

## COMMERCIAL ELEMENT

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

**The Southeastern San Diego community has few community commercial facilities and has few definable commercial centers which could serve as community focal points.** The central focal points of many communities in San Diego are established by their commercial centers. Southeastern San Diego does not enjoy this feature because the strip nature of most of the commercial land use in the community does not lend itself to centralized commercial activity except in limited areas. Currently, there are four such shopping center areas, including the five-acre Otto Square on National Avenue near State Highway 15. Imperial Marketplace, Market Creek Plaza, and Southcrest Park Plaza. Markets, pharmacies and other convenience stores are provided by small neighborhood commercial centers ("corner markets") or strip commercial facilities located throughout the community (Figure 8).

In support of the General Plan, the Village Center at Euclid & Market has been designated as a Pilot Village. The Village Center at Euclid & Market will focus growth into a mixed-use activity center that is pedestrian friendly and linked to the San Diego Trolley regional transit system. In addition to more than 800 residential units, the Pilot Village Project may include approximately 390,000 square feet of neighborhood retail and office uses, light-industrial facilities, a 500-seat amphitheatre on Las Chollas Creek, and recreational facilities.

The General Plan introduces 'Neighborhood Commercial (Residential Permitted)' as a City-wide land use designation. The General Plan definition of Neighborhood Commercial (Residential Permitted) is as follows: *Provides local convenience shopping, civic uses, and services serving an approximate three mile radius. Housing may be allowed only within a mixed-use setting. Residential Density is 0-44 dwelling units per acre.* Within Southeastern San Diego, the Neighborhood Commercial (Residential Permitted) designation only applies within the Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ) of the Village/Mixed Use Element of this Community Plan. Outside of the CPIOZ, only uses allowed by the implementing zone are permitted.

**There are few available vacant commercial sites usable for community commercial development within the community.** Although the community has approximately 171 acres that are zoned for commercial use, few sites are large enough for community commercial development. Most of the available parcels are 10,000 square feet or less in size and would require consolidation with neighboring parcels to accommodate commercial development (Figure 9).

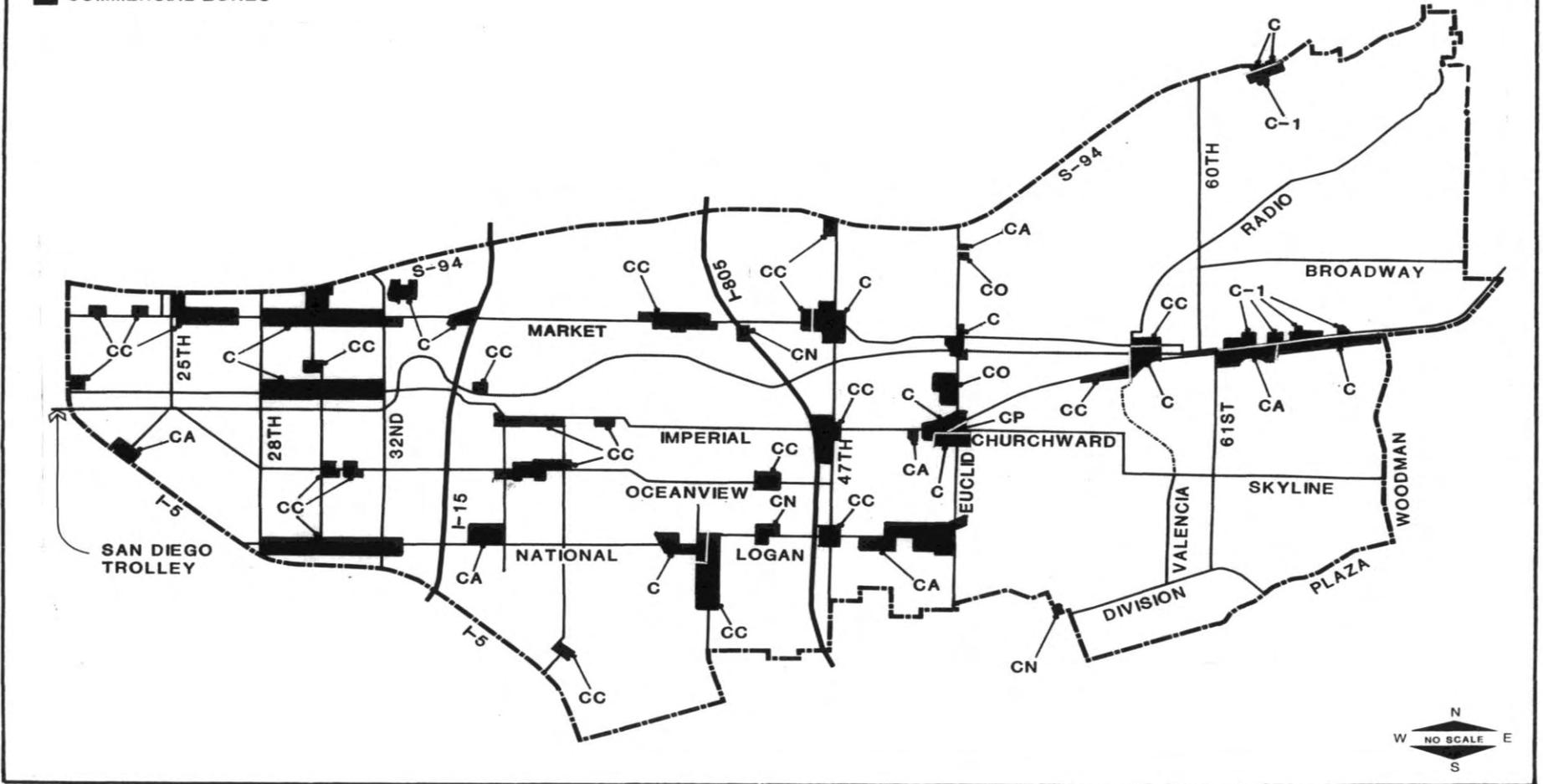
**In the western portion of the community, commercial development is characterized by discontinuous strips of small storefronts interspersed with residential units and vacant parcels.** These commercial properties are difficult to patronize for motorists in that they front on busy streets and for the most part do not have off-street parking. In addition, the kinds of goods and services available and the distances between establishments make them less efficient to the shopper than a consolidated commercial center, and are too spread out for pedestrians.

**Access and land use patterns in the community conspire to thwart commercial functions.**

Street patterns which were severed by the construction of freeways and cemeteries in the community make access to a number of neighborhood commercial areas difficult. Because shopping within the community often entails an indirect automobile trip, it is often perceived by residents to be easier to get on the freeway and leave the community. This, coupled with the fact that many goods are simply not available in the community, means that significant neighborhood shopping dollars escape the community to be spent elsewhere.

# EXISTING COMMERCIAL ZONING

■ COMMERCIAL ZONES



SOUTHEAST SAN DIEGO

CITY OF SAN DIEGO · PLANNING DEPARTMENT

FIGURE 8



## Commercial Objectives

1. Provide attractive quality community and neighborhood commercial facilities that offer a variety of goods and services to meet community needs.
2. Rehabilitate existing commercial centers and improve both vehicular and pedestrian access.
3. Preserve, restore and rehabilitate commercial buildings of historical significance or interest.
4. Enhance the perception of safety through the use of crime-deterring materials and design, including the thoughtful use of landscaping, screening materials, lighting and building siting, and materials and parking locations.
5. Improve vehicular and pedestrian access to commercial sites, and ensure adequate and aesthetically pleasing parking facilities.
6. Limit the establishment of new retail liquor sales outlets in neighborhoods experiencing a high level of crime.
7. Provide opportunities for a mix of community-specific commercial uses.

## Commercial Recommendations

1. Community Commercial Shopping Facilities. In order to provide community-shopping facilities, four community commercial centers have been designated. These include:
  - a. Southcrest East (along 43<sup>rd</sup> Street south of National Avenue)
  - b. Otto Square (National Avenue between 35<sup>th</sup> Street and 36<sup>th</sup> Street)
  - c. Gateway Center East (northeast corner State Highway 15 at Market Street)
  - d. Market Creek Plaza (between Euclid Avenue and 47<sup>th</sup> Street, off Market Street and behind trolley station.)

The four community commercial centers total 74 acres. All are located within redevelopment project areas to facilitate the assembly of property. The Redevelopment Agency should assist in the assemblage of these parcels and should assist in establishing these centers as community focal points. Design controls should also be established for these centers.

Land uses or development other than for community commercial purposes should not be permitted at these locations.

2. Lot Consolidation. The regulations of the planned district or similar zoning regulations should encourage the consolidation of parcels for commercial development to create more viable businesses to serve the community.
3. Vehicular Access. Transportation system improvements are proposed in the transportation element of this plan to alleviate breaks in the existing transportation and street system. The implementation of these improvements will improve vehicular circulation and access to commercial centers.
4. Pedestrian Access. In areas where pedestrian activity is desired, development regulations should require that buildings be located along or near the street property line and parking should not be permitted between the building and the street. Amenities and project features such as street trees and building transparencies should be required. For projects oriented to vehicular access, pedestrian access should nonetheless be provided through clearly identified and pleasant walkways.
5. Design Review and Development Regulations. Several commercial areas within the community need special design treatments. These areas are specifically identified in the Neighborhood Element of this plan.
  - a. Design review and regulations should address how the commercial project fits into the existing or expected pattern of development, including building scale, height and setbacks.
  - b. Commercial signage should be regulated to enhance the overall area.
  - c. The provision and maintenance of adequate landscaping should be assured through legislation. In larger areas, such as redevelopment project areas, a landscaping theme should be formulated and applied to all parcels within the project.
  - d. Site design review should seek to minimize the amount of grading to produce building pads, maintain solar access to the site and neighboring sites, coordinate the proposed development with surrounding development, create buffers between dissimilar uses where appropriate, and improve general neighborhood aesthetics.
  - e. Slopes and open space within or abutting public or private development should be retained and integrated into project design. Development on steep slopes in Hillside Review Areas proposed by this plan should minimize the amount of grading and to the extent possible retain open space in a natural state. Similarly, natural drainages should be improved using natural channels rather than concrete structures.
  - f. Landscaping and screening should be required for auto-related uses.
  - g. New commercial development should be of the highest quality with attention to aesthetics, usability and safety:

- 1) Building setbacks should be required which maintain a consistent street pattern.
  - 2) Landscaping should be required between buildings and the parking areas.
  - 3) Parking areas should not dominate the streetscape but should be located and screened so as to promote easy access.
  - 4) Curb cuts should be minimized to increase opportunities for landscaping and on-street parking. Curb cuts should be prohibited and alley access encouraged to the extent feasible on the commercial portions of Commercial Avenue, Market Street, Imperial Avenue and 25<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - 5) Uniform or coordinated signage, lighting and screening treatments are desirable within a complex and along strip commercial districts.
6. Historical Conservation. In historic preservation areas, any structures of significant historic value should be preserved through private rehabilitation efforts, aided wherever possible by available public funding sources. City funds, including Housing Commission bonding or funding and Redevelopment Agency funding, should not be used to support the demolition or "ground-up" redevelopment of historic sites. Wherever possible and aesthetically desirable, adaptive reuse of existing structures should be explored along 25<sup>th</sup> Street. As discussed in the Neighborhood Element of this plan, an historic district should be established for Sherman Heights.
7. Recommended Rezonings. Changes in zoning regulations are recommended to encourage commercial development in site-specific areas for the purposes of providing employment opportunities and economic revitalization. These areas are discussed more fully in the Neighborhood Element of this plan.
8. Commercial Revitalization.
- a. The creation of Business Improvement Districts is encouraged in the Mountain View neighborhood along Oceanview Boulevard and Imperial Avenue, in the Grant Hill commercial areas, in the Lincoln Park commercial areas, and in the commercial corridor east of Gateway Center East Industrial Park in the Mount Hope neighborhood and National Avenue west of State Highway 15. Low interest rehabilitation loans should be targeted to those areas where business owners have organized and are willing to commit funds to improvements. Recommended improvements or programs include:
    - 1) Street, curb, sidewalk and transit improvements.
    - 2) Planting programs along the right-of-way and on private property (see the Urban Design Element).
    - 3) Design assistance to individual owners.
    - 4) Low interest loans or rebate programs for exterior rehabilitation and landscaping.
    - 5) Coordinated signage, lighting, and colors.
  - b. Publicly sponsored redevelopment, with an emphasis on rehabilitating existing commercial buildings, is provided for in the Preliminary Dells Imperial Redevelopment

Plan and the Central Imperial Redevelopment Plan. The community plan recommends that priority be given to redevelopment efforts along Imperial Avenue from 25<sup>th</sup> Street to State Highway 15.

- c. Logan-Euclid Professional Business Association. This area should be given priority for landscaping improvements and other assistance because of the owner's willingness to invest. This area could serve as a model for a joint public/private revitalization project. The traffic island here could be landscaped.
9. Public Parking. Public parking lots are needed in areas of higher density or more intense commercial activities, such as Imperial Avenue between 25<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, and 63<sup>rd</sup> and 66<sup>th</sup> Streets. The funding of these parking areas and their maintenance could be obtained through Business Improvement Districts or Special Assessment Districts. These parking areas should be highly visible from the public streets to increase safety and should be well-lighted and landscaped. In addition, the Euclid Trolley Station should be expanded to the west if this additional area is determined to be needed by MTDB.
10. Alcohol Sales - Conditional Use Permit. The Alcohol Beverage Conditional Use Permit pilot program for new liquor licenses or a change in license should be continued. The number of commercial establishments selling alcoholic beverages in Southeastern San Diego should be reduced in neighborhoods experiencing high level of crime.
11. Multiple-Use. Areas designated for multiple use (commercial/residential) should be established along major streets near residential areas as illustrated in the Neighborhood Element of this plan (p. 157-315), and in redevelopment areas. Areas designated for multiple-use may be developed commercially or residentially. Careful site planning will be required to provide a buffer area between residential and commercial development. This blending of uses will act as a buffer between the commercial and residential zones, can aid in the preservation and re-use of historically significant structures and allows for development flexibility to create new opportunities for redevelopment. All other commercially designated areas should not be permitted to develop residentially to assure that needed commercial services are provided.
12. Urban Plazas and Landscaped Settings. Create urban plazas in park-like setting along Chollas Creek from Imperial Avenue near Interstate 805 on the north to National Avenue on the south which consist of landscaping, enhanced paving, and a location for public art.
13. Commercial Street Revitalization. The southern portion of Commercial Street, between 21<sup>st</sup> and Harrison Avenue is designated Community Commercial (see Figure 7). The Community Commercial Designation provides for mixed use areas with retail, service, civic, office and residential uses for the community along transit corridors. The residential density associated with the Community Commercial Designation is 30-74 dwelling units per acre.