
URBAN DESIGN

GOAL

Enhance the unique character and community image of Greater North Park.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Urban Design is not a physical entity in and of itself which can be isolated and discussed separately from the other elements and functions which make up this community plan. Urban Design deals with all the factors and issues examined elsewhere in the Plan, yet is also concerned with more detailed features such as architectural or site design. This Plan recommends that the scope of community planning should also consider urban design in the continuing development and improvement of the Greater North Park community.

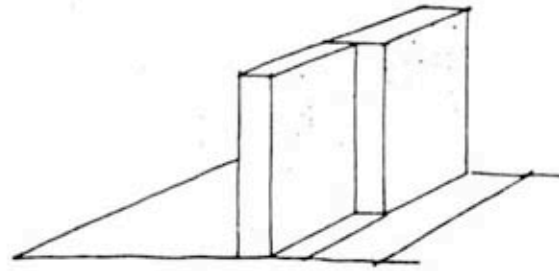
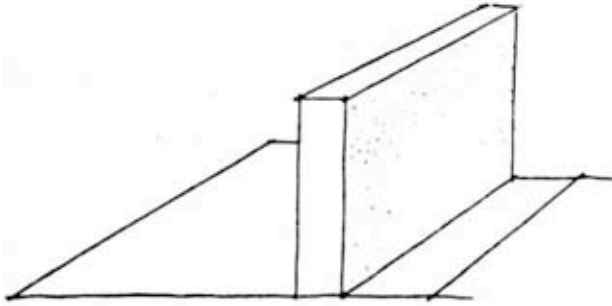
Within the City of San Diego generally, and the Greater North Park community in particular, exist many older neighborhoods, which have evolved memorable individual characters of their own, a character which is modest and small in scale. Greater North Park has many of these neighborhoods and their qualities should be preserved.

Greater North Park is a community of many images. It provides an image of single-family neighborhoods featuring classic California bungalows; it is a community of intense apartment construction intruding into traditional low-density residential areas; it has a definable central business district which is unique in auto-oriented Southern California; and, it is a community of landmarks, the water tower which can be seen from great distances, the Lafayette Hotel with its classic appearance and the North Park Theatre and other visually pleasing buildings.

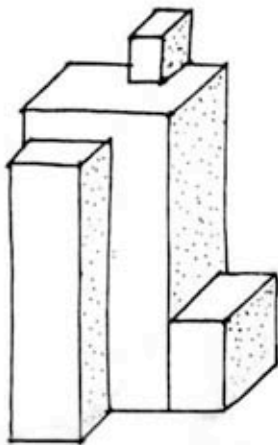
Many Greater North Park neighborhoods still have an intimate scale, with mature trees and quiet streets. Many single-family homes have survived and present a residential style well worth conserving.

OBJECTIVES

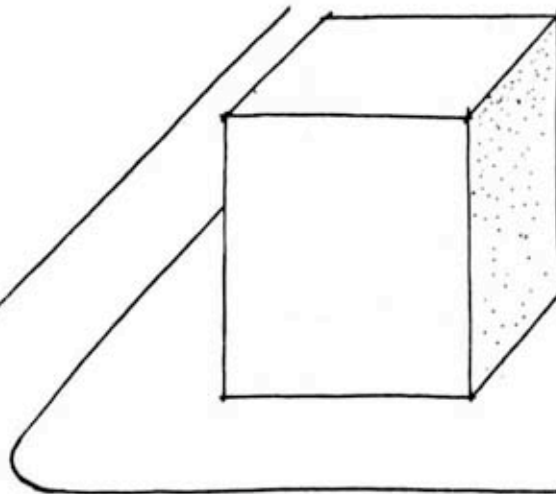
- Ensure that development in the community conforms with the Greater North Park Community Plan **Urban Design Element**.
- Preserve the architectural variety and residential character of Greater North Park.
- Maintain the existing open space edges of the community and develop projects which create a sense of arrival at major community gateways.
- Develop a varied urban character within the community.
- Ensure that new buildings are in character and scale with their neighborhoods.



Example: A wall effect can be avoided by establishing a maximum dimension of wall planes in relation to the lot line.



Example: Differences in the heights and depths of various portions of the building divide the mass into distinct elements, and create a transition between low- and mid-rise development.



Example: **Uniform** heights and depths bring attention to the building's total size.

- Enhance the appearance of major streets through the design of new development, public improvements and landscaping.
- Preserve existing street trees and increase the quality of landscaping in public right-of-way and front yard areas.
- Eliminate visual clutter, including nonconforming signs and overhead utility lines.
- Preserve and restore unique or historic structures within the community.
- Maintain the visual interface between Balboa Park and the community.
- Create neighborhood identities through coordinated street plantings.
- Establish development and design guidelines which will assist in reducing crime in the community.

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Natural Environment-Public Views

- Structures should be designed to protect public views of Greater North Park's natural scenic amenities, especially Mission Valley, Balboa Park and the Switzer and 32nd Street canyons.
- Where existing streets serve as public access and public view corridors of the valley, park and canyons, development on corner lots requires special design considerations. In order to maximize public views, new development should be set back from the corner or terraced away from the street.

Building Scale

Building scale is a quality that describes the relationship of buildings to each other and to human dimensions. Much of the residential development in North Park is older and single-story, consisting of single-family bungalows, and low-scale multifamily development including bungalow courts. However, over recent years, higher-density development, out of scale with the older development has been introduced into the community causing impacts on the visual environment. It is important that new residential development be designed to blend into the scale and visual environment of the community.

The majority of existing commercial development within the community is old and characterized by small, low-scale, one- and two-story structures. New buildings of greater heights could be out of scale with this established character. It is therefore important that new development complement the scale of existing development to avoid abrupt and negative changes to the established development character. In some instances, land use designations will permit higher densities than is the norm. It is intended that new development, while not being forced to comply with the scale of existing development where the community plan designates higher development intensities, should not ignore existing scale and should provide good design relationships with adjacent development.

- New development should be consistent with the scale and character of the existing development of the surrounding areas. The fitting in of new development is, in a broad sense, a matter of scale. It requires a careful assessment of each building site in terms of the size and texture of its surroundings, and every conscious attempt to achieve balance and compatibility in design between old and new buildings.
 - Relate the height of new buildings to the height of existing development. Exceptionally tall buildings immediately adjacent to low buildings can create problems such as excessive shadows, undesirable wind tunnels and lack of privacy.
 - Abrupt differences in scale between large commercial buildings and adjacent residential areas should be avoided. Gradual transitions in scale are preferred.
 - Extreme contrasts in color, shape and organization of architectural elements will cause new buildings to stand out in excess of their public importance. Where visually strong buildings clash with their surroundings, the character of the area will be adversely affected.
- Harmony should be promoted in the visual relationships and transitions between new and older buildings. New buildings should be made sympathetic to the scale, form and texture of surrounding development. Where new buildings reach exceptional height and bulk in comparison to existing structures, large surfaces should be articulated and textured to reduce their apparent size and to reflect the pattern of the surrounding development. Multifamily buildings should be designed and evaluated in the context of surrounding development.
 - Building bulk should be controlled through the use of vertical and horizontal offsets and other architectural features (balconies, porches, bay windows) which serve to break up building facades.
 - Building surfaces should be articulated and textured to reduce their apparent size.
 - Buildings can be textured by using different materials, colors, or facades to produce separate elements.
 - Treat upper floors so that they actually, or seem to, set back and recede. Structures of over two stories in particular should incorporate this treatment.
 - Smaller architectural elements: windows, cornices and other details should not be much larger than they would be on a single-family house.
 - Taller portions (multiple stories) of buildings should be set back from the required front setbacks. This would control building scale by emphasizing one- and two-story facades along street frontages.
 - Landscaping can also be used to add texture to blank walls, soften edges and provide a sense of pedestrian scale.

- Features such as entryways, side notches, partial facade setbacks, entry porches, bay windows, window proportions and other small-scale geometric forms set up strong visual rhythms. Where these elements are a part of a block's character, new development should incorporate them to preserve block unity and to fit in harmoniously.
- Structures should conform to the spacing pattern and rhythm of spacing of buildings already existing within the block.
- The clustering of dwelling units in the single-family designated areas (residential areas 1 through 4) through a Planned Residential Development permit should only be approved if the proposed projects create dwelling units which strongly resemble the scale and character of the surrounding development. It is acknowledged that this approach may often result in substantially fewer dwelling units than the maximum allowed by the underlying R-1 (single-family) zones.
- Parcel accumulation will be permitted, and even encouraged, in some residential areas of Greater North Park in order to provide for increased residential densities. However, care must be taken in the formulation of the regulations permitting parcel accumulation density increases (bonuses) so as not to permit development that is out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood. New development should blend into the visual environment of the neighborhood unless extensive redevelopment is anticipated to occur within the neighborhood.
 - Where parcel accumulation takes place, consideration should be given to adjacent parcels which have lower scale development of a long-term nature. For instance, a three-story apartment building with sideyard walls featuring an unbroken plane can visually overwhelm a neighboring bungalow or single-story apartment development. This impact can be avoided by the use of regulations which require adequate setbacks, diagonal building planes and roof articulation.
- Parcel consolidation should be prohibited in residential Areas 5, 6, 7 and 8 to preclude large clustered developments which are not compatible with the scale and character of these areas.

Architectural Detailing

- Flat roof surfaces should be considered for use as terraces, with limited landscaping if it is structurally and economically feasible.
- Visually distracting roof appendages such as stairway towers or ventilation equipment should be screened from public view.
- Buildings with a roof form or profile similar to surrounding buildings should be required to strengthen the visual identity of the structures and contribute to a street's visual harmony.

- Commercial buildings should present open facades to the street. This adds to the pedestrian interest along the street and also provides a security factor based on visual openness between the street and the building. This is particularly important for an area like the 30th and University central business district has a pedestrian orientation, which should be reemphasized and enhanced.

Parking

- The automobile or parking facilities should not be a dominant element of the neighborhood character. On-site parking should be screened or located in areas not highly visible from the street.
 - On-site parking should be underground or located in the rear of buildings and accessed from the rear alley whenever feasible. Also, parking spaces should be linked through various properties in order to provide better and more efficient parking areas. Efforts to consolidate parking through the use of common alley spaces, landscaped parking lots or parking garages should be encouraged.
 - Curb cuts and front driveways should be minimized. Driveways should be restricted in width within required front yard setbacks. Curb cuts and drive-throughs are not appropriate on pedestrian-oriented streets such as portions of University Avenue.
- Large surfaced parking areas should be broken up with landscaped islands and screened from view by landscaping. This can be accomplished through the use of trees, shrubs, mounding or walls appropriate to the character of the area. Large parking areas should also include patterned pavings as a means to enhance surface areas.
- The width of garages should be adequate for maneuvering. Two-car garages should be designated to accommodate standard-size cars.
- In many instances, required parking spaces are utilized to accommodate trash receptacles. Provisions should be established which will preclude this practice and will provide for refuse collection areas in a manner that will both retain required parking and cut down on litter on the streets and alleys.

Streetscape and Parkways

- At key locations, specimen trees can become community focal points. Such trees should be designated as community resources and protected.
 - New development should be sited and designed to mitigate any harmful impacts to major trees or other significant resources.
- Where feasible, tree massing should be carried into adjacent public and private spaces.
- Shrub buffers should be provided and/or maintained on busy streets to protect pedestrians.

- Streets should be designed and developed to be pleasant places to walk down as well as drive upon. The arrangement of houses should create a pleasant streetscape. Attention to building siting, paving, landscaping and tree plantings should all be designed to enhance the visual effect.
 - Excessive use of concrete in front yards shall be eliminated.
 - The citywide landscaping ordinance should be utilized to enhance the streetscape by increasing the amount of landscaping in front yard areas.
 - Landscaping should be used to establish a linkage between the street and the buildings along the street. It should also be used to “tie the street together.” This can be done through the use of tall street trees that lend identity or “an image” to the street and also help to soften parking areas. Different species of trees can be planted along individual streets in order to create individual and identifying images for different streets.
- The facades of buildings at pedestrian levels should provide a close relationship between the building and street. Blank walls are considered detrimental to this relationship.
- The existing condition of many commercial streets is the result of many years of neglect and a failure to upgrade the street environment as the need arose.
 - There is noticeable sign clutter. This situation could be improved through enforcement of existing regulations.
 - Many of the streets have cluttered sidewalks. This is usually the result of a combination of narrow sidewalks and poorly located street furniture. A combination of sidewalk widening and more appropriate locational criteria for street furniture should be able to resolve this problem.
 - Most of the commercial streets have little or no landscaping. The addition of landscaping, particularly trees, can enhance the visual environment, provide shade and soften the effect of the pavement inherent in a commercial area.
- In commercial areas, the linkage between the street can best be established by keeping the buildings close to the street in order to enhance the pedestrian environment of the street. This adds interest to the street by permitting “window shopping” and encouraging merchants to do on-premises advertising through the use of window displays. This is particularly important in the central business district where the pedestrian environment should be enhanced. Therefore, mini-shopping centers and other forms of commercial development which place parking areas along the sidewalk and feature buildings with deep setbacks should be discouraged.
- Trees, lighting bollards or sidewalk textures should be encouraged along major streets to separate pedestrian paths from traffic conflicts.

- Recreational values of paths should be increased by providing rest stops and focal points of activity. The use of interest nodes; a fountain, chain of shops, or plaza space, at reasonable walking distance, can help entice pedestrian movement from one point to another.
- Pedestrian paths that provide a series of views and a consistent variety of scenes should be encouraged. The discovery of interesting places along pedestrian paths contributes to the existence of serendipity and surprise.
 - Storefront diversity adds to pedestrian accessibility, variety and choice along commercial paths.
 - Clusters of shops around interior courtyards, or pedestrian malls extend the commercial frontage of the area and increase the diversity of the street.
 - Window displays stimulate interest along paths and encourage pedestrians to stop and browse.
- Various elements of climate control improve the pathway for the pedestrian and add color, visual variety and liveliness to the streetscape. Such elements include coverings, arbors, canopies, awnings, colonnades and arcades. Street trees providing broad canopies can also be used to create a sense of pedestrian scale adjacent to large buildings.
- Richly detailed facades, windows, entrances, stairways, retaining walls and other features are appreciated by the pedestrian and impart a sense of human scale.
- Various textures and paving treatments can be used to define and separate pedestrian paths. The coarseness of surface textures should not be so great as to create difficulty in walking.
 - Curb cuts and driveway access paths create conflicts between auto and pedestrian use. Where such conflicts cannot be avoided, the visual continuity of the pedestrian path can be maintained by continuing the pavement pattern across the driveway space. On commercial property, speed bumps and stop signs should be used to reduce hazards at blind auto egress points.
 - Pavement textures can also be used at street crossings to clearly mark and improve the appearance of the intersection. However, care should be taken to ensure that pavement textures indicating pedestrian crossings are only used in situations where proper traffic controls are in place so as not to create unsafe pedestrian crossings.
 - Although pedestrian activity should be concentrated along the streets, mid-block pedestrian paths (along the alleys) should be provided whenever feasible to link the activity centers of the main commercial street to adjacent large development across the alley areas.
- Fencing or landscaping that is provided as either a screen for open space or for private yards should avoid “blocking off” the building from the sidewalk.

Landscaping

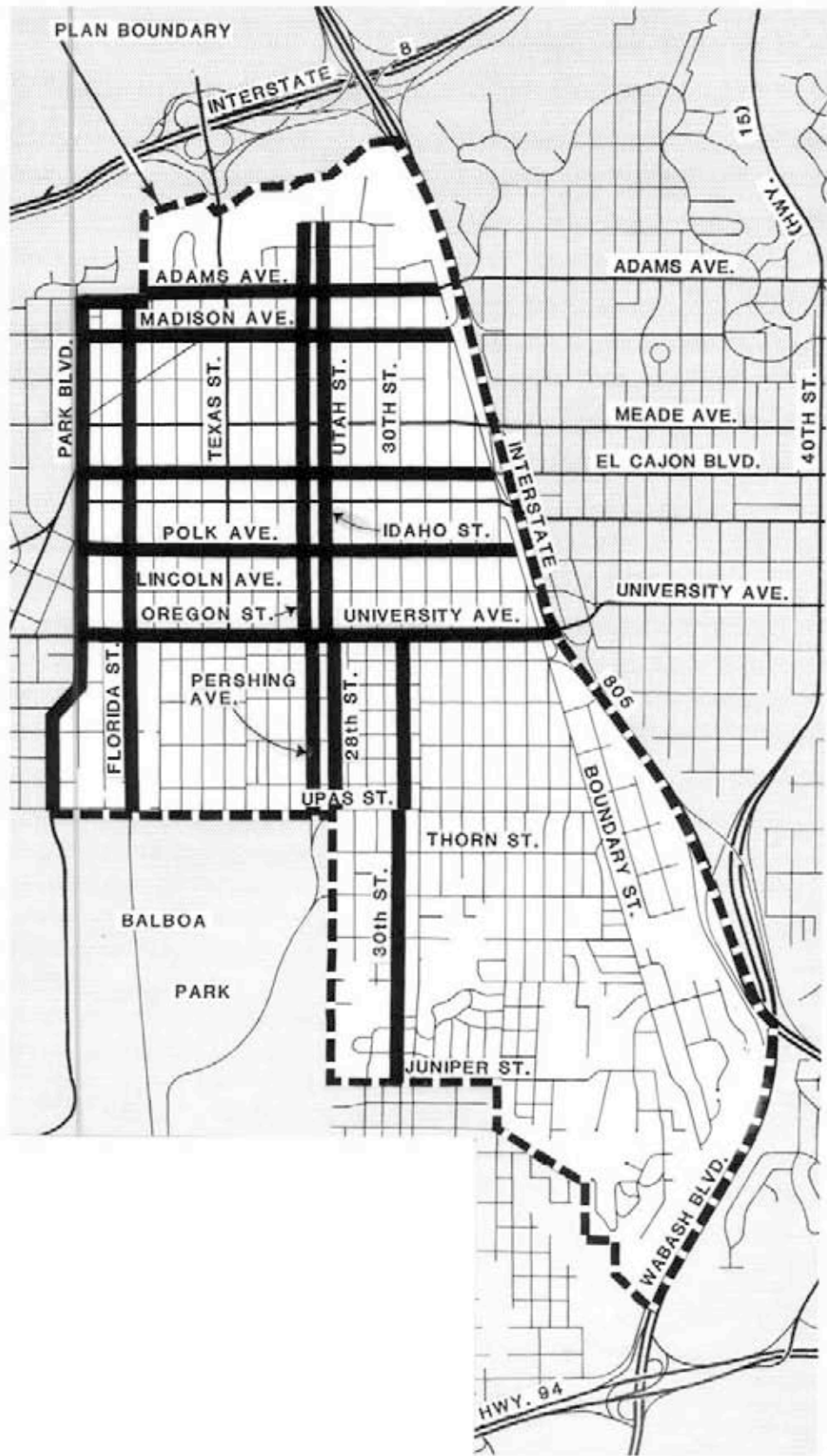
The use of appropriate landscaping materials and careful consideration of siting factors help to maintain a sense of nature in the urban environment. Landscaping exerts a major influence on the character of individual streets.

- Extensive tree plantings should be provided or preserved to enhance the visual quality of public streets and provide a strong element of continuity as future development occurs.
- Landscaping themes for all major streets in the community should be studied, and specific plans should be developed. Priority should be given to improving landscaping in the commercial areas as part of individual permit processing. Such plans should be reviewed by the community planning group before any implementing actions are taken.
- In areas of little or no activity, groundcovers or lawns should be planted as an alternative to paving.
- At key locations, specimen trees can become community focal points. Such trees should be designated as community resources and protected.
 - New development should be sited and designed to mitigate any harmful impacts to major trees or other significant resources.
- Where feasible, tree massing should be carried into adjacent public and private spaces.
- Shrub buffers should be provided and/or maintained on busy streets to protect pedestrians.
- Mature street trees should be preserved and replaced when removal is unavoidable. Street trees, particularly when an individual species dominates, become an important element of a neighborhood and streetscape character.

Standards requiring minimum percentages of landscaping and limiting the amount of concrete areas, particularly in residential areas, should be established and incorporated into implementing legislation.

Landscaping programs should be established along selected streets throughout the community. These “parkways” have been selected because they either enhance the visual appearance of major important thoroughfares which enhance the visual image of the community or because they provide pleasant landscaped linkages between public places.

Park Boulevard, El Cajon Boulevard, University Avenue, Adams Avenue and portions of 30th Street are streets which can enhance the visual appearance of the community through landscaping programs. El Cajon Boulevard already presents a “landscaped appearance” and efforts should be made to enhance it, especially within the median. In order to properly enhance El Cajon Boulevard’s medians through landscaping, the landscaping program should be designed in conjunction with the provision of left turn pockets for vehicular traffic.



Proposed Landscaped Parkways
Greater North Park Community Plan

22
FIGURE



These pockets should be placed only at selected intersections so as to permit maximum landscaping opportunities in the medians. Adams Avenue is an important link through the community between University Heights and Normal Heights. Park Boulevard is a major entry into Balboa Park. Thirtieth Street, south of University Avenue, is the only southern route into and out of the community.

In the latter category, Florida Street is a direct link between Balboa Park and the future Trolley Barn Park north of Adams Avenue. Oregon Street/Pershing Drive and Idaho Street/28th Street connect Balboa Park with the south rim of Mission Valley via the North Park Recreation Center. Polk Street provides east-west access to the recreation center from the eastern and western edges of the community. These parkways are shown in **Figure 22**.

In order to ensure the visual enhancement of these parkways, special design and development regulations will be formulated as part of the legislative implementation program.

Places

Pedestrian places are extensions of personal space. A place is formed when people establish boundaries and find recurring uses for a space. Activities are the focus of a space.

- Buildings should not dominate surrounding spaces but should step back or form enclosures in scale with pedestrians.
- Changes of level are an effective way to create interest and define pedestrian space.
 - Raised places give a sense of overlook and advantage to its occupants.
 - Lowered spaces create a sense of intimacy and enclosure.
 - Extreme changes in level impair the visual connection between the occupant and passerby, reducing interest for both.
- Spaces should have furnishings that enable multiple use by all age groups.
- The location of benches and their relationship to one another is of prime importance.
 - Benches should be arranged to promote contact and form interesting spaces to watch pedestrian activity.
 - Views from fixed benches should not be obscured by walls, railing, poles, landscaping or other unnecessary obstructions.

Transition Areas

Along the south sides of Meade Avenue, south of residential Area 8, tailored zoning should be developed in such a manner, as to ease the transition between the differing densities of Areas 8 and 17 to the extent possible. Similar tailored zoning should also be investigated where there are similar differences or transitions in densities.

Continuity

- Uses requiring large frontages, such as banks, office buildings, parking lots and supermarkets can disrupt the continuity of a complex of small shops. Large development should be designed to maintain this continuity by creating additional pedestrian and landscaped areas along the street, providing display windows and breaking up large facades with architectural features.
- Residential units should be encouraged on the upper floors of commercial developments. The mixing of residential and commercial facilities provides a more efficient use of parking facilities and reduces dependence on the automobile.
- Many blocks in Greater North Park do not have alleys. This provides an opportunity for development to cross common rear property lines. This, in effect, provides two front yards. However, because of the need to provide off-street parking, one front yard can become a vehicular parking area having adverse impacts on abutting front yards. Development standards precluding this from occurring should be established.
- In many older areas of Greater North Park, front yard setbacks are greater than the minimum front yard setbacks presently required by zoning regulations. Consideration might be given, particularly in lower-density residential areas, to utilizing the older established setbacks as the required setbacks.

Density Bonus Areas

In certain specified areas, residential development may be increased from the established base density (maximum permitted dwelling units per net residential acre) to a specified bonus density if certain bonus density criteria are met. The above guidelines are recommended minimum standards; the requirements for a specific project may vary based upon individual site and neighborhood characteristics.

Minimum parcel accumulation area, which is the basic qualifier necessary to obtain density bonuses must be formulated during the implementation phase of the planning program. Refinements and additions to the above recommended guidelines may also be incorporated into the implementing legislation.

Lighting

- Light quality should be geared to the specific use of the areas, spaces and forms to be illuminated.
- Lighting should reflect the relative importance of pedestrian spaces by degrees of illumination at night and by the repetition and scale of lighting standards during the day.
- Lamps and standards should be for people, and not cars, wherever possible.
 - The height of standards should vary between ten and 15 feet.
 - Lamps should be placed beside walks, not above the roadway.
 - Bollard-type lighting is suited for pedestrian paths.

- In instances where desired lighting standards are not in conformance with the standards established in Council Policy 600-4, it may be necessary to establish a maintenance district for any added costs of providing the special street lighting.

BALBOA PARK

Balboa Park lies adjacent to Centre City, Greater Golden Hill, Uptown and the community of Greater North Park which it borders on the south and the west.

The park is divided in four major segments by three deep canyons, Cabrillo, Florida and Switzer. In some cases the mesas are so widely separated from one another that it is difficult to associate one mesa with another as being in the same park. This distinct topographic cleavage has been successfully overcome in the western sector by the construction of four bridges over the Cabrillo Canyon. No such connection has been made over Florida and Switzer Canyons.

The north-south division of the park, the Cabrillo and Florida Canyons, has influenced the basic development pattern of the park. The western one-fifth has been extensively landscaped and is devoted primarily to picnicking and various forms of passive recreation including facilities for older persons. The two-fifths of the area in the center of the park, bounded by the Cabrillo and Florida Canyons, contains the major developed areas; the Prado area along Laurel Street is mostly a museum use, the Palisades area south of the Prado contains buildings used in both the 1915 and 1935 Expositions and the Balboa Park Bowl is primarily an indoor recreational use. The San Diego Zoo, the Veterans Building, the San Diego High School, the Roosevelt Junior High School, the Boy and Girl Scout Camp areas and the Naval Hospital are also found in the center of the park. The schools and the hospital lands have been legally removed from the park.

The easternmost two-thirds of Balboa Park has been further divided by Switzer Canyon, which runs in a northeast-southeast direction. The triangular area south of the canyon contains a nine-hole golf course, the Golden Hill picnic area and a community recreation center. North of Switzer Canyon is an 18-hole golf course. In the extreme northeast portion of the park is Morley Field area, a partially developed active recreation area.

Because of Balboa Park's physical relationship to the Greater North Park community, it is important to ensure that the design and development of abutting areas are consistent with the regional resource and design qualities of the park. For this purpose, the following development guidelines are recommended:

1. Development adjoining the parks should maintain and enhance public vistas to the parks, incorporate landscaping motifs and materials consistent with the parks, and incorporate development densities that are consistent with the landform and that preserve the parks and topography. Development should maintain and enhance the traditional character at the perimeter of the parks.
2. Development should maintain the low-density residential character, reflective of the existing development in the area which is primarily single-family. Future development should be consistent with these densities, lot patterns, front yard landscaped areas, street trees and existing early architectural style.

3. Development should maintain an open space character with vegetated courtyards and setbacks. Landscaped/vegetated areas and street trees, within the development site, should relate to the typical vegetation and tree species in the adjacent park area. Also the existing street tree treatment should be continued.

SECURITY AGAINST CRIME

The concept of territoriality and defensible space should be considered in designing public and private improvements. This is accomplished without the building of fortresses, and is successful when a potential offender perceives that he is intruding on the domain of another, and that he will be noticed if he intrudes. He is then more likely to be deterred from criminal behavior. The Neighborhood Watch Program successfully uses this premise.

The physical design of a development project can provide surveillance opportunities of the neighborhood by its residents or of the commercial center by merchants, employees and customers. Greater security against crime is also accomplished by improving the capacity of people to live, work and shop while at the same time casually and continually surveying their environments, both indoors and outdoors.

Therefore, design features of a project, together with the features of the natural environment, should be considered in the review of development proposals and in the preparation of development regulations.

COMMERCIAL AREA DESIGN STUDIES

Introduction

The Mid-City Commercial Revitalization Program was undertaken in the early 1980s in an effort to revitalize the commercial areas in the Mid-City and Greater North Park communities. This program has provided two design studies pertinent to Greater North Park: the North Park Design Study for the community's central business district centered around 30th Street and University Avenue; and, the Design Study for the Commercial Revitalization of El Cajon Boulevard which includes that segment of the boulevard between Park Boulevard and I-805 within the Greater North Park community.

These design studies establish design guidelines for the revitalization of these two important commercial areas. It is intended that these studies serve as supplements to the Greater North Park Community Plan and, to the extent feasible, serve as a basis for the formulation of development and design regulations for these areas. The objectives of the two studies are listed below in order to provide a summary of the design guidelines set forth in those studies.

North Park Commercial Center Design Study

The design study for the North Park (30th & University Avenue) Commercial Center is an extensive survey and analysis of the area complete with design objectives. It is intended that this study be utilized with this community plan document as a supplement to the Plan. It is therefore summarized below.

Pedestrian Circulation - Design Objectives

1. Improve quality and appearance of sidewalks, crosswalks, shelters, bus stops, benches and other pedestrian amenities.
2. Improve alleys and rear entries for pedestrian use.
3. Consider a pedestrian mall or plaza.
4. Consider a small-scale public transportation system for North Park.
5. Provide bicycle racks in or near the commercial area.

Vehicular Circulation - Design Objectives

1. Maintain traffic speed controls through the commercial areas.
2. Consider alternatives to University Avenue for through east-west traffic.
3. Provide ideas for a small-scale public transportation system.
4. Consider a parking structure or removal of buildings to create more parking in the area.
5. Enhance and improve streets, sidewalks, benches and other amenities which will encourage more pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation use.

Street Furniture - Design Objectives

1. Select attractively designed benches, trash containers and bicycle racks that complement the existing architecture.
2. Street furniture should be comfortable and convenient for the elderly and handicapped.
3. Remove billboards and establish uniform design standards for signs.

Landscaping - Design Objectives

1. Select appropriate size, form, color and texture of street trees and shrubs that will complement and enhance the existing buildings.
2. Place trees and shrubs appropriately.
3. Select plant materials with low water and maintenance requirements.

Colors and Materials - Design Objectives

1. Select a color palette for building in North Park.
2. Building materials should be compatible with the architectural styles of the buildings.

Character - Design Objectives

1. Preserve, restore and enhance historic buildings.
2. Encourage architectural detailing on new buildings that is compatible with the historic character of the commercial area.
3. Suggest design features which will unify the commercial area.

Image - Design Objectives

1. Restore deteriorating buildings.
2. Visually unify and simplify the avenue through uniform signage and building colors.
3. Introduce landscaping to enhance the appearance of the area.

Building Use - Design Objectives

1. Provide ideas for building facades and street improvements which enhance community shops and services.
2. Provide ideas for pedestrian amenities which encourage residents and non-residents to shop in the neighborhood.
3. Suggest design features that will make shopping more convenient in the area. This may involve improving access, parking or public transportation.

El Cajon Boulevard Design Study

El Cajon Boulevard is the subject of The Design Study for the Commercial Revitalization of El Cajon Boulevard. While this study includes the entire length of El Cajon Boulevard from Park Boulevard to the city of La Mesa, it does provide guidelines for that segment of El Cajon Boulevard traversing Greater North Park. The design study establishes a series of general design guidelines intended to assist in achieving the study's major objective which is business revitalization. These guidelines are summarized as follows:

1. Regional Commercial Role
 - a. Develop the boulevard into a major "Spine." Relate to the Greater North Park market, draw from outside.
 - b. Focus commercial/community centers at nodes.
 - c. Build in resident market with new housing.
 - d. Recognize the historic and continued demand for service- and auto-oriented business.
 - e. Create special districts.

2. Attractive Image

- a. Develop the image of the “Spine.”
- b. Use centers of activity at nodes to create specialized image districts to reduce anonymity.
- c. Capitalize on strip nostalgia. Use lights, signs and width to distinguish the boulevard from other streets.
- d. Change the boulevard name to increase community identification.
- e. Develop an urban, high-activity, high-energy boulevard that is fun.
- f. Use minimum floor area ratio calculations and architectural reviews at district centers.
- g. Establish a coordinated streetscape program for street improvements to reduce visual chaos.
- h. Create a more defined physical structure of the boulevard through setback control, screening, sign placement.

3. Early Benefits for Full Length

- a. Use design elements such as gateways and median trees at centers to affect the image of the entire boulevard but which do not require six miles of improvements.
- b. Develop low cost ideas that businesses and City can implement relatively quickly.
 - Painting street furniture
 - Painting private and public sign frames
 - Color coding store fronts
 - Color theming district centers

4. Cost Efficient Plan

- a. Use public improvements as highly visible seeds for private improvement.
- b. Initiate major improvements through private development which respond to and work with the market.
- c. Establish a workable, realistic image that capitalizes on existing good qualities - do not start over.

5. Respond to the Community

- a. Reinforce Greater North Park identification with district centers that reflect adjacent neighborhoods.
- b. Use increasing residential densities along the boulevard to benefit commercial and to hold down densities in existing residential areas. Decrease density in neighborhoods.
- c. Encourage and accommodate rather than destroy business.
- d. Capitalize on ethnic restaurants and specialty businesses that reflect changes in demographics.
- e. Develop social and police services for the community.

6. Encourage Participation

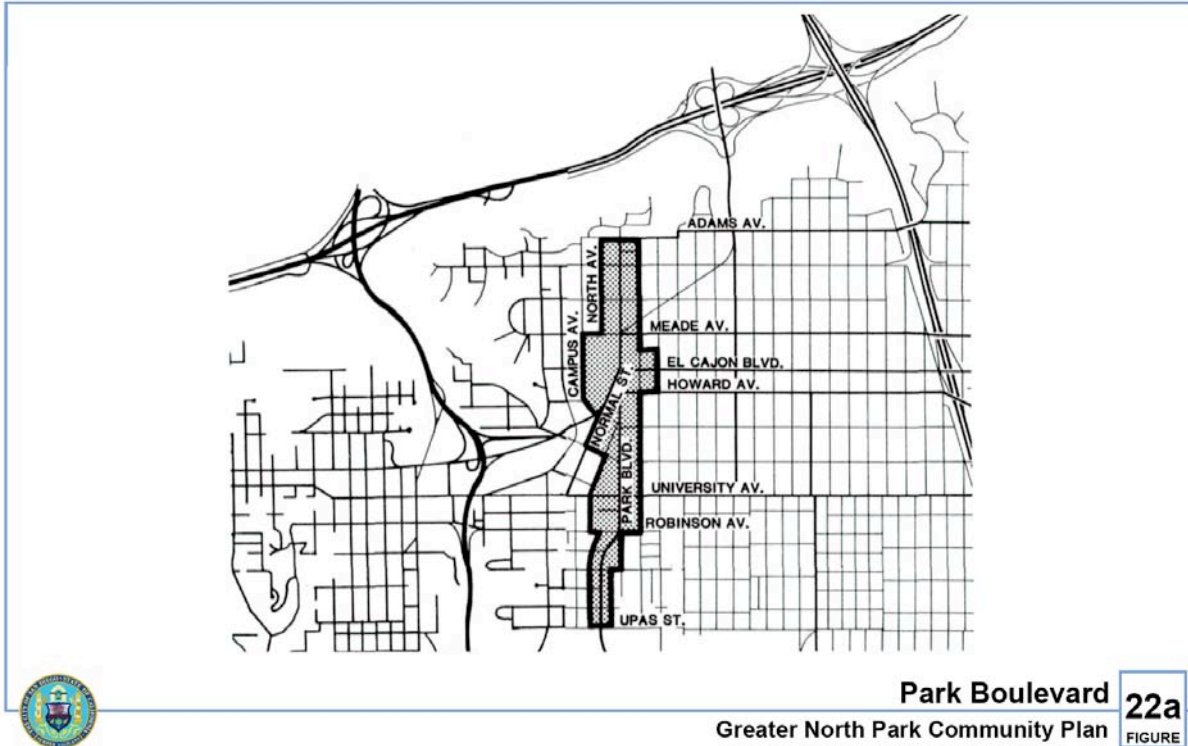
- a. Establish zoning that allows small-scale development.
- b. Develop FIX UP ideas that work immediately within existing business climate.
- c. Facilitate loan incentives, loans for FIX UP and new development.
- d. Recognize effort and accomplishment.
- e. Establish an effective system of promotion, marketing and organization of individual businesses.
 - BIDs
 - Events

7. Pedestrian Environment

- a. Develop a simple, consistent parking system in front of buildings in linear areas between centers.
- b. Provide parking behind buildings and in common lots or garages at district centers. Place building at right-of-way line in district centers.
- c. Provide arcades, furniture, shelters, trees.

8. Major Arterial Multi-Modal Circulation

- a. Maintain width of street and widen in the most congested areas.
- b. Add light rail transit, trolley or continuous bus service to minimize congestion.
- c. Reduce number of left turn areas.
- d. Coordinate streetlights.
- e. Reduce curb cuts on the boulevard or trade curbside parking for off-street parking.



Park Boulevard
 Greater North Park Community Plan **22a**
 FIGURE

Park Boulevard

Park Boulevard is an important north-south street which is the common boundary between the Greater North Park and Uptown communities. It is a street of diverse land uses ranging from higher quality residential development south of Robinson Street to areas in need of rehabilitation north of El Cajon Boulevard. The development of Park Boulevard should be coordinated between the communities of Greater North Park and Uptown. The Park Boulevard area is illustrated in **Figure 22A**.

Park Boulevard should become a landscaped parkway linking Balboa Park and the Trolley Barn Park, with trees being placed along the curb lines of both streets. The existing median strip between El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue should also be enhanced by the planting of additional trees. The Park and Recreation department, which regulates tree planting in the public right-of-ways (streets), should be consulted in order to ensure that trees are selected which will thrive and will present a desirable visual appearance and will not cause damage to sidewalks and curbs. A well-planned landscaping program will add to and improve the pedestrian environment of the boulevard and will also serve to soften the appearance of many of the larger existing buildings.

The preservation and rehabilitation of existing historical and architecturally significant buildings along this street is also recommended, with an emphasis on the Egyptian Revival buildings located within the commercial area between University and Robinson Avenues and the residential area located south of Robinson Avenue. This latter area provides a visually pleasing entry into and exit out of Balboa Park with its two parallel rows of older, and usually ornate, two-story residential buildings. These buildings should be preserved, and further intrusions of high-rise buildings should be prevented.

The two primary commercial areas between University and Robinson Avenues and between Adams and Madison Avenues should be upgraded and made more appealing to surrounding residential areas through the provision of desired goods and services, an improved pedestrian environment, and an improved visual appearance. The area between University and Robinson Avenues is the focal point of a significant senior citizen population including four senior residential towers and should provide the goods and services needed by these senior citizens. The Capri Theater, currently vacant, is located in this area and should be rehabilitated to its original Egyptian Revival appearance. The area between Adams and Madison Avenues, including Adams Avenue between Park Boulevard and Georgia Street, has historically been the commercial center for the University Heights area. However, in recent times, this commercial center has deteriorated and no longer provides an adequate range of desired goods and services. Given its proximity to the Trolley Barn Park site, this area might be rehabilitated using its physical relationship to the past as a redevelopment theme. This area lends itself to becoming a unique commercial center, providing not only essential and convenience goods and services to the surrounding residential area but also providing small specialty restaurants and shops which would attract citywide support.

The Design Study for the Commercial Revitalization of El Cajon Boulevard designates the Park Boulevard and El Cajon Boulevard intersection as the western gateway to El Cajon Boulevard and the intersection is also a primary focal point on Park Boulevard. Therefore, as called for by the El Cajon Boulevard design study, this intersection should become a high-intensity node with appropriate design standards regulating new development.

The Mid-City Revitalization Program includes the commercially zoned properties on both sides of Park Boulevard. This program is administered by the Economic Development Division of the Property Department which is currently studying the Park Boulevard business district in an effort to formulate appropriate implementation programs. The Economic Development Division can also provide measures to support and leverage business reinvestment in the area. Proposed measures include staff support for the formation of a business improvement district, design and implementation of a public improvement project and the creation of a financial assistance program to assist businesses in the rehabilitation of their storefronts. The implementation of any adopted measures is contingent upon the availability of Community Development Block Grant funds. The programs are described in the Commercial Element of this community plan.

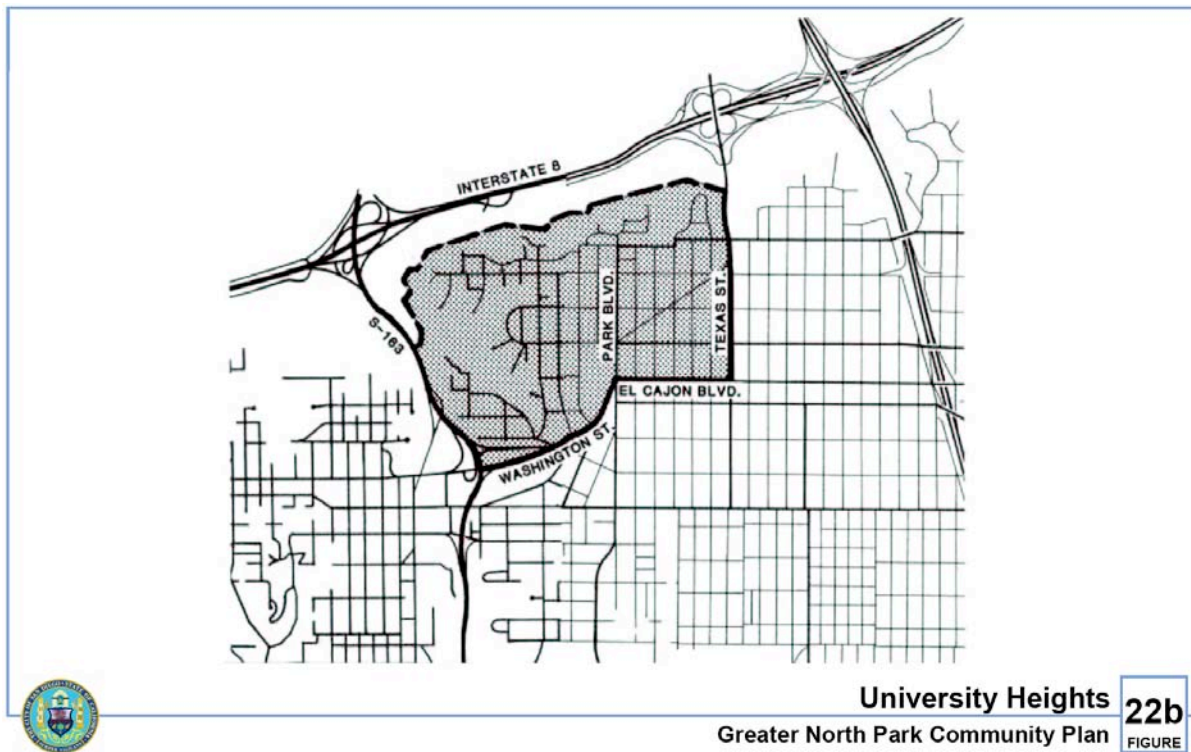
The University Heights Neighborhood

University Heights has traditionally been considered to be a distinct and definable neighborhood centered around the Park Boulevard and Adams Avenue commercial area. That portion of University Heights within the Greater North Park community plan area might be considered to be predominantly north of El Cajon Boulevard and west of Texas Street. The portion of University Heights west of Park Boulevard is in the Uptown Community Plan and is generally located north of Washington Street and east of SR-163. The University Heights area is shown on **Figure 22B**.

For that portion of the University Heights neighborhood which lies within the Greater North Park community planning area, the residential designations are for very-low and low-density or single-family dwellings north of Adams Avenue and for generally low-medium density of 10 to 20 dwelling units per acre south of Adams Avenue. These residential density designations are intended to ensure the retention of the low-density and low-medium density character of the neighborhood while still permitting some infill development.

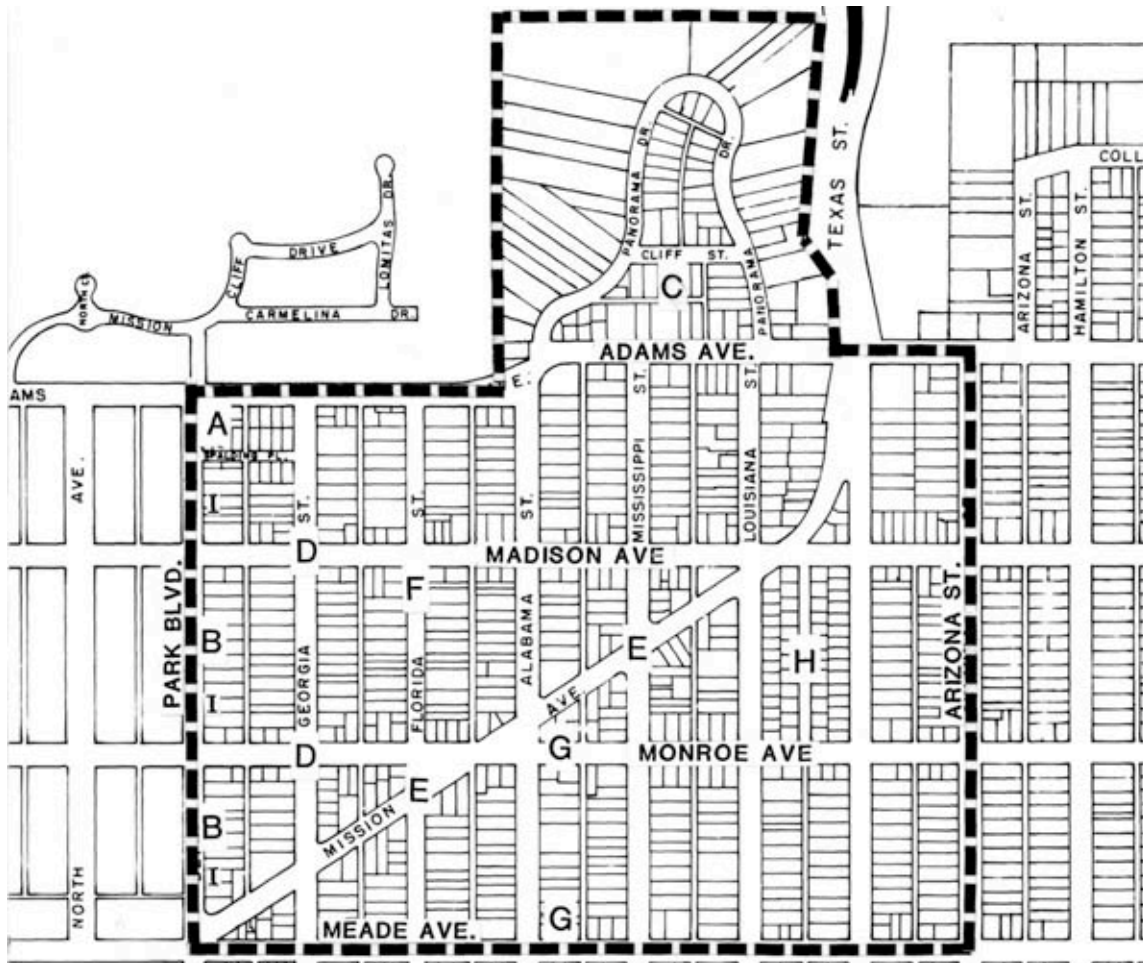
Commercial development will be limited to Park Boulevard and Adams Avenue with Park Boulevard north of Madison Avenue and Adams Avenue west of Georgia Street being the focal point of the University Heights commercial area. The community plan recommends that a strong relationship be developed between this commercial area and the Trolley Barn Park site immediately north of Adams Avenue.

The **Urban Design Element**, specifically Urban Design Area 1, lists a series of guidelines intended to provide a basis for the tailored zoning regulations. Included are the establishment of a design motif for the Park and Adams commercial node based upon its relationship with the Trolley Barn Park site; retention of the small lot, single-family character along Mission Avenue; establishment of a landscaping program for specified streets; and, retention of the Shirley Ann Place enclave with its small lots and small bungalows.



URBAN DESIGN AREAS

An urban design review of the Greater North Park community north of Upas Street has established a series of guidelines which should be taken into consideration during the formation of design and development regulations for the community. It should be recognized that during the implementation phase of the planning process these guidelines may be modified and refined and that additional criteria and guidelines may be established. Five urban design areas are discussed below.



Urban Design Area 1

- A. Enhance and upgrade the Park and Adams commercial node. It should have a design motif based upon its relationship with the nearby Trolley Barn Park site and existing historical features.
- B. Encourage multiuse along this section of Park Boulevard, including higher residential density development and office use.
- C. Retain the existing single-family, large lot character of the Panorama Drive neighborhood. Retain existing palm trees in this area.

- D. Keep higher-density residential development to the west of the topographical break along Florida Street.
- E. The single-family character created by the small lots along Mission Avenue should be retained. Opportunities for landscaped islands in Mission Avenue should be utilized.
- F. Enhance Florida Street as a landscaped parkway between Balboa Park and the Trolley Barn Park site.
- G. Establish a landscaping program for specified streets, which could include landscaped medians, if feasible.
- H. Retain the Shirley Place enclave in its present state featuring small lots and small bungalows.
- I. The Park Boulevard Revitalization Committee of the University Heights Community Association is undertaking a survey of Park Boulevard between Adams Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard. This survey is the first step in the preparation of an urban design study for Park Boulevard. The recommendations of this urban design study should be utilized to the extent possible in the formulation of development regulations and incentives.



Urban Design Area 2

- A. Preserve and enhance the Adams Avenue “Antique Row” and commercial mode. Commercial development should be kept east of Idaho Street. Establish a design character for this commercial node.
- B. Enhance the entryways to the community.
- C. Maintain the lower-density residential character of the neighborhood north of Adams Avenue.
- D. Encourage multiple use along 30th Street including higher density residential development and office use.
- E. Establish a landscaping program for specified east-west streets.
- F. Encourage the private redevelopment of the residential area east of 30th Street.



Urban Design Area 3

Urban Design Area 3 (West)

- A. Enhance Florida Street as a landscaped parkway between Balboa Park and the Trolley Barn Park site.
- B. El Cajon Boulevard at Park Boulevard is the major western gateway to Greater North Park. As such, it should be enhanced as a major commercial node and should be distinguished as a gateway through special signage and landscape treatments.
- C. El Cajon Boulevard at I-805 is the major eastern gateway to Greater North Park. It should be enhanced so as to signify its status as a major gateway.
- D. El Cajon Boulevard is a major commercial strip featuring auto-oriented uses. It should develop in accordance with the guidelines of the Design Study for the Commercial Revitalization of El Cajon Boulevard. In addition, the boulevard should feature enhanced landscaping in the medians.
- E. The intersection of 30th Street and El Cajon Boulevard is a major commercial node and should be developed as such.



Urban Design Area 3 (East)

- F. Thirtieth Street is an important commercial link between El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue. It should have design and development standards which are consistent with those two commercial streets.

- G. Park Boulevard between Howard and Lincoln Avenues should be a mixed-use area and should have design and development standards which reflect its status as a major entryway into Balboa Park.

- H. The topographical break west of Florida Street provides easterly view opportunities for development in this area. Design and development standards for this area should take this factor into consideration.



Urban Design Area 4

- A. University Avenue at Park Boulevard is a major gateway to the community. It is in close proximity to the Georgia Street bridge. These factors indicate that appropriate design standards enhancing this gateway should be utilized for this area together with special signage, landscaping or other public improvements.
- B. The commercial area between University and Robinson Avenues features a number of Egyptian Revival Buildings. Development regulations oriented towards preserving these buildings should be utilized for this area.
- C. Park Boulevard south of Robinson Avenue is a high-quality residential area featuring many architecturally significant buildings. It is also a major entryway into Balboa Park. Development regulations aimed at preserving this area should be established.
- D. Enhance Florida Street as a landscaped parkway between Balboa Park and the Trolley Barn Park site.
- E. University Avenue between Park Boulevard and Idaho Street should be redeveloped as a higher-density residential area with the exception of the Texas Street area which should be a small neighborhood commercial center. Design and development regulations enhancing the University Avenue area should be established, recognizing that the Georgia Street bridge over University Avenue and the high-rise residential towers on Park Boulevard, are nearby.

- F. The area west of Florida Street has significant quality development. Development regulations encouraging the expansion of this development should be established. In addition, the view opportunities found in this area should be enhanced by new development.
- G. The area south of Landis Street is a stable lower-density residential area with numerous California bungalows. The existing character should be preserved.



Urban Design Area 5

- A. Thirtieth Street and University Avenue is a major commercial node and the community's central business district. It should be upgraded and enhanced in accordance with the recommendation of the North Park Design Study.
- B. University Avenue at I-805 is a major gateway to the community and should be enhanced.
- C. The node at University Avenue and 32nd Street should be strengthened possibly with additional tall buildings emphasizing it as a gateway to the community.
- D. Give consideration to possible street closings in order to create opportunities for pedestrian plazas and pedestrian circulation.
- E. Investigate the opportunities for parking structures serving the commercial area.
- F. Enhance 28th Street as a link between the commercial area and Balboa Park.
- G. Retain the area west of 30th Street and south of Dwight; and on Felton Street and 33rd Street south of Landis Street as single-family.
- H. Higher-density residential development should be permitted in close proximity to the commercial area.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM - URBAN DESIGN

Development and Design Proposals

1. The appearance and compatibility of new development should be considered in reviewing proposals. The proper treatment of bulk and facades is particularly important. For example, large blank walls should be avoided; variations in height and depth of wall surfaces and architectural detailing should be provided on all sides of structures. New buildings should blend into the visual character of the neighborhood.
2. Higher-density development should be encouraged to utilize larger sites. Projects with more than 50 feet of frontage can begin to incorporate more usable open space, imaginative site design, recreational facilities, secured parking and other amenities not possible in a smaller project. Such projects should be carefully designed, however, so as not to overwhelm existing development.
3. Usable open areas should be provided. Even in high-density development, open areas can be provided in the form of balconies, patios and courtyards. Rooftops are a largely untapped resource for open uses in multifamily development. Recent revisions to the multifamily zones encourage both the use of rooftops and the variation in wall surfaces described above.
4. Housing designed for senior citizens should accommodate their needs. Smaller household sizes and a lower incidence of car ownership may allow these projects to be built at a higher density and with less off-street parking than would otherwise be permitted. But these projects must be located with convenient access to transit, shopping and, if possible, senior services. Care should also be taken not to overly concentrate these uses in one area, or to locate them in areas with a shortage of available on-street parking. They should provide an attractive environment for their residents, who spend more time at home than working families. Usable outdoor areas such as patios, balconies and courtyards should be provided, as should laundry facilities. Ample landscaping should be provided to soften the effect of the added density, and to provide shade and visual screening.
5. Adequate landscaping should be provided to help soften higher-density development and to provide shade. Trees and shrubs should be of adequate size when planted. Native and drought-resistant plant materials are encouraged; large turf areas should be avoided.
6. Structures should be designed to utilize shade and breezes. Solar heating and cooling and improved insulation techniques should be utilized.
7. Hillside development should cause minimal disturbance to the topography, complementing the land's natural character. Minimize the need for level areas such as streets, parking lots and yard areas. Required level areas should be in small increments. Development should be clustered, but the resultant structures should not be out of scale with the neighborhood. The use of specialized construction to minimize grading should be considered.

8. Hillsides bordering Mission Valley and the canyons in the southern portion of the community should be treated with an extreme level of sensitivity. Development should be restricted to the top of the mesa or other areas where virtually no manufactured slopes are visible. An adequate, undisturbed buffer should remain between the mesa and the valley floor.
9. Where manufactured slopes are necessary, they should be made to blend with the natural contours. Natural appearing groundcover should be provided on all created slopes.
10. Public access to canyons and views should be provided at suitable locations.

Specific Recommendations

1. Special development regulations should be formulated for the R-3000 zone in order to retain the single-family character of areas within that zone. Second units, including move-ons from other areas of the community, should be located in the rear portion of lots with existing single-family dwellings “up front.” Development regulations should ensure that second units maintain the visual character of existing units. Prohibitions against parcel accumulation should be considered in order to maintain neighborhood scale and preclude intrusions by apartment-like structures.
2. New landscaping and parking regulations and standards should be formulated in a coordinated manner so that they complement each other and enhance the visual appearance of the community.
3. Where parcel accumulation is permitted for purposes of increasing permitted residential densities, special design and development regulations should be formulated so as to preclude massive or tall buildings which are out of scale with surrounding development.
4. Special design and development regulations should be formulated for commercial areas emphasizing the unique individual character of each area.
5. Urban design regulations for the entire community should be specifically written and included in the implementing of zoning legislation for the community.
6. The North Park Water Tower is a visual landmark not only visible from within the Greater North Park Community, but also from surrounding communities. The Greater North Park Community Planning Committee and the North Park Community Association have selected a community-identifying logo which could be painted on the water tower as a symbol of community pride.
7. The central business district, at one time, featured a “North Park” sign over the right-of-way at 30th Street and University Avenue. As part of the revitalization program for the central business district, consideration might be given to restoration of the sign to its former place of prominence.

8. The “Design Study for the Commercial Revitalization of El Cajon Boulevard” recommends that a “gateway” sign be placed on El Cajon Boulevard at Park Boulevard identifying El Cajon Boulevard as the major east-west thoroughfare between Park Boulevard and La Mesa.

Refinements and modifications to the recommended development intensities for both residential and commercial development, as well as for permitted uses, may be incorporated into the implementing legislation. In addition, it may be necessary to adjust land use and density boundaries in order to properly apply implementing zoning legislation. Finally, the achievability of recommended development intensities and residential densities may be predicated upon the design standards and development regulations of the implementing legislation.