1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE
1.2 COMMUNITY PLANNING FRAMEWORK
1.3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK
1.4 COMMUNITY PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES
1.5 PLANNING PROCESS
1.6 ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN AND PLAN ORGANIZATION

INTRODUCTION

North Park is a dynamic urban community located in the central core of the City of San Diego. Originally settled at the turn of the 20th century, North Park has evolved into a community of thriving neighborhoods with a diversity of housing, strong commercial districts, and a growing arts community. The North Park Community Plan strives to reflect and protect North Park's uniqueness while planning for future growth in the community.

The North Park Community Plan is an update of the 1986 Greater North Park Community Plan which was preceded by the 1970 Park North-East Community Plan and the 1969 North Park Commercial Area Plan. A component of San Diego's General Plan, the North Park Community Plan is a guide for how the community will grow and develop over 20 to 30 years. The plan includes specific goals and recommendations regarding the use and development of land and addresses mobility, economic prosperity, public facilities, conservation, open space and recreation. The plan also envisions a sustainable community that preserves historic resources and North Park's unique aesthetic character.

1.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE

COMMUNITY SETTING

The community of North Park encompasses approximately 1,980 acres located in the central portion of the City of San Diego (Figure 1-1). North Park is bordered by the communities of Uptown on the west, Mission Valley on the north, the Mid-City communities of Normal Heights and City Heights on the east, and Golden Hill to the south. Balboa Park, the 1,400 acre urban cultural park, abuts the community on the southwest.

North Park is defined by its location on a mesa top, intersected with canyons and bounded by hillside areas along its northern boundary adjacent to Mission Valley and its southeastern boundary adjacent to Golden Hill. The majority of North Park's topography is relatively flat or gently sloping.

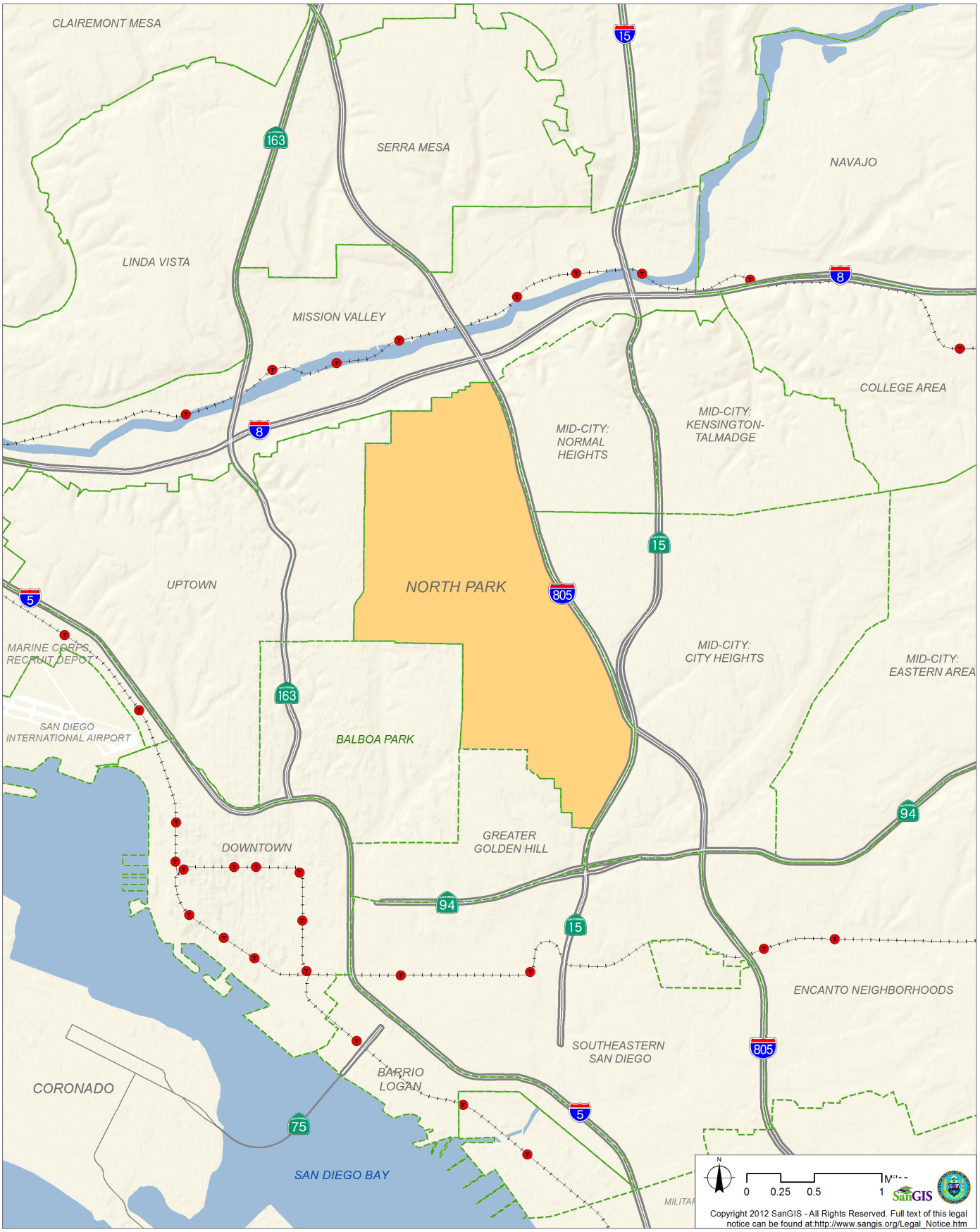
North Park is one of the older urbanized communities in the City of San Diego with original subdivisions being recorded just after the turn of the 20th century. The built environment of North Park includes vibrant commercial corridors surrounded by multi-family residential single-family neighborhoods concentrated in the northern and southern portions of the community.

North Park's transportation system is based on a strong grid street pattern that facilitates multi-modal circulation. The community is traversed by two major east-west streets, University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard. Adams Avenue, another east-west street, serves the neighborhoods in northern portion of the community. Park Boulevard, which is the community's western boundary, as well as 30th Street and Texas Street are north-south streets of significance within the community. These major streets are characterized by streetcar-era commercial establishments dating as far back as the 1910s and auto-oriented development from the 1940s and 1950s.

North Park is a community of historic neighborhoods.

The North Park Theater, built in 1923, is model example of North Park's redevelopment and revitalization efforts.

Figure 1-1: *Community Location*



HISTORIC CONTEXT

North Park traces its development history to shortly after the turn of the 20th century when land in the vicinity of 30th Street and University Avenue was subdivided. The name "North Park" was derived from the fact that it was located to the north of "South Park," which was then centered around 30th and Beech Streets.

Residential development during the first half of the 20th century was made possible by a streetcar system which accommodated movement within and outside the community. The streetcar system also led to the development of active commercial districts along University Avenue, El Cajon Boulevard, and Park Boulevard. Although the streetcar system was dismantled in the 1940s, North Park continued to grow after World War II and became a suburban shopping district. However, with the development of freeways and shopping centers in Mission Valley in the 1960s, North Park evolved into a bedroom community with a population primarily dependent upon other areas of the City for jobs, services and goods. It was during this time that North Park entered a period of decline with failing business districts and deteriorating neighborhoods.

The 1990s brought the start of a renaissance to North Park. Residential areas stabilized with reinvestment and a renewed interest in the preservation of North Park's historic architecture. Commercial areas also saw a revival and an eclectic arts district began to emerge. The revitalization of North Park continues to enhance its diverse and vibrant character. See the Historic Preservation Element for more information related to the community's history and development periods.

Bungalow courtyard homes are a characteristic aspect of North Park's residential neighborhoods.

NORTH PARK NEIGHBORHOODS

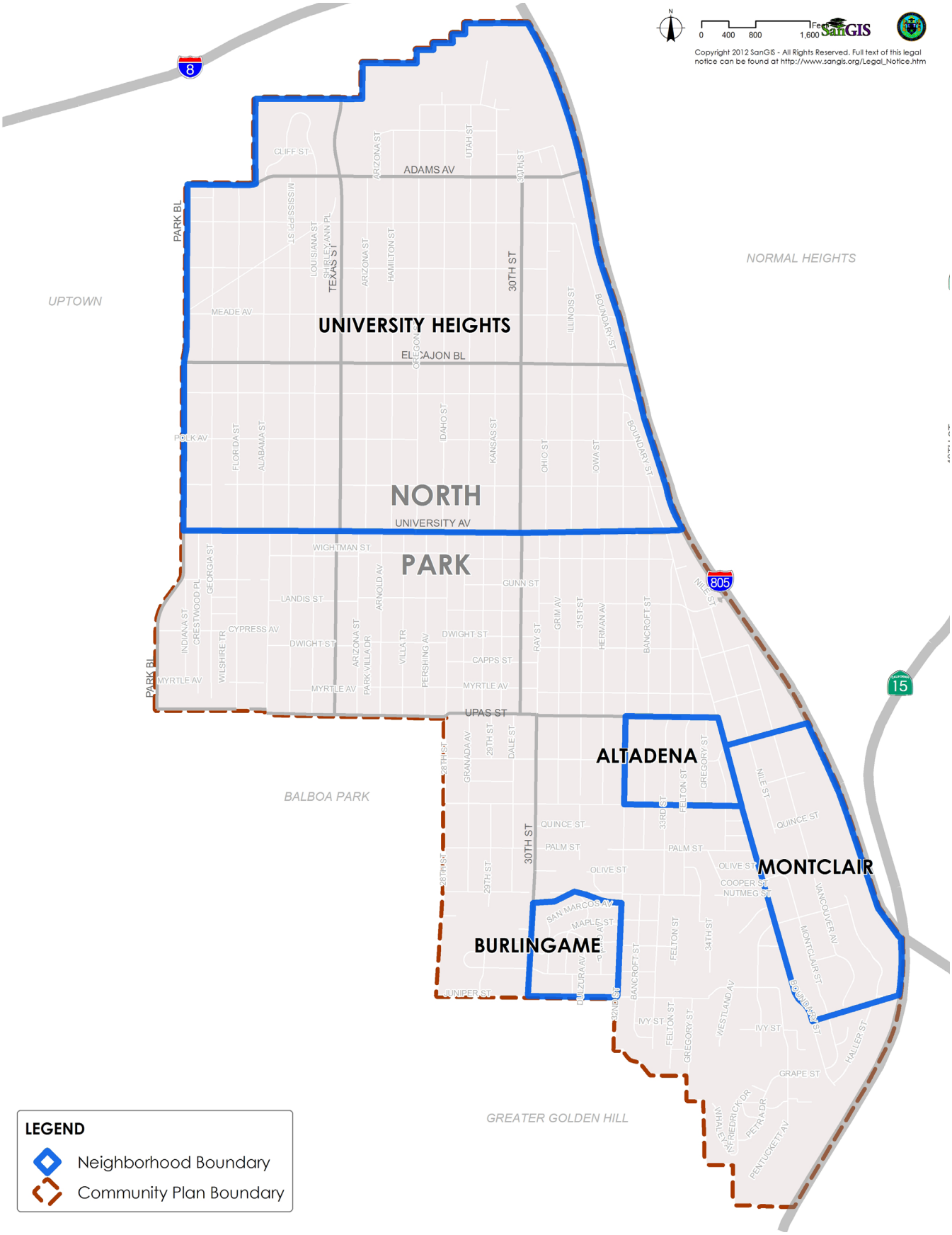
Several neighborhoods exist within the North Park community (see Figure 1-2). While neighborhood boundaries are not officially defined, they are illustrated in this plan and are based upon factors such as historical documents, county assessor's parcel maps, property deeds, subdivision maps, police beat maps, the existence of active neighborhood organizations, and residents' perceptions about where they live within North Park. Through the years residents within these neighborhoods have come together to focus on their local needs, improvement opportunities, and to celebrate their local identity within the North Park community. Although Figure 1-2 shows several active neighborhoods within the community, other neighborhoods can emerge as local residents in other areas of the North Park community organize and promote their own neighborhood identity.

River rock column monuments depicting an ostrich symbol are identity markers for the University Heights neighborhood.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The population of North Park was 45,728 persons as of 2015. Residents represent all economic and ethnic backgrounds. Based on the build-out of the community plan, the future population of North Park community is estimated to be approximately 70,000.

Figure 1-2: *North Park Neighborhoods*



1.2 COMMUNITY PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The North Park Community Plan provides a long range guide for the community's future physical development. The community plan update process started in 2009 with an intensive public outreach effort centered around community meetings. These meetings included stakeholder committees, neighborhood associations, workshops on key topics, a multi-day charrette and meetings of the North Park Planning Committee, the City's recognized community planning group.

This Community Plan considers North Park's setting and history as it makes recommendations for future development. North Park's location on a broad mesa interspersed with many natural or semi-developed canyons allows a distinctive combination of outward views and interaction with open space along most community edges. These characteristics also provide a sense of seclusion from adjacent communities not uncommon for San Diego's neighborhoods. Adjacent freeways reinforce this relationship as they have usually followed canyons and other low points in San Diego. North Park is also adjacent to the northern and eastern sides of Balboa Park and all its resources.

North Park has been part of one of the longest historical development periods in the region due to its central location and accommodative zoning. Early development in San Diego radiated out from Downtown along streetcar lines. Commercial districts formed along these arterial streets and at major crossings. A legacy remains of traditional storefronts uniquely suited to small and sole-proprietor businesses. The concentrations of retail and employment uses nearby in Downtown and Mission Valley draw certain retail formats and employment away from these communities. The community's development history has created a range of building forms and architectural styles as well as historic resources in need of preservation. It has also in some locations resulted in awkward scale transitions and juxtaposition of building styles.

A grid pattern of streets enhances connectivity and promotes walkability in North Park, yet traffic congestion occurs where street widths narrow or access is funneled due to canyon and freeway interfaces. Aging right-of-way infrastructure often needs to be upgraded and/or replaced.

North Park and adjacent communities Uptown and Golden Hill share direct access to Balboa Park.

Shared transportation networks: Mid-City Rapid Bus connects North Park and surrounding community residents to regional transportation network.

A 3-day public charrette focused on urban design, mobility, recreation, and historic resources to develop ideas for the community plan.

1.3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan sets out a citywide long-range vision and policy framework to guide future development, provide public services, and maintain the qualities that define San Diego. A set of overall guiding principles were established to guide the formation of policy for the General Plan (see box at right). Whereas the prior Progress Guide and General Plan which focused on how to develop vacant land, the current General Plan focuses on how to design infill development and reinvest in existing communities. A key component guiding new development is the City of Villages Strategy which proposes that growth be directed into pedestrian-friendly mixed-use activity centers linked to an improved regional transit system.

Regional and local investments that promote transit and bicycle use support this strategy. By increasing transportation choices, a reduction in overall vehicle miles traveled can be achieved which is a key contributor to broader sustainable development initiatives. Better mobility options are also needed for those who cannot drive, do not own a motor vehicle, or prefer to reduce their dependence on the automobile. Public health benefits can also be achieved with any reduction in air pollutants associated with alternative modes of transportation such as walking, bicycling, utilizing public transit.

The North Park Community Plan is a component of the General Plan. It is intended to further express the General Plan policies for the North Park community through the provision of more site-specific recommendations that implement goals and policies, and to guide zoning and the Capital Improvement Plan. The General Plan and the North Park Community Plan work together to establish the framework for growth and development in the community.

Some specific General Plan policies are referenced within the Community Plan to emphasize their significance for North Park, but all applicable General Plan policies may be cited in conjunction with the community plan whether or not they are specifically referenced. Both the General Plan and the North Park Community Plan should be consulted for guidance regarding land use planning matters in the community. While the Community Plan addresses specific community needs, its policies and recommendations remain in harmony with the General Plan, citywide policies, and other community plans.

General Plan Guiding Principles

1. An open space network formed by parks, canyons, river valleys, habitats, beaches and ocean;
2. Diverse residential communities formed by the open space network;
3. Compact and walkable mixed-use villages of different scales within communities;
4. Employment centers for a strong economy;
5. An integrated regional transportation network of walkways, bikeways, transit, roadways, and freeways that efficiently link communities and villages to each other and to employment centers;
6. High quality, affordable, and well-maintained public facilities to serve the City's population, workers, and visitors;
7. Historic districts and sites that respect our heritage;
8. Balanced communities that offer opportunities for all San Diegans and share citywide responsibilities;
9. A clean and sustainable environment; and
10. A high aesthetic standard.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) is intended to ensure the City of San Diego achieves Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reductions through local action. The CAP identifies five primary strategies implemented by a number of targets and actions which together will meet

GHG reduction target for 2020, as well as an interim target set for 2035 that is on the trajectory to the 2050 statewide goal established in former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's Executive Order S-3-05. One of the primary strategies identified in the CAP is to implement bicycling, walking, transit and land use strategies that promote increased capacity for transit-supportive residential and employment densities and provide more walking and bicycling opportunities in these areas. The North Park Community Plan takes a multi-modal approach to improving circulation and access through and within North Park. These mobility policies and recommendations implement the General Plan's Mobility Element and ultimately propose a refined mobility strategy specifically for North Park that enhances transit stations as well as pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, focused along the major commercial corridors and in village areas.

LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

The City's Land Development Code contains planning, zoning, subdivision and building regulations which implement the policies of the General Plan and community plans. Located in the City's Municipal Code, the Land Development Code includes regulations for areas throughout the City.

IMPACT FEE STUDY

The North Park Impact Fee Study (IFS) identifies public facilities needed to maintain existing levels of service within the community. The IFS is based on the policies and build-out assumptions of the Community Plan. The IFS establishes the collection of Development Impact Fees (DIF) to mitigate the impact of new development through provisions of a portion of the financing needed for public facilities identified in the IFS. The DIF does not fund facilities to serve the existing population. Rather, it is a mechanism to mitigate the impact of new development on the community.

MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) is a comprehensive, long-term habitat conservation planning program that is designed to preserve native habitat for multiple species and is implemented by the City's MSCP Subarea Plan. The MSCP identifies areas for directed development and areas to be conserved in perpetuity, referred to as the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA), to achieve a workable balance between smart growth and species conservation. A portion of the open space lands within North Park are within the MHPA. These open space lands are addressed in the Conservation and Recreation Elements of the Community Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared in concert with the North Park Community Plan pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to address potential environmental impacts that would result from implementation of the Community Plan. Where impacts were identified, measures to reduce or avoid impacts were identified and incorporated into the community plan to the extent feasible.

As development is proposed in North Park, the City will prepare an Initial Study in accordance with CEQA to determine whether the development is covered by the community plan EIR. The Initial Study will determine whether the potential impacts associated with a proposed project were examined by the community plan EIR. If additional environmental impacts are anticipated, additional environmental review may be required.

RELATED PLANS AND STUDIES

In addition to the General Plan and documents outlined above, a number of plans, "legacy" studies and other efforts have been prepared for North Park. These range from design guidelines to parking management plans and other studies. Although most of these studies are not officially adopted City documents, they offer a wealth of analysis and public deliberation on planning issues and have been used as appropriate in the preparation of the North Park Community Plan.

1.4 COMMUNITY PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Through public outreach and input from the Community Plan Update Advisory Committee, North Park Planning Committee, and members of the community the following issues related to community development have been identified:

- A strong desire to preserve community character including historical, architectural, and cultural resources.
- Maintenance of intact single-family neighborhoods.
- Creating a community focus on sustainability.
- Rehabilitation of housing and commercial structures through adaptive reuse.
- Promotion of arts and culture.
- Management of commercial areas to assure minimal negative effects on adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Expansion and enhancement of a multi-modal transportation network that includes bicycling, walking, and transit use.
- Identification of additional recreational opportunities.
- Compatibility of new development with existing neighborhoods.

North Park's Guiding Principles, shown at right, form the 'heart' of the Community Plan. They have been developed through an extensive public involvement process and describe the broad direction and vision for North Park. They also form the basis for developing the goals and recommendations of the Plan.

Guiding Principles for North Park:

1. A diversity of housing types with varying levels of affordability.
2. Businesses that contribute to the vitality and growth of the community in harmony with residential neighborhoods.
3. A circulation system that offers safe, multi-modal access between jobs, shopping, recreation, businesses, schools, and residential neighborhoods.
4. A community that is a center for creativity and enriched by public art.
5. Employment and mixed-use centers that allow North Park residents to work where they live through the attraction of new businesses and higher paying jobs.
6. A high level of public facilities that not only meet the needs of the community, but serve to enhance community identity.
7. A community that fosters the expansion of recreational opportunities through traditional and innovative ways.
8. Open space resources that are managed and maintained.
9. Sustainable residential neighborhoods and business districts.
10. Cultural and historic resources that are respected and preserved through historic designations and adaptive reuse.

1.5 PLANNING PROCESS

The North Park Community Plan is the result of an extensive community outreach process. A community plan update advisory committee was formed to guide the process, identify issues and review the draft plan. The North Park Community Plan Update Advisory Committee (CPUAC) was made up of members of the North Park Planning Committee and other interested community members, property owners and stakeholders. The Committee met regularly during the update and all meetings of the committee were open to the public. Public workshops and an intensive three-day charrette were also held to solicit community ideas and comments. The Community Plan represents a culmination hundreds of hours of thoughtful consideration and review by an engaged citizenry.

1.6 ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN AND PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Community Plan is not a static document and should be continually monitored to respond to unanticipated changes affecting the community. Any proposed changes to the community plan or community plan amendments should be carefully reviewed for consistency with the vision, values, goals, and policies of the North Park Community Plan and General Plan.

The Urban Design and Arts and Culture Elements of the community plan place an emphasis on North Park as a center for arts and cuture.

The Community Plan is organized into ten elements and supporting appendices. Each element contains the overarching goals for that subject. Each of the goals relate to one or more of the Community Plan's Guiding Principles. Goals are followed by a context discussion, broken down by topic area. Finally, each element provides specific recommendations for North Park which provide a specific action or strategy to achieve a goal. The ten elements are patterned after the General Plan and include:

1. Land Use
2. Mobility
3. Urban Design
4. Economic Prosperity
5. Public Facilities, Services & Safety
6. Recreation
7. Sustainability and Conservation
8. Noise and Light Pollution
9. Historic Preservation
10. Arts and Culture

Following the ten elements, the Community Plan concludes with an Implementation chapter. This chapter identifies the variety of tools available to implement community plan goals and recommendations. It also contains an action matrix containing specific actions needed to implement the plan. Appendices, though not adopted City policy, provide background materials used in the preparation of the Community Plan.