

CIRCULATION ELEMENT

BACKGROUND

The community of Old Town San Diego is located four miles north of Centre City, just west of Presidio Park and the upland community of Mission Hills. Centered around Old Town State Historic Park, the community is adjacent to two of the region's major freeways (Interstates 5 and 8). The freeways have isolated the community's older angled grid pattern of local streets. The exception to the grid pattern is San Diego Avenue, but it too has been interrupted by the State Park development. The result is that traffic is funnelled onto those streets which still provide the means to cross or pass through the community. Juan Street and the Congress Street/San Diego Avenue combination are the parallel routes for traffic oriented to the north and south, while Taylor, Twiggs, and Harney Streets provide east-west connections.

Except for Taylor Street, the community is composed of two-lane streets of varying width. Taylor Street provides a four-lane street which is a major linkage to other communities, connecting to Rosecrans Avenue and Pacific Highway on the west and Morena Boulevard and Hotel Circle on the east. Freeway access to these streets is available from Interstate 5 at the Old Town Avenue and Sea World Drive interchanges, and from Interstate 8 at the Taylor Street/Hotel Circle interchange just east of Presidio Park, and at Sports Arena Boulevard just west of Old Town San Diego.

Automobile/Automobile Support

STREET VOLUMES.

Daily traffic in the area is composed of both locally-generated trips and a significant amount of thru-traffic. Combined, these two sources have contributed to an annual growth rate in the area's street volumes of 4.25 percent since 1981. The latest traffic counts were 6.6 percent higher than previous ones.

Taylor Street is the heaviest travelled street in Old Town San Diego, carrying 25,100 average daily traffic (ADT) between Juan and Sunset Streets. Although this section of Taylor Street has five lanes, capacity is becoming a problem on the adjacent four-lane sections. Peak-hour congestion in the eastbound direction is evident due to poor signal progression and a narrow cross-section. Other streets in the community are not experiencing severe congestion, but volumes are at or above 10,000 on sections of Juan Street and San Diego Avenue. According to the City's street design standards, these two-lane streets would normally accommodate 5,000 ADT without any capacity problems. As volumes rise, congestion becomes evident at intersections where turning vehicles can block through lanes or form long queues at signals. In most cases, on-street parking is restricted only near intersections to allow room for short turn pockets. Recent accident rates are indicative of growing congestion, with 1984 rates exceeding city averages on Taylor Street, Juan Street, and San Diego

Avenue. The combination of narrow streets, rising volumes, on-street parking, and the mixture of **slow-moving** local traffic and fast-moving **thru-traffic** has created **community-wide** concern regarding the future of Old Town San Diego's circulation system.

THRU-TRAFFIC.

A key to understanding how future **development** in Old Town San Diego might affect local traffic volumes was to separate and quantify the percentage of vehicle trips generated outside the community. To **accomplish** this task, a thru-traffic survey was conducted during the weekday p.m. peak hour (4:30 - 5:30).

Thru-traffic on San Diego Avenue and Juan Street averaged 36 percent during the afternoon peak hour. This means that just over a third of the trips entering at one end of the community are leaving at the other end without stopping in Old Town San Diego. The turning moves at Taylor Street would indicate that roughly 60-70 percent of these trips are oriented to and from locations east of Old Town San Diego, such as the Taylor Street/Interstate 8 interchange or the communities of Mission Valley and **Morena**. Although **thru-traffic** on Taylor Street **itself** is not **included** in the above statistics, examination of the intersection counts reveals that 80-90 percent of the peak-hour traffic coming from Rosecrans Street and Pacific highway continues to travel eastward, passing through Old Town San Diego. The intersection counts and a detailed breakdown of the survey **results** can be found in the **Circulation** and parking report prepared by SANDAG, which is the basis of this Circulation **Element**.

Some of these through trips are **unavoidable**. For **example**, Juan Street and Presidio Drive are the **only** outlets for Mission Hills traffic seeking access to points north and west. During the survey, 40 percent of the vehicles heading north on Juan Street were doing just that. Other peak hour trips are using **local** streets through Old Town San Diego because of poor access to the freeway from certain areas or to avoid other, more congested streets and freeway ramps. The result is noticeable peak-hour congestion along Taylor Street and a growing concern about the negative effect thru-traffic will have on economic development along the **community's** narrow **two-lane** streets.

PARKING.

Given the nature of Old Town San Diego as a unique visitor-oriented community with high trip generation ratios and attractiveness to both tourists and **San Diegans**, convenient and adequate parking becomes an **integral** part of the **overall** circulation plan for the community. After **initially** driving into Old Town San Diego, most visitors park their vehicles in one location and walk between the various shops, restaurants, and park facilities. In addition to the visitor-related parking **problems**, there are employee and resident parking needs that also have to be addressed. Numerous **public** parking **lots** are scattered throughout the **commercial** core, along with **several smaller** private lots for some of the

restaurants, **retail** stores, and office **buildings**. While the **public** lots provide a total of 978 spaces, there are **approximately** 476 on-street spaces with varying parking time **limitations** within one **block** of the commercially developed areas.

The largest **public** lot is located south of Taylor Street between Pacific Highway and the Santa Fe railroad tracks. It is presently striped for 229 spaces. Other lots are found along Juan Street and at the northwest side of the State Park **itself**.

Visitors to Old Town San Diego arriving on the freeways are directed to the appropriate interchanges by special exit signs on Interstates 5 and 8. For those approaching from Pacific Highway, Rosecrans Street or **Taylor** Street, there are directional parking signs leading them to the Taylor Street lot. After leaving the freeway at Old Town Avenue, vehicles are directed north on San Diego Avenue. But without any public parking on the south periphery, motorists at that point must find their way through Old Town San Diego to Juan Street or Congress Street without the benefit of further signing. A lack of identifying signing makes some **lots** hard to spot from the street, and a comprehensive program directing vehicles exiting from one **lot** to the next available parking area has not been instituted.

All of the public lots were surveyed in August, 1985, to assess the **overall** parking demand versus capacity during peak periods and its effect on the surroundings streets.

The weekend suffered the highest parking demand, with 80 percent occupancy and an overflow rate of 35 percent. Midday demand during the week was **slightly less**, with 79 percent occupancy and 27 percent overflow. Similar results were found for on-street spaces during the week, with an 88 percent occupancy rate at midday. The overall statistics indicate that **surplus** parking is available during peak periods, but as evidenced by the high **overflow** percentages at several **lots**, too many motorists are attempting to park at **highly** visible, close-in locations. This is **especially** true in the evenings, when occupancy rates **fall** dramatically for any lot removed from the immediate vicinity of the State Park and surrounding restaurants.

Public Transportation

Transit service in the area is **presently** provided by buses operated by San Diego Transit. Four routes serve Old Town San Diego: 4, 5, 6, and 105. Routes 5 and 105 connect downtown San Diego with University City, passing through Old Town San Diego along San Diego Avenue, Congress Street, and Taylor Street. Taylor Street is used by Routes 4 and 5, where Route 4 provides service between Centre City, Linda Vista, **Clairemont**, and Route 6 connects Point Loma, Mission Valley, and Mid-City.

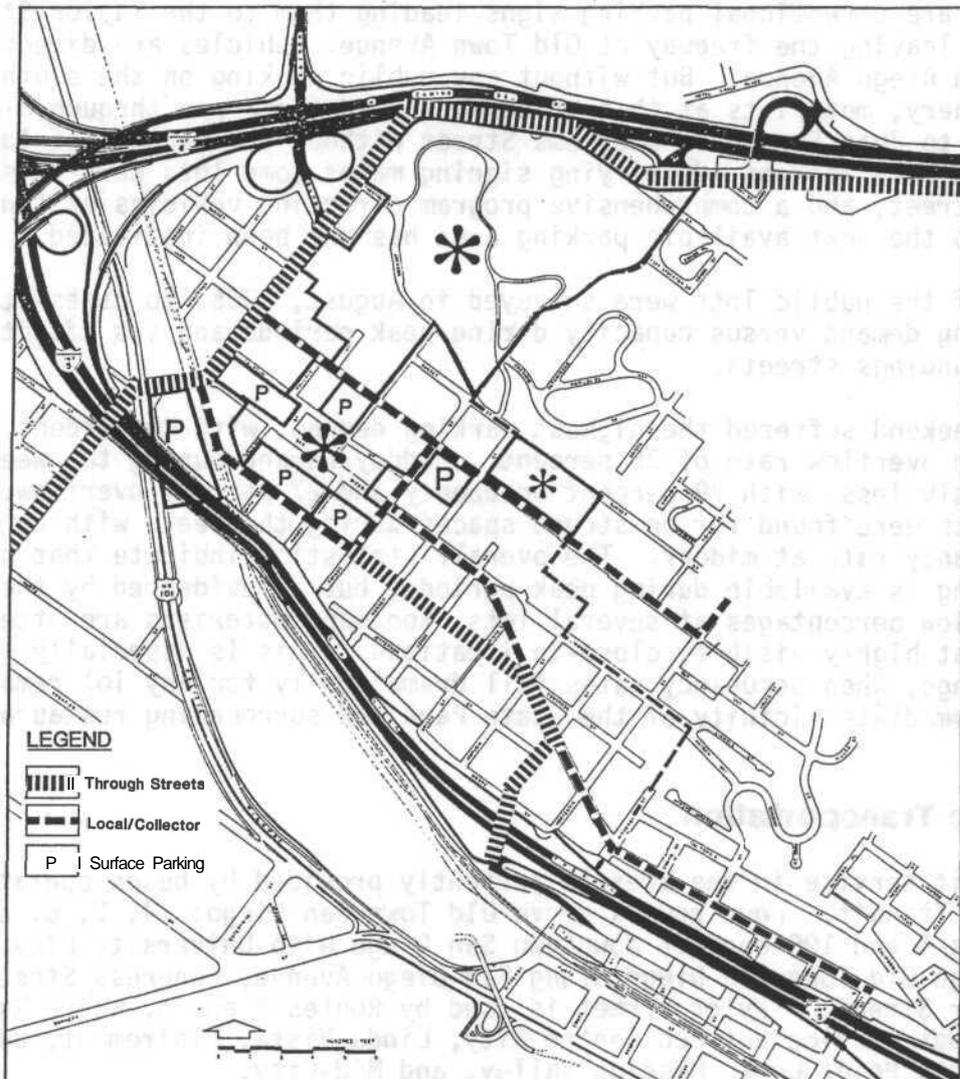
There are **presently** several **public** transit planning activities in process. The **light** rail transit system is planned to be extended to the North City and East County areas. Both lines will eventually pass by Old Town San Diego Station. Location planning and design is in process.

Bikeways

A designated bike route exists on Taylor Street. The route, however, is only signed and no special provisions are made toward its design.

Pedestrian Ways

With the exception of public sidewalks along some of the community streets and exclusive pedestrian plaza and walk areas within private complexes or the State Park, there is no existing pedestrian circulation network in the community.



EXISTING CIRCULATION/PARKING

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROVIDE A BALANCED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND NETWORK WHICH GIVES TO THE OLD TOWN SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY ITS PROPER ROLE AS AN IMPORTANT DESTINATION POINT.

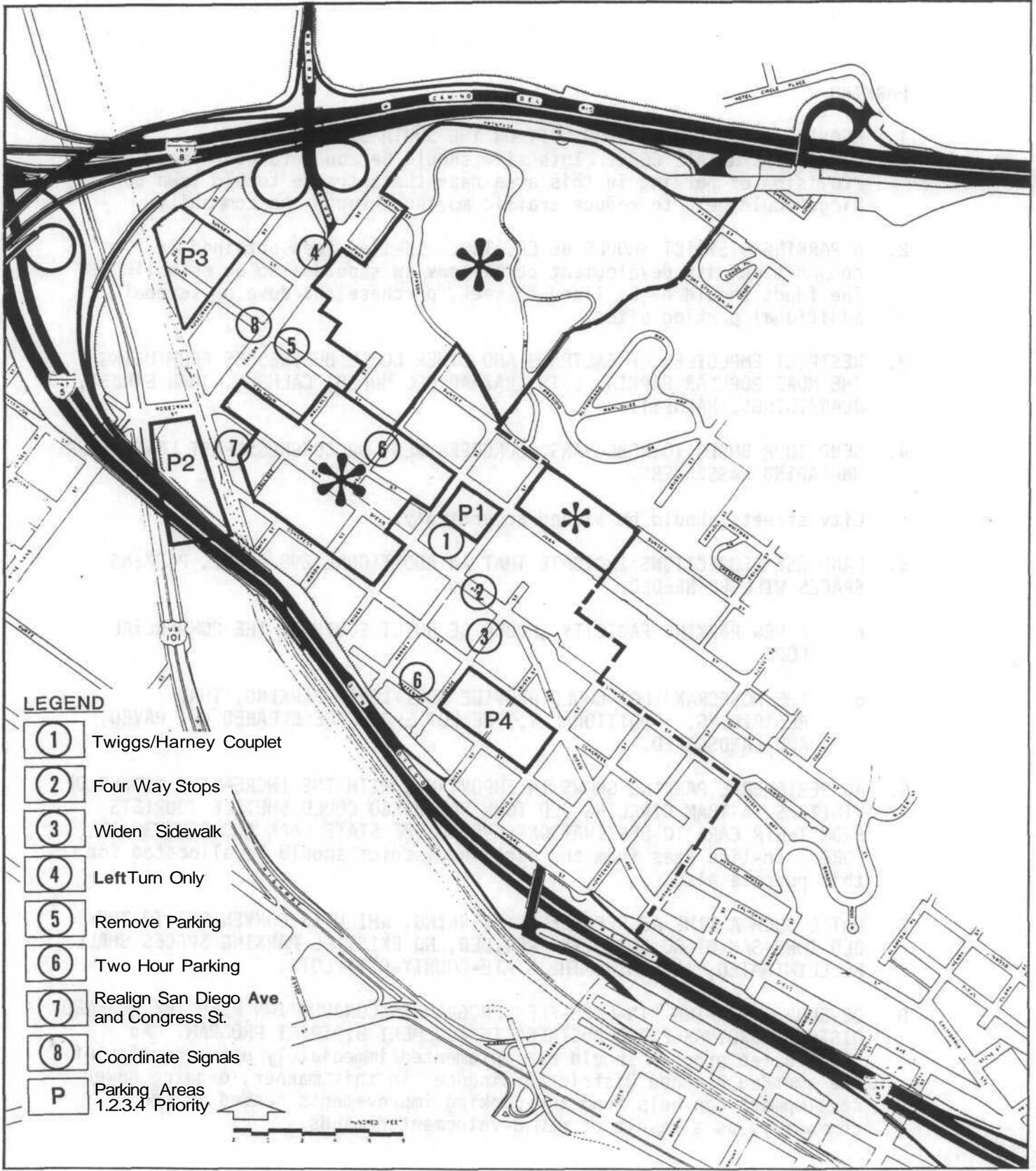
AUTOMOBILE ACCESS:

1. DEVELOP A CIRCULATION SYSTEM, THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF WHICH IS TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY RATHER THAN TO ACT AS A PRIMARY ACCESS ROUTE THROUGH OLD TOWN SAN DIEGO. Wide through streets should be **deemphasized** and designed to meet their local service needs. The historical scale and vehicle speed of pre-1871 streets should be **carefully** considered when designing the street.
2. FURTHER WIDENING OF STREETS FOR AUTOMOBILE ACCESS TO ENHANCE TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD NOT BE UNDERTAKEN. Street **widenings** should be a "last resort" action and should only be considered in conjunction with an overall corridor study and design **proposals** which incorporate all necessary circulation needs including auto, parking, bus transit, LRT (as **applicable**) **bikeway**, and pedestrian access, as **well** as design amenities designed to visually enhance the corridor.
3. DEVELOP AND ENHANCE MAJOR VEHICULAR ENTRANCE WAYS INTO OLD TOWN SAN DIEGO. **Taylor Street**, **Old Town Avenue**, and **San Diego Avenue** entrances into the community should be enhanced.
4. STREET VACATIONS SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED. The **closing** of a street to vehicular traffic and **public** use **should** constitute an enhancement of **public** use opportunities in the community, and not change the development patterns established by historical precedent.

5. THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC STREET IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN:

- o IMPROVE SIGNAL PROGRESSION BETWEEN PACIFIC HIGHWAY AND MORENA BOULEVARD. This **should** be **implemented** as soon as possible as a Capital Improvement Project **facilitation**.
- o A ONE-WAY COUPLET SHOULD BE INSTALLED ON TWIGGS AND HARNEY, to be **located** between Juan and Congress, with Twiggs **circulating** toward the southwest and Harney circulating toward the northeast.
- o INSTALL A FOUR-WAY STOP AT HARNEY STREET AND SAN DIEGO AVENUE.
- o WIDEN SIDEWALKS ON SAN DIEGO AVENUE BETWEEN TWIGGS AND CONGRESS STREETS TO PROMOTE PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY.

Sidewalks should be widened to the intersection of San Diego Avenue and Congress Street, in conjunction with the work of the Streetscape Committee and their consultant.
- o CONVERT OPTIONAL LEFT TURN LANE ON EASTBOUND TAYLOR STREET AT MORENA BOULEVARD TO A MANDATORY LEFT, CREATING A DUAL POCKET.
- o WIDEN PRESIDIO DRIVE TO ALLOW FOR A RIGHT TURN ON TAYLOR.
- o REMOVE PARKING FOR ANOTHER 100-150 FEET ON JUAN STREET FOR THE NORTHBOUND APPROACH OF THE TAYLOR STREET INTERSECTION AND RESTRIPE FOR TWO APPROACH LANES. **Only** 60-70 feet of existing parking should be removed, no further parking should be limited. The impacts on Mason Street should also be addressed as part of this improvement.
- o TWO HOUR PARKING POSTING LIMITS SHOULD BE INSTALLED ALONG ALL OF WALLACE, JUAN, AND CALHOUN STREETS, AS WELL AS THE ADJOINING RESIDENTIAL AREAS. A very **low** or no fee residential parking permit may be required to **allow** residents to park for longer periods and encourage residential development.
- o INCORPORATE THE STATE **PARK'S** PLAN TO REALIGN THE ONE BLOCK OF CONGRESS STREET/SAN DIEGO AVENUE SOUTH OF TAYLOR STREET THROUGH THE POTTERY VILLAGE PROPERTY.



STREET AND PARKING IMPROVEMENTS

PARKING

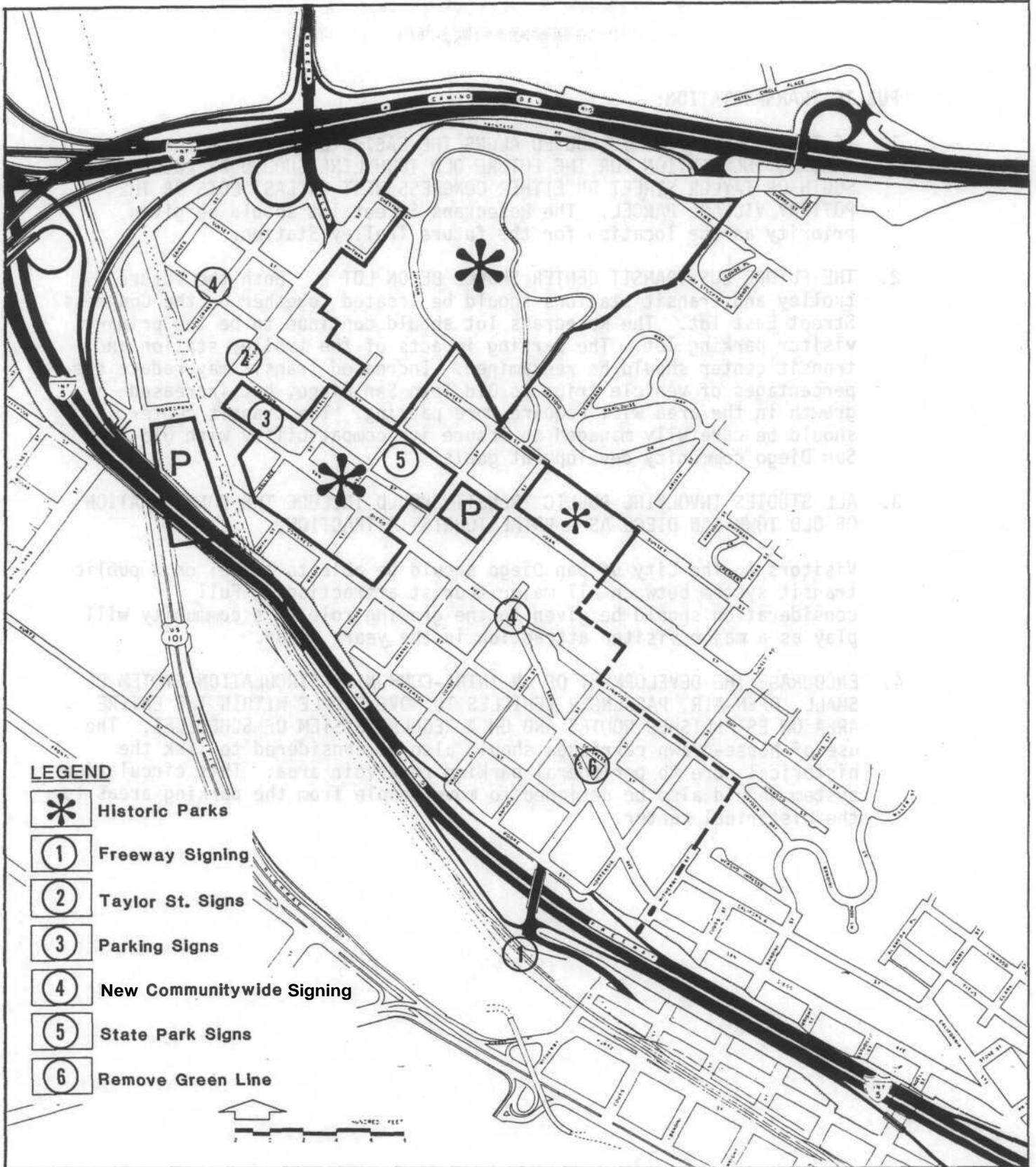
1. PROVIDE A NEW PARKING FACILITY ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE COMMERCIAL/RETAIL CORE. This site **should** be zoned for parking. Provision of parking in this area near the entrance to Old Town San Diego would **help** to reduce traffic moving through the community.
2. A PARKING DISTRICT SHOULD BE CREATED. In-lieu fees obtained in conjunction with development permit review **should** also be **established**. The funds should be **utilized** to seek, purchase and develop several additional parking sites.
3. RESTRICT EMPLOYEES OF CALTRANS AND OTHER LOCAL BUSINESSES FROM USING THE MORE POPULAR PARKING LOTS (BAZAAR DEL MUNDO, CALHOUN, JUAN STREET, JUAN/TWIGGS, HARNEY).
4. SEND TOUR BUSES TO ROSECRANS, CONGRESS WEST OR CONGRESS EAST LOTS AFTER UNLOADING PASSENGERS.

City streets should be signed **accordingly**.

5. LAND USE PROJECTIONS INDICATE THAT AN ADDITIONAL 298 PUBLIC PARKING SPACES WILL BE NEEDED.
 - o A NEW PARKING FACILITY SHOULD BE BUILT SOUTH OF THE COMMERCIAL CORE.
 - o THE ROSECRANS LOT COULD PROVIDE ADDITIONAL **PARKING**, THRU RESTRIPIING. ADDITIONALLY, THE LOT SHOULD BE CLEANED UP, PAVED, AND LANDSCAPED.
6. AS PERIPHERAL PARKING GROWS IN IMPORTANCE WITH THE INCREASING NUMBER OF VISITORS, A TRAM CIRCLING OLD TOWN SAN DIEGO COULD SHUTTLE TOURISTS FROM THEIR CARS TO DESTINATIONS AROUND THE STATE PARK AND COMMERCIAL CORE. In-lieu fees from the parking district should be **allocated** for this purpose **also**.
7. UNTIL SUCH A TIME AS **REPLACEMENT/PARKING**, WHICH IS CONVENIENT TO THE OLD TOWN SAN DIEGO CORE, IS PROVIDED, NO EXISTING PARKING SPACES SHALL BE ELIMINATED, INCLUDING THE STATE-COUNTY-CITY LOTS.
8. DEVELOP A PARKING "**IN-LIEU-FEE**" PROGRAM IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PLANNED DISTRICT ORDINANCE AND BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT PROGRAM. An in-lieu fee program should be implemented immediately upon adoption of the amended Planned District Ordinance, in this manner, ongoing newer **development** can help fund the parking improvements needed in the community, as a result of new development **demands**.

SIGNS:

1. IMPROVE THE DIRECTIONAL SIGNING FROM INTERSTATE 5 AT OLD TOWN AVENUE INTERCHANGE.
2. ELIMINATE CONFUSING SIGNS ON TAYLOR STREET WHICH DIRECT MOTORISTS TO JUAN STREET OR SAN DIEGO AVENUE TO FIND "OLD TOWN SAN DIEGO STATE PARK." Traffic signs should **lead** the motorists to the main lot (Rosecrans), where additional information and signing for pedestrian access **will** lead visitors to the park **itself**. The Rosecrans lot should continue to be the number one parking lot because of its **accessibility** and capacity.
3. IMPROVE THE VISIBILITY, INTERNAL CIRCULATION AND ACCESS TO THE PARKING LOT BETWEEN CALHOUN STREETS AND SAN DIEGO AVENUE. ENTRANCE FROM SAN DIEGO AVENUE SHOULD BE PROVIDED. Visibility, internal circulation and access to the parking **lot** between Calhoun Street and San Diego Avenue should be **improved**. this could be achieved by removing the chain link fence, thereby improving visibility, however, a landscaped buffer (minimum four feet) should be installed. Entrances on San Diego Avenue are not recommended and entrances should be improved off Calhoun Street.
4. A SIGNING PROGRAM SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED. A priority system should be designed which would send overflow cars from the existing parking lot to either the main lot (Rosecrans) or others in the area. This signing study **should** be implemented **immediately**, since it has already been **completed** by the State Park.
5. IMPROVE VISITOR AWARENESS OF WHERE "OLD TOWN SAN DIEGO STATE PARK" IS WITH BETTER SIGNAGE AND IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS FROM PERIPHERAL PARKING LOTS. This is a top priority and **will** also be addressed by the Streetscape and Amenities Committee and the streetscape consultant.
6. REMOVE THE "GREEN LINE" THROUGH OLD TOWN SAN DIEGO AND ALL ASSOCIATED SIGNS. Create a terminus at the intersection of San Diego Avenue, Arista, and/or Ampudia Street, provided such an improvement does not impede traffic flow. The streetscape consultant should **analyze** and address this proposal as part of its streetscape study.



CIRCULATION/ORIENTATIONAL SIGNS

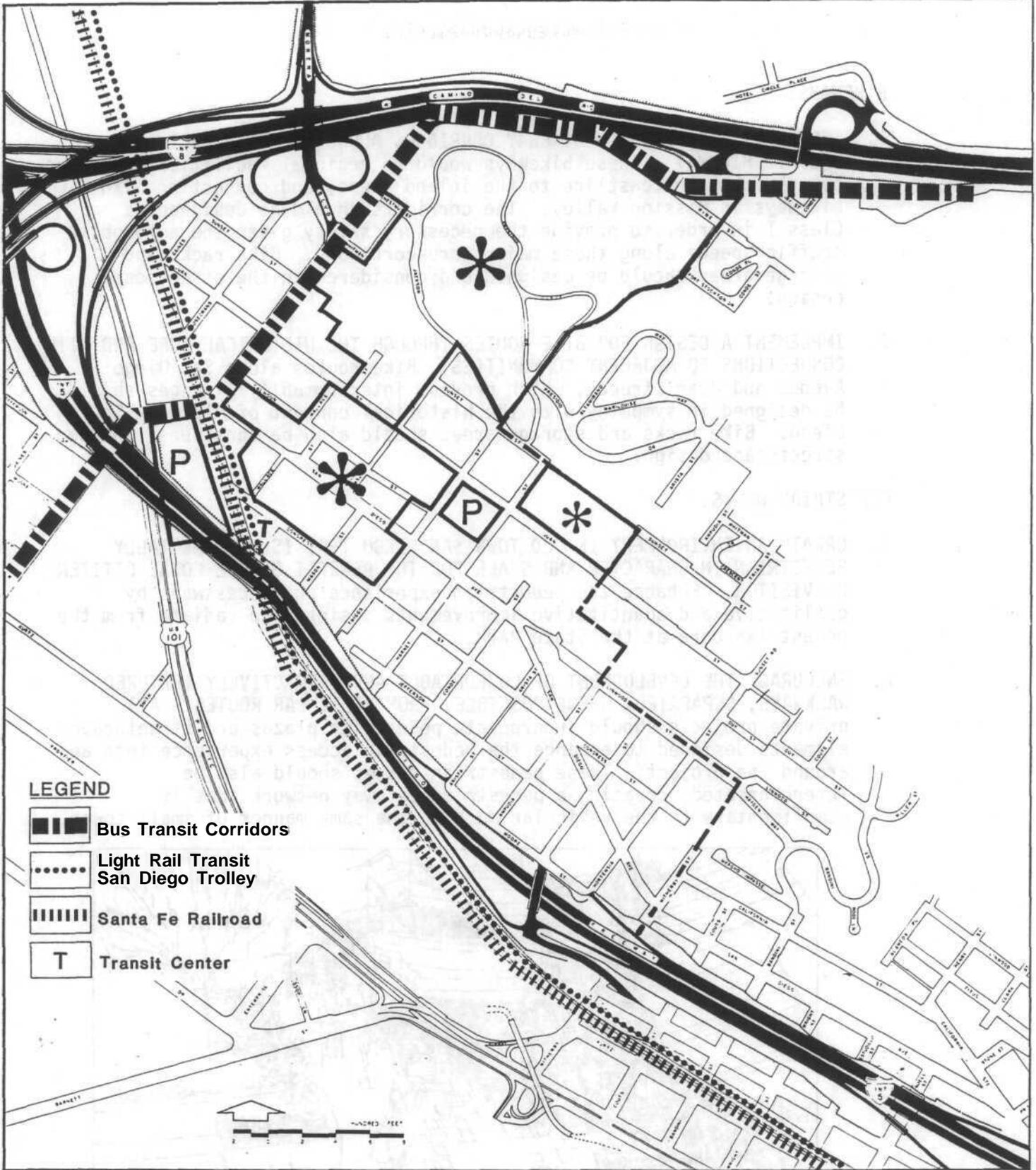
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:

1. IF THE TROLLEY LINE IS ROUTED ALONG THE EAST SIDE OF THE RAILROAD TRACKS, THE STATION FOR THE FUTURE OLD TOWN LINE SHOULD BE LOCATED SOUTH OF TAYLOR STREET ON EITHER CONGRESS WEST OR EAST LOTS OR THE POTTERY VILLAGE PARCEL. The Rosecrans Street lot should be given priority as the location for the future **Trolley** Station.
2. THE FUTURE BUS TRANSIT CENTER SHOULD BE ON LOT E. Both the future **trolley** and transit stations should be **located** together on the Congress Street East lot. The Rosecrans lot should continue to be the primary visitor parking lot. The parking impacts of the trolley station and transit center should be **reexamined**. Increased transit may reduce the **percentages** of vehicle trips to Old Town San Diego, but increased growth in the area will require more parking. The transit center should be **carefully** managed to insure its **compatibility** with Old Town San Diego community development goals.
3. ALL STUDIES INVOLVING PUBLIC TRANSIT SHOULD INCLUDE THE CONSIDERATION OF OLD TOWN SAN DIEGO AS A PRIME TOURIST ATTRACTION.

Visitors to The City of San Diego should be able to **travel** on a public transit system between **all** major tourist attractions. **Full** consideration should be given to the growing role this community will play as a major visitor attraction in the years ahead.

4. ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTRA-COMMUNITY CIRCULATION SYSTEM OF SMALL, OPEN-AIR, PASSENGER VEHICLES TO MOVE PEOPLE WITHIN THE ENTIRE AREA ON ESTABLISHED ROUTES AND ON A REGULAR SYSTEM OF SCHEDULES. The use of horse-drawn carriages **should** also be considered to **link** the historical core to **peripheral** parking reservoir area. This circulation system should **also** be designed to move people from the parking areas to the historical center.

CIRCULATION ORIENTATIONAL SIGNS

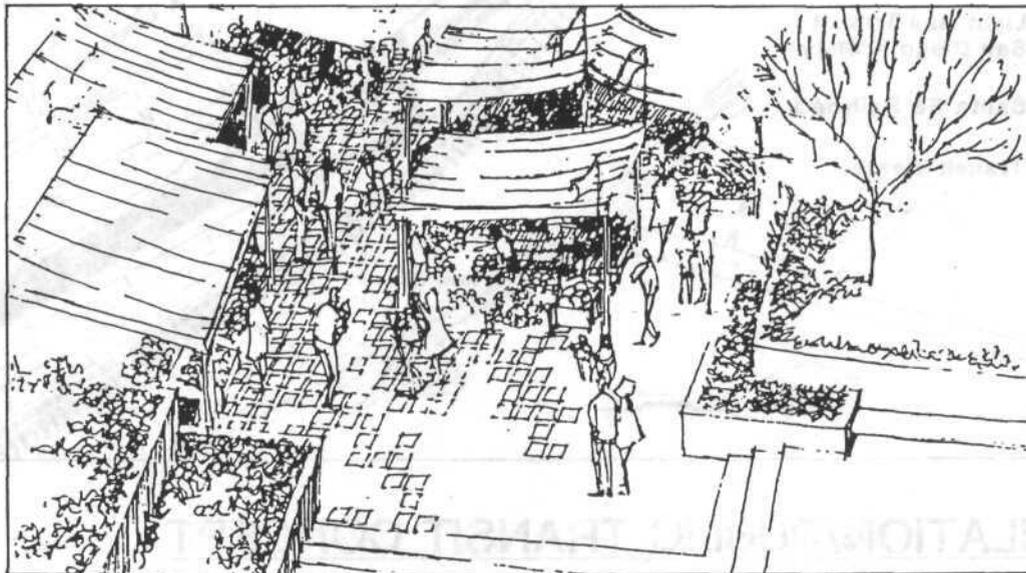


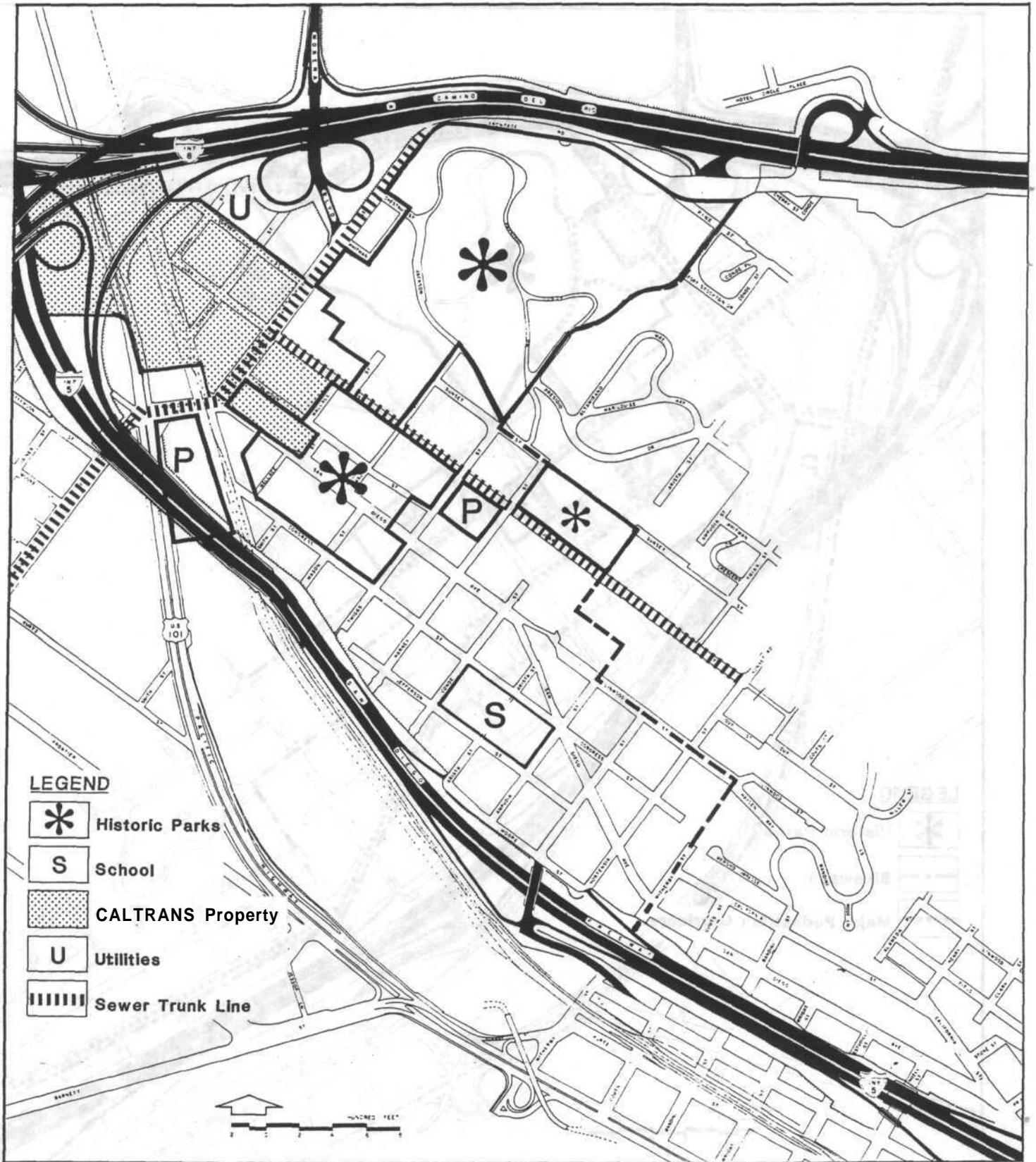
BIKEWAYS:

1. IMPLEMENT A DESIGN FOR BIKEWAY CORRIDORS ALONG TAYLOR STREET AND PACIFIC HIGHWAY. These bikeways would be regional facilities, carrying bikers from the coastline to the inland areas, and connecting with bikeways in Mission Valley. The corridors should be designed as Class I in order to provide the necessary safety given the automobile traffic speeds along these major thru-corridors. Bike racks and storage areas should be designed and considered in the streetscape design.
2. IMPLEMENT. A DESIGN FOR BIKE ROUTES THROUGH THE HISTORICAL CORE AND WITH CONNECTIONS TO ADJACENT COMMUNITIES. Bike routes along San Diego Avenue and Juan Streets, which provide intercommunity linkages should be designed in sympathy with the historical context of Old Town San Diego. Bike racks and storage areas should also be considered in the streetscape design.

PEDESTRIAN WALKS:

1. CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT IN OLD TOWN SAN DIEGO THAT IS FUNDAMENTALLY PEDESTRIAN IN CHARACTER AND SCALE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE LOCAL CITIZEN OR VISITOR. Enhance the pedestrian experience and accessways by qualitative and quantitative improvements designed to radiate from the pedestrian core at the State Park.
2. ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMFORTABLE AND ATTRACTIVELY TEXTURED WALKWAYS, SEPARATED, WHERE POSSIBLE, FROM VEHICULAR ROUTES. All private projects should incorporate pedestrian plazas and streetscape elements designed to enhance the pedestrian access experience into and around the project. These pedestrian spaces should also be interconnected, creating a pedestrian pathway network that is complimentary to the vehicular much in the same manner of small towns.





EXISTING PUBLIC FACILITIES/UTILITIES