

LAND USE

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Introduction

The main purpose of the Land Use Element is to guide the future growth and development of the Uptown community through the appropriate distribution of land uses. As an integral part of the City's General Plan Land Use and Community Planning Element, this plan applies a range of land use designations within the context of the Uptown community. Uptown is a community with an established land use pattern that is expected to remain, and with some refinements as a result of this plan, continue to evolve incrementally. The community has a unique level of complexity due to its long-standing and diverse development history, varied geography and proximity to prominent regional draws such as Balboa Park, Downtown, Mission Valley, and San Diego Airport.

The land use framework is a function of long-standing development patterns as well as previous planning efforts to redistribute density to protect the character of certain single-family and lower density neighborhoods as well as open space canyon areas. The multiple land use and density components established by the 1988 Community Plan (often with subtle variations) reflect the community's complexity. Generally, higher intensity development is located along main transit corridors providing opportunities for mixed-use commercial and employment districts.

Lower residential densities are located within existing single-family neighborhoods near the system of canyons intended for open space preservation. This land use plan was considered innovative at the time the 1988 community plan was adopted and is still relevant today. The opportunity for the community to continue to grow within this existing planning framework is considered 'smart growth' by promoting compact development within walkable areas served by transit. The 1988 Community Plan proposed some of the highest development intensities in the city outside of downtown within commercial corridors that today still have many low-scale older buildings. However, the rate of new development since 1988 has been modest and uneven so that a grander vision of unified, prominent buildings along major corridors has oftentimes resulted in a mosaic of awkward scale transitions (a key issue of this plan).

GENERAL PLAN CROSS-REFERENCE

The General Plan establishes citywide policies to be cited in conjunction with a community plan. Policies may also be further referenced, emphasized or detailed in a community plan to provide community-specific direction. General Plan Land Use Element policies particularly significant to the Uptown community are listed by their notation in the cross reference table below.

TABLE 2-1: GENERAL PLAN - RELATED LAND USE TOPICS AND POLICIES

General Plan-Related Topics	Policies
Community Planning	LU-C.4
Airport Compatibility	LU-D.1 – LU-D.3, LU-D.6, LU-D.7, LU-D.8 – LU-D.11, LU-D.12 – LU-D.14
Balanced Communities	LU-6.1 – LU-6.10
Environmental Justice	LU-H.1 – LU-H.7
Mixed-Use and Commercial Areas	LU-I.1 – LU-I.16
Office and Business Park Development	UD-C.1 – UD-C.3, UD-C.5
Public Spaces and Civic Architecture	UD-C.1, UD-C.5 and UD-E.1
Non-Base Sector Employment Uses	EP-E.1
Non-Base Sector Employment Uses	EP-A.6 – EP-A.9
Commercial Land Use	EP-B.1 – EP-B.16
Business Development	EP-B.1 – EP-B.16
Visitor Industries	EP-F.1 – EP-F.4, EP-I.1 – EP-I.4
Land Use Noise Attenuation	NE-E.1-5

LAND USE ELEMENT GOALS

The Land Use Element Goals developed during the community plan update process were formed with the community and stakeholders through a process of re-evaluating and refining goals from the 1988 community plan and creating new goals to address a desired land use conditions in the Uptown community.

- A distribution of land uses that provides for a range of goods and services, facilities, and activities that meets the needs of the community
- Residential densities appropriate to each Uptown neighborhood
- A variety of housing types for all age, income, and social groups
- Multi-family development that does not detract from its surrounding neighborhood
- Opportunities for new medical and professional office development
- Active commercial districts that benefit from a sustainable level of residential density and multiple mobility options
- Adequate transitions between new and existing development
- Preservation of natural hillsides and canyons as Open space
- Compatibility of uses within established neighborhoods
- Preservation of structures with potential historic significance
- Continued revitalization of commercial districts
- Active pedestrian-oriented commercial areas
- Retention of residential neighborhood character



A key characteristic of walkable communities is the availability of a mix of land uses that bring more residents in proximity of goods, services, and employment.



Land use and transit are linked - The distribution and types of land uses can have a direct influence on community travel patterns and the placement of transit facilities.



Active commercial business are encouraged on the ground floor level in the Hillcrest Core.

2.1 Physical Environment

PHYSICAL CONTEXT

Similar to other developed communities, Uptown's overall physical structure reflects its geography, historic development patterns and social evolution. The community is located on a level mesa that is broken by heavily vegetated canyons and borders Presidio Park and Balboa Park. This gives the area a sense of separation from Downtown and other surrounding communities, and also provides a sense of openness within the community. It also affords scenic views of downtown, the harbor, Coronado, and Point Loma. Most of the street system and building lot development was well established prior to the need to consider the automobile as a part of subdivision planning and includes a grid pattern of streets at the core of each neighborhood. The community also



Uptown's proximity to Downtown and the prevalence of canyons and open space areas lend to its diverse land use patterns.



Canyons and open spaces within Uptown include Maple Canyon in the Bankers Hill/Park West neighborhood.

contains some of the oldest neighborhoods in San Diego exhibiting a variety of historic architectural styles and building types. The community is well-served by transit.

The negative effects on existing urban neighborhoods from the mid-twentieth century federal and state freeway construction era have factored into the land use and social evolution of Uptown. Interstate-5 separates the community from Downtown as well as dividing the historic Five Points neighborhood. State Route 163 separates the core of Hillcrest from the eastern portions. While the community has evolved around these effects, the freeways will continue to function as fixed barriers with limited permeability. The freeways are also a source of air and noise pollution that are diminished with distance from the source. Portions of the community are also adversely affected by aircraft noise arriving and departing at San Diego International Airport.

EXISTING LAND USE

Uptown contains a unique balance of residential, commercial and employment uses. While residential is the predominant land use, there are also several large concentrations of retail, medical office, and mixed use—which includes retail, residential, and office uses. These generally are located along the major transportation corridors where convenient access better supports commercial uses. The additional emphasis of retail and employment uses in a predominantly residential community also provides a land use balance not often found in other communities. Accommodating additional residential growth while preserving the existing land use balance is fundamentally important as most of the residential growth opportunities are within the mixed-use commercial corridors.

The largest retail concentration is in the Hillcrest core where several major corridors intersect. Retail also extends in a more linear orientation along Washington Street west of the core, and University Avenue east of the core. Smaller, neighborhood-scale retail nodes also exist in Uptown's residential neighborhoods, such as on Park Boulevard in University Heights and on West Lewis Street in Mission Hills. Within these mixed use areas, pedestrian-oriented streets and building frontages create a vibrant public realm.

The concentration of hospitals and medical support uses in the Medical Complex neighborhood have their own distinct physical form, and the distribution of office uses along 4th and 5th avenues contributes a distinct individuality to these north-south corridors. Office uses also serve as an appropriate transition to residential uses to the west.

LAND USE DISTRIBUTION

The overall land use distribution within the community consists of Community-Commercial, Neighborhood-Commercial, and Office-Commercial with medium to high residential density located along the major community commercial corridors such as Washington Street, University Avenue, Park Boulevard, 4th Avenue, 5th Avenue, and India Street. Multi-family residential uses generally distributed throughout the community adjacent to the commercial land uses along the major corridors. Single-family land uses are focused around the central, eastern and western ends of the community and to the north where they are adjacent to open space. Institutional uses consisting of schools, hospitals and government institutions are also located in the northern end of the community.

The land uses and residential intensities in the Uptown Community Plan are summarized and illustrated on the Community Plan Land Use Map (Figure 2-1) and separated into three sectors for more detail (Figures 2-2, 2-3 and 2-4). The Community Plan Land Use Map is intended to guide development and represent a diagrammatic illustration of land use policies. The map also shows opportunity areas where density bonuses can be applied as a development incentive for the provision of public amenities (See the incentive zoning discussion in Urban Villages Section 2.3 and Implementation chapter of the community plan). Designation of a site for a certain use and intensity does not necessarily mean that the site will be built out within the horizon of this plan.

These three maps together provide a general guide to land use distribution and diagrammatic illustration of land use policies, including allocation of residential density. These maps are also intended to guide development. Designation of a site for a certain use and intensity does not necessarily mean that the site will be built out within the horizon of this plan.

LAND USE INTENSITY

Land use intensity is related to the specific type of use as well as the materialization of a particular use (or multiple uses) within a developed or built form. A generalized description of land use categories is provided in Table 2-2. Each land use designation also contains quantifiable standards of building intensity.



Typical areas of higher density development include the 5th Avenue commercial corridor that runs through Bankers Hill/Park West to Hillcrest.



The Uptown District commercial area is a model example of vertical and horizontal mixed-use development.

FIGURE 2-1: COMMUNITY PLAN LAND USE MAP

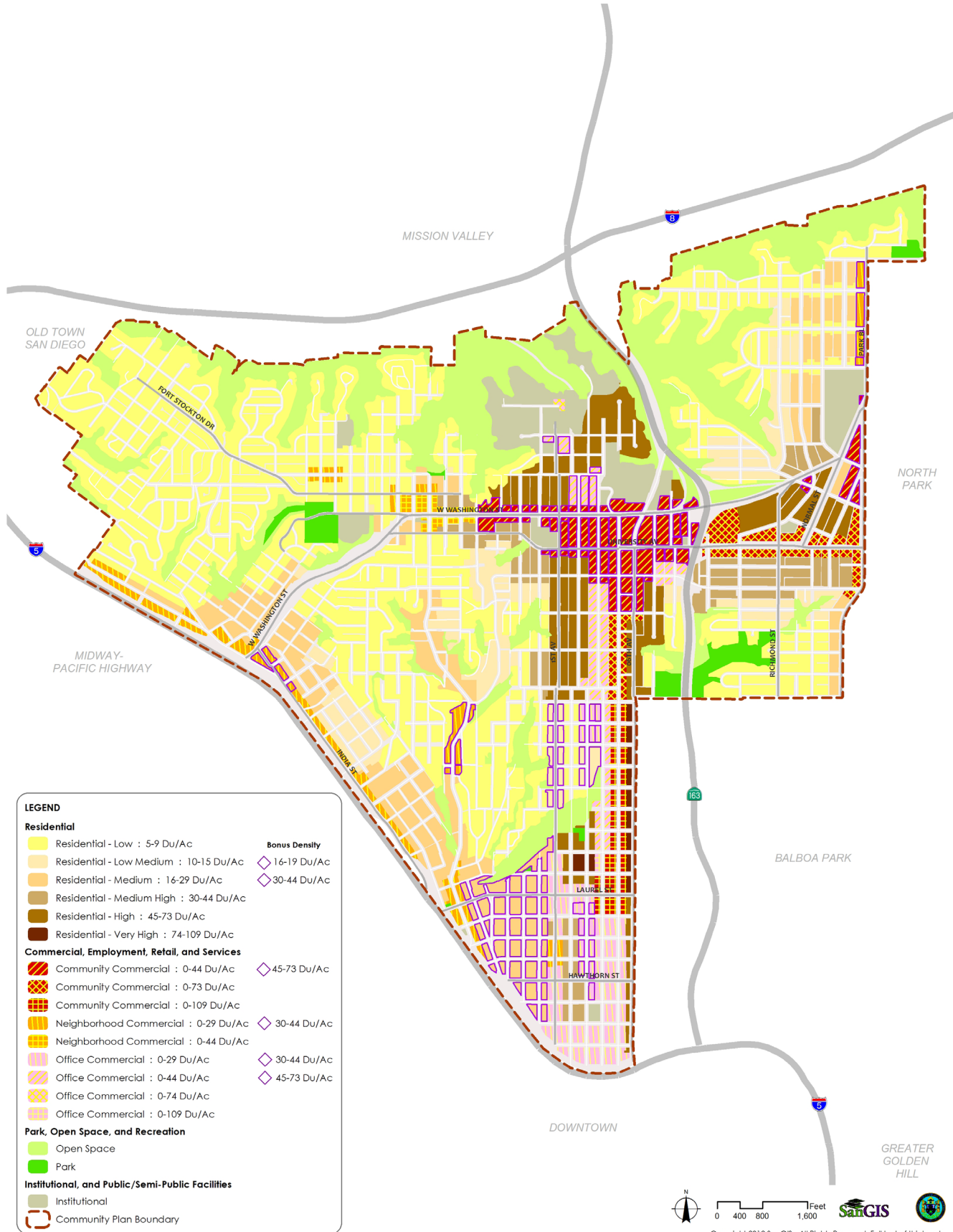


FIGURE 2-2: COMMUNITY PLAN LAND USE MAP - WEST

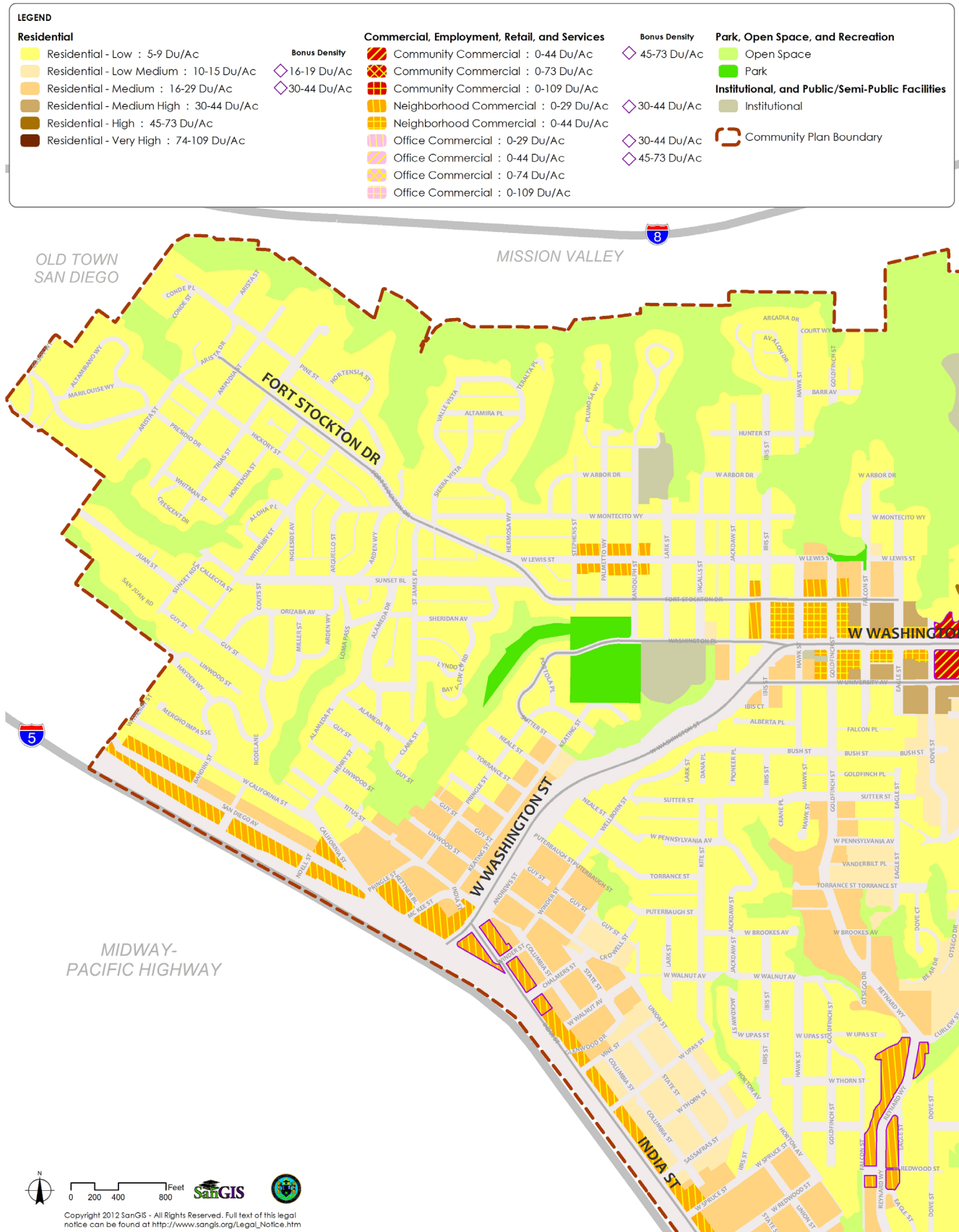


FIGURE 2-3: COMMUNITY PLAN LAND USE MAP - EAST

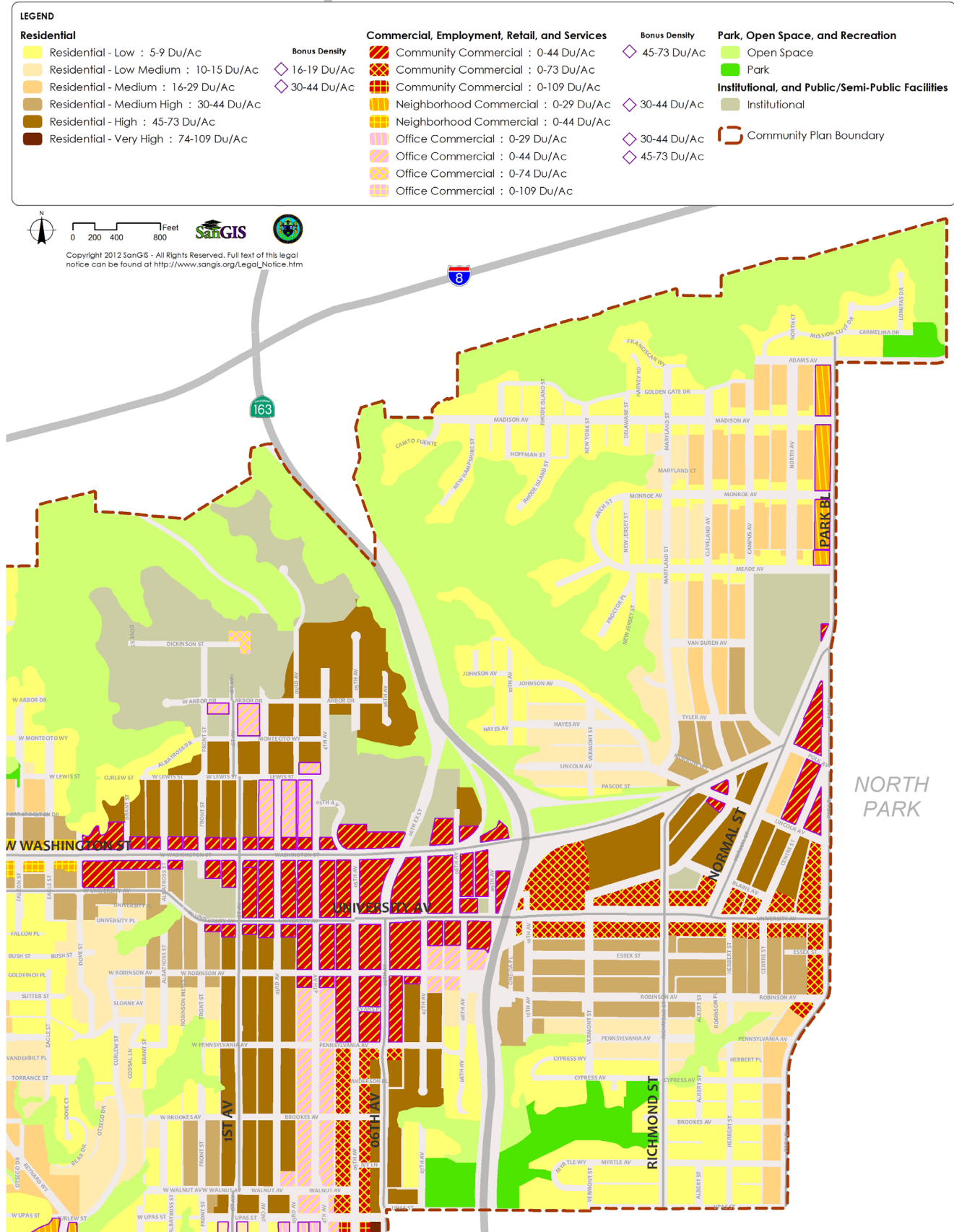


FIGURE 2-4: COMMUNITY PLAN LAND USE MAP - SOUTH

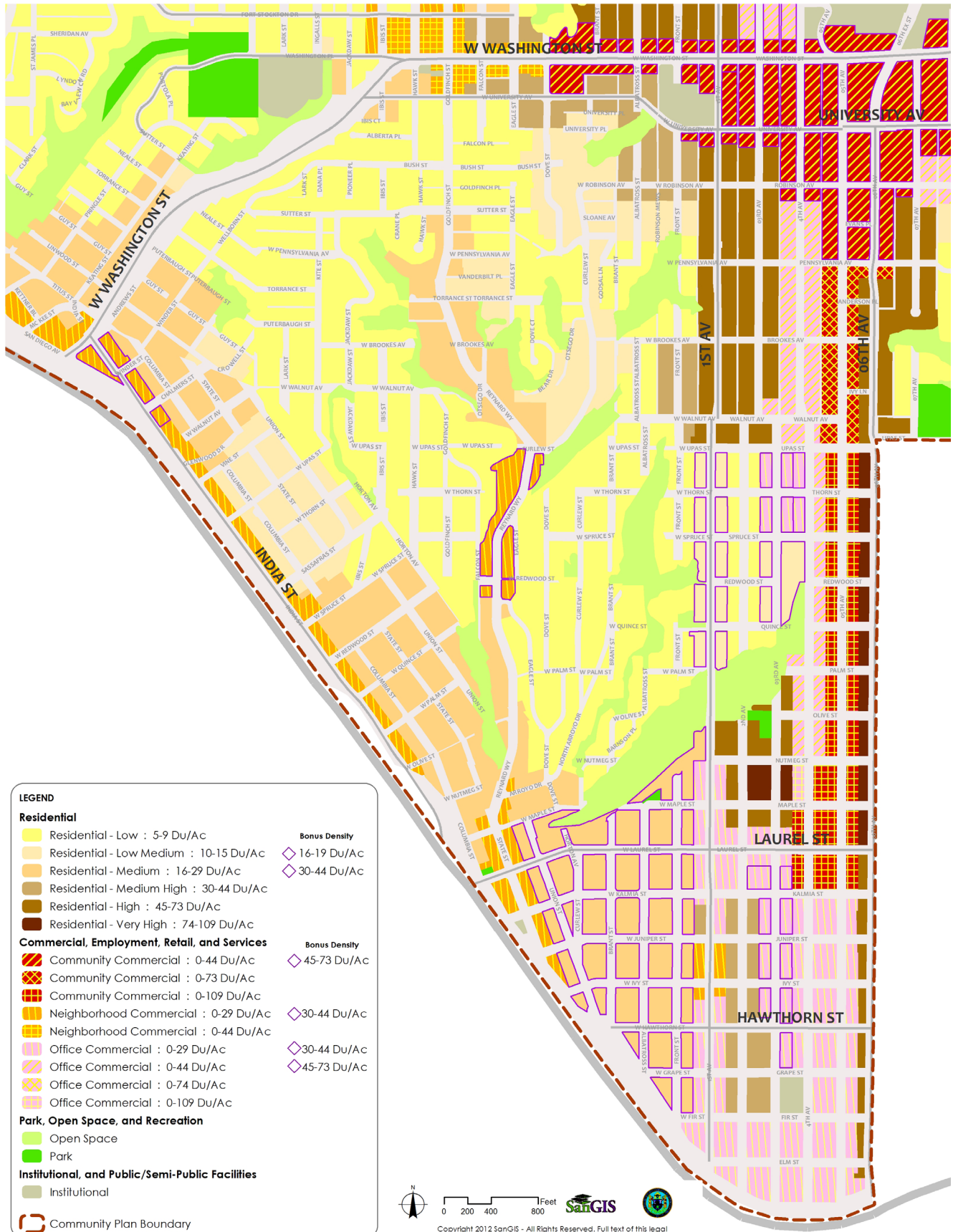


TABLE 2-2: UPTOWN COMMUNITY PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

General Plan Land Use	Community Plan Designation	Specific Use Considerations	Description	Intensity	
				Residential Density (dwelling units/acre)	Floor Area Ratio (FAR)
Park, Open Space, and Recreation	Open Space	None	Provides for the preservation of land that has distinctive scenic, natural or cultural features; that contributes to community character and form; or that contains environmentally sensitive resources. Applies to land or water areas that are undeveloped, generally free from development, or developed with very low-intensity uses that respect natural environmental characteristics and are compatible with the open space use. Open Space may have utility for: primarily passive park and recreation use; conservation of land, water, or other natural resources; historic or scenic purposes; visual relief; or landform preservation.	1	Limited
	Population-based Parks	None	Provides for areas designated for passive and/or active recreational uses, such as community parks and neighborhood parks. It will allow for facilities and services to meet the recreational needs of the community as defined by the community plan.	N/A	Limited
Residential	Residential - Low	None	Provides for single-family housing within a low residential density range and limited accessory uses.	0 - 9	0.60 FAR
	Residential - Low Medium	None	Provides for both single-family and multifamily housing within a low-medium residential density range.	10 - 15 ¹	0.75 FAR
	Residential - Medium	None	Provides for both single-family and multifamily housing within a medium residential density range.	16 - 29 ¹	1.35 FAR
	Residential - Medium High	None	Provides for multifamily housing within a medium-high residential density range.	30 - 44 ¹	1.80 FAR
	Residential - High	None	Provides for multi-family housing with a high density range.	45-73	2.25 FAR
	Residential - Very High	None	Provides for multi-family housing with a very high density range.	74-109	3.60 FAR
Commercial Employment, Retail and Services	Office-Commercial	Residential Permitted	Provides local convenience shopping, civic uses, and services serving an approximate three mile radius. Permits office uses. Housing may be allowed up to a medium residential density within a mixed-use setting	0-29 ¹	1.5 FAR
			Provides local convenience shopping, civic uses, and services serving an approximate three mile radius. Permits office uses. Housing may be allowed up to a medium-high residential density within a mixed-use setting.	0-44 ¹	1.0 FAR

TABLE 2-2: UPTOWN COMMUNITY PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS (CONTINUED)

General Plan Land Use	Community Plan Designation	Specific Use Considerations	Description	Intensity	
				Residential Density (dwelling units/acre)	Floor Area Ratio (FAR)
Commercial Employment, Retail and Services	Office-Commercial	Residential Permitted	Provides local convenience shopping, civic uses, and services serving an approximate three mile radius. Permits office uses. Housing may be allowed up to a high residential density within a mixed-use setting.	0-73	2.5 FAR
Commercial Employment, Retail and Services	Neighborhood Commercial	Residential Permitted	Provides local convenience shopping, civic uses, and services serving an approximate three mile radius. Housing may be allowed up to a medium residential density within a mixed-use setting.	0-29 ¹	1.0 FAR
			Provides local convenience shopping, civic uses, and services serving an approximate three mile radius. Housing may be allowed up to a medium-high residential density within a mixed-use setting	0-44 ¹	1.0 FAR
	Community Commercial	Residential Permitted	Provides for shopping areas with retail, service, civic, and office uses for the community at-large within three to six miles. Housing may be allowed up to a high residential density within a mixed-use setting	0-73	2.0 FAR
			Provides for shopping areas with retail, service, civic, and office uses for the community at-large within three to six miles. Housing may be allowed up to a very high residential density within a mixed-use setting	0-109	2.0 FAR
Institutional, Public and Semi-Public Facilities	Institutional	None	Provides a designation for uses that are identified as public or semi-public facilities in the community plan and which offer public and semi-public services to the community. Uses may include but are not limited to: military facilities, community colleges, communication and utilities, transit centers, schools, libraries, police and fire facilities, post offices, hospitals, park-and-ride lots, government offices and civic centers.	N/A	To be determined based on abutting zones.

¹ A density bonus to the next highest residential range is available within the same General Plan Land Use Category as an incentive for public benefits. See Section 2.3 Villages and Implementation chapter in this community plan

DEMOGRAPHICS

Future population can be estimated based upon the number of dwelling units expected to be achieved with the application of planned land uses and development intensity. As of January 2013, there were 23,146 dwelling units in the community with a total population of 36,061. Dwelling units are expected to increase to 26,483 during the horizon of this plan. The community is estimated to have a future population of 56,025.

POLICIES

- LU-1.1** Provide a variety of land use types to accommodate housing and commercial opportunities within the community.
- LU-1.2** Protect public health by evaluating the effects of noise and air pollution from airport operations and freeway traffic on community land uses and reduce, or eliminate where feasible, negative effects on sensitive land uses (including housing, schools and outdoor athletic areas) through appropriate buffers, barriers and construction measures.

2.2 Land Use Framework

1988 UPTOWN COMMUNITY PLAN

The previous community plan provided various land use recommendations that are carried forward with this plan with added refinement or emphasis. Several of these recommendations relate specifically to residential neighborhoods such as preserving and enhancing the special character of well-defined neighborhoods; providing adequate housing for a broad spectrum housing opportunities, promoting mixed use development along transit corridors as well as higher density residential development to activate commercial centers and districts; and ensuring adequate transitions and buffering between potentially incompatible uses. Recommendations for the viability of commercial center and districts included enhancing pedestrian orientation and walkability and the preserving and encouraging pedestrian-oriented businesses especially those that would generate pedestrian activity after typical business hours.

The overall distribution of land uses generally follows that of the 1988 Community Plan with several revisions. These generally fall into three categories: land use refinements that reflect existing conditions, conversions to General Plan land uses, and input from the community. These also include various changes that have resulted in a reduction in residential densities to address preservation of neighborhood character within older, historic neighborhoods, a lack of public facilities, and changes in the development vision for certain neighborhoods within the community. During this process areas that could support increased residential density were also identified. These areas were primarily located adjacent to already existing very-high density, mixed-use corridors in the Bankers Hill/Park West neighborhood and along University Avenue in the Hillcrest neighborhood where high residential density could support the business core and from an urban design perspective, taller buildings in proportion to the wide nature of the street could be accepted. Areas were also identified in the community as opportunity areas to apply density bonuses in exchange for public amenities as means to allow increased housing opportunities.

RESIDENTIAL

The age, type and tenure of the community's housing stock allows for a wide range of income and lifestyle choices. There is a wide variety of housing types largely due to the relatively long pre-World War II building period as well as a sustained period of apartment construction during the latter half of the 20th century reflecting various trends in building densities, unit configurations and provision of amenities. Pre-war housing often features a higher level of craftsmanship and includes single-family homes with a broad range of sizes, and duplexes and apartments at an appropriate scale for their neighborhood or where they can feature prominently on corner lots. Post-war housing is largely multi-family and reflects modernist principles of efficient use of space, minimal ornamentation and greater accommodation of the automobile. Versions that did not involve lot assembly give an illusory sense of single-family scale although this is often overshadowed by the loss of landscaping and sidewalk comfort due to wide driveways and parking previously allowed within front yards. More recent post-modern style buildings

often use ornamentation and design features to better establish neighborhood context.

The Uptown community contains a variety of residential forms and neighborhoods based upon historical development patterns as well as community plan land use typologies. These include neighborhoods where single-family housing predominates such as Mission Hills, neighborhoods with a mix of single-family and multi-family housing such as University Heights, and those with a mix of commercial and residential uses such as Park West/Bankers Hill.

Each of the six Uptown neighborhoods contains a variety of residential forms. These can range from low-scale single-family homes to hi-rise apartments and condominiums. The intensity and mix of uses allowed within the commercial designations along the major

corridors can also result in a broad range of development types and sizes. This can often contribute to awkward scale transitions and a need for buffering between residential and certain commercial uses.

Uptown has been an attractive area for senior housing given the availability of bus service, neighborhood markets, and shopping. More notably medical offices and facilities in the Bankers Hill/Park West and the presence of UCSD Medical Center and Scripps-Mercy Hospital within the community provide essential medical services in close proximity and create an ideal and convenient draw for senior housing development. Multi-family housing as part of mixed-use developments will continue to provide opportunities for senior housing in the community.

POLICIES

- LU-2.1 Provide a diverse mix of housing types and forms consistent with allowable densities.
- LU-2.2 Enable rental and ownership opportunities in all types of housing including alternative housing units such as companion units, live/work studios and shopkeeper units.
- LU-2.3 Develop adequate housing for those with special needs such as the elderly, handicapped persons, those who need nursing care, low income, and homeless persons.
- LU-2.4 Preserve existing single-family homes and neighborhoods as a distinct housing choice as well as for their contribution to the historic character of the community.
- LU-2.5 Preserve and enhance the special character of specific, well-defined, low-density neighborhoods from encroachment by incompatible, higher density residential or commercial development.
- LU-2.6 Locate medium and high density residential development in selected areas with adequate design controls provided to ensure compatibility with existing lower density development.
- LU-2.7 Concentrate medium and high density housing:



Multi-family rowhome development along San Diego Avenue in the Middletown neighborhood.



Apartment lofts along Centre Street in Hillcrest.

- On upper floors as part of mixed use development in commercial areas;
- Adjacent to commercial areas;
- Near transit and higher volume traffic corridors.

LU-2.8 Preserve and provide incentives for mixed residential/commercial development at appropriate locations.

LU-2.9 Locate higher density residential development in appropriate areas that are situated to promote safer and livelier commercial districts.

LU-2.10 Ensure adequate transition and buffering between potentially incompatible uses.

LU-2.11 Design and enforce stricter controls and location criteria on Conditional Use Permits in residential neighborhoods to minimize nuisances generated by nonresidential uses, such as offices in historic structures.

COMMERCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT

Uptown consists of a wide variety of commercial uses ranging from neighborhood commercial facilities, community shopping facilities, specialized commercial centers, and medical facilities. Generally, existing commercial development within the community is distributed along major transit corridors, commercial nodes, and the community's urban villages. Commercial land uses typically serve to support residential and other land uses by providing needed or desired goods and services, or function independently as employment generators. Uptown's commercial land is unique as employment is a relatively large contributor, including three major hospitals and numerous small-scale professional offices.

It is anticipated that the community will see an increase in medical office use as most of the substantial growth in jobs in Uptown is expected to be in health services which also includes professional and business services, and personal services (See discussion in the Economic Prosperity Element). These uses over time have located along the north-south running streets, within commercial areas or adaptively reused residential structures, in

Bankers Hill/Park West, Hillcrest, and in the Medical Complex neighborhood which are anchored by UCSD Medical Center and Scripps-Mercy Hospital to the north and Sharp Rees-Stealy Urgent Care Center to the south.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

There are four neighborhood-oriented commercial areas in Uptown:

1. The Mission Hills Business Area – This area provides a variety of convenience goods and services to meet the daily needs of the adjacent residential neighborhood.
2. Reynard Way – this area provides convenience goods and services that are conveniently located and easily reached by the residents along Reynard Way.
3. University Heights – this area has a cluster of services on Park Boulevard south of Adams Avenue.
4. Bankers Hill/Park West – consists of readily identifiable shopping areas providing goods and services to nearby residents and workers.
5. Five Points Area – The western gateway into the Uptown community, this area also provides a mixture of goods and services primarily focusing on local restaurants and eating establishments.



Mixed-use development in Mission Hills containing for-sale dwelling units, retail space, and underground parking.

COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

The Hillcrest Business District is considered the primary commercial area for Uptown and also the community's major entertainment center that attracts visitors not only community-wide, but from all over the City. The Hillcrest Business District provides shopping, dining, convenience and specialized retail goods including personal, professional, repair, business, and financial services. The Hillcrest Business District contains the Uptown District shopping center.

The historic core at Fifth Avenue and University Avenue has served as the heart of Hillcrest neighborhood. The east end of Hillcrest along University Avenue, between State Route 163 and Park Boulevard has grown in importance as another heart of the neighborhood and is considered the "second core" of Hillcrest. The presence of the Uptown District shopping center, the LGBT Community Center, the Hillcrest Farmers Market, the Hillcrest Pride Flag, and many of new businesses have made the east end of this area another focal point of the Hillcrest neighborhood.

SPECIALIZED COMMERCIAL

Specialized Commercial areas in Uptown offer retail activity such as locally run and freestanding stores not typically found in shopping centers. These uses include photography studios, furniture stores, bicycle shops, automobile repair stores, secondhand merchandise stores, local food markets, boutiques, restaurants, bars, etc.

There are five primary areas in Uptown that provide specialized commercial uses:

1. University Avenue – this area east of State Route 163 and west of Park Boulevard is primarily an entertainment-artisan district consisting of entertainment establishments such as restaurants and bars.
2. India Street – This area is primarily an automobile-oriented, specialized commercial center focusing on restaurants along with rental vehicles, small scale manufactures, warehousing, and light industry-associated uses.
3. State Street – This commercial strip south of Laurel Street includes a variety of small scale



Scripps-Mercy Hospital along with UCSD Medical Center are major employers within the Uptown community.



The Hillcrest commercial core serves as the community's major business district with regional attraction.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

There are two major hospitals and various medical offices located in Uptown offering urgent care and a wide range of medical services. These two main hospitals are primarily located at the northern portion of the community, located primarily in the Medical Complex neighborhood. Other medical facilities extend south from the Medical Center Complex neighborhood through Hillcrest and to the southern end of the Bankers Hill/Park neighborhood anchored by the Sharp Rees-Stealy Urgent Care Center.

1. Scripps-Mercy Hospital – This facility is located in the southeast quadrant of the medical complex areas just north of the Washington Street and just west of 6th Avenue

2. UCSD Medical Center – this facility is located in the northwest portion of the medical complex area at Dickinson Street and Front Street
3. Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Center – This facility and associated medical offices occupies over two city blocks located at the 4th Avenue and Grape Street.

INSTITUTIONAL

Institutional uses provide either public or private facilities that serve a public benefit. These uses may serve the community or a broader area. Typically, the larger or more significant public uses such as schools and fire stations are identified on the land use map. However, the policies in this element apply to institutional uses as a category, including religious facilities, charter schools and social service providers. In addition to municipal services, a range of institutional uses including State, Federal, and private facilities are located in Uptown.

POLICIES

LU-2.12 Evaluate proposed institutional uses for appropriate development intensity and effects on visual quality and neighborhood character. Additional factors, such as those related to mobility, noise and parking demand should also be evaluated as needed.

LU-2.13 Use retail and office uses as a means of creating a buffer between active evening uses such as bars, restaurants, breweries, etc. and single-family neighborhoods

PARKS

Parks and open space fulfill a variety of important purposes in the community including active and passive recreation, conservation of resources, protection of views and visual relief from urbanization. Designated open space within the Uptown community consists of natural open space areas concentrated in undeveloped canyon areas interspersed throughout the community.

OPEN SPACE

Open space is to be generally free from development or may be developed with limited, low-intensity uses in a manner that respects the natural environment and conserves sensitive environmental resources. The planned land use map identifies the open space system recommended for conservation. The description of the purpose and attributes for preservation of Parks and Open Space is shown in Table 2-2.

Protection of resources within lands designated as Open Space affects multiple property owners (including the City of San Diego) and is accomplished primarily through application of various development regulations of the Municipal Code, particularly the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Regulations. The City also pursues acquisition of private parcels or acquisition of easements as a means of conserving open space resources and protecting property from development.

Policies for the protection and conservation of environmentally sensitive resources within open space lands are also contained within the Conservation Element; policies related to views and hillside development are contained in the Urban Design Element.



The Hillcrest neighborhood hosts Uptown's premiere, walkable community village.

2.3 Villages

VILLAGE/NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

The General Plan City of Villages strategy calls for focusing growth into mixed-use activity centers that are pedestrian-friendly, centers of community life and linked to the regional transit system. Uptown since the previous 1988 community plan, has been in a position to promote “village-like” development. It’s neighborhoods are urban, dynamic, and attractive areas full of unique character and village characteristics. The Uptown Community represents the City of Villages Strategy by focusing growth into mixed-use activity areas that are pedestrian friendly, centers of the community, and linked to the regional transit system along the main corridors. Growth and development in the Uptown community has taken place within these areas – primarily in the Hillcrest and Bankers Hill/Park West neighborhoods, and along the commercial corridors of the University Heights and Mission Hills neighborhoods. The mixed-use areas have been the focus of new growth, development, and revitalization as a result of the growing concentration of goods, services, and entertainment uses plus the access offered by the corridors and their surrounding grid network of streets.

The community plan advocates medium-high to very high residential densities that are focused along major commercial corridors, multi-modal connectivity within the community and region, and policies for improving the pedestrian environment by enhancing pedestrian activity in business districts and neighborhoods. Community and neighborhood village locations are shown on Figure 2-4.

Typical of commercial development of previous eras, these community and neighborhood centers lack true public space components in the size and configurations recommended by the General Plan. Ensuring viable public space is also a particular challenge in a developed community.

The commercial corridors between the neighborhood commercial nodes also tend to be in areas identified by the General Plan as having a relatively high village propensity particularly due to their location along major transit lines.



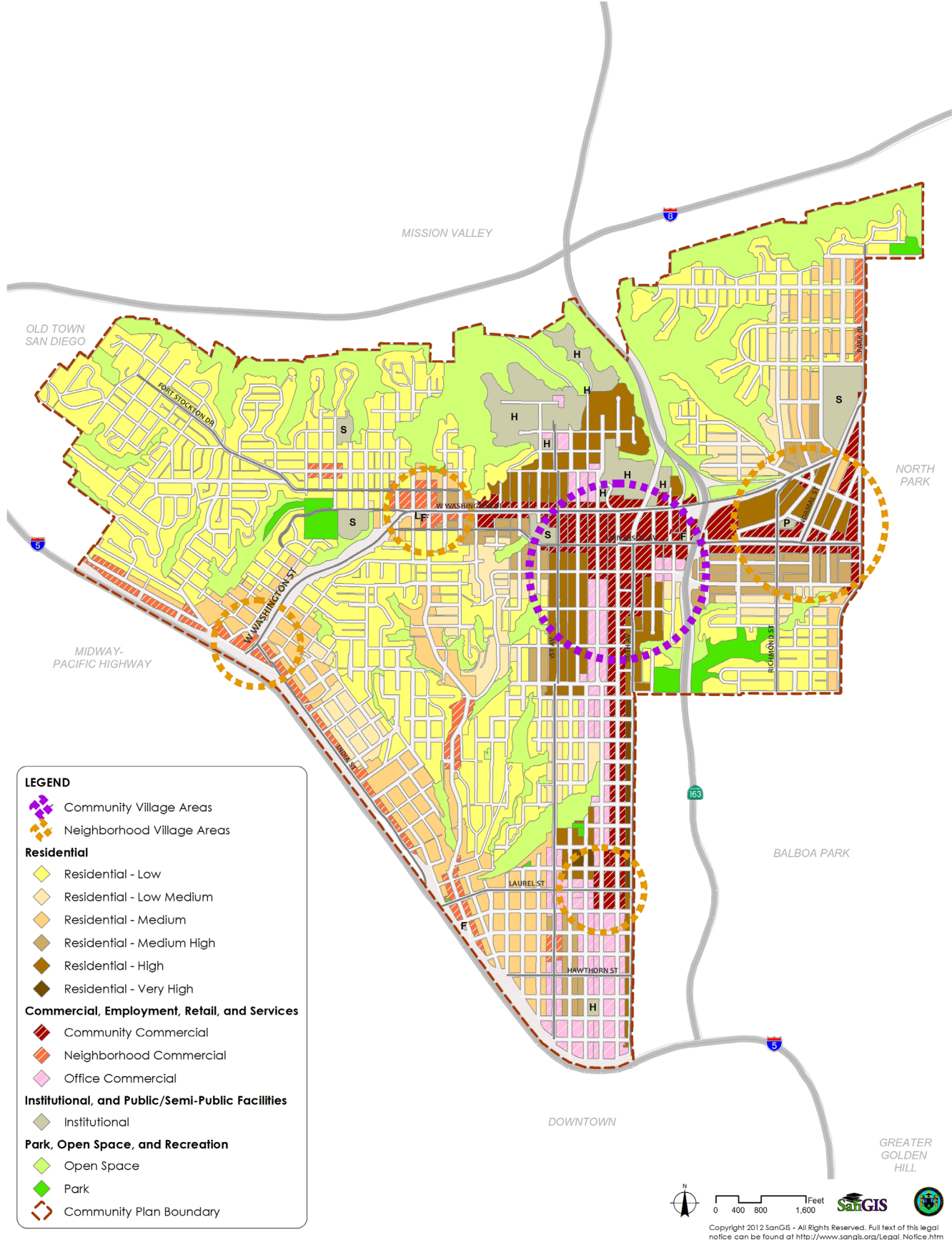
Villages in Uptown come in varying scales, but all enjoy a high level of walkability and pedestrian orientation.

While not physically commercial nodes or neighborhood centers, these linear corridors provide similar commercial activity and transit access to their adjacent residential neighborhoods. Improving walkability and providing public space within these areas would strengthen their village characteristics. Further discussion can be found in Sections C and E of the Urban Design Element of the General Plan.

Villages within Uptown have established themselves as neighborhood-oriented areas with local commercial, office, and multi-family residential uses, including some structures with office or residential space above commercial space. Within these neighborhood and community village areas, horizontal mixed-use developments along with stand-alone office and village supportive commercial uses contribute to the overall “village characteristics” already exemplified in the Uptown community.

The implementation of the City of Villages strategy is dependent on the close coordination of land use and transportation planning. Uptown, along with several of San Diego’s older, developed urban communities is expected to see an improved level of walkability, bicycling, and transit use through the implementation of future transportation-related projects and infrastructure improvements that are focused within the Villages and along associated transit corridors. It is within these areas where transportation and land use planning complement each other and have the potential of being highly effective in bringing residents closer to local and regional destinations in a manner that is safe, efficient, and healthy for residents and employees and beneficial to the environment.

FIGURE 2-5: VILLAGE AREAS AND COMMERCIAL NODES



MISSION HILLS

improve the appearance of existing commercial structures throughout Mission Hills and addressing visual conflicts found within the commercial areas.

POLICIES

- LU-3.1** Expand mixed-use and commercial development at the Neighborhood Center/Node at Washington and Goldfinch Streets.
- LU-3.2** Implement streetscape improvements along Washington Street to improve the visual quality and pedestrian realm.
- LU-3.3** Increase the landscaping in the public right-of-way along Reynard Way and Curlew Street.
- LU-3.4** Establish pocket parks on available public land along canyons and public rights-of-way to expand and connect the current open space system, especially along Reynard Way and Curlew Street.
- LU-3.5** Explore the feasibility of a pedestrian bridge over Washington Street west of Goldfinch Street.
- LU-3.6** Explore methods to eliminate billboards, such as to require the removal of existing billboards in conjunction with any permit.
- LU-3.7** Consider potential enhancements to Juan Street to signify it as a community gateway from Old Town into Mission Hills such as neighborhood identity signs and public right-of-way improvements.

HILLCREST

Strengthen the commercial vitality of the Hillcrest business district, while preserving single-family neighborhoods as well as commercial facades. In addition, preserving and enhancing the pedestrian scale and human orientation within the neighborhood is crucial, which includes maintaining the network of alleys as service areas. Providing parking that is both adequate and unobtrusive is also a major issue in Hillcrest.

POLICIES

- LU-3.8** Permit high intensity pedestrian-oriented commercial and mixed-use development in the Hillcrest Neighborhood Center/Node surrounding University and Fifth Avenues.
- LU-3.9** Projects over three stories should include a stepback of the streetwall to reflect the historical scale of development. (See Development Form).
- LU-3.10** To encourage the rehabilitation, expansion and redevelopment of existing commercial structures, additional off-street parking should only be required for additional floor area.
- LU-3.11** Enhance pedestrian access between the Hillcrest Core and the medical complex area to the north.



Mission Hills is known for dramatic public views.



Hillcrest is among the most vibrant and eclectic neighborhoods in Uptown.

- LU-3.12 Encourage “active” commercial business on the ground floor level in the Hillcrest Core, especially those that generate pedestrian-oriented activity into the evening.
- LU-3.13 Reduce curb cuts by prohibiting the development of “drive-through” commercial facilities in the Hillcrest Core.
- LU-3.14 Encourage the conversion of portions of Normal Street to a linear mini-park.
- LU-3.15 Consider mixed-use options for the redevelopment of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) site.
- LU-3.16 Encourage new development in the vicinity of the North Park/Hillcrest gateway on University Avenue and Park Boulevard to incorporate neighborhood identity signs, distinctive architecture, public art, right-of-way improvements that signify entry into the neighborhood.
- LU-3.17 Maintain and enhance the “Egyptian Thematic District” along the commercial areas along Park Boulevard between Robinson Avenue and University Avenue which features a number of Egyptian Revival and Art Deco themed buildings and serves as a joint gateway corridor into the Uptown and North Park communities from Balboa Park.



The Egyptian Thematic District is a walkable commercial district between the Uptown and North Park communities.

MEDICAL COMPLEX

Provide a balance between expansion of the medical services and the surrounding neighborhood, including preservation of residential character and on street parking supply. Improving the appearance and pedestrian access of Washington Street in Medical Complex, including the development of a coordinated signage system. Pedestrian-oriented development, the maintenance of contiguous open space development and pedestrian and bicycle access to Mission Valley.

POLICIES

- LU-3.18 Support the intensification on existing hospital designated areas rather than expanding into residential or commercial areas. Expansion should not occur beyond institutional and office designations of the land use map.
- LU-3.19 Encourage landscaping, screening and architectural design to enhance the appearance of hospital facilities. In particular, Mercy Hospital as viewed from the Sixth Avenue extension and the appearance of the Arbor Street parking structure, Bachman Canyon parking structure, and hillside areas within the UCSD Medical Center facility and the Somerset Hillcrest adjacent to Mercy Hospital.



Medical Complex is dominated by the medical center and medical-related uses, surrounded by primarily multi-family housing developments.

LU-3.20 Identify area between Medical Complex and Hillcrest neighborhoods as priorities for improved pedestrian crossings through the use of crosswalks, signalization and pavement variations.

- LU-3.21** Encourage a Parking Management Plan should be initiated jointly by the Medical Centers which may include measures for parking reduction such as:
- Encouraging employees to use car pools by providing reduced parking rates for those who car pool
 - Increase employee use of transit by providing reduced-cost transit passes.
 - Expand the on-street permit parking area if the parking impact spreads beyond its existing boundaries.



Commercial uses along India Street emphasize walkability and pedestrian orientation.



5th Avenue Financial Center - Bankers Hill

MIDDLETOWN

Preservation of views on the western slopes, the preservation of natural open space along steep slopes, and the quality of the Neighborhood Center/ Node of India Street. Concerns for India Street include reduction of auto/pedestrian conflicts, the appearance of the businesses and right-of-way along the commercial area, and enhancement of the pedestrian realm. Parking impacts from India Street into the residential areas are also a concern.

POLICIES

LU-3.22 Streetscape plan for India Street and San Diego Avenue in the Middletown Neighborhood Center/ Node to improve appearance and pedestrian amenities.

LU-3.23 Consider development that provide additional off-street parking in the area around the Washington Street and India Street intersection.

LU-3.24 Identify the community gateway at Washington Street into Middletown from Midway. New development in the vicinity of this gateway should incorporate neighborhood identification, distinctive architecture, public art, right-of-way improvements that signify entry into the neighborhood.

BANKERS HILL/ PARK WEST

Balancing traffic flow and pedestrian safety along Fourth and Fifth Avenues and Park Boulevard and identifying areas for increased height and density in the neighborhood while maintaining views to Balboa Park.

POLICIES

LU-3.25 Encourage development in designated areas on the Avenues to link Uptown and Downtown along enhanced activity corridors, especially south of Fir Street.

LU-3.26 Enhance the pedestrian orientation of the Neighborhood Center/ Node surrounding Fifth Avenue and Laurel Street. Upgrade commercial development on First Avenue south of Juniper St.

- LU-3.27** Require facade articulation through the use of balconies, terraces and/or upper-story setbacks on high-rise buildings west side of Sixth Avenue to minimize view obstructions to Balboa Park. Establish a 10-foot setback from lot line for landscaping along the west side of Sixth Avenue with Palm trees planted adjacent to the sidewalks, resulting in a 30-foot setback from the curb.
- LU-3.28** Maintain and enhance views of Balboa Park from Fifth Avenue through the articulation of building facades, variations in setbacks and utilization of varied roof forms.
- LU-3.29** Maintain the historic scale and character on First Avenue south of Maple Canyon.
- LU-3.30** Concentrate office uses on Fourth Avenue north of Maple Street, Third Avenue south of Laurel Street, and First Avenue in the vicinity of Laurel Street. Encourage re-use of historically-oriented residential structures for office use.
- LU-3.31** Identify the community gateways in Bankers Hill/ Park West that include Laurel Street from Midway, Laurel Street from Balboa Park, and 1st and 5th Avenues from Downtown. New development in the vicinity of these gateways should incorporate neighborhood identification, distinctive architecture, public art, right-of-way improvements that signify entry into the neighborhood.

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

Preserve and enhance single-family neighborhoods along canyon rims and ensuring that new development is unobtrusive and of the same character and scale of adjacent development. Buffering commercial activity along Washington Street, El Cajon, and Park Boulevard from residential areas is also important. The improvement of the pedestrian realm and commercial development on Park Boulevard is a priority.

POLICIES

- LU-3.30** To conform to the historic development pattern, a lower scale of multi-family residential development should be maintained for

parcels at the end of blocks, facing the east west oriented streets.

- LU-3.32** Consider the reuse of the San Diego Unified School District Education Center at Park Boulevard and Normal Street. That includes a mixed-use development with medium-high density and public and private space.
- LU-3.33** Identify El Cajon Boulevard and Park Boulevard intersection as priority for improved pedestrian crossings through the use of crosswalks, signalization and pavement variations.



The Vermont Street Bridge provides direct pedestrian and bicycle access to the University Heights Neighborhood.



The neighborhood commercial district along Park Boulevard in University Heights, encourages walkability and provides dining, shopping and employment opportunities in proximity to residential areas.

2.4 Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone

The Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ) is applied within the community and neighborhood villages (see also Section 11, Implementation section). The purpose of the overlay zone is to supplement the Municipal Code by providing development regulations that are tailored to specific circumstances and/or sites within the community and have been adopted as part of this community plan. The CPIOZ also provides for a discretionary review process where needed to more effectively implement community plan recommendations, particularly those of the Urban Design Element.

Particularly in the Uptown community, CPIOZ is utilized to establish maximum building heights in specific areas of the community and to identify areas where incentive zoning opportunities could be applied. Additional details regarding the CPIOZ as it pertains to maximum building heights and other development regulations tailored for particular areas within the community can be found in the Urban Design Element and in the Implementation section of this community plan.

INCENTIVE ZONING PROGRAM

Policy LU-F.3 of the General Plan encourages the creation and application of incentive zoning measures to achieve the desired mix of land use and public benefits. An incentive zoning program is being implemented through the CPIOZ as a voluntary program for private development to provide public infrastructure and amenities such as parks, plazas, additional public parking within business districts for increased residential density or additional building height. These community benefits would exceed any related requirements for new development. Within an urban community, opportunities for creating public amenities are been limited. Implementation of an incentive zoning program can provide public amenities with new infill development and further the General Plan's City of Villages Strategy which calls for the inclusion of public space within mixed-use village areas.

POLICIES

- LU-4.1** Grant flexibility within the aspects of required parking, building height limits, and maximum density in order to facilitate the provision of appropriate community benefits with new development.
- LU-4.2** Consider application of incentive zoning where increased building heights in community identified opportunity areas, would allow a portion of the project site at the ground level area to be available for public benefits such parks, plazas, public parking, community space, etc.
- LU-4.3** Allow public parking in the form of parking structures, additional spaces with parking garages within private developments, joint parking opportunities, etc. as a potential public benefit especially within areas such as business and entertainment districts.
- LU-4.4** Provide public spaces within each Community and Neighborhood Center (Refer to General Plan Policies UD-C.1, UD-C.5 and UD-E.1).



Public amenities provided by private development can assist in addressing the need for more public space in community and neighborhood villages.

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