
IV-B NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

Although considered an urban environment, the Greater Mid-City area has many natural features that contribute to the quality of the area. These include open space resources such as canyons and floodplains, as well as historic and prehistoric resources. Visual resources too, contribute to the urban environment including panoramic views of San Diego's mountains and coastline. Preservation of the quality of the environment is important to residents of the area as is respecting geological constraints associated with the natural environment.

Geotechnical Conditions

Environmental Quality

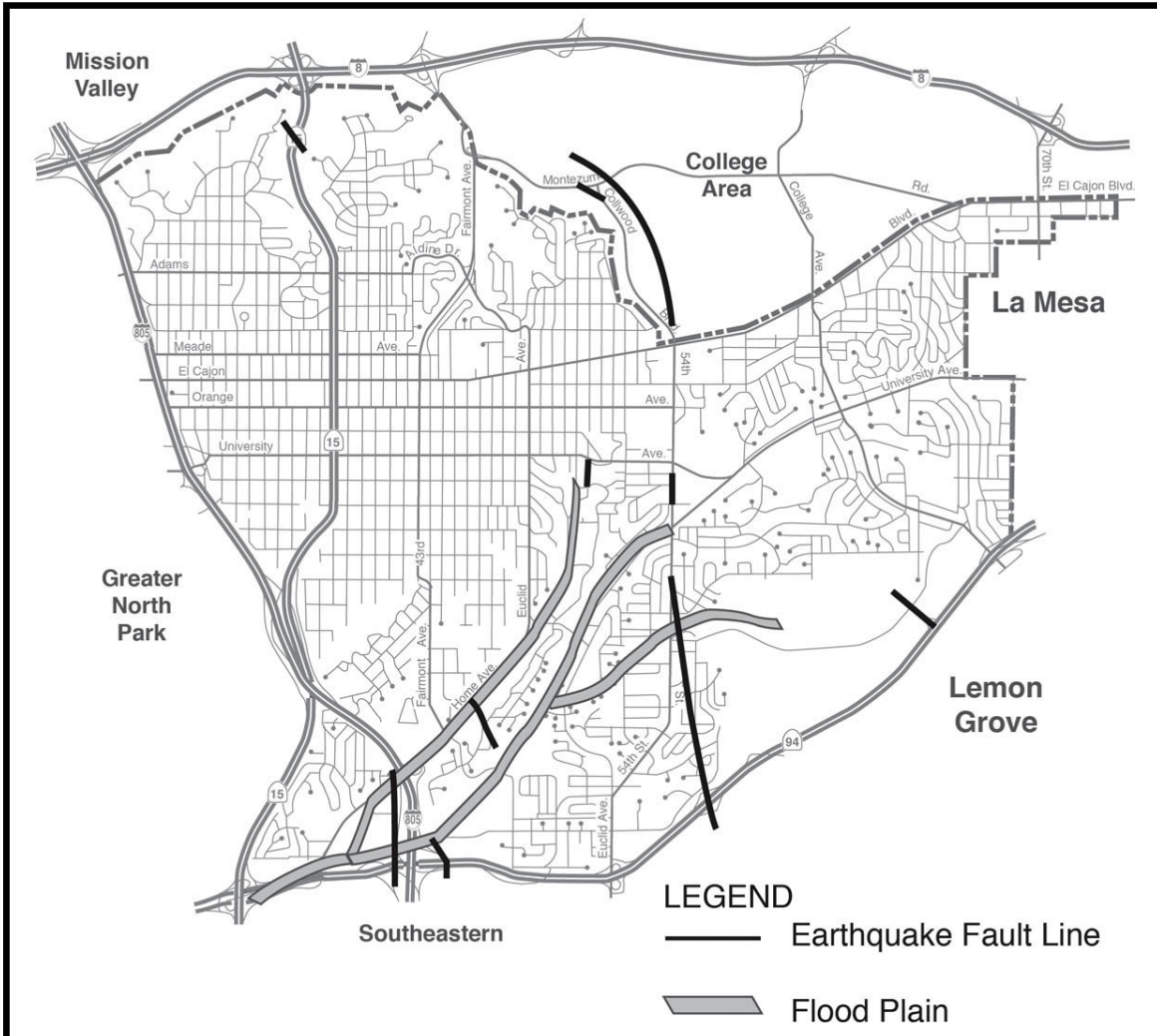
Open Space

Visual Resources

Cultural Resources

GEOTECHNICAL CONDITIONS

Although urbanized, the Greater Mid-City area possesses geotechnical conditions which represent potential safety hazards. These include expansive soils and areas of potential liquefaction and landslide. In addition, the La Nacion and lesser faults exist in the community and represent a potential geotechnical hazard in the event of earthquake.



Vision: Development which avoids or mitigates potential geotechnical hazards.

FAULTS AND LIQUEFACTION

Goals

- Consider the use of fault areas as linear open space areas or linkages to open space resources.
- Minimize development in areas prone to liquefaction. Ensure adequate building measures when development of liquefaction areas is unavoidable.

Recommendations

- Provide an adequate building setback from all known faults.
- Utilize development controls, dedications and easements to minimize potential earthquake hazards to private property.
- Utilize appropriate building techniques and site planning in areas of known geotechnical hazard.

SOIL STRUCTURE, LANDSLIDES, SHRINK AND SWELL CHARACTERISTICS

Goal

Avoid building construction in areas with inadequate soil conditions.

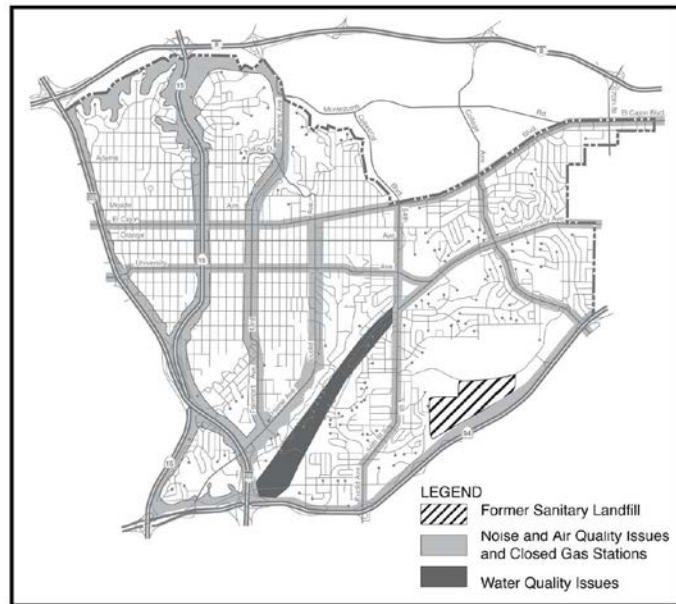
Recommendations

Utilize appropriate building techniques in areas of known geotechnical hazard.

Cluster building construction in areas not affected by geotechnical hazard conditions.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Myriad issues affect the environmental quality of the Greater Mid-City area. Biological resources, air, and water quality are threatened by development and motorized vehicle emissions. Former sanitary landfills and closed service stations in Mid-City can bring hazardous materials in close proximity to residents.



Vision: A community where natural resources are preserved and development contributes to the environmental quality of the area.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Goals

- Protect canyon, hillside, and creek-side natural wildlife habitats from urban encroachment and conflicting uses.
- Improve and enhance riparian habitat in Chollas Creek (City Heights and Eastern Area).

Recommendations

- Apply the appropriate development restrictions to riparian areas along Chollas Creek.
- Prepare and implement a master plan for the enhancement of Chollas Creek which protects natural wildlife and riparian habitat.
- Form “Friends of Mid-City Canyons” to focus funding and effort toward the maintenance and enhancement of Chollas Creek, and the area’s natural canyons.
- Apply appropriate zoning restrictions to all steep slopes in Mid-City to ensure that sensitive slopes and natural habitats are protected from erosion and other impacts of urban encroachment.

AIR QUALITY

Goal

- Improve air quality throughout Mid-City through local monitoring, awareness and the promotion of non-polluting forms of transportation.

Recommendations

- Utilize public relations techniques and physical improvements to promote non-polluting pedestrian access and bicycling as primary intra-community modes of transportation.
- Pursue the expansion of trolley service both north-south and east-west to link the community to regional employment opportunities, as well as to link the community internally to provide less-polluting mass transportation options.

WATER QUALITY

Goal

Improve and enhance riparian habitat in Chollas Creek as a means of improving water quality.

Recommendations

Form “Friends of Mid-City Canyons” to focus funding and effort toward the maintenance and enhancement of Chollas Creek.

Encourage use of reclaimed water for landscaping and encourage low water demand landscaping.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND SOIL QUALITY

Goal

- Clean up former landfill areas for public use.

Recommendations

- Utilize grants, bonds or other public funding to clean-up “brownfields” and landfill areas and convert them to an appropriate use.
- Encourage use of reclaimed water for landscaping and encourage low water demand landscaping.
- Continue to provide locations for the safe disposal of hazardous materials within the community, using the fire stations as a possible resource for such facilities.
- Alternatives for the timely reclamation and reuse of the Chollas landfill should be identified.

NOISE

Goal

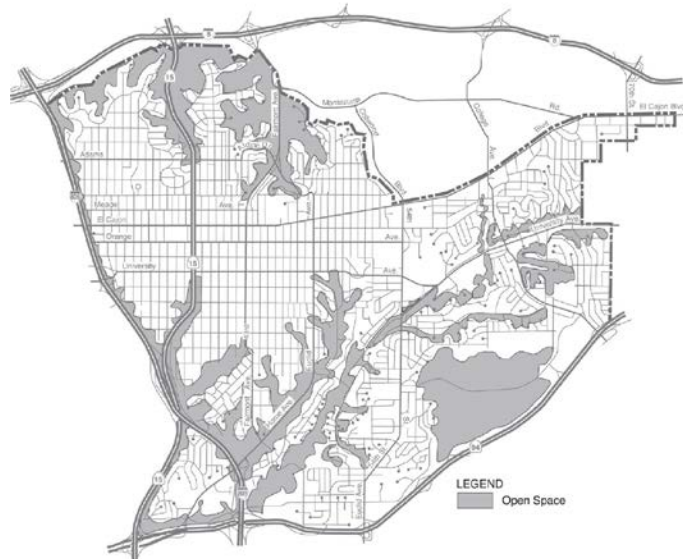
- Maintain adequate sound levels in residential neighborhoods.

Recommendations

- Mitigate sound pollution conditions created along major transportation corridors and certain businesses.
- Encourage the use of “noise masking” techniques when appropriate.

OPEN SPACE

With close to 6,000 acres, the central and western portions of the Mid-City Community occupy a relatively level, developed mesa bisected by a series of canyons, particularly along Chollas Creek and the southern rim of Mission Valley. Together with parks, trails and publicly owned lands, these canyons represent an open space resource for the community. The Eastern Area is urbanized on rolling hillsides, where large lot development enjoys its private views and open space, but where few interconnected open space areas exist.



Vision: An integrated open space system of linked natural canyons, creeks, parks, trails and joint use areas.

LAND FORM – CANYONS AND CREEKS

Goals

- Permanently link and preserve all canyons, slopes and floodways, designated as such in this Plan, as open space.
- Develop passive recreational space in undeveloped canyons, where the natural integrity of the canyon can be preserved.
- Preserve sensitive hillside areas.
- Preserve areas of native vegetation.

Chollas Creek

- Preserve and enhance Chollas Creek as a linear open space system to provide passive recreational opportunities, visual relief and biological habitat preservation.
- Where acquisition of Chollas Creek is not feasible, explore other means of preservation such as open space easements, development restrictions and other means.
- Implement the Chollas Creek Enhancement Program for the enhancement of Chollas Creek as a passive linear park.

Recommendations

- Preserve sensitive slopes, canyons, floodways and other areas designated as open space through acquisition, zoning, resource regulation or other available methods.
- Within areas zoned for single-family development and designated for open space preservation, limit further subdivisions and development to one dwelling unit per lot.
- When development occurs, obtain open space easements in privately owned canyon areas.
- Form “Friends of Mid-City Canyons” to focus funding and effort toward the preservation and maintenance of open space areas.
- Vacate Chollas Parkway to allow for the restoration and expansion of riparian habitat adjacent to Chollas Creek.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Goals

- Protect biological, visual, and topographic resources.
- Ensure the preservation of an open space system through appropriate designation and protection.
- Give highest priority to the acquisition of open spaces susceptible to development.
- Provide access to usable public open space systems in order to increase passive recreational opportunities.

Recommendations

- Paper streets or paper alleys should not be vacated if they are located in an open space canyon and the retention of undeveloped paper streets or alleys would assist in the preservation of the area as open space.
- Utilize easements, street vacations or irrevocable offer of dedications, and appropriate open space zoning to maintain and enlarge parks and open space.
- Vacate Chollas Parkway to allow for the development of active and passive park uses. Locate active park uses within the northern section of the existing right-of-way.
- Revise and prioritize the City’s open space acquisition list, assigning highest priority to acquisition of the Chollas Creek open space system and other systems susceptible to development.
- Property acquired by the City for open space preservation should be officially dedicated for that purpose.
- Create a system of linkages between Mid-City parks and open space.

TRAILS

Goals

- Provide limited non-vehicular access to open space areas within the community.
- Enhance links between park and open space areas within and outside the community.

Recommendations

- Limit trails within open space areas to those that provide designated linkages. Trails should be located to minimize impacts to sensitive slopes and vegetation. Security, fire risk, and maintenance should also be considered in the location of trails.
- Due to their environmental sensitivity and steepness, public access should be restricted along hillsides facing Mission Valley and within Kensington-Talmadge.
- Identify design concepts, routes, and funding for the development and maintenance of a non-vehicular trail system.
- Identify and improve key streets that link open space resources and community facilities.
- A ranger program should be established to ensure compliance with established park and open space policies.
- Develop a trail adjacent to Chollas Parkway that further connects the open space system.

JOINT USE AREAS

Goal

- Provide recreational facilities open to the community on all government owned lands (refer to **Public Facilities and Services Element** and **Urban Design Element**).

Recommendations

- Joint use agreements between the City of San Diego and San Diego Unified School District should be adopted to make all public school sites available for recreational use and open space support.
- The City of San Diego should work with other governmental agencies to access possible use of other agency facilities for open space support.

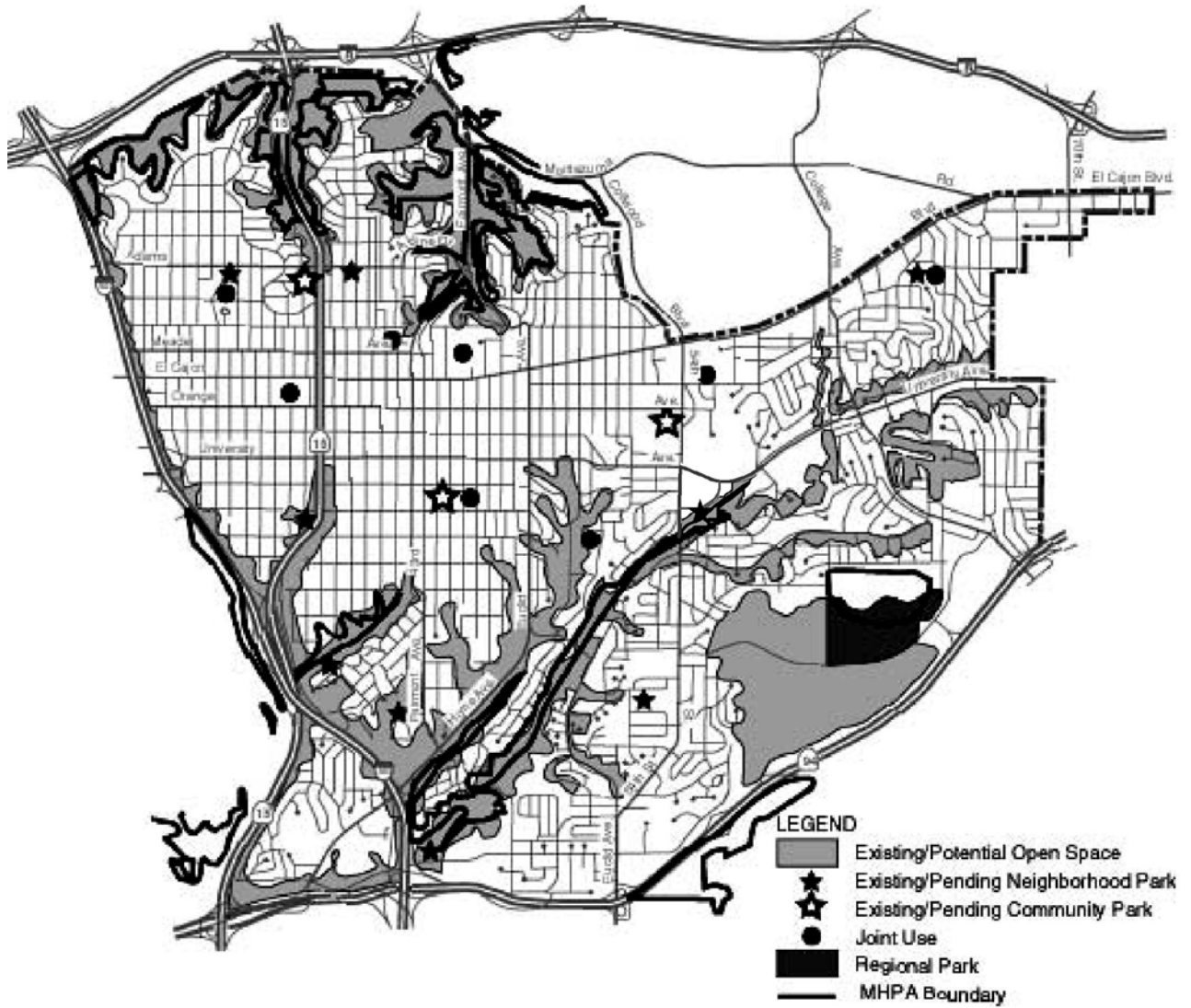
OPEN SPACE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

While some of the open space described in the Public Domain section of this element has been acquired for preservation or has an open space easement placed on it, a significant portion remains under private control. These areas are typically the lower portions of hillside lots with a single-family dwelling on the upper portion of the lot, although some vacant lots still remain. The potential exists in some areas for additional development to disturb this open space.

Recommendations

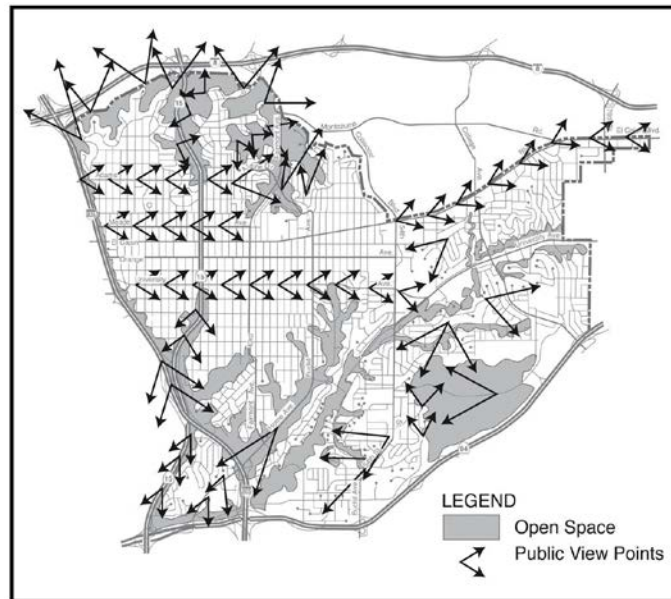
- Within residentially designated areas, apply open space zones (ten-acre minimum) to all properties containing slopes of 25 percent or greater.
- A maximum of one dwelling unit per lot should be permitted.
- Establish building setback and landscaping requirements for properties along the edge of designated open space hillsides. Such a restriction would protect slopes from erosion and intrusive vegetation, and would protect buildings from fire hazard and slide damage. Public views from upland and lowland areas would also be preserved and enhanced.
- Development within or adjacent to a designated Multiple Habitat Planning Area should be consistent with the policies and guidelines for development found in the Multiple Species Conservation Program Subarea Plan.

FIGURE 14. OPEN SPACE AND PARKS



VISUAL RESOURCES

Several streets and other public areas offer framed public views of panoramic aesthetic features such as open space areas or significant architecture. In addition, many of the streets on the Mid-City mesa top afford panoramic views of the mountains to the east and the bay and coastline to the west and south.



Vision: Development that preserves and enhances significant views within and outside the greater Mid-City area.

VIEWS

Goals

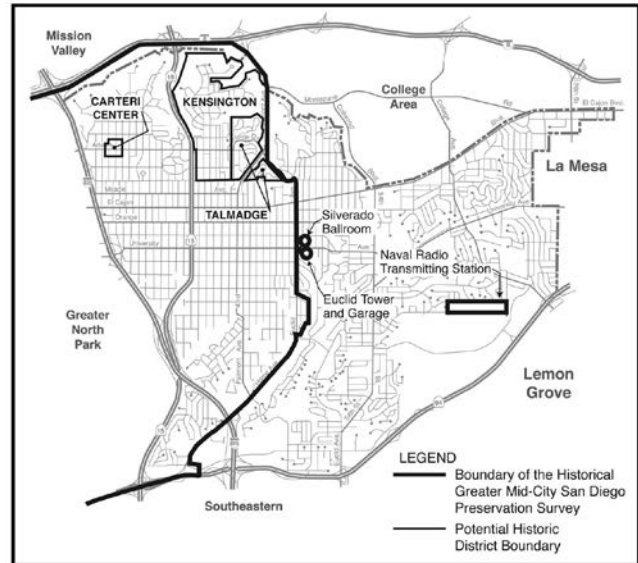
- Ensure that new development preserves and enhances framed public views of existing aesthetic resources such as parks and community landmarks.
- Preserve and enhance panoramic public views of the bay, open spaces, and mountains from street rights-of-way and other public areas.

Recommendations

- Review development proposals to protect and preserve significant framed and panoramic public views within the community.
- Undertake a study to identify key sites with significant panoramic public views for potential acquisition as public viewing areas.
- Preserve and enhance privately owned local landmarks offering framed views from public vantage points.
- Work with the City to identify sites with significant panoramic public views for potential public acquisition.
- Continue undergrounding utilities on view corridors.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Evidence of prehistoric occupation exists within Mid-City, primarily within or adjacent to Chollas Creek. In addition, there are several historic structures and districts which are eligible for historic designation, including the Carteri Center Historic District in Normal Heights, the Kensington & Talmadge Historic District in Kensington, and the Egyptian Revival Euclid Tower, Garage, and Silverado Ballroom in City Heights. In addition, the Chollas Heights Navy housing project in the Eastern Area includes a museum and historic district with structures from a 1917 era Naval Radio Transmitting Station. Numerous other structures remain from the first half of the 20th Century which, although they do not qualify for historic designation, contribute to the character of Mid-City's neighborhoods.



Vision: A community where prehistoric and historic resources are celebrated, preserved, and enhanced.

ARCHAEOLOGIC AND PALEONTOLOGIC RESOURCES

Goal

- Preserve areas of Mid-City possessing significant archaeologic and paleontologic interest.

Recommendation

- Identify and preserve significant prehistoric sites through zoning, development review or other regulatory means.

HISTORIC SITES AND DISTRICTS

Goals

- Preserve and upgrade all land and structures having significant historical interest.
- Preserve and enhance historic resources by means of acquisition, easements, agreements, assessment districts or other means.
- Preserve and enhance areas identified as historic districts.
- Encourage the retention and enhancement of non-historic structures which contribute to the character of Mid-City.

Recommendations

- Encourage the preservation of historic structures through identification, designation, tax relief, tax breaks and other neighborhood physical improvement and financing measures.
- Apply zoning that will act to conserve older areas of Mid-City which, although they are not historic, contain structures contributing to the overall character of the area.
- Expand the Greater Mid-City Historic Oversight Program to encourage and ensure the identification and designation of all eligible historic sites and districts in Mid-City to implement the 1987 Historical Greater Mid-City San Diego Preservation Strategy that surveyed that portion of the Mid-City communities west of Euclid Avenue and Home Avenue.
- Private owners of historic structures and those with property in historic districts are responsible for maintaining and enhancing their structures, in partnership with the community and the City.
- Economic incentives such as the Mills Act tax incentive should be identified and developed to assist property owners to maintain historic properties.
- Coordinate the continued evaluation and designation of historic resources within Mid-City.