

ROLE OF THE PUBLIC REALM

Role of the Public Realm

The community’s development fabric is composed of two distinct, yet inter-related components: the “public” realm and the “private” realm. The “public realm” consists primarily of the publicly-owned street rights-of-way and other publicly accessible open spaces such as parks, squares, plazas, courtyards, and alleys. The “private realm” consists of privately-owned areas in large part developed with buildings and associated improvements, and is more limited in its accessibility to the public.

The public realm plays a critical role in the area’s character and function, serving overlapping roles, including:

- **Circulation and Access.** The public street rights-of-way provide for circulation within and through the community—accommodating pedestrians, bicycles, and buses, in addition to automobiles and trucks.
- **Development Framework.** The public street rights-of-way provide the fundamental structure that contains and organizes individual developments into a cohesive whole.
- **Public Open Space.** In addition to the community’s parks and plazas, public street rights-of-way play an

important role as public open space—allowing for light, air, landscaping within developed areas, and serving as the “living room” for community life—places where people meet, interact, and linger.

- **Visual Character.** While buildings are important visual elements, the physical design of the public realm is critical in establishing the community’s identity and overall character.

The community’s original street system was laid out in the early 20th century as a grid pattern with primary and secondary streets. In addition to serving as transportation corridors, these primary streets contain much of the commercial land use for these communities. This dual function of primary transportation corridor and commercial corridor has created long-standing problems with traffic congestion, parking demand and safety. In many areas current right-of-way configurations favor auto travel over pedestrian travel. These problems will likely be solved through more efficient use of the existing right-of-way, by shifting space within the right-of-way between the various transportation modes, and through use of new operational technologies.

In the past, considerations for street function have often placed a priority on the efficient movement of motor vehicles. The present guidelines for streets and the public realm promote a



Diagram of Public vs. Private Realm

4.3 STREETS & THE PUBLIC REALM

ROLE OF THE PUBLIC REALM

more balanced accommodation of all travel modes that is also safer, more attractive, and more convenient for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. Guidelines recommend street re-design options that reduce vehicular speeds, create buffers between pedestrians and traffic, and clearly delineate zones for people, bikes, and transit. Such options include reducing the number and/or width of lanes, widening sidewalks, adding medians, adding diagonal parking, adding bike lanes, and necking down intersections. Recommendations are intended to be specific to the community's distinct street types .

STREET TYPES

The community contains a variety of streets types that differ in character and function. Some streets, such as Washington Street and Park Boulevard, function as major through vehicular travel corridors while others, such as University Avenue and Fifth Avenue, serve as major connectors to adjacent neighborhoods. The majority of the streets in Uptown, however, are local streets that provide access to residential neighborhoods and carry much lower volumes of traffic. The guidelines are crafted with the functional classification and level-of-service requirements identified in the Mobility Element in mind, and are consistent with the community's objectives. Eight street types are identified and accompanied by individual recommendations:

- Major Connector Streets
- The Avenues
- Pedestrian-oriented Retail Streets
- Residential Streets
- Green Streets
- Bicycle Boulevards
- Alleys in Commercial Areas
- Alleys in Residential Areas

MAJOR THROUGH-CORRIDOR STREETS

Major Through-Corridor Streets serve as the major circulation routes connecting the community to freeways and state highways, and to the surrounding city, allowing efficient

circulation of high volumes of traffic. Washington Street and Park Boulevard represent this type of street. Both streets are characterized by wide right-of-ways (in most locations), multiple (4-6) travel lanes, high travel speeds, and limited pedestrian and bicycle facilities or streetscape amenities. The functional and aesthetic character of these corridors is typically not conducive to pedestrian, bicycle or transit use. As a result, development along these corridors tends to be more automobile-oriented in scale and design.

POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.1 Implement guidelines for Major Through-Corridor Streets to promote modal balance

- 4.3.1.1 Implement measures to reduce the actual and/or apparent width of the vehicular travelway to slow traffic and facilitate safe pedestrian crossing, including:
- The reduction of lane widths
 - The removal of travel lanes
 - The incorporation of a landscaped median
- 4.3.1.2 Provide measures at intersections to encourage pedestrian safety. Such measures include:
- Neck-down intersections to reduce crossing widths
 - Pedestrian refuges



Major Through Corridors should promote modal balance and incorporate complete streets elements where feasible

THE AVENUES

- Appropriate marking and lighting at pedestrian crossings
 - Count-down signals provided at all traffic lights.
- 4.3.1.3 Include street tree planting to give scale and definition to broad corridors and slow traffic. Street tree locations may include sidewalk zones, parking lanes, and median strips.
- 4.3.1.4 Widened sidewalks to provide a pedestrian zone that does not feel impinged upon by moving traffic. Pedestrian zones should include both parking and street trees
- 4.3.1.5 Bike lanes, cycle tracks, or other appropriate improvements should be incorporated to accommodate safe bicycle use.

THE AVENUES

The Avenues are unique streets because they serve as important connectors between Uptown and Downtown. While they all have a similar width, the six avenues have different functions and character. First, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth avenues generally have heavier traffic volumes due to their through connection between Downtown and Washington Street. Fourth and Fifth Avenues, both one-way streets, function as a couplet between Downtown and Hillcrest, including three travel lanes and parallel parking on both sides of the street. Due to higher traffic speeds and one-way character, the streets are not the most pedestrian or bicycle friendly. First and Sixth Avenues, both two-way streets, generally have lower travel speeds. Second and Third Avenues, and the north-south streets west of First Avenue, all function as local streets because they do not provide continuous north-south connections due to canyons.

POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.2 Implement guidelines on the Avenues to promote modal balance



Third Avenue in Park West is characterized by a generous width and lined with palm trees.

- 4.3.2.1 Make effective use of the widths of the Avenues to create more pedestrian-, bicycle- and transit-friendly streets while accommodating vehicular traffic. Such enhancements might include:
- Consistent street tree planting
 - Widening of sidewalks and/or introduction of planting strips
 - Addition of bike lanes
 - Sidewalk bulb-outs at intersections
 - Addition of street furnishings to support pedestrian activity at key nodes
 - Enhanced transit stops
- 4.3.2.2 Consider mitigating the linearity of Fourth and Fifth Avenues to create a greater sense of place. Design strategies might include:
- The introduction of gateway elements (e.g., markers, signs, etc.) at key neighborhood or commercial district entries to reinforce neighborhood or district identities
 - Changing street tree and landscape palettes along different sections
 - The use of distinctive paving, banners, public art, etc. to distinguish neighborhoods and districts
- 4.3.2.3 Enhance residential character of First, Second and Third Avenues by employing urban

PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED RETAIL STREETS

design strategies to reduce actual and/or perceived width (see Mobility Element for recommendations).

PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED RETAIL STREETS

Uptown is known for its active, vibrant, retail streets filled with pedestrians throughout the day. The community's retail streets are generally continuations of streets that connect to other parts of the City, but have different dimensions and design character as they pass through the commercial district. Typically, retail streets support neighborhood retail by providing low-speed vehicular access, convenient on-street parking, wide sidewalks with pedestrian amenities, and street trees and landscaping. Narrow street widths and enhanced pedestrian crossings encourage pedestrian activity that promotes retail vitality. The best examples include sections of Fifth Avenue in Hillcrest and the north end of Park Boulevard in University Heights. While balancing travel modes is important on retail streets, the preeminent design concern is creating a physical environment that supports the pedestrian activity that is essential for successful retail.

POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.3 Promote the design of Pedestrian-Oriented Retail Streets to support pedestrian activity

- 4.3.3.1 Require sidewalk widths to be adequate to accommodate significant pedestrian traffic, street furniture, pedestrian amenities, and a welcoming frontage zone for commercial uses. Ideally, retail streets should have sidewalk widths of at least 15 feet, but no less than 12 feet.
- 4.3.3.2 Eliminate or significantly restrict driveways and curb cuts that create conflicts with pedestrians in core retail districts. Ideally, vehicular access should be redirected to alleys or restricted to mid-block access to in shared parking structures where alley or rear access is not available.

- 4.3.3.3 Incorporate curb extensions into key intersections to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and to slow traffic speeds. Curb extensions can also be used independently of pedestrian crossings as traffic calming "chokers" to discourage build up in travel speeds on long blocks. In addition to slowing traffic, curb extensions increase the space available for pedestrian amenities, such as plantings and street furniture.
- 4.3.3.4 Introduce diagonal parking on wide streets to provide more on-street parking and reduce travel speeds. Reverse angle (i.e., back-in) parking should be used rather than front-in angled parking as it offers many benefits: it is safer for pedestrians and cyclists; there is less danger to traffic when maneuvering; it is easier for truck and rear door loading; and passengers can enter and leave the vehicle without danger from traffic.
- 4.3.3.5 Consistent street tree planting should be introduced to key retail streets to enhance visual character, to establish pedestrian scale, and to contribute to street/district identity.
- 4.3.3.6 Encourage crosswalk improvements that enhance the visibility and signify the importance of the pedestrian zone. Measures include:



University Avenue is a pedestrian-oriented Street in Hillcrest

RESIDENTIAL STREETS



Curb extension or neck-downs may be included to enhance pedestrian safety and add planting area.



Adding diagonal parking on one side of the street may be appropriate in residential areas where generous right-of-way is available

- Paving materials, colors, textures, and markings used to delineate the crosswalk area, using materials that are durable and safe for pedestrian use.
- Special lighting—either flashing pavement markings or overhead fixtures focused upon the crosswalk—used to further enhance pedestrian visibility of crossings that are heavily used during evening hours.
- Curb extensions and flashing signals should be installed wherever mid-block crosswalks are provided.

4.3.3.7 Design retail streets to accommodate bicycle use, including in-street designations such as Class II bike lanes, Class III bicycle routes (“sharrows”), and bike boxes, and off-streets facilities such as bike racks and directional signs.

RESIDENTIAL STREETS

Residential streets in the community are local streets that provide access to residences within the neighborhood, with little or no through traffic. As a result, the streets are intended to accommodate relatively low traffic volumes and slow travel speeds. They are also the setting for much of a neighborhood’s communal life—where neighbors stroll and greet each other. As such, the design of these

streets plays an important role in community character by ensuring that they are both safe and attractive.

Residential streets fall into two broad categories: the rectilinear grid of wide streets found in University Heights and Bankers Hill/ Park West, and the narrower and often more curvilinear streets of Mission Hills and Middletown. Many of Uptown’s residential streets have a defined character, which should be maintained and reinforced. Other streets, particularly those with wide street cross-sections, have room for improvement in terms of both their aesthetic and functional characteristics. The following guidelines suggest strategies for making these streets safer, more attractive, and more conducive to pedestrian and bicycle activity.

Although The community’s residential streets do not all share identical dimensions, their design is important for creating a clear and attractive residential character, and ensuring a safe environment.

POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.4 Design Residential Streets to create a clear and attractive residential character

- 4.3.4.1 Utilize design strategies to calm traffic, enhance pedestrian realm, and improve definition of the public realm on streets wider than 40'. See Mobility Element for recommendations.
 - 4.3.4.2 On streets with no consistent street tree planting, implement a program to select a tree species for regular planting along the street that will enhance neighborhood identity, add visual interest, and create a more comfortable pedestrian environment.
 - 4.3.4.3 On streets where a predominant street tree has already been established, but is not consistently planted, implement a program to enhance streetscape character by infilling gaps with the same species.
- Signage to identify designated green streets
 - Traffic calming measures needed to slow travel speeds and reduce potential for pedestrian and bicycle conflicts with motor vehicles, such as:
 - Narrowing the street cross-section to create wider parkways (planter strips) between the street and sidewalk
 - Adding bulb-outs and crosswalks at key intersections
 - Necking down street cross-sections in mid-block areas
 - A consistent street tree planting to create a visual connection between parks and the neighborhoods. A double row of trees (either the same or different species) should be considered as a way of establishing the green street identity and creating a more verdant character.
 - Planting strips should serve the dual purpose of "greening" the public realm and contributing to stormwater management by slowing and treating stormwater runoff. Install bioswales and raingardens in planting strips when feasible.
 - Include plantings that are native and/or climate-appropriate species.

GREEN STREETS

In the Uptown community, "green" streets are intended as components of both the circulation and open space systems. Their purpose is to provide linkages between open space resources and provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to the area's parks and open space amid a lush, park-like character, and low traffic volumes and speeds. Potential green streets include Laurel, Spruce, and Quince in Bankers Hill, San Diego Avenue, Sunset and Juan Streets in Mission Hills, and Richmond, Vermont, and Lincoln Streets in Hillcrest and University Heights.

POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.5 Establish a network of Green Streets to provide connections to parks and open spaces

- 4.3.5.1 Explore opportunities for creating green streets including the following design elements:
 - Sidewalks of at least 10 feet
 - Broad greenways (e.g., extra wide planting strip) on one or both sides of the paved street cross-section
 - Bike lanes on both sides of street



Green Streets should be lushly landscaped, creating green connectors between parks and neighborhoods.

BICYCLE BOULEVARDS



Green Streets should include planting strips that contribute to stormwater management with climate-appropriate species.



Bicycle paths and lanes create designated spaces for bicycles, thereby promoting bicycle use and safety.



Bicycle boulevards are designated with prominent markings to indicate the presence of bicycle use.

BICYCLE BOULEVARDS

Bicycle lanes are currently rather limited in the community. Proposed Bicycle Streets and Boulevards are connectors that facilitate bicycle mobility by providing dedicated bicycle infrastructure, and encourage bicycle use as an alternative to driving throughout the neighborhood and city. Bicycle streets promote bicycle use, along with other modes, while bicycle boulevards give priority to bicycles over vehicular traffic. Bicycle boulevards typically are lightly-trafficked side streets that allow bicyclists to avoid more dangerous collectors and arterials. Motorists on these routes expect to see bicyclists and therefore travel with caution. Bicycle Streets typically include Class II Bike Lanes, with designated signage. Bicycle Boulevards typically are Class III Bike Routes yet include additional features to ensure bicycle safety. The Mobility Element provides further guidance on the creation of a bicycle network within the community.

POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.6 Promote the creation of Bicycle Streets and Boulevards to encourage safe bicycling

- 4.3.6.1 Coordinate the urban design rationale of providing Bicycle Streets and Boulevards with the recommendations of the Mobility Element of the Uptown Community Plan.
- 4.3.6.2 Identify Bicycle Streets and Boulevards with uniformly colored signs and bold pavement markings.

ALLEYS IN COMMERCIAL AREAS

The community’s alleys are an important element of the area’s urban design character. Alleys in commercial and mixed-use areas should continue to be used to provide access to parking and service areas, reducing the need for garage entrances and curb cuts along street frontages. Currently, all of the major commercial districts are served by alleys, except for Washington Street and isolated blocks where development has been allowed to eliminate them.

4.3 STREETS & THE PUBLIC REALM

ALLEYS IN COMMERCIAL AREAS



Alleys in commercial areas can serve an intimate social function.

There are multiple desirable functions that alleys can perform beyond vehicular use. Alleys can provide access from rear parking lots to streetfront entrances either directly through alley-side entries or by means of the mid-block breezeways. They also can provide a secondary route for pedestrians and bicyclists to navigate through the commercial districts. Additionally, they can provide venues for markets, street parties, and other special events. With the addition of improvements, these other functions can be greatly enhanced.

POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.7 Provide alleys in commercial areas for serving pedestrian circulation and special events

- 4.3.7.1 New development in commercial districts should create alleys if none exist, in order to provide rear service and parking access.
- 4.3.7.2 Service and loading areas and refuse containers should be screened and gated for security, and included on-parcel, keeping the right-of-way clear.
- 4.3.7.3 Consider implementing a program to underground overhead utility lines in order to improve the visual character of alleys.
- 4.3.7.4 When alleys provide the boundary between residential and commercial uses, the location

of service and loading areas should be located and/or screened to minimize potential conflicts.

ALLEYS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Alleys in residential areas provide the opportunity to reduce the impact of automobiles on the public streets by reducing the number of driveway curb cuts and vehicle trips along neighborhood streets. Residential alleys are prevalent throughout much of the residential areas of Hillcrest and University Heights that have long blocks. Alleys are typically 20 feet wide, but are narrower in some of the older parts of the community.

POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.8 Include alleys in new and infill development in residential areas

- 4.3.8.1 Encourage new development to use alleys, where they exist, for access to residential parking.
- 4.3.8.2 Discourage street front driveways and parking in front yard setbacks
- 4.3.8.3 Design residential alleys as shared-use environments where safety and aesthetics are considered, including the following elements:
 - Screen trash bins from view at all times and ensure they do not intrude into the alley right-of-way.
 - Include paving materials that are conducive for both vehicular and pedestrian activity.
 - Include landscape elements within private property adjacent to alley right-of-way.
 - Underground overhead utility lines to reduce visual clutter
- 4.3.8.4 Require rear yard setbacks of 2'-5' adjacent to alleys to accommodate turning movements and provide space for landscaping.
- 4.3.8.5 Design alleys to assist in managing stormwater runoff, including necessary drainage infrastructure and/or porous paving.

ALLEYS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

WALKABILITY

Maintaining and enhancing the walkability of Uptown is a primary concern of community members. In turn, the guidelines intend to improve the character and function of the pedestrian network in order to support walking within the community. The guidelines recommend design strategies for enhancing the physical safety, comfort, and convenience of the pedestrian environment as well as the aesthetic character and quality of the pedestrian experience.

Sidewalks are the primary areas within the public street right-of-way that are reserved specifically for pedestrian use. They also serve as the interface between buildings and the street, providing both connection and buffer. Sidewalk widths vary



Landscaping should be included in alleys if possible, with minimal exposure of trash bins and other utilities.



Alleys should be encouraged as safe spaces for community interaction.

throughout Uptown, with sidewalks fourteen (14) feet in width found in the Hillcrest core, while sidewalks in other commercial areas are much narrower. Safe, comfortable pedestrian environments will only occur where the design of the public realm balances the concerns for automobile efficiency with those for a high quality pedestrian environment. As such, the design of the sidewalk and its elements is critical to the creation of an active and pedestrian-friendly environment, safe neighborhoods, and vibrant commercial and mixed use districts.

The pedestrian realm serves several functions—circulation facility, social space, and amenity zone—and must accommodate numerous features and facilities to support these functions. Conceptually, the pedestrian realm can be subdivided into three zones: the pedestrian zone, the amenity zone, and the frontage zone. Each zone plays a slightly different role in the pedestrian realm and has different design requirements.

The pedestrian zone is the middle zone and primarily accommodates pedestrian circulation. The amenity zone generally is adjacent to the street and accommodates public facilities and street furnishings. The frontage zone is adjacent to building frontages and serves as a transition area where pedestrians do not generally pass as it is directly adjacent to building features. Sidewalk design guidelines encompass the three zones together.

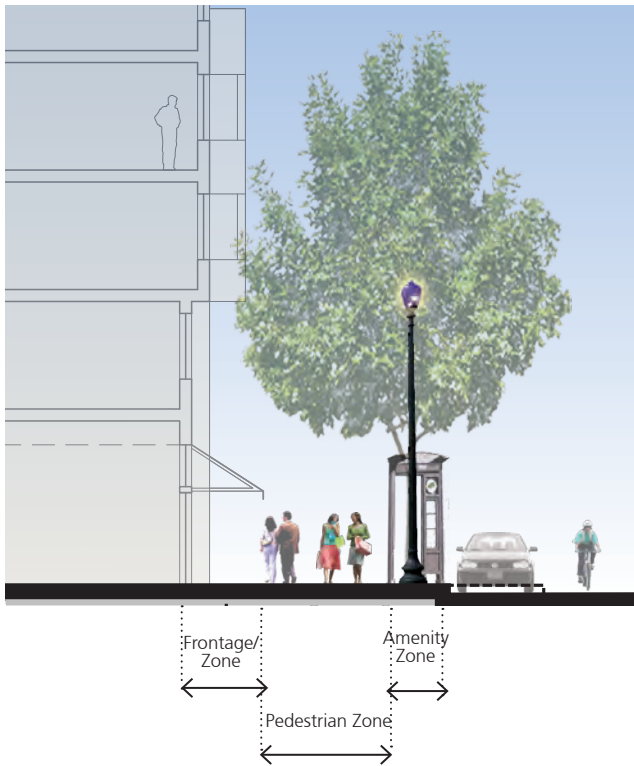
POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.9 Improve sidewalks to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort and pedestrian activity in commercial and mixed-use areas

4.3.9.1 Design sidewalks with widths commensurate with the level of pedestrian activity desired for the specific street frontage. Sidewalks generally should be wider in pedestrian-oriented commercial areas, where pedestrian activity is heaviest.

- Sidewalk widths of fourteen (14) feet or greater generally provide adequate space

Pedestrian Realm Functional Zones



for pedestrian amenities, for local business activity to spill out onto the sidewalk, and for adequate space to accommodate smooth pedestrian flow. However, in the most active retail areas, wider sidewalks (e.g., up to 20 feet) may be desirable.

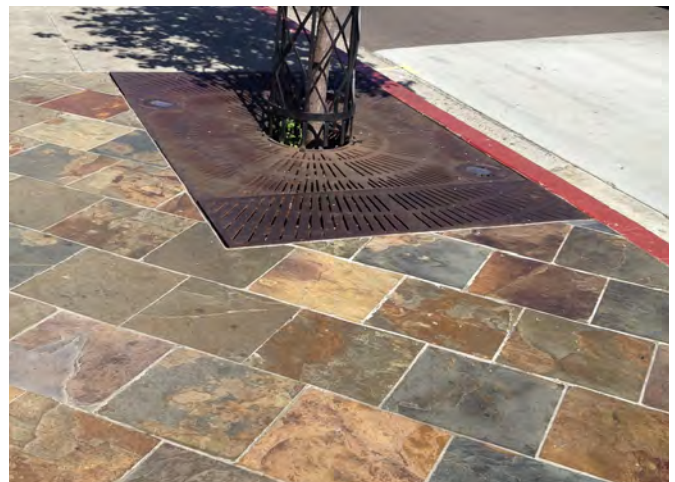
- 4.3.9.2 In areas where increasing sidewalk width is difficult because of pre-existing development, require either acquisition of additional space by narrowing the street cross-section or require new development to implement increased setbacks.
- 4.3.9.3 Implement a consistent sidewalk paving material, color, surface finish, and paving/scoring pattern to establish a unified character and identity with new sidewalk projects, as well as the preservation and re-setting of original sidewalk contractor date stamps.
- 4.3.9.4 Incorporate higher quality paving materials, such as the red brick used in the Hillcrest core, where there is a desire to establish a distinct



Sidewalks in commercial and mixed-use areas should be maintained to accommodate pedestrians and promote walkability.



Sidewalk cafes are popular in Uptown and are an important element of the interface between the public and private realm.



High quality paving materials should be used to establish district identity.

CROSSWALKS

identity for a street or district. Materials may be used for the public sidewalk as long as it is applied to a minimum of a full block face (i.e., paving treatment should wrap around the block from alley to alley).

- 4.3.9.5 Include paving materials (e.g., unit pavers, porous pavement, etc.) in the amenity zone that reduce stormwater runoff and enhance street tree health and viability. Ensure that materials conform to the paving pattern established in the sidewalk pedestrian zone.



Pedestrian crosswalks should be designed to enhance the designated pedestrian area within the street.

CROSSWALKS

Sidewalks are the primary component of the public realm, but equally important are the pedestrian street crossings where pedestrians and motor vehicles cross paths, especially in commercial and mixed use areas.

Intersections are the places where the vehicular traffic and pedestrian traffic overlap and, as a result, the potential for conflict exists. In order to reduce potential conflict and ensure pedestrian safety, it is important that pedestrian crossings be designed as integral and critical components of the street system.

POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.10 Provide crosswalks for enhanced pedestrian safety at key intersections

- 4.3.10.1 Design pedestrian crossings to achieve the following four objectives:
 - Announce the presence of a crossing zone;
 - Slow vehicular traffic as it passes through the crossing zone;
 - Minimize the crossing time/distance for pedestrians; and
 - Demarcate a clear and unambiguous zone for pedestrians.
- 4.3.10.2 Minimize curb-to-curb crossing distance in order to reduce pedestrian exposure to traffic.



Mid-block crosswalks may be considered where serve an important pedestrian linkage.

Design strategies to reduce crossing distances include:

- Reducing the number and/or width of approach lanes to an intersection,
 - Eliminating turn lanes,
 - Reducing the radius of the intersection curb returns.
- 4.3.10.3 Use high visibility markings to delineate pedestrian crosswalks, both to alert drivers of pedestrian presence, and to guide pedestrians to use only designated crossing points. In areas with particularly heavy pedestrian and vehicle traffic, pedestrian-activated flashing pavement markings can be used to further

enhance pedestrian visibility during evening hours.

- 4.3.10.4 Use special paving treatments, such as brick, colored concrete, and pavers, in conjunction with crosswalk markings, to enhance the visibility of crosswalks, improve aesthetics, and serve as a visual and tactile cue to drivers that there is pedestrian activity
- 4.3.10.5 Use crosswalk materials that are durable, safe for pedestrian use, and stable enough to accommodate vehicle traffic without shifting or settling.
- 4.3.10.6 Provide curb ramps at all intersections to assure accessibility for all users.
- 4.3.10.7 Consider adding mid-block pedestrian crosswalks in areas with heavy traffic, where pedestrian crossing is currently considered unsafe, and where a dedicated pedestrian crossing is needed to support community connectivity. Examples include crossings across 6th Avenue to Balboa Park from Bankers Hill/ Park West

STREETSCAPE AND FURNISHINGS

As the primary public space throughout the community, it is important that the pedestrian realm is managed not just for circulation purposes, but is also appropriately furnished and maintained. An attractive, well-designed public realm not only contributes to increased pedestrian activity, but also to increased community pride and sense of place. In order to transform the public streetscape from a transportation facility to vibrant public open space, it is important to add facilities and amenities that help to animate the pedestrian realm, support public use, and contribute to the social and economic vitality of the community's neighborhoods.

Street furnishings encompass seating, such as benches, street lighting, bicycle racks, newspaper racks, refuse containers, and tree grates. Furnishings refer to those maintained as part of the public realm, rather than those maintained by individual



Pedestrian "countdown" signals should be installed at all signalized intersections to improve pedestrian comfort, such as Fifth Avenue.

businesses. Typically a suite of coordinated furnishings are chosen that represent district identity and serve passersby that are utilizing the sidewalk, and also create a sense of place that can be viewed by through traffic. Wayfinding signage may also be included as part of the streetscape elements. These are generally located in the amenity zone and in the frontage zone, adjacent to the building face. It is the goal that furnishings as a whole do not impede the circulation function of the pedestrian realm.

POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.11 Add streetscape improvements and furnishings that contribute to the public realm's attractiveness

- 4.3.11.1 General standards for streetscape furnishings:
 - Locate street furnishings along the streetside edge of the sidewalk or adjacent to the building face (if present) so as to not interfere with pedestrian circulation.
 - Maintain a consistent design character along the length of a block and on a district level through coordinated design, type, color and material of street furniture.
 - Landscape the public streetscape with street trees and other vegetation as a means of adding color and visual interest, softening the urban edges, providing

STREETSCAPE & FURNISHINGS

shade, and assisting with air quality and stormwater management.

4.3.11.2 Seating:

- Provide benches and other forms of seating (e.g. low walls, planter edges, wide steps) throughout the community, particularly in pedestrian-oriented commercial areas and near transit stops.
- Provide benches in sidewalks, plazas, parks, transit stops, and other high pedestrian use areas to further promote pedestrian use.
- Benches should be fixed in place, constructed of durable and low-maintenance materials, and reflect the design character of the area.



The combination of streetscape elements create a distinct sense of place for neighborhoods throughout Uptown.



Street furnishings should communicate a consistent overall style and aesthetic

- Encourage use of individual, movable chairs, such as is done in Little Italy, where there is an organization that is willing to manage their use (e.g., secure the seats at night). Such seating provides appealing flexibility that can enhance public use.

4.3.11.3 Street Lighting:

- Use a consistent style and size of pole and fixture within a given district or street to create a unifying scheme of illumination that is appropriate to the scale of the street and the level and character of nighttime activity.
- Coordinate the pole and fixture design with other street furniture and amenities to establish an attractive and unified design character.
- Maintain a low height of light fixtures to establish a pedestrian-scaled environment and to minimize light spill into adjoining properties.
- Encourage the placement of lights in close proximity so that the illumination standard may be reduced and provide appropriate levels of illumination.
- Select light poles with armatures that allow for the hanging of banners or other amenities (e.g., hanging flower baskets, artwork, etc.).
- Place street lighting to focus on illuminating the pedestrian zone (e.g., sidewalks, paseos, plazas, alleys, transit stops), rather than the vehicular zone (i.e., the street). Minimize the use of tall, cobra-head lighting to the degree possible.
- Select color-balanced lamps that provide a warm white illumination and realistic color rendition are recommended.

4.3 STREETS & THE PUBLIC REALM

STREETSCAPE & FURNISHINGS

4.3.11.4 Bicycle Racks:

- Place bicycle racks in prominent locations that are clearly visible to cyclists from the street and from adjoining buildings and public spaces, distributed at regular intervals along the length of the block for optimal convenience.
- Place bicycle racks so that parked bicycles do not block the travel path of pedestrians, infringe upon seating areas, or obstruct ingress and egress to parked vehicles.
- Place bicycle rack within curb extensions, as long as the furnishings do not interfere with pedestrian circulation. Include the provision of bicycle parking as a consideration for designing curb extensions.
- Locate bicycle parking in the form of bike corrals within the on-street parking zone when space in the public amenity/furnishings zone of the sidewalk is crowded or insufficient to meet demand.
- Design bicycle racks to provide a secure system that reassures bicycle owners and encourage more frequent bicycle use.
- Coordinate bicycle racks with other street furnishings. They may also be an opportunity for public art, or to highlight community identity.



Street lighting should be incorporated into areas of high pedestrian activity.



Bicycle racks should be durable and located outside of the pedestrian realm.

4.3.11.5 Newspaper Racks:

- Consolidate newspaper racks into consistently designed newspaper boxes to reduce the physical and visual clutter of individually placed newspaper boxes.
- Prohibit the clustering and chaining of news boxes to trees, street signs, and utility poles.
- Locate newspaper racks generally near intersections and co-located with transit stops, to provide an amenity to transit riders.



Bicycle parking within the parking lane is ideal for accommodating bicycle racks within the public right-of-way.

STREETSCAPE & FURNISHINGS



Tree grates should be used in commercial and mixed-use areas to reflect street and neighborhood character and protect trees.



Wayfinding signage may be in the form of permanent installations or seasonal banners meant to mark neighborhood identity or events.

4.3.11.6 Refuse Containers:

- Locate refuse containers regularly at intersections, near major building entrances, near bus stops, and adjacent to outdoor seating areas.
- Choose containers that include an area for recycling, prevent wind and rain from entering the container, facilitate convenient access to the liner, and have the option of being anchored to the pavement.
- Coordinate refuse containers with the overall style and aesthetic of other street furnishings.

4.3.11.7 Tree Grates, Tree Guards, and Planting Strips

- Included tree grates in commercial areas and areas with high pedestrian activity to protect trees and reduce pedestrian safety hazards. In areas with lower levels of pedestrian activity, alternatives such as accent planting, decomposed granite or pavers, may be employed instead of tree grates.
- Coordinate tree grate design and materials with overall character of the street and neighborhood and other street furnishings.
- Choose grates that allow for integrated tree guards, decorative lighting, electrical fixtures and auxiliary power (for special events, holiday lighting, or maintenance).
- To maintain long-term health, locate street trees in tree grates and/or within paved areas planted in a structural soil medium that extends from the street curb to the full width of the adjacent property line or, if narrower, the extent of the mature canopy. This larger growing area improves a tree’s stability and lifespan by ensuring that its roots are properly aerated and have room to grow.
- Planting strips are encouraged rather than tree grates in primarily residential areas and areas with lighter pedestrian traffic.

4.3.11.8 Signage and Wayfinding Systems

As a significant destination for visitors, consideration should be given to developing a wayfinding system that can assist both San Diego residents and out-of-town visitors in navigating the community. A wayfinding system would:

- Provide directional and informational signs that are attractive, clear, and consistent in theme, location, and design.
- Identify key historic, cultural, civic, and shopping destinations and facilities, e.g. public parking structures, parks and open space areas, transit routes, etc.

4.3 STREETS & THE PUBLIC REALM

STREETSCAPE & FURNISHINGS

- Be co-located with other streetscape elements (e.g. lighting) where possible to reduce visual clutter.
- Have a distinctive design that contributes to the community's identity and unique sense of place.

4.3.11.9 Transit Stops

- Design transit shelters to be consistent in scale and character to the surrounding built context and furnishing palette.
- Highlight transit stops with prominent signage and all pertinent route and schedule information, including major connecting service.
- Equip transit stops with shelters that provide seating and protection from the elements, when feasible. This would be coordinated with MTA and discussed in the Mobility Element.

4.3.11.10 Parking Meters and Public Utilities

- Install multi-space and pay-and-display parking meters that require one meter for multiple parking spaces. This type of meter system reduces clutter within the pedestrian zone, facilitates on-street parking, and increases parking revenues.
- Undergrounded utilities whenever feasible, particularly on commercial streets, in order to reduce conflict with pedestrian movement and improve the aesthetic character of the public realm. Undergrounding projects should maximize space available for street tree planting.
- Locate handholes, vaults, and other utility access points out of the sidewalk area, and in the private parcel area.
- When located above grade, utilities should be located outside of the sidewalk pedestrian zone and designed so as not to obstruct a clear path of travel.



Transit stops may incorporate public art elements to express community identity

4.3.11.11 Streetscape Improvements in Residential Areas

Residential streets generally do not have the same degree of pedestrian activity or need the level streetscape furnishings as streets in commercial and mixed-use areas. The primary intent is creating a safe, comfortable, and attractive pedestrian environment that accommodates the needs of local residents. The following guidelines apply to streetscape improvements in primarily residential areas:

- Ensure that residential streets have continuous, well-maintained sidewalks on both sides of the street.
- Pave sidewalks with grey concrete or match the tone and material of adjacent properties and that of the overall neighborhood character.
- Include a planting strip between the curb and sidewalk to provide a buffer between pedestrians and the street edge.
- Where necessary, locate street furnishings adjacent to the sidewalk so to not interfere with pedestrian circulation.
- Underground overhead utilities to eliminate visual clutter and conflicts with street trees.
- Include unique neighborhood identity monuments or other features that contribute to neighborhood character in the planting strip or median, if present.

STREETSCAPE & FURNISHINGS



In residential areas, a planting strip should be included between the curb and sidewalk to create a buffer pedestrians and street.

4.3.11.12 Street Lighting in Residential Areas:

Street lighting should be considered as a way to promote walkability, enhance public safety and contribute to neighborhood identity in residential areas.

- Include street lights design that reflect the character of the street and the neighborhood and create a visual hierarchy relative to the scale of the street. Include a single consistent style and size of fixture should be used along a given street.
- Select light fixtures that are low in height (e.g., 12' to 16') to establish a pedestrian-scaled environment and to minimize light spill into adjoining properties.
- Select lights that are color-balanced to not cast a tint, and are cut-off to focus light down toward the ground and shield areas not intended to be illuminated.
- Match levels of illumination in response to the type and level of anticipated activity, without over illuminating the area. (i.e., bright, uniform lighting of all public right-of-ways is not desirable). Lower levels of illumination are generally appropriate for residential neighborhoods.

URBAN FORESTRY

Street trees can contribute significantly to the character, identity, and comfort of the community's streets. Trees can contribute to the spatial definition of the street, providing both a comfortable sense of scale and enclosure to the public realm. They can add shade which contributes to pedestrian comfort, and color, texture and pattern that contribute to the street's visual quality. They also can contribute to improved air quality and reduced stormwater runoff. Uptown, which currently has a relatively limited amount of coordinated street tree planting, can benefit from a more coordinated and comprehensive street tree program. Palm trees are the most frequently used street trees in the community. Although they do not provide the benefits of canopy trees, they serve as a character defining feature of the community and contribute well to street definition and identity.

POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.12 Utilize street trees to reinforce neighborhood character and provide ecological benefits

- 4.3.12.1 Develop Neighborhood Street Tree Masterplans for each of Uptown's neighborhoods to identify a street tree planting strategy tailored to the needs and character of each neighborhood. In order to establish the identity of a particular street or area, a single predominant species should be selected, and consistent size and spacing used to create a recognizable pattern and character.
- 4.3.12.2 Engage community members from each neighborhood in the process of identifying which streets should be addressed, what the objectives for tree planting should be, and which tree species are most appropriate.
- 4.3.12.3 Use Neighborhood Street Tree Masterplans to make final determination of which particular species should be used on given streets or category of streets. On streets which already have a predominant tree species, infill planting should be used to reinforce character.



Street trees create a positive streetscape environment and define neighborhood character, such as on Fifth Street in Hillcrest.

4.3.12.4 Establish a citywide Street Tree Program that supports community implementation of street tree plans once developed, and empowers community members to get actively involved in greening their own streets.

4.3.12.5 Base development of Neighborhood Street Tree Master-plans on the City of San Diego Street Tree Selection Guide, the source for tree species that are suitable for inclusion in the Master Plan. Specific trees that are on the City's list and have been identified preliminarily due to their presence in the community include:

- Mexican Fan Palm (*Washingtonia robusta*)
- Queen Palm (*Syagrus romanzoffianum*)
- Jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*)
- Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*)
- Fern Pine (*Podocarpus gracilior*)
- Silver Dollar Gum (*Eucalyptus polyanthemos*).
- Two species identified in the Uptown Community Plan (1988) are not on the City's approved list: Indian Fig (*Ficus nitida*) and Lemon Scented Gum (*Eucalyptus citriodora*)

4.3.12.6 Employ the following guidelines in selecting street trees and developing Neighborhood Street Tree Masterplans

- In order to support a comfortable pedestrian environment, street trees should have sufficient canopy to provide shading to the pedestrian zone. Spacing of trees will be dependent on species selected, but should be based on the ability to reasonably achieve shading of at least 50% of the public right-of-way within ten (10) years of planting, and provide a nearly continuous canopy at maturity.
- Street trees should have a high enough branching pattern and canopy—generally thirteen (13) feet or higher—so that trees do not obscure commercial signage and storefront windows or conflict with truck access.
- Tree species should be hearty and tolerant of urban conditions
- Tree species should be suited to the San Diego climate and not require significant water, pesticides, or fertilizer to maintain health
- Tree species should be structurally sound, and not have weak branching habits that result in broken and falling branches
- Native or naturalized tree species provide more suitable habitat and nesting for local birds and wildlife
- Trees that are overly messy (e.g., heavy shedding of bark, leaves or seed pods) or have invasive root systems that can heave sidewalks or break pipes should be avoided
- Tree species need to be chosen to avoid potential conflicts with overhead or underground utilities, or with adjacent structures
- Broad canopy type trees should be selected for streets that are particularly wide and/or where shade is desirable

COMMUNITY & NEIGHBORHOOD GATEWAYS

Recommended Street Tree Species



Mexican Fan Palm (*Washingtonia robusta*)



Jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*)



Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*)



Silver Dollar Gum (*Eucalyptus polyanthemus*)

- Tree canopies should not be so dense that they obscure views of the street from upper floor windows or obstruct filtered light from reaching the pedestrian zone
- Tree species that have distinctive flowers, bark, or other special characteristic are particularly effective on pedestrian-oriented streets
- Palm trees should only be used as design or character defining elements and should be restricted to the corners of intersections and major entry ways where their other limitations are less apparent.

COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD GATEWAYS

Gateways are already an important character-defining feature of the Uptown community with its prominent historic streetcar signs for Hillcrest, Mission Hills, University Heights, and El Cajon Boulevard. Smaller gateway signs are also located throughout the neighborhood, announcing neighborhood transitions. Incorporation of gateway elements should be considered at key points to announce the entry into a neighborhood or commercial district and alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians and the need to slow down. Gateways may demarcate key historic, cultural, civic, and shopping destinations.

POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.13 Provide gateway markers within the public realm to announce entry into distinct neighborhoods

- 4.3.13.1 Use gateway elements (e.g., markers, signs, etc.) to indicate at key neighborhood or commercial district entries to reinforce neighborhood or district identities.
- 4.3.13.2 Design gateway elements in a manner that reinforces neighborhood identity through the use of similar materials, historic features, and scale.
- 4.3.13.3 Appoint gateways with street furnishings that may encourage their development as a public gathering space.
- 4.3.13.4 Design gateways so that they may be experienced and viewed from multiple modes of transportation (i.e. pedestrian, bicyclists, vehicles)
- 4.3.13.5 New development in the vicinity of gateways should incorporate neighborhood identification, distinctive architecture, public art, right-of-way improvements that signify entry into the neighborhood.

ON-STREET PARKING



Community gateways should address multiple scales and incorporate elements of individual neighborhood identity.



Community gateways can be combined with public art and streetscape elements such as iconic planting.

ON-STREET PARKING

Parking throughout the community is a combination of on-street and off-street parking. On-street parking, located in the public realm, is an important component of a successful commercial and mixed use district that benefits visitors, merchants, and residents, by providing convenient access to adjacent uses, buffering pedestrians from moving traffic, calming traffic speeds, and increasing pedestrian activity on the street. On-street parking can play an important role in reducing demand for private, on-site parking that can drive up housing costs and adversely impact building and site design. Streets with wide curb-to-curb widths offer an opportunity

to provide more public parking, through the introduction of diagonal parking, which helps to calm traffic and reduce apparent street widths. This strategy has already been effectively used in areas of Bankers Hill/Park West, Hillcrest, and University Heights. It is important to ensure that on-street parking is aesthetically and functionally integrated into the design of the public realm. Off-street parking is discussed in Section 4.4: Development Form.

On-street parking can be configured as either parallel or diagonal spaces and angled parking can be configured as either "head in" or "back in" type spaces. Both parallel and angled configurations are good solutions in the right context. Generally, parallel parking is better for higher volume streets with faster moving traffic and limited right-of-way width. Angled parking works better on slower, lower-volume streets that have ample right-of-way.

Angled parking can provide more on-street parking than parallel parking within the same length of curb. This is particularly desirable in retail areas that have "main street" type storefronts and want to generate as much street activity as possible. The disadvantages of angled parking are that it requires more street width, it can create sight distance problems for cars backing out, and it can slow traffic flow.

The use of back-in (reverse) angled parking can overcome the sight distance concerns, and because of this is considered a safer solution for streets with bicyclists traveling adjacent to angled parking. However, it is a configuration that drivers are less familiar with so it requires some education and time for people to understand how it works.

POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.14 Implement measures to support on-street parking in neighborhood centers and residential areas

- 4.3.14.1 Provide on-street parking on all streets to support adjacent uses and enhance pedestrian safety and activity.
- 4.3.14.2 Include primarily parallel on-street parking on high-volume arterial and collector streets and

ON-STREET PARKING



Plantings within the parking lane contribute to streets' visual character and reduce the apparent width of the street and vehicular travel speeds.

angled parking on lower-speed and lower-volume streets.

- 4.3.14.3 Limit driveway curb cuts to the extent possible to maximize the curb length available for on-street parking. Driveway access should be provided through alleys or shared driveways.
- 4.3.14.4 Explore opportunities to incorporate reverse angle (i.e., back in) diagonal parking to improve safety for bicyclists, calm traffic and reduce conflicts with on-coming traffic. This is particularly appropriate in locations with generous street widths (50' or greater), where a narrower travel lane can accompany this configuration.
- 4.3.14.5 Avoid conflicts between front-in angled parking and marked bicycle lanes. In these locations, a six-foot buffer must be provided. Bicycle lanes may abut the parking area when back-in angled parking is used.
- 4.3.14.6 Use metered parking in commercial areas to provide reasonable short-term parking for retail customers and visitors while discouraging long-term resident and employee parking. Restrict time limits of 30 minutes or less to areas reserved for special, short-term, high-turnover parking such as passenger loading, convenience stores, dry cleaners, etc. Maximum

time limits should not exceed 2 hours where turnover of parking spaces is important to support nearby retail business.

- 4.3.14.7 Design parking space widths depending on the land use context and thoroughfare type, and the anticipated frequency of parking turnover. The preferred width of a parallel on-street parking lane is 7 feet.
- 4.3.14.8 Incorporate plantings into on-street parking areas to contribute to the visual character of the street and reduce the apparent width of the street and vehicular travel speeds. This includes:
 - a. "Tree islands" to be included within the parking lane at regular intervals along the block to reduce uninterrupted lengths of on-street parking.
 - b. Landscaped curb extensions at each end of the block
- 4.3.14.9 On-street motorcycle parking should be provided in prominent, well-lit locations. Motorcycle parking bays should be striped perpendicular to the sidewalk in the on-street parking lane.
- 4.3.14.10 In retail areas where pedestrian activity is heavy and sidewalk space limited, bike corrals may be used to include bicycle parking in the parking lane. Bike corrals should be delimited with bollards to protect bicycles and cyclists.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Sustainable design is encouraged throughout the community. In the public realm, sustainability guidelines apply to landscape and hardscape, and are related to an overall approach to providing sustainable infrastructure. All improvements in the public realm should contribute to a more energy- and resource-efficient future.



Drought-tolerant landscaping should be used in public realm landscaping to ensure consistency with sustainable development goals.



Permeable paving treatments are encouraged in areas of the public realm in both new construction and existing development.

POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.15 Encourage sustainable design in the public realm

4.3.15.1 Reuse and recycle construction and demolition materials for all new public realm construction, when feasible.

4.3.15.2 Use materials made from renewable sources when feasible.

4.3.15.3 Use regional and drought-resistant plant species in landscaping to reduce water consumption.

4.3.15.4 Use permeable or porous paving and landscape to treat and attenuate stormwater flow whenever feasible as a means of reducing stormwater runoff rates and volumes. Reference the City's Stormwater Standards manual for further guidance.

4.3.15.5 Employ energy-efficient strategies to conserve energy and reduce long-term costs, implemented for public utilities, including:

- Use of LED or Energy Star-certified lamps for all public realm lighting;
- Monitoring and limiting hours of illumination in public realm lighting to avoid waste;

- Incorporation of features such as solar panels and LED lights in transit shelters;
- Installation of pay-and-display solar powered parking.

4.3.15.6 Encourage street tree planting and other public realm landscaping as a strategy for:

- Reducing the build-up of surface temperatures in paving and buildings (i.e., the "urban heat island effect") and resulting need for air conditioning by shading heat absorptive surfaces.
- Reducing stormwater runoff and improving water quality through the combination of foliage cover, pervious surfaces, and evapotranspiration.
- Improving air quality by removing carbon dioxide (CO₂), other gaseous pollutants, and particulate matter from the atmosphere.