Urban Design Element

Purpose and Intent

To guide physical development towards a desired image in a way that is consistent with the social, economic and aesthetic values of the City.

Plan Issues

- A compact, efficient, and environmentally sensitive pattern of development

- Contribute to the qualities that distinguish San Diego as a unique living environment.

- Address urban form and design through policies aimed at respecting our natural environment, preserving open space systems and targeting new growth into compact villages.

- Build upon our existing communities

Introduction

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 the shorelines, canyons, mesas, and parks as they shape and are incorporated into the urban framework.

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, consisting of beaches, canyons and mesas which allowed the evolution of unique communities. San Diego has distinctive residential and commercial neighborhoods, as well as historic districts. Urban design describes the physical features which define the character or image of a street, neighborhood, community, or the City as a whole. Urban Design is a process to foster quality in the built and natural environment as the City of San Diego changes.

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. It is intended that the Urban Design policies may be further supplemented with site-specific community plan recommendations. The Urban

Design Element is also a means to link other elements of the General Plan. The Urban Design policies can help to 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 will influence 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
- A built environment that respects San Diego's natural environment
- Improved quality of life through safe and secure neighborhoods and public places
- Pattern and scale of development as a means of providing visual diversity, choice of lifestyle and social interaction
- Districts, communities, and neighborhoods as distinguishable subareas within the City
- Activity centers as places where people gather and interact
- Historic resources as important landmarks that maintain the City's historic identity
- 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. As San Diego grows, its urban form must increasingly respect the existing natural form. The Strategic Framework Element and the City of Villages strategy provides guidance on determining 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 and supportive uses.

There are several urban design issues relating to the 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 already exists and thereby preserving single-family neighborhoods.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
The design of the built environment can play a significant role in reducing crime and the perception of risk to one's safety. A key method for reducing the incidence of crime and fear of undue risk is through implementation of Crime Prevention Through

Environmental Design (CPTED) measures. CPTED provides recommendations on designing safer environments using four fundamental principles:

- Surveillance - Surveillance involves the design, location and use of physical features, sensors, activities, and people to enhance visibility. Surveillance creates a risk of detection for intruders and offenders, and a perception of safety for legitimate users. The term "natural surveillance" refers to the ability to view and monitor a place through the normal course of one's daily activities.

- Access Control - Access Control employs people, devices, and natural measures to create a perception of risk to offenders and deny them access to targets. It also guides legitimate users safely through the environment.

- Territoriality - Territoriality uses physical features and activities to express ownership, pride, and control of the environment. By delineating public, semi-public/private, and private spaces, residents feel empowered to take control of their environment.

- Maintenance - Maintenance allows the continued use of areas for their intended purposes and maintains the effectiveness of measures employed for surveillance, access control and territoriality.

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. Mixed-use residential and commercial developments advocated by the City of Villages strategy also make neighborhoods safer by having legitimate activities taking place at night as well as during the day. The primary CPTED concepts are located in policy UD-A.16, however, specific recommendations have been incorporated into associated urban design policies throughout the Element.

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 is concentrated. Through the urban design principles established in this Element, we could expect to achieve a coherence and identity for our City as a whole within its physical, social and cultural diversity. Urban design applies at multiple levels from Citywide to community to neighborhood and down to individual projects. As we look to accommodate increases in density and intensity, urban form and how it functions become increasingly important.

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 of open space and landscape to define and link communities.
   a. Preserve and enhance naturally occurring features such as coastlines, rivers, creeks, 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, 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 development adjacent to public spaces and open space to locate their entrances and windows 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. Integrate development with the natural environment.
   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.

Architecture

UD-A.4: Design buildings that contribute to a positive neighborhood character and relate to neighborhood and community context.

    a. Relate architecture to San Diego's climate, and topography (see also the Conservation Element for sustainable building policies).

    b. Promote harmony in the visual relationships and transitions between new and existing buildings via designs that are sensitive to the scale, form, rhythm, proportions, and materials in the existing neighborhood.

    c. Design buildings to complement existing development patterns.

    d. Relate the ground floor of buildings located in urban and village areas to the street in a manner that adds to the pedestrian experience while providing an appropriate level of privacy and security.

    e. Encourage the use of materials and finishes that reinforce a sense of quality and permanence.

    f. Provide building walls bordering the pedestrian network with some form of architectural variation to add interest to the streetscape and enhance the pedestrian experience.

    f. 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 street.

    h. Provide architectural features that establish and define a building's character and enhance the neighborhood character.

    i. Acknowledge the positive aspects of nearby existing buildings by incorporating compatible features in new developments.

    j. Use architectural styles that complement and augment surrounding development.

    k. Design or redesign the primary entrances of buildings in urban and village areas to open onto the public street.

    l. Maximize natural ventilation, sunlight, and views.

    m. Provide convenient, safe, well-marked, and attractive pedestrian connections from the public street to building entrances.

    n. Add new building types to established areas with care and respect for the context that past generations of builders have provided.

UD-A.5: 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 Preservation

UD-A.6: Respect the context of historic streets, landmarks, and areas that give a community a sense of place or history.

a. Create guidelines in community plans for new development that compliments a neighborhood's historic character where appropriate. (see also the Historic Resources Element – Section XY).

Landscape

UD-A.7: Use street trees and other landscape to enhance structures, create and define public and private spaces, and provide shade, beauty, and environmental benefits.

    a. Use landscape to provide unique identities within neighborhoods, villages and other developed areas.

    b. Use landscape to complement the existing character of the neighborhood. (See also the Conservation Element Policy CE-I.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 by providing seating in landscaped areas.

    i. Reduce barriers to views or light by selecting appropriate tree types, pruning thick hedges, and large overhanging tree canopies.

    j. Encourage water conservation through the use of drought-tolerant landscape.

    k. Use landscape to support storm water management goals for filtration, percolation and erosion control.

Transit Integration

UD-A.8: 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.9: 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, 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. 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.

    e. Develop and enhance a public signs system to define public places, recreation spots, and principal attractions.

    f. Enhance the 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).

    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.10: 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 attractive building materials, detailing and landscape to complement the surrounding neighborhood.

    d. Provide well-defined 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 enhance safety and security and prevent break-ins and vehicle thefts.

Surface Parking

UD-A.11: 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.

c. Design clear and attractive pedestrian paseos/pathways and signs that link parking and shopping areas.

d. Locate pedestrian pathways in areas where vehicular access is limited.

e. Avoid large areas of uninterrupted parking.

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.12: 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.

Signs

UD-A.13: 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. Design signs to complement the development and community.

e. Post signs to provide directions and rules of conduct where unacceptable behaviors occur.

Wireless Facilities

UD-A.14: 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 where possible.

Utility Undergrounding

UD-A.15: Convert to underground, those overhead utility wires and poles, and associated overhead structures for supplying electric, communication, community antenna television, or similar service.

Safety and Security

UD-A.16: Incorporate CPTED concepts, as necessary, to reduce incidences of fear and crime.

    a. Design projects to encourage natural surveillance as a means to deter crime through the location of physical features, activities and people to maximize visibility.

    b. Employ people, electrical or mechanical devices, and natural measures to create a perception of risk to offenders and deny them access to targets, while allowing legitimate users to freely and safely use the site.

    c. Define clear boundaries between public, semi-public/private, and private spaces.

    d. 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

- A city of distinctive neighborhoods
- Development that protects and improves upon what is best about San Diego's neighborhoods
- Residential design that contributes to neighborhood preservation and vitality
- Provision of innovative designs for a variety of housing types to meet the needs of the population
- Infill housing, roadways and new construction that is sensitive to the character and quality of existing neighborhoods

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 that things must be kept exactly the same. 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 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 building out, 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. Each individual subdivision links to another, while offering small variations on the layout and character of the area. 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 surrounding architectural styles, materials, scale and pattern of development in neighborhoods.

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 should be encouraged.

Subdivisions

UD-B.2: Design subdivisions to respect the existing lot pattern established within neighborhoods to maintain community character.

a. Create lot divisions that follow 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 that 25 percent gradient.

Residential Street Frontages

UD-B.3: 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 features such as porches, stoops, balconies, and windows facing the street.

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.4: 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 problems. (see also Mobility Element – Section XY)

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.

UD-B.5:   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.6:   Provide useable open space which can be used for play, recreation, and social or cultural activities in multifamily as well as single-family projects.

a. Design recreational facilities, common facilities, and open space to be attractive and easily accessed by everyone in the development it serves.

b. Design outdoor space as "outdoor rooms" and avoid undifferentiated, empty spaces.

c. Locate open spaces and open space trails where appropriate so that they may be viewed from individual units.

d. Locate small parks and play areas centrally, and to allow for adult supervision from dwelling units.

e. Maximize the provision of private outdoor space for individual units.

C. Commercial Centers and Mixed Use Design

Goals

- Commercial shopping areas that serve as walkable village centers and activity centers

Discussion

The City of Villages strategy calls for the development of transit-oriented mixed-use villages with significant public spaces. Villages are to be compact and walkable, and serve as focal points for public gathering as a result of their outstanding public spaces (plazas, public art spaces, streetscape, transit centers, urban trail heads, parks, and pocket parks), publicly-oriented buildings (including civic buildings and monuments, public facilities and services, and social services), retail establishments, and compact residences. In conjunction with the General Urban Design policies identified above, the following are additional policies for neighborhood commercial districts and mixed use design.

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 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 areas.

Policies

Project Street Layout and Design
UD-C.1: Design project circulation systems for better 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, should be used 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 patrons to walk or bike, rather than drive, to neighboring destinations.
  h. Layout streets to provide vistas into public viewsheds.

Superblocks
UD-C.2: 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. Strategically place pedestrian-oriented infill structures to introduce street level vitality.
  c. Implement exterior improvements such as public art, pedestrian-scale windows and entrances, signs, and street furniture.

Pedestrian-Oriented Design
UD-C.3: Create pedestrian-friendly shopping areas.

a. Design or redesign buildings to include architecturally interesting elements, pedestrian-friendly entrances, outdoor dining areas, plazas, transparent windows, public art, or other elements that emphasize human-scaled design features at the ground floor level.

b. 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 main street-type experience, including provision of on-street parking.

c. Break up the exterior facades of large retail establishment structures into distinct building masses distinguished by offsetting planes, rooflines and overhangs or other means.

d. Consider the use of small buildings in key locations to scale down large retail establishment sites, with separate individual main entrances directly leading to the outside.

e. Provide direct pedestrian connections from sidewalks to building entrances.

f. Create a new zoning category for mixed-use development. Standards of the zone 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.

Mixed Use

UD-C.4: In village centers and transit corridors identified in community plans, provide a mix of uses that create vibrant, active places.

a. Uses may be mixed vertically (stacked) or horizontally (separate buildings).

b. 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.

c. Use architectural design to differentiate residential use from commercial use.

d. Share and manage commercial, institutional, and public parking facilities where possible and manage parking for greater efficiency (link to Mobility Element).

e. Provide residents distinct and secure parking areas.

f. Encourage distinctive architectural design of commercial and mixed use buildings to promote a sense of identity to village centers.

g. Share and manage commercial, residential and public parking facilities where possible to manage parking for greater efficiency (link to Mobility Element).

h. Highlight areas where mixed-use projects could be located. Particular attention should be paid to transition areas, and areas where small-scale commercial uses can fit into a residential neighborhood context.

Village Center Public Space

UD-C.5:   Provide public spaces such as plazas, greens, gardens, pocket parks, amphitheaters, community meeting rooms, or libraries in mixed-use/commercial village projects. See also Public Places and Civic Architecture section of this Element.

> a. Provide approximately 10 percent of a project's net site area as public space, with adjustments for smaller (less than 10 acres) or constrained sites.
> b. Allow reasonable use of public spaces in accordance with this policy by all members of the public, regardless of patronage.
> c. Provide required public space in the earliest possible phase of development, as determined by the public's ability to use and access the space.

D.   Commercial Corridors

Goals
- Vibrant, mixed-use main streets that serve as neighborhood destinations, community resources, and conduits to the regional transit system
- Attractive, prosperous, commercial corridors which link communities and provide goods and services

Discussion

Commercial corridors link neighborhoods together and may cross community boundaries. These shopping areas 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 City of Villages Transit/Land Use Connections Map (see fold-out) identifies major transit lines that are along various commercial corridors. The policies in this section offer guidance on how to preserve and enhance these corridors to achieve the City of Villages goals to create walkable communities and support transit. 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.

Policies

Streetscape

UD-D.1: Enhance the public streetscape for greater walkability and neighborhood aesthetics (see also the Citywide Streets and Public Art sections 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. Utilize building proportion and innovative architecture and design to create a sense of rhythm on long commercial corridors.

    e. 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.

Mixed Use

UD-D.2. Provide a mix of uses to help create vibrant, active places in accordance with UD-C.4.

E. Office and Industrial Development

Goals

- Improvement in the pedestrian and transit orientation of office and industrial development.
- Improvement in the visual quality of office and industrial development.

Policies

UD-E.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 so as to promote their use. Interest can be created by paving materials, landscaping, public art, and uses such as retail, 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.

UD-E.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-E.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.

F. Public Spaces and Civic Architecture

Goals
- Provision of significant public gathering spaces in every neighborhood
- Distinctive civic architecture, land marks and 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-F.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 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

<div align="center">natural surveillance into the open space.</div>

Civic Architecture and Landmarks
UD-F.2: Treat and locate civic architecture and landmark institutions prominently.

    a. Accompany civic architecture with public open space and greens, urban parks, or plazas that enhance the character of these sites.

    b. Design parks, schools, libraries, and other civic buildings as centers for the community.

    c. Incorporate sustainable building principles into building design (see Conservation Element Section H).

    d. 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.

    e. Encourage designs that distinguish civic buildings and landmarks from the surrounding neighborhood as a means of identifying its civic purpose.

    f. Support the preservation of community landmarks.

Public Facilities
UD-F.3: Design public facilities that serve as examples of quality and notable architecture.

    a. Develop partnerships with neighborhood residents and businesses in the site selection, planning, design, and construction of public facilities.

    b. Design public improvements in a manner that emphasizes the distinctive nature of communities and neighborhoods.

    c. Regard public facilities as catalysts for private investment.

G. Public Art & Cultural Amenities

Goals
- 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, click here. The following are policies related to public art and cultural amenities.

Policies

Community Identity
UD-G.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.

Citywide Identity
UD-G.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-G.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 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-G.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-G.5: Provide opportunities for the collaboration of artists and community members.
a. Encourage the incorporation of public art 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.