providing a clear, legible route for drivers entering and traveling through Downtown. Both streets are under TxDOT jurisdiction, which influences how traffic operations and design standards are applied.

As Downtown's main streets, Washington and Elizabeth Streets support a dense mix of shops, restaurants, civic uses, and cultural destinations, along with a high level of pedestrian activity throughout the day. Market Square, located immediately adjacent to Washington Street, reinforces the corridor's role as a destination rather than simply a through route. The one-way configuration and emphasis on vehicle movement can contribute to higher speeds and create tension with the corridor's role as a walkable, economically active Downtown street.

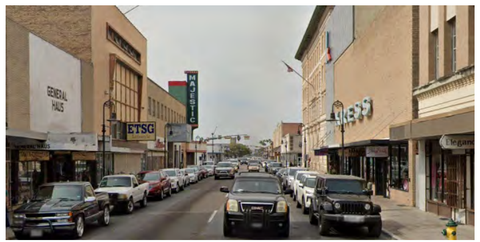


Washington Street at 11th Street

Recommendations

Future improvements along Washington and Elizabeth Streets should focus on strengthening their function as Downtown's main streets while continuing to support their role in citywide mobility.

- Downtown Main Street Performance: Reinforce Washington and Elizabeth Streets as destination-oriented Downtown streets that support local businesses, pedestrian activity, and civic life. Corridor operations should emphasize storefront access, visibility, and ease of movement for vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users particularly near Market Square and other high-activity blocks.
- Speed, Safety, and Access: Address speeding and through-traffic behavior by aligning operating speeds and intersection performance with a Downtown context. Improvements should enhance pedestrian comfort and safety, support convenient access to businesses and civic destinations, and reduce conflicts between local activity and vehicles moving through Downtown.
- Operational Coordination and Incremental Change: Pursue improvements through coordination with TxDOT that reflect Downtown priorities and can be implemented incrementally, focusing on operational adjustments and safety enhancements rather than large-scale reconstruction.



Elizabeth Street at 11th Street

PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY CORRIDORS

Pedestrian-focused streets are places where walking is safe, comfortable, and intuitive, and where the streets and roadways support daily activity rather than just moving traffic through Downtown. On these corridors, the goal is to improve comfort, access, and connections between destinations while balancing the needs of transit, emergency services, and local vehicle access. Focusing investment on key pedestrian priority corridors helps strengthen Downtown as a destination, supports local businesses, and makes it easier for people to move between parking, transit, and Downtown destinations.

11th and 12th Streets

The one-way pair of 11th and 12th Streets runs southwest and northeast through Downtown and, together with Adams and Washington Streets, frame Market Square. Historically, these streets supported some of the most concentrated commercial activity in Downtown due to their central location and proximity to key destinations, including their role as the primary route connecting the railroad to the Brownsville steamboat landing along the Rio Grande. Over time, commercial activity has shifted primarily to Washington and Elizabeth Streets, altering the role of 11th and 12th Streets within the Downtown street network.

Existing Conditions

Today, 11th and 12th Streets function as other streets in Downtown that support local access and circulation rather than destination-oriented activity. They carry lower traffic volumes than major corridors and serve a mix of nearby land uses, including smaller commercial buildings, offices, and residential homes. Their role is less prominent than that of Washington, Elizabeth, or Adams Streets, but they remain important components of Downtown circulation.

The physical scale of 11th and 12th Streets is well suited to walking. Narrower cross-sections, shorter blocks, and closely spaced intersections create a calmer street environment and shorter crossing distances than on larger Downtown corridors. The one-way pair of 11th and 12th Streets provides important pedestrian connections across Downtown, including direct routes between Market Square, surrounding commercial areas, and parking locations. Potential public parking garage sites along St. Charles Street would rely on clear, comfortable walking connections into the Downtown Core, and 11th and 12th Streets provide some of the most direct and intuitive paths for these movements. As part of the Downtown one-way street system, traffic on these streets moves consistently in one direction, shaping pedestrian crossing behavior and overall street character.

Recommendations

- Pedestrian-Focused Connector Streets: Strengthen 11th and 12th Streets as pedestrian-focused connector corridors that support comfortable, intuitive walking across Downtown. Improvements should emphasize their role in linking Market Square, surrounding commercial areas, and adjacent neighborhoods, helping distribute pedestrian activity beyond primary destination streets and reinforcing Downtown as a walkable district.
- Access to Parking and Downtown Destinations: Reinforce the role of 11th and 12th Streets as primary walking routes between Downtown destinations and parking locations. Potential public parking garage sites along St. Charles Street become more valuable with clear and direct pedestrian connections into the Downtown Core, and 11th and 12th Streets provide some of the most logical and legible paths to support this access for daily use and special events.
- Long-Term Circulation and Street Network Evolution: Position 11th and 12th Streets as candidates for future changes to Downtown circulation that support pedestrian comfort and safety. Over time, adjustments to traffic operations, including potential changes to one-way configurations, can be explored as part of a broader effort to simplify Downtown circulation, reduce vehicle dominance, and strengthen the pedestrian network.

Adams Street

Existing Conditions

Adams Street is a central commercial corridor within Downtown Brownsville and is a focus area with the potential to evolve over time. The street runs through the heart of Downtown, connecting Market Square, surrounding commercial blocks, civic destinations, and Washington Park, and linking the Downtown Core to International Boulevard. Its location and mix of uses make it one of the most visible and active streets within the Downtown network.

Land uses along Adams Street include retail, dining, and institutional uses that generate pedestrian activity throughout the day, with higher levels of activity during events and peak Downtown periods. Pedestrian conditions vary along the corridor depending on retail context, curb activity, and adjacent destinations. Blocks near Market Square and Washington Park tend to experience higher pedestrian presence, while areas closer to International Boulevard are shaped more strongly by transit activity and vehicle movements.

Adams Street also plays a significant operational role within Downtown. It carries transit service, and the La Plaza at Brownsville Multimodal Terminal is located along Adams Street at its intersection with International Boulevard, making the corridor an important access route for transit riders. In addition, the Brownsville Central Fire Station is located at 10th Street and Adams Street, requiring reliable emergency access and response. Traffic volumes along Adams Street, particularly between International Boulevard and 7th Street, are lower than on major Downtown arterials and vary by time of day. These factors influence how the street functions today and define the operational context for any future changes.

Recommendations

- Paseo-Oriented Downtown Corridor: Position Adams Street as a potential pedestrian-oriented “paseo” corridor, reflecting its central role in Downtown and its connection to Market Square, Washington Park, and surrounding commercial areas. A paseo approach is most appropriate along the segment between International Boulevard and 7th Street, where activity levels and traffic volumes support a stronger pedestrian emphasis.
- Transit, Emergency, and Operational Compatibility: Ensure that pedestrian-oriented changes along Adams Street remain compatible with transit service and emergency access. Adams Street must continue to accommodate bus routes and provide reliable access to the La Plaza at Brownsville Multimodal Terminal at International Boulevard, as well as support emergency response associated with the Brownsville Central Fire Station at 10th Street.
- Network Connections and Phased Implementation: Position Adams Street as a key pedestrian corridor within the Downtown network, with the potential to support a future walking connection to the university area if pedestrian access across International Boulevard is improved in the future. Within Downtown, early implementation should focus on the blocks between 11th Street and 12th Street, where pedestrian activity and proximity to Market Square are strongest, allowing improvements to be phased and refined over time.



Conceptual rendering of the Adams Street Shared Street

COMPLETE STREET CORRIDORS

In Downtown Brownsville, complete street corridors support safe, comfortable travel for people of all ages and abilities while continuing to accommodate local vehicle access. These streets play an important role in connecting neighborhoods to Downtown destinations and supporting everyday trips.

Ringgold Street

As part of the broader downtown street network, Ringgold Street helps connect east-of-Downtown neighborhoods to key corridors and regional routes. It plays a supporting role in distributing traffic and providing alternative paths outside the Downtown Core.

Existing Conditions

Ringgold Street runs northwest–southeast through neighborhoods east of Downtown Brownsville and does not pass through the Downtown commercial core. Instead, it functions as a connector street that links several major corridors, including Palm Boulevard, 6th and 7th Streets, and International Boulevard, and provides a parallel route close to the highway.

The corridor primarily serves neighborhood-scale travel and everyday trips rather than destination-oriented Downtown activity. Surrounding land uses are largely residential, with nearby access to civic and commercial destinations along the Downtown edge. Ringgold plays an important role in connecting east-of-Downtown neighborhoods to major corridors without requiring travel through the Downtown Core.

Ringgold Street operates primarily as a vehicle corridor, with pedestrian and bicycle conditions that vary by segment. While it provides an important network connection, walking and biking comfort is inconsistent in places due to traffic speeds and limited facilities. Its role as a connector between neighborhoods, major streets, and regional access points highlights the importance of improving continuity and safety along the corridor.

Recommendations

- East-Side Connector Street: Strengthen Ringgold Street's role as a key connector linking east-of-Downtown neighborhoods with major corridors, including Palm Boulevard, 6th and 7th Streets, and International Boulevard. Improvements should support reliable, legible movement between these routes while reducing the need for neighborhood traffic to rely on Downtown core streets.
- Consistent Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations: Improve walking and biking conditions along Ringgold Street to provide a continuous, comfortable route for everyday trips. Enhancements should focus on safety, comfort, and continuity across segments, supporting neighborhood access to Downtown edges, transit routes, and nearby destinations.
- Network Integration near Regional Access Points: Coordinate improvements along Ringgold Street with nearby highway access and major intersections to ensure safe, intuitive connections for all users. As a corridor close to regional access points, Ringgold Street can play an important role in distributing traffic and supporting multimodal connections without increasing pressure on Downtown core streets.

A Scalable Complete Street Approach

Improvements along 15th Street can serve as a model for other neighborhood-oriented streets in Downtown Brownsville and across the City. This approach reflects a repeatable way to balance walking, biking, and local vehicle access on streets that support everyday trips and residential areas. Applying consistent principles on similar corridors over time can help create a more connected and predictable street network.

15th Street

15th Street serves as a neighborhood-oriented corridor east of Downtown Brownsville, supporting daily movement and access for nearby residents. Its existing scale and character already make it a comfortable place to walk, providing a strong foundation for continued improvements over time.

Existing Conditions

15th Street runs northwest–southeast through neighborhoods east of Downtown Brownsville and functions as a neighborhood-serving connector linking residential areas to Downtown-adjacent streets and major east–west corridors. The street supports local circulation and short, everyday trips and has a predominantly residential context.

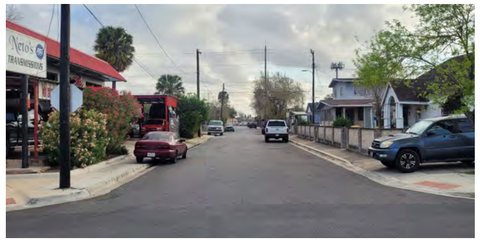
15th Street is identified as a complete street and plays an important role in supporting residential access. The Buena Vida Redevelopment, a new affordable housing project located along the corridor, will add new daily pedestrian, bicycle, and local vehicle trips. Residents are expected to use 15th Street to reach nearby services, travel toward Downtown, and connect to transit on adjacent corridors. Walking and biking conditions vary along the corridor, reflecting differences in block context and existing street features.

Recommendations

- Neighborhood-Oriented Complete Street: Reinforce 15th Street's role as a complete street that prioritizes everyday neighborhood mobility. Improvements should support safe, comfortable walking and biking for residents while maintaining local vehicle access and reinforcing the street's residential character.
- Support for Buena Vida Redevelopment: Ensure that 15th Street functions as a welcoming and accessible front-door street for residents of the Buena Vida Redevelopment. Enhancements should focus on safe pedestrian and bicycle connections between housing, nearby services, and routes leading toward Downtown and transit.
- Consistent Multimodal Connectivity: Improve continuity along 15th Street so walking and biking conditions are clear and reliable from end to end. As part of the broader street network, 15th Street should complement Ringgold Street and other connectors by strengthening neighborhood-to-Downtown access without increasing pressure on the Downtown Core.



Ringgold Street near 6th Street



15th Street at Van Buren Street

TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS

Key

- Sidewalk
- Planting Area
- Parking
- Shared-Use
- Travel Lane
- Median/Turn Lane

Translating Corridor Roles into Street Design

The following cross sections illustrate the intended design approach for the key corridors that connect into and function within Downtown Brownsville, as described in the preceding sections. These streets shape how people arrive, move through, and experience Downtown, and must balance regional access, local circulation, and pedestrian activity.

These cross sections are conceptual and represent typical conditions rather than fixed designs. Right-of-way widths, adjacent land uses, and operational needs vary along each corridor, often from block to block. The configuration of travel lanes, sidewalks, parking, and streetscape elements should be adapted to local context while maintaining the overall design intent of each corridor.

Across all corridors, street space is organized using a consistent set of elements. **Sidewalks** provide space for walking and building access, supported by **planting areas** that add shade and buffer from traffic. **On-street parking** supports adjacent uses and helps define the street edge. **Shared-use areas** allow flexibility where space must accommodate multiple users or changing curb needs. **Travel lanes** carry vehicles and are sized to reflect desired speeds and volumes, while **median or turn lanes** manage access and improve safety. In select locations, **shared streets** create low-speed environments where pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles share space, reinforcing Downtown as a place to spend time rather than simply move through.

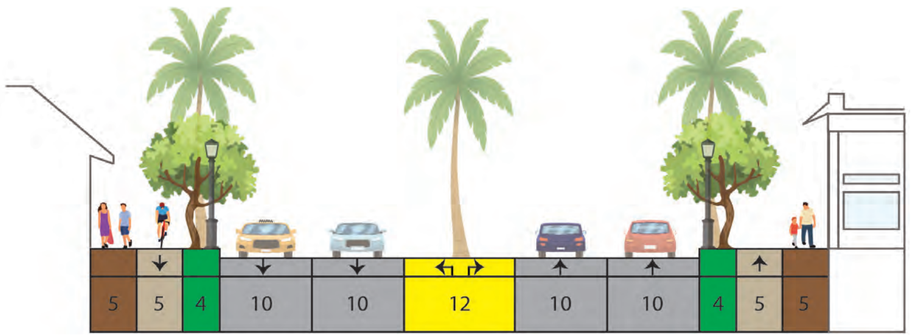


Figure 18. Palm Boulevard Cross Section – 80’ Right-of-Way

Key

- Sidewalk
- Planting Area
- Parking
- Shared-Use
- Travel Lane
- Median/Turn Lane

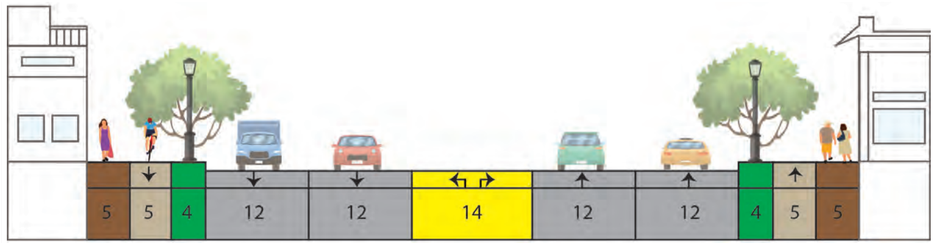


Figure 19. International Boulevard Cross Section – 90’ Total Right-of-Way

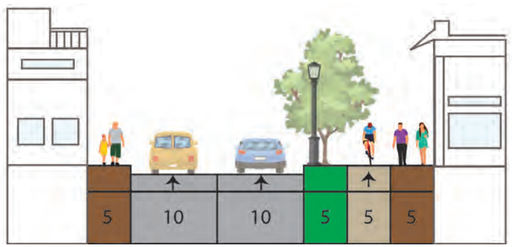
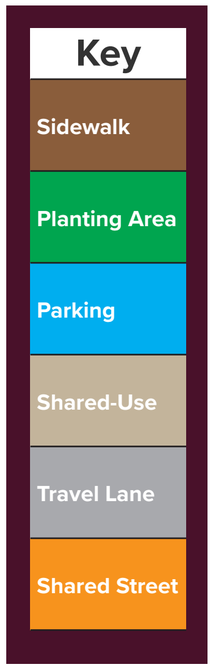


Figure 20. 6th and 7th Streets Cross Section – 40’ Right-of-Way



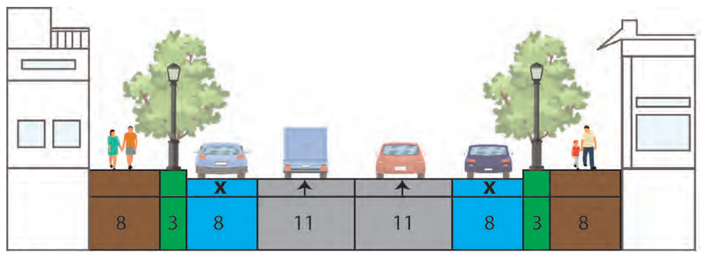


Figure 21. Washington and Elizabeth Streets Cross Section - 60' Right-of-Way

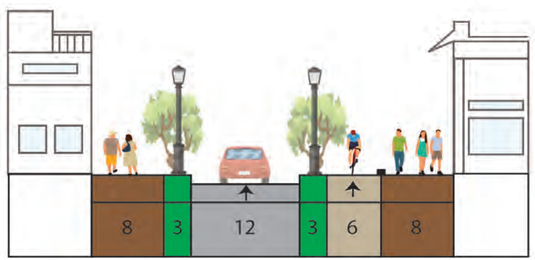
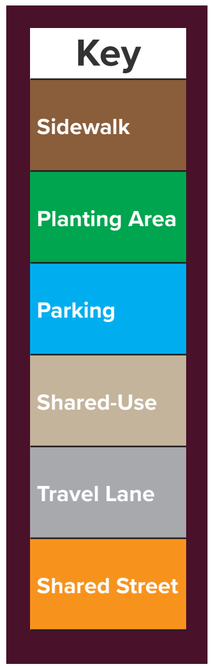


Figure 22. 11th and 12th Streets Cross Section – 40' Right-of-Way



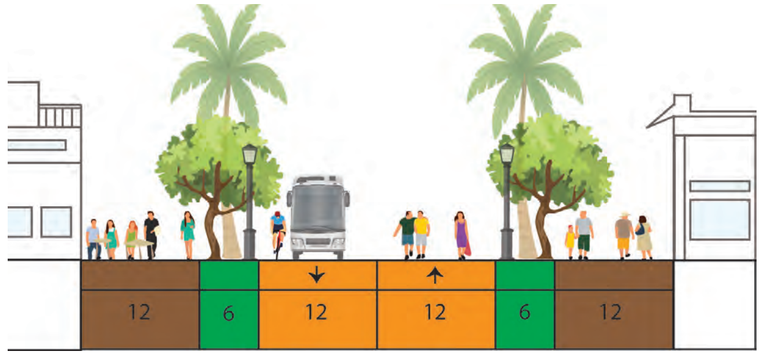


Figure 23. Adams Street Cross Section – 60' Right-of-Way

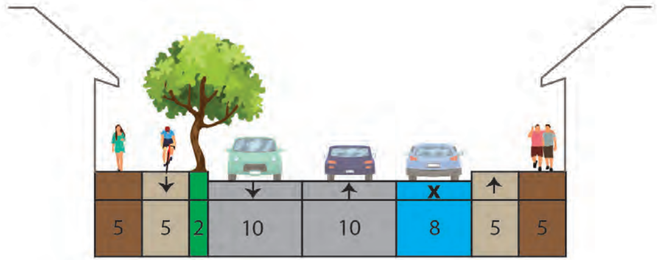


Figure 24. Ringold and 15th Streets Cross Section – 50' Right-of-Way