Urban Design Element

Purpose and Intent

To guide physical development toward a desired image that is consistent with the social, economic and aesthetic values of the city.

Plan Issues

- A compact, efficient, and environmentally sensitive pattern of development becomes increasing important as the city continues to grow.
- Citywide urban design recommendations are necessary to ensure the built environment continues to contribute to the qualities that distinguish San Diego as a unique living environment.
- There is a need to address urban form and design through policies aimed at respecting our natural environment, preserving open space systems and targeting new growth into compact villages as San Diego becomes more urbanized.
- As the availability of vacant land becomes more limited, designing infill development and redevelopment that builds upon our existing communities becomes increasing important.
- Future development should accommodate and support existing and planned transit service.

Introduction

Urban design describes the physical features that define the character or image of a street, neighborhood, community, or the city as a whole. Urban design is the visual and sensory relationship between people and the built environment. The built environment includes not only buildings and streets, but also the natural environment such as shorelines, canyons, mesas, and parks as they shape and are incorporated into the urban framework. Urban Design is a process to foster quality in the built and natural environment as the city of San Diego changes.

In many cases urban design features are what people identify when asked "What makes this city unique?" The character of San Diego may be perceived differently by each citizen or visitor, although there are several basic design elements that are commonly recognized. San Diego's distinctive character results from an unparalleled natural setting, including beaches, bays, hills, canyons and mesas that allow the evolution of geographically distinct neighborhoods. The network of small human-scaled canyons creates a natural open space system that extends through

many parts of the city and is unparalleled in other American cities. The topography and San Diego's year-round climate is ideal for outdoor pedestrian activity of all kinds.

The Urban Design Element policies are also intended to be responsive to the core values on Urban Form identified in the Strategic Framework Element. The core values that San Diegans place the most significance on related to urban form include:

- The natural environment;
- The city's extraordinary setting, defined by its open spaces, natural habitat and unique topography;
- A compact, efficient, and environmentally sensitive pattern of development;
- The physical, social, and cultural diversity of our city and its neighborhoods.

Many of San Diego's older neighborhoods built prior to World War II capitalized on these natural features. The open porches on early twentieth century craftsman style homes and the bungalow courts focused upon common open space. Construction of Balboa Park and Mission Bay Park modified the natural environment but created unique public and civic spaces that are still much used and admired. A major challenge for the city is to return to the traditional pedestrian-oriented forms of development but with modifications to reflect modern realities such as crime, safety and automobile dependency.

Urban Design Strategy

There are several urban design principles relating to the existing city form and a compact and environmentally sensitive pattern of development envisioned in the City of Villages strategy. These principles are identified below to provide a framework for the goals of the Urban Design Element:

- Contribute to the qualities that distinguish San Diego as a unique living environment;
- Build upon our existing communities;
- Direct growth into commercial areas where a high level of activity already exists and preserve stable residential neighborhoods.

The Urban Design Element addresses urban form and design through policies aimed at respecting our natural environment, preserving open space systems and targeting new growth into compact villages. Urban form and how it functions becomes increasingly important as we anticipate increases in density and intensity. Through the urban design principles established in this element, we expect to achieve an identity for the city as a whole while encompassing its physical, social and cultural diversity. A higher overall quality of urban design is another fundamental goal. Urban design applies at multiple levels from citywide to community to neighborhood and ultimately to individual projects. It is intended that the urban design policies be further supplemented with site-specific community plan recommendations.

The Urban Design Element links other elements of the General Plan. The Urban Design policies help support and implement land use and transportation decisions, encourage economic

revitalization and improve the quality of life in San Diego. Ultimately, the General Plan's Urban Design Element influences the implementation of all elements of the General Plan and community plans as it establishes goals and policies for the pattern and scale of development and the character of the built environment.

A. General Urban Design

Goals

- Provide a built environment that respects San Diego's natural environment and climate.
- Improve the quality of life through safe and secure neighborhoods and public places.
- Use pattern and scale of development to provide visual diversity, choice of lifestyle and social interaction.
- Foster the continuation of districts, communities, and neighborhoods as distinguishable subareas within the city.
- Create activity centers as places where people gather and interact.
- Maintain historic resources as important landmarks that maintain the city's historic identity.
- Utilize landscape as an important aesthetic and unifying element.

Discussion

The city's urban form is loosely based upon a naturally connected system of open space, characterized by valleys, waterways, canyons and mesas. Remaining natural features should be preserved to the greatest extent possible. The Strategic Framework Element and the City of Villages strategy provide guidance to determine where and how new growth should occur. The strategy seeks to target growth in village areas at core locations within communities adjacent to community facilities, existing and future transit facilities and supportive use.

There are several urban design issues relating to existing city form and the compact and environmentally sensitive pattern of development envisioned in the City of Villages strategy. These issues provide a framework for the goals of the Urban Design Element. The policies that implement these goals are intended to contribute to the qualities that distinguish San Diego as a unique living environment and highlight the value of our open space resources as part of the overall built environment. Another key element of the policies contained in this element is the importance of building upon our existing communities. This includes implementation of the City of Villages growth strategy that seeks to direct growth into areas where a high level of activity and transit service exist

The design of the built environment plays a significant role in reducing crime and the perception of risk to one's safety. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) concepts provide recommendations on designing safer environments. Many of the CPTED concepts are complementary to the City of Villages approach, since strategies to increase opportunities for surveillance are similar to those used to accomplish greater walkability. The CPTED policies can change over time and are a resource used in design. A link to the complete CPTED[S1] concepts can be found on the city of San Diego Police Department website.

The following policies apply citywide to all commercial, industrial, institutional and residential and mixed use development. They are intended to influence project design, and be used in the development review process. Overall, the policies call for the city's urban form to be defined and shaped by the natural environment, to improve upon what is best about San Diego's neighborhoods, and to foster the creation of convenient, and where appropriate, well-designed village centers where commercial and residential development are concentrated.

San Diego is nearing build-out. Most of the remaining open space is designated for permanent open space or agricultural use and will not be urbanized. As San Diego continues to evolve, new development should not seek to imitate existing development, but should be sympathetic to the scale, form, proportion and materials of the more distinctive existing development, particularly in the historic neighborhoods. As the city grows and matures, new approaches to design will be fostered, so this element does not recommend particular architectural styles. The overall citywide Urban Design policies are intended to achieve quality design over time, to reinforce a sense of community, and respect the city's historic diversity.

Policies

Natural Features

UD-A.1: Preserve and protect natural landforms and features.

a. Protect the integrity of community plan designated open spaces.
b. Continue to implement the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) to conserve San Diego's natural environment and create a linked open space system.

Open Space Linkages

UD-A.2: Use open space and landscape to define and link communities.

a. Preserve and enhance remaining naturally occurring features such as wetlands, riparian zones, canyons and ridge lines.
b. Link villages, public attractions, canyons, open space, and other destinations together by connecting them with trail systems, bike ways, landscaped boulevards, formalized parks, and/or natural open space, as appropriate.
c. Preserve and encourage preservation of physical connectivity and access to open space.
d. Recognize that open spaces sometimes prevent the continuation of transportation

corridors and inhibit mobility between communities. Where conflicts exist between mobility and open space goals, site-specific solutions may be addressed in community plans.

Buildings Adjacent to Natural Features

UD-A.3: Design development adjacent to natural features in a sensitive manner to highlight and complement the natural environment in areas designated for development.

a. Encourage location of entrances and windows in development adjacent to open space to overlook the natural features.
b. Preserve views and view corridors along and/or into waterfront areas from the public right-of-way by decreasing the heights of buildings as they approach the shoreline.
c. Minimize grading to maintain the natural topography, while contouring any landform alterations to blend into the natural terrain.
d. In instances where new buildings abut natural areas, use building and landscape materials that blend with and do not create visual or other conflicts with the natural environment. This guideline must be balanced with a need to clear natural vegetation for fire protection to ensure public safety in some areas.
e. Design and site buildings to permit visual and physical access to the natural features from the public right-of-way.
f. Protect views from public roadways and parklands to natural canyons, resource areas, and scenic vistas.

g. Provide public pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian access paths to scenic view points, parklands, and where consistent with resource protection, in natural resource open space areas.

Sustainable Development

UD-A.4: Use sustainable building methods for development including green building techniques, energy efficient design, and sustainable landscape and site design sensitive to local environmental conditions. The use of such techniques and systems should not be limited to buildings, but should include all types of built structures from surface parking lots to fence posts. (See also the Conservation Element for Section H).

Architecture

UD-A.5: Design buildings that contribute to a positive neighborhood character and relate to neighborhood and community context.

a. Relate architecture to San Diego's unique climate and topography.
b. Encourage designs that are sensitive to the scale, form, rhythm, proportions, and materials proximate to commercial areas and residential neighborhoods that have a well established, distinctive character.

c. Provide architectural features that establish and define a building's appeal and enhance the neighborhood character.
d. Encourage the use of materials and finishes that reinforce a sense of quality and permanence.
e. Provide architectural variation in buildings to discourage the appearance of a uniform structure. Design buildings where no single treatment of building walls exceeds 30 linear feet without some form of architectural variation. For example, the building should protrude, recess, or change in color, height or texture every 30' to provide visual interest. This would include not only building walls, but fencing bordering the pedestrian network to have some form of architectural variation to add interest to the streetscape and enhance the pedestrian experience.
f. Design building wall planes to have shadow relief, where pop-outs, off-setting planes, overhangs and recessed doorways are used to provide visual interest at the pedestrian level.
g. Design rear elevations of buildings to be as well-detailed and visually interesting as the front elevation, if they will be visible from a public right-of-way or accessible public place or street.
h. Acknowledge the positive aspects of nearby existing buildings by incorporating compatible features in new developments.
i. Maximize natural ventilation, sunlight, and views.
j. Provide convenient, safe, well-marked, and attractive pedestrian connections from the public street to building entrances.

UD-A.6: Create street frontages with architectural and landscape interest to provide visual appeal to the streetscape and enhance the pedestrian experience.
a. Locate buildings on the site so that they reinforce street frontages.
b. Provide as many ground level entries as possible.
c. Relate buildings to existing and planned adjacent uses.
d. Ensure that building entries are prominent and visible.
e. Maintain existing setback patterns, except where community plans call for redevelopment to change the existing pattern.

Historic Character

UD-A.7: Respect the context of historic streets, landmarks, and areas that give a community a sense of place or history. A survey may be done to identify "conservation areas" that retain original community character in sufficient quantity and quality but typically do not meet designation criteria as an individual historical resource or as a contributor to a historical district.
a. Create guidelines in community plans for new development that compliments a neighborhood's historic character where appropriate. (See also the Historic Preservation).
b. Pursue the use of identifying conservation areas at the community plan level, based on historical resources surveys, to maintain community character and

provide a buffer area between potential historical districts and areas expected to redevelop at higher densities.

c. Review redevelopment of property within conservation areas to maintain important bulk, scale, style, orientation, and other aspects of the surviving community character.

Landscape

UD-A.8: Landscape materials and design should enhance structures, create and define public and private spaces, and provide shade, aesthetic appeal, and environmental benefits.

a. Use landscape to provide unique identities within neighborhoods, villages and other developed areas.
b. Landscape materials and design should complement and build upon the existing character of the neighborhood. (See also the Conservation Element Policy CE-H.9 on urban/community forests and street tree master plans.)
c. Design landscape bordering the pedestrian network with new elements, such as a new plant form or material, at appropriate intervals. This is not intended to discourage a uniform street tree or landscape theme, but to add interest to the streetscape and enhance the pedestrian experience.
d. Establish or maintain tree-lined residential and commercial streets. Neighborhoods and commercial corridors in the city that contain tree-lined streets present a streetscape that creates a distinctive character.
    1. Identify and plant trees that complement and expand on the surrounding street tree fabric.
    2. Unify communities by using street trees to link residential areas.
    3. Locate street trees in a manner that does not obstruct ground illumination from streetlights.
e. Shade paved areas, especially parking lots.
f. Demarcate public, semi-public/private, and private spaces clearly through the use of landscape, walls, fences, gates, pavement treatment, signs, and other methods to denote boundaries and/or buffers.
g. Use landscaped walkways to direct people to proper entrances and away from private areas.
h. Consider landscaped areas as amenities.
i. Provide seating within landscaped areas.
j. Reduce barriers to views or light by selecting appropriate tree types, pruning thick hedges, and large overhanging tree canopies.
k. Encourage water conservation through the use of drought-tolerant landscape.
l. Use landscape to support storm water management goals for filtration, percolation and erosion control.

Transit Integration

UD-A.9: Incorporate existing and proposed transit stops or stations into project design.

a. Provide attractively designed transit stops and stations that are adjacent to active uses and recognizable by the public.

b. Design safe, attractive, accessible, lighted, and convenient pedestrian connections from transit stops and stations to building entrances.
c. Provide necessary rights-of-way for transit, transit stops or stations.
d. Generally, locate buildings along transit corridors within 25 feet from the front curb edge.

Streets

UD-A.10: Design or retrofit streets to improve walkability, strengthen connectivity, and enhance community identity.

a. Design streets to support multiple users of the public right-of-way, including motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists and trash collection and emergency vehicles.
b. Coordinate planning and design for landscape, lighting, signs, trash receptacles, transit stops, public art, and other amenities.
c. Provide street trees of appropriate height and scale based on the function of the street and surrounding uses.
d. Enhance urban forest street tree installation and maintenance programs. As new and replacement street trees are planted, attention is needed in the selection of appropriate species and locations to reinforce the character of each neighborhood or corridor. A Street Tree Plan has been identified in the Conservation Element. (See Conservation Element Section H - Sustainable Development and Urban Forestry).
e. Use pedestrian-scale lighting along the street to promote safety and to encourage evening socialization. Street light fixtures unique to a neighborhood are also a way to create a sense of place within a neighborhood and establish or maintain community identity.
f. Develop and enhance a public signs system to define public places, recreation spots, and principal attractions.
g. Remove barriers to pedestrian and bicycle circulation in order to enable patrons to walk or bike to neighboring businesses.
h. Provide “street furniture” such as benches, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, newspaper kiosks and public restrooms to offer pedestrian convenience and comfort.
i. Consider street light fixtures that are unique to a community or neighborhood to foster a sense of place and enhance community identity.

Structured Parking

UD-A.11: Encourage the use of underground or above-ground parking structures, rather than surface parking lots, to reduce land area devoted to parking.

a. Design safe, functional, and aesthetically pleasing parking structures.
b. Design structures to be of a height and mass that are compatible with the surrounding area.

c. Use building materials, detailing and landscape that complement the surrounding neighborhood.
d. Provide well-defined, dedicated pedestrian entrances.
e. Use appropriate screening mechanisms to screen views of parked vehicles from pedestrian areas.
f. Pursue development of parking structures that are wrapped on their exterior with other uses to conceal the parking structure and create an active streetscape.
g. Encourage the use of attendants, gates, natural lighting, or surveillance equipment in parking structures to promote safety and security.

Surface Parking

UD-A.12: Reduce the amount and visual impact of surface parking lots.

a. Encourage placement of parking along the rear and sides of street-oriented buildings.
b. Avoid blank walls facing onto parking lots by promoting treatments that use colors, materials, landscape, selective openings or other means of creating interest. For example, the building should protrude, recess, or change in color, height or texture to reduce blank facades.
c. Design clear and attractive pedestrian paseos/pathways and signs that link parking and destinations.
d. Locate pedestrian pathways in areas where vehicular access is limited.
e. Avoid large areas of uninterrupted parking especially adjacent to community public viewsheds.
f. Build multiple small parking lots in lieu of one large lot.
g. Retrofit existing expansive parking lots with street trees, landscape, pedestrian paths, and new building placement.
h. Use trees and other landscape to provide shade, screening, and filtering of storm water runoff in parking lots.

Lighting

UD-A.13: Provide lighting from a variety of sources at appropriate intensities and qualities for safety.

a. Provide pedestrian-scaled lighting for pedestrian circulation and visibility.
b. Use effective lighting for vehicular traffic while not overwhelming the quality of pedestrian lighting.
c. Use lighting to convey a sense of safety while minimizing glare and contrast.
d. Use vandal-resistant light fixtures that complement the neighborhood and character.

Signage

UD-A.14: Provide comprehensive project sign plans.

a. Design signs as a means to communicate a unified theme and identity for the project.

b. Include pedestrian-oriented signs to acquaint users to various aspects of a development.
c. Place signs to direct vehicular and pedestrian circulation.
d. Post signs to provide directions and rules of conduct where appropriate behavior control is necessary.

Wireless Facilities

UD-A.15: Minimize the visual impact of wireless facilities.
a. Conceal wireless facilities in existing structures when possible, otherwise use camouflage and screening techniques to hide or blend them into the surrounding area.
b. Design facilities to be aesthetically pleasing and respectful of the neighborhood context.
c. Conceal mechanical equipment and devices associated with wireless facilities in underground vaults or unobtrusive structures.

Utility Undergrounding

UD-A.16: Convert those overhead utility wires and poles, and associated overhead structures for supplying electric, communication, community antenna television, or similar service to underground.

Safety and Security

UD-A.17: Incorporation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) measures, as necessary, to reduce incidences of fear and crime. CPTED provides recommendations on designing safer environments.
a. Design projects to encourage visible space that will serve as a means to discourage and to deter crime through the location of physical features, activities and people to maximize visibility.
b. Define clear boundaries between public, semi-public/private, and private spaces.
c. Promote regulations, programs, and practices that result in the proper maintenance of the measures employed for CPTED surveillance, access control, and territoriality.

B. Distinctive Neighborhoods and Residential Design

Goals

- Promote a city of distinctive neighborhoods.

- Provide development that protects and improves upon the desirable features of San Diego's neighborhoods.

- Development of architectural design that contributes to the creation and preservation of neighborhood character and vitality.
- Create innovative designs for a variety of housing types to meet the needs of the population.
- Design infill housing, roadways and new construction that is sensitive to the character and quality of existing neighborhoods.
- Create pedestrian connections between residential areas and adjacent commercial areas

Discussion

In conjunction with the General Urban Design Goals identified in the previous section, the following policies are intended to provide further guidance for maintaining our distinctive neighborhoods and achieving high quality residential design. The design and quality of infill housing is critical to ensuring that new housing fits into our existing neighborhoods. Preserving neighborhood character does not mean maintaining the status quo. Sometimes change is welcome, as private and public investment can contribute to the beauty, vitality, and functionality of a neighborhood. However, new development - whether it is in the form of infill, redevelopment, or first-time development - should contribute to the creation and preservation of neighborhood character and creation of a sense of place.

San Diego's distinctive neighborhoods are a great asset to the city. Some neighborhoods date back to the early days of San Diego's history and a few are still emerging, but each has elements that set it apart from the others and establish its identity. Many of San Diego's neighborhoods are the product of small incremental parcelizations and development over a long period of time. Neighborhood character is defined in part by certain physical qualities that repeat throughout neighborhoods, such as landscape and massing of buildings, colors, and materials. The character of a neighborhood or community is also defined by factors including topography and natural features, street layout and streetscape, and landmarks and civic land uses.

Residential housing types include conventional single-family homes, small lot single-family homes, townhouses, duplex, and triplex dwellings, and a wide variety of apartment and condominium units. While densities, unit mix, and design parameters will vary based on individual community plan recommendations, there are overall policies that are applicable citywide.

The residential design policies are intended to foster the development of high quality housing that becomes an integrated part of the larger neighborhood and community. The distinctive neighborhoods policies strive to preserve the desirable distinctive qualities of existing neighborhoods while encouraging a coherent image of the city as a whole. It is intended that these general policies be supplemented with site-specific guidance in community plans.

Policies

Residential Design

UD-B.1: Recognize that the quality of a neighborhood is linked to the overall quality of the built environment. Projects should not be viewed singularly, but viewed as part of the larger neighborhood or community plan area in which they are located for design continuity and compatibility.

a. Integrate new construction with the existing fabric and scale of development in surrounding neighborhoods. Taller or denser development is not necessarily inconsistent with older lower density neighborhoods but must be designed with sensitivity to existing development. For example new development should not cast shadows or create wind tunnels that will significantly impact existing development and should not restrict vehicular or pedestrian movements from existing development.
b. Design new construction to respect the pedestrian orientation of neighborhoods.
c. Provide innovative designs for a variety of housing types to meet the needs of the population.

UD-B.2: Achieve a mix of housing types.

a. Incorporate a variety of unit types in multiple-family projects.
b. Incorporate a variety of single-family housing types in single-family projects/subdivisions.
c. Build townhomes and small lot single-family homes to add diversity to neighborhoods or as a transition between higher density units and lower density single-family neighborhoods.
d. Identify sites for revitalization and additional housing opportunities in neighborhoods.

Subdivisions

UD-B.3: Design subdivisions to respect the existing lot pattern established within neighborhoods to maintain community character.

a. Create lot divisions that respect the existing pattern of development for neighborhood continuity and compatibility.
b. Design lot divisions to have a portion of each created lot in areas of less than 25 percent gradient.

Residential Street Frontages

UD-B.4: Create street frontages with architectural and landscape interest for both pedestrians and neighboring residents.

a. Locate buildings on the site so that they reinforce street frontages.
b. Provide as many ground level entries as possible.
c. Relate buildings to existing and planned adjacent uses.
d. Ensure that building entries are prominent and visible.
e. Maintain existing setback patterns, except where community plans call for redevelopment to change the existing pattern.
f. Locate transparent features such as porches, stoops, balconies, and windows facing the street to promote a sense of community.
g. Encourage side- and rear-loaded garages. Where not possible, reduce the prominence of the garage through architectural features and varying planes.

Neighborhood Streets

UD-B.5: Design or retrofit streets to improve walkability, strengthen connectivity, and enhance community identity.

a. Design or retrofit street systems to achieve high levels of connectivity within the neighborhood street network that link individual subdivisions/projects to each other and the community.
b. Avoid closed loop subdivisions and extensive cul-de-sac systems, except where the street layout is dictated by the topography or the need to avoid sensitive environmental resources.
c. Design open ended cul-de-sacs to accommodate visibility and pedestrian connectivity, when development of cul-de-sacs is necessary.
d. Emphasize the provision of high quality pedestrian and bikeway connections to transit stops/stations, village centers, and local schools.
e. Design new streets and consider traffic calming where necessary, to reduce neighborhood speeding. (See also UE-C.5)
f. Enhance community gateways to demonstrate neighborhood pride and delineate boundaries.
g. Clarify neighborhood roadway intersections through the use of special paving and landscape.
h. Develop a hierarchy of walkways that delineate village pathways and link to regional trails.
i. Discourage use of walls, gates and other barriers that separate residential neighborhoods from the surrounding community and commercial areas.

UD-B.6: Work with community groups and property owners to ensure adequate street maintenance, public landscape maintenance, law enforcement, code enforcement, and litter and graffiti control to maintain safe and attractive neighborhoods.

Open Space and Recreation

UD-B.7: Provide useable open space for play, recreation, and social or cultural activities in multifamily as well as single-family projects.

a. Design attractive recreational facilities, common facilities, and open space that can be easily accessed by everyone in the development it serves.
b. Design outdoor space as "outdoor rooms" and avoid undifferentiated, empty spaces.
c. Locate small parks and play areas in central accessible locations.
d. Maximize the provision of private outdoor space for individual units.

C. Mixed Use Villages and Commercial Areas

Goals

- Create mixed use villages that achieve an integration of uses and serve as focal points for public gathering as a result of their outstanding public spaces.
- Create vibrant, mixed-use main streets that serve as neighborhood destinations, community resources, and conduits to the regional transit system.
- Design neighborhood commercial shopping areas that serve as walkable centers of activity.
- Design attractive and functional commercial corridors which link communities and provide goods and services.

Discussion

The City of Villages strategy identifies a village as a mixed-use center of a community where residential, commercial, employment and civic uses are present. The intent is that a high quality of urban design will achieve the maximum possible integration of uses and activities connected to the surrounding community fabric and the transit system. Villages will be compact and walkable, with inviting streets and public spaces for community events. Villages will serve as focal points for public gatherings as a result of their outstanding public spaces. In addition to compact residences and retail establishments, villages will contain public spaces that include plazas, public art, transit centers, enhanced streetscape, urban trail heads, parks and pocket parks. Publicly-oriented buildings including civic buildings and monuments, public facilities and services, and social services will also contribute to villages as activity centers.

The Land Use and Community Planning Element identifies six categories of villages: Regional Center, Subregional Employment Districts, Urban Village Centers, Neighborhood Village Centers, Community Village Centers, and Transit Corridors. The policies contained in this section are intended to address the physical integration of uses, provision of a variety of housing

types, significant public spaces, and public facilities within a pedestrian environment for all village types. The intent is to create villages that are pedestrian in scale, accessible by diverse multi-modal means, and varied with uses and activities that serve local daily needs.

Village development will occur, in part, through the development and redevelopment of shopping centers. The following policies address key, overall urban design principles for village development, and allow for community plans to provide more specific guidance tailored to each location. Appropriate design will help make these villages true centers of neighborhood activity, rather than just renovated shopping centers.

Commercial corridors are important areas that link neighborhoods together and in many cases, cross community boundaries. The commercial corridors provide convenient local shopping destinations and space for small businesses to take root. Some commercial corridors were designed with a pedestrian-friendly "main street" appearance and others have a more auto-dominated "strip commercial" design. Auto-dominated design is typified by parking located between the front of the building and the street, auto-oriented signs, and minimal landscape.

The Transit/Land Use Connections Map (see fold-out) identifies major transit lines along various commercial corridors. The policies in this section are intended to offer guidance on how to preserve and enhance these corridors to achieve the City of Villages goals of creating walkable communities and encouraging transit use. The design policies also apply to commercial corridors not identified as transit corridors, with the goal of redesigning these commercial corridors so they enhance the community and are attractive to pedestrians, transit riders, and bicyclists, in addition to drivers.

Commercial centers outside of villages, as well as employment centers, and other types of activity centers should also be designed in accordance with many of the same design policies that apply to village and commercial areas. (See also the Land Use Element – Section A, City of Villages Strategy).

Policies

Mixed Use Villages

UD-C.1: In villages and transit corridors identified in community plans, provide a mix of uses that create vibrant, active places in villages.

a. Encourage both vertical (stacked) and horizontal (separate buildings) mixed use development.
b. Achieve a mix of housing types, by pursuing innovative designs to meet the needs of a broad range of households.
c. Encourage placement of active uses, such as retailers, restaurants, fitness centers, and various services, on the ground floor of buildings in areas where the greatest levels of pedestrian activity are sought.
d. Create new zoning categories for mixed-use development. Standards for these

zones should allow for the particular design issues related to mixed use projects, such as parking, noise attenuation and security measures. In addition, development regulations should address bulk, mass, articulation, height, and transition issues such as the interface with surrounding or adjacent development and uses.

e. Encourage location of mixed-use projects in transition areas and areas where small-scale commercial uses can fit into a residential neighborhood context.

UD-C.2: Design village centers to be integrated into existing neighborhoods through pedestrian-friendly site design and building orientation, and the provision of multiple pedestrian access points.

UD-C.3: Develop and apply building design guidelines and regulations that create diversity rather than homogeneity, and improve the quality of infill development.

a. Encourage distinctive architectural features to differentiate residential, commercial and mixed use buildings and promote a sense of identity to village centers.

Pedestrian-Oriented Design

UD-C.4: Create pedestrian-friendly village centers.

a. Respect pedestrian-orientation by creating entries directly to the street and active uses at street level.
b. Design or redesign buildings to include pedestrian-friendly entrances, outdoor dining areas, plazas, transparent windows, public art, and a variety of other elements to encourage pedestrian activity and interest at the ground floor level.
c. Orient buildings in village centers to commercial local streets, or to internal project drives that are designed to function like a public street, in order to create a pedestrian-oriented shopping experience, including provision of on-street parking.
d. Provide pathways that offer direct connections from the street to building entrances.
e. Break up the exterior facades of large retail establishment structures into distinct building masses distinguished by offsetting planes, rooflines and overhangs or other means.
f. Where feasible, use small buildings in key locations to create a human scale environment in large retail centers. Incorporate separate individual main entrances directly leading to the outside from individual stores.

Village Center Public Space

UD-C.5: Design village centers as focal points for public gatherings. (See also the Public Places and Civic Architecture section of this element).

a. Establish build-to lines to create village center public space and pedestrian streets.

b. Provide public spaces such as plazas, greens, gardens, pocket parks, amphitheaters, community meeting rooms, public facilities and services, social services, and retail centers within commercial-mixed use projects and villages.
c. Encourage provision of approximately ten percent of a project's net site area as public space, with adjustments for smaller (less than 10 acres) or constrained sites.
d. Allow reasonable use of public spaces by all members of the public, regardless of patronage.
e. Encourage provision of public space in the earliest possible phase of development, as determined by the public's ability to use and access the space.

Village Street Layout and Design

UD-C.6: Design project circulation systems for walkability.

a. Extend existing street grid patterns into development within existing fine-grained neighborhoods.
b. Design a grid or modified-grid internal project street system, with sidewalks and curbs, as the organizing framework for development in village centers.
c. Diagonal or "on-street" parallel parking may be appropriate along driveways in order to contribute to a "main street" appearance.
d. Provide pedestrian shortcuts through the developments to connect destinations where the existing street system has long blocks or circuitous street patterns.
e. Use pedestrian amenities, such as curb extensions and textured paving, to delineate key pedestrian crossings.
f. Provide pedestrian facilities and amenities including wider sidewalks, unifying street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting and signs, landscape, and street furniture on public and private streets within or bordering the project. "Street furniture" (i.e. benches, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, newspaper vending, etc.) which could be placed along pedestrian routes offers pedestrian convenience and comfort while contributing to the appearance of a public sidewalk.
g. Design new connections, and remove any barriers to pedestrian and bicycle circulation in order to enable people to walk or bike, rather than drive, to neighboring destinations.
h. Lay out streets to take advantage of and maximize vistas into public viewsheds.
i. Share and manage commercial, residential and public parking facilities where possible to manage parking for greater efficiency (link to Mobility Element).
j. Incorporate design features that facilitate transit service along existing or proposed routes, such as bus pullout areas, covered transit stops, and multi-modal pathways through projects to transit stops.

Streetscape

UD-C.7: Enhance the public streetscape for greater walkability and neighborhood aesthetics (See also UD-A.10 and the Section F Public Art of this element).

a. Preserve and enhance existing main streets.
b. Establish build-to-lines, or maximum permitted setbacks on designated streets.
c. Design or redesign buildings to include architecturally interesting elements, pedestrian-friendly entrances, outdoor dining areas, transparent windows, or other means that emphasize human-scaled design features at the ground floor level.
d. Implement pedestrian facilities and amenities in the public right-of-way including wider sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting and signs, landscape, and street furniture.
e. Relate the ground floor of buildings to the street in a manner that adds to the pedestrian experience while providing an appropriate level of privacy and security.
f. Design or redesign the primary entrances of buildings to open onto the public street.

Superblocks

UD-C.9: Retrofit existing large scale development patterns, such as "superblocks" or "campus-style" developments, to provide more and improved linkages among uses in the superblock, neighboring developments, and the public street system.

a. Coordinate the redesign of roads, sidewalks, and open spaces of adjacent developments.
b. Locate new infill buildings in a manner that will promote increased pedestrian activity along streets and in public common areas.
c. Implement exterior improvements such as public art, pedestrian-scale windows and entrances, signs, and street furniture.

D. Office and Industrial Development

Goals

- Promote the enhanced visual quality of office and industrial development.
- Provide increased pedestrian and transit orientation within office and industrial developments.

Discussion

The design of our employment areas is a critical element of our city's built environment. It is important to provide pleasant working environments, and for employment centers at the edge of residential neighborhoods and our open space systems to be sensitively designed. This may be achieved by applying architectural and site planning guidelines unique to our employment centers. In addition to encouraging office and industrial development to be well designed and aesthetically pleasing, it is important to provide easy access to our employment areas. This may

be achieved through additional integration of transit within our employment areas, and the creation of safe and direct bicycle and pedestrian connections. The provision of multi-model connections to our workplaces is a critical element to not only link where people live to where they work, but to also provide employees access to a convenient mix of supportive uses around their workplaces.

Policies

Pedestrian-Oriented Design

UD-D.1: Provide expanded opportunities for local access and address the circulation needs of pedestrians within and among office and industrial developments.

a. Design safe pedestrian routes between developments, preferably separated from vehicle traffic.
b. Design pedestrian routes to provide interest to the walker and promote their use. Interest can be created by paving materials, landscaping, public art, and uses such as retail and restaurant, or public events such as concerts.
c. Identify pedestrian crossings of streets or parking lots through the use of special paving.
d. Provide project recreational and/or urban plazas that link visually and/or physically to the pedestrian network or network of public spaces.

Architecture

UD-D.2: Assure high quality design of buildings and structures. The design and orientation of buildings within projects affect the pedestrian- and transit-orientation.

a. Design buildings to have shadow-relief, where pop-outs, off-setting planes, overhangs, and recessed doorways are used to provide visual interest, particularly at the street level.
b. Design the rear elevations of buildings to be as well detailed and visually interesting as the front elevation if it will be visible from a public street.
c. Locate outdoor storage areas, refuse collection areas, and loading areas in interior rear or side yards and screen with a similar material and color as the primary building.

UD-D.3: Assure high quality design in parking areas, which often provide the first impression and identification of a project to a client, employee or resident.

a. Utilize a combination of trees and shrubs at the edge of parking areas to screen parking lots and structures from the street.
b. Distribute landscape areas between the periphery and interior landscaped islands.
c. Design landscape to break-up large paved areas.

E. Public Spaces and Civic Architecture

Goals

- Provide significant public gathering spaces in every neighborhood.
- Provide distinctive civic architecture, landmarks and public facilities.

Discussion

Public gathering spaces have the potential to strengthen the social fabric and identity of neighborhoods. The City of Villages strategy calls for significant public space to be provided in every village development. Thoughtful design is needed to ensure that these spaces become treasured neighborhood assets. In addition, investments in infrastructure and facilities serve specific needs, but also may enhance the identity of a community and be a catalyst to high quality private investment.

Policies

Public Spaces

UD-E.1: Include public plazas, squares or other gathering spaces in each neighborhood and village center (see also the Public Art and Cultural Amenities section of this element).

a. Locate public spaces in prominent, recognizable, and accessible locations.
b. Design outdoor open areas as "outdoor rooms," developing a hierarchy of usable spaces that create a sense of enclosure using landscape, paving, walls, lighting, and structures.
c. Develop each public space with a unique character, specific to its site and use.
d. Design public spaces to accommodate a variety of artistic, social, cultural, and recreational opportunities including civic gatherings such as festivals, markets, performances, and exhibits.
e. Consider artistic, cultural, and social activities unique to the neighborhood and designed for varying age groups, that can be incorporated into the space.
f. Use landscape, hardscape, and public art to improve the quality of public spaces.
g. Encourage the active management and programming of public spaces.
h. Design outdoor spaces to allow for the penetration of sunlight.
i. Frame parks and plazas with buildings which visually contain and provide natural surveillance into the open space.

Civic Architecture and Landmarks

UD-E.2: Treat and locate civic architecture and landmark institutions prominently.

a. Where feasible, provide distinctive public open space, greens and/or plazas

around civic buildings such as court houses, libraries, post offices and community centers to enhance the character of these civic and public buildings. Such civic and public buildings are widely used and should form the focal point for neighborhoods and communities

b. Incorporate sustainable building principles into building design (see Conservation Element Section H).
c. Civic buildings at prominent locations, such as canyon rims, sites fronting open space, sites framing a public vista, and those affording a silhouette against the sky should exhibit notable architecture.
d. Encourage innovative designs that distinguish civic and public buildings and landmarks from the surrounding neighborhood as a means of identifying their role as focal points for the community.
e. Support the preservation of community landmarks.

F. Public Art & Cultural Amenities

Goal

- A city enhanced with distinctive public art and cultural amenities.

Discussion

Public art and cultural amenities have the potential to enliven public spaces and build a sense of community identity. The city of San Diego's Public Art Program dates back to 1984 and has developed over the years, including adoption of the Public Art Master Plan in 2004. Public art and cultural amenities can help to implement the City of Villages strategy, as they are an effective means to improve the quality of the built environment, contribute to economic prosperity, create great public spaces, foster cultural diversity, attract tourists, and celebrate the distinctiveness of San Diego's neighborhoods. Public art and cultural activities can also contribute to the City of Villages goal of creating more walkable communities by enlivening the streetscape and other public spaces. The following policies are intended to provide an overview of how public art and cultural amenities relate to the city's planning and urban design goals. For more detailed and comprehensive information about arts and culture. The following are policies related to public art and cultural amenities.

Policies

Community Identity

UD-F.1: Relate public art and cultural amenities to their surroundings, respecting the unique nature of the community and reflecting the character of the area.

a. Use arts and culture to strengthen the sense of identity of the Neighborhood and Urban Village Centers of each community.

b. Use artwork and cultural activities to improve the design and public acceptance of public infrastructure projects.
c. Use public art to enhance community gateways.
d. Reinforce community pride and identity by encouraging artworks and cultural activities that celebrate but do not overwhelm the unique cultural, ethnic, historical, or other attributes of each unique neighborhood.
e. Use public art and cultural amenities as a means to assist in implementation of community-specific goals and policies.
f. Use public art as community landmarks, encouraging public gathering and wayfinding.
g. Encourage community planning group involvement in the decision making process regarding public art and cultural amenities.

Citywide Identity

UD-F.2: Use public art and cultural amenities to celebrate San Diego's diversity, history, and unique character.

a. Take advantage of opportunities to emphasize, through art, the cultural connections between San Diego and Mexico.
b. Use public art and cultural amenities to help commemorate local history and culturally significant places.
c. Support artworks and cultural activities that explore and reflect the diverse facets of San Diego life.
d. Reinforce San Diego's commitment to diversity by using public art and cultural activities to interpret and celebrate the histories and cultures of its population.

Public Spaces

UD-F.3: Enhance the Urban Environment by animating the city's public spaces.

a. Utilize public art and cultural activities such as festivals to create vibrant and distinctive public squares, plazas, parks and other public gathering spaces.
b. Ensure that public artworks fit with the character of the surroundings both physically and conceptually.
c. Encourage the use of art in highly visible places as a directional assistance that can be used to delineate access routes and entrance points.
d. In high foot traffic areas, use pedestrian-oriented art to enhance the pedestrian experience.
e. Highlight points of interest throughout the city through the use of artwork.
f. Encourage art and activities that animate public spaces and energize the cityscape.
g. Encourage temporary public artworks to create a frequently changing and engaging environment.
h. Encourage artist-designed infrastructure improvements within communities such as utility boxes, street-end bollards, lampposts, and street furniture.
i. Encourage incorporation of vandal-resistant and easily repairable materials in art to reduce maintenance requirements.

j. Encourage the programming of changing exhibits.
k. Encourage a range of activities, easy access, a clean and attractive environment, and a space for people to socialize in order to attract legitimate users and thereby discourage improper behavior.
l. Provide front porches, parks, plazas, and other outside public spaces for residents to socialize.

Development Quality

UD-F.4: Improve the quality of new development through public art and spaces for cultural use.

a. Provide a humanizing element to public and private developments through the installation of public artworks and spaces for cultural use.
b. Include art in development projects as a means to distinguish and enliven spaces viewed or experienced by the public.
c. Create a more livable community by encouraging public art in infill projects.

Public Participation

UD-F.5: Provide opportunities for the collaboration of artists and community members.

a. Encourage the incorporation of public art plans and programs in the initial stages of the development process, rather than as an afterthought.
b. Conduct outreach efforts and engage community members in the public art process.
c. Ensure that artists conduct research and gather community input before generating concepts for public art works.