



ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

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- 5.1 Commercial Districts
- 5.2 Commercial Area Revitalization

INTRODUCTION

Economic activity within Golden Hill is an important pursuit, providing goods, services, and jobs geared toward community needs while also providing a contribution to the City's economy. Economic development activities can maintain the vibrancy of the community's commercial districts and promote revitalization where it is needed. Economic development efforts should be coordinated and sustained over time to be most effective.

The community's estimated workforce included approximately 2,300 total jobs in 2012. Of these:

- 960 are within government;
- 720 are within private sector businesses; and
- 620 are held by self-employed persons.¹

Golden Hill is a community with a range of incomes, including lower income households. The community's demographics can also support a diverse range of businesses. From 1990 to 2012, the community experienced a sales increase in the food and beverage services retail categories. During this same time period, sales in other retail categories declined². This decline indicates that Golden Hill residents are shopping outside the community. Future growth can be expected within the hospitality and leisure sector, composed of lodging, entertainment, food services, and beverage services. Continued growth in the food and beverage categories is expected to contribute most of this sector's growth. However, it is as important to retain and promote the growth of businesses within other retail categories to provide a diverse range of businesses that serve the community's broader needs.

¹ San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) employment projections – Series 12 Forecast.

² MuniServices, LLC, the City of San Diego's sales tax consultant's data research.



GOALS

- Vibrant neighborhood commercial districts where residents can purchase a significant share of their basic goods and services.
- Increased aggregate community buying power.
- Commercial districts that reflect a distinctive community identity of heritage preservation and awareness, and expression of local arts and culture.
- Attractive commercial developments that increase the number of small businesses and provide job opportunities within the community.
- Provision of adequate parking, bicycle, and transit access to serve commercial districts.
- Maintenance and improvement of the aesthetics of commercial districts and businesses, where needed, through street tree plantings, timely building maintenance, and litter and graffiti removal.

COMMUNITY BUSINESS DATA

Retail

- Nearly 240,000 square feet of existing retail space
- Retail lease rates 28% higher than the citywide average
- A low 0.4% retail vacancy rate compared to 4.3% citywide
- Higher lease rates and low vacancy rates indicate support for additional retail space

Office

- Nearly 139,000 square feet of existing office space
- Office lease rates 60% lower than the Citywide average

Industrial

- Nearly 103,000 square feet of existing light industrial space
- A 0% vacancy rate in industrial/flex space compared to a 10.5% vacancy rate Citywide
- The light industrial businesses are engaged in warehousing, manufacturing and providing services

Source: The CoStar Group (2012)

5.1 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Golden Hill is predominantly a residential community with commercial uses, including traditional corner stores interspersed within neighborhoods, centrally located to support the community. Historically, commercial development was concentrated along former streetcar lines, which resulted in several linear commercial nodes that form districts with a “Main Street” character (refer to Land Use Element Figure 2-2, Commercial Districts).

The community’s commercial districts are centrally located with convenient pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access. They are intended to provide opportunities for businesses that serve community needs for goods and services in a clean and attractive pedestrian-oriented setting. The commercial districts are also intended to provide opportunities for artistic expression and entertainment along with small-scale spaces for public gathering. Pedestrian access and comfort should be enhanced where needed by planting street trees, repairing sidewalks, and maintaining a clear pedestrian path of travel, as well as improving the appearance of storefronts.

Commercial uses are predominantly located within buildings that are smaller-scale and have limited or no off-street parking. These traditional storefronts are uniquely suited to small and sole-proprietor businesses. Common design elements, such as generous window areas, high ceiling heights and longer storefront depths, contribute to successful retailing and small business development. Storefront commercial spaces have been successfully renovated to accommodate new businesses in locations throughout the community. It is important to maintain the viability of existing storefront commercial spaces and for new developments to provide similar configurations and design elements to support Golden Hill’s commercial districts.

Independent local businesses are valued by the community. They provide growth of the local economy, expand consumer choice, support entrepreneurship and provide a unique character to Golden Hill's commercial districts. Businesses in Golden Hill draw customers from a broader area due to the popularity of local establishments and the appeal of traditional walkable "Main Street" commercial districts. Retail formats that result in large-scale and formula businesses are not conducive to maintaining community character and are only anticipated where they can fulfill an unmet need. Therefore, the over-provision of formula retail businesses in Golden Hill is not desired.

POLICIES

- EP-1.1** Support activities and programs that provide resources or funding to enhance the physical attractiveness of the community's commercial districts.
- EP-1.2** Increase street tree planting and maintenance in commercial districts (also refer to Urban Design Element Urban Forest/Street Trees section).
- EP-1.3** Consider traffic calming measures where appropriate and enhance pedestrian, bicycle and transit access in commercial districts (also refer to Urban Design Element Streetscape and Public Realm section).
- EP-1.4** Provide support to local independent businesses (also refer to section 5.2 below).
- EP-1.5** Discourage formula retail business that do not serve an unmet community need. When allowed, standardized colors and designs for front façades and signs should be modified to provide a more individual look.

- EP-1.6** Preserve the predominant small-scale development form of existing storefronts by maintaining the 25 and 50-foot pattern of facade and lot widths (also refer to Urban Design Element policy UD-2.5).
- EP-1.7** Provide an environment that is conducive to community artistic and cultural expression including:
 - A.** Live/work spaces for artists and artisans;
 - B.** Appropriate settings for performance, display or sale of artistic wares and cultural programming;
 - C.** Support for permanent, publicly visible art displays that accent the community's small-scale character and do not overwhelm their surroundings.

BUSINESS FORECAST ASSUMPTIONS

- The health and education services sector is projected to remain the largest private sector employer.
- The largest job gain is expected to occur in the leisure and hospitality sector. This sector includes hotels, entertainment, food services and beverage services.
- Job gains would also occur in the professional and business services sector.
- Future job losses are affected by the community's relationship within the region.

Source: SANDAG-Series 12 Forecast; Census Program Local Employment Dynamics

5.2 COMMERCIAL AREA REVITALIZATION

Revitalization imparts new economic and community life in an existing neighborhood or business district while preserving the original building stock and historic character. Revitalization activity focused within the community's commercial areas can ensure the economic vitality of small businesses, provide local job opportunities and contribute to the economic and social health of the community. Revitalization of older neighborhoods and districts often involves coordinated and sustained public-private efforts related to business attraction and retention, infrastructure investment, security, and maintenance.

The City has provided services and incentives to assist new and existing businesses for over twenty years. Business Improvement Districts formed by property owners can also levy fees for area improvements. Golden Hill does not have a City-established Business Improvement District. However, there are several active business associations in the South Park and Golden Hill neighborhoods that promote economic revitalization by working with independently-owned small businesses in the area to collectively brand, market, and revitalize the commercial districts.

Golden Hill and South Park businesses provide unique retail experiences in a “Main Street” type atmosphere. While providing goods and services to the community, they are also expected to attract business from outside the community due to their appeal. With proximity to Downtown and Balboa Park, these businesses may also be able to capture more of San Diego’s visitors from these nearby tourist destinations if transportation links are enhanced.

Revitalization of commercial areas in many older communities requires ongoing attention and effort to support small businesses. Small business-based services and assistance programs should be continued to ensure the sustained revitalization of the community's commercial districts. Revitalization efforts are also needed to maintain the appearance and viability for many of the small-scale corner stores interspersed throughout the community. The City will continue to partner with community groups and business organizations in Golden Hill to serve and assist small businesses and enhance the attractiveness of the community's commercial areas.



The community has several distinct commercial districts. A small business along 25th Street is shown here.

POLICIES

- EP-2.1 Utilize economic development tools and programs such as those listed in the boxed text at right to attract and retain small businesses.
- EP-2.2 Recapture a greater share of Golden Hill residents' expenditures with improved basic retail and personal services, as well as through coordinated promotional efforts.
- EP-2.3 Provide necessary infrastructure repair and maintenance for commercial districts.
- EP-2.4 Increase the physical attractiveness of the 25th Street commercial district, through efforts including coordinated planting of street trees.
- EP-2.5 Support preservation of historic resources as an important aspect of community identity and commercial area revitalization.
- EP-2.6 Market Golden Hill businesses to the Downtown and Balboa Park visitor trade, and improve existing transit service and bicycle connectivity from those destinations through means including a potential future streetcar line.
- EP-2.7 Organize and market South Park and North Park businesses on 30th Street as a multi-district dining, arts, and entertainment commercial corridor.

CITY OF SAN DIEGO BUSINESS SERVICES AND INCENTIVES

Small Business Assistance

Public/private partnerships to facilitate access to small business financial assistance programs and other support resources.

Storefront Improvement Program

Storefront Improvement Program (SIP) assists small business owners in revitalizing building facades through design assistance and financial incentives.

Micro Assessment District

A business improvement district that contains less than 300 members formed to promote and improve the business environment.

Capital Improvement Program

Improvements to public facilities and infrastructure.

Public Art

The inclusion of art or cultural uses in private and public development projects within the community.

Urban Forestry

The planting, care and management of tree populations in the community's urban setting to improve the environment.

Historic Districts

A group of buildings, properties, or sites that have been designated as historically or architecturally significant. A historic district can also promote the character of a business district.

Clean & Safe Program

Provides additional levels of services such as trash and debris removal, sidewalk sweeping and power washing, graffiti removal, landscape maintenance, and public safety services. Traditional a "Clean and Safe" program is operated by a Business Improvement District or a Micro Assessment District.

Event Programs

Special events such as restaurant tours, block parties, farmers' markets and holiday festivals are often efforts of an active business improvement district, business association or community development corporation.