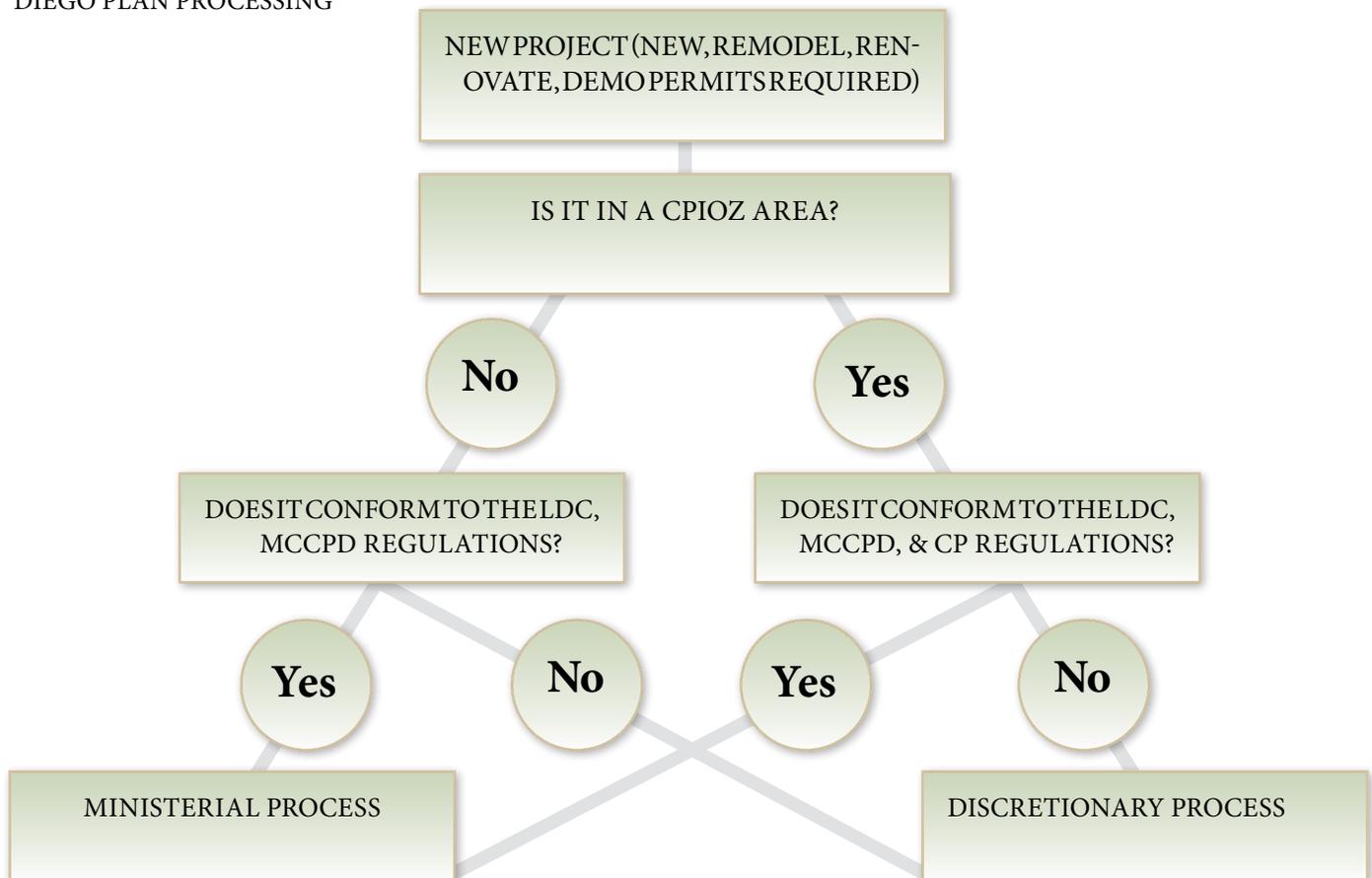


Within the City of San Diego, there are two basic types of permitting review: ministerial and discretionary. Previously, Greater North Park did not have any CPIOZ areas. This Urban Design Element identifies CPIOZ areas and applies context-specific polices and guidelines. The City of San Diego has two permitting processes: ministerial permits and discretionary permits. Figure 4-2 highlights how a new project would be processed for Greater North Park.

FIGURE 4-2: CITY OF SAN DIEGO PLAN PROCESSING



4.3 URBAN FORM ANALYSIS

The unique urban form of a community is dictated by a number of different factors. Understanding these factors can help in determining what is important to improve the quality of the built environment. These factors occur at the various scales: Community-Wide, District or Neighborhood, Corridor, Block, and Building scales. The following discussion begins with elements of the urban form that are at the community-wide scale. After this introductory text, the discussion is organized by geographic sub-areas called CPIOZ districts. Most areas within the Greater North Park planning area fall into either the public realm or one of four CPIOZ districts: core area, mixed use corridor area, consistent character area, or diverse character area

(see Figure 4-3: CPIOZ Map). The “other areas” on the map are regulated by superceding guidelines such as Secretary of the Interior standards for historic districts or City of San Diego guidelines for canyon slopes/hillsides. This structure allows the reader to quickly identify which policies/guidelines are applicable for any location within the planning area.

4.3.1 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND LAND USE/DENSITY TRANSITIONS

While most policies/guidelines are organized by geographic area, the topics of sustainability and land use/density transitions can apply to locations throughout the planning area and throughout the chapter. Sustainability refers to urban design guidelines which reduce the impact of human development on the environment, achieve long-term goals over short-term goals, and enhance the built environment equally for all segments of the population. Land use transition guidelines address the boundaries between differing land uses (i.e. commercial adjacent to residential) and/or land uses of different densities (i.e. multi-family adjacent to single family).

In order to maintain the geographic structure of the UDE, while also calling attention to these two urban design topics, these guidelines are identified by an icon for:



Sustainability guidelines and;



Land use/density transition guidelines.

4.3.2 URBAN FORM

The unique attributes of a place set the overall urban design stage. Some of the major physical elements that make up urban form in North Park include:

- Block pattern
- Street pattern
- Views, Landmarks, Gateways, Landforms
- Activity Centers
- Districts
- Neighborhoods of similar character
- Building character and architectural style

Greater North Park is unique in the combinations of older historic areas and forms that are still intact as well as newer forms and improvements that also contribute to a unique sense of place. North Park has retained building forms that are pedestrian scaled and established by historical development patterns and transportation systems of the early 1900s. Part of the uniqueness is attributed to the historic commercial centers and neighborhoods, and part to the roads and block configurations. A network of several major streets are arranged as the structural center of the community, with the neighborhoods surrounding these commercial districts.

COMMUNITY-WIDE SCALE



DISTRICT OR NEIGHBORHOOD



CORRIDOR



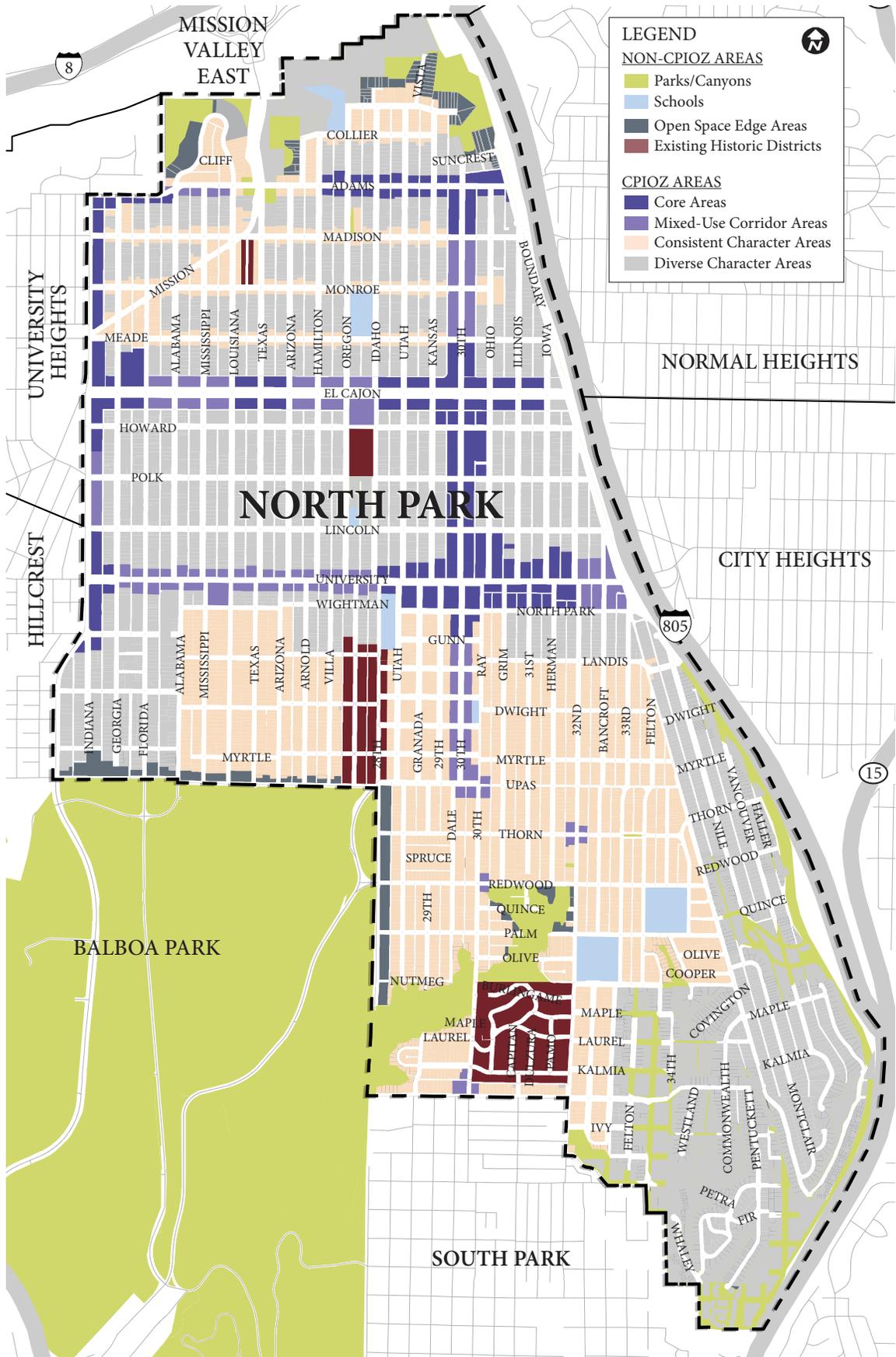
BLOCK SCALE



SITE / BUILDING SCALE



FIGURE 4-3: CPIOZ MAP





Courtesy of San Diego Uptown News

Historically, University Avenue served as the center for residential and commercial activities as far back as 1907 when electric streetcars existed. Since that time, mixed use development has continued to extend east and west along University Avenue. University Avenue is a vibrant area, home to many shops, neighborhood restaurants, and craft breweries.

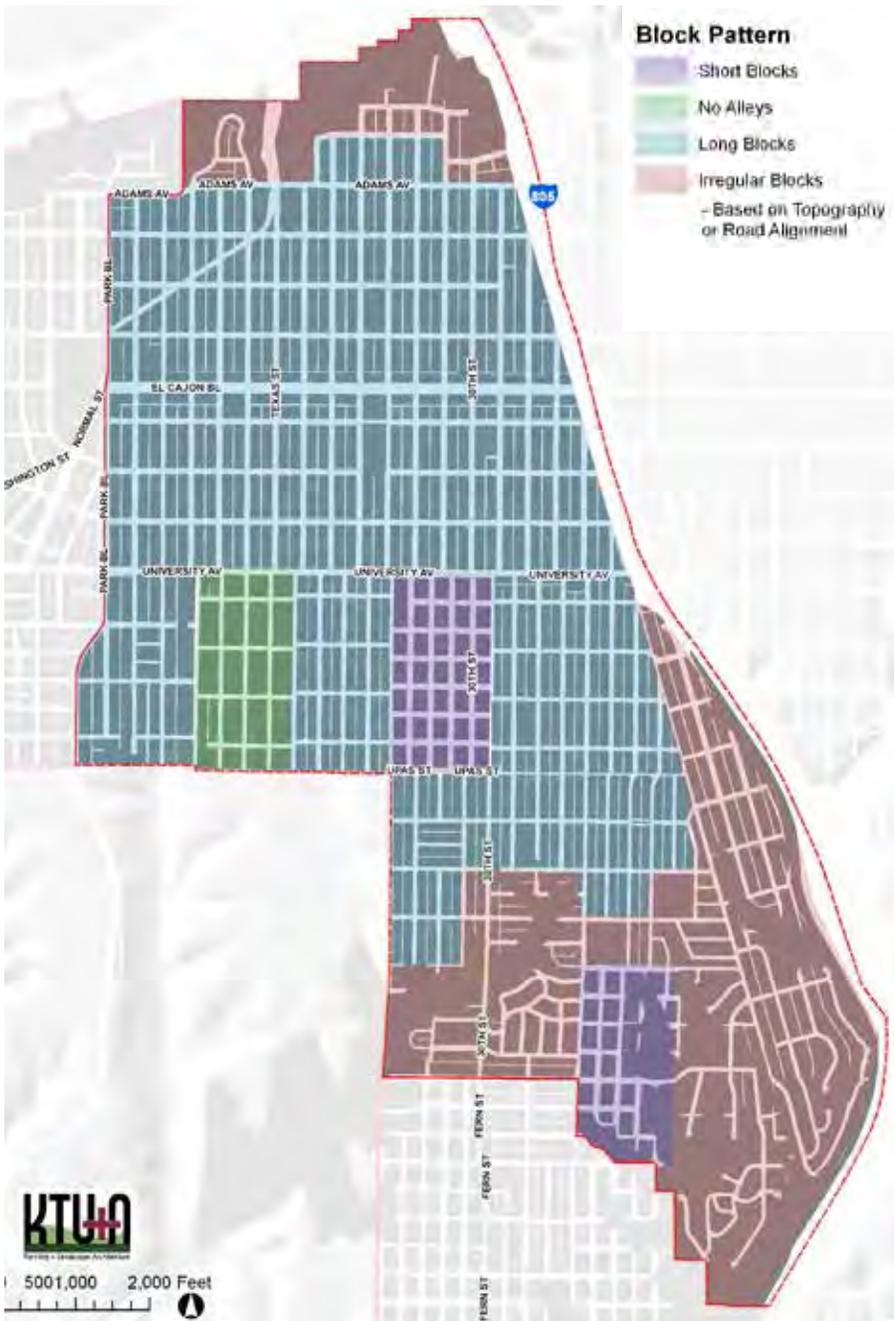
In the 1920's, North Park saw a new type of commercial development as the automobile became more and more viable. Because land prices adjacent to the trolley lines were expensive, El Cajon Boulevard began to attract automobile catered businesses. Today, El Cajon Boulevard is a major east to west through fare and mixed-use corridor with taller surrounding buildings and diverse business types. Through time, Adams Avenue also developed into an east to west mixed-use street.

The remaining areas outside of the commercial districts consist mostly of residential neighborhoods. North of Adams Avenue and south of University, the neighborhoods are mostly single-story and single-family residential neighborhoods. The desire for these neighborhoods is to protect the harmonious and consistent scale and character. In addition to the single family neighborhoods, a large portion of the neighborhoods in the center of North Park have a blend of multi-family and single-family homes. These areas include a blend of different residential types, styles and designs. Throughout the residential area, there are opportunities for replacing poorly designed infill from the 1960s through the 1990s with higher quality and more compact infill development that provides both private and public benefits.

BLOCK PATTERNS

North Park’s streets are generally oriented in a rectilinear pattern dating back to 1870 due to the planning of a street car system. The Class 1 streetcar system ran along University Ave and Adams Ave. It also connected these street through Park Boulevard and 30th St. Since that time, these streets have served as key commercial streets. Development has been facilitated by North Park’s elongated blocks. The blocks provide two distinct types of frontage with the short side or end grain assigned to the higher traffic thoroughfare. Most residential buildings can front the quieter, long side of the block. Along Texas Street, 30th Street, Park Avenue and Adams Avenue, the end parcels are platted to take advantage of the traffic while the amount of parking behind is controlled by the variable lot depth. Development was spurred forward with the introduction of the street car system.

FIGURE 4-4: BLOCK PATTERNS



In the 1920s, North Park saw a development geared towards the automobile as the automobile became the more dominant form of transportation. Because land prices adjacent to the trolley lines were expensive, El Cajon Boulevard began to attract development and it has the same block pattern with the short end that addresses El Cajon Boulevard and the long side reserved for less intense uses. Figure 4.5 shows different block patterns in North Park. With few exceptions there are approximately four different block patterns that occur. Areas adjacent to the canyons have no consistent pattern while platted developments retained the elongated block for the most part. Figure 4.5 highlights two platted developments that introduced two different block patterns.

STREET GRID

The North Park area has eight primary streets that are highlighted as community corridors for connectivity. These streets have been identified in the workshop process as important corridors for walking and biking. This information was used to establish a hierarchy of streets (shown below) from an urban design perspective as well as identify key mixed use corridors.

FIGURE 4-5: STREET GRID



- Boulevards** connect, define and separate neighborhoods and community centers. Boulevards can include major transit corridors such as Park Boulevard and El Cajon Boulevard. These streets provide access to other communities in the region.
- Pedestrian Oriented Retail Streets** support connectivity within the planning area. It supports lighter transit, such as bus but is largely focuses on pedestrian and bicycle access. University Avenue, Adams Avenue, and 30th Street are examples of a pedestrian oriented retail street.
- Alleys** in commercial areas are critical to ease of access to parking in commercial areas and provide pull off areas for delivery as well.
- Residential Streets and Alleys** provide direct access to private residences and local public facilities; bicycles and pedestrian mobility is encouraged on all thoroughfares.
- Green Streets** are streets that incorporate urban forestry and stormwater capture. A green street typically includes large canopy trees to provide shade to pedestrians and bicyclists. In addition, surfaces are more permeable to allow for capture of rain water and any surface runoff from buildings or sidewalks.
- Reclaimed Streets** are streets that are excessively wide compared to the level of users it supports. A reclaimed street is termed so because the pedestrian zone can reclaim space from the street to create a bike facility, additional parkway or parklet.

COMMUNITY WIDE FEATURES

The character of an area is affected by the unique attributes of the views, landmarks, and gateways. Historic properties contribute to the character of North Park but will be discussed in the Historic Element.

Views

Views are a result of naturally forming canyons or high points. Though much of North Park is flat, topography does exist and should be highlighted since it does provide structure and uniqueness to the planning area. Most views are found from the edges of North Park, afforded by the dropping away of the topography. Some views do exist from high points in the community as well, though they are relative limited since most of the mesa top that North Park sits on is flat. Views are important public resources that need to be recognized and protected as community amenities.



Landmarks

Landmarks are visual reference points. They are often used to guide when giving directions or for orientation. Landmarks include:

- Water Tower
- Switzer Canyon
- Georgia Street Bridge
- North Park Theater
- San Diego County Credit Union Building
- North Park sign at 30th & University Ave



Gateways

Gateways mark the boundaries of a community and its unique neighborhoods. Additional gateways should be created to solidify the community’s branding identity. Gateways include:

- Entrance onto El Cajon Boulevard at Park Boulevard
- Adams Avenue/Antique Row between Texas Street and I-805

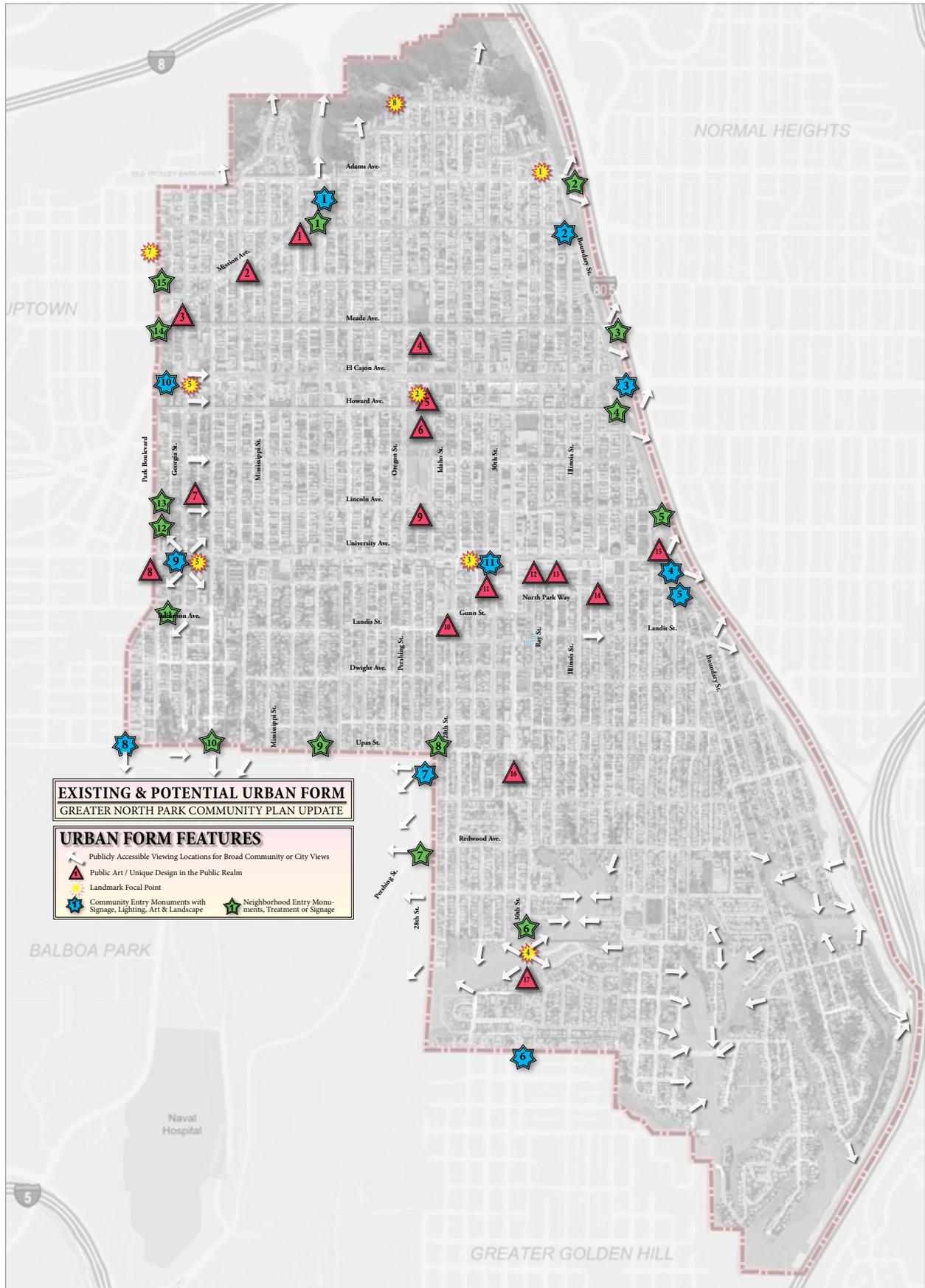


Canyons

An important piece of the built form in Greater North Park includes the canyons. The canyons create spines that extend into the neighborhoods and provide views. These canyons have also impacted street patterns and home developments. The canyons also include a few existing trails. These trails allow access in Switzer Canyon and through Balboa Park. However, most other trails are informal areas where many walk.



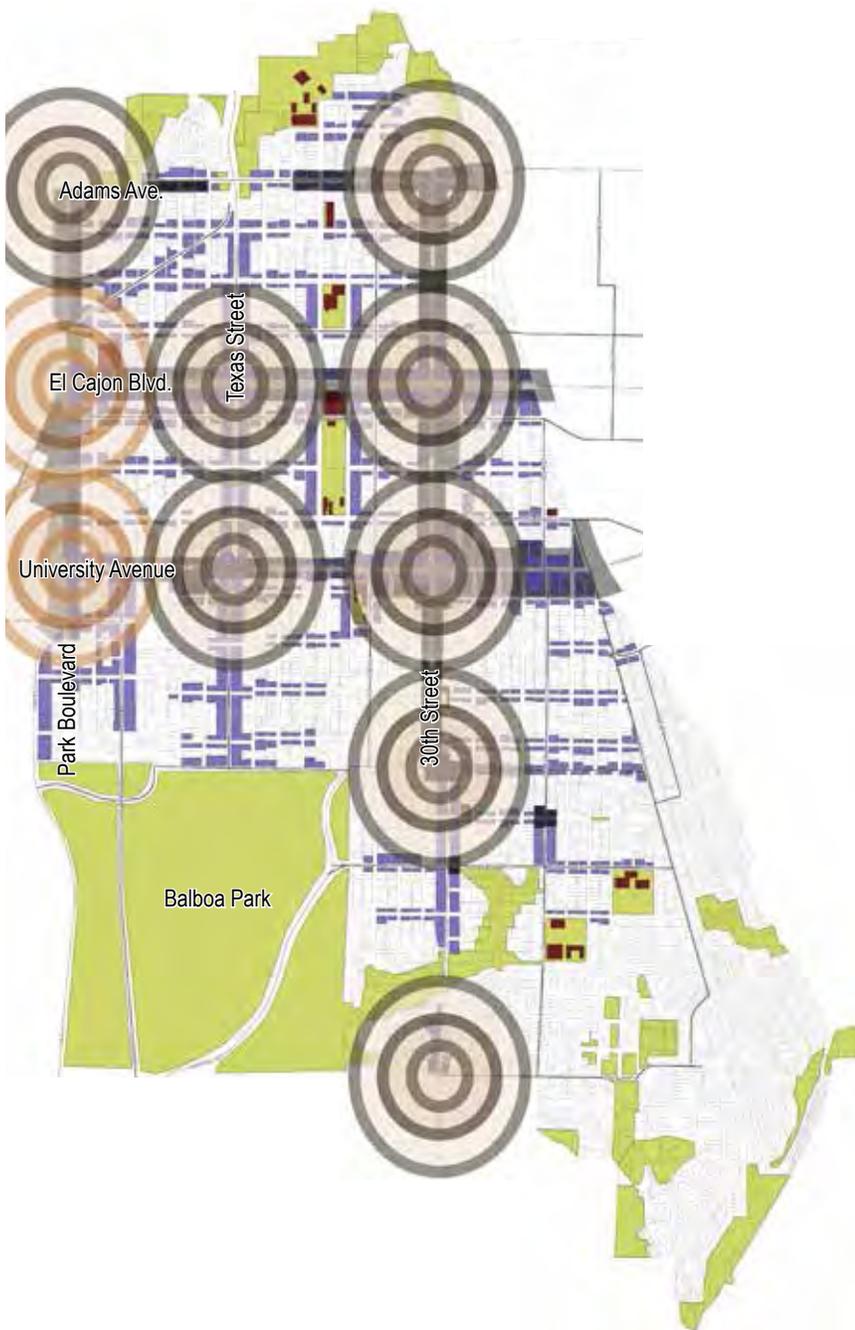
FIGURE 4-6: EXISTING URBAN FORM FEATURES



ACTIVITY CENTERS

North Park supports several different activity centers including retail hubs, employment centers, civic structures, and schools. The form of a building is related to the land use that it supports as well as building typology. While commercial centers and mixed use hubs are generally located along major corridors, civic structures, parks, and schools can act as anchors to create a neighborhood center in a residential area. Figure 4-7 highlights the neighborhood centers and nodes in the planning area. The community workshop process identified these activity centers as a place with a different character. Buildings in these areas are set a part by their ground floor design and uses.

FIGURE 4-7: ACTIVITY CENTERS



Key commercial development areas include:

- University Avenue & 30th Street
- University Avenue & Texas Street
- El Cajon Boulevard & 30th Street
- El Cajon Boulevard & Texas Street
- Adams Avenue & 30th Street
- 30th Street & Upas Avenue

These activity centers identified by the community were incorporated into the CPIOZ map as the core areas and mixed-use corridors. They are defined below:

- *Core Area:* The most concentrated commercial activity centers
- *Mixed-Use Areas:* Commercial and residential areas that provide everyday amenities to adjacent neighborhoods

CITY OF VILLAGES TYPES

- Neighborhood Village Center
- Urban Village Center

Civic Spaces: *Areas that provide public space for all to use and enjoy.*

Activity centers support a variety of land uses including civic space such as parks. These areas are critical in creating opportunities for social interaction.

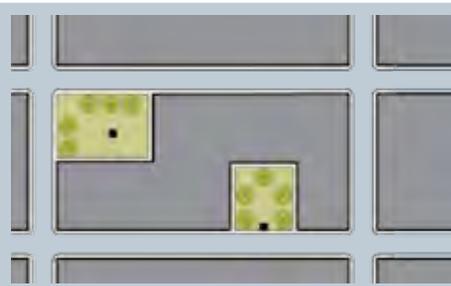
Civic spaces should be organized by their location within the neighborhood. Location is only one of several typological characteristics including size, landscaping, frontages, and equipment. Civic space, to be truly public, should front onto building facades and thoroughfares. Civic spaces should have visual supervision from fronting buildings as well.

Open space in the conventional Land Development Code is usually defined quantitatively, as a ratio of population to land area. This practice has resulted in unrealistic expectations being unmet. Civic spaces must be specialized in function and appropriate in location, which can range from canyons to roof gardens. Complex, civic spaces serve as emergency facilities as well as public amenities.

The following information provides a range of civic space typologies and their associated characteristics.

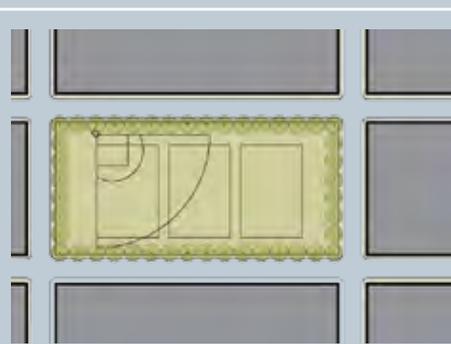
Playground:

Fenced and may include an open shelter. Playgrounds shall be interspersed within residential areas and may be placed within a block. Playgrounds may be included within parks and greens and encouraged throughout the Community.



Neighborhood Multipurpose Field:

Spatially defined by landscaping rather than building frontages. There shall be a 20 foot clear zone at the perimeter for viewing and shall be landscaped with canopy trees. This field may serve a secondary purpose of stormwater management.



Regional Park:

Independent of surrounding building frontages, its landscape shall consist of paths and trails, canyons, meadows, woodland and open shelters, and follow natural corridors. These are at the Community-scale.



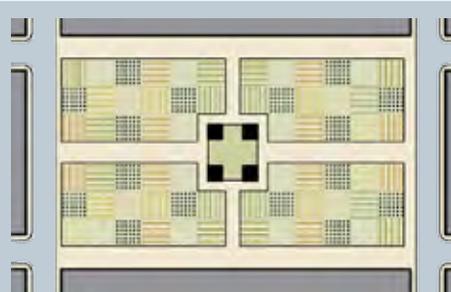
Green:

Spatially defined by landscaping rather than building frontages, its landscape shall consist of lawn and trees, naturalistically disposed. These service



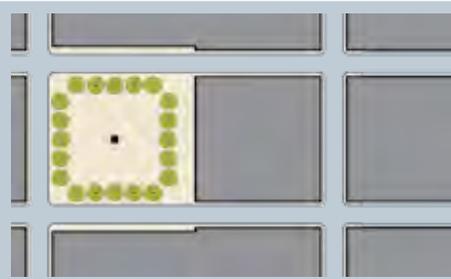
Community Garden:

Fenced and may include a tool shed. Running water is required. Community gardens shall be interspersed within residential areas and may be placed within a block or included within parks and greens and should be encouraged throughout the Community.



Plaza:

Spatially defined by building frontages. Its landscape shall consist primarily of pavement. Trees are optional. Plazas should be located at the intersection of important streets. Ex.: Horton Plaza



Connections with Schools:

Schools are an important part of any community. Every child should have a safe walkable and bikeable route to a quality education. There nine schools in the planning area. Each school acts as an activity center for parents and children, serving as a gathering place for a community, potential recreation center, and adult education resource.



Policy 1 *The existing schools and any new schools need to continue to be identified as civic centers in physical design and relationship to the surrounding neighborhoods.*

- Guideline 1.1** While schools are important centers of learning, the character and development surrounding schools needs to facilitate safe, accessible, and clearly identifiable paths to and from these places.
- Guideline 1.2** Schools need to form a physical partnership with the community.

BUILDING CHARACTER AND ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

The history of North Park's buildings informs the urban form of the character of North Park. While the architectural styles may vary, it is the scale of the detailing that differentiates different building types. For instance the buildings in the core area have a different scale than homes in a residential neighborhood but both may reflect a beaux arts style of architecture.

It is not critical to identify all architectural periods of the community in the urban design element. The primary purpose of discussing these periods or historic styles is to improve the context sensitive design. The single family neighborhoods in North Park are predominantly homes that relate to a specific time period that help to create unique neighborhoods that have retained historic architecture. Figure 4.9 shows the general range of years when different parts of North Park originally developed. Figure 4.10 shows the results of an historic survey of buildings and properties conducted by Gensler in 2009.

This information helps set a foundation for the guidelines. While the guidelines allow for innovation and new design themes, they require that some elements of the dominant style found in the immediate vicinity of any new project site be considered as an integral design component. Existing traditional architectural styles needs to be respected.

The most common architectural characters found in Greater North Park can generally be categorized in the following architectural styles:

Victorian

(Queen Anne and Simplified)



Neo-classical Rowhomes



California Bungalow



Craftsman



Mission Revival



Spanish Colonial



Spanish Revival and Southwest - Pueblo



Egyptian Revival



Italian Renaissance or Italianate



Prairie Style



Gill Cubism



Art Deco,



Based on three public workshops with the general public and North Park Planning Committee, the community identified areas where the building form was consistent and desirable, areas where change would be encouraged, and areas where change is needed to enhance the neighborhood feel. Figure 4.3 highlights the input from the public process. In addition, Figure 4.9 and 4.10 show where platted developments occurred and the styles of homes in Greater North Park. Not surprisingly, there is a greater consistency in architectural styles in the areas that were platted developments and commercial centers. Outside of these platted developments, styles and building types vary greatly.

The community's input was used to identify three categories in the CPOIZ process, core area, mixed use corridors, and consistent character areas. Figure 4.8 shows where the core areas, mixed use corridors, and consistent character neighborhoods occur and where context sensitive design is necessary. The diverse character neighborhoods were informed by the community process as areas where change should be encouraged.

- **Core areas:** Mixed use centers where the ground floor design is critical to the continued success of a pedestrian scale retail street. The "main street" includes smaller shops with store entries occurring every 25 feet and large windows that showcase the shops function.
- **Consistent Character Areas:** Residential areas that reflect a period of time in the history of North Park
- **Diverse Character Areas:** Residential areas that reflect post 1960's blending of apartments

FIGURE 4-8: EXISTING AND POTENTIAL DISTRICTS NEEDING CONTEXT SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

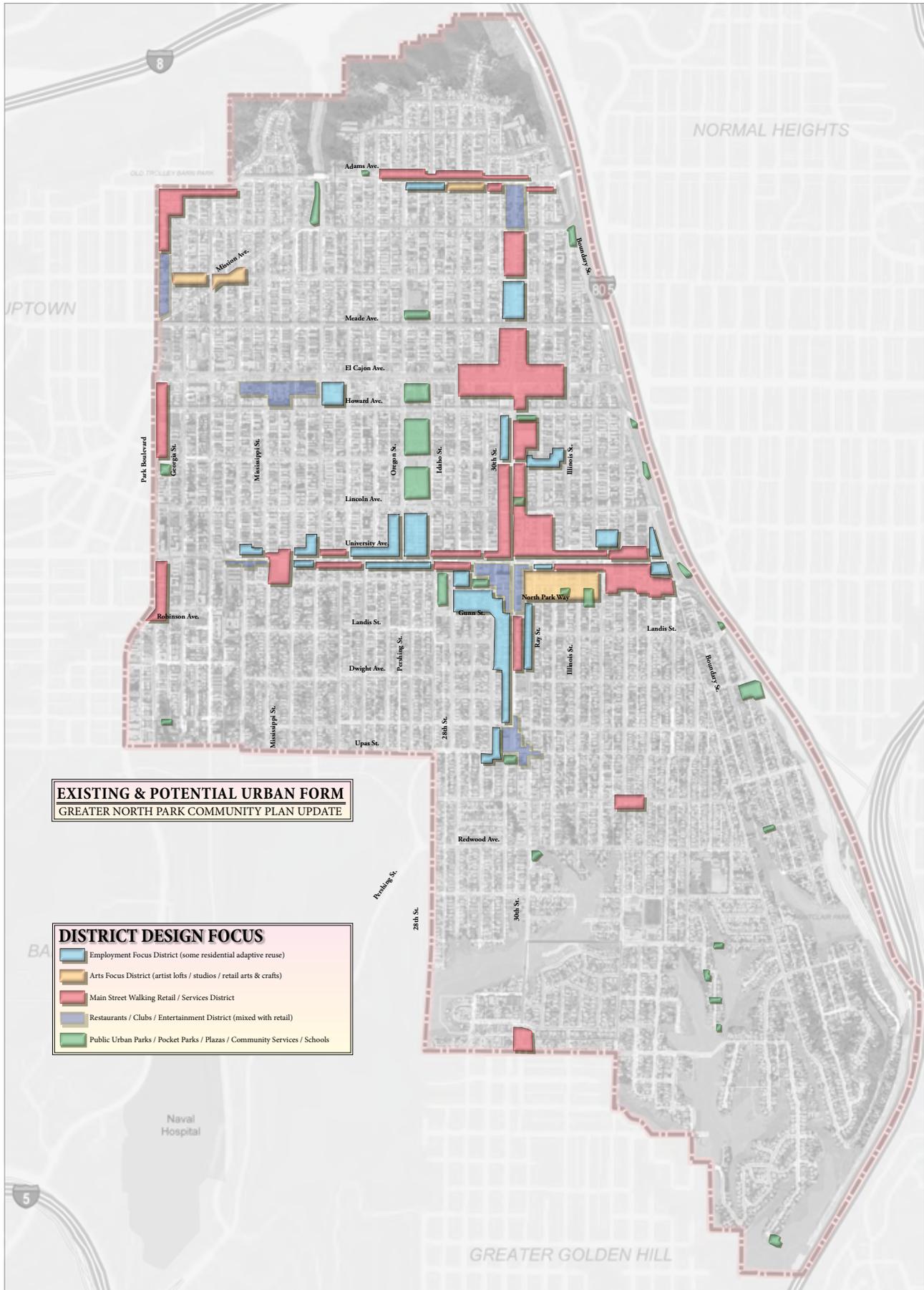
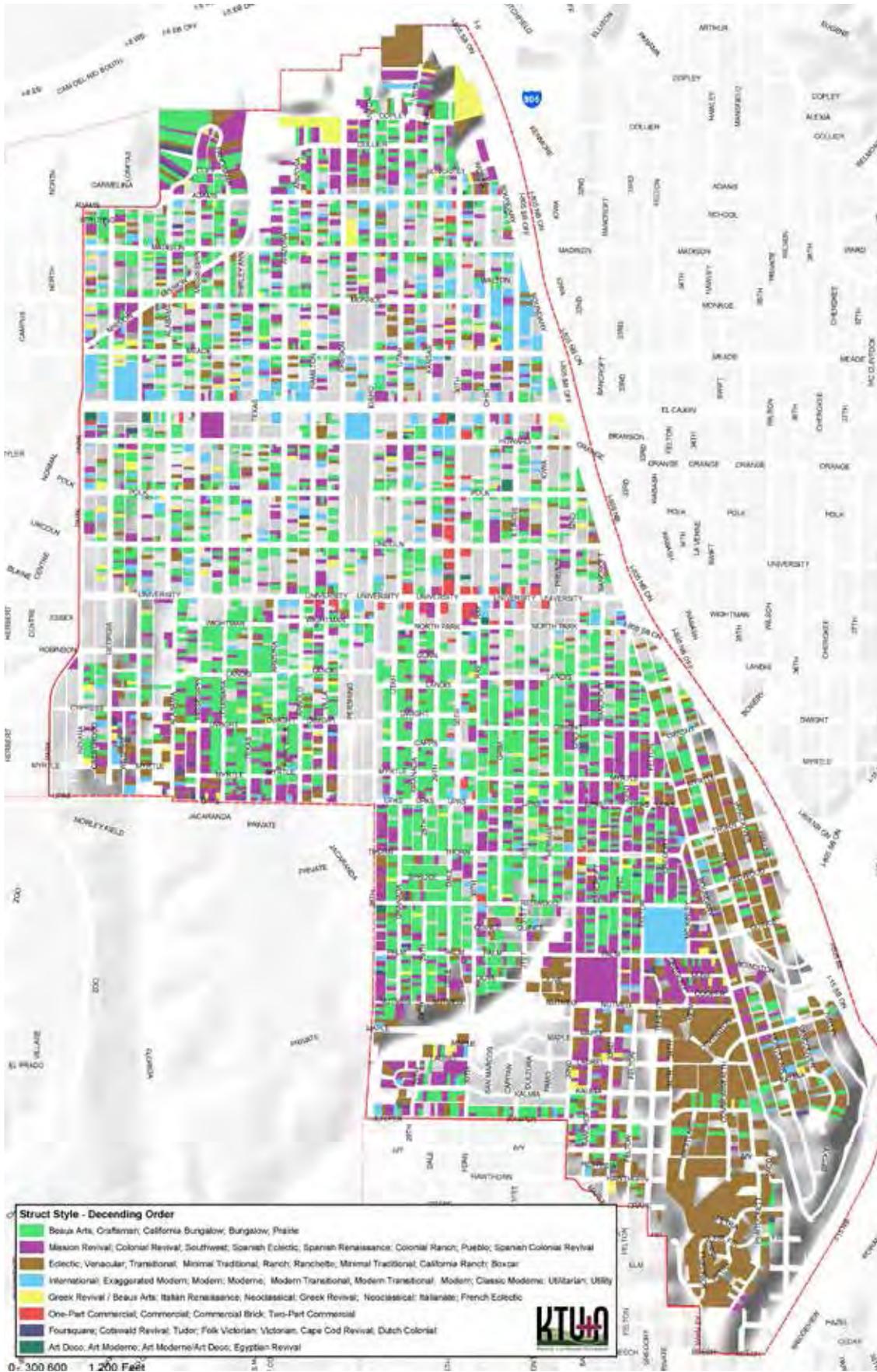
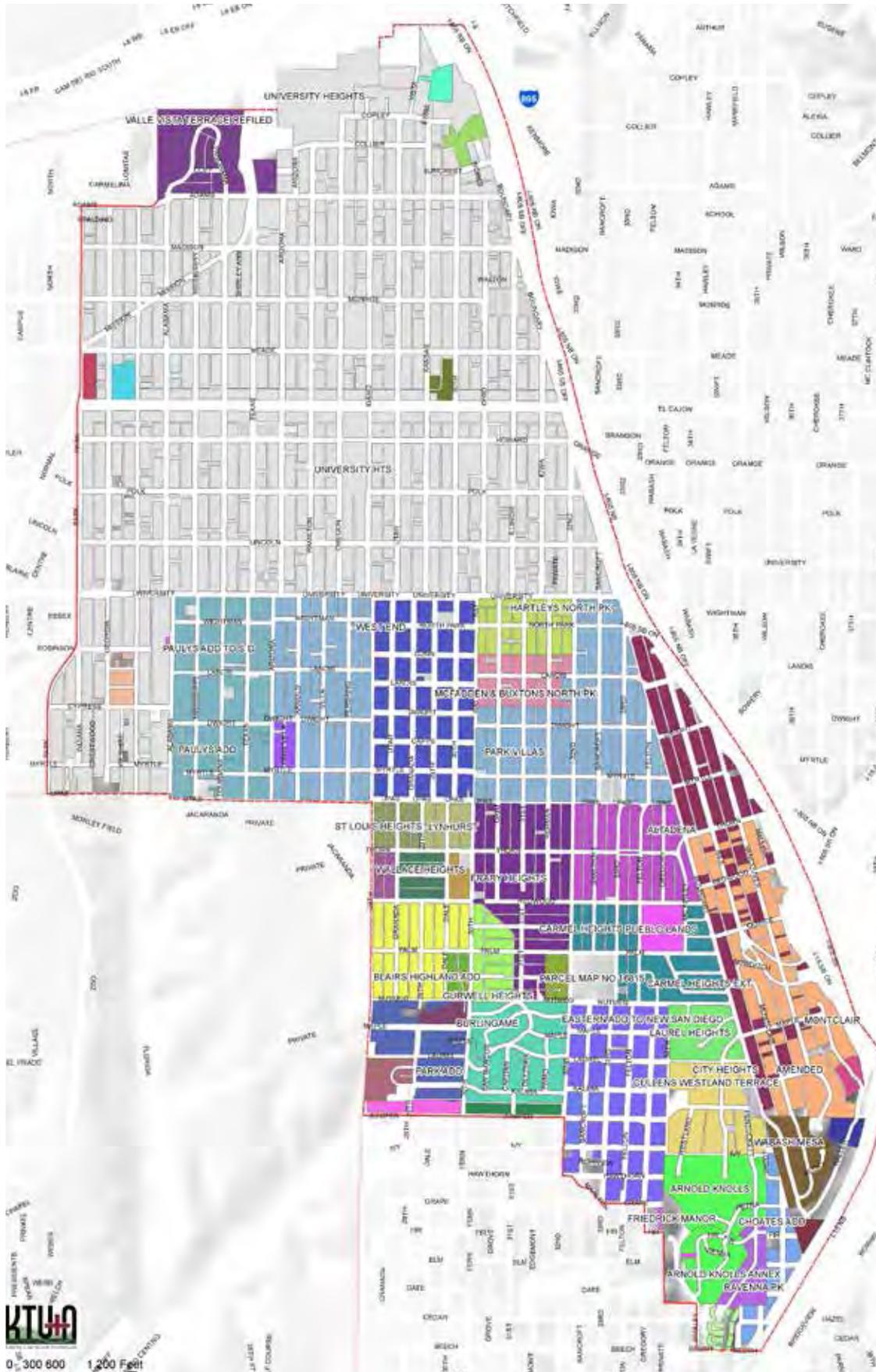


FIGURE 4-9: HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL PATTERNS



This figure shows the architectural style of the homes in North Park. As you can see from the map, the craftsman style home is common throughout the planning area.

FIGURE 4-10: SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENTS



This figure shows the subdivisions that were developed in North Park. Each color indicates a different subdivision created by a developer. As a result, generally each of these colored areas has a consistent architectural style associated with it.