

# Commercial/Imperial Corridor Master Plan



City of San Diego



Prepared by

**DYETT & BHATIA**  
Urban and Regional Planners

April 2013





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*Prepared by*

**DYETT & BHATIA**

Urban and Regional Planners

*With assistance from*

**Dudek**

**Fehr & Peers**

**Rob Quigley Architects**

**Spurlock Poirier Landscape Architects**





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1-1</b>
1.1	Overview .....	1-2
1.2	Context .....	1-4
1.3	Project Objectives .....	1-13
1.4	Strategy .....	1-14
<b>2</b>	<b>LAND USE .....</b>	<b>2-1</b>
2.1	Framework.....	2-2
2.2	Development Potential.....	2-6
2.3	Draft Zoning.....	2-7
2.4	Policy Recommendations .....	2-11
<b>3</b>	<b>URBAN DESIGN.....</b>	<b>3-1</b>
3.1	Public Realm .....	3-2
3.2	Streetscape Concepts .....	3-5
3.3	Public Open Space Concepts .....	3-14
3.4	Visual Simulations .....	3-17
3.5	Policy Recommendations .....	3-22
<b>4</b>	<b>MOBILITY.....</b>	<b>4-1</b>
4.1	Multi-Modal Context and Conditions .....	4-2
4.2	Future Multi-Modal Conditions .....	4-4
4.3	Multi-Modal Strategy and Improvements .....	4-10
4.4	Policy Recommendations .....	4-16
<b>5</b>	<b>ECONOMICS .....</b>	<b>5-1</b>
5.1	Market Conditions and Demand Projections.....	5-2
5.2	Financial Feasibility .....	5-4
5.3	Policy Recommendations .....	5-8

**6 IMPLEMENTATION .....6-1**  
 6.1 Implementation Plan ..... 6-2

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1-1: Regional Location..... 1-4  
 Figure 1-2: Planning Area..... 1-5  
 Figure 1-3: Existing Land Use..... 1-9  
 Figure 1-4: Existing Plans..... 1-11  
 Figure 1-5: Master Plan Concept..... 1-15  
 Figure 2-1: Master Plan Land Use..... 2-3  
 Figure 2-2: Maximum Residential Density..... 2-5  
 Figure 2-3: Draft Zoning Map ..... 2-10  
 Figure 3-1: Parking Design..... 3-3  
 Figure 3-2: Clear Pedestrian Zone..... 3-7  
 Figure 3-3: Imperial Avenue – Streetscape Design ..... 3-8  
 Figure 3-4: Commercial Street – Streetscape Design ..... 3-11  
 Figure 3-5: Commercial Street – Pedestrian Facilities ..... 3-12  
 Figure 3-6: Public Realm and Open Space Concepts ..... 3-13  
 Figure 3-7: Illustrative Simulation – Imperial Avenue between 25th and 26th Street  
 (Looking East) ..... 3-18  
 Figure 3-8: Illustrative Simulation – Imperial Avenue at 30th Street (Looking East) ..... 3-20  
 Figure 4-1: Projected Traffic Volumes ..... 4-5  
 Figure 4-2: Recommended Street Improvements..... 4-11  
 Figure 4-3: Circulation Plan ..... 4-13  
 Figure 4-4: Bicycle Network..... 4-15  
 Figure 5-1: Residential Building Prototype..... 5-5  
 Figure 5-2: Mixed-Use Building Prototype..... 5-7

## LIST OF TABLES AND CHARTS

Table 1-1: Household Demographics for Commercial/Imperial Expanded Area and San Diego (2009).....	1-6
Chart 1-1: Education and Ethnicity Demographics for Commercial/Imperial Expanded Area and San Diego (2009) .....	1-7
Chart 1-2: Existing Land Use in the Planning Area, by Percent Share (2011).....	1-8
Table 1-2: Existing Land Use, by Building Area or Units (2011) .....	1-8
Table 2-1: Land Use Classifications.....	2-2
Table 2-2: Maximum Development Potential Resulting from the Master Plan .....	2-7
Table 2-3: Proposed Residential Zones for Commercial and Imperial Corridor Plan.....	2-8
Table 2-4: Proposed Commercial and Industrial Zones for Commercial and Imperial Corridor Plan.....	2-9
Table 4-1: Level of Service Definitions.....	4-6
Table 4-2: Existing and Future Roadway Segment LOS Results.....	4-7
Table 4-3: Existing and Future Intersection LOS Results .....	4-8
Table 5-1: Projected Market Demand by 2030 .....	5-3
Table 5-2: Residential Building Prototype Feasibility .....	5-4
Table 5-3: Mixed Use Building Prototype Feasibility .....	5-6
Table 6-1: Implementation Actions.....	6-3



# 1 INTRODUCTION



The Commercial/Imperial Corridor is the gateway to the greater Southeastern San Diego community. It enjoys the benefits of adjacency to downtown, and convenient local and regional access by freeways and a trolley line. The corridor also provides stores, restaurants, and living and working opportunities in a more affordable, lower-scale setting compared with downtown. The corridor's unique identity is a reflection of its history, diversity, and small lot development pattern. Shaped by a community-driven process, this Commercial/Imperial Corridor Master Plan embodies the community's vision to enable a more vibrant future that supports a mix of culturally-relevant uses integrated with transit, streetscape and public space enhancements to promote vitality and neighborhood livability.



Community members provided input and feedback throughout the planning process through workshops, surveys, and advisory committee meetings.

## 1.1 Overview

### Background

The Master Plan emerged out of a planning grant from the San Diego Association of Governments to identify target areas for new mixed-use development, improve mobility, and express community identity through streetscape design concepts. These objectives are reflected in vision, principles, and recommendations described in the chapters that follow.

### Process and Public Outreach

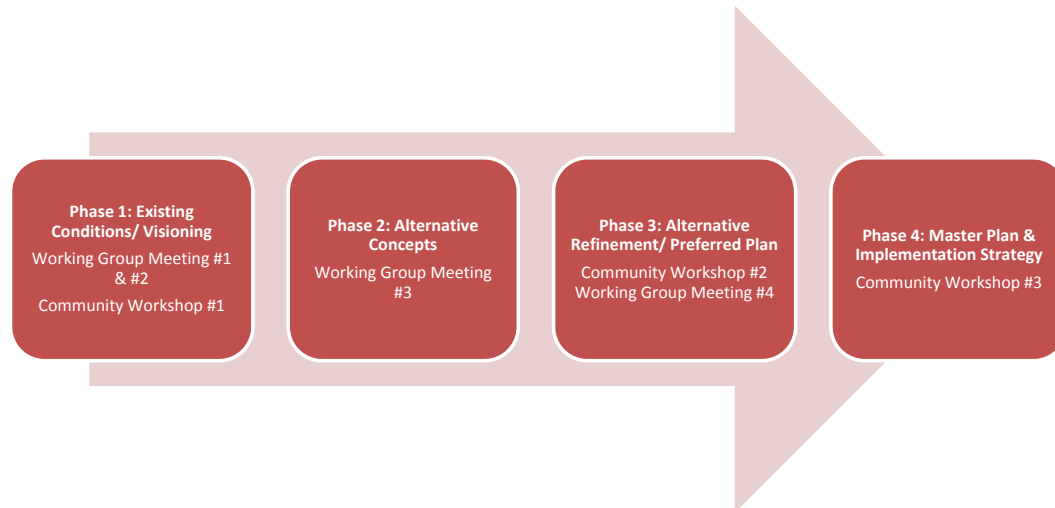
The Master Plan progressed with an integrated community outreach and technical process: balancing the perspectives of community members and other stakeholders with technical analysis—environmental conditions, market projections, traffic projections—that will affect future development possibilities and quality of life.

Through the planning process, community members were offered a variety of opportunities to help develop

a vision and plan for the corridor that reflects the community's priorities. Community workshops, a community character survey, and ongoing updates to the project website offered ways to share information, discuss issues and aspirations, and provide feedback on interim products. An advisory committee—the Project Working Group—met at key milestones to help shepherd the process.

The project was undertaken in four phases, as shown in the graphic below:

1. The **Existing Conditions/Visioning** phase included extensive community outreach efforts to understand issues, aspirations, and concerns in the Planning Area. Activities included two meetings with the Project Working Group, a community-wide workshop, and a community character survey. Supplementing these activities, City staff and consultants prepared technical studies which culminated in a Market Demand Study and an Existing Conditions Report, which analyzed land use, mobility, and en-





vironmental issues. A community vision and a set of guiding principles emerged from this first phase and provided direction for subsequent phases.

2. During the **Alternative Concepts** phase, the planning team prepared three land use and mobility concepts to test alternative choices for future development. The emerging vision and principles served as the basis for the development of alternatives; each alternative strived to meet the vision and guiding principles in different ways. The Project Working Group reviewed and provided feedback on the alternatives, selecting components of each of the alternatives in recommending a preferred plan.
3. The **Alternatives Refinement/Preferred Plan** phase formed the bridge between exploration of various options and this Master Plan. The Project Working Group and community at-large discussed the preferred alternative and shaped the preferred vision, land use, mobility, and urban design strategy for the corridors. This step provided the basic framework for the Master Plan preparation.
4. The **Master Plan and Implementation Strategy** phase represented the preparation of the Master Plan and will ultimately include its implementation, through an update to the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan.

### Implementation

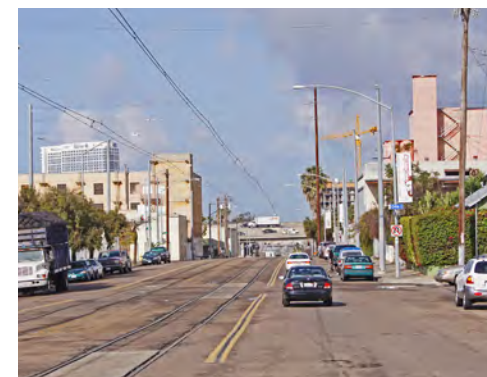
The Master Plan provides a focused set of recommendations for the corridor for inclusion in the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan. The Master Plan will not be adopted by the City Council. Rather the recommendations will be folded into the plan update process and that effort will ultimately be adopted by the City Council.

The Community Plan will list and prioritize funding for public projects, such as open space and streetscape improvements described in the Master Plan. However, on private land in the corridor, owners of properties and interested developers will ultimately decide on when and what to build. Some development may take place in the short-term; as the economy recovers and land becomes scarcer downtown, there may be more interest in development in the corridor. Other development projects may take 15 or 20 years to come to fruition. The availability of funding on the part of the City (e.g. through capital improvements program funds), timing of key public improvements, and the general economic and lending climate for private development, are some of the factors that will affect the timing and extent of redevelopment and revitalization.

### Plan Organization

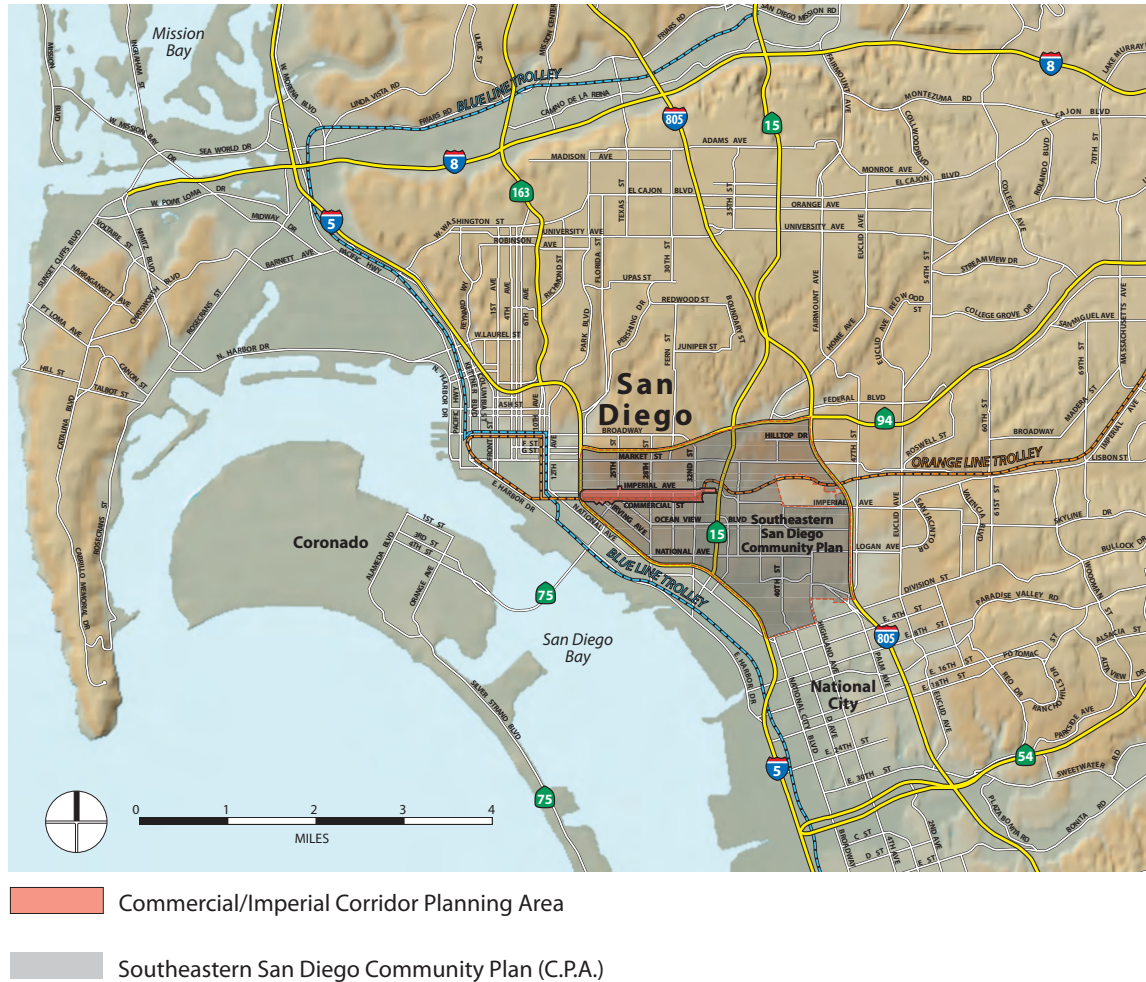
The Master Plan is organized as follows:

- **Chapter 1** provides background and context, including project location, demographic information, and the project objectives.
- **Chapter 2** describes the land use framework, including the land use classification system, potential development that could result from the plan, and recommendations for achieving land use and environmental goals.
- **Chapter 3** illustrates urban design recommendations and improvements to the public realm, including open space and streetscapes (i.e., streets, landscaping, and sidewalk infrastructure).
- **Chapter 4** describes the mobility strategy, with an emphasis on creating a multi-modal circulation network.



*Good transit access and proximity to Downtown make this corridor a good candidate for smart growth transit-oriented development.*

**FIGURE 1-1: Regional Location**



- Chapter 5 describes strategies for economic development and implementation incentives, based on market demand projections and feasibility of projects in the corridor.
- Chapter 6 summarizes the strategy for implementation.

## 1.2 Context

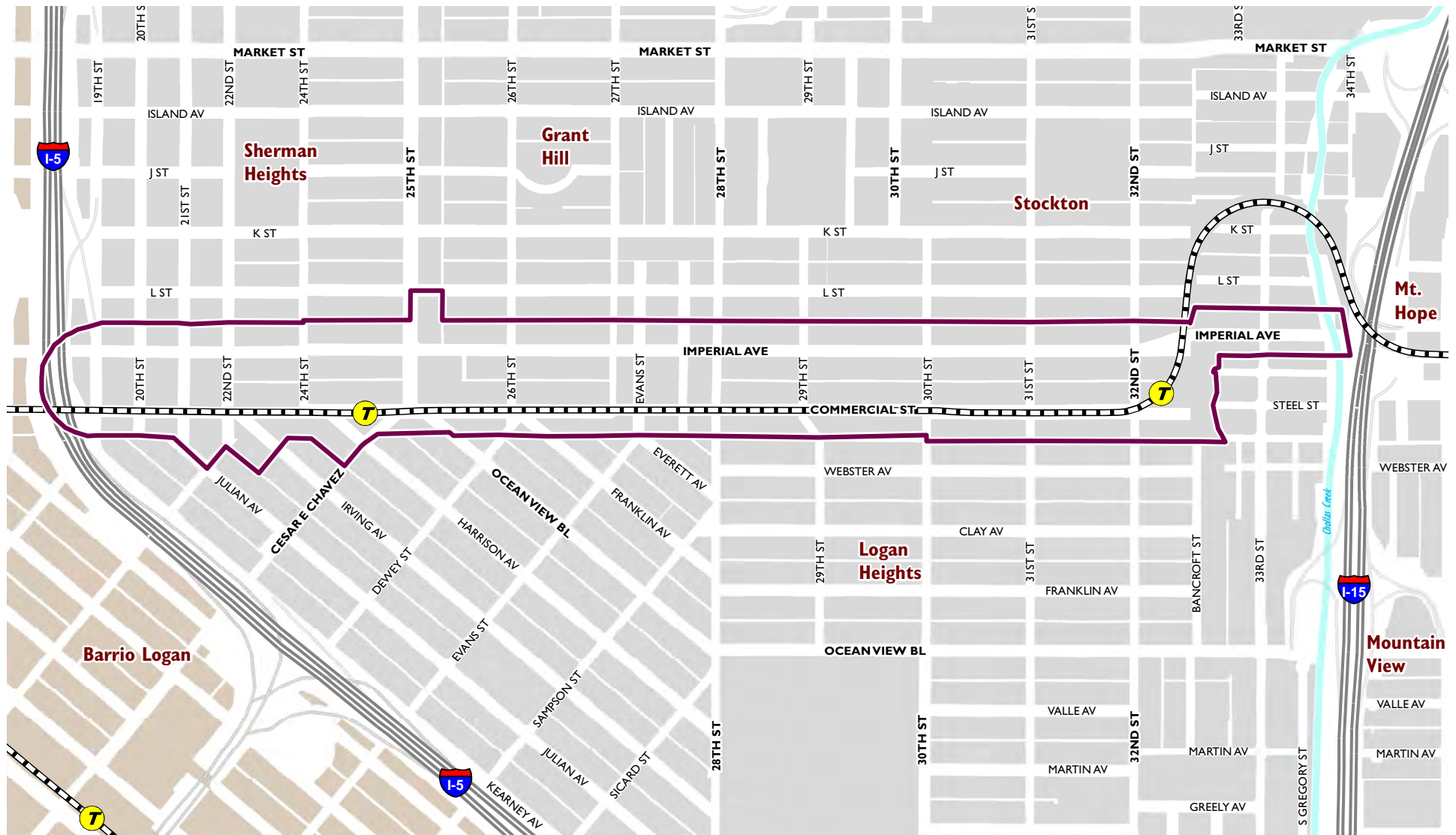
### Project Location

The Planning Area is located within Southeastern San Diego: a large, urbanized, and ethnically diverse community located just east of downtown San Diego. Southeastern San Diego includes the land area south of State Route 94, west of Interstate 805, east of Interstate 5, and north of the National City border, as shown in Figure 1-1.

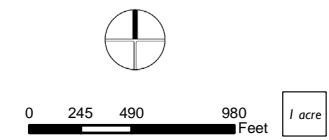
The Planning Area for the Commercial/Imperial Corridor is shown in Figure 1-2. It extends approximately 1.5 miles from Interstate 5 in the west to State Route 15 in the east, and the alley between L Street and Imperial Avenue in the north to Valley Place in the south. The corridor traverses several neighborhoods, including Sherman Heights, Logan Heights, Grant Hill, and Stockton. Chollas Creek runs through the east end of the Planning Area, parallel to Highway 15. Balboa Park is located just over a mile to the north.



FIGURE 1-2: Planning Area 1-5



-  Trolley Stop
-  Light Rail
-  Planning Area



Data Source  
 City of San Diego, California,  
 2011; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011.



Over half of the housing stock in the greater corridor is more than 60 years old, which implies both that homes and apartments tend to be unique and interesting in their diversity, and that repairs, renovation, or redevelopment will be necessary in the coming years.

### Demographic Profile

The corridor and surrounding neighborhoods represent one of the most diverse communities in the city, with a range of ages, household types, income levels, and languages spoken. Table 1-1 and Chart 1-1 provide a snapshot of demographic characteristics in the greater Commercial/Imperial Corridor as well as the city as a whole for comparison purposes.

The greater corridor is home to population of nearly 20,000, along with a job base of approximately 500. Compared to the city overall, the greater Commercial/Imperial Corridor has larger average households and more overcrowding within housing units (defined as more than one occupant per room). Households in the corridor have substantially lower incomes compared with the rest of San Diego’s households, with 37 percent of households reporting incomes below the poverty level within a 12-month period and a median income of \$29,188.

As shown in Chart 1-1, education levels trend similarly, with 86 percent of San Diego residents having completed high school or even higher education, compared with only 49 percent of Commercial/Imperial residents. The Hispanic heritage of the Planning Area is exemplified by the 77 percent of households who speak Spanish at home. Approximately 80 percent of residents identify Mexico as their origin country.

The “expanded” area is bound by I-5, Market Street, I-15, and Ocean View Boulevard/28th Street and is used as a proxy for the corridor due to the scarcity of available corridor-specific Census information.

These statistics suggest that good job opportunities, access to education, and availability of affordable housing are essential to ensuring that residents have a good quality of life in the future.

CHARACTERISTIC	COMMERCIAL/ IMPERIAL EXPANDED AREA <sup>1</sup>	CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Average Household Size	3.8	2.6
Housing Units		
Overcrowding (>1 occupant per room) (%)	27%	6%
Median Year Built	1949	1975
Vacancy Rate (%)	9%	8%
Owner occupied (%)	30%	50%
Renter occupied (%)	70%	50%
Poverty Status (income below poverty level within last year) (%)	37%	13%
Median Household Income	\$29,188	\$62,034

1. The “expanded” area is bound by I-5, Market Street, I-15, and Ocean View Boulevard/28th Street and is used as a proxy for the corridor due to the scarcity of available corridor-specific Census information.

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009 Estimates. The “Commercial/Imperial Expanded Area” includes Census tracts: 39.01, 40, 47, 48, and 49.

**CHART 1-1: EDUCATION AND ETHNICITY DEMOGRAPHICS FOR COMMERCIAL/IMPERIAL EXPANDED AREA<sup>1</sup> AND SAN DIEGO (2009)**



1. The "expanded" area is bound by I-5, Market Street, I-15, and Ocean View Boulevard/28th Street and is used as a proxy for the corridor due to the scarcity of available corridor-specific Census information.

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009 Estimates. The "Commercial/Imperial Expanded Area" includes Census tracts: 39.01, 40, 47, 48, and 49.



Nearly 80 percent of residents in the greater corridor identify themselves as Mexican, which reveals itself in the retail stores and restaurants shown here. These demographics also suggest the types of businesses, architecture, and community design which may be appropriate in the future.





Residential homes (top) and industrial uses (bottom) are the most prevalent uses in the corridor. These uses can often be found directly adjacent to one another (bottom) suggesting potential incompatibilities due to noise, air quality, and odors.

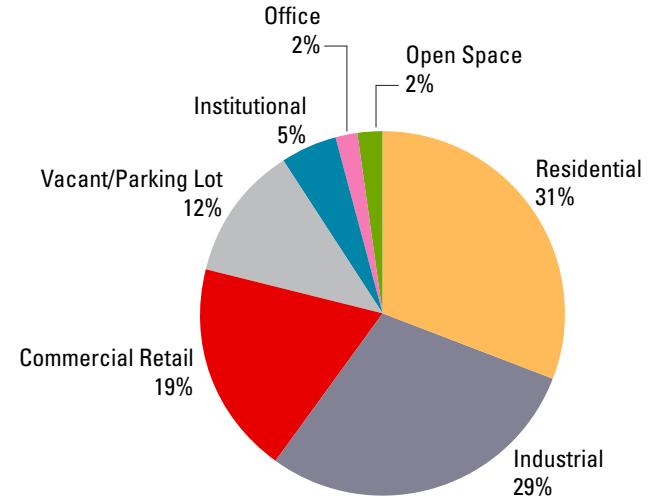
### Land Use Profile

The Commercial/Imperial Corridor is composed of a range of land uses, as shown in Figure 1-3. The Commercial/Imperial Corridor exemplifies a multiple use pattern, with single-family homes, auto repair shops, retail stores, and industrial uses directly adjacent to each other. Commercial and residential uses are predominant along Imperial Avenue, while industrial uses dominate Commercial Street. Commercial uses on these corridors serve not just the Planning Area’s residents, but also the residents in surrounding residential neighborhoods in Sherman Heights, Grant Hill, and Logan Heights among others.

Chart 1-2 shows the amount and proportion of land uses in the Master Planning Area. Of the 83 acres in the Planning Area (not including streets) residential and industrial uses (including dismantling and recycling centers, warehousing, and light manufacturing) represent the most prevalent uses, at 31 percent and 29 percent respectively. Commercial retail, which includes auto repair shops, restaurants, grocery stores, and other small businesses and retail stores, accounts for 19 percent of land area. Vacant sites and parking lots represent ten percent, office uses account for two percent, while open space represents just one percent of the area.

Table 1-2 describes land uses in terms of total building square footage and housing units. There are approximately 463 housing units in the Planning Area, the majority of which are multi-family developments. Industrial and commercial uses represent the largest non-residential building areas.

CHART 1-2: EXISTING LAND USE IN THE PLANNING AREA, BY PERCENT SHARE (2011)<sup>1</sup>



1. Excludes roads and other rights-of-way.

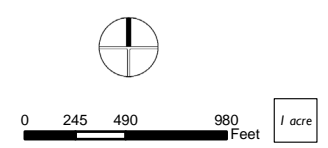
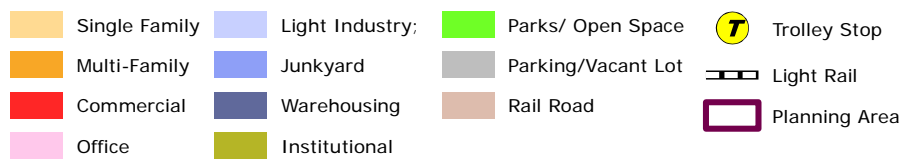
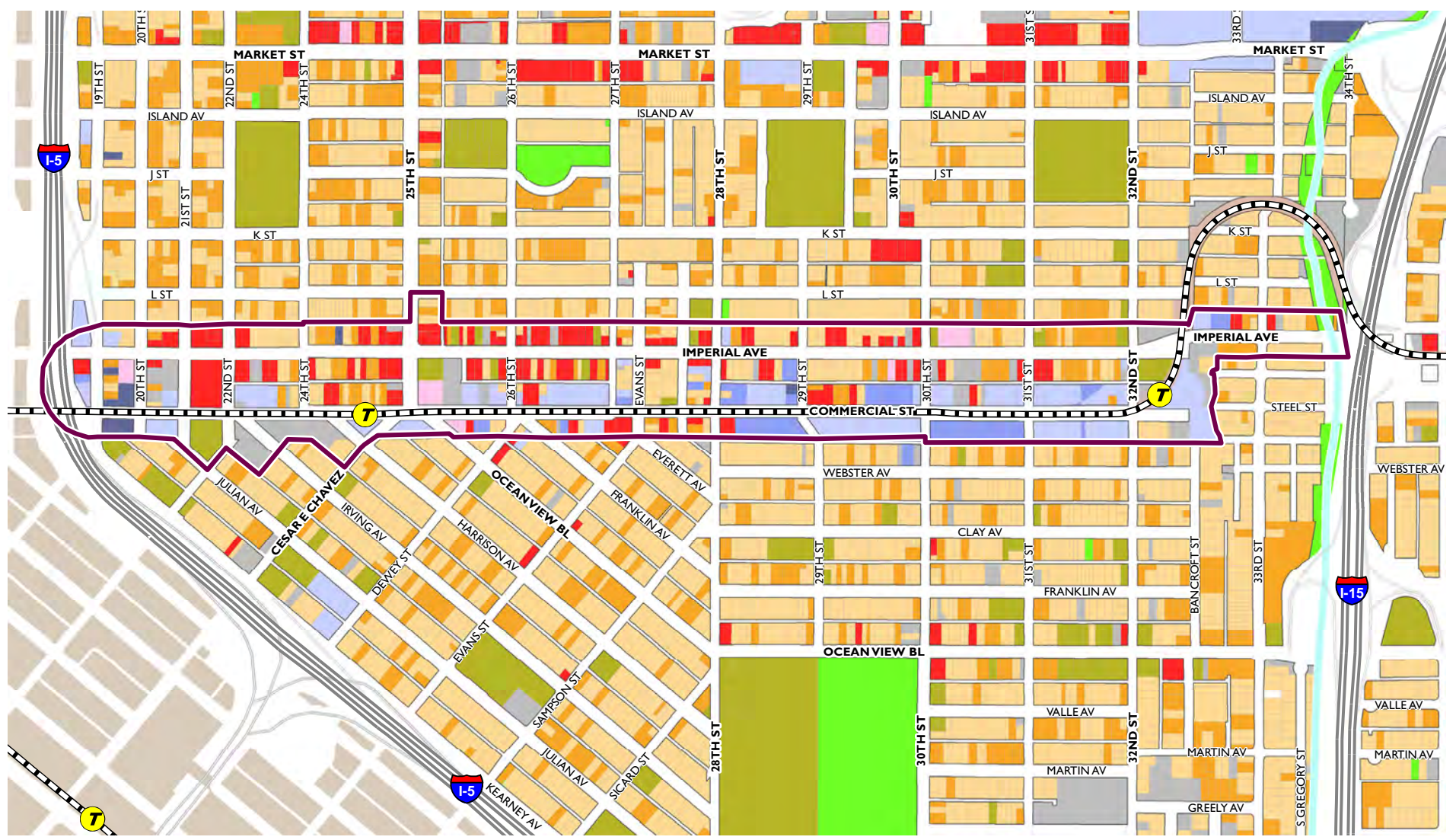
Source: City of San Diego, 2011.

TABLE 1-2: EXISTING LAND USE, BY BUILDING AREA OR UNITS (2011)

LAND USE	AMOUNT
<b>Residential (Housing Units)</b>	<b>463</b>
Multi-Family	237
Single-Family	187
Mixed-Use Residential	39
<b>Non-Residential (Building Square Feet)</b>	<b>908,579</b>
Industrial	350,560
Commercial	344,927
Institutional	135,201
Warehousing	43,000
Office	27,381
Recycling/Dismantling	11,010

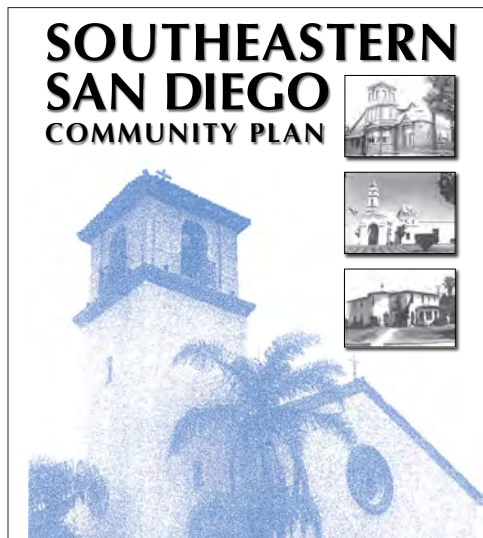
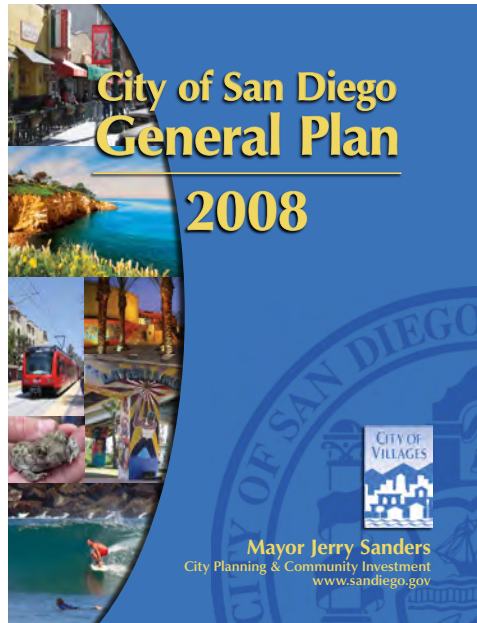
Source: City of San Diego, County of San Diego, 2011.

FIGURE 1-3: Existing Land Use



**Data Source**  
 City of San Diego, California,  
 2011; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011.





*The Master Plan may recommend amendments to policies and actions in existing plans in order to meet goals for the corridor.*

### Related Plans and Policies

The focus of the Master Plan is to identify policy recommendations that support the community vision for the corridor. In addition, other City and regional policies and regulations will continue to apply to planning in the corridor. Key plans and policies are described below and, where boundaries overlap with the Master Planning Area, are shown in Figure 1-4.

#### General Plan

The San Diego General Plan is a comprehensive “blueprint” for San Diego’s growth over the next 20 years. Central to the plan is the “City of Villages” strategy which focuses growth into mixed-use activity centers that are pedestrian-friendly districts linked to an improved regional transit system. The General Plan identifies over 50 community planning areas in the city for which community plans will be developed to provide more localized policies.

#### Land Development Code

The City’s Land Development Code documents the procedures and regulations for development within the city. This includes regulations for base zones, design, landscaping, and signs, among other development standards. In addition, Chapter 13 describes the Transit Overlay Zone which surrounds the 25th Street Trolley stop (though not the 32nd Street stop) and provides supplemental parking regulations for areas receiving a high level of transit service.

#### Southeastern San Diego Community Plan

The Southeastern San Diego Community Plan provides a framework to guide development in the 7,200-acre

Southeastern and Encanto Planning Areas. Through its policies and regulations, the Plan identifies and addresses the following key issues in the community: the need for employment opportunities and commercial shopping; concerns about density; community design and appearance; adequate public facilities; and the disproportionate number of assisted housing projects and social services in the community. The Plan is expected to be updated again beginning in 2013.

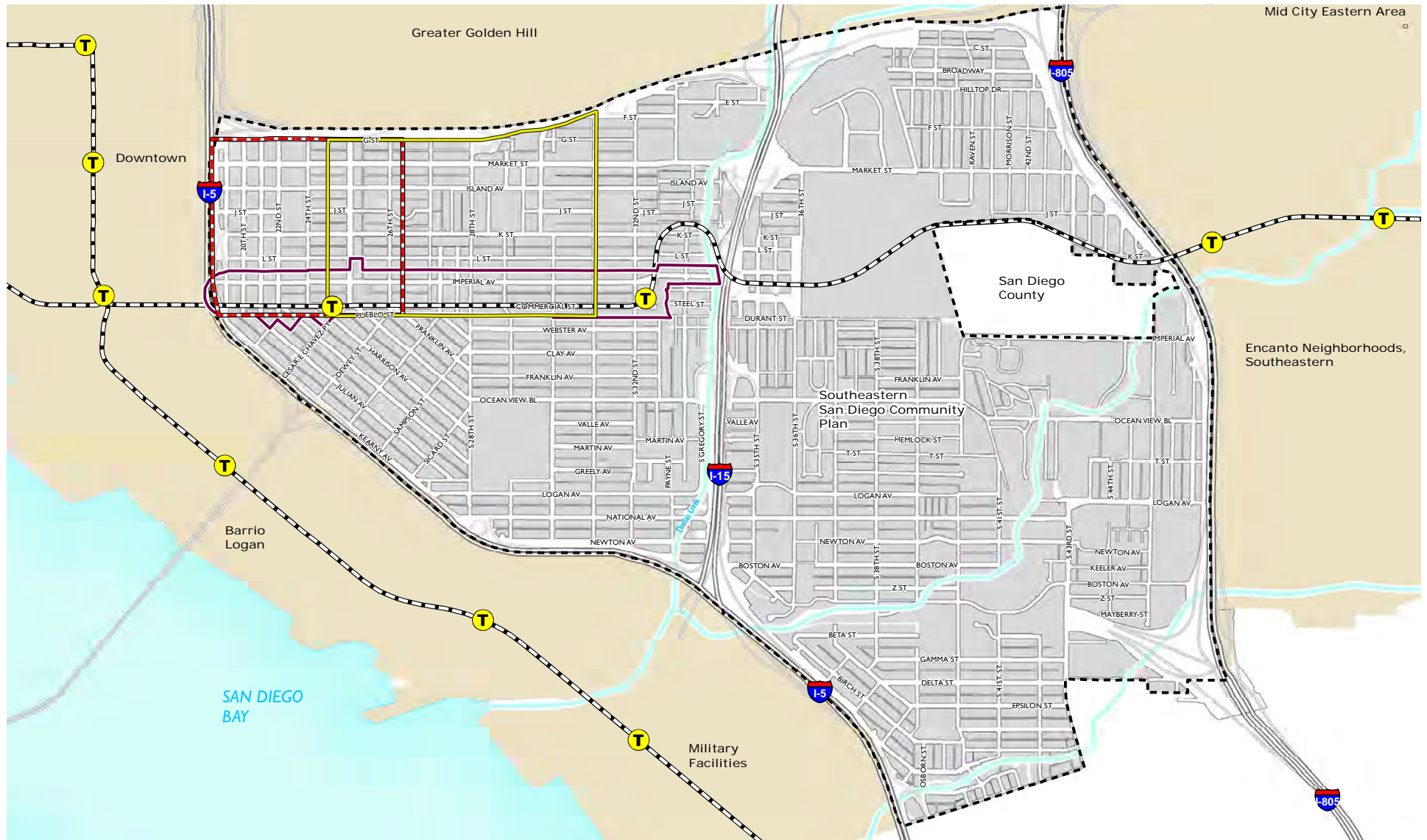
#### Grant Hill Revitalization Action Program







The Grant Hill Revitalization Action Program describes implementation actions to revitalize the historic Grant Hill neighborhood. Its planning boundaries overlap with the Master Plan boundaries from 25th to 31st Streets. Specific strategies include traffic calming on heavy-use streets such as Imperial Avenue and streetscape improvements on Imperial Avenue, and 25th, 28th and 30th streets. In addition, the program recommends increasing densities and allowing mixed-use development around the trolley stops.

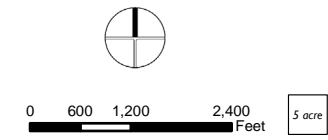
#### Sherman Heights Revitalization Action Program

The Sherman Heights Revitalization Action Program identifies strategies and projects to revitalize the historic community of Sherman Heights. Its planning boundaries overlap with the Master Plan boundaries from I-5 to just east of 25th Street. Key recommendations include development of an urban plaza around the intersection of Commercial and 25th streets, streetscape improvements, such as lighting and landscaping, façade improvements, traffic calming, community services, housing rehabilitation, and neighborhood policing/defensible space strategies.

FIGURE 1-4: Existing Plans



-  Trolley Stop
-  Light Rail
-  Planning Area
-  Sherman Heights Revitalization Action Program Area
-  Grant Hill Revitalization Action Program Area
-  Southeastern San Diego Community Plan Area



Data Source  
 City of San Diego, California,  
 2011; Dyett & Bhatia, 2012.





*The Master Plan seeks to better capitalize on the corridor's transit access to improve residents' and workers' mobility within and beyond the corridor. The 25th Street trolley stop (top) is currently surrounded by primarily residential and some industrial and commercial uses. The 32nd Street trolley stop (bottom) is immediately surrounded by industrial uses and a church, though residential homes lie just beyond the station area.*



### 1.3 Project Objectives

A community vision statement and set of guiding principles emerged from Project Working Group meetings and community visioning workshops and was subsequently refined and endorsed by the Project Working Group. The vision and principles provide a foundation for the land use and mobility framework and policy recommendations described in subsequent chapters. Policy recommendations are more detailed statements for how to achieve the vision and guiding principles, providing clear steps to implementation through the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan and other implementing plans.



#### Community Vision

*A Commercial/Imperial Corridor that is vibrant, diverse, family-oriented, safe, and celebrates the neighborhood's history and sense of community. The corridor capitalizes on its transit access to support a mix of culturally-relevant uses, including stores, restaurants, and other businesses; a diverse range of housing; and public facilities, including arts, education, recreation and open space. Streetscapes foster community identity, provide opportunities for plazas and other gathering spaces; and enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety and comfort, while preserving automobile movement. A network of north-south transit routes complements the east-west trolley lines.*

#### Guiding Principles

##### Community Character

1. Create an inclusive community that supports a diversity of ethnicities, income level, ages, businesses, and architectural styles.
2. Celebrate the corridor's historic roots as a working-class, African-American, and Hispanic community.
3. Improve community health by facilitating safe walking and biking routes, promoting good air quality, reducing noise impacts, providing access to healthy foods, and expanding park and recreation opportunities.

##### Land Use

4. Develop a mix of employment, residential, live/work, retail, restaurant, public gathering space, and cultural uses and a variety of amenities and services to support a balanced and vibrant community. Encourage transit-oriented development around trolley stops.
5. Reinforce Imperial Avenue's identity as a mixed-use corridor, with vibrant ground-level uses in several stretches. Explore feasibility of transit-oriented uses around trolley stops along Commercial Street.

6. Accommodate a range of household types and a variety of affordability levels.
7. Develop an urban park system comprised of parks and open spaces with a range of functions and sizes.

##### Mobility

8. Create a multi-modal circulation system that supports the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and vehicles.
9. Retain and enhance street parking opportunities.

##### Economic Development

10. Support opportunities for arts, cultural, educational, and job training for children, teenagers, and adult community members.
11. Support job opportunities in light industrial, commercial, and new start-up sectors.



*The Master Plan expands the types of uses permitted by allowing mixed-use development. It also provides illustrated concepts for how to improve streets and landscaping and expand parks to improve quality of life in the corridor. Examples projects and improvements include mixed-use development in Downtown (top), new residential development in Barrio Logan (middle), and sidewalk seating in Little Italy (bottom).*

## 1.4 Strategy

Figure 1-5 illustrates the overall concept of the Master Plan, which directs development into mixed-use centers around the two existing trolley stops at 25th and 32nd streets. These centers are strategically located to maximize accessibility from transit and the residential neighborhoods to the north and the south. Quarter-mile radii are shown around these nodes, approximating a five-minute walking distance from transit. Each center will contain a mix of local serving uses, spaces for small businesses, retail, housing, and plazas or open spaces. While commercial development would be allowed as part of mixed-use developments in any location in the corridor, they would be required along certain stretches in order to create core locations for foot traffic, small businesses, façade improvements and local shopping. The uniqueness of each street in the corridor is retained as part of the land use and mobility strategy.

### Sustainability

Sustainability is an inherent component of the Master Plan. The vision and land use plan support a mix of land uses to provide new homes and affordable housing in proximity to jobs, shopping, and services. The circulation plan and streetscape designs support a corridor that is safe and convenient for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. The urban design strategy supports celebration of culture and preservation of historic resources. Lastly, the economic development plan supports a variety of businesses, well-paying jobs, and adherence to fiscal sustainability to ensure a healthy economy. Together, these strategies can help to improve community health and quality of life, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and negative air quality impacts.

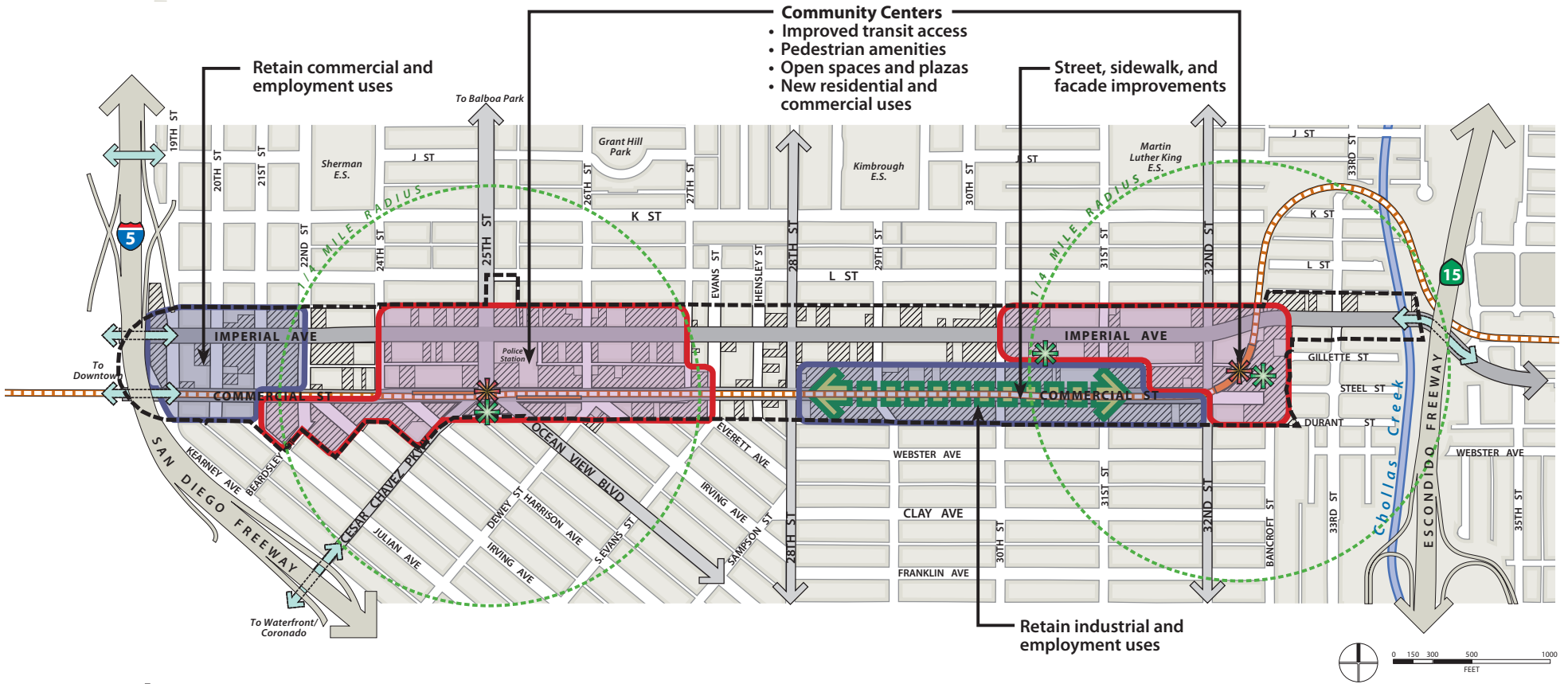
### Imperial Avenue

Imperial Avenue will remain as a mix of residential and commercial uses, but new and revitalized development around the trolley stops will enhance pedestrian safety and comfort. New housing, stores, and restaurants will enhance the vibrancy of the corridor, and focused streetscape and pedestrian improvements—such as wider sidewalks, bulbouts, traffic calming, landscaping, and street furniture—will foster pedestrian comfort. New small parks and plazas will provide community-gathering opportunities. Street and streetscape improvements create bicycle routes, add lighting, expand the pedestrian realm and improve mobility and safety within the corridor and beyond.

### Commercial Street

East of 28th Street, Commercial Street will be retained as industrial, heavy commercial, and similar employment uses. However, west of 28th Street a mix of uses is recommended to capitalize on trolley access. Industrial uses would transition over time into other uses such as residential, live/work, commercial businesses, and cultural and community facilities. In the shorter term, the Master Plan addresses compatibility between industrial and residential uses. Streetscape, sidewalk, and screening/buffering improvements are recommended to improve safety and mobility along Commercial Street and at the trolley stops.

FIGURE 1-5: Master Plan Concept



Retain commercial and employment uses

- Community Centers**
- Improved transit access
  - Pedestrian amenities
  - Open spaces and plazas
  - New residential and commercial uses

Street, sidewalk, and facade improvements

Retain industrial and employment uses

Park/Plaza (exact location to be determined)

TOD Node

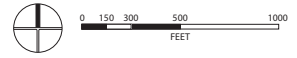
Orange Line Trolley

Trolley Platform

Street/Sidewalk/Facade Improvements

Planning Area

Overpass/Underpass



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## 2 LAND USE



The Commercial/Imperial Corridor was developed before the application of current zoning regulations, resulting in a patchwork of land uses—primarily residential, industrial, and commercial. Thus, the corridor enjoys a rich mix of housing types, small businesses, everyday shopping, and employment opportunities, but also uses that are not always compatible, such as residential uses that abut auto-wrecking and industrial properties. This chapter provides a land use strategy to help realize culturally-relevant and transit-supportive uses expressed in the community vision, while still preserving the neighborhood's diversity of uses.





Allowing mixed use development in the corridor creates a more walkable community, retail and office (top), live/work (middle) residential and office (bottom), or another combination of compatible uses.

## 2.1 Framework

The land use framework provides the foundation for future development in the corridor. The Land Use Diagram (Figure 2-1) seeks to achieve the vision expressed by the community to allow a greater mix of uses in the corridor, preserve some industrial jobs, and ensure that development is sensitive in terms of heights and densities to the existing character. Transit-oriented development (TOD) nodes are shown at both of the existing trolley stops, identifying locations where higher intensity development may be appropriate. Conceptual locations for parks or plazas are symbolized on the maps to illustrate that open spaces should be developed in

tandem with new development. Parks and public open space are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

### Classification of Uses

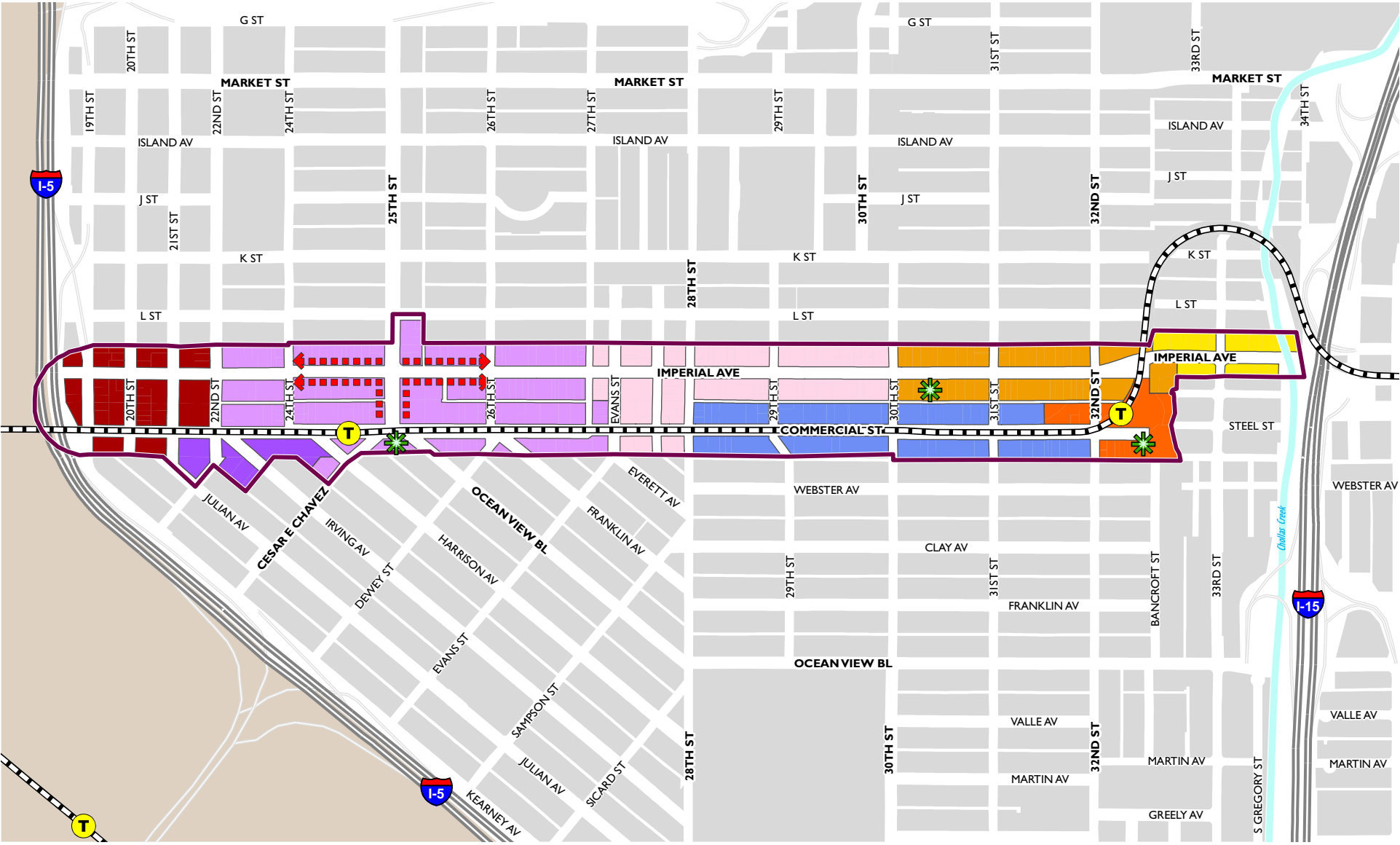
The San Diego General Plan specifies a series of land use designations that may be used in community plans to fit the needs and desires of individual communities. Table 2-1 shows the land use designations that have been adapted and applied to the Commercial/Imperial Corridor. These use classifications will be formally adopted as part of the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan Update.

**TABLE 2-1: LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS**














CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	DENSITY RANGE (DU/ACRE)	MAXIMUM FAR <sup>1</sup>
Residential Medium	Single- and multi-family housing.	15-29	n/a
Residential Medium – High	Multi-family housing, or combination of single-family attached and multi-family housing, in a medium-high density setting.	30-44	n/a
Community Commercial – Residential Permitted	Shopping facilities with retail, service, civic, and/or office uses for the community at large (within and outside the corridor). Multi-family residential uses are also permitted as part of mixed-use developments near trolley stops and away from the freeway, as shown in the Land Use Diagram.	30-44	2.0
Community Commercial – Residential Prohibited	Shopping facilities with retail, service, civic, and/or office uses for the community at large (within and outside the corridor). Residential uses are not permitted.	n/a	2.0
Light Industrial	Light manufacturing, research and development, storage, distribution, office, and service commercial uses. Heavy industrial uses with significant nuisance effects are excluded.	n/a	1.5
Neighborhood Village (Low)	Housing in a mixed-use setting with convenience shopping, and civic uses, at low intensities.	15-29	1.5
Neighborhood Village (Medium)	Housing in a mixed-use setting with convenience shopping, and civic uses, at moderate intensities.	30-44	2.2
Community Village (COMM22 Only)	Housing in a mixed-use setting along with commercial needs of the larger community beyond the corridor, including industrial and business areas. Retail, office, civic, and recreation, are permitted. Residential development is required.	45-74	2.0

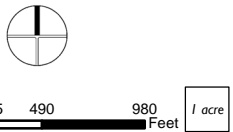
1. Total FAR for residential and non-residential development combined.

FIGURE 2-1: Master Plan Land Use 2-3



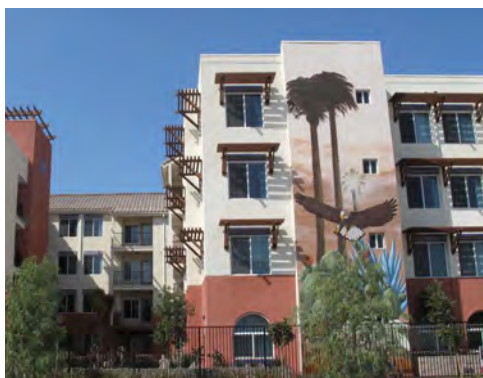
Proposed Land Uses

-  Trolley Stop
-  Light Rail
-  Planning Area
-  Community Village (45-74 du/ac)
-  Neighborhood Village-Medium (30-44 du/ac)
-  Neighborhood Village-Low (15-29 du/ac)
-  Community Commercial - Residential Permitted (30-44 du/ac)
-  Community Commercial - Residential Prohibited
-  Residential Medium High (30-44 du/ac)
-  Residential Medium (15-29 du/ac)
-  Light Industrial
-  Commercial Frontage Required
-  Park/Plaza (exact location to be determined)



Data Source  
 City of San Diego, California,  
 2011; Dyett & Bhatia, 2012.





Medium and medium-high density (top, middle) housing creates opportunities for new building types and new residents in the corridor. High-density housing (bottom) is only permitted the Community Village designation.

The table also specifies, where appropriate, a residential density range and total intensity maximum for each classification. Residential densities are expressed as dwelling units per acre (du/ac), and are mapped in Figure 2-2. Building intensity is expressed as floor area ratio (FAR), which is the ratio of building area to land area, and includes combined floor area for residential and non-residential development. The highest densities and intensities are located toward the western end of the corridor, closest to downtown, and within a ¼-mile of the trolley stops to capitalize on transit access and create centers for activity and commerce.

As shown in Figure 2-1, the west end of the corridor is designated Community Commercial (Residential Prohibited) to provide opportunities for more retail, office, and job opportunities close to downtown and I-5. Residential uses are undesirable due to noise and air quality impacts from the freeway. The Neighborhood Village designation is shown around the 25th Street trolley stop and along Imperial Avenue from 22nd Street to 30th Street to allow a mix of uses, which is not permitted under the current (as of 2012) land use designation. The Neighborhood Village designation is further subdivided into two density levels: Low and Medium. The Medium designation is applied closest to the trolley stop to provide more opportunities for residents and workers to live and work near transit. The Community Village designation, which permits the highest densities of any land use category in the corridor, is only applied to the COMM22 development project.

East of 28th Street, Commercial Street is designated as Light Industrial, consistent with the existing land use designation and to preserve some industrial land in the

corridor. On Imperial Avenue, between 30th Street and Highway 15, Residential Medium and Medium High designations are shown to maintain the primarily residential character of this segment of the corridor. Around the 32nd Street trolley stop, Community Commercial (Residential Permitted) permits a wider range of uses than is currently allowed, providing opportunities for new mixed-use development integrated with the trolley station. Parks and open space will be essential to ensure a high quality of life for community members and to create complete neighborhood; locations are shown conceptually along the corridor.

### Required Commercial Frontage

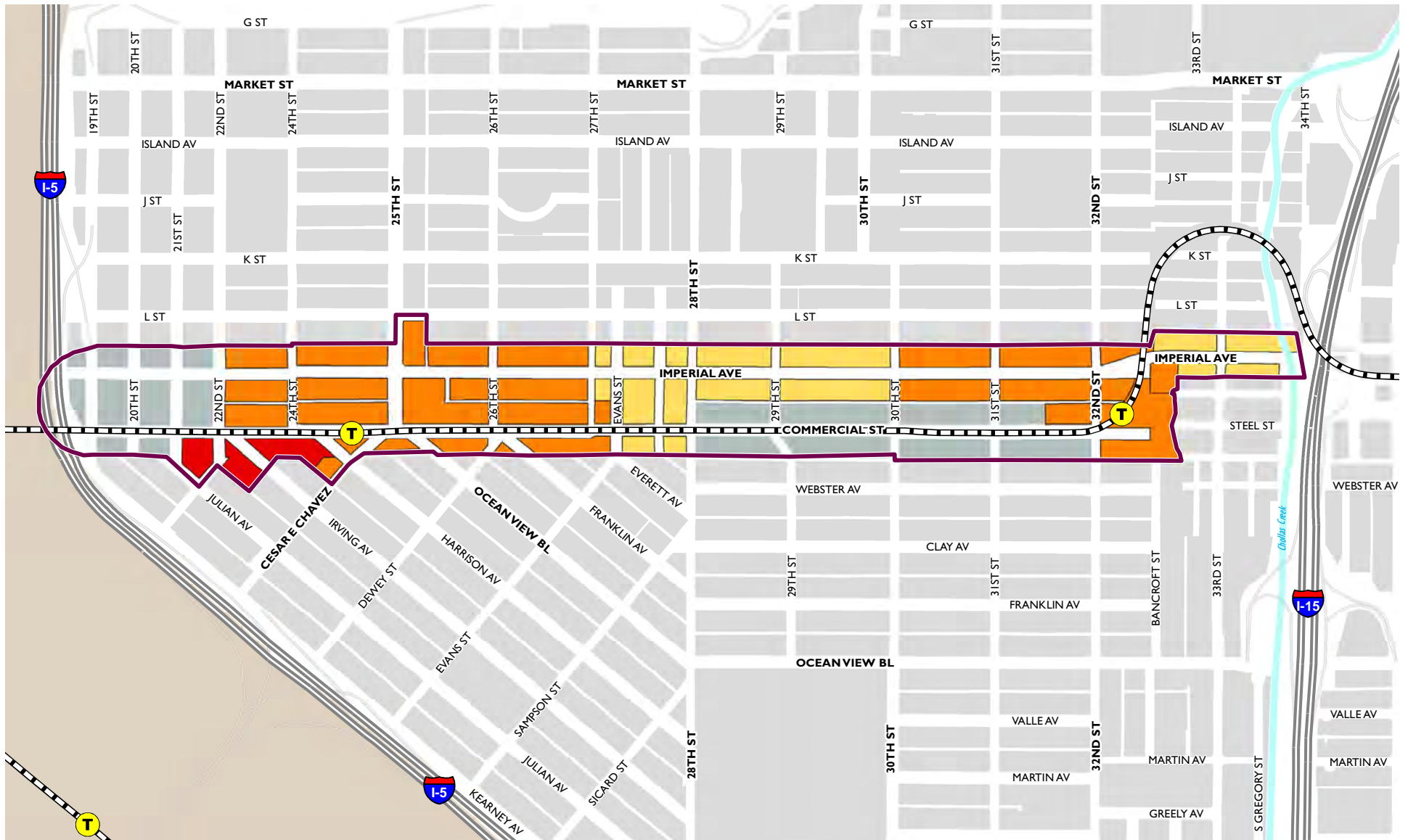
The Land Use Diagram also identifies streets where “active” commercial ground-floor frontages are required to focus retail development and create vibrant pedestrian-oriented centers. Active uses include uses with building that have transparent surfaces that allow window-shopping, and entice customers inside, such as: retail stores, restaurants and cafés, markets, personal services (e.g. hair salons), and even offices with lobbies or ground-floor suites. This overlay is shown specifically around the intersection of Imperial Avenue and 25th Street. This area could build on existing public facilities and foot traffic to become a center for the community with retail uses and a gathering space for a farmers’ or open-air market.

### Collocation of Uses and Community Health

One of the corridor’s challenges is the proximity of industrial uses to homes. Industrial and auto uses can have negative impacts on workers, residents, children, and other sensitive receptors due to loud noises from



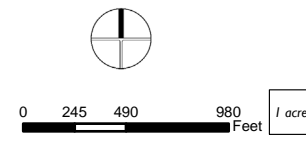
FIGURE 2-2: Maximum Residential Density : 2-5



Residential Density (dwelling units/acre)

- 29 du/acre
- 44 du/acre
- 74 du/acre
- Residential Not Permitted

- T Trolley Stop
- Light Rail
- Planning Area



Data Source  
 City of San Diego, California,  
 2011; Dyett & Bhatia, 2012.



*The Plan seeks to reduce potential air quality, noise, and visual impacts from freeways, the trolley, and industrial uses, through land use siting, site planning, code enforcement, screening, and landscaping.*

machinery, unappealing facades and open industrial yards, and potential hazardous emissions.

The Master Plan addresses compatibility between industrial and residential uses in the short-term through measures such as noise mitigation (i.e., controlling noise at the source), screening operations with shrubs or well-designed walls, as well as enforcement of the City's existing codes (e.g. containing auto wrecking operations within structures or behind fencing). State and federal agencies are also responsible for protecting community health through enforcing air quality rules identified by the Environmental Protection Agency, the California Air Resources Board, and the San Diego Air Quality Management District; as well as enforcing rules concerning use, handling, storage and transportation of hazardous materials identified in the California Hazardous Materials Regulations and the California Fire and Building Code, and laws and regulations of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control and the County Department of Environmental Health.

Some businesses have already made an effort to soften and screen the sidewalk edge through the introduction of vines and planting, or by painting large walls with murals. Vines can be introduced on fences and walls where wide planting areas are not feasible. The addition of vegetated cover to these blank surfaces can provide immediate impact to increased pedestrian comfort on the street, while screening the industrial uses.

## 2.2 Development Potential

### Opportunity Sites

Development opportunity sites were identified to estimate the potential for development over the next 20 to 30 years. Although many uses in the corridor may remain the same for years to come, there are many sites along the corridor that may be appropriate for reuse in the short- or long-term. These sites include vacant or underutilized parcels (i.e., sites with low building values compared to land values, and sites with low building intensities).

### Potential Buildout

Private property owners will set the pace and ultimately the amount of development over the next 20 to 30 years. Development may result in replacement of some existing buildings, driven by property owner interest and market conditions, but is difficult to predict with certainty. Estimating potential development is useful for anticipating potential impacts on traffic, parks, infrastructure and other public facilities. These estimates are intended for planning purposes only and do not represent development targets or limitations.

Development potential is estimated based on the land use designations shown in Figure 2-1, market demand projections, and maximum density, as described in Table 2-1. Table 2-2 describes the results of this analysis, including net new development resulting from the Master Plan (which factors in existing development that is redeveloped).

When combined with the COMM22 development project, the Master Plan could result in as much as 157,500 square feet of additional office space, 27,000 square feet of higher intensity industrial development, 147,300 square feet of retail, and 1,500 housing units (Row C). Adding existing development to these values results in total future development of approximately 810,400 square feet of non-residential space and 1,800 housing units (Row E).

Based on these maximum buildout estimates, the Master Plan and COMM22 development project could add about 5,500 new residents, and add nearly 900 new jobs in industrial, retail, and office sectors.<sup>1</sup> As described above, these development estimates assume development at maximum densities; in reality, development potential may be 40 to 60 percent less over the next 20 to 25 years.

### 2.3 Draft Zoning

The land use designations and map described in Section 2.1 will be implemented through the Land Development Code. Draft zoning designations are provided in Tables 2-3 and 2-4 and illustrated in the draft zoning map in Figure 2-3.

TABLE 2-2: MAXIMUM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL RESULTING FROM THE MASTER PLAN				
CATEGORY	SQUARE FEET			HOUSING UNITS
	OFFICE	LIGHT INDUSTRIAL	COMMERCIAL RETAIL	
A. Master Plan (Net New)	147,500	27,000	132,300	1,270
B. Development Project (COMM22)	10,000	0	15,000	252
C. Subtotal (A+B)	157,500	27,000	147,300	1,522
D. Existing Development to Remain	8,200	237,800	232,600	290
E. Total Future (C+D)	165,700	264,800	379,900	1,812

Source: Dyett & Bhatia (Master Plan); BRIDGE Housing (COMM22).



Integrating development with the 32nd Street trolley station could improve ridership, safety, and neighborhood vibrancy.



The Master Plan could add as many as 1,522 new housing units in the corridor, adding foot traffic and catalyzing new business opportunities to create a more vibrant corridor.

<sup>1</sup> Estimated number of residents is based on the existing household size of 3.8. Job estimates assume 250 sq. ft. per office worker, 500 sq. ft. per retail worker, and 1,500 sq. ft. per industrial worker.



TABLE 2-3: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL ZONES FOR COMMERCIAL AND IMPERIAL CORRIDOR PLAN							
ZONE	ADDITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	DENSITY (DU/AC)	MINIMUM LOT AREA (SQ.FT.)	MAXIMUM HEIGHT (FT.)	COMMERCIAL ALLOWED	FAR	LAND USE DESIGNATION
<b>RT Zones</b>	Provide for attached, single-dwelling unit residential <i>development</i> on small <i>lots</i> with <i>alley</i> access. These zones provide for more urbanized, single-unit living at densities typical of multiple-unit zones. Provide transition opportunities between single-unit neighborhoods and higher <i>density</i> multiple-unit neighborhoods and may replace multiple-unit zones at similar densities. Intended to be applied on subdivided blocks with <i>alleys</i> that are within or close to highly urbanized areas, <i>transit areas</i> , and redevelopment areas						
RT-1-5	No Common wall construction	29	1,600	35 <sup>1</sup>	—	1.20/1.60 (1&2sty/3sty)	Residential – Medium
<b>RM Zones</b>	Provide for <i>multiple dwelling unit development</i> at varying densities. The RM zones individually accommodate <i>developments</i> with similar densities and characteristics. Each of the RM zones is intended to establish <i>development</i> criteria that consolidates common development regulations, accommodates specific dwelling types, and responds to locational issues regarding adjacent land uses.						
RM-3-7	Multiple dwelling units with limited commercial	44	7,000	40	Yes <sup>2</sup>	1.80	Residential High

1 Thirty-five feet is based on raised floor in 3-story structure. Height lessens with slab floor and with two story structure.  
2 Current regulations - only in mixed-use development of 25 du or more; ground floor only; and a maximum of 25% of the GFA of the ground floor.

Provide a footnote in the development table to refer to a new section that is **specific to Barrio Logan, Southeastern and Encanto** that allows:

- Commercial on 100% of ground floor;
- On ground floor only; and
- Does not have a unit threshold prior to commercial development.

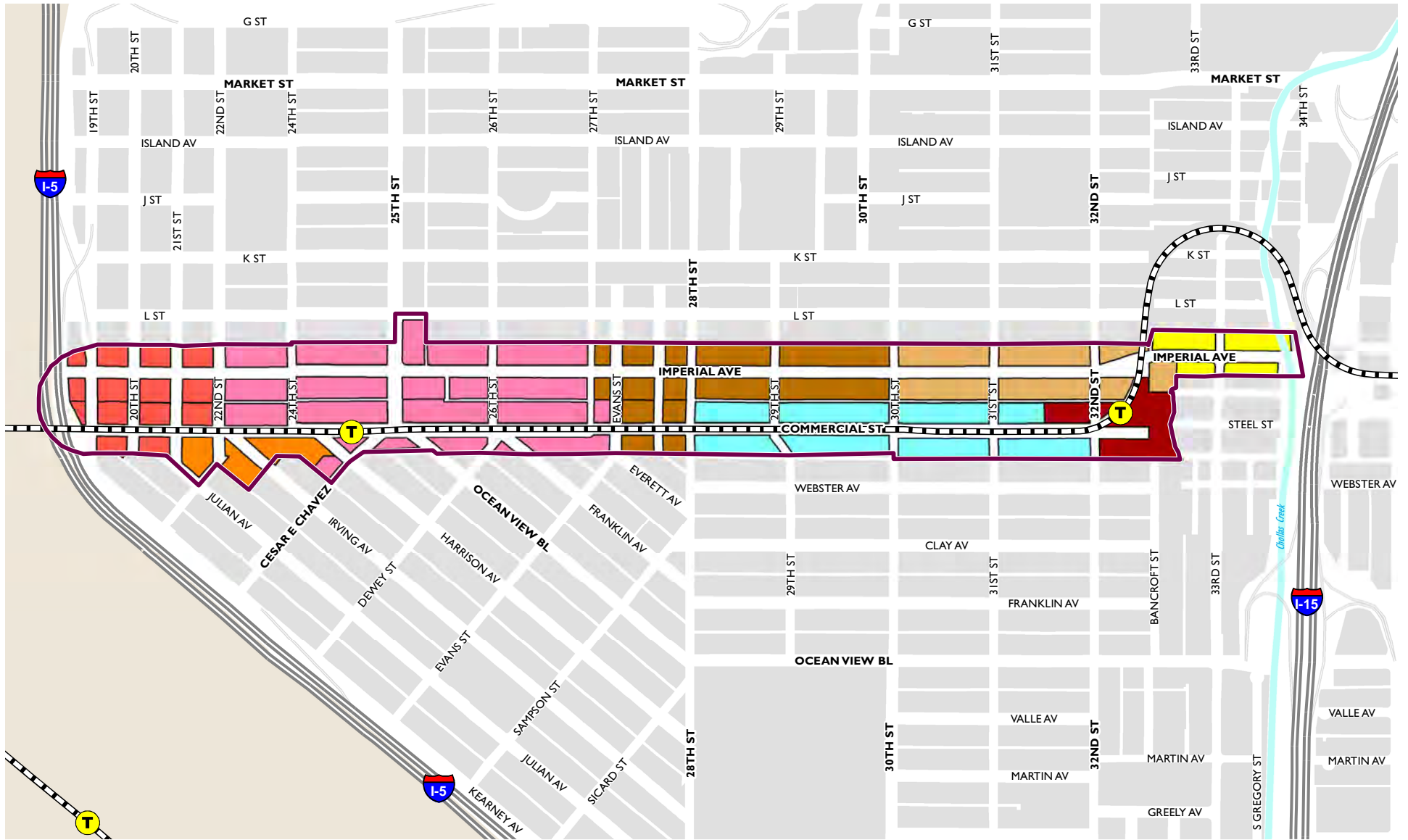
**§131.0540 Maximum Permitted Residential Density and Other Residential Regulations**

The following regulations apply to all residential development within commercial zones in the Land Development Code:

- Residential Development as a Permitted Use. Residential development is permitted in commercial zones only where it is identified in Table 131-05B.
- Mixed-Use or Multi-Use Requirement. Residential development is permitted only when a commercial structure exists on the premises or is a part of the proposed development.
- Residential Development. Where residential development is permitted, the development regulations of the RM-1-1, RM-2-5, and RM-3-7 zones as appropriate according to the maximum permitted residential density apply, except that the lot area, lot dimensions, setback, floor area ratio, and structure height requirements of the applicable commercial zone apply.
- Non owner occupants must reside on the premises for a minimum of 7 consecutive calendar days.

TABLE 2-4: PROPOSED COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ZONES FOR COMMERCIAL AND IMPERIAL CORRIDOR PLAN							
ZONE	PURPOSE OF ZONE	DENSITY (DU/AC)	MINIMUM LOT AREA (SQ.FT.)	MAXIMUM HEIGHT (FT.)	MAX. FAR ALLOWED	RESIDENTIAL ALLOWED	LAND USE DESIGNATION
<b>CN Zones</b>	Provide residential areas access to a limited number of convenient retail and personal service uses. Intended to provide areas for smaller scale, lower intensity <i>developments</i> that are consistent with the character of the surrounding residential areas. May include residential <i>development</i> . CN zones will be primarily located along local and selected collector <i>streets</i> .						
CN-1-4	<i>Development</i> with a pedestrian orientation	44	5,000				
<b>CC Zones</b>	Accommodate community-serving commercial services, retail uses, and limited industrial uses of moderate intensity and small to medium scale. Provide for a range of <i>development</i> patterns from pedestrian-friendly commercial <i>streets</i> to shopping centers and auto-oriented strip commercial <i>streets</i> . Some CC zones allow residential <i>development</i> . Primarily located along collector <i>streets</i> , major <i>streets</i> , and public transportation lines.						
CC-3-5	<i>Development</i> with a pedestrian orientation with a high residential density (Specifically for Comm 22)	73	2,500	100	2.0	Yes	Community Commercial – Residential Permitted
CC-3-6	<i>Development</i> with a pedestrian orientation with a high residential density	44	2,500	45	1.5	Yes	Community Commercial – Residential Permitted
<b>CO Zone</b>	Provide areas for employment uses with limited, complementary retail uses and some allowed medium to high density <i>residential development</i> . Apply in larger activity centers or in specialized areas where a full range of commercial activities are not desirable.						
CO-2-2	Office use with a neighborhood scale and orientation with no residential use	–	5,000	60	1.5	No	Office Commercial
<b>IL Zones</b>	Provide a wide range of manufacturing and distribution activities. Intended to encourage sound industrial <i>development</i> by providing an attractive environment free from adverse impacts associated with some heavy industrial uses. The IL zones are intended to permit a range of uses, including nonindustrial uses in some instances.						
IL-2-1	Light industrial with mix of offices uses with limited commercial	–	15,000	–	2.0	No	Light Industry

FIGURE 2-3: Draft Zoning Map



Proposed Zoning Designations

- Trolley Stop
- CC-3-5
- CN-1-4
- RM-3-7
- CC-3-6
- IL-2-1
- RT-1-5
- Planning Area
- CO-2-2
- RM-3-# \*

\*New zoning district to be created



1 acre

Data Source  
City of San Diego, California,  
2012; Dyett & Bhatia, 2012.

## 2.4 Policy Recommendations

The following recommendations seek to implement the land use strategy outlined above, while also addressing environmental and collocation issues. These recommendations will be incorporated in the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan.

### Land Use

- LU-1:** Focus the highest intensity development (residential and non-residential) on both Commercial Street and Imperial Avenue around the trolley stops to capitalize on access to transit, help boost transit ridership, and reduce reliance on driving.
- LU-2:** Permit mixed-use development through mixed-use land use designations and by redeveloping vacant sites, blighted properties, and properties in disrepair with uses that contribute a diversity of land uses and vitality to the corridor. Allow single-use developments (i.e., 100 percent non-residential or 100 percent residential) in the Neighborhood Village designations.
- LU-3:** Require ground-floor commercial uses, such as retail spaces and small businesses, in the Neighborhood Village designation near the 25th Street trolley stop, as shown by the symbol “Commercial Frontage Required” on the Land Use Diagram.
- LU-4:** Provide a mix of housing densities and types through a range of mixed-use and residential land use designations to accommodate a range of household types and incomes. Residential projects should be developed at or above the minimum density of the range specified in the land use classifications to facilitate affordable housing and enable efficient use of sites in this transit-accessible corridor.

- LU-5:** Focus industrial and auto repair uses in one portion of the corridor—between 28th and 32nd streets—to minimize potential conflicts with residential and other sensitive uses, and concentrate industrial activities, including freight and truck loading/unloading.
- LU-6:** Establish an overall height consistent with the designated land uses with typical new buildings reaching three- to four-stories and slightly taller buildings—up to five stories—around trolley stops.

### Collocation of Uses

- LU-7:** Where industrial uses are located, mitigate potential negative effects through zoning performance measures (such as glare and noise standards), landscaping and/or screening to reduce noise, dust, toxins, and unattractive presence along streets and sidewalks:
  - Within an industrial development site, locate smaller buildings and less intensive uses, rather than larger or more intensive uses, closer to adjacent residential uses.
  - Limit hours of operation so that neighboring residential uses are not disturbed by noise and light.
  - Use natural landscape materials (trees, shrubs, and hedges) to buffer differing land uses, and provide a transition between adjacent properties.



*New buildings should generally reach no more than three or four stories, except around the trolley stops, where heights up to five stories are acceptable.*



- Require screening walls on the interior lot lines of industrial uses abutting residential uses. Screen the view of any parking or storage area, refuse collection, utility enclosures, or other service area visible from major streets, alley, or pedestrian area.
- Use screens of attractive high-quality materials and/or landscaped screening such as vines, mesh, and living walls (e.g. concrete wall with green creepers) of consistent height and design.



**LU-8:** Encourage property owners to apply for Encroachment Maintenance and Removal Agreements. Encourage planting and irrigation within the public right of way and on fences to screen industrial sites from adjacent sidewalks and properties.

### Community Health

**LU-9:** Increase availability of fresh healthy foods by actively engaging such businesses, and undertake measures to decrease the density of liquor stores in the corridor.

- Define healthy food grocers in the zoning ordinance and permit in residential zones if less than 5,000 square feet.
- Limit liquor stores within 100 feet of residential zones.

**LU-10:** Control noise impacts at the source by dampening, buffering, or active cancelling, particularly on sites that abut residential development or other sensitive receptors.

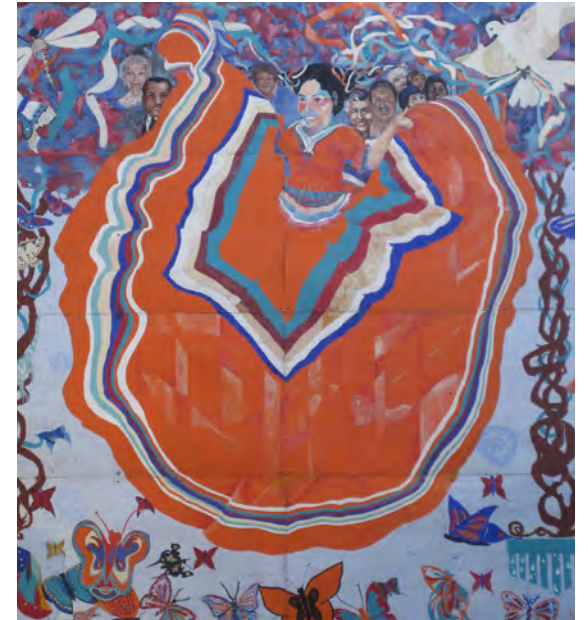
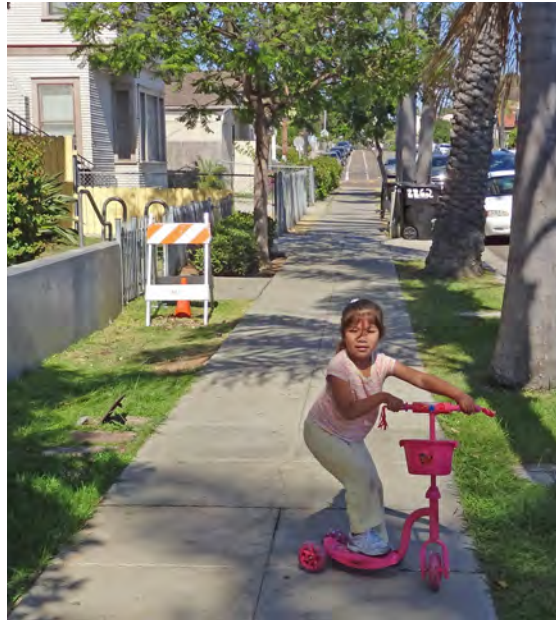
**LU-11:** Reduce potential noise impacts, particularly from the trolley, by orienting windows and openings away from noise sources or developing mitigations for noise and vibrations.

**LU-12:** Minimize noise impacts on sensitive receptors by discouraging multi-family housing development within the 65 db CNEL noise contour (generally west of 22nd Street and east of 33rd Street as shown on Figure 3-2: Existing Noise Contours in the Existing Conditions Report).

*The City's Development Code requires auto wrecking uses to be enclosed or screened from the public right of way.*



# 3 URBAN DESIGN



The design of the urban environment is integral to the character, feel, and livability of a place. Urban design includes physical elements such as buildings, blocks, and streets, as well as the activities and the pace of life that they accommodate. It also includes the location, orientation and design of open space, the pedestrian realm, streetscape, and landscaping elements. This chapter describes the desired character of the corridor. Policy recommendations address elements such as site planning, building massing, streetscape design, and open space planning in an effort to encourage economic vitality, celebration of culture, and safe, convenient mobility as expressed in the community vision.





*Buildings that are built to the sidewalk (top) or provide seating or open space in the setback area (middle) accommodate and are inviting to pedestrians. Locating parking between the primary street and the building (bottom) creates potential conflicts and an uninviting street for pedestrians.*

### 3.1 Public Realm

#### Context

The Commercial/Imperial Corridor is generally characterized by a fine-grain pattern, with small building footprints and lot sizes that make walking convenient and comfortable along Imperial Avenue and in limited areas along Commercial Street.

Imperial Avenue maintains a mix of small business and residential land uses, with generally one- and two-story building heights. The activity of pedestrians and a varied mix of small businesses and single-family homes influence the character of the street. Except for occasional surface parking lots facing the street, landscaped setbacks, and curb cuts, buildings tend to form a street wall, providing a comfortable scale of urban development for the pedestrian. Many of the businesses are targeted to the varied ethnicities within the surrounding neighborhood, which contributes to a strong identity and fairly cohesive streetscape character with a heavily Hispanic influence.

In contrast, Commercial Street is dominated by vehicles and trolleys, while pedestrian comfort is significantly marginalized. This difference in character is largely due to two dominant factors: a wide street section to accommodate trolley lines, and the predominance of industrial land uses found in the eastern two-thirds of the Planning Area. The large parcel size of the industrial uses, coupled with a wider street, fewer street trees, and irregular sidewalk conditions, contributes heavily to a general feeling of discomfort for the pedestrian. Despite this, the corridor is active with trolley commuters (especially within the vicinity of the two trolley stops) and vehicle traffic at the recycling businesses.

#### Key Recommendations

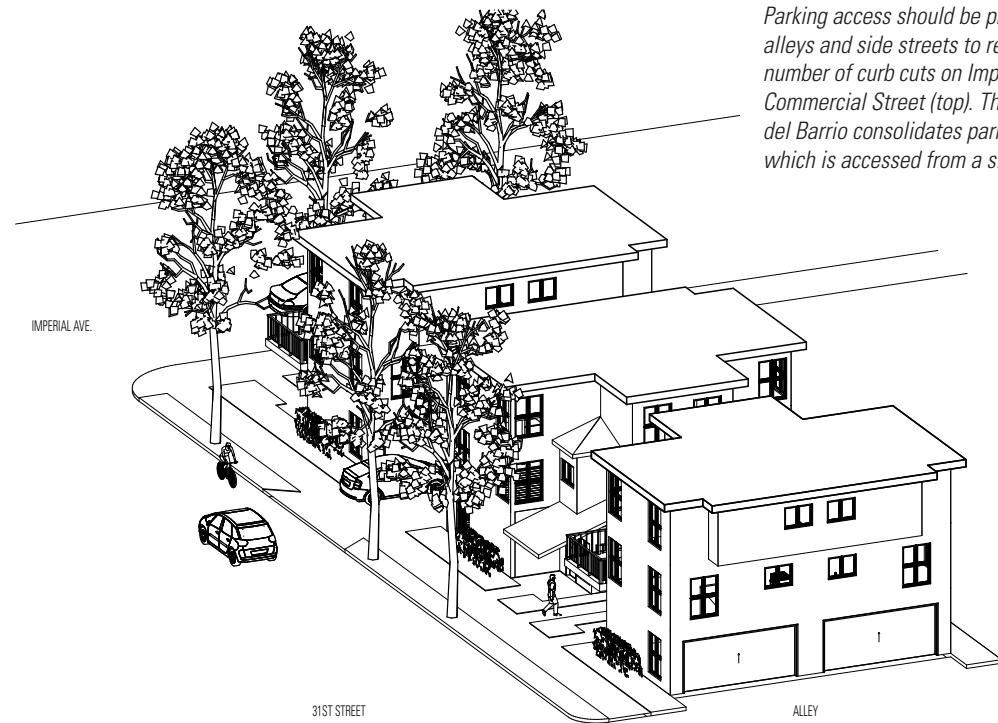
As the corridors grow and change over time, compatibility with existing development and culture, and assurance of safety and security will be essential to enabling cohesive community character and a safe, vibrant place. Key aspects for public realm improvements and design considerations are discussed below:

- **Site Planning:** Site design includes the overall orientation of buildings and open spaces and their interface with adjacent streets and development. Careful site planning supports walkability at the street level and results in a space that can be easily navigated. The strategic location of buildings and parking can help enhance visual interest and increase pedestrian safety. Retention of views to neighborhood landmarks, such as the Farmer's Market building, will ensure that changes occur without compromising the corridor's unique character.
- **Parking Design:** Siting and design of parking areas should contribute to a safe and convenient pedestrian environment and an attractive street frontage. Using the alley between Commercial Street and Imperial Avenue for vehicular access can reduce curb cuts, driveways, and loading areas along the main corridor, as shown in Figure 3-1.
- **Building Articulation:** Building articulation is achieved through recesses, projections, height variations, façade treatments, and individual storefronts that create visual interest and pedestrian-scaled development. Boxy buildings that lack design detail, on the other hand, can feel bulky and overwhelming, contributing to an unpleasant public realm.



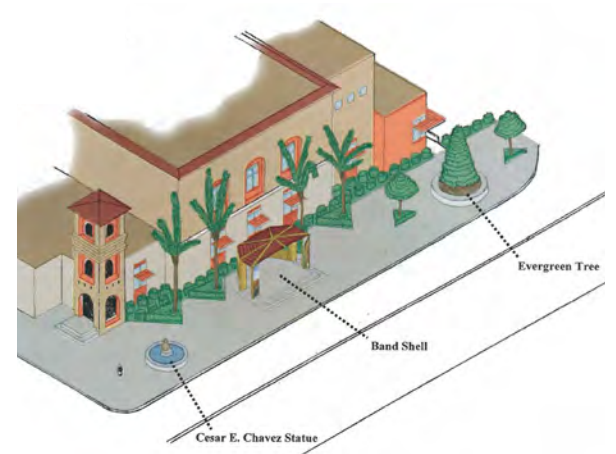
- **Street Interface:** The relationship between the building and the street helps shape a district's identity and contributes to the overall pedestrian experience. A cohesive street frontage with well-designed building façades or site boundaries creates an attractive and identifiable character and allows people to walk, shop, and dine comfortably. In commercial or mixed-use areas, transparent storefronts and outdoor displays can make walking more visually entertaining, while landscaped property edges can make walking feel safe in industrial and residential areas.
- **Community Design for Safety:** Crime prevention through environmental design can help reduce actual and perceived crime. Currently, exterior security bars at windows and doors, boarded up windows, neglected buildings, sites, and sidewalks, heavy industrial activities, and homeless individuals camped out under I-5, affect real and perceived safety and restrict movement in and out of the corridor. In addition to the enforcement of property maintenance, street cleaning, policing, and provision of affordable housing, design elements can enhance community safety. These include installing pedestrian lighting, designing clear sightlines along sidewalks, maintaining low-growing landscaping, installing well-designed fences or landscaped walls at property edges, and designing clear and well-lit building entrances, and windows and balconies that face the public street.
- **Signs:** Signage can help enhance a district's identity if it is carefully designed to be integrated into the public realm. Light pole banners are already well used in the corridor, adding to the cohesive character, particularly on Imperial Avenue. Directional

**FIGURE 3-1: Parking Design**



*Parking access should be prioritized from alleys and side streets to reduce the number of curb cuts on Imperial Avenue and Commercial Street (top). The new Mercado del Barrio consolidates parking in a structure which is accessed from a side street (bottom).*





Logos, banners, and signage should also be employed to help direct visitors to community destinations.

Gateway features relay a sense of identity by providing visual cues such as neighborhood signs, banners, public art and murals, or wayfinding signs.

A landmark sign and the proposed Cesar Chavez Plaza signify entry into the corridor and exemplify its identity.



and gateway signage can also be used to indicate routes and entry to parks, schools, and other community destinations.

- **Public Art:** A program to encourage public art would enhance the already vibrant cultural and historical resources in the community. Simple, creative approaches to existing elements such as painting of utility boxes, trash receptacles, and seating can bring an immediate impact. Such designs can already be found at the 25th Street trolley station. Longer term, a multifaceted program should encourage art in public spaces. The program can build on the creativity and diversity already found in the corridors, by employing local artists, hosting events, and embracing efforts to reveal the history and diversity of the neighborhood.
- **Gateways:** Specially-designed landmark elements including signage and banners or accent landscape features to be located at key entrances to the community as shown in Figure 3-6. It is essential that gateway features be unique in design, visible to both motorists and pedestrians, and emblematic of the community. The gateway features should announce one's arrival into the community from the freeway, streetcar, and from Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. The design of the gateway feature should factor into the scale of nearby buildings, traffic circulation patterns, and the existing and desired character established in the community plan; and should distinguish the Imperial Avenue Commercial Street Corridor from Downtown and other neighboring areas.

## 3.2 Streetscape Concepts

### Context

#### Imperial Avenue

The character of Imperial Avenue is provided by the activity of the pedestrian and a varied mix of small businesses and single-family homes. Many storefronts are brightly colored and engaging, though public art on Imperial Avenue is limited to a mural at the corner of 32nd Street. Imperial Avenue has a consistent street section, fairly regular street trees, and sidewalks in passable condition. Even though sidewalks are wide (around 14 feet), very few street furnishings (e.g. benches, trash receptacles, or bike racks) are provided along the corridor, making the streetscape appear barren. Lighting is limited to vehicular street lights and does not provide good illumination for pedestrians at night. Sidewalk seating at restaurants is limited, and generally seating is not available for pedestrians except at bus stops.

#### Commercial Street

Though consistently wide to accommodate vehicular traffic and trolley tracks, the Commercial Street section varies significantly depending on adjacent land uses. Around the 25th Street trolley station, there are noticeably more street trees. At the waiting platforms, overhead awning structures, public art pieces, and tiled art seating lends some interest to the streetscape.

Beyond the trolley station areas near 25th Street, the majority of Commercial Street is characterized by large-parcel industrial and light manufacturing uses, a wide-open street section, and the trolley tracks. Sidewalks are



Murals and public art (top, middle) illustrate the character and identity of the corridor. Public art can transform I-5 freeway underpasses at Imperial Avenue and Commercial Street, as shown in Chicano Park (bottom).



*Sidewalks are missing and parking is often haphazard on the eastern portion of Commercial Street (top, middle). Where sidewalks do exist, they are often too narrow to navigate, with utility poles obstructing the pedestrian path (bottom).*

narrower or nonexistent in some locations, street trees are irregular and generally in poor condition, and pedestrian lighting is sub-standard. The walking surface is often interrupted by building entries, loading docks, and trolley catenary poles projecting into the walking zone approximately every 140 feet. Access along several blocks is impossible, especially for wheelchairs, where catenary poles and tree cutouts effectively cut the sidewalk width below three feet, and “dead end” conditions at ramps and loading docks are common.

At the east end of the corridor, the 32nd Street trolley stop, which feels separated from the street itself, is positioned on the curve as the trolley tracks arc north from Commercial Street and over Imperial Avenue. The separation gives this stop its own character, enhanced by the curve of the right-of-way, consistent plantings, and adjacency to the church at the corner of 32nd Street and Imperial Avenue. However, it also constrains access to the station, particularly from the east.

### Key Recommendations

#### Corridor-Wide

To address many of the issues described above, community members expressed a desire for more attractive and comfortable streets, with more street trees, places to sit, and lighting to ensure safety at night, while still retaining on-street parking and access to businesses. Improvement in the overall quality of the pedestrian experience can be accomplished by addressing these issues, while building on the corridor’s existing character:

- **Clear Pedestrian Zone:** Sidewalks and streetscapes should be designed to allow through-traffic for pe-

destrians, gathering and resting area, and space for storefront activity. To accommodate this, as shown on Figure 3-2, sidewalks should include the following zones: a clear and safe walking pedestrian pathway, an area dedicated to building entry and building-related public space in front of the building, and a parkway to allow landscaping and street furniture on the curb side.

- **Street “Furniture:”** The quantity and quality of standard streetscape elements such as benches, lighting, trash and recycling receptacles need to be addressed throughout the corridor and at parklets and curb extensions at mid-block locations or intersections. Additional beneficial streetscape elements may include tree grates, bike racks, bike lockers near trolley stations, and information kiosks/signage. Site furnishings should be of a similar style and color palette, but could also provide an opportunity to provide branding for each corridor by incorporating artwork and public input into custom site furnishing pieces.
- **Street Trees and Landscaping:** The provision of healthy street trees and planting, appropriate to the region with low water and maintenance requirements is an invaluable part of street improvement. Trees should be at regular spacing and planting should improve the street experience without impeding accessibility. Selecting a particular species of tree at key locations as shown on Figure 3-6, can help define and differentiate the character of the street. Planting areas can be functional as well as beautiful, employing stormwater management strategies to filter polluted street runoff before it discharges to the storm drain.



- **Lighting:** A priority for the corridor is an increase in illumination levels on the street and sidewalk at night. Pedestrian-scale lighting should augment the existing vehicular pole lights to increase light within the pedestrian realm. Well-lit pedestrian areas will enhance safety and walkability, and benefit retail and commercial businesses in the corridor.
- **Corner Bulb-outs:** Curb extensions at block corners create more pedestrian space on the sidewalk. They reduce the crossing distance at intersections and increase visibility around parked cars, thereby enhancing pedestrian safety and comfort. They also allow for space to add landscaping and street furniture, improving the appearance of the street, quality of the air, and stormwater management.



*Bulb-outs in Emeryville, CA provide seating and landscaping, while also reducing the crossing distance for pedestrians.*

**FIGURE 3-2: Clear Pedestrian Zone**

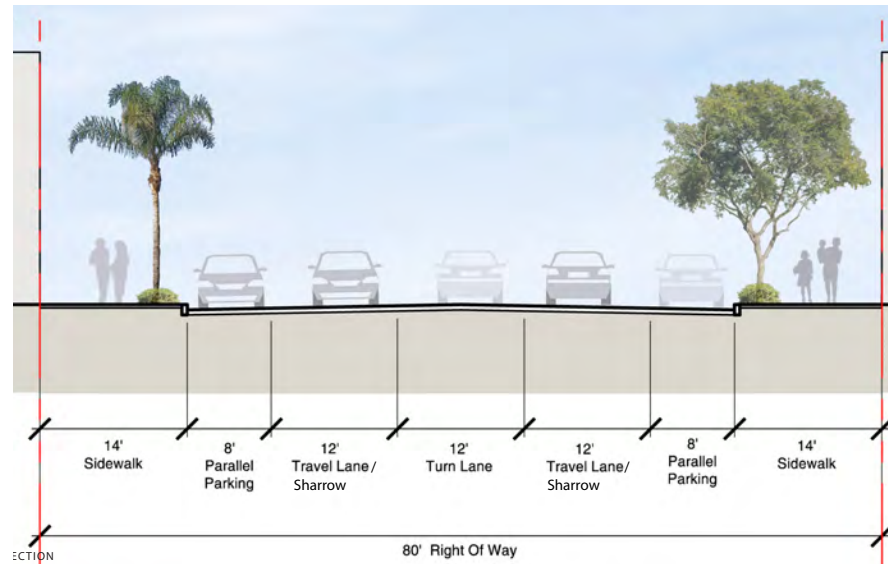


### Imperial Avenue

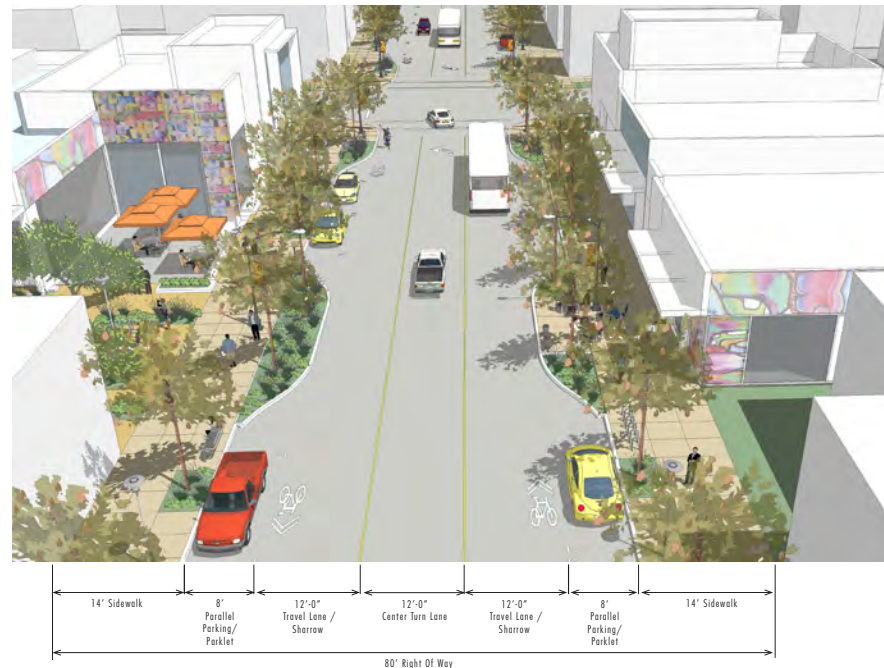
Imperial Avenue is proposed to be a multi-modal street that supports pedestrian, bicycle, bus transit, and vehicular movement safely and efficiently. Decals should be added to the street (shared arrows or “sharrows”) and signage posted in order to create a bicycle route (Class III) in both directions, as shown in Figure 3-3. This recommendation utilizes the existing street infrastructure, thus retaining the existing 14-foot sidewalk, curb and gutters. However, added curb bump-outs at select corners can function as traffic calming measures and provide additional safety for pedestrians by effectively reducing the crossing length at the intersection. These locations are illustrated in Figure 3-6 and discussed in Chapter 4: Mobility.

The highest pedestrian movement levels are anticipated at the Neighborhood Village – Medium node, between 22nd and 27th streets, given that the highest densities are recommended in this area (see Figure 3-6). At select mid-block locations in this area, sidewalks should be widened through the removal of parallel parking spaces to provide additional open space for social interactions and community engagement. These wider sidewalk areas or parklets may be paired with commercial and retail to provide active café seating and gathering areas adjacent to the sidewalk, or can become passive planting areas that serve as extensions of mid-block pocket parks.

**FIGURE 3-3: Imperial Avenue – Streetscape Design**



*Proposed typical street section, with bike routes (sharrows) in both directions.*



*Proposed street section for Neighborhood Village – Medium node (between 22nd and 27th streets), with mid-block bump-out.*



**FIGURE 3-3: Imperial Avenue – Streetscape Design** *(continued)*



*A Class III bike route allows for shared use by bikes and vehicles (Los Angeles, CA).*



*Mid-block bump-outs or "parklets" expanding the sidewalk area to provide seating opportunities (San Francisco, CA).*

*Illustrative views of mid-block bump-outs and new urban open spaces in the Neighborhood Village node (between 22nd and 27th streets).*





*In the longer term, moving the catenary poles to the centerline (top) will reduce sidewalk obstructions around 32nd Street. The 25th Street trolley station (middle, bottom) is more successful in creating a pedestrian-friendly streetscape, with adequate sidewalks and landscaping.*

### Commercial Street

Given the obstacles to pedestrian safety and movement that currently exist on Commercial Street, the recommendation for Commercial Street’s streetscape seeks to make walkability and pedestrian comfort the primary goal. An unobstructed pedestrian zone should be created on the sidewalk or other pedestrian aisle, distinguished from street furniture, utilities, and street trees. Substandard sidewalks should be widened and new sidewalks and curb ramps created in locations where they do not currently exist, if feasible.

Where sidewalks can be constructed or expanded, these should be at least eight feet wide to create a comfortable pedestrian experience and allow access around the catenary pole base wherever it falls within the pavement, as shown in Figure 3-4 (top). An eight-foot sidewalk width will permit a three-foot minimum unobstructed



passing width (as required by CA Title 24). If necessary, where the right-of-way is less than 80 feet (which would not permit an eight-foot wide sidewalk), future development should provide a setback from the property line to provide for a continuous eight-foot sidewalk.

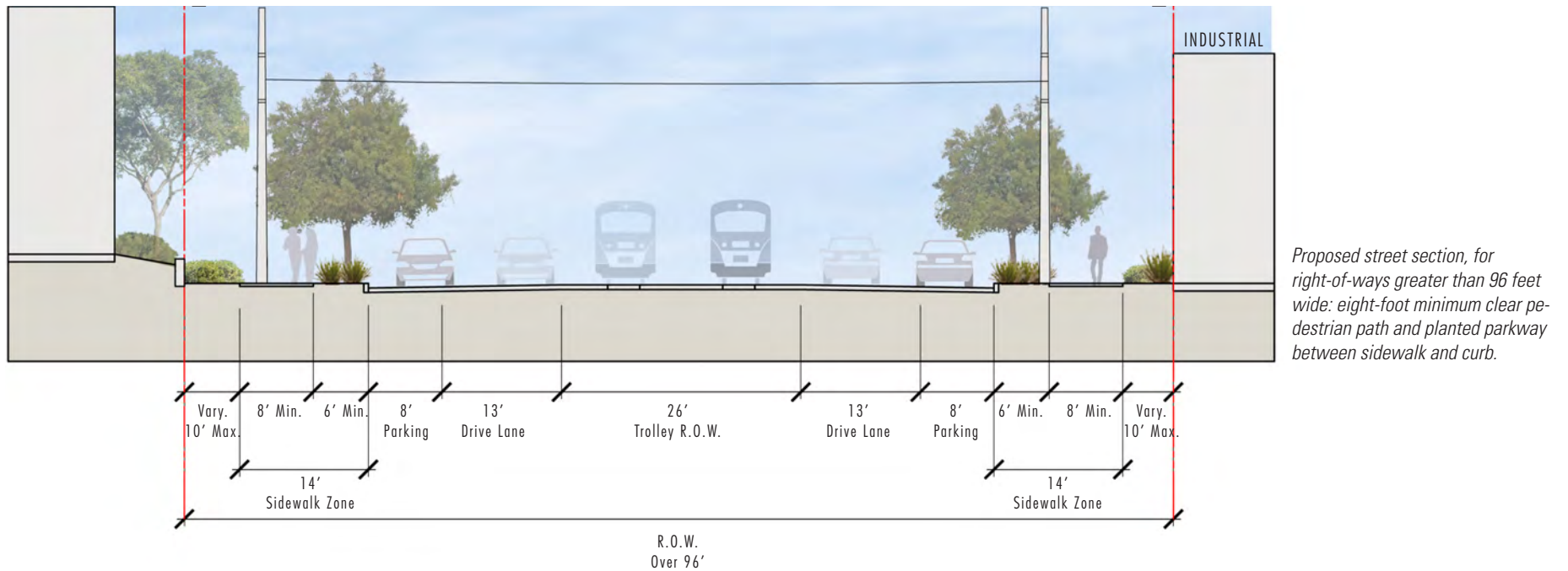
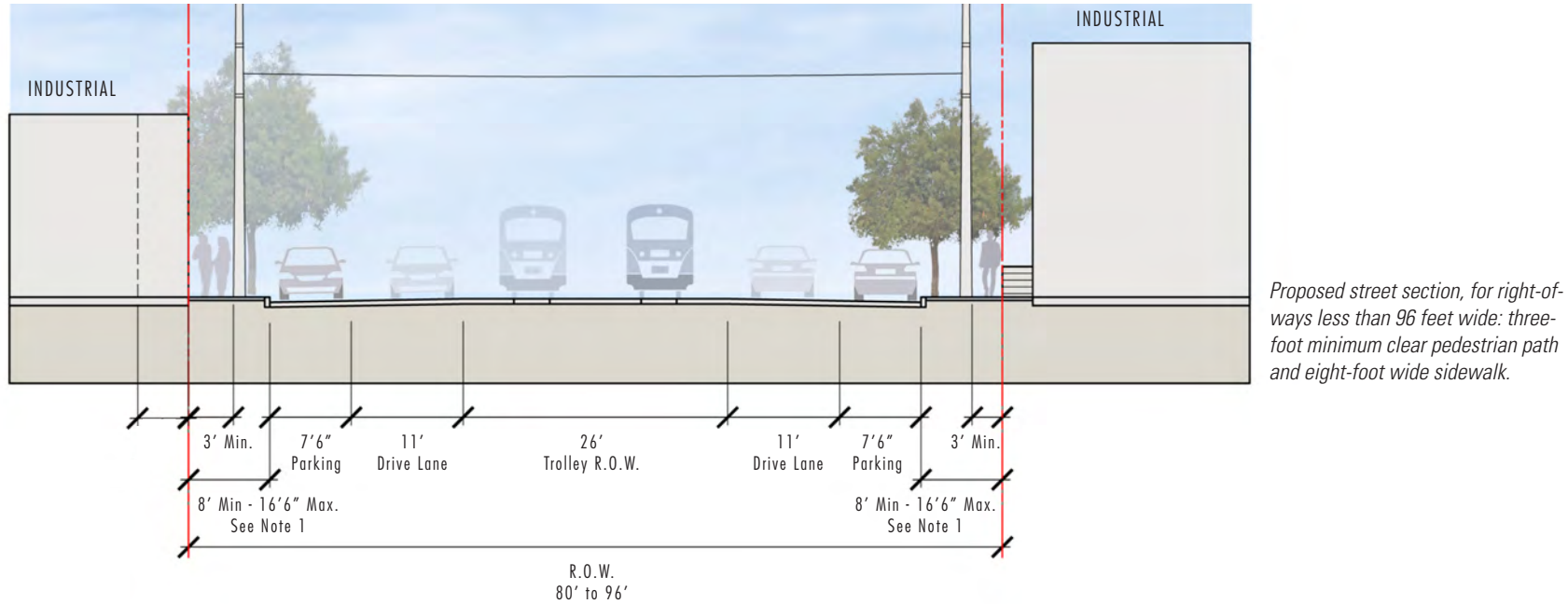
Where the right-of-way exceeds 96 feet, as shown in Figure 3-4 (bottom), planted parkways should be installed for stormwater filtration, street beautification, and pedestrian safety. Curb cuts would allow water to be conveyed directly from the gutter to planting areas, filtering pollutants prior to discharge into storm drains.

Where construction of sidewalks is not feasible due to the presence of rail spurs (in operation or which may be operational in the future) or loading docks, then a pedestrian aisle should be designated through striping or colored pavement, as shown in Figure 3-5.



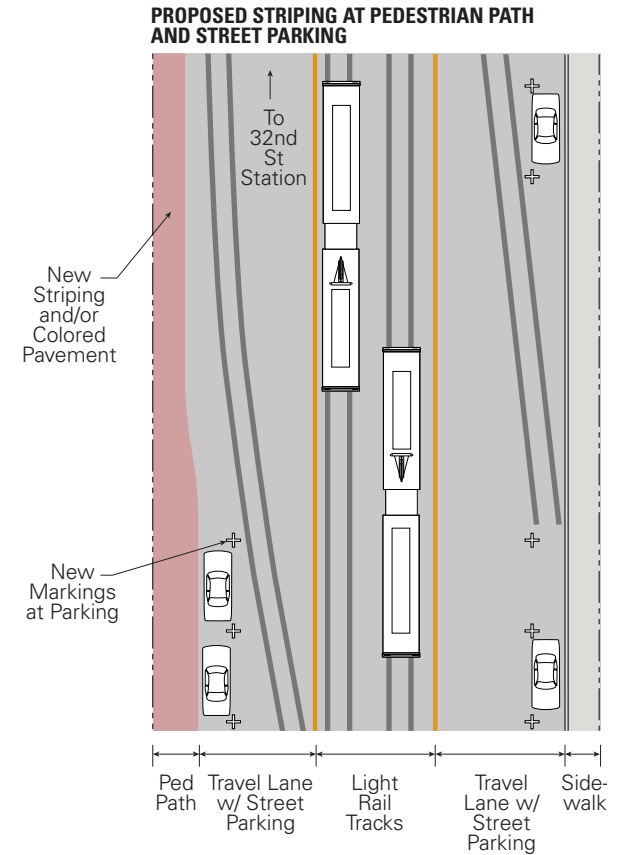
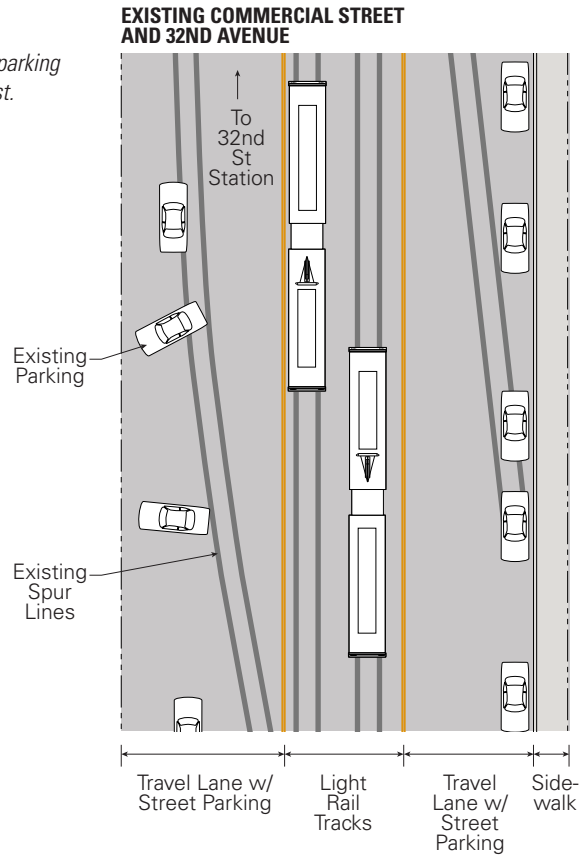
*Landscaping and public plaza improvements planned as part of COMM22 provide a foundation for future streetscape improvements along the corridor.*

**FIGURE 3-4: Commercial Street – Streetscape Design**



3-12 **FIGURE 3-5: Commercial Street – Pedestrian Facilities**

*On Commercial Street, painted markings can encourage orderly parking and striping can delineate pedestrian pathways where none exist.*



*Using paint striping or alternate materials to designate parking and pedestrian areas could help to improve pedestrian safety and preserve parking and rail access without constructing sidewalks and curbs.*



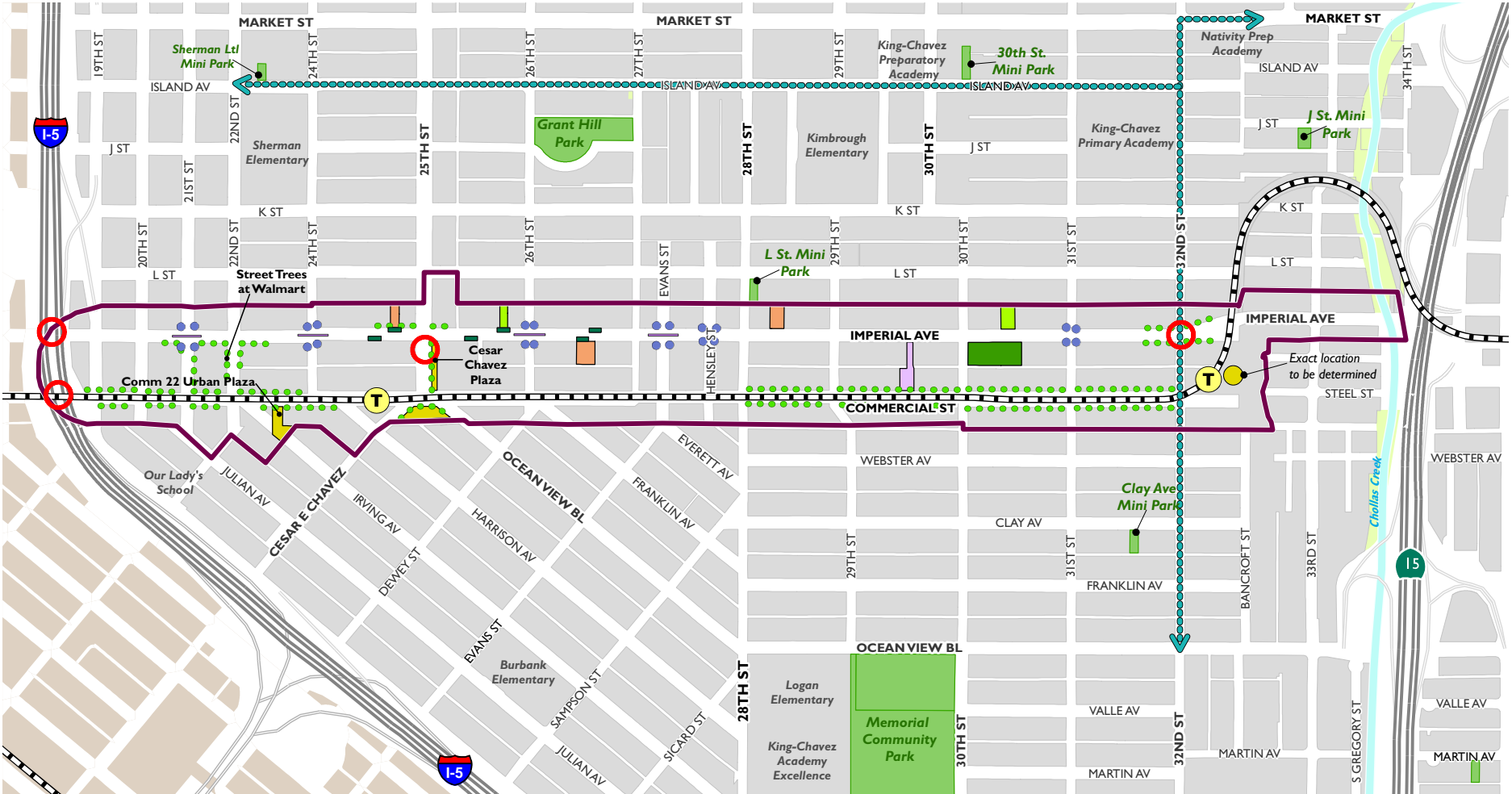
*Due to lack of designated pedestrian space and parking space, on-street parking is often unorganized and adds to the visual disorder along Commercial Street.*



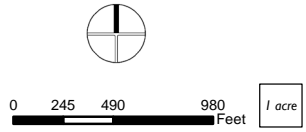
*This example of a shared road allows equal access and priority to trains, cars, and pedestrians without the use of curbs. Subtle design features such as material change or color visually indicate pedestrian areas.*



FIGURE 3-6: Public Realm and Open Space Concepts 3-13



- |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#90EE90;"></span> Existing Public Parks                          | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#FFD700;"></span> Potential Public Amenities                                | Light Rail   | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; border:1px solid black; border-radius:50%; text-align:center; line-height:15px;">T</span> Trolley Stop |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#90EE90; border:1px solid black;"></span> Existing Open Space    | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#FFD700; border:1px solid black;"></span> Urban Plaza                       | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border-bottom:2px solid purple;"></span> Center Median                                      | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; border:1px solid red; border-radius:50%;"></span> Gateway  |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#90EE90; border:1px solid black;"></span> Potential Public Parks | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#FFD700; border:1px solid black;"></span> Paseo                             | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; border-bottom:2px dashed green;"></span> Proposed Street Trees and Landscaping | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; border:2px solid purple;"></span> Planning Area  |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#90EE90; border:1px solid black;"></span> Pocket Park            | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#FFD700; border:1px solid black;"></span> Semi-Private Urban Space          | Chollas Creek Street Trail   |  |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#90EE90; border:1px solid black;"></span> Mini Park              | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#FFD700; border:1px solid black;"></span> Corner Bump-outs                  |  |  |
|   | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#FFD700; border:1px solid black;"></span> Parklets/Mid-Block Curb Extension |  |  |



Data Source  
 City of San Diego, California,  
 2011; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011.



**Mini parks** at J Street (top) and L Street (middle) provide small spaces for rest and activity. Even small **pocket parks** (bottom) should provide opportunities seating, landscaping, and beauty.

### 3.3 Public Space and Public Parks Concepts

#### Context

The City’s General Plan identifies Public Space as significant public gathering spaces in communities supported by distinctive civic architecture, landmarks and public facilities.

Within the Planning Area, Public spaces are limited to enhancements made by businesses or institutions, such as a small public accessible area with enhanced planting at the intersection of 25th and Commercial streets. At 28th and L streets, a single basketball court is open to the public.

The City’s Parks and Open Space System contains population-based parks, consisting of community and neighborhood parks, resource based parks located at notable natural, or man-made features (i.e. Mission Bay Park, and Balboa Park), and open space lands that is City-owned lands located throughout the City consisting of canyons, mesas and other landforms.

There are no public parks within the Planning Area. Overall, the community has a population-based park deficit of 157 acres based on the City’s General Plan standards. This has resulted in parks that are over used, requiring upgrades, repairs and additional maintenance. Several public parks are located within a half-mile (approximately ten minutes walking) of the Planning Area, as shown in Figure 3-6. These include Grant Hill Park, Chicano Park, Memorial Park, and the fields associated with Sherman Elementary School Joint Use. In total, there are 21.5 acres of population-based parks serving the existing surrounding residential population within

a half-mile of the corridor, with the vast majority of the park acreage being provided by Memorial Park.

The City has joint-use agreements with the San Diego School District to use school facilities—including Sherman and Kimbrough Elementary Schools—during non-school hours.

Many households in the neighborhood are multi-generational families with children, and many homes have small lots with little yard space. Thus, providing parks and open space in this community is extremely important.

Open space is limited to the inaccessible private green space along Chollas Creek.

#### Key Recommendations

Development of Public Space consisting of both public gathering spaces and population-based parks for residents of the corridor and the surrounding neighborhoods, will contribute to an increased quality of life and provide safe places for children to play and residents to gather. Even small spaces can help to add both vibrant and relaxing areas within the boundaries of the Commercial/Imperial Corridor. Public space and population-based parks are recommended to include the following amenities. Potential locations for each type are shown in Figure 3-6.

#### Public Parks (Population-based Parks)

- **Mini Parks:** small parks (between one and three acres) serving the neighborhood through walking and biking access. No on-site parking is provided, but must provide for disabled access. Depending

on community need and the surrounding land use context, amenities may include: picnic areas, children’s play areas, multi-purpose recreation courts or turf areas, landscaping and walking paths. Multi-use spaces for small gatherings, events, or a farmers’ market could also be provided. A potential location is shown at 30th Street and Imperial Avenue.

- **Pocket Parks:** small-scale parks, less than one acre. Pocket parks should provide a combination of multi-purpose recreation areas, small play structures and picnic areas. Other uses may include seating opportunities, bike racks, drinking fountains, or public art. Seating should consider sun and shade orientation so that the spaces can be utilized year round. Potential locations are identified along Imperial Avenue.

#### Population-based Park Standards

The General Plan establishes a standard of 2.8 acres of usable, population-based park land per 1,000 residents. However, given the lack of public parks within the Planning Area, the corridor is at an extreme deficit. Meeting this population-based standard in the Planning Area is challenging because of the built-out nature of the corridor and the large household size.

As a result of the land use framework described in Chapter 2: Land Use, approximately 3.3 acres of park could be developed in the Planning Area. This acreage value includes pocket parks and mini parks as shown in Figure 3-6. In addition, urban plaza, paseos, semi-private urban space, parklets, and curb extensions and other public spaces provided as part of new developments would further add to the availability of open space.

While these improvements would not achieve 12.88 acres per the citywide standard of 2.8 acres per 1,000 (This value is based on a projected new 1,270 housing units or 4,600 residents and assumes a vacancy rate of 5 percent and household size of 3.8.), they would provide 0.7 acres per 1,000 new residents directly in the Planning Area. The Southeastern San Diego Community Plan update will include this additional deficiency as it addresses the overall deficiency in the larger Community Plan Area.

#### Public Spaces

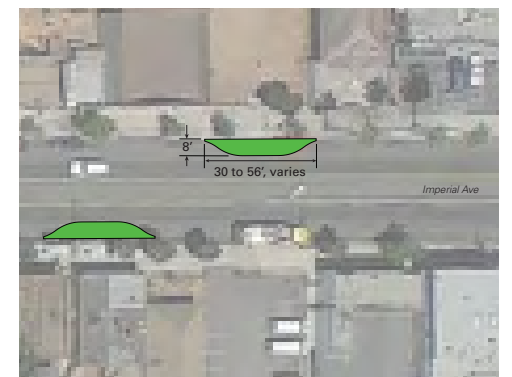
- **Parklet/Curb Bump-outs:** these spaces represent extensions of the sidewalk to create public gathering space. At select mid-block and curb locations, as shown in Figure 3-6, sidewalks should be widened through the removal of parallel parking spaces. This will allow for café seating if situated across from a food establishment, landscaping, or other amenities that encourage gathering.
- **Urban Plazas:** visible and accessible public spaces, located near transit and existing civic and commercial spaces—specifically near the trolley stations. Plazas should include generous circulation areas, seating, shade, and may also include signage or informational kiosks. Hardscape areas should be prioritized over planting to facilitate maintenance. Potential locations are illustrated at both trolley stations.
- **Chollas Creek Street Trail:** The Chollas Creek Enhancement & Implementation Program envisions a linear park-open space system that will ultimately link San Diego’s central mesas to San Diego Bay. Adjacent to the Commercial/Imperial corridor, the



San Francisco Planning Department



San Francisco Planning Department

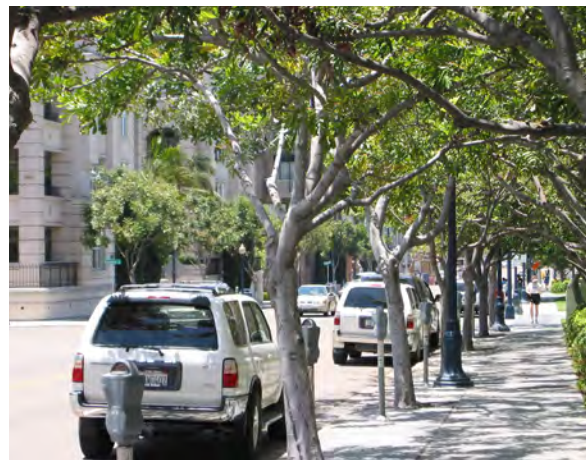


*Parklets provide gathering spaces along the street and can include a combination of seating, landscaped buffers and trees, and decorative paving. These have been used successfully in San Francisco, CA (top, middle) to create gathering space in urban areas. A typical plan view is shown in the bottom diagram.*





This **urban plaza** in Pasadena, CA at a light rail station provides bike lockers (top), wayfinding signage (bottom), seating, and other amenities convenient for transit riders and local residents and workers.



The **on-street trail** that connects regional to the Chollas Creek linear park system should be tree-lined and well landscaped, similar to what can be found along portions of Commercial Street (top) and in Downtown (bottom).



Streetscape and open space improvements at COMM22 will improve the public realm along Commercial Street between 21st and 24th streets, but will also provide a catalyst and example for future streetscape improvements proposed here.

MVE & Partners

MVE & Partners



creek is currently in a concrete channel. Reconstruction and redevelopment as an urban park will require coordination and integration with the freeway, creek, and residential neighborhoods. In the meantime, the Chollas Creek Enhancement & Implementation Program identifies a street trail on the public sidewalk on 32nd Street from Market Street to Ocean View Boulevard, as depicted on Figure 3-6. The street should be enhanced with elements such as additional trees and plantings on both sides of the street, wide sidewalks, signage, and public art.

- **Paseos:** public spaces that prioritize pedestrians and serve as linkages through a block for increased neighborhood walkability. A potential location is shown between 29th and 30th Streets, spanning Imperial Avenue to Commercial Street. Paseos have potential for public/private (Semi-Private Urban Amenity) use sharing, such as outdoor café spaces, wireless hotspots, and vending.
- **Semi-Private Urban Amenity Spaces:** shared public spaces, where restaurants or other businesses provide and maintain private amenities such as café seating on private property, or within the public right-of-way through easements or other agreements with the City. Potential locations are shown along Imperial Avenue, where vacant or underutilized parcels provide opportunities for open space adjacent to businesses.

These types of Public Spaces may be identified as a park equivalency as identified in the City's General Plan Park Element if supported by the community through the Southeastern Community Plan Update process.

Regardless of the size or type, public spaces should consider neighborhood context and needs. As described above, during the planning process, community members expressed a desire for more gathering space, including plazas and event space around the trolley stops, seating, lighting, and public art.

Public space should be thoughtfully designed for flexible use and maintenance, with an appropriate mix of hardscape and planting. Planting areas should be coordinated with hardscape, providing accessible and safe circulation. Plant material should be climate appropriate, low-maintenance, and low water-use.

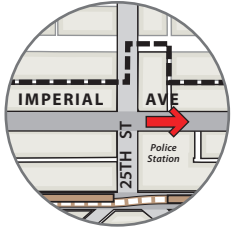
### 3.4 Visual Simulations

Photo simulations illustrate concepts for streetscape design and how new development could look and feel. Figure 3-7 and 3-8 show illustrative façade and streetscape improvements, as well potential building heights, massing, and scale. Corner bulb-outs provide opportunities for seating or “parklets.” New street trees provide shade and an attractive streetscape.



*New development should be balanced with open space to ensure a healthy livable community. Given the small size of sites in the corridor, open spaces may be small and could include community gardens (top, Sacramento CA), landscaped **paseos** (middle, Pasadena, CA) and **semi-private urban spaces** (bottom, Fullerton, CA).*

3-18 : **FIGURE 3-7: Illustrative Simulation – Imperial Avenue between 25th and 26th Street (Looking East)**



*This hypothetical simulation shows how improvements may unfold over time as scheduled utility undergroundings are implemented, bikes routes and mid-block bump-outs are added, and property owners make improvements and redevelop their properties.*



*A. Existing View*



*B. Undergrounding Overhead Utilities*



*C. New Street Trees and Traffic Improvements*



*D. New Developments (north side)*

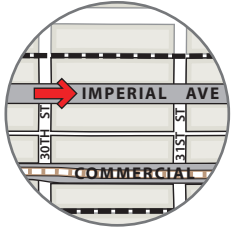




*E. New Developments (north and south side)*



3-20 : **FIGURE 3-8: Illustrative Simulation – Imperial Avenue at 30th Street (Looking East)**



*This hypothetical simulation illustrates how the corridor could change over time, with new bike routes, façade improvements, and redevelopment of properties that create more activity on the street and catalyze new businesses.*



A. Existing View



B. Traffic Improvements



C. New Street Trees



D. Façade Improvements





E. New Developments

### 3.5 Policy Recommendations

*These policy recommendations seek to guide design of the public realm, including streetscapes and public open spaces, to achieve high quality urban design and enhance the identity of the corridor.*

#### Public Realm

- UD-1:** Design buildings to allow sunlight to reach streets and sidewalks. Step back upper stories of taller buildings, especially on north side of the streets, to avoid building shadow impacts.
- UD-2:** Adaptively reuse historic (or eligible) structures to reinforce the corridor's history and reinvest in existing resources. Incorporate local history and heritage into the public realm through elements including signage, information placards, historic plaques, murals, gateway features, and unique pavers.
- UD-3:** To prioritize pedestrian movement and comfort, encourage designs that locate parking behind buildings with car entries from alleys or side streets, or as shared entries when curb cuts are provided from Imperial Avenue or Commercial Street.
- UD-4:** Along Imperial Avenue, especially within the Neighborhood Village-Medium node, encourage buildings with articulation, entries and windows facing the street, landscaped edges, outdoor eating space, minimal setbacks at the ground level, and vertical bays at wider lot widths to maintain the look of individual storefronts and a continuous street wall.

- UD-5:** Encourage façade and streetscape improvements on Commercial Street, particularly within ¼-mile of the 32nd Street trolley stop, to improve the appearance and viability of local businesses. Specific improvements may include installing sidewalks, where they are missing and adding high-quality fencing or screening materials (e.g. creeper plants).
- UD-6:** Allow live/work spaces and provide other forum for performing and visual art and exhibits.
- UD-7:** Develop a public art program with assistance from and that promotes local artists. The program should incorporate murals, sculptures, colorful storefront decorations, mosaics, utility/site furnishing painting, and light pole banner art to improve urban design character and reveal the history and diversity of the corridor and surrounding neighborhoods.
- UD-8:** To improve the perception of and actual safety, encourage the use of interior security bars in lieu of exterior bars, or chain link fences, and design buildings with windows and doors facing the street.
- UD-9:** Continue to abate graffiti and deter illegal dumping; encourage community members to use the City's Graffiti Hotline and online complaint forms for trash and graffiti.

#### Streetscape Concepts

- UD-10:** Provide directed, pedestrian-scaled lighting to ensure safety, security, and comfort, particularly on north-south streets, where lighting is limited. Consider creation of a Lighting and Landscape Maintenance Assessment District to fund the installation and maintenance of lighting and streetscape furnishings.
- UD-11:** Plant low-water, site-appropriate plants with consideration for ability to withstand car and human traffic, limited soil and water, maintenance, and purpose (shade or accent).

#### Imperial Avenue

- UD-12:** Explore opportunities for gateway elements at key locations such as the entrance to the Southeastern community at 25th Street and Imperial Avenue.
- UD-13:** "Green" Imperial Avenue by installing street trees, public art, and historic tributes in order to create a cohesive identity and more attractive corridor. Incorporate stormwater management techniques that reduce runoff.



**UD-14:** Design pedestrian bump-outs at corners and mid-block, where feasible, between 22nd Street and 27th streets on Imperial Avenue as a part of the Neighborhood Village node, where substantial pedestrian activity is anticipated:

- At select mid-block locations (Figure 3-6), widen sidewalks through the removal of parallel parking spaces or where parking is prohibited, to provide additional open space for social interactions and community engagement.
- Establish a process to review and permit property-owner initiated parklets.
- Pair wider sidewalks with commercial and retail development to provide seating and gathering areas adjacent to the sidewalk, or passive planting areas that serve as extensions of mid-block pocket parks.
- Where seating is allowed, consider buffering and protecting pedestrian activity from vehicular traffic through raised planters or seat walls.

**UD-15:** Allow café seating, shared use of sidewalk space, and development of semi-private open space in side yards and/or front yards, while preventing uses from obstructing the public realm or encroaching into the pedestrian path on the sidewalk.

### Commercial Street

**UD-16:** Ensure pedestrian safety and comfort by providing adequately-sized and consistent sidewalks; undergrounding utility lines and boxes; adding street lighting, signage, seating, and landscaping.

- Sidewalk zones are recommended to be at least eight feet wide and include tree grates or sidewalk cutouts at regular intervals for street trees and planting.
- Where the right-of-way is less than 80 feet, future development should dedicate additional right-of-way in order to provide for a continuous eight-foot wide sidewalk zone.
- Where feasible (e.g. in rights-of-way more than 96 feet), the sidewalk zone should extend to 14 feet, including a minimum eight-foot paved clear pedestrian zone and six-foot planted parkway between the sidewalk and curb.
- If sidewalk construction or width is not feasible due to rail spurs, a pedestrian zone should be striped and/or colored to designate that pedestrians are permitted and to discourage parking or loading with the public right-of-way.

### Public Space and Population-based Park Concepts

**UD-17:** Develop population-based parks and public spaces with a mix of functions and designs, including active parks for recreation and urban plazas, paseos and semi-private urban space as passive spaces with landscaping and hardscape.

**UD-18:** Develop a mini-park site in the corridor (at least one acre and preferably on a corner site for sun access to provide opportunities for active recreation.

**UD-19:** Prioritize public spaces within the Planning Area, at the following location:

- Within ¼-mile of the 25th Street trolley stop (northeast or northwest corner of Cesar Chavez Boulevard, Ocean View Boulevard, and 25th Street intersection) provide a plaza for transit users and shoppers, while also building relationships with the adjacent police station.

**UD-20:** Develop safe and convenient connections between Southeastern's schools, parks, libraries, regional trails and parks (e.g. Balboa Park). This includes:

- Enhancing north-south linkages, especially 28th Street, to schools, parks, and the Logan Heights Library.

- Identifying and marking 25th Street as the connector to Balboa Park.
- Developing a street trail on 32nd Street as part of the Chollas Creek Enhancement & Implementation Program.

**UD-21:** Address the deficiency of public spaces in the corridor by considering innovative ways to provide open space in site planning and development, such as revitalization of vacant and underutilized lots for plazas and community gardens, installation of green roofs, and parklets (i.e., widened sidewalks or bump-outs that extend into parking lanes) or setbacks along the street to create outdoor seating, gathering and landscaping areas.

**UD-22:** Address the population-based park deficiency in the corridor by considering innovative ways to provide equivalencies as identified in the General Plan.

**UD-23:** Encourage retail/food vending within public spaces consistent with the City's requirements for pushcarts. Ensure that vendors do not obstruct the public right-of-way.

**UD-24:** Celebrate local culture and arts in the community by supporting local events, providing gathering spaces, and incorporating public art into the public realm.

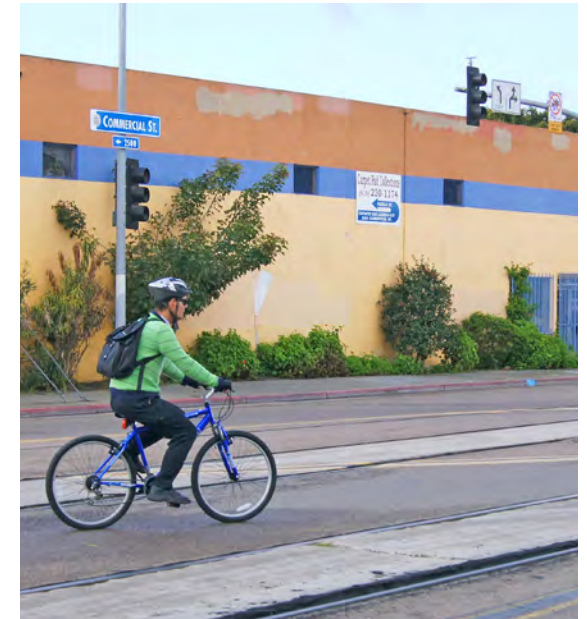
**UD-25:** Accommodate a variety of activities, including youth-oriented recreation (e.g. skateboard parks and designated places for rotating artwork), farmers' markets, community gardens, and festival spaces.

**UD-26:** Design public parks and public spaces for flexibility of use, with an appropriate mix of hardscape and planting.

- Hardscape surfaces should be attractive, durable, sustainable, and wherever possible, permeable.
- Hardscape should be coordinated with planting to provide accessible and safe circulation that supports the spatial function of the public space.
- Encourage the use of climate appropriate, low-maintenance, and low water-use plant material.

**UD-27:** Explore opportunities for public parks and public spaces surrounding the Commercial/Imperial corridor during the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan update process.

# 4 MOBILITY



The Master Plan seeks to improve quality of life and support economic vitality by promoting a multi-modal transportation system that is integrated with land use planning and urban design. This chapter describes the strategy for ensuring the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and vehicles. It also documents current traffic conditions, recommended improvements to the circulation system, and potential effects on circulation as a result of implementation of the Master Plan.







Imperial Avenue (top) and Commercial Street (middle) represent the foundation of the transportation network, carrying vehicle, truck, trolley, bus, and bicycle traffic. Perpendicular streets and alleys (bottom) help to create a fine street grid.

## 4.1 Multi-Modal Context and Conditions

The corridor has excellent local and regional transportation access via highway and public transportation. These facilities, travel conditions as well as some deficiencies are described below in order to provide context for the improvements and policy recommendations proposed in this chapter. (For a complete account of existing conditions, see the August 2011 Existing Conditions Report.)

### Street Network and Roadway Volumes

The corridor's network of streets serves as the foundation for circulation. Small blocks and a fine network of streets and alleys provide many travel routes through the corridor for pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicular movement. This block pattern also allows businesses along Commercial Street and Imperial Avenue good delivery and distribution access.

Three highways—I-5, I-15, and Highway 94—encircle the corridor, providing good regional and citywide access. However, these highways also result in dead-end streets and over- and underpasses that may be daunting to pedestrians. Moreover, connections in the north-south direction, south of Commercial Street, are fewer, since the street grid shifts west of 28th Street.

The existing roadway volumes on both Commercial Street and Imperial Avenue are generally well below their functional capacities. Daily traffic volumes along Imperial Avenue range between 4,150 and 6,580, with heavy vehicle/truck percentages ranging between five and ten percent. Daily traffic volumes along Commercial Street range between 570 and 2,070, with heavy vehicle percentages ranging from six percent at the western end of the corridor to 18 percent at the eastern end.

### Public Transit and Ridership

The corridor enjoys decent transit coverage and ridership. Local bus routes serve Imperial Avenue and 25th Street. The Orange Line Trolley along Commercial Street provides convenient access to Downtown San Diego (East Village) to the west and El Cajon to the east.

Bus and trolley transit ridership is relatively high in the Planning Area. According to SANDAG, the Orange Line Trolley comprises approximately 80 percent (at 4,416 riders) of the total daily transit boardings/alightings in the Planning Area. The two trolley stops at 25th and 32nd streets have somewhat similar ridership, accommodating 56 and 44 percent respectively of the trolley boardings/alightings. The remaining transit ridership is via bus. The two bus stops located in the vicinity of Ocean View Boulevard/Commercial Street intersection have the highest bus alightings/boardings at 246 daily.

### Bicycle Facilities and Volumes

There are no striped bicycle lanes in the corridor, but there are bicycle routes designated on 28th Street and on L Street, just north of the corridor. Nonetheless, because of relatively low traffic volumes and a posted speed limit of 30 miles per hour, bicyclists often use Imperial Avenue as a biking route, even though there is no designated facility.

A bicycle count undertaken for this project in 2011 revealed that most cyclists ride along Imperial Avenue between 28th and 29th streets (31 AM/59 PM). The segment with the second highest counts was between 20th and 25th streets (14 AM/18 PM). On Commercial Street, cyclists were most prevalent between 25th and 26th streets (6 AM/14 PM).

## Pedestrian Facilities and Volumes

### Imperial Avenue

Imperial Avenue generally provides an inviting streetscape with sidewalks and some amenities for pedestrians and transit users, such as lighting and street trees. On-street parking is allowed and provides an additional buffer between pedestrians and vehicles. A number of the intersections are controlled by traffic signals or all-way stop signs. Marked crosswalks are provided across these controlled intersections (e.g., at 25th and 28th streets), but not at uncontrolled intersections (e.g., at 20th and 26th streets).

### Commercial Street

As described in Chapter 3, Commercial Street lacks many of the amenities that make Imperial Avenue an inviting streetscape. Most intersections are only side-street stop controlled and the presence of the trolley along the corridor can be an obstacle to north-south travel that requires crossing Commercial Street. In addition, pedestrian movement along the south side of Commercial Street is affected by the layout of intersecting streets. Streets on the west side of the Logan Heights neighborhood intersect Commercial Street at 45 degree angles with long crossing distances of up to 175 feet, such as at Franklin Avenue and at Dewey Street.

Commercial Street is also riddled with an ever-changing sidewalk layout, which can make it difficult for pedestrians to navigate. Between 17th and 29th streets, sidewalk widths vary between four and nine feet and can be interrupted by numerous driveways providing property access. Between 29th and 30th streets, no sidewalk is

present on portions of the street (south side). There are no sidewalks east of 30th Street, thus requiring transit riders to walk on the shoulder of the traffic lane to access the 32nd Street Station. In addition, utility poles can often be found obstructing the sidewalk and reducing the passable width to less than three feet.

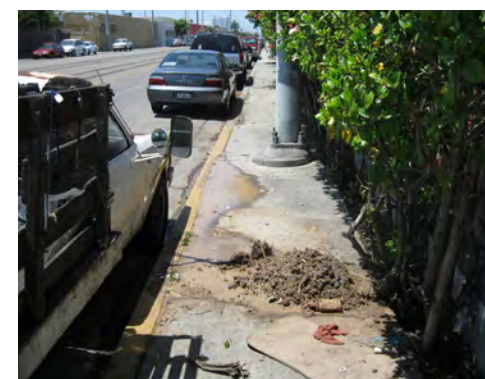
### Pedestrian Volumes

A 2011 pedestrian count showed that pedestrian travel was highest along 25th Street at both Imperial Avenue (145 AM/267 PM) and Commercial Street (140 AM/158 PM). Pedestrian activity was also high along Imperial Avenue between 25th and 27th (36 AM/121 PM) streets and at 30th Street (72 AM/167 PM).

Despite poor sidewalk conditions along Commercial Street between 29th and 32nd streets, pedestrian activity was still high (80 AM/120 PM) due to the siting of the 32nd Street stop. In fact 25th and 32nd streets, where trolley stops are located, had the highest pedestrian activity rates on Commercial Street.

### Parking

A 2011 inventory of on-street parking spaces within the Planning Area determined that there were roughly 1,800 on-street parking spaces in the corridor. The AM peak hour had the lowest overall on-street parking occupancy at less than 50 percent for the entire Planning Area, while both the mid-day and PM peak reported an occupancy rate of approximately 70 percent. A nighttime drive-by observation found that on-street parking occupancy was near 100 percent adjacent to residential uses.



*Imperial Avenue tends to have higher pedestrian volumes and better pedestrian facilities (top, middle). Commercial Street, especially near the 32nd Street trolley station, has inadequate and often obstructed sidewalks (bottom).*





Street and streetscape improvements seek to improve access to transit, particularly at the 32nd Street station (top) by creating unobstructed pedestrian paths (middle, Downtown) and adding dedicated bicycle facilities (Carlsbad, CA)

### Safety

Community members raised concerns about safety during the planning process. An analysis of collision data obtained from the City of San Diego revealed the following collision data in the Planning Area during a five-year period between 2005 and 2010:

- 160 vehicle-to-vehicle collisions (32 per year): The leading cause of collisions was unsafe movements at approximately 65 percent, including improper lane changes/starts/ passing/turns, and unsafe backing movements.
- 11 bicycle-related collisions (with vehicles): The highest number of incidents—three—were recorded near the intersection of 25th and L Streets. However, since there is a Class III bicycle route on L Street, this higher rate could be a function of the greater prevalence of cyclists at this intersection.
- 15 pedestrian-related collisions (with vehicles): Approximately 60 percent of collisions occurred during daylight while the other 40 percent occurred at night (dark/dusk/dawn).

### 4.2 Future Multi-Modal Conditions

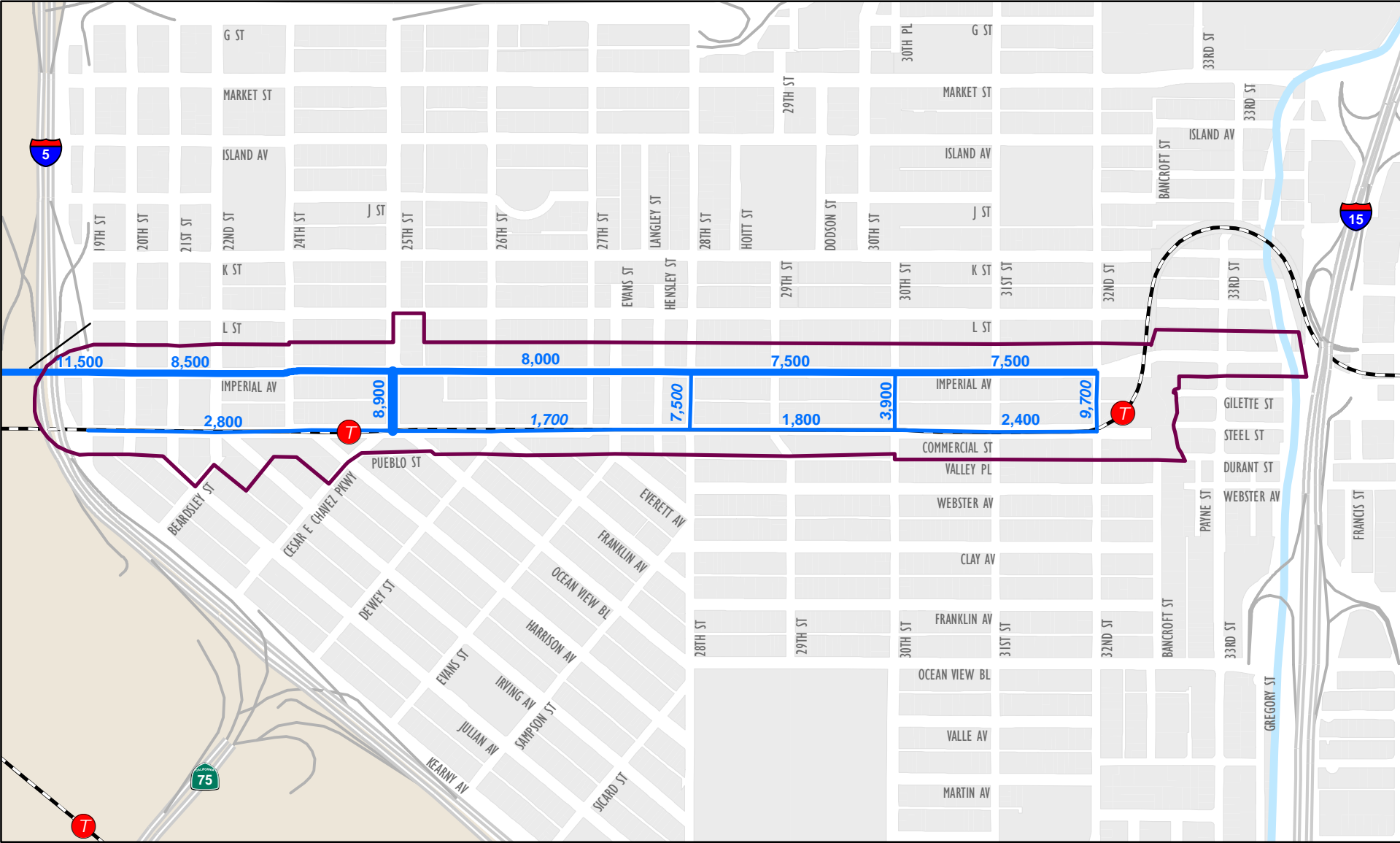
A detailed traffic model was prepared to assess traffic and circulation outcomes as a result of full implementation of the Master Plan under future year 2035 conditions. Projected volumes and Multi-Modal Level of Service (MMLOS) are analyzed under buildout of the Master Plan. Details are provided in the Commercial/Imperial Corridor Master Plan Transportation Analysis, prepared by Fehr & Peers. A summary is described below. Policy responses and recommended improvements are discussed in Section 4.3 and 4.4.

#### Street Network

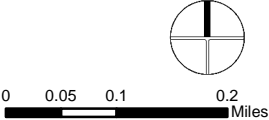
Future year traffic volumes were derived from the SANDAG Series 12 Transportation Forecast per the City of San Diego’s Small Study Area Traffic Modeling Process (April 2012). The future year model projects circulation outcomes based on buildout of land uses within the Planning Area, as described in the Land Use Diagram in Chapter 2. It also includes projections for the year 2035 for development outside the Planning Area that may affect circulation in the corridor. Projected traffic volumes under buildout of the Master Plan are displayed in Figure 4-1.



FIGURE 4-1: Projected Traffic Volumes : 4-5



- 2-Lane Roadway
- 3-Lane Roadway (includes Two-Way Left Turn Lane)
- 4-Lane Roadway
- X,XXX Daily Traffic Volumes
- Study Area
- Trolley
- T Trolley Station



Source:  
Fehr & Peers (2013)

TABLE 4-2: LEVEL OF SERVICE DEFINITIONS	
LOS CATEGORY	DEFINITION OF OPERATION
A	This LOS represents a completely free-flow condition, where the operation of vehicles is virtually unaffected by the presence of other vehicles and only constrained by the geometric features of the highway and by driver preferences.
B	This LOS represents a relatively free-flow condition, although the presence of other vehicles becomes noticeable. Average travel speeds are the same as in LOS A, but drivers have slightly less freedom to maneuver.
C	At this LOS the influence of traffic density on operations becomes marked. The ability to maneuver within the traffic stream is clearly affected by other vehicles.
D	At this LOS, the ability to maneuver is notably restricted due to traffic congestion, and only minor disruptions can be absorbed without extensive queues forming and the service deteriorating.
E	This LOS represents operations at or near capacity. LOS E is an unstable level, with vehicles operating with minimum spacing for maintaining uniform flow. At LOS E, disruptions cannot be dissipated readily thus causing deterioration down to LOS F.
F	At this LOS, forced or breakdown of traffic flow occurs, although operations appear to be at capacity, queues form behind these breakdowns. Operations within queues are highly unstable, with vehicles experiencing brief periods of movement followed by stoppages.

Source: Highway Capacity Manual 2000.

LOS is a quantitative measurement describing operational conditions within a traffic stream, and the motorist's and/or passenger's perception of operations. A LOS definition generally describes these conditions in terms of such factors as delay, speed, travel time, freedom to maneuver, interruptions in traffic flow, queuing, comfort, and convenience. Table 4-1 defines LOS categories (A through F) as applied to roadway operations. The City of San Diego considers LOS D or better during the AM and PM peak hours to be acceptable for intersection LOS.

Table 4-2 displays the LOS analysis results for the key study roadway segments under both existing conditions and buildout of the Master Plan. As shown in the table, all of the roadway segments are projected to operate at LOS D or better, with the exception of 32<sup>nd</sup> Street between Imperial Avenue and Commercial Street (LOS

E). As presented in the following section, the intersections at both ends of this segment are projected to operate at acceptable LOS D or better; therefore reclassification of 32<sup>nd</sup> Street is not necessary or recommended.

Table 4-3 displays intersection LOS and average vehicle delay results for the key study intersections under buildout of the Master Plan. The existing intersection LOS is also displayed to show the projected change between buildout of the Master Plan and current operations. As shown, all intersections are projected to operate at LOS D or better under build out of the Master Plan with the exception of 20th Street / Imperial Avenue (LOS F AM & PM) due to the anticipated increase in vehicular traffic throughout the Imperial Avenue corridor.

TABLE 4-3: EXISTING AND FUTURE ROADWAY SEGMENT LOS RESULTS						
ROADWAY SEGMENT	CROSS-SECTION	LOS D THRESHOLD	EXISTING		FUTURE	
			AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (ADT)	LOS	AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (ADT)	LOS
Imperial Avenue, between 28th Street and 30th Street	2-Ln w/ TWLTL	13,000	5,030	B	7,500	C
Imperial Avenue, between 30th Street and 32nd Street	2-Ln w/ TWLTL	13,000	4,150	A	7,500	C
Commercial Street, between 19th Street and 25th Street	2-Ln	9,000	2,070	A	2,800	A
Commercial Street, between 25th Street and 28th Street	2-Ln	9,000	1,070	A	1,700	A
Commercial Street, between 28th Street and 30th Street	2-Ln	9,000	930	A	1,800	A
Commercial Street, between 30th Street and 32nd Street	2-Ln	9,000	570	A	2,400	A
25th Street, between Imperial Avenue and Commercial Street	4-Ln	13,000	5,700	B	8,900	C
28th Street, between Imperial Avenue and Commercial Street	2-Ln	9,000	320	A	7,500	C
30th Street, between Imperial Avenue and Commercial Street	2-Ln	9,000	2,990	A	3,900	B
32nd Street, between Imperial Avenue and Commercial Street	2-Ln	9,000	3,130	A	9,700	E

Source: Fehr & Peers, January 2013



New development in the corridor as well as development outside of the corridor could contribute to increased vehicle volumes on 25th Street in the future.



**TABLE 4-4: EXISTING AND FUTURE INTERSECTION LOS RESULTS**

INTERSECTION	EXISTING LOS		FUTURE AM PEAK HOUR		FUTURE PM PEAK HOUR	
	AM	PM	AVG. DELAY (SEC)	LOS	AVG. DELAY (SEC)	LOS
1. 17th St / Imperial Ave (signalized)	B	B	20.9	C	12.5	B
2. 19th St / Imperial Ave (signalized)	B	B	18.8	B	10.2	B
3. 20th St / Imperial Ave (two-way stop controlled) <sup>1</sup>	C	C	<b>OVFL</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>86.6</b>	<b>F</b>
4. 21st St / Imperial Ave (two-way stop controlled) <sup>1</sup>	C	C	12.5	B	17.4	C
5. 22nd St / Imperial Ave (signalized)	A	B	17.9	B	20.1	C
6. 24th St / Imperial Ave (two-way stop controlled) <sup>1</sup>	B	E	12.3	B	14.1	B
7. 25th St / Imperial Ave (signalized)	B	B	22.0	C	22.3	C
8. 26th St / Imperial Ave (two-way stop controlled) <sup>1</sup>	B	C	11.2	B	16.9	C
9. 27th St / Imperial Ave (two-way stop controlled) <sup>1</sup>	B	C	15.8	C	33.6	D
10. 28th St / Imperial Ave (signalized)	B	B	12.6	B	20.5	C
11. 29th St / Imperial Ave (two-way stop controlled) <sup>1</sup>	B	C	32.6	D	30.6	D
12. 30th St / Imperial Ave (signalized)	B	B	14.6	B	11.2	B
13. 31st St / Imperial Ave (all-way stop controlled)	A	B	20.4	C	26.9	D
14. 32nd St / Imperial Ave (signalized)	B	B	38.4	C	11.0	B
15. 19th St / Commercial St (signalized)	B	B	10.4	B	14.1	B
16. 22nd St / Commercial St (two-way stop controlled) <sup>1</sup>	B	B	18.7	C	12.2	B
17. 24th St / Commercial St (one-way stop controlled) <sup>1</sup>	A	B	10.1	B	12.0	B
18. Harrison Ave / Commercial St (one-way stop controlled)	A	A	9.7	A	10.7	B
19. 25th St/Cesar Chavez Pkwy/Ocean View Blvd / Commercial St (signalized)	D	D	36.5	D	36.3	D
20. 26th St/Dewey St/Franklin Ave / Commercial St (two-way stop controlled) <sup>1</sup>	B	B	12.0	B	16.9	C
21. Evans St / Commercial St (two-way stop controlled) <sup>1</sup>	A	B	10.5	B	11.6	B
22. 28th St / Commercial St (signalized)	A	A	10.1	B	12.3	B
23. 30th St / Commercial St (signalized)	B	B	18.2	B	15.4	B
24. 32nd St / Commercial St (signalized)	A	B	10.9	B	13.9	B

1. For one or two-way stop controlled intersections, the delay shown is the worst delay experienced by any of the approaches.  
**OVFL:** indicates an overflow of traffic volume at the intersection, therefore a true delay cannot be accurately calculated

Source: Fehr & Peer, January 2013

### Public Transit and Ridership

The projected future transit ridership at stops within the Planning Area was developed by applying a growth factor to existing boarding and alighting data. Transit ridership is estimated to increase by approximately 51 percent. This projected increase in ridership is due to the planned increase in land use density throughout both corridors, as well as the transit oriented nature and design of the planned land uses.

Transit riders are expected to experience a failing LOS along Commercial Street (Orange Line Trolley) under buildout of the Master Plan. The failing LOS is predominantly due to the projected increase in ridership. Plan policies call for coordination with MTS to provide additional transit service (e.g. increased headways or additional routes) as the population in the and near the corridor grows, which should alleviate this failure. Some of these service improvements are already contemplated in the SANDAG 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). This increase in Orange Line service is projected to restore its level of operations along Commercial Street back to LOS B

### Bicycle Facilities and Volumes

Similarly, the increase in land use density in the corridor and the mixed use nature of the land uses, are projected to result in a higher propensity of internal bicycle trips. The model estimates that bicycle volumes will increase by 61 percent under buildout of the Master Plan, with the greatest concentration of bicycling projected near and along 28th and 29th streets. The projected future bicycle volumes at key study intersections within the Planning Area were developed by applying a growth factor to existing bicycle count data.

Bicyclists will experience poor Levels of Service (E or F) when riding along both study corridors. This is due to the lack of separation from traveling vehicles, relatively high vehicular travel speeds, high truck traffic (on Commercial Street) and presence of on-street parking. To provide better bicycle connectivity though this area, it is recommended that the feasibility of a Class II bicycle facility be assessed along parallel corridors such as L Street during the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan update process.

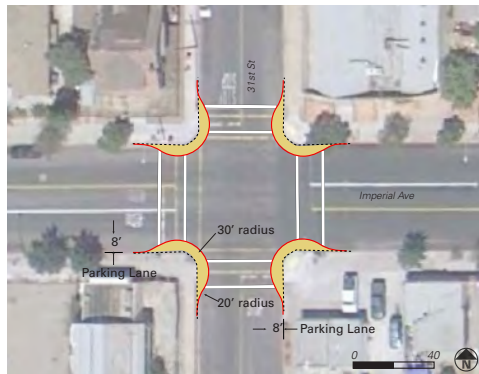
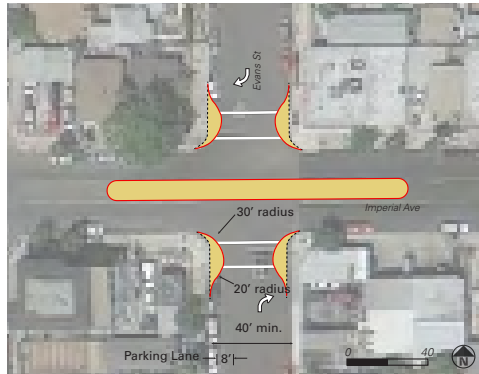
### Pedestrian Facilities and Volumes

Similar to the bicycle volumes, it is anticipated that pedestrian volumes will increase by 61 percent under buildout of the Master Plan. This increase is based on the increase in land use density within the Planning Area, as well as the mixed nature of the land uses, resulting in a higher propensity of internal walk trips throughout the corridors. The highest rates of pedestrian travel are anticipated along Imperial Avenue, near 25th and between 30th and 32nd Street due to their proximity to transit (bus and trolley) stations and the active village land uses that are anticipated within this section of the corridor. These locations are the focus of additional pedestrian improvements described in Section 4.3.

Pedestrians experience very good levels of service when walking along both Imperial Avenue and Commercial Street under build out of the Master Plan. The Pedestrian LOS degrades slightly along Imperial Avenue between existing conditions and buildout of the Master Plan due to the increase in vehicular traffic throughout the corridor. However, LOS B or better is maintained throughout the Planning Area. The Pedestrian LOS at the east end of Commercial Street is anticipated to improve significantly



*Increased headways and/or additional bus routes may be necessary on the transit system to meet demand (top). Additional bicycle facilities should be constructed elsewhere in the Community Plan Area to improve the level of service, safety and comfort of bicycling, and reduce bikes on sidewalks (bottom).*



*Corner bulb-outs reduce the effective crossing distance for pedestrians and improve visibility around parked cars (bottom). Raised medians provide a point of refuge for pedestrians, while restricting left-turn movements at unsignalized intersections (top); these will only be needed under maximum buildout of the plan.*

(from F to A) due to the proposed new sidewalks along these segments, as described in Chapter 3.

### 4.3 Multi-Modal Strategy and Improvements

As described by the Vision and Guiding Principles, a major aspect of the Master Plan is to create a multi-modal circulation system that supports the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and vehicles. Based on community input, traffic model findings and the deficiencies and safety concerns described in Section 3.1, the Master Plan supports several key improvements. These improvements are illustrated on the figures in this chapter and described below.

#### Key Improvements

##### Street Network

The street network represents the foundation for the circulation system and all modes of travel. Buses, personal vehicles, bicycles and trucks share the roadway, and sidewalks, where present, line the roadways for pedestrian (and sometimes bicycle) travel. As illustrated in Figure 4-2, the Master Plan proposes several streetscape improvements. This includes adding a bike route on Imperial Avenue and expanding sidewalk areas in active pedestrian areas with mid-block and corner bump-outs. (See Chapter 3: Urban Design for detailed street sections and streetscape concepts.)

##### Pedestrian Facilities

Pedestrian facilities and safe, convenient access to transit are essential components of successful transit-

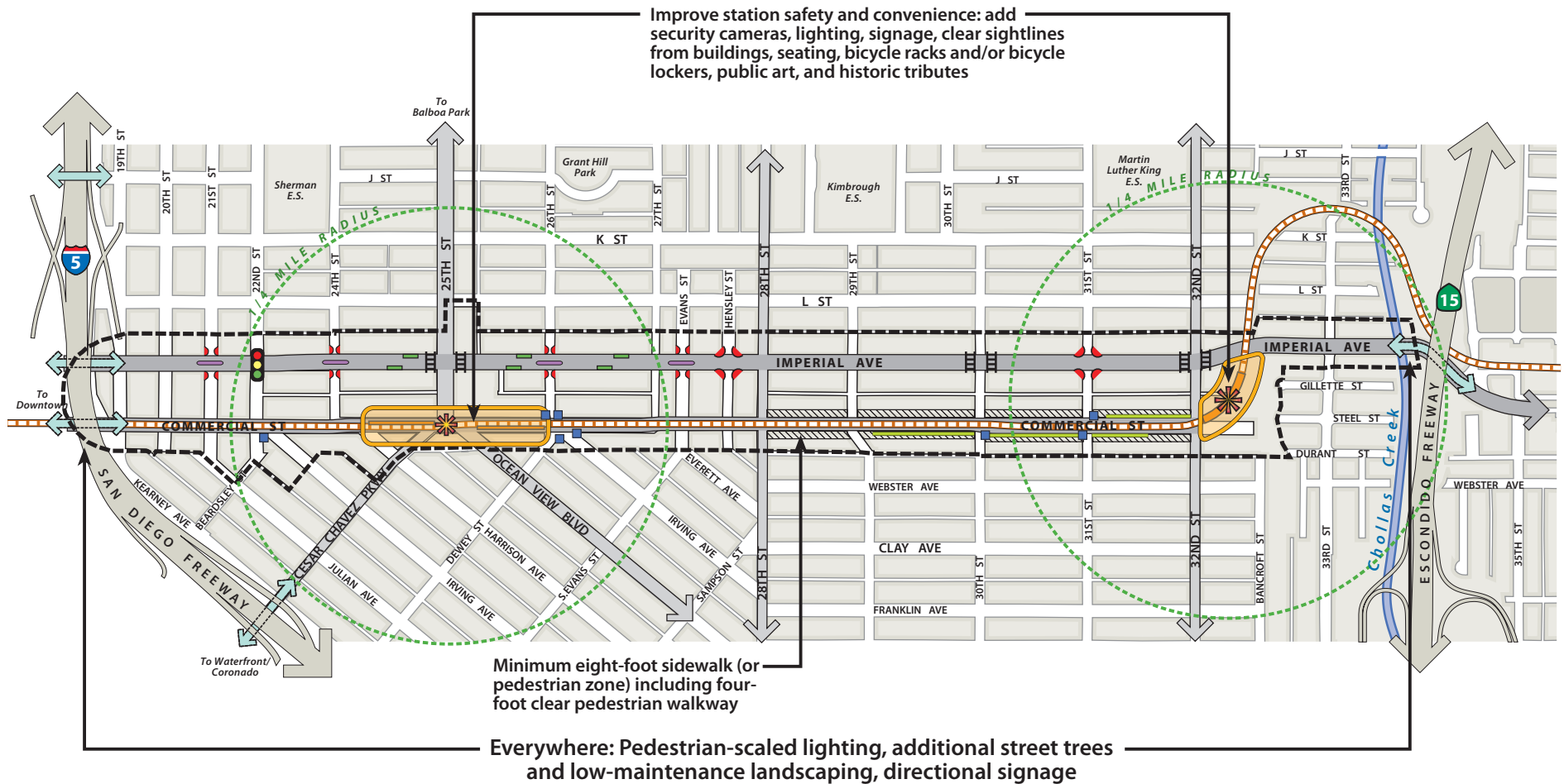
oriented development and a multi-modal corridor. Improvements to sidewalks and streetscapes to improve pedestrian facilities, as detailed in Chapter 3 and Figure 4-2, include:







- Installation of mid-block bump-outs on Imperial Avenue between 22nd and 27th streets to expand open space opportunities and pedestrian areas;
- Installation of corner bulb-outs on Imperial Avenue to improve pedestrian comfort and safety;
- Pedestrian countdown indications at traffic signals on Imperial Avenue to provide better information for pedestrians about how much time they have to cross;
- Installation of curb ramps on Commercial Street where missing;
- Construction of consistent sidewalks, or painted pedestrian zones where rail spurs make sidewalks infeasible, on Commercial Street (see Figure 3-5 in Chapter 3);
- As redevelopment along the Commercial Street corridor occurs, provide adequate right-of-way around obstructions (catenary poles); and
- Addition of street trees, landscaping, and lighting throughout the corridor.





It is recommended, under maximum buildout of the Master Plan, that center raised medians be constructed along Imperial Avenue at key unsignalized intersections (as shown in Figure 4-2) to restrict side street access to right-turn in/out only control. The center raised median will also provide a point of pedestrian refuge while crossing Imperial Avenue. Restricting left-turns at these







FIGURE 4-2: Recommended Street Improvements : 4-11

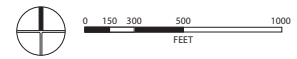


-  TOD Node
-  Orange Line Trolley
-  Trolley Platform
-  Curb Ramp Installation
-  Planning Area
-  Overpass/Underpass

-  Mid-block Bump-outs\*
-  Sidewalk Improvements
-  Sidewalk Construction or Pedestrian Striping
-  Station Safety and Convenience Improvements

-  Ladder Crosswalks
-  Corner Bulb-outs
-  Center Median
-  Traffic Signal

\*Actual locations may vary, and should correspond to supportive land uses such as restaurants or plazas.





Enhanced crosswalks (top) and curb ramps (middle) increase visibility of and accessibility for pedestrians. In Little Italy (bottom), a corner bump-out creates an opportunity for sidewalk seating while large potted plants create beauty and a buffer to vehicle traffic.

intersections will limit the number of conflict points along the corridor, as well as channelize left-turning vehicular traffic to the signalized intersections which are projected to operate below capacity, as described in the preceding section. These improvements will only be necessary if the Planning Area achieved the maximum buildout described in Chapter 2.

In addition, traffic calming policy recommendations in Section 4.4 seek to minimize conflicts between vehicular traffic and pedestrians, and to encourage the use of alternate modes.

### Multi-Modal Safety

The focused mixed-use development anticipated within the Neighborhood Village-Medium node located between 22nd and 27th streets, is expected to substantially increase pedestrian and bicycle activity along the Imperial Avenue corridor. This, in association with the projected increase in vehicular traffic, would likely increase the potential for conflicts between the various modes of travel (auto, pedestrian, bicycle and transit) resulting in a higher potential for vehicular collisions.

Therefore, the Master Plan supports additional pedestrian facility enhancements along Imperial Avenue within the Neighborhood Village-Medium designation to provide a safer environment for pedestrians. As shown on Figure 4-2, these enhancements include:

- Curb bulb outs at intersections to reduce the effective width of the right-of-way;
- Enhanced crosswalks to improve their visibility;
- A traffic signal at 22nd Street and Imperial Avenue (part of COMM22 improvements);

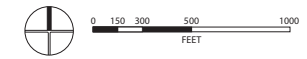
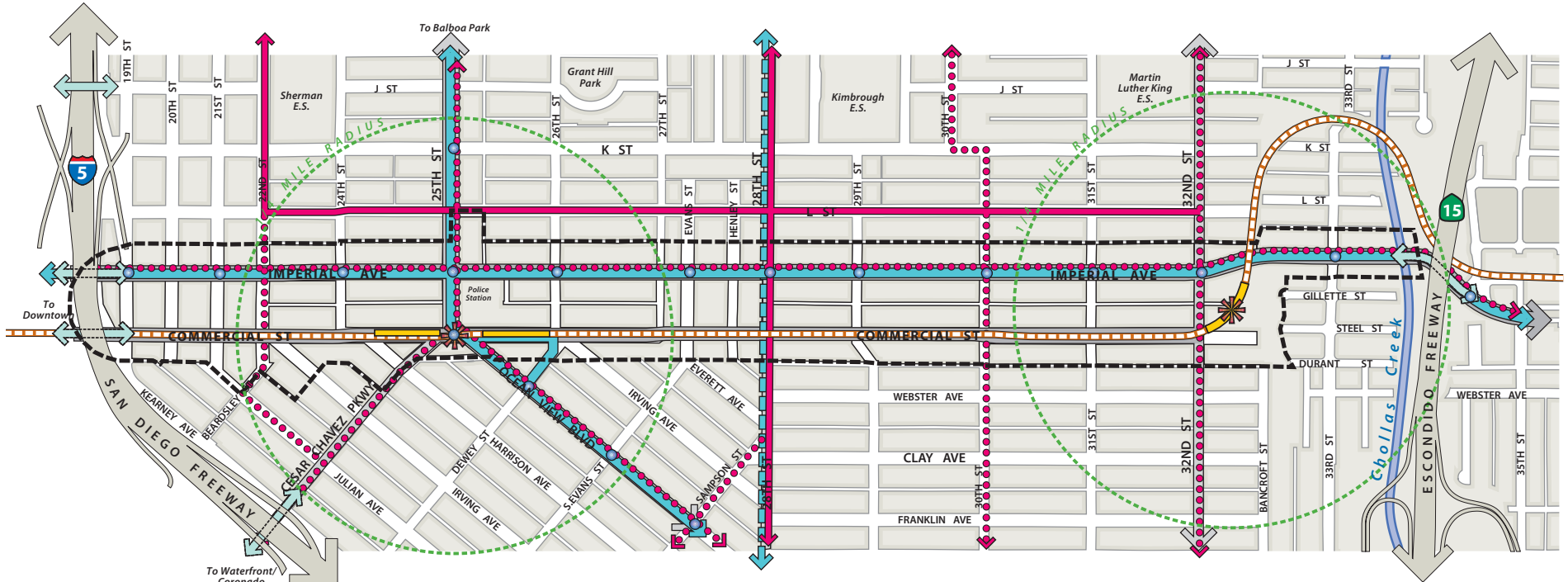
- Restriction of driveway access along Imperial Avenue as properties redevelop to reduce curb cuts and turning movements; and
- Additional buffers between the pedestrian and vehicular right-of-ways, such as street furniture and mid-block bump-outs, to distinguish between pedestrian and vehicle zones.

### Public Transit

A new 28th Street trolley stop was a popular idea among community members as a way to improve access to and ridership on the Orange Line. However, this concept was not carried forward by the Working Group and community due to the lack of available right-of-way and negative effect on overall travel time. Still, the sentiment among community members to improve availability of transit is still supported by the Master Plan. A new north-south bus route is proposed along 28th Street to better connect the neighborhoods to the north and the south, as shown on Figure 4-3. The feasibility, including ridership demand, should continue to be discussed with the San Diego Metropolitan Transportation System (MTS), as the number of residents and workers in the corridor increases.

In addition, the Master Plan supports safety and comfort improvements around the 32nd Street trolley station, such as the installation of lighting or emergency phones. Recent improvements to the 25th Street trolley station serve as a good example of features that improve comfort and reflect the identity of the place, such as public art, benches, and litter receptacles. In the longer term, integrating the station as part of a new development project could improve the visibility of the stop and expand ridership with additional residents and/or

FIGURE 4-3: Circulation Plan 4-13



-  TOD Node
-  Orange Line Trolley
-  Trolley Platform
-  Planning Area
-  Overpass/Underpass
-  Existing Bus Routes & Bus Stops
-  Potential New Bus Route on 28th Street
-  Existing Bicycle Lanes/Routes
-  Potential Bicycle Lanes/Routes





*Seating, signage, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and landscaping found at the 25th Street station (top) create a more pleasant and safe waiting area. The Plan also recommends more transit service in the north-south direction, which is currently only served by one bus line (bottom).*



*The Plan supports expanding diagonal parking on side streets to create additional on-street parking spots.*

workers. Bus stops should also have a standard set of amenities including pedestrian-scale lighting and trash receptacles.

### Bicycle Facilities

New Class III bicycle routes along Imperial Avenue are intended to encourage bicycle ridership throughout the corridor. The recommended routes, as shown on Figure 4-4, are adapted from the Bike Master Plan, with two key changes:

- Class III (signed bicycle route) designation is proposed on both sides of Imperial Avenue.
- No facility is proposed on Commercial Street.

Community members and Working Group members determined that Imperial Avenue was the best option for improved bicycle facilities due to its active land uses, connectivity to both the downtown area and the neighborhoods to the east, and available right-of-way. Through this planning process community members determined that Commercial Street was not the best option for a Class I bike path, given the limited right-of-way, lack of connectivity to the east, and obstacle of the existing trolley tracks.

In addition to bicycle routes, secure bicycle parking is essential to ensuring that bicycling is a convenient travel mode. This includes both on-street bicycle parking to

provide access to public facilities, stores, services, and transit stops as well as off-street bicycle parking within housing developments and offices for residents and employees, respectively.

### Parking

On-street parking strategies can help to accommodate parking demand and ensure the viability of small businesses that do not have dedicated parking. At the same time, parking strategies must avoid creating excessive supplies that discourage alternative transportation modes. For example, pricing strategies, such as metering or variable pricing that fluctuates by demand and time of day, can help create turnover in parking spots and raise funds for transportation improvements.

The Master Plan also recommends changes to some on-street parking spaces. Although some parking spots along Imperial Avenue would be removed with the development of mid-block bump-outs between 22nd and 27th streets, the Plan supports adding diagonal parking on perpendicular side streets. For example converting the west side of Evans Street to angled parking on two blocks – one north and one south of Imperial Avenue – would create six additional parking spots.

FIGURE 4-4: Bicycle Network 4-15



## 4.4 Policy Recommendations

*The following recommendations seek to achieve the multi-modal strategy outlined above. Also see Streetscape policy recommendations in Chapter 3: Urban Design.*

### Street Network

- MB-1:** Promote a balanced, multi-modal transportation environment along Imperial Avenue:
- Retain Imperial Avenue as a three-lane roadway. Update the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan to remove the proposed four-lane roadway designation.
  - Whenever possible, restrict curb cuts and left-turn movements into and out of driveways along Imperial Avenue by designing parking and loading entrance in the side or rear of the building.
  - Construct pedestrian bump-outs at key locations on Imperial Avenue between 22nd and 27th streets (within the Neighborhood Village-Medium designation), as shown on Figure 4-2.
  - Under full buildout of the Master Plan, construct a raised median along Imperial Avenue to restrict left-turn movements at the following intersections:
    - Imperial Avenue / 21st Street
    - Imperial Avenue / 24th Street
    - Imperial Avenue / 26th Street
    - Imperial Avenue / Evans Street

### Public Transit

- MB-2:** Work with MTS to improve the 32nd Street Trolley Station to be more accessible, comfortable and safe for pedestrians:
- Provide adequate pedestrian connectivity between residential neighborhoods/employment sites and the 32nd Street Trolley Station by constructing pedestrian facilities (either sidewalks or painted pedestrian zones, as illustrated in Figure 3-5) along both sides of Commercial Street between 29th Street and 32nd Street.
  - Provide additional security features at the 32nd Street Trolley Station including pedestrian-level overhead lighting and emergency phones.
  - Provide additional station amenities at the 32nd Street Trolley Station, which may include shelters, additional benches pedestrian-scale lighting, security cameras, public art and bicycle racks/lockers.
- MB-3:** As the resident and employee population in the corridor increases and creates additional transit ridership, work with MTS to consider improvements and route changes and upgrades:
- Determine feasibility of a new north-south bus route, such as along 28th Street,



to better connect the neighborhoods to the north and the south, as shown in Figure 4-3.

- Determine feasibility of queue jumper lanes and transit priority signals along Imperial Avenue at the 28th Street intersection. This improvement will provide convenient access for buses into and out of 28th Street bus stops.

**MB-4:** Provide benches, wastebaskets and pedestrian-scale lighting at all transit stops along Imperial Avenue.

### Bicycle Facilities

**MB-5:** Provide designated bicycle lanes and routes as shown on Figure 4-4:

- Designate Imperial Avenue as a Class III bicycle facility with “sharrow” (shared right-of-way) pavement markings and route signage.
- Ensure connectivity to both the downtown area and the Bayshore bikeway via implementation of Class III Bike Routes along Imperial Avenue west of I-5, 14th Street north of Imperial Avenue and Park Boulevard south of Imperial Avenue.
- Update the City’s Bicycle Master Plan to remove Commercial Street as a proposed Class I Bicycle Path and designate Imperial Avenue as a Class III east-west connection between the corridor and downtown (along with other parallel routes that have been designated or proposed such as Island Avenue and L Street).

- Explore opportunities for bike lanes on parallel streets (e.g. L Street) as part of the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan update.
- Provide adequate public on-street and private off-street bicycle parking throughout both corridors:
- Install bicycle racks at key points along the Imperial Avenue corridor (i.e. parks, transit stops, and other public gathering places).
- Install bicycle lockers or racks at both the 25th Street and 32nd Street Trolley Stations.
- Require new large developments or rehabilitations of existing buildings within the Imperial Avenue corridor to provide off-street bicycle parking consistent with the standards included in the City of San Diego’s Land Use Development Code.

### Pedestrian Facilities

**MB-6:** Construct sidewalks or striped pedestrian zones on either side of Commercial Street between 29th and 32nd streets, as shown in Figure 4-2.

**MB-7:** Assess the feasibility to move the Commercial Street Trolley Line utility poles outside of the pedestrian right-of-way and avoid the sidewalk obstructions.

- MB-8:** In order to reduce pedestrian and vehicular conflicts, require new development to access parking areas via side streets and alleyways, whenever possible.
- MB-9:** Provide additional pedestrian safety enhancements along Imperial Avenue at intersections with high pedestrian volumes:
- Curb bulb outs at the 31st Street / Imperial Avenue intersection
  - Curb bulb outs at all unsignalized intersections along Imperial Avenue (22nd Street to 26th Street)
  - Ladder-style painted crosswalks at 25th Street, 30th Street and 32nd Street
  - Pedestrian countdown signal heads at all signalized intersections

### Parking

- MB-10:** Ensure adequate street parking for customers of local businesses while avoiding excessive supplies that discourage transit ridership and disrupt the public realm.
- MB-11:** Consider pricing strategies (e.g. metering, variable pricing), time limit parking, and permit parking, if necessary, to manage parking demand and supply.
- MB-12:** To increase the provision of on-street parking, provide angled on-street parking on side-streets throughout the corridor where feasible, including the west side of Evans Street between L and Commercial streets.

# 5 ECONOMICS



While most economic development activity occurs in the private sector, the City can help to facilitate opportunities in certain market segments, coordinate and provide infrastructure improvements, and ensure that policies support, and do not impede, business development, construction, and local employment opportunities. This chapter provides context for economic development opportunities by rooting development potential in realistic possibilities based on market conditions and feasibility.







Housing currently represents about 31 percent of land acreage in the corridor with a range of single-family (top), multi-family (middle), and mixed-use residential uses (bottom). The market demand study projects 530 to 1,100 over the next 20 years.

## 5.1 Market Conditions and Demand Projections

As part of the technical studies prepared for the Master Plan, consultants analyzed market demand and identified development potential for residential, office, and retail uses in the corridor over the next 25 years. A summary is described below; for details, see “Commercial Street and Imperial Avenue Corridor Master Plan—Market and Economic Analysis” prepared by Keyser Marston Associates, August 2011.

As of 2011, new real estate development ventures were hampered by depressed market demand, impaired financing markets, and a gloomy outlook for the national economy. Still, in the mid- to long-term, the Planning Area represents a good opportunity for new mixed-use development, with residential homes, flexible office space, retail, and restaurants creating a more vibrant corridor. For example, with assistance from the City and community, the Imperial Avenue corridor could become a Hispanic shopping district, similar to the 4th Street District in Santa Ana. Detailed trends and projections are described for each land use category below.

### Residential Trends and Projections

From 2006 forward, the national housing market suffered substantial declines in pricing and sales activity. The San Diego housing market was hit particularly hard, with many development proposals and entitlements put on hold. However, the long-term outlook for San Diego’s multi-family market-rate housing remains positive due to numerous barriers to entry, including high land costs, a large rental population, and extremely limited new multi-family development sites. Low vacancy rates, stricter lending requirements for homebuy-

ers, and changing demographics have increased demand for rental housing.

As shown in Table 5-1, the corridor can support between 530 and 1,100 new housing units through 2030, according to market projections. Currently, there is one residential development project in the pipeline in the corridor that will start to address a portion of this demand. The COMM22 project will add 252 affordable units, including senior housing, live/work lofts, multi-family units, and rowhouses (for sale).

### Retail/Restaurant Trends and Projections

Retail commercial markets have also experienced uncertainty and lack of confidence due to the national recession and credit crisis. However, many regional economists project the beginning of a market turnaround in Southern California within the short-term. In fact, high vacancy rates and lower rents have provided leasing opportunities in markets that were previously inaccessible.

Based on the low amount of sales on a per person basis, it is evident that Southeastern is experiencing a leakage (or export) of retail sales. For example, residents in the corridor need to travel outside of the community for grocery items, pharmacies, and household goods. The corridor possesses a competitive advantage in capturing demand growth due to the lack of existing national credit retailers, the presence of a younger population and larger families, and good access to transit. On the other hand, lower income households and a lack of daytime population reduce demand. Still, the corridor could support additional retail development in the range of 12,900 to 27,300 square feet and an additional 3,600 to 7,700 square feet of restaurant space.

**TABLE 5-1: PROJECTED MARKET DEMAND BY 2030**

LAND USE TYPE	LOW ESTIMATE	HIGH ESTIMATE
Office (sf)	27,000	53,000
Retail/Restaurant (sf)	16,500	35,000
Residential (units)	530	1,100

Source: Keyser Marston Associates, *Commercial Street and Imperial Avenue Corridor Master Plan—Market and Economic Analysis*, August 2011.

### Office Trends and Projections

The national residential market downturn likely contributed to decreased office space demand from related professional office users. In 2011, the County office market was the weakest it had been in more than a decade, with an overall vacancy of nearly 17 percent and negative absorption (meaning more companies were downsizing or subleasing than expanding or adding space).

The Planning Area itself contains limited office space. The most recently developed office space, constructed in 2007, is a retail/showroom/office space which allows the landlord flexibility to lease space to a variety of tenants in a distressed market. As the corridor becomes a more mixed use environment due to new development, enhanced amenities, access, and services, it is estimated to bear between 27,000 and 53,000 square feet of office space demand through 2030, as shown in Table 5-1. Much of the new employment is expected to occur in the educational, healthcare and social services, and retail trade industries.

### Industrial Trends and Projections

Similar to the office market, the national residential market downturn likely contributed to decreased industrial space demand. The industrial sector is anticipated to recover stronger than other real estate sectors as employment and demand rises, which will lead to manufacturing output and growth in the shipment of goods. Vacancy rates are projected to decrease as demand rises and there is little to no new construction of industrial space projected in the area.

The largest submarkets for industrial space in the County are Miramar, Kearny Mesa, and Otay Mesa. The Commercial Street corridor provides a small amount of industrial land and uses comparatively and may continue to do so in the future. As industrial development sites are built-out in Southeastern San Diego and industrial businesses located San Diego and along the San Diego Bay are forced into surrounding communities, the demand for industrial space may increase.



Office uses (top, middle) are currently limited in the corridor, but are projected to increase by as much as 53,000 square feet. Industrial uses (bottom) are still viable uses with low vacancy rates, but are proposed to be focused in the eastern portion of Commercial Street to avoid conflicts with residential uses.





The feasibility study revealed that duplex townhomes (top, middle) may be feasible with low land costs or financial assistance. The COMM22 development (bottom) is a higher density affordable project financed in part with public assistance.

## 5.2 Financial Feasibility

As part of the Master Plan process, a financial feasibility analysis was prepared for several development typologies to determine whether projects would be feasible from the developers’ perspective. Feasibility depends both on site availability and physical conditions, as well as the cost of land, construction, and any environment clean-up required.

### Residential Building Prototype

The first prototype illustrates how a new residential development could be developed on a typical 7,000 square foot lot along Imperial Avenue. As shown in Figure 5-1, this prototype shows how three duplex townhouse units (a total of six dwelling units) could be developed on the site, resulting in a density of 37 dwelling units per acre. Two parking spots (attached two-car garages) are provided for each unit, with access to four of the units from a driveway off of a side street and access to the other two units from the alley way just south of Imperial Avenue.

Table 5-2 describes the costs, proceeds from the sale or rent of residential units, and resulting residual land value—meaning the maximum land payment that a private developer could afford to pay for a specified development opportunity. The resulting value is positive suggesting that development may be feasible, but only if land can be acquired at or below \$52,000. Since the cost of land has been historically higher—in fact, comparable land prices for the area since 2008 suggest an average of \$45 per square foot—additional subsidy may be needed for the project to pencil out for a developer.

Still, it should be noted that the Master Plan is a long-term plan. Although the housing market will need to rebound to produce healthy residual land values, there are strong fundamentals supporting attached housing development in infill locations throughout Central San Diego. Scarcity of land, rising housing costs, and the increase in non-family households will continue to generate demand for townhomes, condominiums, and apartments. In addition, proximity to downtown San Diego and its amenities and employment opportunities may further generate demand within the corridor.

TABLE 5-2: RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PROTOTYPE FEASIBILITY			
CATEGORY		TOTAL	PER UNIT
A. Total Development Costs (excluding land)		\$1,139,000	\$189,833
For Sale			
B. Net Sales Proceeds		\$1,205,000	\$200,833
Residual Land Value (B-A)		\$66,000	\$11,000
For Rent			
C. Net Scheduled Rental Income		\$1,191,000	\$198,500
Residual Land Value (C-A)		\$52,000	\$8,667

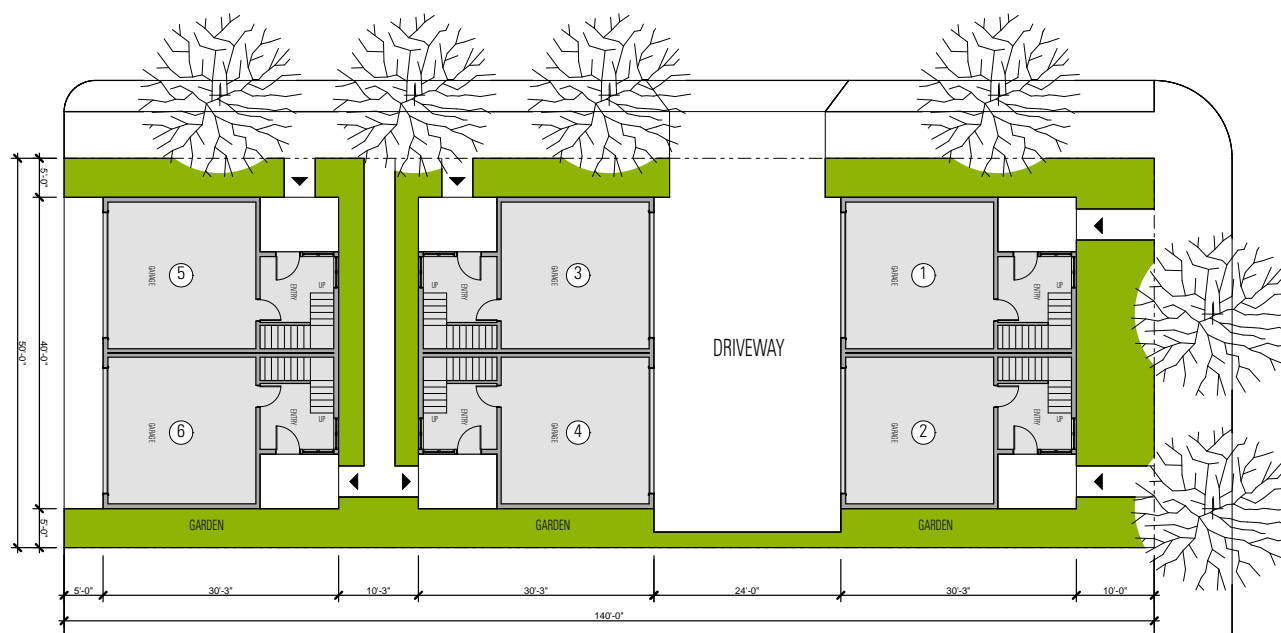
Source: “Commercial Street and Imperial Avenue Corridor Master Plan—Financial Feasibility Analysis.” Keyser Marston Associates, 2011.



FIGURE 5-1: Residential Building Prototype



Perspective view of three-story residential building prototype.



Plan view with side street and rear alley access to individual-unit garage parking.



Encouraging mixed use development, as shown in Little Italy (top, middle) and in San Jose, CA, is a key part of the Master Plan vision. However, accommodating parking on the corridor's small sites is challenging and efficient parking strategies (e.g. structured) add to the cost of development.

### Mixed Use Building Prototype

The second prototype illustrates potential development on a slightly larger corner lot and with mixed use development as shown in Figure 5-2. This prototype allows for 12 units (six 1-bedroom, six 2-bedroom) on a 14,000 square foot lot. The resulting density is 37 dwelling units/acre. The entrance to the residential units is provided on the side street for pedestrian access, while vehicle access is provided in the rear of the units from the alleyway. The design provides space for a small commercial space (close to 5,000 square feet) fronting Imperial Avenue, with its own parking and entrance. Parking requirements are met through surface parking.

Table 5-3 describes the costs, proceeds from the sale or rent of residential units, and resulting residual land value. Whether rental or for sale, residual land values are negative, suggesting that development is not feasible from the developers' perspective without subsidy or changes in market conditions. (Notably, this example

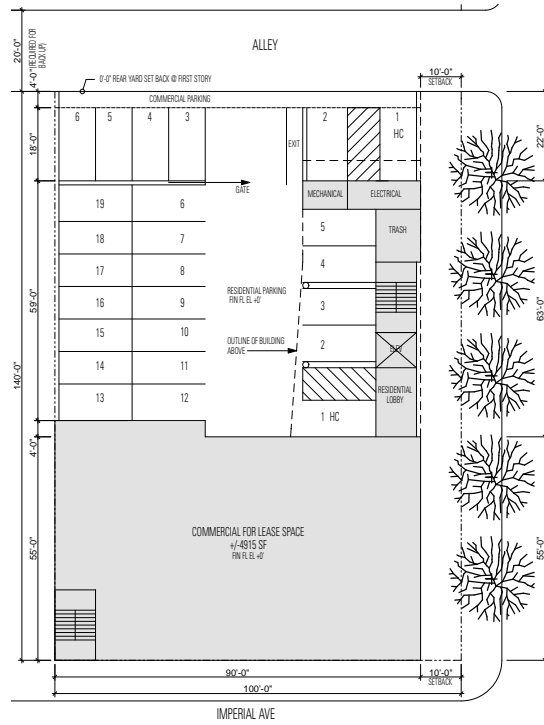
does not take into account any environmental clean-up costs that may be required.) This finding assumed residential sale prices, for this type of new construction, averaging \$175,500 (or average monthly rent of \$1,200) and commercial rents at \$1.75/square foot (Keyser Marston Associates, 2011).

This development would require a subsidy or major change in market conditions. Alternatively, increasing the average sale/rental prices to \$251,000 and \$1,800 would bring the estimated residual value to zero, but would be higher than local comparable prices and potentially out of reach for current residents and business owners.

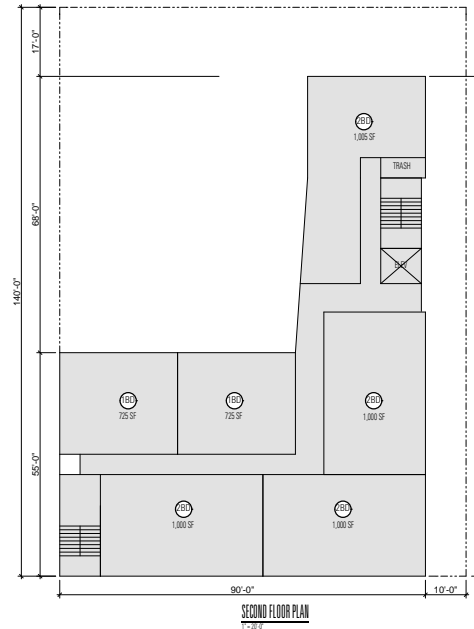
TABLE 5-3: MIXED USE BUILDING PROTOTYPE FEASIBILITY			
CATEGORY		TOTAL	PER UNIT
A. Total Development Costs (excluding land)		\$3,704,000	\$308,667
For Sale			
B. Net Sales Proceeds		\$2,926,000	\$243,833
Residual Land Value (B-A)		-\$778,000	-\$64,833
For Rent			
C. Net Scheduled Rental Income		\$2,653,000	\$221,083
Residual Land Value (C-A)		-\$1,051,000	-\$87,583

Source: "Commercial Street and Imperial Avenue Corridor Master Plan—Financial Feasibility Analysis." Keyser Marston Associates, 2011.

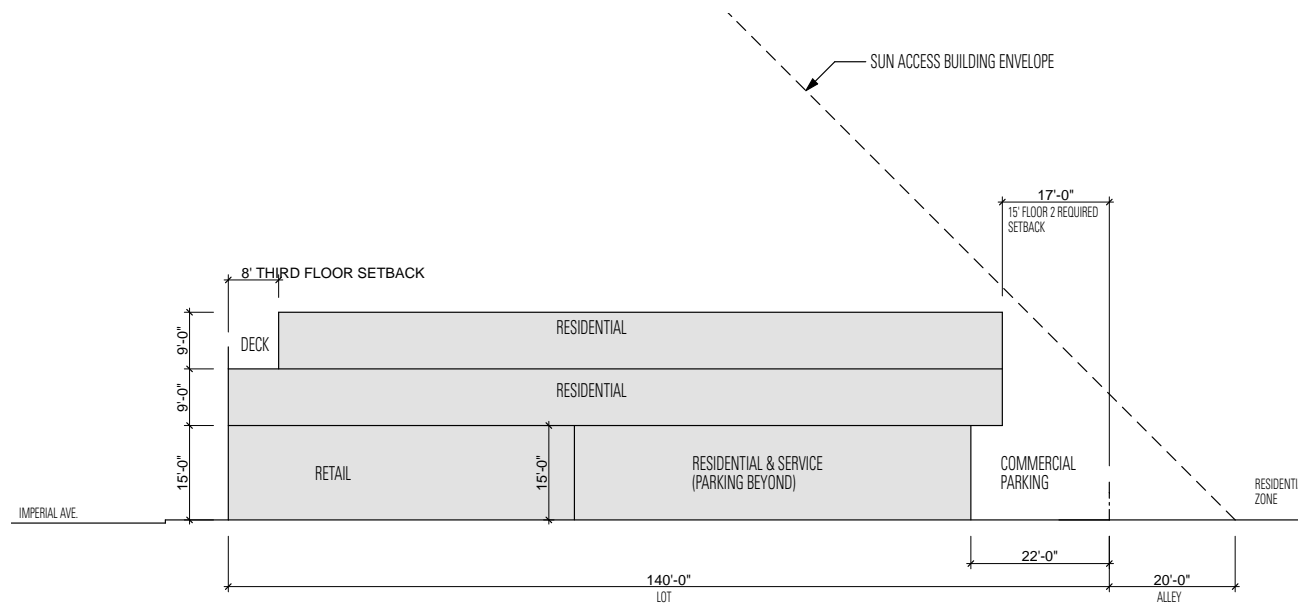
FIGURE 5-2: Mixed-Use Building Prototype



Site and ground-floor plan view.



Second floor plan view.



Section view of three-story mixed-use building prototype.



### 5.3 Policy Recommendations

*In response to market conditions and projections, as well as community desires, the Master Plan proposes a balanced set of land uses, with retail and employment development along the corridor that support shopping needs and job opportunities for nearby residents, and new residential uses that enable people to live close to transit. The following recommendations seek to promote economic development in the corridor and suggest incentives for implementation. Many of these initiatives will be implemented by the City's Economic Development Division.*

#### Business Development

- EC-1:** Encourage a range of businesses that provide affordable goods and services. Build on the existing base of Hispanic and other ethnic businesses that provide food, culture, and everyday shopping needs for households in the Southeastern community and that draw customers from throughout the city.
- EC-2:** Encourage a diversity of employment opportunities through land use designations that permit a range of light industrial, commercial office, and retail uses. Consider businesses that:
- Provide opportunities for skill training.
  - Create higher-paying and/or higher-quality jobs for local residents.
  - Complement or augment existing goods and services in the corridor, such as high-tech, machining, and green industries that seek industrial designations and building requirements in proximity to downtown.
  - Provide opportunities in growth industries, namely education, healthcare and social services, and retail trades.
- EC-3:** Utilize tax credit and permit expediting benefits, through the corridor's Enterprise Zone designation, to provide incentives for business development.

- EC-4:** Provide technical assistance to business owners for assistance with both physical improvements and business practices by encouraging participation in the City's Economic Development Division's programming.
- EC-5:** Work with owners, managers, and employers in the corridor, as well as local business groups and associations, such as the Central Commercial District Revitalization Corporation, to explore cooperative ways of marketing and doing business in the corridor.

#### Education and Arts

- EC-6:** Support training and education at all levels, including youth programming and activities, vocational training, creative arts programs, opportunities for a neighborhood high school, community college extension programs, and other higher education opportunities through partnerships with local providers.
- EC-7:** Encourage local businesses to offer internship, mentoring and apprenticeship programs to local students.
- EC-8:** Support public access to computers and the internet at Sherman Heights Library and local community centers.

# 6 IMPLEMENTATION



This chapter describes the actions and responsibilities for Master Plan implementation.



## 6.1 Implementation Plan

The Commercial and Imperial Corridor Master Plan (CICMP) will be implemented by folding the master planning goals, policies and implementation measures into the greater Southeastern San Diego (SESD) Community Plan update process. Ultimately the CICMP measures will be realized through approval of the community plan update by the City Council who will essentially adopt the project list contained in this section. These improvements will be funded and implemented through a number of different mechanisms which are outlined in this chapter. This chapter describes the necessary actions and key parties responsible for realizing the plan's vision. Implementing these proposals will require the active participation of the city departments and agencies, regional agencies such as SANDAG, MTS, and the community.

This plan also recommends a number of funding mechanisms for the City and the Southeastern San Diego Community to pursue as ways to viably finance the implementation of this plan.

### Key Actions

- Regularly update a Public Facilities Financing Plan (PFFP) identifying the capital improvements and other projects necessary to accommodate present and future community needs as identified throughout this Community Plan.
- Implement facilities and other public improvements in accordance with the PFFP.
- Pursue grant funding to implement unfunded needs identified in the PFFP.

- Pursue formation of Community Benefit Assessment Districts, as appropriate, through the cooperative efforts of property owners and the community in order to construct and maintain improvements.

### Funding Mechanisms

Implementing improvement projects will require varying levels of funding. A variety of funding mechanisms are available depending on the nature of the improvement project:

- Impact fees for new development.
- Requiring certain public improvements as part of new development.
- Establishing community benefit districts, such as property-based improvement and maintenance districts for streetscape, lighting, sidewalk improvements.

### Priority Public Improvements and Funding

The proposals for improvements described in this plan vary widely in their range and scope— some can be implemented incrementally as scheduled maintenance occurs, and others will require significant capital funding from city, state, regional, and federal agencies, or are not feasible until significant redevelopment occurs. Grants and other sources of funding should be pursued wherever possible. A complete list of projects will be included in the PFFP that will be developed as part of the plan update process. Table 6-1 articulates some of the higher priority recommendations.



<b>TABLE 6-1: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS</b>				
<b>NO.</b>	<b>ELEMENT ACTIONS</b>	<b>POLICY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>
1	Encourage façade improvements on Commercial Street, especially within a ¼ mile of the 32nd Street trolley stop.	UD-5	City/Business Owners	Short term
2	“Green” Imperial Avenue by installing street trees and public art in order to create a more attractive corridor.	UD-13	City/ Business Owners	Short term
3	Designate pedestrian bump-outs at corners and parklets mid-block between 22nd and 27th streets on Imperial Avenue where substantial pedestrian activity is anticipated.	UD-14	City/Community	Mid Term
4	Construct sidewalks or striped pedestrian zones on either side of Commercial Avenue between 29th and 32nd streets.	MB-7	Property Owners	Short Term
<i>Roadway Infrastructure Improvements</i>				
5	Explore opportunities for gateway signs at key locations, such as the entrance to the Southeastern community at 19th Street and Imperial Avenue.	UD-12	Community/CDC/City	Short Term
6	Construct Pedestrian bump-outs at key locations on Imperial Avenue between 22nd and 27th streets.	MB-1	City/Property Owners	Mid Term
7	Work with MTS to improve the 32nd street Trolley Station to be more accessible and safe.	MB-2	City/MTS	Mid Term
8	Provide additional station amenities at the 32nd Street Trolley Station, such as overhead lighting, shelters, benches, bike rack, etc.	MB-2	MTS	Mid Term
9	Determine feasibility of a new north-south bus route, such as along 28th street.	MB-3	City/MTS	Short Term
10	Determine feasibility of transit priority signals along Imperial Avenue at the 28th Street intersection.	MB-3	City/MTS	Short Term
<i>Parking Improvements</i>				
11	Consider pricing strategies and permit parking, if necessary, to manage parking demand and supply.	MB-11	City/ CDC	Mid Term
12	Provide angled on-street parking on side streets throughout the corridor, including the west side of Evans Street between L and Commercial street.	MB-12	City/Community	Short Term
<i>Park and Open Space Improvements</i>				
13	Improve access to open spaces and plazas by developing safe and convenient connections between Southeastern’s schools, parks, and libraries.	UD-20	City/SDUSD	Long Term
<i>Public Facilities Improvements</i>				
<i>Business Development Improvements</i>				
14	Utilize tax credit and permit expediting benefits, through the corridor’s Enterprise Zone designation, to provide incentives for business development.	EC-3	Businesses	Short Term

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**DYETT & BHATIA**  
Urban and Regional Planners

755 Sansome Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, California 94111  
☎ 415 956 4300 📠 415 956 7315