



Urban Design

- 4.1 EXISTING URBAN FORM AND CONTEXT
- 4.2 URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK
- 4.3 DEVELOPMENT FORM

Introduction

Urban design is not a physical entity in and of itself which can be isolated and discussed separately from the other elements of this plan. Urban design is a process that considers many of the factors and issues examined elsewhere in this plan, yet is also concerned with more detailed features such as architecture or site design. Special attention to urban design is an integral part of the community planning process and continuing successful development of the Golden Hill community.

Perched within hilly topography and next to Downtown and Balboa Park, Golden Hill occupies a premier geographic location in the city, with breathtaking city, bay and mountain views and is one of the oldest communities in the city. Two qualities which make the community unique are the variety of older, traditional architectural styles, and the sensitivity of the earlier site planning to the rolling terrain and canyon landforms.



Many of the community's neighborhoods still have a pedestrian scale with mature trees and quiet streets. Growth has followed a traditional neighborhood development pattern, characterized by compact blocks, small lots and fine-grained, pedestrian-scaled buildings. Many significant residential architectural styles exist in the area and are well worth preserving.

The community has great potential to build on the renaissance of its commercial streets, with the restoration, enhancement or new development of mixed-use buildings and traditional storefronts that contribute to a "Main Street" character that supports walking, bicycling, and greater transit use. Investments in public streets, plazas, parks and open spaces will provide community identity, gathering spaces, and connections between neighborhoods, commercial districts and Balboa Park.

Over time, 25th Street becomes a "Bay-to-Park" link, a lid over SR-94 provides a much needed park space and mends a past divide with the community of Sherman Heights by becoming a central gathering space for both communities. Russ Boulevard is enhanced to offer a better face to Balboa Park and bicycle facilities, pedestrian bridges, trails, stairs and paths facilitate greater connectivity across the canyons and within the community.

While new development in Golden Hill is not expected to duplicate the older established scale and architectural styles of the community, it is expected to be compatible with the traditional development pattern of Golden Hill that is typically characterized by a 50-foot wide lot pattern coupled with low-scale and distinctive quality architecture. It is the composition of the natural environmental features, the grid street pattern and the distinctive architectural character that defines the urban form and provides the design framework for the Golden Hill Community Plan.



URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT GOALS

- High quality urban design that provides superior living and working environments and contributes positively to the public realm.
- A community that supports creativity as expressed in its built environment, architecture, public art, street furniture and physical form.
- Improved urban design and access (where appropriate) at neighborhood interfaces with natural open space and Balboa Park.
- A thoughtful and ingenious adaptation and respect for the hilly topography, canyon landscape, and resulting views that give Golden Hill its name and unique character.
- New development that contributes to and is compatible with the existing fine-grained development patterns and architecture that give the community its traditional charm.
- An enhanced and lively streetscape that not only supports pedestrians, bicycles and transit, but also functions as the “outdoor living room” of the community and the arena of public life and civic engagement.
- Improved visual aesthetics and community identity through the ongoing repair, upgrade and maintenance of public facilities and infrastructure.

GENERAL PLAN CROSS REFERENCE

The City of San Diego General Plan establishes citywide policies to be cited in conjunction with a community plan. Policies may also be further referenced, emphasized or detailed in a community plan to provide community-specific direction. General Plan urban design policies particularly significant to the Golden Hill community are listed by their notation in cross reference Table 4-1 below.

TABLE 4-1: GENERAL PLAN - RELATED URBAN DESIGN TOPICS AND POLICIES

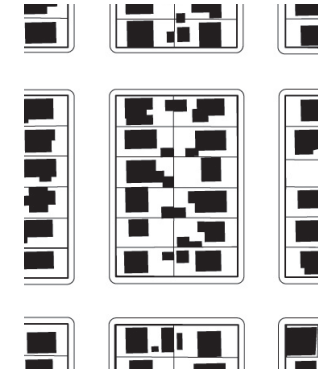
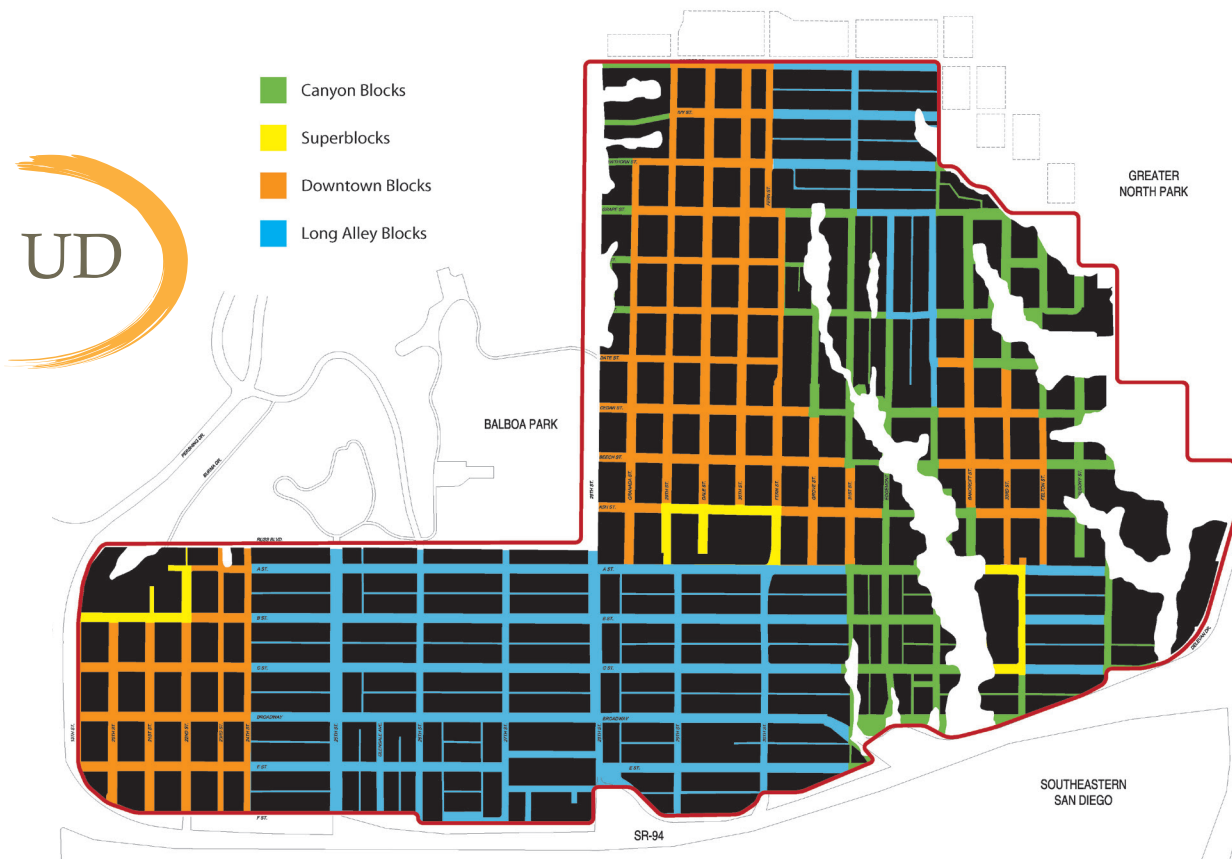
Community Plan Topic	General Plan Policy
Development Adjacent to Canyons & Other Natural Features	UD-A.3
Landscape Guidelines	UD-A.8
Parking	UD-A.11, UD-A.12
Wireless Facilities	UD-A.15
Utilities	UD-A.16
Safety & Security (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED))	UD-A.17
Residential Design	UD-B.1 – UD-B.8
Mixed-Use and Commercial	UD-C.1 – UD-C.8
Public Spaces & Civic Architecture	UD-E.1 – UD-E.2
Public Art & Cultural Amenities	UD-F.1 – UD-F.5
Urban Runoff & Storm Water Management	CE-E.1 – CE-E.7
Urban Forestry	CE-J.1 – CE-J.5
Sustainable Development Practices	CE-A.5 – CE-A.12



4.1 Existing Urban Form and Context

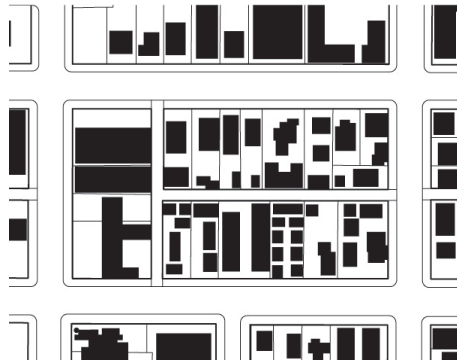
TRADITIONAL BLOCK PATTERNS

A defining characteristic of Golden Hill is its diversity of block patterns and types which contribute to a clear definition of neighborhoods and a highly walkable and connected street network. Generally, blocks are compact and follow a clear grid pattern, with some exceptions where blocks meet the edges of canyons and freeways.



Downtown Blocks

Downtown Blocks are an extension of the block pattern of downtown that existed prior to the construction of the I-5 freeway. They are predominantly located in the South Park neighborhood and in the western-most section of Golden Hill west of 24th Street. They are typically 200' x 300' with 50' wide by 100' deep lots that can face in both the long and short directions of the block. This block type typically does not have an alley, although a slightly wider variation with an alley does appear in select locations. This block design is compact and affords a variety of lot configurations, which has enabled a diversity of building types to be built over the years. It allows a good amount of density, with an average of 12 lots per block and up to 17 lots in some locations. At the same time, the scale and character of development is fine-grained and mostly single-family. The combination of these development patterns makes the neighborhoods around them highly walkable and pedestrian-oriented.



Long Alley Blocks

Long Alley blocks are largely located south of A Street from 24th to 31st Streets, with some blocks clustered around the northeast section of the community. They measure a standard 300' wide by 600', with some blocks as long as 700' and some half-blocks facing the park. The typical lot size is 50' wide by 140' deep. A rich diversity of lot configurations and dimensions exists with lots as small as 1400 square feet. Many of the larger apartment complexes in the community are developed within this block type, as the length allows large lot consolidations, easy alley access, and a greater amount of diversity of building types and sizes. In the eastern neighborhoods, single-family lots dominate this block type. While the pattern of development is fine grained in many locations, the length of this block type provides a challenge to walking. This is coupled with the fact that many of these blocks are located in the most hilly areas of the community.



Canyon Blocks

Canyon Blocks are irregular blocks that have developed along canyons and respond to the variation in topography created by the canyons. They are located mostly in the eastern neighborhoods of the community and they are characterized by dead-end streets, irregular lot sizes and lot lines, and cul-de-sacs. An average block width of 300' persists, but the depth varies according to the location of the canyons. Lot depths may extend beyond 100' in some locations to accommodate the canyon lands. Block access is through winding streets and private driveways. The irregular shape and hidden nature of the lots in this block type make walking and general way-finding a challenge. At the same time, the unique arrangement and shape of lots allows development to be well-suited for canyon interface.



Superblocks

Superblocks are unique blocks in the community where two or three standard blocks are combined to accommodate special uses, such as schools, planned communities, industrial or other non-residential uses. Typically, superblocks are discouraged in existing communities because they disrupt the street network, encourage incompatible and inward-focused development, and they tend to degrade the pedestrian environment. However, exceptions can be made for special community-serving uses, such as schools, where the larger block size allows the flexibility needed to make exceptional types of development feasible.

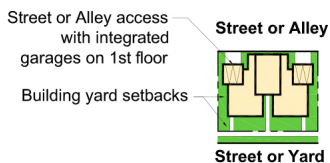
DIVERSITY OF BUILDING TYPES

A defining characteristic of Golden Hill is the rich diversity of building types and architectural styles that exist in the community. Buildings allow for a mix of unit types, sizes, and styles, while their scale, massing and height is consistent across the community. They incorporate successful urban design elements and principles of “Eyes on the Street.” The images on this page illustrate some of the most prevalent building types in the community and their distinctive characteristics.

Single Family, Duplex, or Triplex

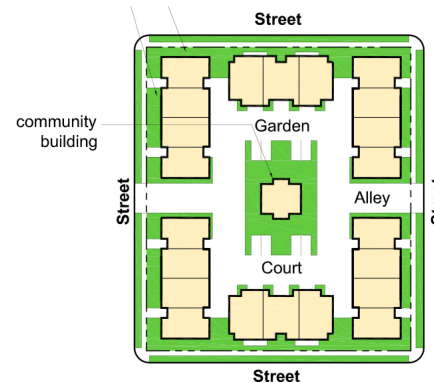
Single family homes may be arranged as stand-alone detached units, or attached as duplexes or triplexes. Accessory Dwelling Units or “Granny Flats” may be built in some zones. Densities typically range from 5 to 14 units per acre. Parking for single family homes, duplexes or triplexes may be integrated into the ground-floor of the units or separated in individually secured garages. Garages should be accessed from the rear or side of the site.

UD



Bungalow Courts

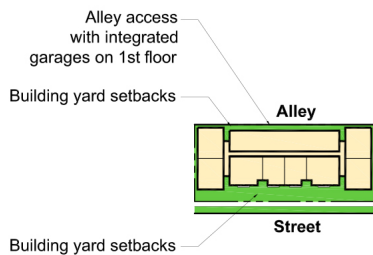
Bungalow Courts are attached dwelling units organized around a central courtyard. The courtyard may contain individual or collective garden plots for building residents to use. They typically range in density from 29 to 44 units per acre. Parking for Bungalow Courts may include a mixture of garages and surface spaces, as well as tandem spaces and tandem lift parking accessed from an alley.





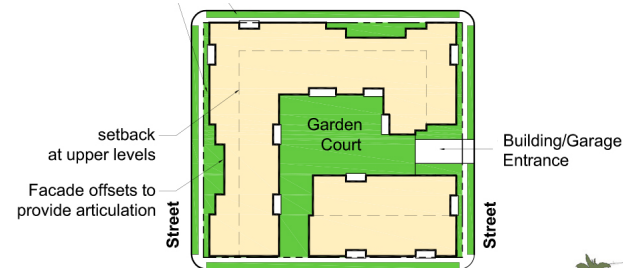
Rowhomes and Townhomes

Rowhomes and townhomes are single-family residential units, attached to their neighbors by shared side walls. They can be clustered in groups of 4 to 6 units. Townhomes may range from 2 to 3 levels in height and from 15 to 29 units per acre. Parking for rowhomes and townhomes should be integrated into the ground-floor of the units in individually secured garages. Garages should be accessed from the rear of the site.



Apartments

Apartments are denser multi-family residential buildings, most often with double-loaded corridors. They range between 20-44 units per acre and may include a range of unit sizes. Parking is typically accommodated in a below-grade structure that is integrated within the building and privately secured for access by residents only. The ground floor of Apartments should include active uses to screen the parking behind. Active uses may include residential units, building amenities, or storefronts with retail or other neighborhood-serving uses.



4.2 Urban Design Framework

KEY URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop the City Operations Yard Site with Residential and Mixed-Use Buildings and a Public Plaza or Pocket Park.
- Retrofit 'Strip' Commercial Lots with Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial and Mixed-Use Buildings that Positively Address the Street Edge and Corners.
- Enhance Russ Blvd. with Bike Facilities and Improved Park Frontage.
- Make 25th Street the Community's "Bay to Park" Link by Implementing the Streetscape Improvements of the 25th Street Renaissance Project.
- Build a "Lid" over SR-94 and Provide a Neighborhood Park that Connects Golden Hill with Sherman Heights.
- Plant a "Green Buffer" along SR-94 to address Pollution, Noise and Visual Quality and Provide Opportunities for Passive Parks where appropriate.
- Connect Golden Hill and South Park by incorporating pedestrian and bicycle facilities to Golf Course Drive and 26th Street.
- Explore Opportunities to Build Plazas and Pocket Parks as Gathering Areas within Neighborhood Centers/Villages.
- Add Street Trees as Needed to Improve Pedestrian Comfort and Visual Quality and to Create Gateways.
- Build a Pedestrian Bridge or Trail to Golden Hill Elementary Across 32nd Street Canyon.
- Enhance and Continue to Beautify the Canyons in the Community with Native Species, Trails, Trail Heads and Steps where appropriate.

COMMUNITY & NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN

Block Patterns

A defining characteristic of Golden Hill is its diversity of block patterns and types which contribute to a clear definition of neighborhoods and a highly walkable and connected street network. Generally, blocks are compact and follow a clear grid pattern, with some exceptions where blocks meet the edges of canyons and freeways.

POLICIES

- UD-2.1 Preserve the diversity of block patterns and street configurations which contribute to distinct neighborhoods in the community.
- UD-2.2 Maintain and enhance the high level of connectivity and mobility afforded by a compact block pattern and consistent street grid.
- UD-2.3 Discourage street and alley vacations that would result in the creation of large-scale, "superblocks."



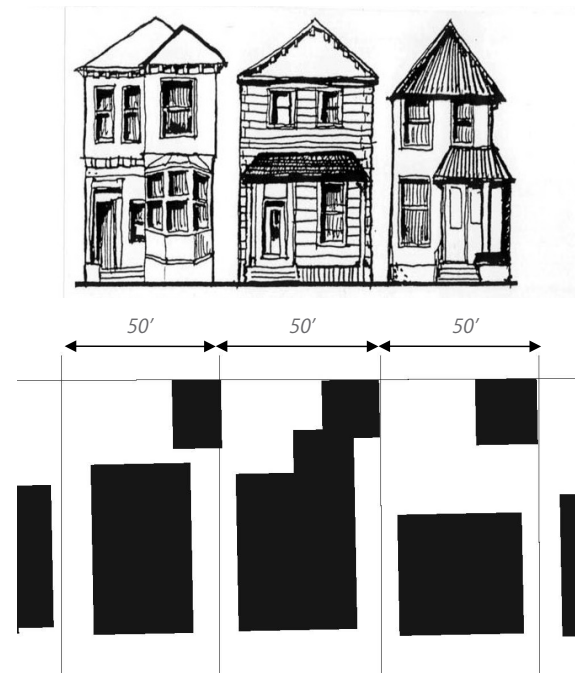
The existing lot pattern in the community yields a diversity of businesses.

Lot Patterns

A defining characteristic of Golden Hill is a predominant 50' lot width that has allowed development to occur over time with a consistent pattern, rhythm and scale. As a result, development has a fine-grain character contributing to a rich, diverse streetscape, attractive pedestrian environment, distinctive structures, and unique plazas.

POLICIES

- UD-2.4** Respect, preserve and follow the community's traditional, small-scale and pedestrian-oriented development patterns. Maintain the scale and rhythm of the existing 50' lot widths prevalent in the community through development that is fine-grained, well-articulated and not excessive in bulk and massing.
- A. Prohibit lot consolidations in mid-block locations that result in an area greater than 15,000 square feet or more than 100 feet of street frontage. Corner locations, particularly in commercial areas, have the capacity to accept larger buildings without the same effect on neighborhood character; therefore lot consolidations that result in more than 125 feet of frontage on any single street are strongly discouraged.
 - B. Development should be modulated to fit the scale of 50' lot widths. This can be accomplished with the use of courtyards and cut-outs, roof line variation, placement of doors and windows, and facade treatments that repeat the pattern of adjacent lots in the area.





Design detail at corners is a community character element.



Corner Lots and Buildings

UD

A defining characteristic of the community is the location of greater intensity and more prominent buildings (such as markets and grander apartment buildings) within corner lots. Buildings on corner lots often incorporate design elements that accent corners. These conditions help define the block and mark the street intersection with prominent and distinctive structures.

POLICIES

- UD-2.5 Build-up prominent street corners with well-designed multi-family buildings and/or corner stores and other retail uses where permitted.
- UD-2.6 Use street corners as focal points with prominent and distinctive building forms, plazas and other features.
- UD-2.7 Retain corner stores that are neighborhood-serving and conveniently scattered throughout the community.

UD-2.8 Redesign strip commercial lots with street fronting commercial and mixed-use buildings that also create prominent building forms at street corners. Interim measures to make the existing commercial centers more pedestrian-oriented should address the street edge by adding kiosks and other structures at corners.

UD-2.9 Utilize the City's storefront improvement program to assist small businesses upgrade and beautify storefronts. New storefront design should maintain or reveal important architectural design elements of the building so as not to detract from overall traditional or historic character.



Landscape elements can also define street corners.

Gateways and Gateway Design

A defining characteristic of the community are the iconic gateways that define neighborhood boundaries, provide community identify and enhance way-finding and a sense of place.

POLICIES

- UD-2.10** Provide gateways at key intersections in the community and as shown on Figure 4-1 above. Gateways should be generally focused in predominantly commercial areas and should incorporate any or all of the following elements:
 - A. Distinct building forms, accentuated building corners and frontages.
 - B. Dedicated entry court, public plaza, public art.
 - C. Unique signs, landscape features and lighting.
 - D. A change in materials, a corner plaza or entry feature.
 - E. An increase in the overall building height at the corners.
- UD-2.11** Design gateway elements in a manner that reinforces neighborhood identity through the use of similar materials, historic features and scale.
- UD-2.12** Encourage the reconstruction of the documented historic stone pillars with lighting that is associated with the early development of the South Park area.
- UD-2.13** The improvement of the Gala Foods Site should include a gateway element that takes advantage of the shift in the streets at the intersection of Grape St. and 30th/Fern, as a key community node and gathering area.

Public Spaces & Gathering Spots

Although Balboa Park and Grape Street Square are important examples of accessible public open spaces and community gathering spots, public space is not common within the community’s neighborhoods and commercial areas. The provision of public space and amenities is a component of the General Plan’s City of Villages strategy and is particularly important within commercial districts that form the core of neighborhood centers or villages within the community.

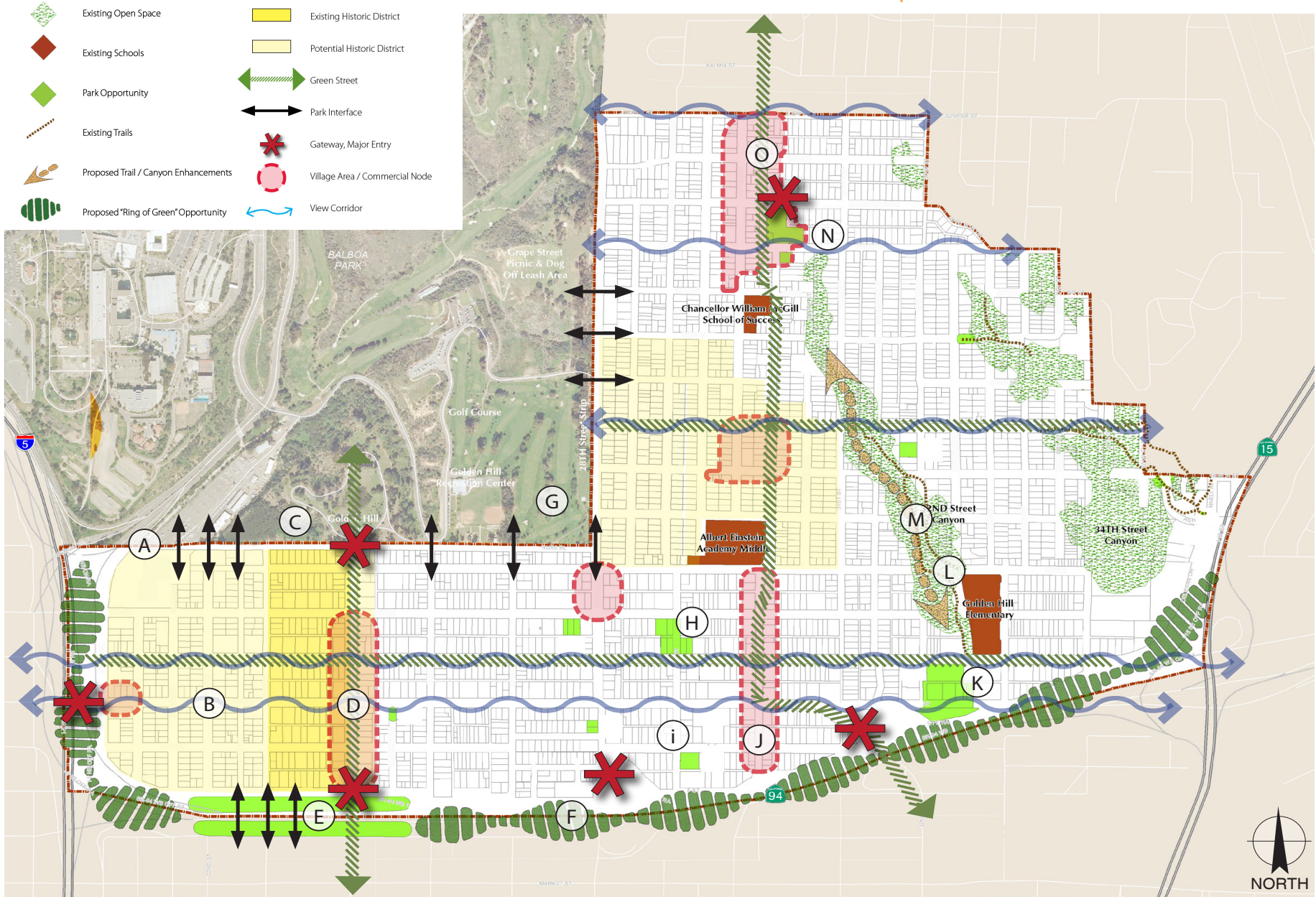
POLICIES

- UD-2.14** Provide public space and gathering spots within neighborhoods and commercial districts. These may take the form of plazas, pocket parks or linear parks, or enclosed space for community meetings and events.
 - A. Implementation may occur as a result of reconfiguring public-right-of-way for this purpose, through public acquisition or private development incentives and exactions.
 - B. Provide seating and areas for social interaction within public space.



Building orientation accentuates the corner of 28th and B Street creating a plaza and gateway element.

FIGURE 4-1: URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT MAP



Public Views

Due to the community’s sloping topography, public and private views (both near and far) are common. Views are particularly associated with the community’s natural scenic amenities of San Diego Bay, Balboa Park, Switzer Canyon, and the 32nd Street and 34th Street canyons. Views have a strong association with the desirable character and attractiveness of the community. While views from public vantage points (e.g. public streets, trails, parks) are intended to be protected, private views are also important to the community. Private views, however, are protected only to the extent that the application of policies and regulations related to context-sensitive and canyon development, and preservation of open space results in better visual quality for the neighborhood. Therefore, strict application of related policies and regulations is important within hillside neighborhoods.

POLICIES

- UD-2.15** Preserve and enhance public views and view corridors. Encroachments into front or street sideyard setbacks over 42 inches high should not be allowed where view corridors are affected.
- UD-2.16** When public-right-of-way crosses or terminates at parks or designated open space, restrict development encroachments only to those necessary for primary access to abutting properties, and with minimal disturbance to existing landforms.
- UD-2.17** When all or a portion of a property is within designated open space, locate structures within the least visually prominent portion of a lot, and outside or toward the edge of designated open space. Maintain views as appropriate by respecting development setbacks.
- UD-2.18** Respect required setbacks for buildings along view corridors identified on figure 4-1.

- UD-2.19** Corner lots along view corridors require special design considerations. Development and tall landscape material should be set back, truncated or terraced from the corner portion of a lot to allow views.
- UD-2.20** Development in low-scale, primarily residential neighborhoods should not impair visual access to canyons and other prominent views. Buildings should respect the traditional scale and form of lots and not overwhelm the site, potentially impacting views enjoyed by neighbors.
- UD-2.21** Step development with the canyon and hillside landforms to maximize view opportunities, allow for decks and patios, and protect the views of adjacent properties where possible.



Maintaining consistent building setbacks is important within public view corridors.



Natural landforms should be protected from further development encroachment.





Canyons, Hillside and Open Space

The community's natural base of hillsides, canyons, ravines, streams, and vegetation are important assets that should be conserved. Canyons, hillsides and open space (including Balboa Park) provide key features shaping the community's identity and built form. The interface between these features and the built environment requires special design attention so that new development does not detract from the unique attributes they provide such as view opportunities, a relationship with the natural environment, and a break from urban development.

UD



A climate-appropriate lawn substitute provides design continuity, and a landscape swale improves water quality downstream.



POLICIES

- UD-2.22** Provide access and view corridors into canyons via street rights-of-way for fire prevention, maintenance and trail access. Primary access to abutting private developable properties may also be permitted.
- UD-2.23** Canyon rim and hillside development should complement the natural character of the land and minimize disturbance of topography and natural vegetation.
- A.** Align streets, drives, parking and emergency vehicle access as closely as possible to existing grades to minimize the need for additional grading.
 - B.** Design buildings and structures to fit into hillsides (rather than altering the hillside to fit the structure) by minimizing the use of grading and outwardly visible retaining walls.
 - C.** Design development to follow the slope of hillsides and canyons by stepping building volumes with the slope and using terraces to create multi-level landscapes.
 - D.** Use only landscape materials suitable for the San Diego climate. Low water use plant species are preferred. Noninvasive or native plant species should be used adjacent to natural habitat areas.
 - E.** Design landscape and private open space areas to serve a sustainable infrastructure function by allowing for the collection, treatment and infiltration of storm water.

- UD-2.24** Building design should positively respond to the community’s unique canyon environment and steep slope landforms. Buildings and structures should be unobtrusive and maintain the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- A. Design buildings along canyon edges to conform to hillside topography by providing a setback from top of slope where possible. In order to accommodate a reasonable building size for lots with limited flat area, step foundations down slopes, rather than cantilevering over canyon landforms.
 - B. Calculate permitted floor area for lots partially within designated open space using only that portion of the lot not within open space. As a minimum, the permitted floor area should assume a lot depth of 100 feet rather than the true lot depth. Garages should not be eliminated in an effort to reduce the floor area.
 - C. Minimize bulk and scale by dividing building heights into one and two story components, varying rooflines and wall planes, providing openings, projections, recesses and other building details. Additionally, entrances, arcades, stairs, overhangs and unique, creative building shapes and angles can help to complement the surrounding topography and vegetation to create and define outdoor space.
 - D. Avoid exposed under-floor areas, large downhill cantilevers, and/or tall support columns for overhanging areas for both aesthetic and fire safety reasons.
 - E. Vary the design and treatment of rooftops within sloping sites. Rooflines should be used to emphasize the shape and flow of the hillside instead of masking it.
 - F. Sloping sites offer opportunities to create and emphasize unique characteristics such as outdoor decks, roof gardens, bay windows and/or terraces.
 - G. Development adjacent to designated open space should specify and use neutral, earth-tone, muted colors that complement the natural landscape.

Balboa Park

The community borders regionally and historically significant Balboa Park on two sides. Because of this physical relationship, it is important to ensure that the design and development within areas adjacent to the park are consistent with the resource, design qualities and character of the park. For this purpose, the following guidelines are recommended for development within each block that has frontage with Balboa Park:

POLICIES

- UD-2.25** Development should maintain and enhance public vistas into the park, particularly from existing streets and public-rights-of-way, including maintaining required setbacks for building facades and fences.
- UD-2.26** Maintain the lower scale residential character reflective of existing development which is primarily single-family or lower density multi-family. For lots that abut the park, incorporate low-scale building elements such as single-story facades, porches, courtyards and forecourts to provide an appropriate visual transition.
- UD-2.27** Incorporate landscape motifs and materials reflective of those used within the park.
- UD-2.28** Development should maintain an open character with landscaped yards and setbacks. Reductions in required setbacks should be discouraged for lots abutting the park.



25th Street / Bay-to-Park Link

A unique characteristic of Golden Hill is its connection to Balboa Park and to surrounding neighborhoods that lead to the bay. 25th Street should be given special consideration as an important connection between the park and the bay.

UD-2.29 Make 25th Street the community's "Bay to Park Link" that connects the community from Balboa Park to Sherman Heights, Logan Heights, Barrio Logan and the Bay.

- A. Design a consistent and continuous street theme with special attention given to the selection of street trees, lighting, street banners, sidewalk paving materials and patterns, and public art.
- B. A focus on the funding and installation of infrastructure, amenities and furniture that support pedestrian and bike mobility on 25th Street.
- C. A coordinated effort to build more positive street frontages of businesses and homes facing 25th, including sidewalk cafes, plazas, and gathering areas.
- D. "Green Infrastructure" that enhances the storm-water management functions of 25th St., particularly as it slopes down to the bay.

Operations Yard (20th & B)

The portion of the City's 'operations yard' within the Golden Hill Community is designated for multi-family development with a neighborhood serving retail component while the portion within Balboa Park is identified by the East Mesa Precise Plan for the development of the Pershing Recreation Complex, a multi-use sports park. The operations yard could be relocated in the future to allow development of the recreation complex making the site within Golden Hill available for development that could potentially help fund this relocation. The guidelines below should be part of any proposal to redevelop the operations yard with a different use.

POLICIES

UD-2.30 Extend 20th Street into the site for primary access. Include parking, non-contiguous sidewalks and street trees within the street profile.

UD-2.31 Utilize the Russ Boulevard right-of-way as a design interface with the future recreation complex and access to the planned trail connection east to Golden Hill Park.

UD-2.32 Provide landscaped open space buffers along the Pershing Drive frontage and within the sloped area at the site's eastern boundary.

- A. The Pershing Drive buffer should be 35-foot-wide and designed as an entry to Balboa Park with colorful plantings consistent with recommendations of the Balboa Park East Mesa Precise Plan. Incorporate any requirements for drainage and sound mitigation into a naturalistic, layered landscape design. Provide facilities for jogging and bicycling to accommodate recreational access to Balboa Park and the future sports complex.
- B. Remove the concrete slope covering at the site's eastern boundary and install plantable retaining walls.

UD-2.33 Design building roofs to take account of views into the site from adjacent development.

UD-2.34 Retrofit the administrative building at the entrance to the site into a commercial or mixed-use building if feasible.

UD-2.35 Provide a publicly accessible plaza designed either as a gateway into the project site or as visual draw from B Street into the site.



Traditional & Historic Buildings

Golden Hill has a wealth of traditional and historic buildings that contribute to the heritage and charm of the community.

POLICIES

- UD-2.36** Encourage the preservation, re-use or restoration of older structures that contribute to the unique traditional character and flavor of the community.
- UD-2.37** Preserve and enhance the site fences, retaining walls, stonework and other landscape features that add to the community’s richness and authenticity.



7th Day Adventist Church is a designated historic resource.



This Queen Anne style residence incorporates landscape stonework that is part the community’s traditional character.



Mural transforms a blank wall into public art.



Design detail provides an artistic element to landscape stonework.

Public Art and Cultural Expression

Golden hill is an edgy and artistic community with many signs of a rich and diverse culture. It is a community that is interested in and supportive of art and other forms of individual and communal expression.



POLICIES

- UD-2.38** Gain the support of local art organizations and programs to attract funding from alternative grant sources.
- UD-2.39** Incorporate local art into the streetscape.
 - A.** Work with arts groups, schools and community organizations to develop a program for art in the streetscape.
 - B.** Solicit local artists and designers for the development of key street furnishings and amenities (such as benches, tree grates, waste bins and planters).
 - C.** Encourage businesses to support and sponsor art in the areas adjacent to their storefront and in the community in general.
- UD-2.40** Embrace the eclectic, edgy and artistic nature of many areas in the community as signs of authenticity and unique character.

STREETScape AND PUBLIC REALM

The network, pattern and design details for streets, sidewalks and abutting public spaces – “the public realm” – is fundamental to the perception of the community’s urban design framework. Therefore, features and improvements within these spaces need to be reviewed for urban design as well as mobility functions.

The community’s grid pattern of streets is a particular mobility asset by providing multiple access points to destinations throughout the community. This pattern provides better connectivity and disperses traffic to create comparatively more walkable commercial and residential neighborhoods. The community is also served by relatively convenient transit access. These characteristics are conducive to walkability and also provide mobility options for those who cannot drive, do not own a motor vehicle, or prefer to reduce their dependence on the automobile.

UD

Golden Hill has a rich diversity of street types that range in character from residential to commercial streets, scenic drives and canyon adjacent streets. Residential streets are compact and highly landscaped in areas where small-scale and tight neighborhood character is important, and expansive, open and hilly in other areas where views are important. Commercial streets exhibit a distinct “Main Street” character, tree grates, bicycle racks, and continuous storefronts. Some streets have an almost bucolic character, especially in areas around canyons and Balboa Park. As the community develops, it will be important to build on this diversity and character.

Policies within the Mobility Element encourage the reconfiguration of the public right-of-way where desirable to enhance transit access, slow automobile traffic and provide better pedestrian mobility and comfort. However, public right-of-way improvements have the potential to disrupt historic and traditional neighborhood character and should be carefully designed to preserve this character. Major improvements should be reviewed with the community.



Art incorporated into a building facade.



The urban design element includes policies that relate to the scale and proportion of these architecturally significant homes.



The community is proud of its many historic landmarks and structures.



Street art can reflect an eclectic sensibility.

Sidewalks & Pedestrian Paths

Sidewalks and pedestrian paths are of particular importance to the community's urban form due to their adjacency to the private realm and the possibility to incorporate multiple functions such as pedestrian access, gathering space, design details and public art. However, sidewalks in the community often lack adequate width for their level of use and may contain gaps, and crossings are not always clearly marked. In some areas, various encroachments and poorly placed above-ground infrastructure and utilities also reduce sidewalk widths and detract from a clearly defined path of travel. Accordingly, encroachments and above-ground infrastructure need to be properly located and managed, especially within areas of higher pedestrian traffic such as along commercial corridors, major streets and transit lines.

Sidewalks are located adjacent to streets and are preferably separated from auto traffic by a curb or other barrier. The sidewalk area typically occupies the ground level between the street curb (or other barrier) and the abutting property line. Pedestrian paths may follow routes independent of auto routes such as paths through parks and plazas, or between buildings, and can be a method to increase pedestrian access in confined spaces.

Sidewalk mobility is of primary importance, and includes pedestrians and those using mobility devices such as wheelchairs and motorized scooters. It is therefore important to provide adequate travel width dependent on use characteristics. Because the area allocated to sidewalks also serves as a transition between the auto travel way and abutting uses outside the public right-of-way, it is useful to characterize this area into separate functional zones (Figure 4-2).

POLICIES

- UD-2.41 Prioritize activities within the sidewalk and make mobility functions such as pedestrian access, bicycle parking and transit stops the main priority. Other uses should be prioritized based upon their public necessity and ability to find alternative locations outside the sidewalk zone.
- UD-2.42 Maintain pedestrian safety and comfort within the sidewalk zone.
- UD-2.43 Promote the use of separate pedestrian paths (such as mid-block paseos and trail connections), to provide greater mobility, particularly where space is restricted.
- UD-2.44 Utilities should be located outside of the pedestrian zone and designed so as not to obstruct a clear path of travel (reference UDE policy UD-2.52 below).
- UD-2.45 Require new development permits to provide street improvements to prevailing City standards, including curbs, gutters, sidewalks and street trees.
- UD-2.46 Remove driveways and curb cuts that create conflicts with pedestrians within commercial districts. Re-direct vehicle access to alleys where available or to mid-block access shared between multiple properties. Outside of commercial areas, driveway access should be provided through alleys when available or through shared driveways.
- UD-2.47 Design public right-of-way improvements to be compatible with existing neighborhood character, including use of similar materials, colors and patterns (e.g. traditional sidewalk scoring). Avoid use of contemporary textured, stamped or colored paving materials. Decorative improvements within Historic Districts should be avoided unless determined consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.



FIGURE 4-2: SIDEWALK ZONES



Frontage Zone

Pedestrian Zone

Furniture /
Planting Zone

UD

Furnishings Zone – Transition area and buffer between pedestrian zone and the roadway. Consider placement of elements that compliment the street such as lighting, signs, trees, driveway aprons, parking meters, trash receptacles and news racks.

Throughway/Pedestrian Zone – Main travel way intended for mobility access. Maintain a continuous, clearly defined, unobstructed route clear of obstacles and accessible to users of all abilities.

Frontage Zone – Transition area between the pedestrian zone and abutting property. Consider outdoor amenities associated with the building frontage such as awnings, overhangs, café railings, planters, doorways, security grills and business signs.

UD-2.48 Enhance the Russ Boulevard frontage with Balboa Park to include pedestrian and bicycle paths and additional landscaping.

UD-2.49 Improve pedestrian environments in the community with wider sidewalks where needed, enhanced crosswalks and paving, better access and connectivity, shade-producing street trees, street furnishings and amenities that support walking.

- A. Increase sidewalk widths and create spaces for additional landscape, furniture, amenities, and gathering places where needed. Sidewalk widths should be a minimum of 10 feet for most streets to allow adequate space for a pedestrian zone and street trees. Wider sidewalks are preferable for commercial streets. A width of 15 feet or greater is preferable for locations with sidewalk cafes and bus shelters.
- B. Keep the pedestrian zone and street corners within sidewalks clear of obstructions and visual clutter.
- C. Above ground utility equipment is discouraged from public view by integrating into building architecture or by landscaping.



Improve pedestrian connections across the canyons and hills in the community with steps, landscape design and handrails.



Enhance Russ Blvd. to include a bike path and development that faces the park and provides a positive frontage to the park

- UD-2.50 Plant continuous rows of street trees throughout the community with priority toward major connections such as those through Balboa Park, linking eastern neighborhoods and commercial streets.
- UD-2.51 Apply current storm water management best practices (such as bio-swales) to treat and retain as much of the storm water runoff from streets, driveways and other built areas in the community.
- UD-2.52 Reduce the impact of auto access and parking on street frontages. Close unused driveways and consolidate the number of driveways and curb cuts where possible. Utilize alleys as sole access where available, and use driveways shared between properties. Parking should be located toward to the rear of lots or underground.
- UD-2.53 Provide furnishings and amenities throughout the streetscape (e.g. bike racks, waste bins, benches, drinking fountains, etc.)
 - A. Street furnishings should not obstruct pedestrian travel and use of the sidewalk.
 - B. Create appealing groupings and combinations that make visual sense and effectively serve community needs.
 - C. Use multi-purpose designs such as planter benches or combined waste, recycling and ash tray bins to avoid sidewalk clutter and obstructions.
 - D. Consider climate and prevailing weather in the design and placement of street furniture, particularly the need for shade. Locate furniture under trees, canopies or awnings and do not use highly reflective metal surfaces that conduct heat.
 - E. Promote the many architectural styles of the community in the design and decoration of street furnishings.
 - F. Incorporate solar power into kiosks, bus shelters and other structures.



A clear path of pedestrian travel should be maintained within the streetscape.



Kiosks are often appealing streetscape amenities.



URBAN FOREST / STREET TREES

The community's urban forest should be maintained and enhanced as a neighborhood character design element that also provides ecological benefits. Street trees contribute significantly to the character, identity, and comfort of the community's streets. Street trees contribute to the spatial definition of the street, providing both a comfortable sense of scale and enclosure to the public realm. Trees are also beneficial to reduce heat gain and glare effects of the urban built environment, to produce fresh air, and to improve pedestrian comfort by providing shade.

This section incorporates a Street Tree Master Plan that provides a design framework intended to create recognizable patterns and character elements for major streets and specific neighborhoods. Street trees

are to provide design and aesthetic benefits by visually unifying streets and providing an element of design continuity within neighborhoods and the community. Street tree planting is strongly encouraged within the public right-of-way where landscape/planting strips are already available or where the sidewalk is of sufficient width to install street trees. Therefore,

the Master Plan is primarily intended for trees planted within the public right-of-way, but is also provided as a voluntary guide when selecting street trees within the front and street side yards of private property. The components of the Master Plan provided below include design themes, tree species selection, a map and related policies.

Design

Theme Trees: Primary streets will be consistently planted with selected theme trees to establish a strong, recognizable design element within corridors and neighborhoods (Figure 4-3). Trees are to be selected from the Golden Hill Street Tree Selection Guide in Table 4-2. The design program identifies a 'primary' tree to establish an overall theme. The theme trees are the dominant species and will establish the character of a street or

neighborhood. An alternate tree that complements the form of the primary tree is also identified for use when conditions for the primary tree are not suitable for its initial establishment or long-term health.

Accent Trees: Accent trees are also identified to provide a separate design statement at street corners, or other locations where a tree with design impact is needed. Palm species may be used as accent trees as they are elements of the community's traditional character and are effective at street and alley corners where a break in overhead shade canopy may be acceptable. Canopy forming trees listed as accents are particularly suitable for larger planters that can be incorporated into any sidewalk extensions improving pedestrian infrastructure. Accent trees should have decorative features such as showy flowers, sculptural form, attractive bark or leaf shape.

Street Tree Districts: Street trees can be used as a design element to create a distinction between neighborhoods or districts. Geographical relationships such as changes within blocks types, and boundaries created by major streets and canyon interfaces create a series of relationships within the community's urban form that can be emphasized with a more unified street tree plan. These street tree districts are identified in Figure 4-3. The street tree selection guide distinguishes each district; the palettes identified in Table 4-2 are to some extent based on the unique natural and built environments of these areas and include species that are already present and performing well. For streets without a strong existing pattern, or without a dominant or theme tree, any of the listed trees within that district's selection can be established as the theme tree for a particular block, street or area. Consistent tree planting within neighborhoods will help to foster a cohesive sense of place. Street trees in residential areas should focus on providing shade for homeowners and pedestrians while considering ease of maintenance.

Tree Selection & Planting

Tree selection and planting should consider environmental characteristics, including climate, exposure, maintenance requirements, existing plantings, views, and the relationship to existing development. Ensure that a sufficient area of non-compacted soil is available for root growth and drainage. Non-permeable surfaces should be placed as far from tree trunks as practical. The use of permeable surfaces is encouraged within the first 10 feet of tree trunks.

Palm Species: Palms are a common street tree in the Golden Hill community and should be used only as accent trees because they do not provide significant overhead shade. They are often a good choice for narrow landscape strips (less than 4 feet wide). The most ubiquitous is the Queen Palm (*Syagrus romanzoffiana*) which is a good choice for an accent tree where palms are specified. The King Palm (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*) is a substitute with a similar form. Both these palms are recommended for narrow landscape strips. However, they require regular irrigation to look their best in San Diego's climate.

Common fan-type palms within the community are the Guadalupe Island Palm (*Brahea edulis*), and the Mexican Fan Palm (*Washingtonia robusta*). Both these palms are considered low water use in San Diego's climate after establishment.

Palms with a stronger structural form and a historic presence in the area are the Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) and the Chilean Wine Palm (*Jubaea chilensis*). Either of these can be effectively used as design statements on commercial blocks, as gateways, and within parks.

Water Use: Golden Hill is a coastal mesa that has naturally supported a xeric chaparral habitat. Tree species native to San Diego's summer-dry climate typically occur in the moister soils within river valleys and within higher elevations with more rainfall. Planting trees within the coastal mesas requires a commitment to provide for their needs, including regular irrigation during an initial establishment phase and subsequent long-term dry season

irrigation for most species. Because the urban forest has multiple aesthetic and environmental benefits, the use of water to maintain the health of trees can be considered beneficial to the community. However, if there is concern over long-term water use, the tree with the lowest water use may be selected from either the primary or secondary category within the species list. The guide, *Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS)*, by the University of California Cooperative Extension can be used to assess water use characteristics of the species listed in Table 4-2.

Unimproved rights-of-way: 'Paper streets' or public rights-of-way that are not paved or improved for automobile access are common throughout the community, particularly adjacent to Balboa Park and within canyon open spaces. The interfaces between these rights-of-way and adjacent neighborhoods represent opportunities for tree planting. Trees should be sited either to frame views or provide a focal point. Trees planted within 100 feet of designated open space should not be invasive within natural habitats. The trees listed are considered lower water use for this area.



A continuous row of trees along Fern St. in South Park provide ample canopy and shade across the full width of the street.



Landscaping is a vital element of streetscape design. The Street Tree Master Plan identifies a 'primary' tree to establish an overall theme.

POLICIES

UD-2.54 Incorporate shade-producing street trees along all streets and roadways.

- A. Maximize tree shade canopy - the optimum canopy will vary in accordance with street size, existing infrastructure, community needs, environmental limitations, and aesthetic considerations.
- B. Space street trees no further than 30 feet on center to achieve a continuous canopy.
- C. Encourage a double row of street trees where sidewalks and building setbacks exceed a total of 15 feet. Tree placement may alternate if needed to avoid canopy crowding.

UD-2.55 Select street tree species to avoid the need for costly and intrusive long-term maintenance.

- A. Ultimate tree size and form should fit within the space allocated, avoiding overhead and underground utilities and nearby structures.
- B. Species should be tolerant of urban conditions, structurally sound and not have weak branching patterns.
- C. Avoid tree species that are overly messy, have invasive root systems or cast too much shade on adjacent structures.

UD-2.56 Leverage street tree maintenance efforts by coordinating public resources with those of private property owners and/or community initiatives.

TABLE 4-2: GOLDEN HILL STREET TREE SELECTION GUIDE

Key	Road Name	Primary Tree	Secondary Tree	Accent Tree
1	Juniper Street	Gold Medallion (<i>Cassia leptophylla</i>)	African Sumac (<i>Rhus lancea/Sersia lancea</i>)	Palm Species
2	Fern Street	Tipu (<i>Tipuana Tipu</i>)	Cassia (<i>Senna Spectabilis</i>) or Gold Medallion (<i>Cassia leptophylla</i>)	Palm Species
3	Grape Street	Gold Medallion (<i>Cassia leptophylla</i>)	Cassia (<i>Senna Spectabilis</i>) or Silk Tree (<i>Albizia Julibrissin</i>)	Tipuana Tipu (for expanded planters)
4	30 th Street (Between Juniper St. and Ash St.)	Jacaranda (<i>Jacaranda mimosifolia</i>)	Pink Trumpet (<i>Tabebuia impetiginosa</i>)	Palm Species
5	30 th Street (Between A St. and F St.)	Lemon Bottle Brush (<i>Callistemon citrinus</i>)	Crape Myrtle – red or pink flowering (<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>)	Palm Species
6	Date Street	– Crape Myrtle – red or pink flowering (<i>Lagerstroemia</i>)	Strawberry tree (<i>Arbutus unedo</i>)	Palm species
7	Cedar Street	Pink Trumpet (<i>Handroanthus impetiginosus / Tabebuia impetiginosa</i>)	Cape Chestnut (<i>Calodendrum capense</i>)	Palm species or Flame Tree (<i>Brachychiton acerifolius</i>)
8	Beech Street	Gold Medallion (<i>Cassia leptophylla</i>)	Silk Tree (<i>Albizia julibrissin</i>)	Palm species, Sweetshade (<i>Hymenosporum flavum</i>)
9	31 st Street	Crape myrtle (<i>Lagerstroemia</i>)	Indian Hawthorn (<i>Rhaphiolepis</i>), or Toyon (<i>Heteromeles arbutifolia</i>)	Palm species
10	28 th Street	Jacaranda (<i>Jacaranda mimosifolia</i>)	Chinese Flame Tree (<i>Koelreuteria bipinnata</i> or <i>Koelreuteria elegans</i>)	Palm species, Brisbane Box (<i>Lophostemon confertus</i>)
11	B Street	Orchid Tree (<i>Bauhinia blakeana</i> or <i>Purpurea</i>)	Mexican Redbud (<i>Cercis mexicana</i>)	Palm species
12	Broadway	Jacaranda (<i>Jacaranda mimosifolia</i>)	Fern Pine (<i>Afrocarpus gracillior</i>)	Palm species
13	C Street	Peppermint (<i>Agonis flexuosa</i>)	Weeping Bottle Brush (<i>Callistemon viminalis</i>)	Palm species
14	22 nd Street	Orchid Tree (<i>Bauhinia Blakeana</i> or <i>purpurea</i>)	Mexican Redbud (<i>Cercis mexicana</i>)	Palm species
15	25 th Street	Jacaranda (<i>Jacaranda Mimosifolia</i>)	Pink trumpet (<i>Tabebuia impetiginosa</i>)	Chilean Wine Palm (<i>Jubaea chilensis</i>)



TABLE 4-2: GOLDEN HILL STREET TREE SELECTION GUIDE (CONTINUED)

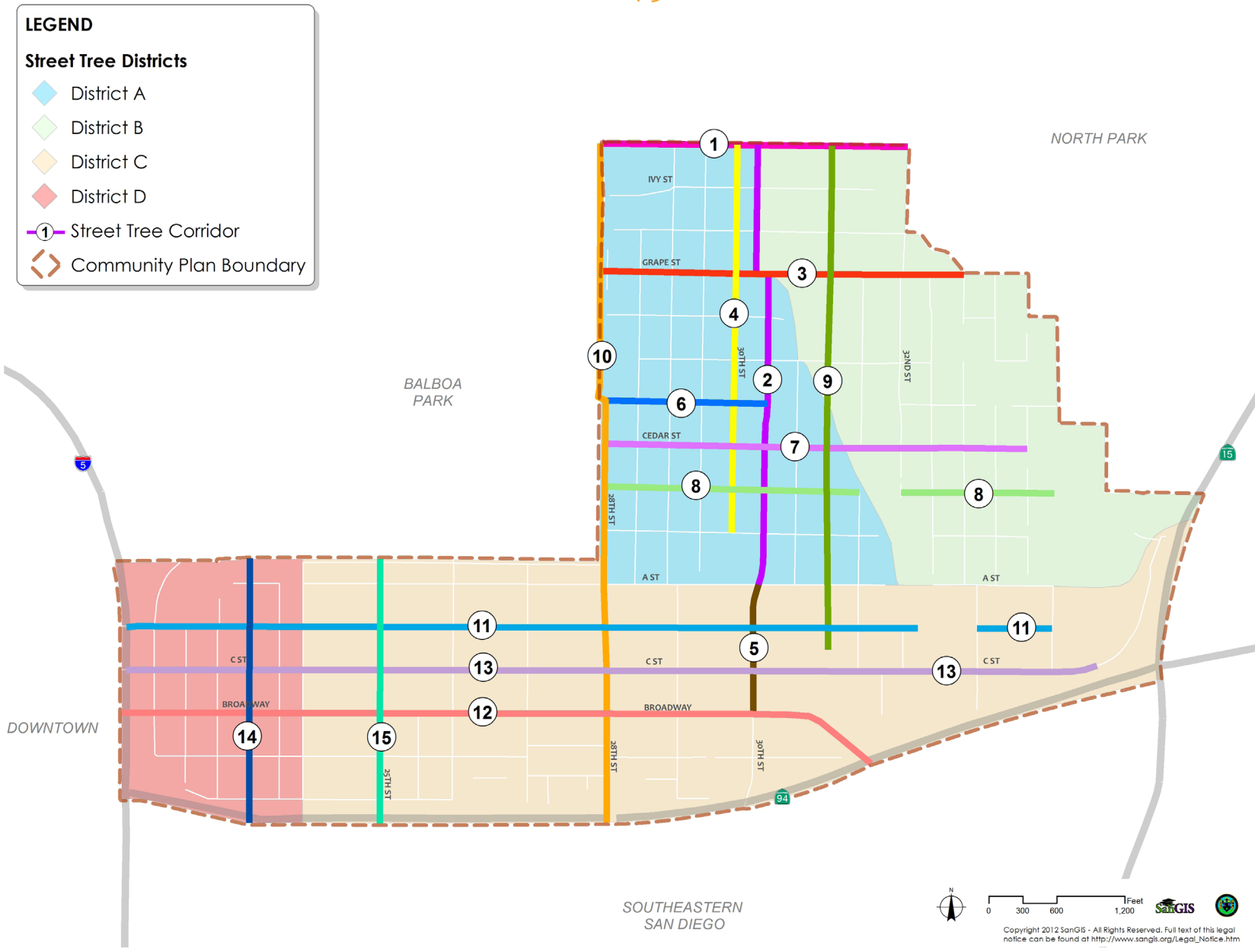
Key	Location	Primary Tree	Secondary Tree	Accent Tree
A	South Park (west of 31 st / Fern Streets)	<p><u>Larger landscape strips:</u> Chinese Flame Tree (<i>Koelreuteria bipinnata</i> or <i>Koelreuteria elegans</i>)</p> <p><u>Smaller landscape strips:</u> Silk Tree (<i>Albizia julibrissin</i>)</p>	<p><u>Larger landscape strips:</u> Jacaranda (<i>Jacaranda mimosifoli</i>) or Water Gum (<i>Tristinia laurina</i>)</p> <p><u>Smaller landscape strips:</u> Gold Medallion (<i>Cassia leptophylla</i>)</p>	<p><u>Larger landscape strips:</u> Palm species or Brisbane Box (<i>Lophostemon confertus</i>),</p> <p><u>Smaller landscape strips:</u> Palm species or Sweetshade (<i>Hymenosporum flavum</i>)</p>
B	South Park/Golden Hill (east of Fern / 31 st Streets)	Crape Myrtle (<i>Lagerstroemia</i>)	Strawberry Tree (<i>Arbutus unedo</i>) or Indian Hawthorn (<i>Raphiolepis</i>)	Palm species, Catalina Ironwood (<i>Lyonathamnus floribundus</i>), Australian Willow (<i>Geijera parviflora</i>), or Weeping Pittosporum (<i>Pittosporum angustifolium</i>)
C	Golden Hill (between 24 th Street and 31 st Street)	Flaxleaf Paperbark (<i>Melaleuca linariifolia</i>)	Fern Pine (Afrocarpus gracillior)	Palm species, or Weeping Bottle Brush (<i>Callistemon viminalis</i>)
D	Golden Hill (west of 24 Street)	New Zealand Christmas Tree (<i>Metrosideros excelsa</i>)	Strawberry tree (<i>Arbutus unedo</i>), or Marina Strawberry Tree (<i>Arbutus marina</i>)	Palm species

TABLE 4-3: TREES FOR UNIMPROVED RIGHTS-OF-WAY

Tree Species	
Floss silk (Ceiba speciosa / Chorisia speciosa)	Eucalyptus torquata
Acacia melanoxylon	Geijera parviflora
Arbutus 'Marina'	Heteromeles arbutifolia (California native)
Arctostaphylos glauca / Dr. Hurd (California native)	Lagunaria patersonii
Brachychiton acerifolius	Laurus 'Saratoga'
Brachychiton discolor	Lyonathamnus floribundus (California native)
Ceratonia siliqua	Melaleuca linariifolia
Corymbia ficifolia (Eucalyptus ficifolia)	Pittosporum angustifolium
Erythrina caffra	Prunus ilicifolia lyonii (California native)
Erythrina coralloides	Quercus agrifolia (California native)
Eucalyptus nicholii	Schinus molle



FIGURE 4-3: GOLDEN HILL STREET TREE SELECTION PLAN



4.3 Development Design

The design quality of new, renovated and expanded buildings contributes significantly to the quality of the community's physical environment. Therefore, the sustained practice of thoughtful urban design through all phases of the development process is key to the successful implementation of the goals and objectives for the community's built form. Development design and review needs to consider all aspects of neighborhood, site and building design relevant to the objectives and guidelines provided below.

CONTEXT-SENSITIVE DESIGN

Golden Hill is an established community with a long-standing development history due to its central location and accommodative zoning which has left a breadth of building forms and architectural styles as well as historic resources in need of preservation. This has sometimes resulted in awkward scale transitions, inconsistent relationships to the public realm and juxtaposition of building styles as the rate of development has oftentimes been modest or uneven.

The practice of context-sensitive design is therefore important to achieving the community's design objectives.

While new development in Golden Hill is not expected to duplicate the older established scale and architectural styles of the community, it should not detract from the surrounding context and architectural character established by these older forms. New development that is compatible with existing context will contribute to a sense of place and enhance neighborhood character. Compatibility is evaluated based upon a building's relationship to the scale, form and architecture of adjacent properties and by an appropriate scale for the block. Important elements to consider are:

1. A consistent interface with the public realm
2. Adaption to the topography of the site and neighborhood
3. Climate appropriate design
4. Managing building scale to avoid abrupt transitions
5. Attention to design detail

POLICIES

- UD-3.1 Link new development to existing street and sidewalk patterns and adjacent uses within a neighborhood.
- UD-3.2 Orient buildings towards public streets to positively define street edges. Align with primary street frontages and public spaces to frame the public realm.
- UD-3.3 Design structures with massing and facade articulation that contributes to a fine-grained, pedestrian scale environment at the street level.
- UD-3.4 Use simple, harmonious proportions that reflect a neighborhood's historic buildings. Establish compatible visual relationships between new and older buildings. Repeat existing building lines and surface treatments and provide gradual transitions in height, bulk and density, particularly where a development abuts single-family residential areas.
- UD-3.5 Complement the scale and architecture of other buildings within the block. Where there is a mix of styles, follow any shared characteristics such as setbacks, heights, rooflines, massing, etc.

- UD-3.6 Maintain the overall topographical relationship between a lot's front yard setback and adjacent lots when proposing site excavation or fill. Encourage preservation of landscape features such as garden walls, stonework and significant trees that contribute positively to neighborhood character.
- UD-3.7 Incorporate a combination of building setbacks, upper-story stepbacks, and articulated sub-volumes to sensitively and adequately transition to adjacent lower height buildings.
- UD-3.8 Use upper story sideyard stepbacks to avoid excessive shading of adjacent parcels.
- UD-3.9 Set upper-story additions back from the primary facade to preserve the original scale and form of the building when viewed from the front setback.
- UD-3.10 Design new expansions and additions using architectural details that are consistent with those of the existing structure.
- UD-3.11 Explore new stylistic interpretations of traditional architectural vocabulary without copying them.



This development responds to its site context by acknowledging the location of the historic streetcar route.



This development responds to its site context through the reuse of an old service station building.

- UD-3.12 Design roofs to incorporate features such as similar pitch, overhang depth, and gable orientation to establish compatibility with prevalent roof forms within a block. Avoid excessive roof breaks and overly complicated roof forms.
- UD-3.13 Use stylistically cohesive, character-defining features such as porches, columns, balustrades, brackets, rafters, and decorative trim, to enhance visual compatibility.
- UD-3.14 Discourage adherence to color trends when incompatible with neighborhood or architectural contexts. Select colors that correlate with traditional building styles as well as neighborhood aesthetics.
- UD-3.15 Address climate appropriate design through site and building features that capture stormwater runoff, avoid excessive heat gain and allow light and air circulation.



GREEN BUILDING PRACTICES AND SUSTAINABILITY

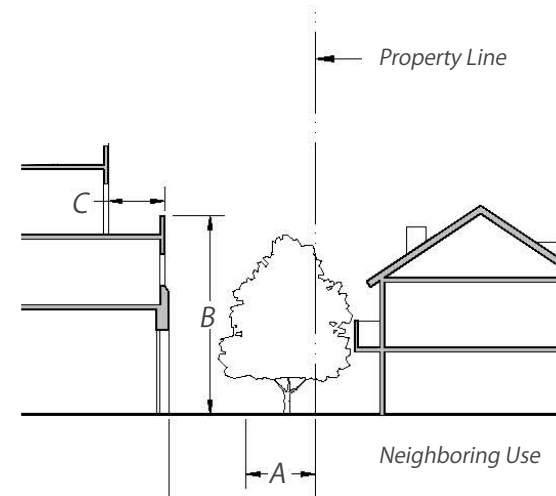
Development of new infill buildings and retrofitting of existing buildings should take into account green building practices and sustainability. When green building practices and sustainability are intrinsic in the overall site planning and individual building design, it can also create a distinctive context-sensitive architecture that will be unique to the community.

POLICIES

- UD-3.16** Manage solar heat gain to shade buildings in summer and allow sunlight in winter as a climate-appropriate response to reduce the demand for heating and cooling.
- Orient buildings to minimize the extent of west facing facades and openings.
 - Use internal courtyards to trap cool air. Courtyards visible from the street will also encourage interaction with on-site open space.
 - Provide awnings, canopies, sunshades and deep-set windows on south and west facing windows and entrances. Retractable awnings can allow solar gain in winter.
 - Utilize decorative vertical shading and fins on east and west facing building facades as integrated design features with a sustainable benefit.
 - Use horizontal overhangs, eaves, decorative shade structures or porches above south and west facing facades to provide shade in summer and allow sunlight in winter. Overhang width should be equal to half vertical window height to provide shade from early May to mid-August while allowing solar heat gain during cooler months.
 - To capture prevailing westerly breezes, provide vents or windows with low openings on western facing facades to accept cooler breezes into a building. Similarly, provide vents or clerestory windows on eastern facing facades to naturally allow warmer air that collects near ceilings to escape.



- UD-3.17** Use landscape design measures to minimize solar heat gain and also provide attractive landscape environments.
- Plant deciduous trees near south facing facades to provide shade in summer and allow sunlight in winter.
 - Shade exposed south and west facing facades using shrubs and vines.
 - Provide groundcover plantings to keep ground surfaces cooler near building facades particularly in place of concrete and other reflective surfaces.
 - Minimize impervious surfaces that have large thermal gain.
 - Encourage green roofs, eco-roofs or other vegetated roof systems to help reduce the solar heat gain and also provide on-site open space.



Step back upper stories of larger, mixed-use and multi-family buildings to ensure compatibility with adjacent single-family as follows:

- Side yard setbacks should be maintained when a large-scale project abuts single-family and small-scale uses
- Height of first two stories should not exceed the overall building height of the adjacent property
- A minimum 6' upper story setback should be provided at the third floor for a minimum 80% of the facade

UD-3.18 San Diego’s imported water is not only subject to competing demands, but requires large amounts of energy to transport. Capturing stormwater on-site can conserve imported water by allowing landscape infiltration or storage for irrigation during dry periods.

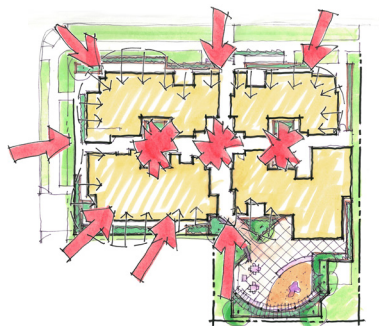
- A. Minimize on-site impermeable paving surfaces such as concrete and asphalt in favor of various porous pavement systems. Impermeable surfaces should drain into permeable landscape areas.
- B. Incorporate stormwater capture within a site using various infiltration and storage techniques such as mulched planters, rain gardens, gravel or vegetated swales, dry wells, driveway cross drains, green roofs, rain barrels and cisterns. Roof downspouts should flow into permeable landscape features such as rain gardens or to storage devices for later use.

UD-3.19 Incorporate environmentally superior building practices and materials by using durable construction materials, low emitting materials and finishes, and re-used or recycled materials.

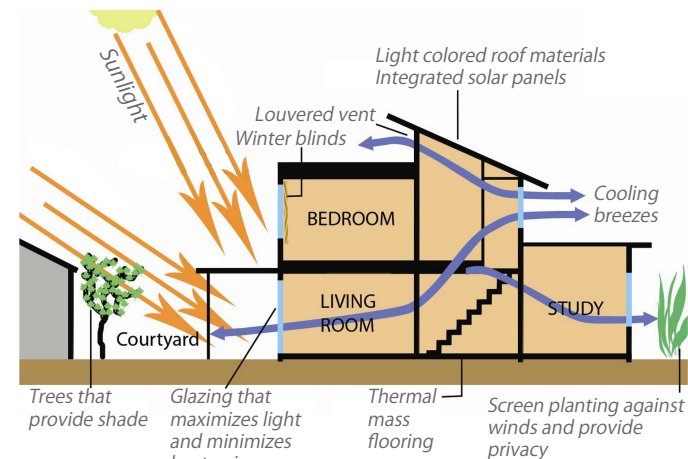
UD-3.20 Integrate practical energy generation such as solar power or other technologies into the overall building design.



A generous front porch and canopy tree effectively manage solar heat gain on this residence.



Building designed to maximize access to natural light with multiple corner dwelling units, open walkways and light wells



Courtyards are an excellent way to increase natural light and ventilation in a building while dramatically improving the indoor environment to support natural surveillance and social interaction



RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

The community has several basic residential neighborhood forms. Single-family neighborhoods such as South Park which have kept their original form require protection of low scale and traditional architecture. Neighborhoods with a mix of single-family and multi-family development require context-sensitive design solutions that respect existing forms. Neighborhoods or blocks that are predominantly multi-family require high quality design and on-site amenities that make attached housing an attractive living choice rather than a less expensive substitute for a single-family home.

POLICIES

UD-3.21 Residential front and street sideyard setbacks should be a 6 foot minimum. Design ground-floor residential uses within attached residential and mixed-use developments to provide a grade change of at least two to three feet from the public sidewalk to the first floor residence to protect the privacy of residential units. These measures ensure a minimum area is available to include landscaped yards, porches, stoops and forecourts.

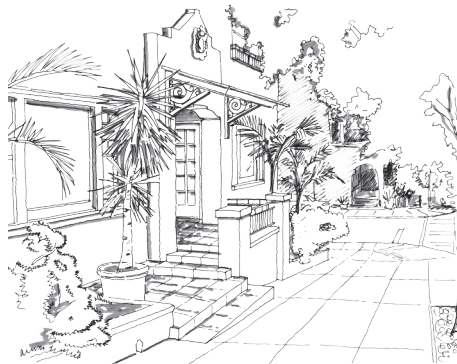


Building Entrances

A defining characteristic of Golden Hill is that several buildings have richly detailed and well-defined pedestrian entrances, with direct access taken from the street and a clear transition between public and private spaces.

Street Orientation

A defining characteristic of Golden Hill is that most buildings face the street, have active spaces that face the street, and provide direct and well-articulated pedestrian paths and entrances. Care and attention is also given to the sidewalk edge, through landscaping, garden walls and other ornamentation.



- UD-3.22 Access ground-floor units primarily from the public right-of-way. If this is not feasible, provide access through a transparent entry lobby.
- UD-3.23 Encourage a variety of housing types, styles, and densities to cater to the needs of a diverse makeup of households in the community.
- UD-3.24 Support the construction of companion units (“granny flats”) in low density residential neighborhoods per Municipal Code regulations. These should be well-designed to fit in with the single-family neighborhood character of the area and match the architectural style, building materials and/or colors of the primary residence.



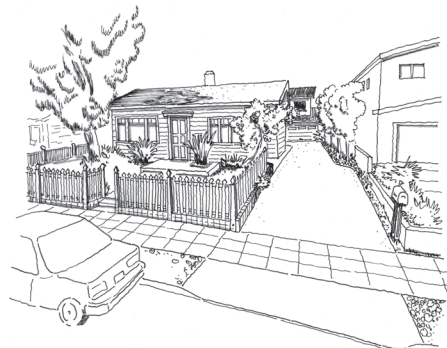
Orientation To Open Space

A defining characteristic of Golden Hill is that many multi-family apartment buildings are designed around a central court, giving individual dwelling units maximum access to light, air and open space.



Parking And Pedestrian Access

A defining characteristic of Golden Hill is that parking access is provided to the side of the lot and garages are tucked behind the house, giving more space to pedestrians and providing a better street frontage and an environment that is not dominated by garage doors or cars.



Adaptation To Topography

A defining characteristic of Golden Hill is that most buildings are well-adapted to the hilly topography of the community. Garden walls, stonework and landscaping demonstrate that property owners and residents have invested a lot of time and resources to make their homes fit in to the site.



DIVERSITY OF BUILDING STREET FRONTS

A defining characteristic of Golden Hill is the variety and richness of building facades that create a street edge or “street wall.” The way buildings face the street and the features that define this street edge contribute to a visually interesting and active street experience.

POLICIES

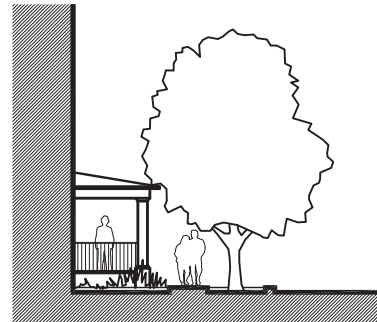
- UD-3.25** Design buildings that relate directly to the adjacent street, present an attractive and interesting facade to passersby, and appear inviting.
- UD-3.26** Incorporate a range of building frontages for a pedestrian friendly street edge and “Eyes on the Street.” Frontages should be designed according to guidelines identified in figures illustrated at right.

- UD-3.27** Where courtyards, paseos or greenways exist, residential units should also address these spaces with windows, front doors, porches, and patios, according to the guidelines identified in this section.
- UD-3.28** Create well-defined open spaces and common areas through building form.
- UD-3.29** Arrange building spaces and dwelling units around a central, common and usable open space. For example, buildings can be clustered around courtyards, greenways, and plazas, or form the edge of a trail, park or canyon.
- UD-3.30** The use of blank, featureless street-facing facades is not permitted. A minimum of 40% of wall surface shall include glazing, to add character to the facade and increase safety by adding “Eyes on the Street.”

UD

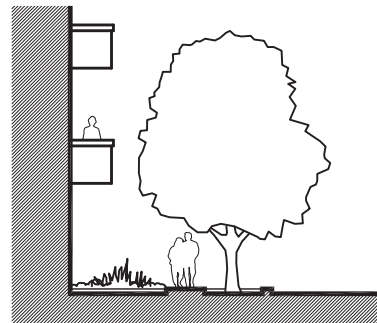
Porch, Patio, or Stoop

- Design to deflect rainwater from sidewalk & walkways.
- Provide landscaping in front of and around porch, stoop or patio.
- A min. of 50% of the porch or patio should be open to the air.



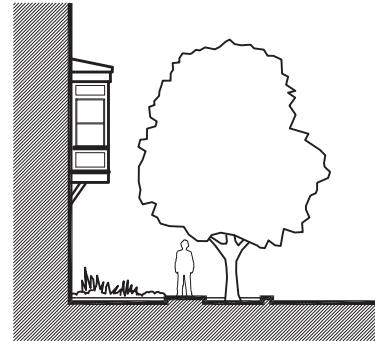
Balcony

- Design to deflect rainwater from sidewalk & walkways below.
- Balconies may be covered.
- A min. of 50% of the balcony should be open to the air.



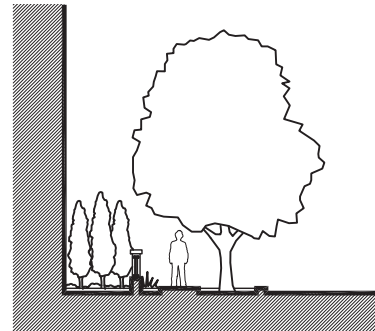
Bay Window

- Bay windows are encouraged on buildings where their use increases cross-ventilation to individual dwelling units.
- Bay windows are allowed on the ground floor, as well as upper floors.
- Provide landscape in front and around bay windows on the ground floor.
- Design to deflect rainwater from sidewalk below.
- Glazing at the two ends of a bay window should be operable so as to facilitate natural cross-ventilation.



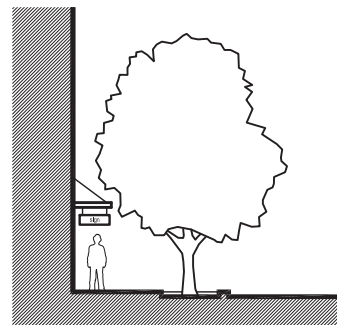
Yard, Forecourts & Building Entries

- Encourage planters, garden walls, and hedges are provide a pedestrian-friendly sidewalk. "Eyes on the Street" and pedestrian safety should be considered in the design of these areas.
- Provide lighting to ensure safety and visibility.
- Provide adequate drainage away from sidewalks & walkways.
- Water features, seating, and art are encouraged.
- Discourage parking, trash collection and storage in these areas.
- Provide shaded areas within yards, forecourts and exterior building entries.



Awning, Canopy, or Trellis

- Avoid the use of highly reflective materials.
- Design to deflect rainwater from sidewalks & walkways.
- Limit the length of any single awning to no more than 20 feet.
- The placement of awnings, canopies and/or trellises should correspond with locations of windows and other openings.
- Signs placed on awnings, canopies and/or trellises should be limited in size so as to not overwhelm or obstruct the structure.



RENOVATION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

Some properties in Golden Hill are in need of basic upkeep and maintenance, while others must be brought up to code. Many existing properties present safety concerns because of poor lighting, unsafe passageways, and lack of “eyes on the street.” Other properties are from development eras that did not pay close attention to maintaining the fine-grained, pedestrian-oriented character of the community.

Where possible, the renovation of existing buildings should be considered. This may involve initiatives by individual property owners, housing investors or community associations employing available private funding, tax credits or grants intended for neighborhood revitalization. Options for renovating existing buildings and sites could include a range of strategies from simple painting, repairs, code compliance, and landscaping to larger changes, such as adding new windows to street-facing facades, landscaping surface parking and enclosing parking areas to create individually secured garages. It is important for renovations to respect the integrity of the particular architectural style. Even buildings replicating a modernist style, often the subject of critique, have intrinsic forms and details that are worthy of preserving or enhancing.



POLICIES

- UD-3.31 Renovation of existing buildings that respect the integrity of the style of the original building is encouraged.
- UD-3.32 Re-paint and re-finish exterior walls and trim, and repair building exteriors where necessary.
- UD-3.33 Add windows to blank walls and street-facing facades to add “Eyes on the Street” and increase safety.
- UD-3.34 Remove parking and curb cuts from building entrances; replace with landscaped areas and well-lit entrances.

- UD-3.35 Increase visibility and safety. Add pedestrian-scale lighting or wall-mounted light sconces to light building entrances and the alley.
- UD-3.36 Add landscape planters and planting to soften alleys and clearly identify entrances.
- UD-3.37 Enclose garages with individually-secured garage doors to increase safety. Eliminate dark, dead-end spaces and unsafe passageways as part of this effort.
- UD-3.38 Install a trellis or canopy over garage entrances to add additional planting and greenery to alleys.
- UD-3.39 Replace asphalt alleys with enhanced pavers to improve drainage and enhance character.

COMMERCIAL & MIXED-USE BUILDINGS

Commercial areas in the community are concentrated along a few commercial corridors and exhibit a distinct “Main Street” character, defined by continuous storefronts that face the street, are pedestrian-oriented and scaled, and provide a variety of shops, restaurants and businesses. This diversity adds to the rich character and vibrancy of the community’s commercial districts.

POLICIES

- UD-3.40 Maintain a consistent interface with the public realm for the community’s commercial districts with an active and consistent ground floor storefront presence.
- UD-3.41 Avoid placing surface parking between the front building facade and the public street.
- UD-3.42 Encourage public or semi-public spaces such as plazas, courtyards, forecourts, and sidewalk cafes, adjacent to the public right-of-way.

- UD-3.43 Establish minimum setbacks that contribute to a wider sidewalk zone in the community’s commercial areas to support an active and well-furnished pedestrian environment. Sidewalk widths less than 10 feet are of particular concern while 12+ widths are preferable depending on prevailing widths. Additional building setbacks should be required to increase sidewalk widths where needed. Where this is not feasible, building alcoves, courtyards and paseos should be required to accommodate features and uses such as entrances, utilities, outdoor displays and sidewalk cafes that may impact pedestrian prioritization and use of the sidewalk.
- UD-3.44 Build to the required sidewalk setback in all Neighborhood and Community Commercial zones. A maximum of 50% of the front building facade may be set back from the sidewalk to provide the following:
 - A. Sidewalk seating/sidewalk cafes
 - B. Recessed entrances
 - C. Pedestrian plazas
 - D. Pedestrian paseos
- UD-3.45 Locate surface parking (when used) behind buildings and on the interior of blocks where it can be screened from public view.
- UD-3.46 For buildings on corner lots, locate entrances at the corner to anchor the intersection and create a seamless transition that captures pedestrian activity from both street frontages.
- UD-3.47 Ensure that ground-floor uses are active and pedestrian-oriented within commercial and mixed-use areas. Discourage uses that have low propensity for walk-in traffic from locating in street-front locations.

Existing Street Facades and Streetscape



Improved Street Facades and Streetscape



- UD-3.48** Building openings and fenestration should represent the uses behind them, minimize visual clutter, harmonize with prevailing conditions, and provide architectural interest. Windows should have a minimum recess of 2 inches.
- UD-3.49** Avoid uninterrupted blank walls along building facades. The unbroken length of a facade generally should be no greater than 15’.
- UD-3.50** Group windows to establish rhythms across the facade and hierarchies at important places on the facade.
 - UD-3.51** Adhere to the design guidelines in Figure 4-4 to ensure high-quality commercial development that is pedestrian oriented, contributes positively to the street environment and creates a “Main Street” presence.



Existing Strip Commercial that is auto-oriented and places parking on one of the busiest and most noticeable corners in the community.



Retrofitted mixed-use commercial that is pedestrian-oriented, places active uses on the street corner and parking interior to the lot.

FIGURE 4-4: STOREFRONT DESIGN GUIDELINES



Storefront Design Guidelines

1. Create a clear differentiation between commercial and residential uses
2. Change materials at the building base and entrances to define areas of a building
3. Provide for shade through awnings, trellises, and overhangs at the pedestrian level
4. Use professionally designed and artistic signs that are consistent with the overall development
5. Provide enhanced paving leading to parking areas, plazas and building entrances
6. Clearly mark entrances with lighting, signage and entry doors
7. Provide display windows for a minimum 60% of the total facade and with clear, non-reflective glazing
8. Provide planting and landscape elements that are well-integrated with the development and at the pedestrian level
9. Use pedestrian-scaled lighting with minimum glare and accent lighting for key features of the building
10. Provide 15-foot minimum floor-to-ceiling height for all first floor commercial uses in a mixed-use building



COMMERCIAL-RESIDENTIAL USE COMPATIBILITY

In more dense urban neighborhoods, commercial and residential uses are often not physically separated to the same extent as within other neighborhoods. This can result in positive associations between walkability, transit access and buildings that frame streets creating a vibrancy within these neighborhoods. However, some commercial uses can have unwanted spillover effects on existing adjacent residential uses, or when located within mixed-use buildings. The Golden Hill community's relative lack of depth for most commercial lots as well as the prevalence of mixed-use buildings limits the use of large spatial buffers when separating uses. Components of the building program can instead be utilized to provide physical separation. Therefore, careful attention to the site planning and design detail of new commercial, institutional and mixed-use developments is necessary to avoid or minimize unwanted spillover effects.

Developments that provide space for institutional or commercial uses may have unwanted impacts on adjacent or on-site residential uses. Institutional and commercial uses should be designed to avoid or minimize noise, fumes, light spill and visual clutter. Incorporate the following measures into commercial and institutional components.

POLICIES

UD-3.52 Buffer residential uses at the adjoining property line through installation of solid masonry walls and landscaping within required setbacks. In no case shall the landscaped setback be less than 5 feet. Solid walls should be between 5 feet and 8 feet high depending upon potential project effects on abutting residential properties.

UD-3.53 Uses that may generate excess or more continuous noise should front commercial streets where primary access, window openings and any permitted outdoor use can be located away from adjacent residential uses. Building elements that generate less noise such as office space, storage areas and parking should be located closer to residential uses.

Building Renovation



BEFORE: Existing Apartment Building



AFTER: Improved Apartment Building

1. Enhanced Building Entrance
2. Added Landscape and Trees
3. Facade Treatments and Materials
4. Added Windows for "Eyes on the Street"
5. Re-Painted Facade



Alley Renovation



BEFORE: Unimproved alley



AFTER: Improved alley with enclosed individually - secured garage doors and new lighting and landscaping

1. Garage Doors
2. Enhanced Paving
3. Landscape
4. Overhead Trellis or Canopy
5. Re-Painting

UD-3.54 Utilize parking levels or rooftops as appropriate when locating generators, exhaust vents, trash enclosures and other service equipment.

UD-3.55 For odor-generating uses such as restaurants, contain and vent exhaust fumes away from adjacent residential uses as well as pedestrian areas such as sidewalks and plazas. For mixed-use buildings, exhaust vents should not be located below the third floor and should be directed away from operable windows, air vents and balconies within the building.

ON-SITE OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPING

Open Space and landscaping plays a significant role in how people experience the urban environment, providing a unifying interface between the public and private realms. Landscaping provides a natural element to the urban form, softens and frames views and can also screen unattractive elements. Historically, Southern California developed with relatively generous spaces for gardens and landscaping in a large urban context. As the scale of development in the community increases, these spaces need to be re-fashioned for a more urban context rather than become vestiges or eliminated altogether. Maintaining setbacks to include room for landscape designs that are attentive to detail with thoughtful placement and layering of plant material is therefore important. This includes plantings along building street frontages and required yard areas as well as in interior courtyards, plazas and paseos.

While landscaping plays a significant role in residential and residentially-oriented mixed-use areas, it is also important in commercial areas where creating comfortable and attractive places for people is critical to successful retailing. Landscape and open space plays an important role in a number of residential and commercial building typologies that are typical to the area's temperate climate, including courtyard housing where units are oriented around a central open space and retail development organized around plazas and paseos. The inclusion of landscaping on both building frontages and within courtyards is important for achieving the aesthetic quality that is desired for future developments.



POLICIES

UD-3.56 Residential development or development with a residential component should provide on-site outdoor open space as an amenity for residents. The open space should be designed as a central-organizing principle of the development not as an afterthought. These areas should relate to the development's common facilities, such as the play areas, courtyards, barbecue areas, and community buildings and support community gathering and passive social activities (such as reading, conversing, or playing games). Features such as pools and sport courts (and indoor gyms) are encouraged for larger developments to provide a recreation component.



The widened sidewalk and curb pop-out at Grape Street Square is clear of any impediments in the pedestrian walkway. There is enough space for the area to be a successful gathering spot in the South Park neighborhood, with the clock as its focal point and plenty of benches, bike racks, trees and interesting signs to help activate the space.

- UD-3.57** Maintain required setbacks for installation of landscaping to achieve needed landscape design functions such as soften development forms, buffer unwanted uses and provide privacy.
- UD-3.58** Use landscaping to activate building facades, soften building contours, highlight important architectural features, screen less attractive elements, provide shade, and add color, texture, and visual interest.
- UD-3.59** Design landscape and private open space areas to serve a sustainable infrastructure function by allowing for the capture, passive treatment and infiltration of storm water flow and to reduce or supplement normal irrigation with potable water.

MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT & UTILITIES

POLICIES

- UD-3.60** Locate all mechanical equipment, including ground, building and roof-mounted equipment away from public view where possible (also refer to General Plan policy UD-A.16).
 - A.** Screen views of ground, building and roof-mounted mechanical equipment from adjoining properties and public rights of way with landscaping or building elements consistent with the overall design of the building facades. The street frontage should not be used for utilities, storage and refuse collection wherever possible.
 - B.** Locate utility boxes and access panels within the project site and outside of the public-right-of-way where possible. If within the public right-of-way, locate outside of the sidewalk's pedestrian zone and designed so as not to obstruct a clear path of travel. Placement of utilities in the frontage and furnishings zones is discouraged unless the utilities can be placed underground.

NATURAL SURVEILLANCE AND ACCESS CONTROL POLICIES

- UD-3.61** Allow for natural surveillance and access control (elements of defensible space) through site planning and building designs that maximize visibility, differentiate between public and private space and foster positive social interaction. Selectively place building entrances, fencing, lighting and landscape to limit access or control flow, particularly for multi-unit and commercial developments.
- A. Make common spaces and entrances visible from individual residences as well as maximize their visibility from public streets to allow vision by neighbors.
 - B. Position windows to allow residents to have visible sight lines or “eyes on the street” toward public streets, parking areas, and entrances to dwellings.
 - C. Locate sidewalks or paths between parking areas and individual residences, and between the street and residences to allow natural surveillance over the entire path.
 - D. Eliminate design features that provide uncontrolled access to roofs or upper levels.
 - E. Provide lighting along walkways, streets, and within parking areas. Use shielded or cut-off fixtures that will shape and deflect light into a layer close to the ground to control glare. This will place light where it is needed most and reduce interference with windows.
 - F. Design attractive landscapes that provide street trees and use effective barrier plants beneath ground-level windows and next to fences to discourage intrusion. Plants with thorns, serrated leaf edges and dense structures are effective barrier plants.
 - G. If security fencing is used, attention should be given to its detailed design so that it becomes an integrated architectural feature. Chain-link and cyclone fencing is not permitted.



Patios and yards within developments should be activated, attractive and ample in size to allow sunlight to fill the space



Building windows and entrances should face playgrounds, common areas and shared open spaces to activate them and provide plenty of “eyes on the open space”

ACCESS TO LIGHT AND AIR

Access to sufficient light and air improves the health and enjoyment of residents within multi-family and mixed-use developments. Site and building designs that maximize density, uniformity, living space and privacy often fail to prioritize access to light and air within individual dwelling units. Site and building designs should instead maximize access to light and air ventilation within each dwelling unit.

POLICIES

UD-3.62 Design the orientation and configuration of new development so that daylight is able to reach all living spaces for part of the day; and adequate ventilation is provided when windows are open.

- A. Avoid site and building designs that rely solely on narrow side yards to provide access to light and air.
- B. Provide courtyards, niches, alcoves, and similar features to ensure light and air ventilation is provided from two or more building facades if possible.



Light wells and light courts are an excellent way to bring natural light and ventilation into a building and make the interior environment more livable.

- C. Use individually placed rather than uniform openings where needed to increase access to light and air. Skylights, solar tubes and decorative and clerestory window designs can be used where other window styles would conflict with facade architecture.

UD-3.63 Maximize visibility of, and access to, outdoor spaces while allowing an adequate level of privacy.

- A. Offset windows and balconies to allow for privacy.
- B. Use opaque window glazing where needed to provide privacy while maintaining light access.
- C. Place landscape plant material to soften sight lines between building openings and between adjoining property lines while allowing light to reach windows.

QUALITY, DURABILITY AND MATERIALS

POLICIES

UD-3.64 Use high-quality authentic materials with a substantial appearance, including wood, quarry stone, plaster-finish stucco, traditional decorative tile and masonry. Avoid using materials that have an inauthentic, non-traditional or thin veneer appearance such as EIFS foam molding or faux stone.

UD-3.65 Terminate brick, stone, tile veneers or other applied materials logically and strongly by wrapping corners and terminating at architectural modulations, articulations, frames or other features so as not to appear superficially affixed to the facade.



- UD-3.66 Make site elements (such as walls, planters, shade structures and fences) consistent with the overall architectural design as well as material and color palettes.
- UD-3.67 Treat all publicly-visible building facades equally in terms of materials, colors, and design details. Buildings should have a finished appearance on all visible sides.
- UD-3.68 Use materials and colors to unify and provide visual interest to building exteriors. Limit the number of materials and colors to promote visual simplicity and harmony.

SIGNAGE

POLICIES

- UD-3.69 Incorporate signage that complements building design and contributes to neighborhood character. Design signs at a scale for pedestrian rather than vehicle traffic.
- UD-3.70 Previously conforming signs should be brought into conformance with citywide sign regulations including removal or abatement of billboards.



Buildings should integrate natural lighting and access to fresh air. The concept of indoor - outdoor living in San Diego is particularly important.



Bike racks should be artistically designed and incorporate elements of the community's identity, such as a design style, the name of the neighborhood and/or whimsical designs and colors





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