

4.4 THE PUBLIC REALM

City right-of-ways used as public realm spaces and for transportation movement, comprise approximately a third of North Park’s land area. The public realm extends from one property line across the street to the other property line. Considered as a single unit, it represents the largest single public asset in North Park. The design of the public right of way has the potential to completely transform the image of a community, while also improving functionality and quality of life.

FIGURE 4-11: PROPOSED STREET TYPES



The figure above highlights the two different zones, pedestrian zone and multi-modal zone, that make up the public realm. The design of the multi-modal zone or what is more commonly referred to as the travel ways of the road, will be discussed in the Mobility Element. For guidance on specific functional classifications and volume analysis and recommendations for biking, transit, and all motorized vehicles, see the Mobility Element. The public realm guidelines will help to show the relationship of the pedestrian and building interface zones and how they can best accommodate the wheeled travel requirements on one side, the land uses and public interaction on the other side, all while accommodating the safe and enjoyable walking environment of the pedestrian zone.

The streets of North Park exhibit a range of design and condition, from streets that are aesthetically pleasing, functional, and well maintained, to streets that are chaotic, underutilized, and in disrepair. In many cases, however, excessive roadway widths result in superfluous paved area and higher driving speeds.

The vision for North Park’s streets and sidewalks includes transforming these auto-oriented thoroughfares into shared public spaces that accommodate all users and are retrofitted to perform sustainably. This vision can be accomplished through a reduction in impervious surfaces, improvements in on-street parking systems, and expansion and enhancement of parkways, sidewalks, and other gathering spaces that all make up the public realm.

4.4.1 STREET TYPES

Figure 4-11: Proposed Street Types provides various classifications of street typology intended for North Park. Many of these streets already function according to these designations. For example, the pedestrian-oriented retail streets already function as such, but need design improvement to make the adjacent land uses function better and non-vehicular travel be more accessible and safe. The suggested street types include:

STREETS OF COMMERCE

Streets that are primarily oriented to retail and public gathering for commerce or entertainment are referred to as streets as commerce. These streets include:

The Boulevards

The boulevards are unique streets because they serve as important connectors between Uptown, City Heights, and other adjacent neighborhood planning areas. Due to higher traffic speeds and one-way character, the streets are not the most pedestrian or bicycle friendly streets.

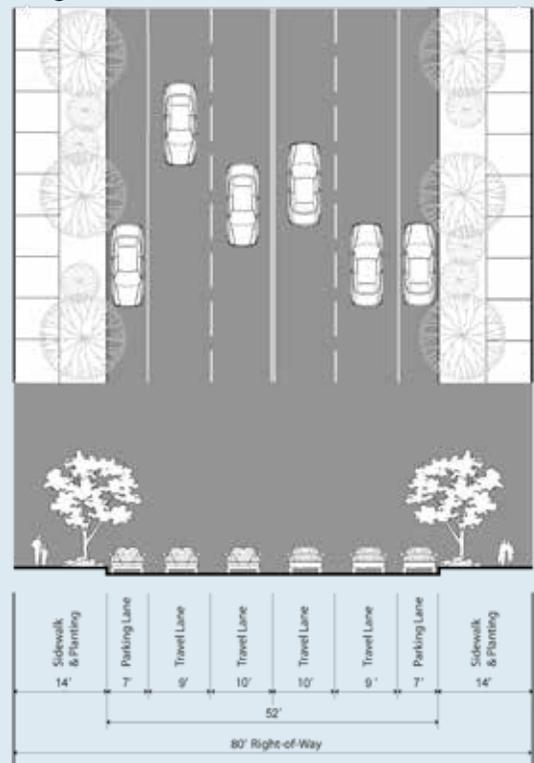
Streets and Alleys:

Commercial Streets are appropriate for commercial and mixed-use buildings at Corridor and Core Areas. Street trees are confined by individual planters, creating a sidewalk of maximum width, with areas accommodating street furniture. High tree canopies are necessary to avoid interference with shop fronts, signage, and awnings.

North Park’s elongated blocks provides two distinct types of frontage. With the short side or end grain assigned to the higher traffic thoroughfare, most buildings can front the quieter long side of the block. For commercial buildings, along Texas, 30th Street, Park Avenue and Adams Avenue the end grain can be platted to take advantage of the traffic while the amount of parking behind is controlled by the variable Lot depth.

The elongated block maintains a consistent lot depth, while maintaining the option of altering the lot width. Elongated blocks allow for economical double-loaded alleys with short utility runs. By adjusting the block length, it is possible to reduce cross-streets at the rural edges and to add them at the urban centers. This adjustment alters the pedestrian permeability of the grid, and controls the ratio of street parking to the building capacity of the block.

Neighborhood Street Character Elements



- Design Speed: 25 - 35 MPH
- Curb Return Radius: 15 feet
- Pedestrian Crossing Time: 12 Seconds
- On-Street Parking: Always
- Transit Types: Private Jitney Services
- Ped/Bike Facilities: Bike Lanes, Corrals, Parklets

Bicycle Facilities:

The community intends to establish North Park as a world-class bicycling city by promoting everyday riding. This plan advocates for and promotes world-class bicycling infrastructure that contributes toward an aesthetic, livable urban environment.

The general network of thoroughfares, if correctly dimensioned, is generally usable by cyclists sharing lanes with motor vehicles. Specialized accommodation is required only where the speed of traffic precludes sharing.

Traffic Calming is a set of techniques which serves to reduce the speed of traffic. Such strategies include lane narrowing, on-street parking, chicanes, yield points, sidewalk bulge-outs, speed bumps, surface variations, mid-block deflections, and visual clues. Traffic calming is a retrofit technique unnecessary when thoroughfares are correctly designed for the appropriate speed at initial construction.



There are three types of bicycle facilities:

- Class 1 Bike Path: Multi-use path that is separated from the roadway
- Class 2 Bike Lane: Dedicated bicycle lane generally created by striping from the edges of thoroughfares
- Class 3 Bike Route: Undesignated bicycle lane that is shared with other vehicles within the thoroughfare

Pedestrian-Oriented Retail Streets

These commercial streets require attention in order to increase use by providing a comfortable and unique place for walking, gathering and biking. Special signage, parking and maintenance needs should be taken into account in these areas.

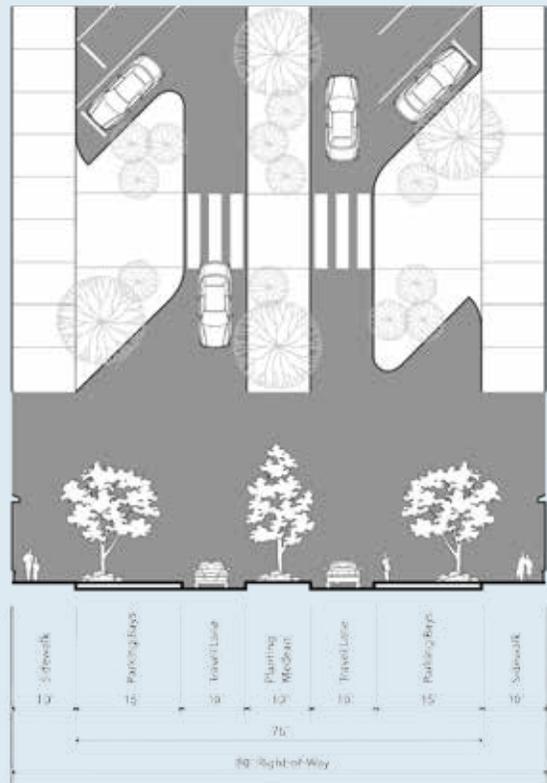
Pedestrian Oriented Retail Streets:

Pedestrian-oriented retail streets are appropriate for commercial and mixed-use buildings in the Boulevards and Core Areas. Street trees are confined by individual planters, creating a sidewalk of maximum width, with areas accommodating street furniture. High tree canopies are necessary to avoid interference with shop fronts, signage, and awnings.

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'Main Street' Character Elements



- Design Speed: 25 - 25 MPH
- Curb Return Radius: 15 feet
- Pedestrian Crossing Time: 12 Sec
- On-Street Parking: Always
- Transit Types: Bus, Private Jitney Services
- Ped/Bike Facilities: Bike Lanes, Corrals, Stations, Parklets

SPECIAL PURPOSE AND DESIGN TREATMENT STREETS

Green Streets

Green streets focus on creating an urban forest canopy over the street and capture and use of stormwater runoff. Recommended treatments include: permeable pavement, major street trees for urban heat island reduction, shade, storm water reuse, pedestrian focus, active walking street enhancements for physical activity & dog walking.

Native Green Streets

A native street is a type of green street that celebrates the natural environment by using highly sustainable plant materials and ground treatments such as native species, xeriscape principles, rock and mulch in parkways, slopes & medians. Although these treatment types are most appropriate for our climate, it should be noted that this approach will not provide the same level of urban forestry, shade, carbon sequestration, oxygen production and more prominent landmarks. The slow growing nature and fragility of these xeriscape treatments need to be taken into account when trying to be both sustainable and obtain the greatest benefits from urban forest treatments.

Reclaimed Streets

Many of the streets in North Park are excessively wide streets that have low volumes of traffic. The excess width can be reclaimed for expanded walkways, trees, angled on-street parking, bulb-outs, improved crosswalks, wider sidewalks that promote outdoor retail or open green space. One use of the excess space in a reclaimed street could be to create a dedicated bicycle facility called a bicycle boulevard.

Bicycle Boulevards

These are low volume and low speed streets with limited through traffic for vehicles. The goal of a bike boulevard is to have few stop signs in order to improve bike movement. However, if vehicular drivers learn of the priority through direction, they will often start using these streets. The solution to Bike Boulevard use by vehicular traffic, is to provide a traffic diversion that allows for bikes and pedestrians to pass through, but requires vehicles to divert to the next street.

Park Chicanes

These are roadway locations where the horizontal and vertical movement of the road, creates a major traffic calming response. These treatments include widened walkways, planters, meandering travel lanes, well marked crossings, angled parking, and speed tables. These all help to lower traffic speeds, improve access and safety crossings and increase green space.



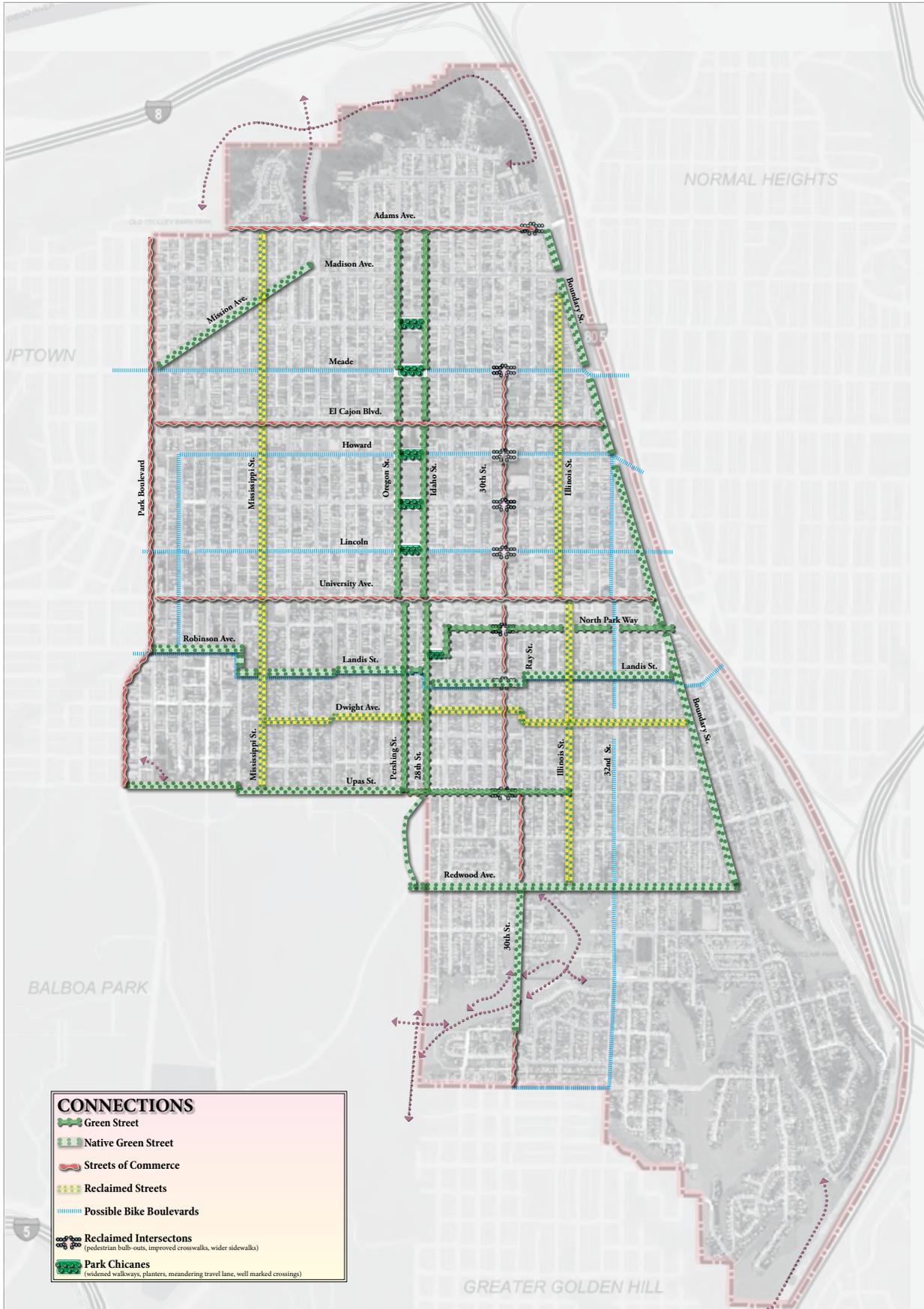
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FIGURE 4-12: PROPOSED STREET TYPES



RESIDENTIAL STREETS

All other streets not identified as Streets of Commerce or Special Purpose Streets are considered to be residential streets. The greatest number of streets in North Park are residential streets. These streets are everyday streets that need to provide access to all different types of residential building types. It is important that parkways and sidewalks be maintained throughout the residential streets and driveways be limited and accessed through the alley whenever possible. The level of residential development can vary, but in general, these streets are smaller in scale than other street types and feature fewer amenities. As such, residential streets effectively serve as an extension of the private residential realm, but can still contribute a unifying theme throughout the neighborhood.



4.4.2 PUBLIC REALM GUIDELINES

The following guidelines apply to all streets as minimal guidance. Each street has special guidance that is additional to these public realm guidelines.

Policy 2 *Maintain continuous pedestrian access with as few driveways as possible.*

- Guideline 2.1** Provide measures at intersections to encourage pedestrian safety. Such measures include:
- Neck-down intersections to reduce crossing widths
 - Pedestrian refuges
 - Appropriate marking and lighting at pedestrian crossings
 - Count-down signals provided at all traffic lights

Guideline 2.2 Include street tree plantings to give scale and definition to broad corridors and slow traffic. Street tree locations may include sidewalk zones, parking lanes, and median strips.

 **Guideline 2.3** Provide continuous, widened walks that do not feel impinged upon by moving traffic. Pedestrian zones should include both parking and street trees.

 **Guideline 2.4** Add bike lanes, cycle tracks, or other appropriate improvements to accommodate safe bicycle use.

 **Guideline 2.5** Walkway materials should be used that encourage drainage and percolation to planted areas.

Policy 3 *Add street furnishings that contribute to the public realm's attractiveness and activate more uses.*

Guideline 3.1 Locate street furnishings along the street side edge of the sidewalk or adjacent to the building face (if present) so as to not interfere with pedestrian circulation.

Guideline 3.2 Maintain a consistent design character along the length of a block and on a district level through coordinated design, type, color and material of street furniture.

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- Guideline 3.3** Provide benches and other forms of seating (e.g. low walls, planter edges, wide steps) throughout the community, particularly in pedestrian-oriented commercial areas and near transit stops.
- Guideline 3.4** Prohibit the clustering and chaining of news boxes to trees, street signs, and utility poles.
- Guideline 3.5** Locate newspaper racks near intersections and transit stops, to provide an amenity to transit riders.

Policy 4 *Provide lighting that enhances the character of a street.*

- Guideline 4.1** Use a consistent style and size of pole and fixture within a given district or street to create a unifying scheme of illumination that is appropriate to the scale of the street and level of nighttime activity.
- Guideline 4.2** Coordinate the pole and fixture design with other street furniture and amenities to establish an attractive and unified design character.
- Guideline 4.3** Maintain a low height of light fixtures to establish a pedestrian-scaled environment and to minimize light spill into adjoining properties.
- Guideline 4.4** Conceal electrical conduit, tubing, raceways, conductors, transformers, mounting hardware, and other equipment.

Policy 5 *Incorporate bike amenities into the public realm.*

- Guideline 5.1** Place bicycle racks in locations that are clearly visible to cyclists from the street and from adjoining buildings and public spaces, distribute at regular intervals along the length of the block.
- Guideline 5.2** Place bicycle racks so that parked bicycles do not block the travel path of pedestrians, infringe upon seating areas, or obstruct ingress and egress to parked vehicles.

Policy 6 *Provide adequate width for walkways to meet universal standards.*

- Guideline 6.1** All streets should provide sidewalks and sidewalks should provide a minimum of 60” for universal access. Obstructions should be kept clear of at least a 40” at all times.

Policy 7 *Integrate art since it inspires and provides a foundation for unique places where people want to go.*

- Guideline 7.1** Public art should be incorporated into streets through designs in concrete, tiles, pavers as well as murals and entry way markers.



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Policy 8 *Improve wayfinding and clarity of our environment through the use of directional signage.*

Guideline 8.1 Signage shall be provided as needed throughout North Park; however, signage should be of the same design, font, and size.

Policy 9 *Lighting must be considered in all locations to improve safety and a feeling of security.*

Guideline 9.1 Lighting is encouraged on all streets. Lighting should be consistent throughout North Park.

Policy 10 *Benches and transit shelters should be provided frequently in the public realm.*

Guideline 10.1 Benches should be consistent along the length of the street and should be closely associated with a shading device (tree, transit shelter, etc.).

Guideline 10.2 A minimum of two benches shall be provided per block.

Policy 11 *The public realm needs to provide for the exiting and entering or retail establishments.*

Guideline 11.1 Activation of the storefront/sidewalk in front of a retail space or commercial terrace is encouraged but should be separated from the walking area by a divider.

Policy 12 *Bike racks can be both functional and can be design treatments as well. Include at regular intervals.*

Guideline 12.1 A minimum of two bike racks should be located on each block and should be consistent throughout North Park.

PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED RETAIL STREETS

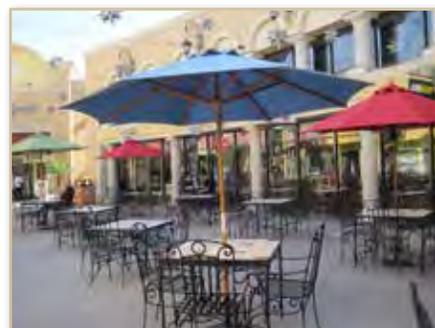
Policy 13 *Pedestrian-oriented retail streets should encourage social and economic activity.*

Guideline 13.1 These streets need to have street furnishings and utilities accommodated away from the storefronts and in some cases, need to accommodate outdoor displays and seating areas, subject to other regulations.

Guideline 13.2 Narrow, tall, and open trees or palms should be used in order to avoid signage blockage. Palms do not provide the same benefits as canopy trees, so they should be used sparingly. Protection from the elements and from out-of-control vehicles is important in commercial areas.

Guideline 13.3 Utilize larger street trees along with tree grates and enhanced flat surfaces instead of extensive amounts of shrubs, flowers, and ground covers.

Guideline 13.4 Where a landscape area is open, plant species must be dense and tall enough to reduce risk of a trip hazard.



RESIDENTIAL STREETS

Policy 14 Residential streets should serve the primary purpose of connecting individual residences with all other areas of the community.

-  **Guideline 14.1** Prohibit excessive use of concrete and concrete pads in front yards should be eliminated.
-  **Guideline 14.2** Incorporate bulb-outs with landscape areas, widened parkways, and solar street lighting on all streets when possible.
-  **Guideline 14.3** Repair and seal asphalt concrete roads with a layer of white aggregate known as a chip seal. This reduces the asphalt reflectivity and minimizes the heat island effect.



GREEN STREETS

Policy 15 Implement Green Streets to use resources more efficiently by providing additional shade, reducing the heat island effect and treating storm water runoff.

-  **Guideline 15.1** Evaluate streets for opportunities to eliminate impervious material. The hydrologic function of roads should be improved in ways that reduce and treat storm water runoff by filtering pollutants, slowing conveyance and increasing infiltration. Streets should incorporate permeable concrete, un-grouted pavers, and other ground treatments that allow for increased percolation and decreased runoff.
-  **Guideline 15.2** Utilize large canopy street trees where appropriate to increase shade for pedestrians and reduce the heat island effect. See the Street Tree/Public Right of Way Planting Guidelines for suggested methods of installation.
-  **Guideline 15.3** Utilize pedestrian extensions, corner planters or bulb-outs to reclaim excessively wide streets. They should be used in conjunction with pedestrian crossings to reduce pedestrian crossing length, enhance the pedestrian experience, improve safety and calm traffic. They should also be used on streets with angled parking or parallel parking, in order to protect the ends of parking spaces that are exposed to the direction of travel. Pedestrian pop-outs should be integrated with storm water runoff treatments such as bioswales or bio-retention basins and percolation trenches.
-  **Guideline 15.4** Install permeable pavement or permeable pavers where feasible along gutters at the edge of roads and used for parking pavement along roadways. Permeable surfaces can also include un-grouted pavers, decomposed compacted granite or tree grates.
-  **Guideline 15.5** Install swales in parkways strips with curb cuts or piping that allow storm water runoff to enter and percolate or evaporate. Vegetated swales slow storm water conveyance, filter pollutants and reduce runoff. Bio-retention basins and parkway planters should be used to intercept and retain storm water, thereby increasing infiltration, recharging groundwater aquifers and filtering out pollutants. Urban runoff and walkway wash downs for cleaning are acceptable if they drain into one of these types of areas.



NATIVE GREEN STREETS

Policy 16 *Implement native green streets that conserve water and celebrate native vegetation by requiring landscaped parkways, medians and strips to be designed with the use of natives.*

Guideline 16.1 Utilize regionally appropriate native vegetation with a high percentage of bark mulch, rock, and other water efficient ground cover systems for native streets.

RECLAIMED STREETS

Guideline 16.2 Analyze streets that are excessively wide to see if vehicular lanes can be reduced, bike lanes added, or mid-block or intersection pedestrian bulb-outs can be added.

Guideline 16.3 Utilize angled parking to increase on-street parking resources, accommodate opportunities for traffic calming, as well as opportunities for tree well pop-outs, islands, medians and other street uses.

PUBLIC ART

Policy 17 *Incorporate public art and artful design into everyday objects to create visual interest.*

Guideline 17.1 Public art should be incorporated into streets through designs in concrete, tiles, pavers as well as murals and entry way markers.

DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

Policy 18 *Signage can vary but should be consistent throughout one neighborhood, retail area, and any special district or zone.*

Guideline 18.1 Signage shall be provided as needed throughout North Park; however, signage should be of the same design, font, and size.

BENCHES & TRANSIT SHELTERS

Policy 19 *Seating is an important part of the public realm in cafe seating, waiting for a bus, and enhancing quality of life.*

Guideline 19.1 Benches should be consistent along the length of the street and should be closely associated with a shading device (tree, transit shelter, etc.).

Guideline 19.2 Transit shelters will be place along bus routes per MTS discretion. Any transit shelters in North Park should be consistent in design and should incorporate the benches that are existing along the street length.

Guideline 19.3 A minimum of two benches shall be provided per block.



COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD GATEWAYS

Refer to Figure 4-13 for a composite of all urban form recommendations.

Policy 20 *Establish monuments/artwork within the right of way to mark entry into North Park.*

Guideline 20.1 Include both graphic and text elements as part of an overall branding theme for the Greater North Park community.

Guideline 20.2 Size gateway monuments/artwork to match the scale of the roadway they accompany.

Policy 21 *Distinguish sub-area monumentation for neighborhoods located within the community from the North Park motif.*

Guideline 21.1 Ensure that local neighborhood monumentation does not compete in either scale or visibility with the North Park community monumentation. These neighborhood markers are useful in historic districts, special use areas or neighborhoods that are unique from adjacent neighborhoods. Monumentation should not compete in either scale or visibility with the Greater North Park monumentation.



ON-STREET PARKING

Policy 22 *Ensure adequate parking in residential areas and retail streets.*

Guideline 22.1 Provide either parallel or angled on street parking on North Park streets. New projects should take care to minimize curb cuts and use alley access for vehicles whenever possible.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Policy 23 *Consider shading in the design of the pedestrian environment to encourage walking.*

 **Guideline 23.1** Landscape and hardscape should enhance the character of the new project and should address sustainable water use and native plantings.

 **Guideline 23.2** Selected drought tolerant and native planting when possible. This reduces the need for irrigation and reduces water consumption.



4.4.3 URBAN FORESTRY

Street trees are encouraged throughout all areas of North Park. Consistency of street trees, however, is not important on all streets. The desire is to establish a hierarchy of streets based on level of use, size and function. If non-designated streets are made up of a mixture of street trees, then they will contrast with the designated streets that will have a more formal and regular pattern of streets. The following guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the maps showing these designated street locations along with the recommended street trees. All other areas should utilize the guidance from the City of San Diego Tree Selection matrices based on available planting widths and should try to add tree species that already exist in the area. Refer to Figure 4-12 for streets identified for street trees.



4.4.4 URBAN FORESTRY GUIDELINES

Policy 24 *Emphasize the importance of streets through the selection of trees and landscape material.*

- Guideline 24.1** Site and design new development to mitigate any harmful impacts to major public trees or other significant plant material resources.
- Guideline 24.2** Utilize trees and landscaping to establish a linkage between blocks and be used to tie the neighborhood together. Tree selection can vary if the intent is to change the feel of a neighborhood. However, on designated streets, existing trees can remain, but new plantings should come from the list of primary and secondary trees.
- Guideline 24.3** Space and center street trees at an interval equal to the species' mature canopy. Gaps between the edges of tree canopies greater than 30' should be avoided. Trunk to trunk spacing should not be less than 20 feet or greater than 50 feet.
- Guideline 24.4** Ensure consistent street tree spacing within a single block to provide rhythm and continuity unless a natural appearance is desired with groupings of mixed-use species.
- Guideline 24.5** Front loaded perpendicular off-street parking shall include at least one planted tree break per 3 parking spaces. Breaks shall be a minimum of 4 feet in width.
- Guideline 24.6** Encourage triangulation of street trees (offset double rows) along sidewalks that exceed 15' in width to improve the pedestrian experience and provide optimal shade.
- Guideline 24.7** Ensure that the necessary area of non-compacted sub grade sufficient for root growth and drainage can be accommodated.
- Guideline 24.8** Provide trees with a minimum of 40 square feet of open planting area per tree. This can include covered areas that provide for water and air circulation such as tree grates, Silva cells, permeable surfaces and open planter areas.

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- Guideline 24.9 Utilize structural soils over compacted soils, open planters with shrubs and groundcovers over tree grates, and deep tree well pits with corner subsurface drainage options over low permeable soil types typical of North Park.
- Guideline 24.10 Implement storm water management strategies on site wherever possible. The use of permeable pavers, rainwater collection, and bio-swales should be incorporated as much as possible.
- Guideline 24.11 Utilize plantings to form “green” walls and screens between buildings and adjacent properties.



Arbutus marina
(Marina Madrone)



Cassia leptophylla
(Gold Medallion Tree)



Cercis occidentalis
(Western Redbud)



Cupaniopsis anacardioides
(Carrotwood)



Eucalyptus leucoxydon
(White Ironbark)



Geijera parvifolia
(Australian Willow)



Heteromeles arbutifolia
(Toyon)



Jacaranda mimosifolia
(Jacaranda)



Koelreutaria bipinnata
(Chinese Flame Tree)



Koelreutaria paniculata
(Golden Rain)



Liquidambar styraciflua
(Sweetgum)



Lophostemon confertus
(Brisbane Box)



Lyonothamnus floribundus
(Catalina Ironwood)



Magnolia grandiflora
(St. Marys Magnolia)



Pinus torreyana
(Torrey Pine)



Platanus acerifolia
"Bloodgood" (London Plane)



Plantanus racemosa
(California Sycamore)



Prunus cerasifera
(Purple Leaf Plum)



Pyrus calleryana
(Bradford Pear)



Quercus agrifolia
(Coast live oak)



Quercus ilex
(Holly Oak)



Tipuana tipu
(Tipu)

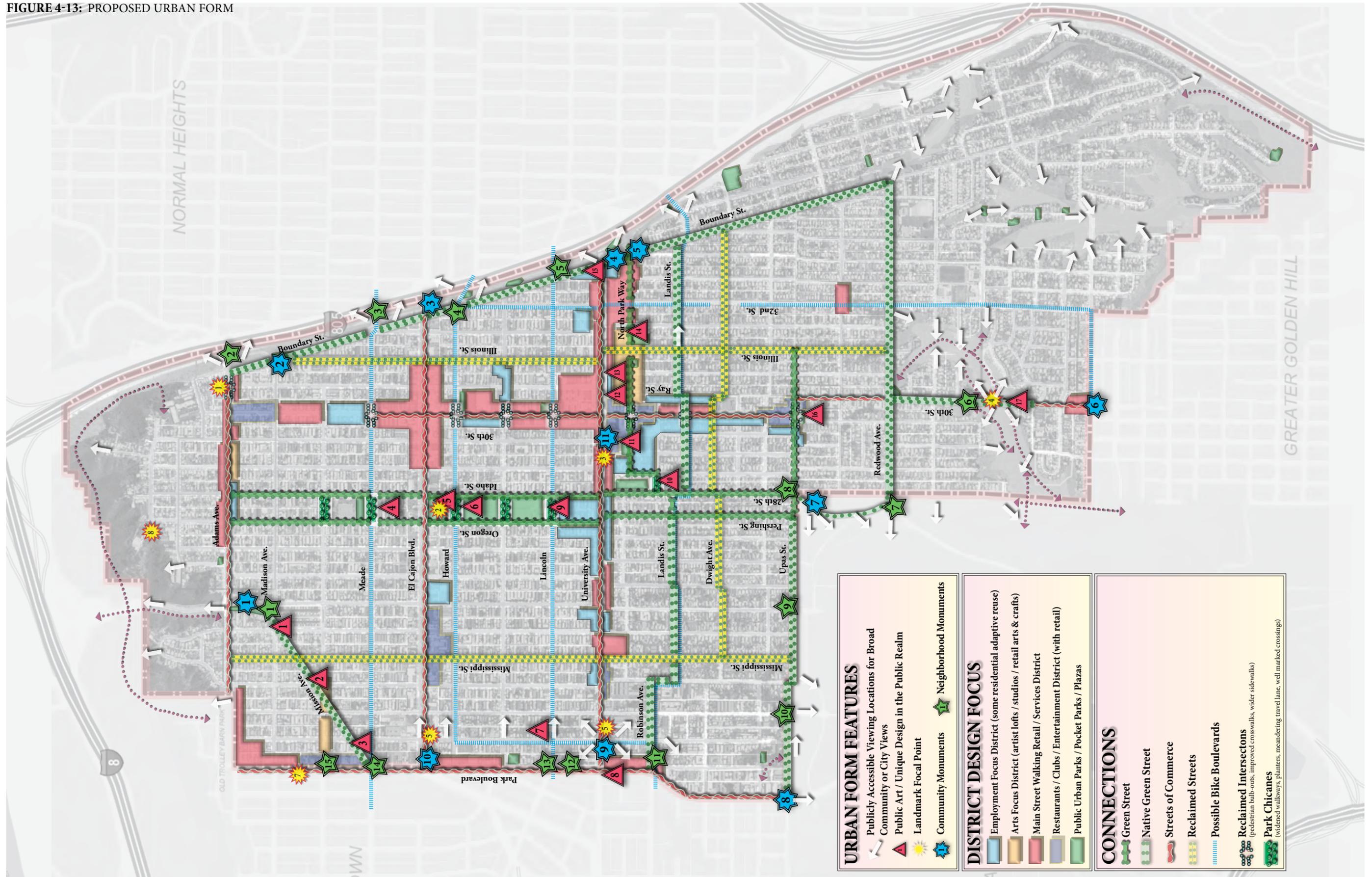


Ulmus parvifolia
(Chinese Elm)



Umbellularia californica
(California Bay Laurel)

FIGURE 4-13: PROPOSED URBAN FORM



URBAN FORM FEATURES

- Publicly Accessible Viewing Locations for Broad Community or City Views
- Public Art / Unique Design in the Public Realm
- Landmark Focal Point
- Community Monuments
- Neighborhood Monuments

DISTRICT DESIGN FOCUS

- Employment Focus District (some residential adaptive reuse)
- Arts Focus District (artist lofts / studios / retail arts & crafts)
- Main Street Walking Retail / Services District
- Restaurants / Clubs / Entertainment District (with retail)
- Public Urban Parks / Pocket Parks / Plazas

CONNECTIONS

- Green Street
- Native Green Street
- Streets of Commerce
- Reclaimed Streets
- Possible Bike Boulevards
- Reclaimed Intersections (pedestrian bulb-outs, improved crosswalks, wider sidewalks)
- Park Chicanes (widened walkways, planters, meandering travel lane, well marked crossings)