



Design Manual: Nano Parks

ESTABLISHING OPEN SPACES

In addition to widening the walkable areas of sidewalks, increasing the number of open spaces adjacent to the streets will also enhance pedestrian mobility and presence in the streetscape. Existing places that offer gathering space that interfaces with the street include the plaza at the Visitor’s Bureau, the front lawns of the University Baptist Church, McCorkle Place on the UNC campus, and the plaza in front of the Post Office. These small-scale gathering spaces enhance the sense of community while relating to the urban streetscape.

The proposed ‘nano parks’ below have been selected for their proximity to major pedestrian corridors (see diagram, p. 20) as well as the availability of small open spaces to capture for public use. Several of these sites occur adjacent to or within parking lots where space is available that is of adequate size to establish a nano park. These parking lot park sites also offer potential connections with larger event gatherings that may take place on public parking lots such as weekend markets. For further description, see [Section 13.0: Cultural Events and Street Fairs](#).



Post Office Plaza



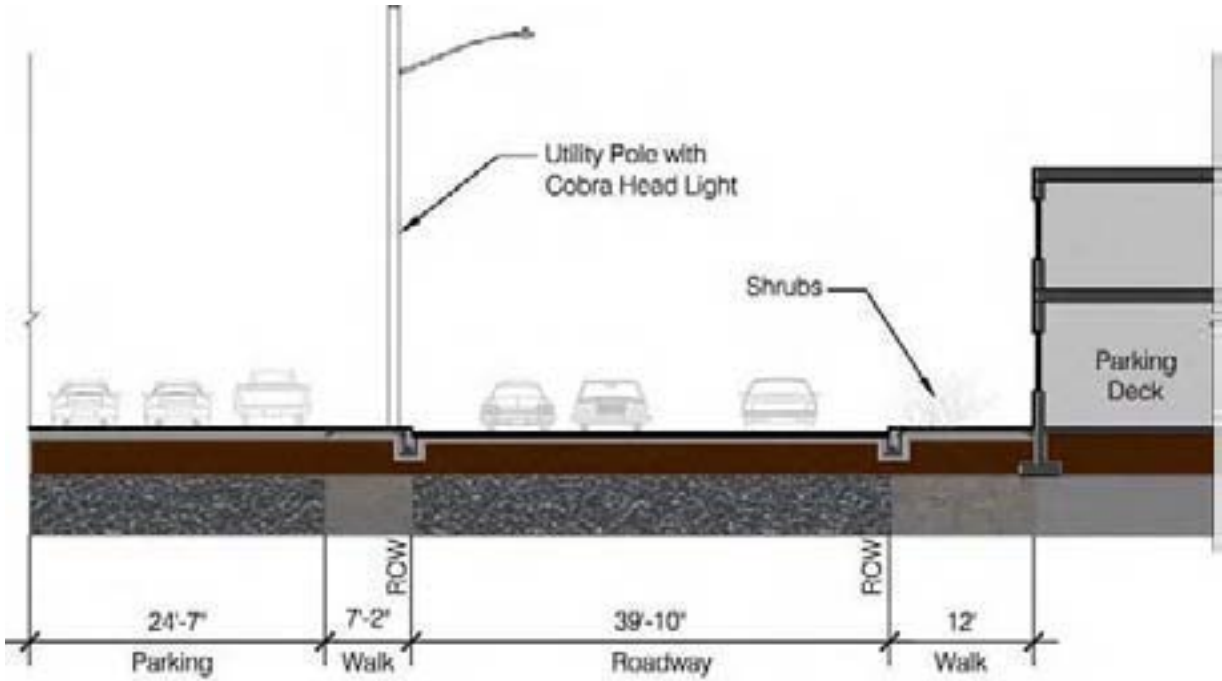
University Baptist Church



McCorkle Place

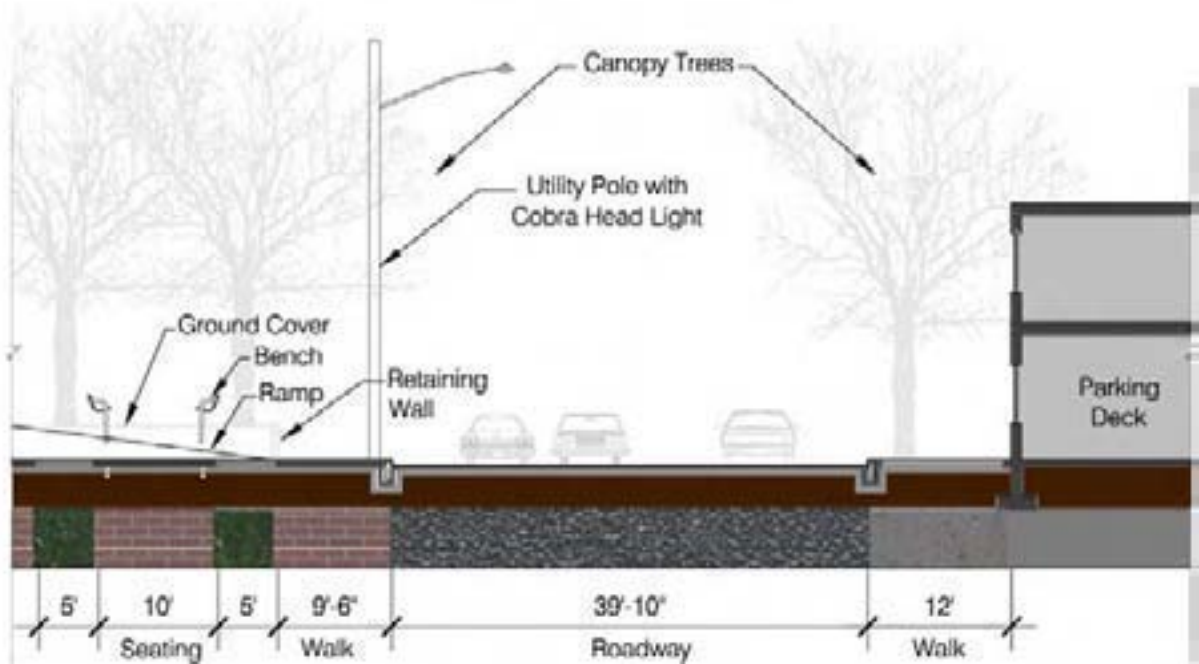
OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES: ROSEMARY STREET

Sections A below is an example of proposed improvement along Rosemary Street, including the addition of pedestrian height lighting and canopy tree planting. Taken along West Franklin Street, the section shows the installation of a nano park in an unused parcel at the edge of a parking lot facing the street. The nano park is accessible from the south through the Post Office and pedestrian pathways and has a direct visual relationship with the sidewalk and East Rosemary Street to the north. The example represents key strategies for improving the aesthetics, safety, and public use of the sidewalks and open spaces adjacent to the street.



Section A: Existing Section through East Rosemary Street Looking West

Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"

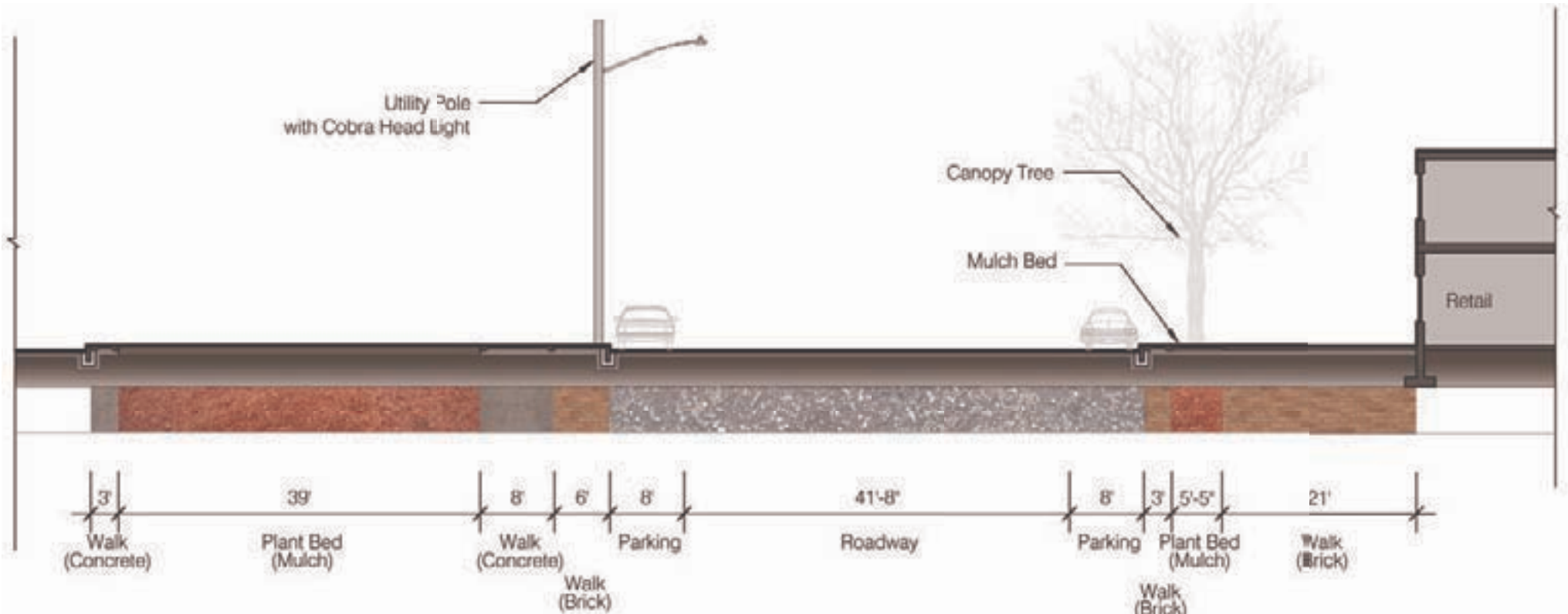


Section A - After: Proposed Section through East Rosemary Street Looking West

Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"

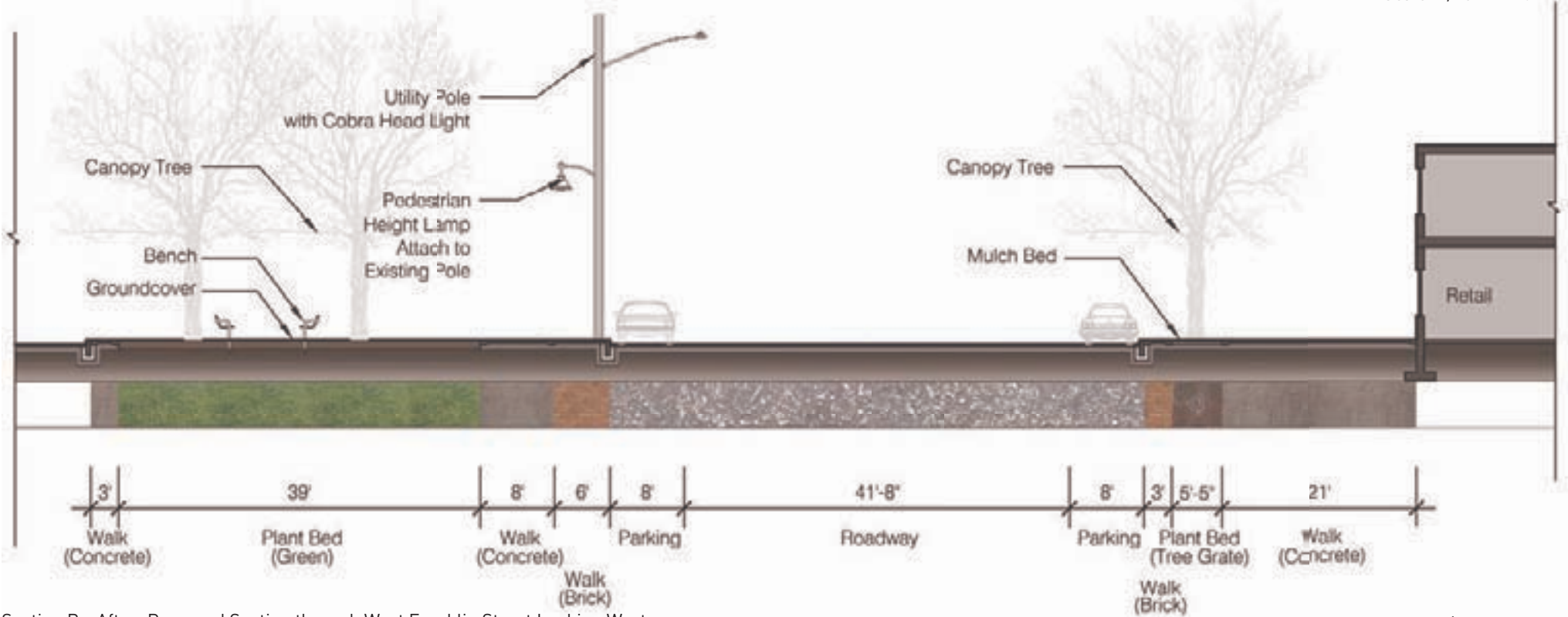
OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES: FRANKLIN STREET

Section B below illustrates a proposed nano park at Parking Lot 3 on West Franklin Street, as well as proposed streetscape improvements including the installation of pedestrian height lighting and the replacement of the existing mulch bed on the North side of the street with a low maintenance tree grate. The nano park adds canopy tree and groundcover plantings, as well as seating, to create a small, public, park-like space for visitors to enjoy.



Section B: Existing Section through West Franklin Street Looking West

Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"



Section B - After: Proposed Section through West Franklin Street Looking West

Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"



Nano Park Diagram

A typical configuration of a nano park includes a buffer zone of groundcover planting that sets the nano park back from the street while maintaining a clear visual connection with the adjacent sidewalk and street. A central active zone can host a paved plaza like space, active play area, public art display or other flexible use, while a peripheral zone will include benches for seating.

Where possible, access through the other side of the park should be established to encourage greater activity and movement through the site.

NANO PARK DESIGN GUIDELINES

The images below offer examples of parks that have direct relationships to the street and offer publicly accessible open spaces connected to sidewalk circulation. The nano parks of Chapel Hill will consist of small, plaza-like spaces that offer shade trees, seating, low-maintenance groundcover plantings and streetscape paving to emphasize their openness and visual connectivity with the street. Where possible, a direct visual relationship between the park and the street should be maintained to emphasize public accessibility. The outline below offers additional guidelines for the configuration of materials within these nano parks.



Johnson Square, Savannah, Georgia



Governors Park, Kentucky



Winthrop Park, Cambridge, Massachusetts



Courthouse Square, Rockville, Maryland



South Waterfront, Portland, Oregon

park entrances

No gates or other entry barriers should be erected at park entry. The nano parks should have full public access at all times. Where there are differences in the elevation of the park and the elevation of the street, an accessible ramp must be included in the design of the main entry.

paving

Paving material should reflect streetscape standards. The nano parks are an extension of the sidewalk and should have visual connectivity in terms of paving materials. Smaller scale paving patterns are encouraged for a slower paced programmatic use.

planting

Canopy trees are recommended for adding shade and framing park-like spaces. Refer to recommendations in [Section 5.0: Plant Materials](#) for species selection. Groundcover and low-growing perennials can also be planted but will require a long-term maintenance plan. This plan must be set in place prior to any installation of plant material.

No hedges or shrubs taller than 3 feet should be planted in order to maintain security and maximum visibility from the street.

furnishings

Park furnishings, including benches and tree grates, should match the streetscape standard. Benches should be protected with vegetation buffer.

lighting

Lighting within nano parks must meet IESNA standards for safety and security. Creative lighting options can be integrated with standard lighting as a public art strategy.

public art

Nano parks offer ideal settings for public art that will have regular exposure. These works of art may include, but are not limited to, sculptural works, lighting designs and interactive play areas or unique furnishings.

funding and maintenance

These parks projects may offer opportunities for donation or private ownership. However, a solid maintenance plan must be agreed upon, with both private and Town responsibilities clearly outlined for future maintenance of each park.

