

# INTRODUCTION

# 1

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

## Introduction

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

The North Park Community Plan is an update of the 1986 Greater North Park Community Plan which was preceded by the 1970 Park North-East Community Plan and the 1969 North Park Commercial Area Plan. A component of San Diego's General Plan, the North Park Community Plan is a guide for how the community will grow and develop over 15 to 20 years. The plan includes specific goals and recommendations regarding the use and development of land and addresses mobility, economic prosperity, public facilities, conservation, open space and recreation. The plan also envisions a sustainable community that preserves historic resources and North Park's unique and aesthetic character.

### 1.1 Community Profile

#### COMMUNITY SETTING

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

North Park is defined by its mesa tops with canyon and hillside areas. The majority of North Park is relatively flat or gently sloping with pronounced hillside areas located in the northern boundary of the community adjacent to Mission Valley, and the southeastern portion of the community adjacent to Greater Golden Hill.

North Park is one of the older urbanized communities in the City of San Diego with original subdivisions being

recorded just after the turn of the 20th century. The community is traversed by two major east-west streets, University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard with Adams Avenue, also an east-west street, serving the northern portion of the community. Park Boulevard, which serves as the community's western boundary, 30th Street, and Texas Street are north-south streets of significance within the community and are characterized by the streetcar and automobile-oriented commercial dating as far back as the 1920's and 1930's.

North Park's public transportation system is supplemented with a strong grid street pattern that facilitates multi-modal circulation. The built environment of North Park includes vibrant commercial corridors surrounded by multi-family residential single-family neighborhoods concentrated in the northern and southern portions of the community.

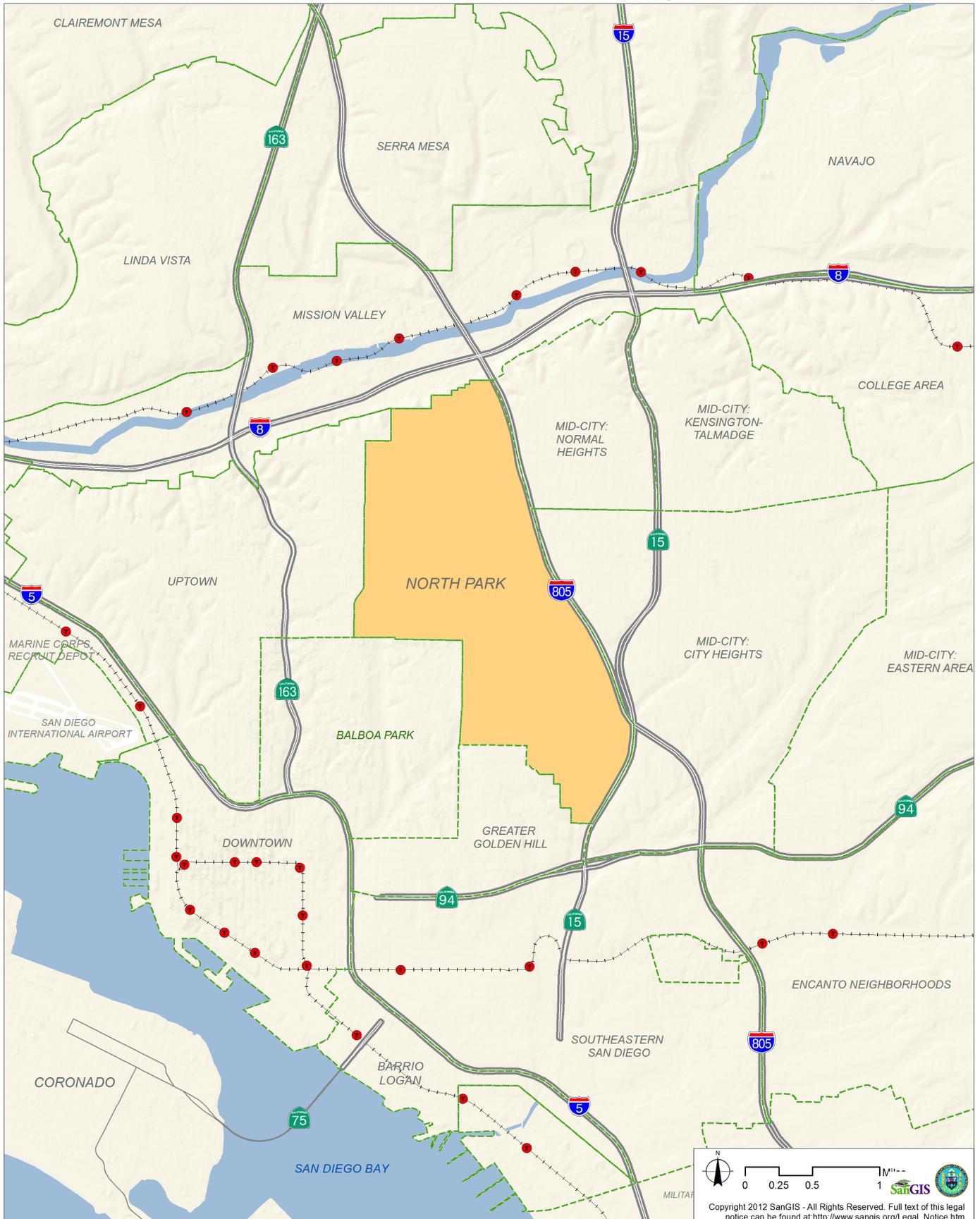


*North Park is a community of historic neighborhoods.*



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

Figure 1-1: Community Location



## HISTORIC CONTEXT

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

Residential development during the first half of the 20th century was made possible by a streetcar system which accommodated movement within and outside the community. The streetcar system also led to the development of active commercial districts along University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard. Although the streetcar system was dismantled in the 1940’s, North Park continued to grow after World War II and became a suburban shopping district. However, with the



*River rock column monuments depicting an ostrich symbol Identity markers for the University Heights neighborhood.*



*Bungalow courtyard homes are a contributing aspect of North Park’s residential neighborhoods.*

development of freeways and shopping centers in Mission Valley in the 1960s, North Park evolved into a bedroom community with a population primarily dependent upon other areas of the City for jobs, services and goods. It was during this time that North Park entered a period of decline with failing business districts and deteriorating neighborhoods.

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

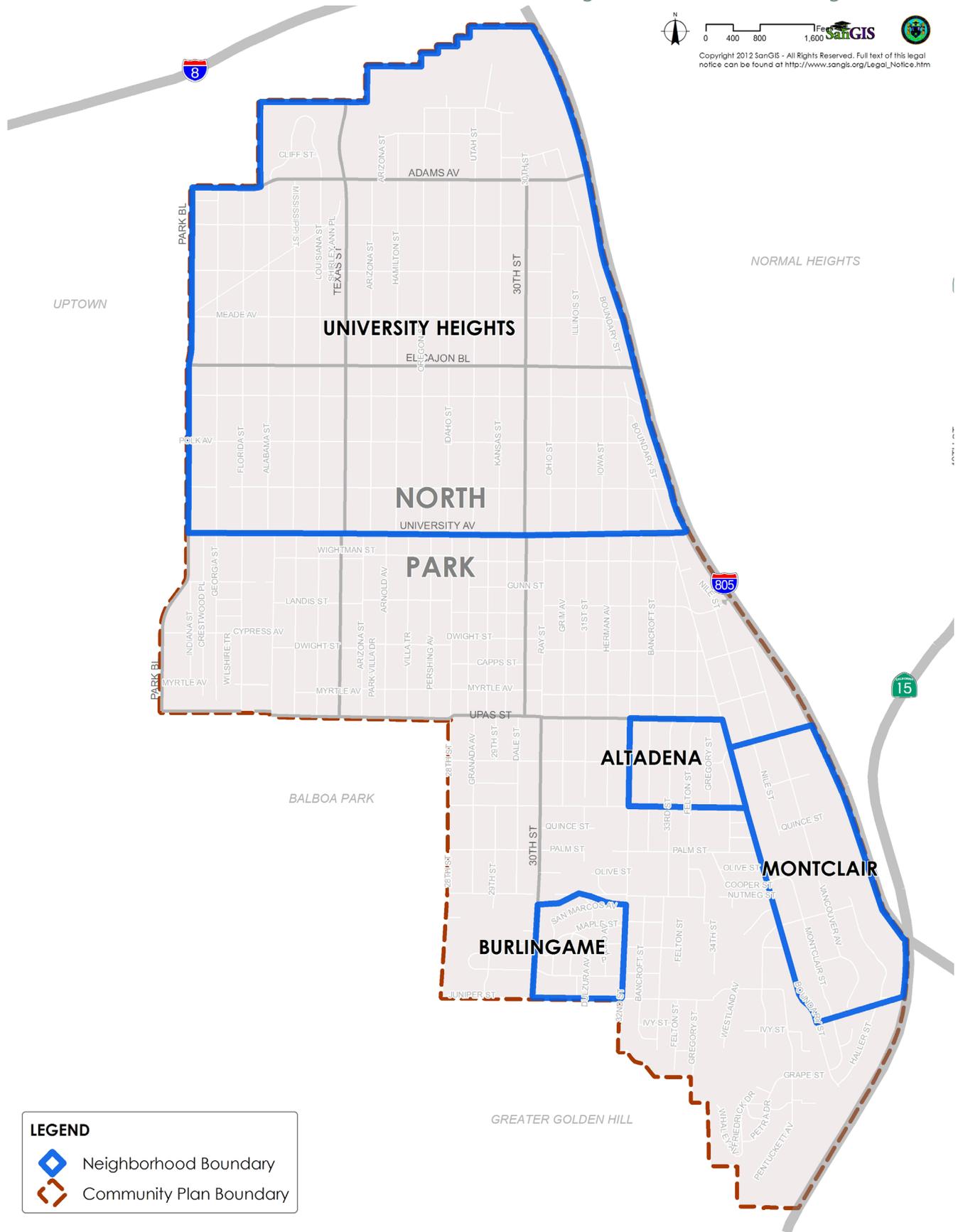
## NORTH PARK NEIGHBORHOODS

Several neighborhoods exist within the North Park community - See Figure 1-2: North Park Neighborhoods. While neighborhood boundaries are officially defined, they are illustrated in this plan and based upon contributing factors such as historical documents, county assessor’s parcel maps, property deeds, subdivision maps, police beat maps, the existence of active neighborhood organizations, and residents’ perceptions about where they live within the North Park community. Through the years residents within these neighborhoods have come together to focus on their local needs, improvement opportunities, and to celebrate their local identity within the greater North Park community. Although Figure 1-2 shows several active neighborhoods within the community, other neighborhoods can emerge as local residents in other areas of the North Park community organize and promote their own neighborhood identity.

## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The current population of North Park is 45,997. Residents represent all economic backgrounds and are diverse in composition. Based on the build out of the community plan the population of North Park community is estimated to be approximately 61,965.

Figure 1-2: North Park Neighborhoods



Copyright 2012 SanGIS - All Rights Reserved. Full text of this legal notice can be found at [http://www.sangis.org/Legal\\_Notice.htm](http://www.sangis.org/Legal_Notice.htm)

## 1.2 Community Planning Framework

### SHARED PLANNING PROCESS WITH UPTOWN AND GOLDEN HILL

The North Park Community Plan provides a long range guide for the future physical development of the community and was updated concurrently with the community plans for Uptown and Golden Hill. A goal of the concurrent updates is to address key issues and propose solutions as they relate to attributes shared by each of the three communities. The updates started in 2009 with an intensive public outreach effort centered around individual community meetings that included stakeholder committees, neighborhood associations, workshops on key topics, a multi-day charrette and meetings of the North Park Planning Committee, the City's recognized community planning group.

Various attributes related to urban design, historic, preservation, open space, and mobility are common to each of the three communities at both larger and smaller scales leading to the development of shared planning solutions with refinements appropriate to individual community and neighborhood contexts. Each community is situated within a landform that is part of a broad mesa interspersed with many natural or semi-developed canyons allowing a distinctive combination of outward views and interaction with open space along most community edge points. These characteristics also provide a sense of seclusion from adjacent communities not uncommon for San Diego's neighborhoods, and importantly, support the interconnectedness between the three communities. Adjacent freeways reinforce this relationship as they have usually followed canyons and other low points in San Diego.

The three communities surround regionally significant and historic Balboa Park. As development radiated out from Downtown San Diego along streetcar lines, later forming commercial districts along arterial streets and major crossings, a legacy remains of traditional storefronts uniquely suited to small and sole-proprietor businesses.

A grid pattern of streets enhances connectivity and promotes walkability yet traffic congestion occurs where street widths narrow or access is funneled due to canyon and freeway interfaces.

The three communities have also been part of one of the longest historical development periods in the region due to their central location and accommodative zoning which has left a range of building forms and architectural styles as well as historic resources in need of preservation. This has sometimes resulted in awkward scale transitions and juxtaposition of building styles as the rate of development has oftentimes been modest or uneven. The relatively intense concentrations of retail and employment uses nearby in Downtown and Mission Valley draw certain retail formats and employment away from these communities. As these communities developed prior to current citywide public facilities standards, locating and financing new public facilities is difficult due to lack of available land as well as a limited rate of new development. Aging right-of-way infrastructure often needs to be upgraded and/or replaced.



*North Park, along with adjacent neighbors Uptown and Golden Hill, share direct access to Balboa Park.*



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

### 1.3 Community Plan Guiding Principles

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

- Preservation of community character including historical, architectural, and cultural resources
- Preservation of single-family neighborhoods
- Focus on sustainability
- Housing and commercial rehabilitation through adaptive reuse
- Promotion of art and culture
- The success of commercial areas and their effect on adjacent single-family neighborhoods
- Expansion and enhancement of a multi-modal transportation network that includes biking, walking, and transit use
- Identification of additional recreational opportunities
- Compatibility of new development into existing neighborhoods

The following are North Park's Guiding Principles which form the 'heart' of the Community Plan. They have been developed through an extensive public involvement process and describe the broad direction and vision for North Park. They also form the basis for the goals and recommendations of the Plan.



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

#### Core Values for North Park:

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

## 1.4 Legislative Framework

### GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan sets out a long-range vision and policy framework to guide future development, provide public services, and maintain the qualities that define San Diego and contain a set of overall guiding principles (see inset Section 1.2 below). The General Plan shifts focus from how to develop vacant land to how to design infill development and reinvest in existing communities. A key component guiding these efforts is the City of Villages Strategy which proposes growth be directed into pedestrian-friendly mixed-use activity centers linked to an improved regional transit system.

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

These villages or activity centers are to be formally identified through the community plan update process. The mixed-use commercial districts and higher density neighborhoods along transit lines are candidate village locations within each of the three communities. The policies of each plan can be used to focus needed investments in infrastructure, transit and other mobility improvements.

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

### General Plan Guiding Principles

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

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

## LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

The City's Land Development Code contains planning, zoning, subdivision and building regulations which implement the policies of the General Plan and community plans. Located in the City's Municipal Code, the Land Development Code includes regulations for areas throughout the City as well as planned district ordinances with specialized zoning for specific geographic areas of the City. Land use in the North Park community is regulated by both citywide regulations as well as the "tailored zoning" through the use of the Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ). Regulations include standards for allowable land uses, densities, building heights, setbacks and other development issues.

## FEE IMPACT STUDY

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

## AIRPORT LAND USE COMPATIBILITY PLAN

The Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) for the San Diego International Airport (SDIA) provides policies and criteria for land use compatibility in the vicinity of SDIA. The Community of North Park is subject to the Airport Land Use Compatibility Overlay Zone and the overflight of aircraft arriving to and departing from SDIA. The community is located in Airport Influence Review Area 2 which requires residential property owners to disclose that the property is near an airport and may be affected by the overflight of aircraft when selling property. In addition, proposals for some structures may be required to provide notification to the Federal Aviation Administration.

## MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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

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

## RELATED PLANS AND STUDIES

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

## 1.5 Planning Process

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

## 1.6 Elements of the Community Plan and Plan Organization

The North Park Community Plan is the City's policy statement for the continued development of North Park and the distribution of land uses. The plan is implemented by a variety of ordinances, activities and programs including the City's Land Development Code, the North Park Fee Impact Study, the City's Capital Improvement Program, and public and private development. The Community Plan is not a static document and should be continually monitored to respond to unanticipated changes affecting the community. Any proposed amendments to this plan should be carefully reviewed for consistency with the vision, values and goals of the North Park Community Plan and General Plan.

The Community Plan is organized into twelve elements and supporting appendices. Following an introduction, each element contains the overarching goals for that subject, written as end statements for what will occur when the vision has been achieved. Each of the goals relate to one or more of the Community Plan's Guiding

Principles. Goals are followed by a context discussion, broken down by topic area. Finally, each element provides specific recommendations for North Park which provide a specific action or strategy to achieve a goal. The ten elements are patterned after the General Plan and include:

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

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



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