
IV-D LAND USE ELEMENT

A cluster of communities that rivals many incorporated cities in size, Mid-City accommodates residential, office, commercial, industrial and institutional land uses. Residential densities in the community range from one to 75 dwelling units per acre. A variety of housing types, including Craftsman-style bungalows, single-family tract home development, apartment courts, six- and eight-plex apartment buildings, and multi-story senior housing centers are represented. Commercial developments take the form of neighborhood centers and districts, strip centers and regional shopping centers. Limited industrial development is concentrated in the southern portion of the City Heights and Eastern Area Communities. Institutional land use ranges from the City's Operations Center to Navy Housing to the Police Shooting Range and the Mid-City Police Substation. Critical issues related to institutional uses are addressed in the Public Facilities and Services Element. A deficiency of parks, schools, and other public facilities limit the ability of the Mid-City communities to effectively accommodate population growth forecast for the area.

Residential

Commercial

Industrial

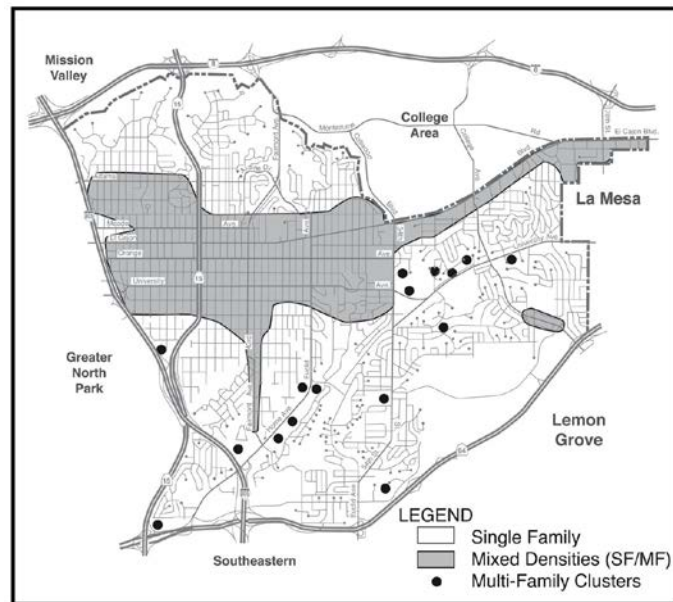
RESIDENTIAL

Development in the older communities of Kensington-Talmadge, Normal Heights and City Heights was begun near the beginning of the Twentieth Century, spurred by the introduction of streetcar (trolley) service along Adams Avenue and University Avenue.

This development was characterized by single-family neighborhoods centered around commercial strips. Craftsman and Spanish Colonial Revival styles dominated single-family construction prior to the Second World War.

More recent development of the Eastern Area is also characterized by single-family development. Here, the varied topography and economic advantages of tract home development are reflected in curvilinear streets, cul-de-sacs and auto-oriented shopping centers.

Many single-family neighborhoods have been altered physically and demographically by the introduction of often ill-designed multifamily housing units during the 1970s and 1980s. This intensification in land use occurred disproportionately in the southern areas of Normal Heights and Kensington-Talmadge, and northern area of City Heights. While providing an abundance of lower cost housing opportunities, this development has exacerbated the existing shortage of parks, libraries, schools and other public facilities. Growth management policies, subsequently adopted to address these deficiencies, have not substantially reduced deficiencies in public facilities.



Vision: A stable community, characterized by a diverse array of well designed and maintained neighborhoods with affordable housing that caters to a full range of family and living styles.

HOUSING BALANCE

The 1991 Housing Element of the General Plan established a low-income housing fair share goal for Mid-City of 100 dwelling units, compared to a citywide goal of 9,300 units. The goal was minimal due to the concentration of lower income households already living in Mid-City, which the communities have more than met with the construction of several subsidized projects. While the satisfaction of this goal points to the need to attract more market rate housing, an ongoing effort is needed to maintain the existing supply of affordable units, which may revert to market rate under certain subsidy programs.

Goal

- To foster the development of an economically and socially balanced residential community.

Recommendations

- Encourage new housing construction in a variety of types and sizes in order to meet the needs of future residents in all socio-economic brackets. In view of the abundance of low- and moderate-income housing, encourage new construction of market rate housing and home ownership in Mid-City's lower income areas in order to upgrade the overall value of the housing stock in those areas.
- Stop the concentration of subsidized housing, social services, and residential care facilities in the Mid-City communities. Locate any additional facilities along transportation corridors.
- Encourage quality family and senior citizen housing projects designed to accommodate the needs of these populations, including the conversion of existing high-density apartment projects to fewer units with more bedrooms to house the concentration of large households in City Heights.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION

Goal

- To protect and enhance the quality of Mid-City neighborhoods.

Recommendations

- Encourage new market rate housing construction in a variety of types, sizes and costs to meet the needs of residents in all socio-economic brackets.
- Preserve existing affordable housing units, particularly where rent subsidies may be expiring.
- Provide and expand assisted home ownership opportunities and cooperative housing projects to afford renters a mechanism to achieve ownership.
- Establish and support an organization dedicated to providing training in good property management practices to owners of multifamily properties.
- Continue to expand housing rehabilitation programs in all residential subareas, especially for owner occupied units.
- Preserve well-designed existing housing stock that might be the source of low and moderate income housing in the future through adequate maintenance and rehabilitation.
- Protect existing low to moderate income housing by rehabilitating single-family and multifamily units, both rental and owner occupied.
- Retain, to the maximum feasible extent, single-family and two-family low- and low-medium-density residential areas and preserve existing two-family districts as the prevailing housing pattern in the neighborhoods.
- Regulate building size to maintain neighborhood scale and character.
- Retrofit existing older six to eight unit apartment complexes located in the midst of single-family neighborhoods by increasing unit size and decreasing density to provide needed larger units and a better integration into the neighborhood.
- Eliminate illegal non-conforming uses through code enforcement or code changes.
- Adopt and enforce minimum property maintenance standards.
- Explore newly developed multifamily housing designs such as row housing that blur the distinction between multifamily and single-family products to achieve greater density while maintaining neighborhood character and fostering home ownership.

OWNERSHIP

Goal

To foster residential ownership in Mid-City.

Recommendations

- Provide and expand assisted home ownership opportunities.
- Provide a marketing program to encourage business owners, managers, and employees to live in Mid-City.
- Develop cooperative housing projects to afford renters a mechanism to achieve ownership.

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Goals

- To foster well-designed and maintained development in existing neighborhoods.
- To ensure that new development is consistent with neighborhood vision.
- To minimize obstacles to the rehabilitation or expansion of older residential structures.
- To maintain and enhance open spaces within residential areas.
- To ensure proper maintenance and security in residential development.

Recommendations

- Apply urban design criteria to single-family and multifamily development by incorporating design guidelines into new ordinances and applying them to appropriate areas. These criteria will include standards for parking, height and bulk considerations, siting of structures, creative landscaping, open space preservation, family-oriented development and exceptional architectural detailing.
- Implement incentives for the removal of blight.
- Establish and apply standards for improvements of the building facade, yard areas and landscaping to older six to eight multifamily apartment buildings with parking in the front yard.
- Establish and support an organization dedicated to providing training in good property management practices to owners of multifamily properties.
- Limit encroachment of residential development into designated open space.
- Minimize obstacles to expansion of older residential structures with desirable design qualities.
- Encourage adherence to the principles of crime prevention through environmental design.
- Ensure that new development reflects neighborhood character in such characteristics as height, setbacks, massing, landscaping, roofs, windows, front porches, street facade, and architectural details.

- Encourage onsite management of multifamily developments.
- Establish a maintenance pool for smaller rental developments, minimizing the cost of professional apartment management services.
- Ensure that single-family development in down-zoned multifamily areas is appropriately scaled and oriented. Use Re-building Plan for Normal Heights (1985) as an example of the issues to be considered in the development of regulations applicable to this unique circumstance.
- Rehabilitate apartment courts and encourage development of new ones, perhaps providing reductions in on-site parking where on-street parking is sufficient.

TYPE AND LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

Goal

- To concentrate new higher-density development along transportation corridors with the highest densities at nodes.

Recommendations

- Within areas zoned for single-family development and designated for open space preservation, limit development to one dwelling unit per lot.
- Restrict development in areas that are predominantly low-density, including those lots fronting on many east-west oriented streets, as shown in **Figure 10** above, to single dwelling units.
- Special development regulations should be applied to areas with single dwelling units on small lots to allow reduced or zero yard setbacks.
- Consider the use of companion units or “granny flats,” as defined and regulated by the Municipal Code, as a method of meeting affordable housing goals.
- Permit moderate-density residential uses as infill development and between nodes along transportation corridors.
- Permit higher-density residential development (one unit/600-1000 square feet) in the nodes along El Cajon Boulevard through a discretionary review process when special design features and community enhancements are provided.
- Encourage mixed-use development (retail or other commercial uses on the ground floor and residential on upper floors) along the commercial strips in transportation corridors through the implementation of General Plan village land use designations.

SUPPORT USES AND FACILITIES

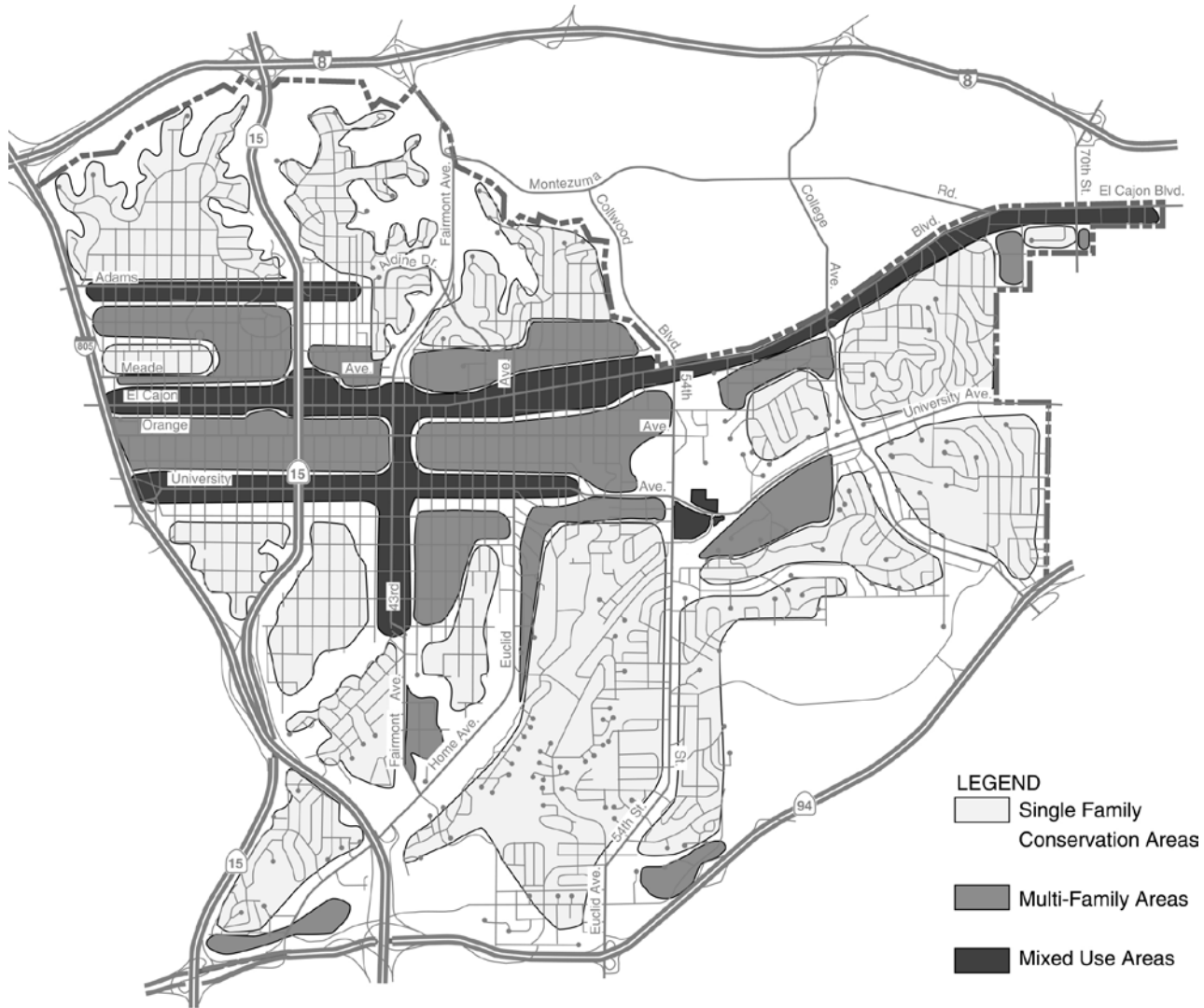
Goal

- To foster development of schools, recreational centers, employment centers and parking reservoirs to support high quality residential development.

Recommendations

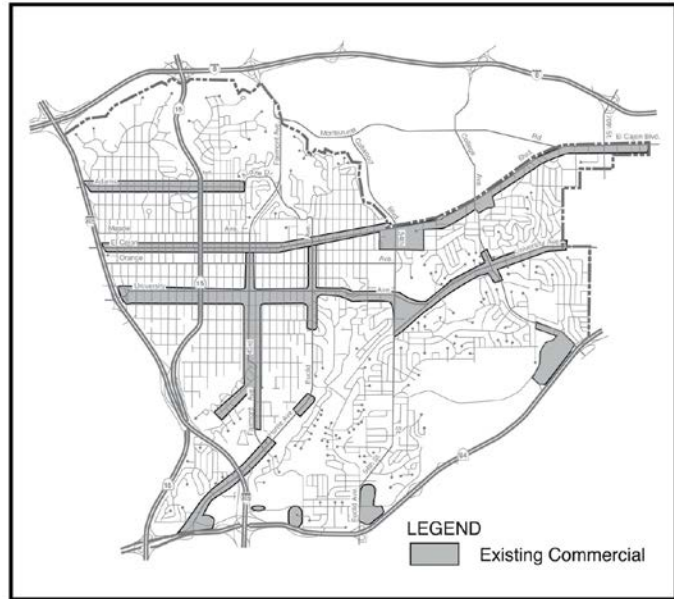
- Ensure that adequate public facilities and infrastructure are in place prior to the construction of additional multifamily dwellings. Restrict new multifamily development within the service boundaries of schools where the local student population exceeds the following standards:
 - Elementary Schools: 100 students per acre, or the design capacity of permanent structures on existing school sites (500 students per school preferred)
 - Middle Schools: 70 students per acre, or the design capacity of permanent structures on existing school sites (1,000 students per school preferred)
 - High Schools: 70 students per acre, or the design capacity of permanent structures on existing school sites (1,500 students per school preferred)
- Enhance school and other public facilities to entice families to live in Mid-City rather than moving to other communities.
- Establish employment centers to provide jobs for residents.
- Provide adequate off-street parking.
- Locate private off-street parking to the rear of multifamily structure

FIGURE 16. CONCEPTUAL RESIDENTIAL ELEMENT



COMMERCIAL

Commercial activity within Mid-City ranges from auto-oriented El Cajon Boulevard to neighborhood-oriented Adams Avenue, with University Avenue reflecting characteristics of both. These major commercial corridors are supplemented by several shopping centers, assorted pockets of strip commercial and neighborhood-serving convenience stores. Retail sales represent the dominant commercial activity in the Mid-City. Office, wholesale, personal and commercial services and visitor-commercial enterprises are also present.



Vision: Commercial corridors and centers providing vibrant shopping and business opportunities.

TYPE AND DISTRIBUTION OF USES

Goal

- To provide a full range of commercial goods and services to the Mid-City population.

Recommendations

- Restructure the commercial sector to take full advantage of Mid-City's population density and shopping patterns (refer to the Economic Development Element).
- Focus new commercial and mixed-use development in nodes to create strong centers of complementary activity. Such nodes should be centered around the intersection of major transportation corridors. These may include the intersections of El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue with I-805.
- 35th Street, SR-15, 43rd/Fairmount, Euclid, and 54th Street. Lower-intensity, commercial, mixed-use, or residential use should be accommodated along designated linear areas between nodes.
- Increase the depth of commercial-residential transition zoning west of 54th Street. The transition zone should extend generally 300 feet from El Cajon Boulevard and up to 250

feet from University Avenue. Within these zones, property may be developed according to the designated residential zone, or, if lots are consolidated such that the property fronts on the commercial corridor, they may be developed with those commercial and/or residential uses permitted in the abutting commercial zone. With the exception of development within the node surrounding the interchange of El Cajon Boulevard and State Route 15, a discretionary permit should be required for development proposals that do not include a residential component.

- Along that portion of Adams Avenue west of East Mountain View Drive and 39th Street, a transition zone should generally extend 50 feet from the commercial zone. Use of this transition zone should be limited to commercial parking.
- Residential-only projects should not be permitted in commercially designated areas along Adams Avenue and should be restricted in other commercial areas.
- Concentrate commercial enterprises serving regional markets reliant on freeway access along I-805, Highway 94, and State Route 15.
- The Grove Shopping Center on SR-94 should be redeveloped to provide regional shopping and entertainment opportunities.
- The commercial nodes at the I-805 and State Route 15 gateways (University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard) should accommodate hotels, restaurants, retailers requiring large structures and parcels, and gasoline stations with auto repair.
- Light manufacturing and assembly activities, such as bakeries and garment manufacturing, should be accommodated along selected major commercial corridors.
- Concentrate medium- to high-intensity mixed-use commercial, light manufacturing and medium-density residential development along the west side of State Route 15. Ground floor street elevations should be reserved for retail, entertainment and recreational uses. Residential, hotel and office uses should be encouraged on upper floors.
- All manufacturing facilities that occupy commercial street frontage should observe transparency requirements consistent with guidelines applicable to commercial development, perhaps by incorporating retail outlets for the sale of products manufactured onsite.
- A commercial revitalization program should be undertaken to foster redevelopment along Euclid Avenue, south of Westover Place.
- A center of ethnically oriented commercial activities should be encouraged within an “International Marketplace” bounded by El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue at Fairmount Avenue and 43rd Street. In addition to restaurants and retail outlets, small- to medium-scale food processing and craft-oriented manufacturing facilities should also be accommodated. Special regulations should be considered to accommodate cultural needs, such as in the processing and sales of food products.
- Establish a center of civic and recreational activity in the 54th Street corridor between El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue. Encourage cultural and non-profit organizations, artisans, hotels, professional offices and art galleries to locate in this area. Consolidate schools, playground and park areas, clustering building areas for most efficient mixed-use.

- Similar to the envisioned Cultural Center Complex, consideration should be given to educational, recreational, spiritual, and/or entertainment uses for the large site at the southeast corner of University Avenue and Aragon Drive.

Note: This recommendation was not reviewed by the Planning Commission.

- Provide for the establishment and continuation of neighborhood businesses such as corner stores at appropriate crossroad locations in the neighborhoods. Such establishments may not necessarily be required to be shown on the community plan map, and should be granted relaxed processing and parking requirements to establish, continue, or expand the use, under the following circumstances:
 1. The establishment provides desired neighborhood goods or services;
 2. The establishment has had an historical presence in the neighborhood or, for new and expanded establishments, is compatible with the style and character of the neighborhood; and
 3. There are no significant impacts related to traffic, parking, noise, or other environmental impacts.
- Provide incentives such as residential density or commercial floor area bonuses for mixed-use infill development along established commercial corridors.
- Encourage reuse of existing commercial structures for non-retail activities (e.g., entertainment, manufacturing, etc.)
- Promote nighttime pedestrian activity in the commercial corridors by accommodating entertainment facilities, religious institutions and other enterprises that attract significant numbers of people during the evening hours.
- Provide an expanded array of commercial goods and services in neighborhoods that lack them, through appropriate regulatory and promotional activities.
- Develop specific regulations for the outdoor display of merchandise and signage, particularly within the public right-of-way.
- Accommodate expanded home occupation activities in varying [degrees for] pre-designated neighborhood areas.

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

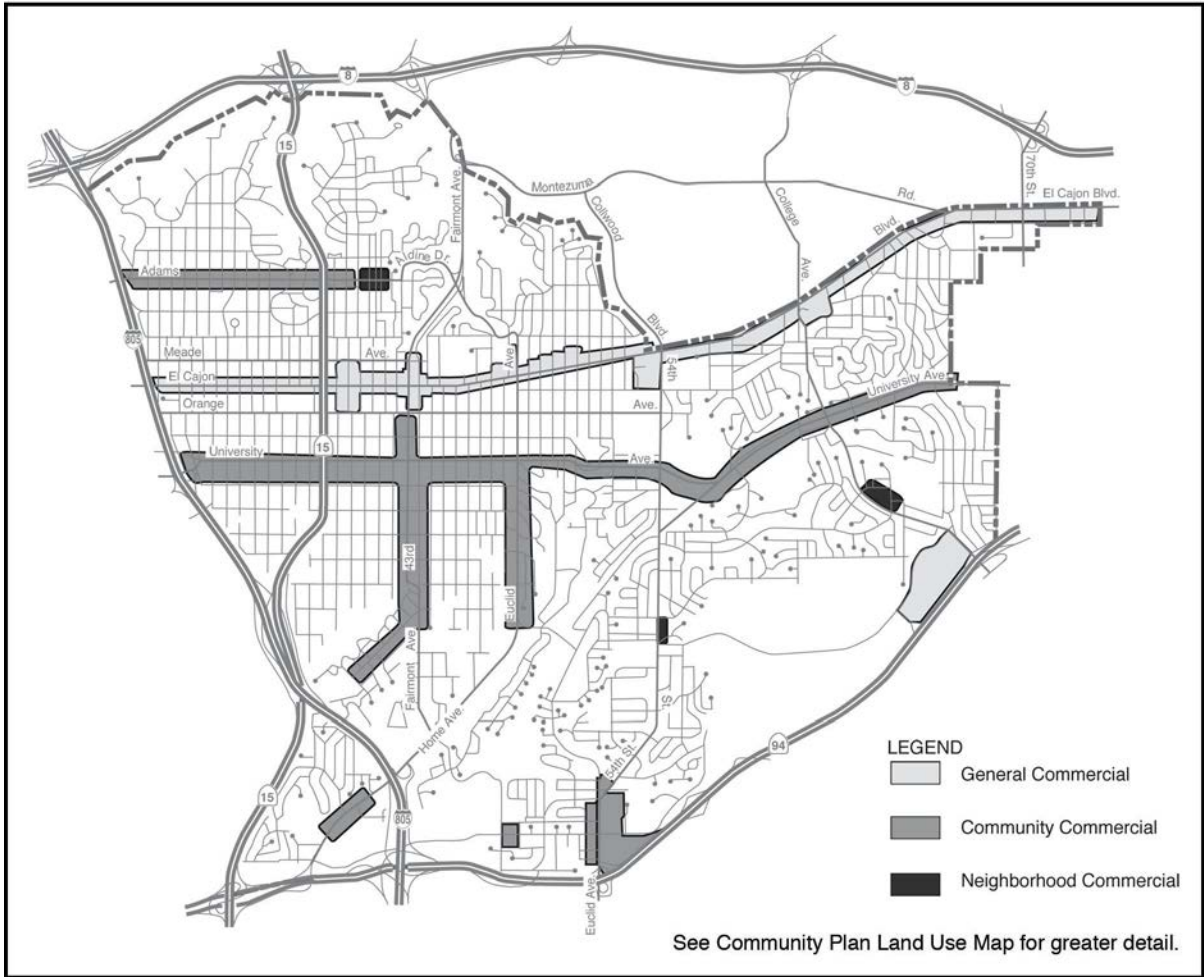
Goals

- To provide attractive and functional commercial corridors and centers.
- To restore and enhance the appearance and function of existing commercial development.
- To maintain and strengthen the pedestrian orientation of commercial areas.
- To reflect the desirable historic character of commercial areas in form and function of new development.
- To foster a safer and more interactive community through the controlled mingling of uses, including commercial, residential, and industrial.

Recommendations

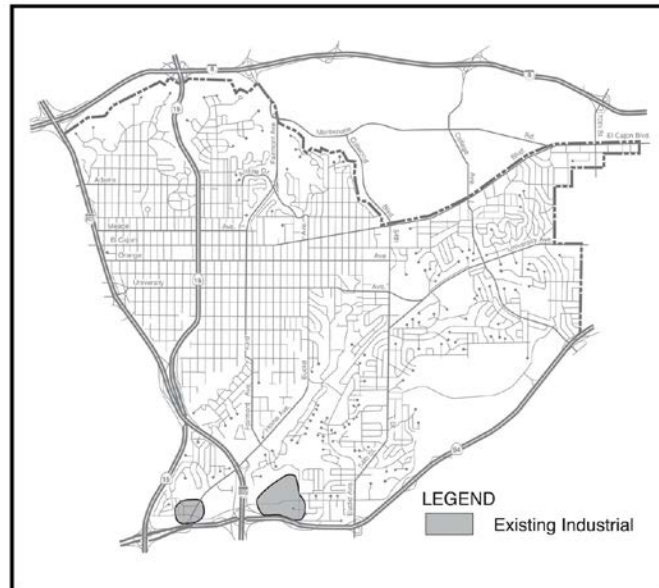
- Revise development regulations as necessary to ensure quality design consistent with community character and to reduce visual clutter in commercial districts.
- Development within and adjacent to community gateways (see the **Urban Design Element**) should incorporate design elements (massing, landscaping) that reflect and reinforce the established design theme for the area.
- Historic structures should be rehabilitated for reuse.
- Storefronts should open up by providing ample display windows that are free of obstructions. Any security bars should be carefully designed to be unobtrusive, using dark colors and/or bar systems that can roll or accordion out of the way.
- Facade rehabilitation is encouraged. A professional designer should be involved to help maintain or restore the architectural intensity of the structure.
- Revise development regulations as needed to accommodate floor area requirements of modern commercial tenants.
- Revise development regulations as needed to establish pedestrian orientation in new development.
- Establish a residential density bonus for mixed-use development.
- Allow on-street parking bays to provide additional parking for small-scale businesses, especially neighborhood convenience centers, in exchange for better building design, street landscaping and lighting

Figure 17
Conceptual Commercial Element



INDUSTRIAL

Employment in the manufacturing sector is a necessary component to sustainable economic development. Base sector employment opportunities in Mid-City are limited by the price and availability of property zoned for industry. Due to the lack of large sites available for industrial development, strategies for the expansion of employment opportunities in Mid-City should focus on accommodating smaller scale employers.



Vision: Provide a multiplicity of accessible base sector employment opportunities.

TYPE AND DISTRIBUTION OF USES

Goal

- To provide a wide range of employment opportunities complementary to the skills and aspirations of the community's workforce.

Recommendations

- Maintain industrial designation along Federal Boulevard, Home Avenue and 47th Street for employers requiring larger parcels and immediate freeway access. Examples of such enterprises include parts suppliers, machine shops, cleaning and dyeing works, boat and motorcycle manufacturers, building contractors, and beverage bottlers and distributors.
- Accommodate appropriately regulated apparel manufacture, electronic assembly, bakeries and other low-intensity light manufacturing situated behind commercial storefronts along major commercial corridors through the designation of additional industrial areas and the modification of commercial zone regulations.
- Designate areas for light manufacturing as shown on **Figure 18**.
- Accommodate home industry and incubator facilities in the International Marketplace.

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Goals

- To provide employment centers which contribute positively to the character of the community.
- To add compatible light manufacturing and assembly development to Mid-City, bringing more jobs and affordable goods to the community.

Recommendations

- Review development regulations, as necessary, to minimize potential conflicts between uses and to ensure consistency with neighborhood character.
- Ensure compliance with development regulations through vigilant code enforcement.
- Require that new industrial and light manufacturing development be adequately buffered from existing land uses through design features such as solid walls and enhanced landscaping.
- Provide for limited light manufacturing and assembly development of a scale and character compatible with existing commercial structures. New industrial structures should comply with streetscape requirements applicable to commercial establishments in the same zone including front setback, pedestrian entrances, transparency, landscaping and lighting. The display and sale of goods manufactured on the premises should be encouraged.

FIGURE 18. CONCEPTUAL INDUSTRIAL ELEMENT



NOTE:
SEE COMMUNITY PLAN LAND USE MAP FOR GREATER DETAIL