

## Urban Design Framework

The Urban Design Framework provides the overarching concept for the focal points of urban design recommendations that are specific to individual geographies within the Uptown Community. The Urban Design Framework (Figure 4.8) focuses on several key areas, which are addressed individually within each of Uptown’s neighborhoods in the discussion that follows. Recommendations were formulated from the 1988 Urban Design Element for Uptown, revised based on community input and the Uptown Community Urban Design Goals, and updated based on current best practices. The topics included in the Urban Design Framework, which were defined in the Urban Form Analysis, include:

- Neighborhood Centers and Nodes
- View Corridors
- Landmarks and Gateways
- Major Connector Streets
- Bicycle Facilities
- Canyons and Parks

Policies and recommendations to address each of these topics are included in the discussions on Streets and the Public Realm (4.3) and Development Form (4.4). Recommendations specific to individual neighborhoods are described below.

### MISSION HILLS

Critical issues to the Mission Hills neighborhood include improving the appearance of existing commercial structures throughout Mission Hills and mitigating visual conflicts found within the commercial areas and ensuring smooth traffic flow along Washington Street while reducing auto/pedestrian conflicts. The preservation of views along the western slopes and increasing the number of public is also a priority.

#### POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.2.1 Implement the following design recommendations to respond to Mission Hills’ unique context.

4.2.1.1 Expand mixed-use and commercial development at the Neighborhood Center/



*Washington Street can accommodate moderate mixed-use development.*



*Mission Hills is known for dramatic canyons and views.*

Node at Washington and Goldfinch Streets. Establish a height limit of 50’ for this area, to be established in the Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ).

4.2.1.2 Establish a 35’ maximum building height along adjoining multi-family zoned areas and a 30-foot maximum building height for adjoining single-family zoned area as part of the CPIOZ.

4.2.1.3 Continue to implement streetscape improvements along Washington Street to improve the visual quality and pedestrian realm.

4.2.1.4 Increase the landscaping in the public right-of-way along Reynard Way and Curlew Street to add interest and minimize erosion.

# URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

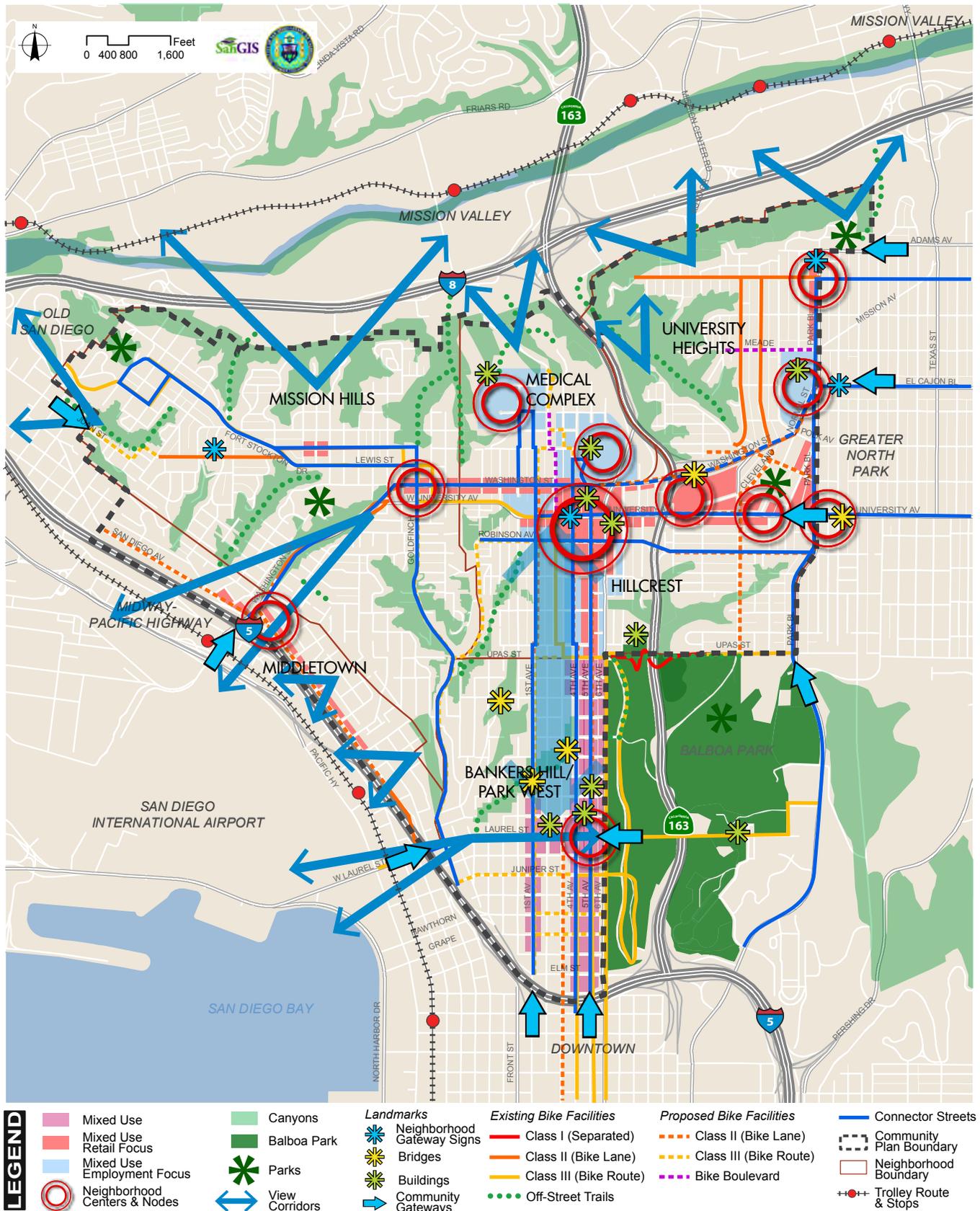


FIGURE 4.7: URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

# URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

- 4.2.1.5 Establish pocket parks on available public land along canyons and public rights-of-way to expand and connect the current open space system, especially along Reynard Way and Curlew Street.
- 4.2.1.6 Explore the feasibility of a pedestrian bridge over Washington Street west of Goldfinch Street.
- 4.2.1.7 Explore methods to eliminate billboards, such as to require the removal of existing billboards when a property redevelops or in conjunction with any discretionary review of the property.
- 4.2.1.8 Consider potential enhancements to Juan Street to signify it as a community gateway from Old Town into Mission Hills such as neighborhood identity signs, distinctive architecture, and public right-of-way improvements.

## HILLCREST

Critical issues in the Hillcrest Community include strengthening the commercial vitality of the Hillcrest business district, while preserving single-family neighborhoods as well as commercial facades. In addition, preserving and enhancing the pedestrian scale and human orientation within the neighborhood is crucial, which includes maintaining the network of alleys as service areas. Providing parking that is both adequate and unobtrusive is also a major issue in Hillcrest.

### POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.2.2 Implement the following design recommendations to respond to Hillcrest's unique context.

- 4.2.2.1 Permit high intensity pedestrian-oriented commercial and mixed-use development in the Hillcrest Neighborhood Center/Node surrounding University and Fifth Avenues. Establish an upper limit ministerial threshold of 50' in the Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ) for all commercially-



Hillcrest is among the most vibrant and eclectic neighborhoods in Uptown.



Active commercial business are encouraged on the ground floor level in the Hillcrest Core.

zoned properties in the Hillcrest Core based on the following stipulations:

- 51 to 65-foot maximum building height limit allowed under discretionary review
  - 66 to 100-foot maximum building height limit allowed under discretionary review involving design review, shade studies, and inclusion of a public amenity
- 4.2.2.2 Within the Hillcrest Core, projects of over two stories should include a residential component.
  - 4.2.2.3 Projects over three stories should include a stepback of the streetwall to reflect the historical scale of development. (See Development Form).

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- 4.2.2.4 To encourage the rehabilitation, expansion and redevelopment of existing commercial structures, additional off-street parking should only be required for additional floor area.
- 4.2.2.5 Enhance pedestrian access between the Hillcrest Core and the medical complex area to the north.
- 4.2.2.6 Encourage “active” commercial business on the ground floor level in the Hillcrest Core, especially those that generate pedestrian-oriented activity into the evening.
- 4.2.2.7 Reduce curb cuts by prohibiting the development of “drive-through” commercial facilities in the Hillcrest Core.
- 4.2.2.8 Continue to implement plans to convert portions of Normal Street to a linear mini-park.
- 4.2.2.9 Continue to explore options for the redevelopment of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) site.
- 4.2.2.10 Continue to develop streetscape plans to improve the visual quality and pedestrian realm along University Avenue between Park Boulevard and the Hillcrest Core. Choose street trees that complement and reinforce existing street tree themes.
- 4.2.2.11 Parking for retail uses should be provided at a ratio to support transit-oriented development. The CPIOZ revision should address this.
- 4.2.5.12 New development in the vicinity of the North Park/Hillcrest gateway on University Avenue and Park Boulevard should incorporate neighborhood identity signs, distinctive architecture, public art, right-of-way improvements that signify entry into the neighborhood.
- 4.2.5.13 Maintain and enhance the “Egyptian Thematic District” along the commercial areas along Park Boulevard between Robinson Avenue and University Avenue which features a number of Egyptian Revival and Art Deco themed buildings and serves as a joint gateway corridor into



*Medical Complex is dominated by the medical center and medical-related uses, surrounded by primarily multi-family housing developments.*

the Uptown and North Park communities from Balboa Park.

## MEDICAL COMPLEX

Critical issues to Medical Complex include providing a balance between expansion of the medical services and the surrounding neighborhood, including preservation of residential scale and parking impacts. Improving the appearance and pedestrian access of Washington Street in Medical Complex is also a top priority, including the development of a coordinated signage system. Pedestrian-oriented development is desired, as well as the maintenance of contiguous open space development and pedestrian and bicycle access to Mission Valley.

### POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **4.2.3 Implement the following design recommendations to respond to Medical Complex’s unique context.**

- 4.2.3.1 Ensure that the Future Land Use Plan for Uptown ensures a balance between the needs of the hospitals, support facilities and employees, and established neighborhoods.
- 4.2.3.2 Establish an understanding with the medical centers that expansion should not occur beyond

## 4.2. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

# NEIGHBORHOOD GUIDELINES

institutional and office designations of the land use map. Zoning for hospital related uses south of Arbor Drive should be granted on an individual basis as needed. Any expansion or redevelopment of hospital facilities should incorporate intensified usage of the existing designated hospital sites rather than expand into new areas.

- 4.2.3.3 Prohibit development in designated open space. Restrict any further vehicle access through the open space areas to Mission Valley.
- 4.2.3.4 Improve the appearance of existing hospital facilities through the use of landscaping, screening and architectural design. In particular, Mercy Hospital as viewed from the Sixth Avenue extension and the appearance of the Arbor Street parking structure, Bachman Canyon parking structure, and hillside areas within the UCSD Medical Center facility and the Sommerset Hillcrest project adjacent to Mercy Hospital need improvement.
- 4.2.3.5 Initiate a façade improvement plan and streetscape plan for Washington Street in the Medical Complex area to improve appearance and pedestrian amenities.
- 4.2.3.6 Identify area between Medical Complex and Hillcrest neighborhoods as priorities for improved pedestrian crossings through the use of crosswalks, signalization and pavement variations.
- 4.2.3.7 A Parking Management Plan should be initiated jointly by the Medical Centers which may include measures for parking reduction such as:
  - Encouraging employees to use car pools by providing reduced parking rates for those who car pool
  - Increase employee use of transit by providing reduced-cost transit passes.
  - Expand the on-street permit parking area if the parking impact spreads beyond its existing boundaries.

### MIDDLETOWN

Critical issues to Middletown include preservation of views on the western slopes, the preservation of natural open space along steep slopes, and the quality of the Neighborhood Center/ Node of India Street. Concerns for India Street include reduction of auto/pedestrian conflicts, the appearance of the businesses and right-of-way along the commercial area, and enhancement of the pedestrian realm. Parking impacts from India Street into the residential areas are also a concern.

#### POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.2.4 Implement the following design recommendations to respond to Middletown's unique context.

- 4.2.4.1 Initiate a façade improvement plan and streetscape plan for India Street and San Diego Avenue in the Middletown Neighborhood Center/ Node to improve appearance and pedestrian amenities. This would include under grounding of utilities on India Street where feasible.
- 4.2.4.2 Consider private efforts to provide additional off-street parking in the area around the Washington Street and India Street intersection.
- 4.2.4.3 Incorporate a 30' height limit for both commercial and residential uses on the westerly



Middletown includes the Washington and India Street commercial node.

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slopes of Middletown to preserve the natural slopes, maximize the design quality and retain public views.

- 4.2.4.4 Establish a 30' height limit for commercial zoned properties along India Street in the Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ).
- 4.2.1.5 Identify the community gateway at Washington Street into Middletown from Midway. New development in the vicinity of this gateway should incorporate neighborhood identification, distinctive architecture, public art, right-of-way improvements that signify entry into the neighborhood.

## BANKERS HILL/ PARK WEST

Critical issues to Bankers Hill/ Park West include balancing traffic flow and pedestrian safety along Fourth and Fifth Avenues and Park Boulevard and identifying areas for increased height and density in the neighborhood while maintaining views to Balboa Park. Mitigating noise and airport-related impacts continue to be challenges as well.

### POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.2.5 Implement the following design recommendations to respond to Bankers Hill/Park West's unique context.

- 4.2.5.1 Encourage development in designated areas on the Avenues to link Uptown and Downtown along enhanced activity corridors, especially south of Fir Street.
- 4.2.5.2 Enhance the pedestrian orientation of the Neighborhood Center/ Node surrounding Fifth Avenue and Laurel Street. Upgrade commercial development on First Avenue south of Juniper St.
- 4.2.5.3 Very-high density residential use with appropriate setbacks, facade articulation, and pedestrian-scale amenities should be permitted in the area along on 4th, 5th, and 6th



*Locations in Bankers Hill/ Park West allow for increased height, with appropriate facade articulation and pedestrian orientation.*

Avenues between Laurel and the Hillcrest Core. Establish an upper limit ministerial threshold of 65' in the Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ).

- 4.2.5.4 Require facade articulation through the use of balconies, terraces and/or upper-story setbacks on high-rise buildings west side of Sixth Avenue to minimize view obstructions to Balboa Park. Establish a 10-foot setback from lot line for landscaping along the west side of Sixth Avenue with Palm trees planted adjacent to the sidewalks, resulting in a 30-foot setback from the curb.
- 4.2.5.5 Maintain and enhance views of Balboa Park from Fifth Avenue through the articulation of building facades, variations in setbacks and utilization of varied roof forms.
- 4.2.5.6 Establish a 15-foot setback from lot line for landscaping along both sides of Quince,

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Laurel, Juniper, Grape, Hawthorne and Elm which will assist in creating visual entranceways to Balboa Park.

- 4.2.5.7 Through the use of CPIOZ, allow a floor area ratio bonus south of approximately Fir Street to provide a transition to the higher intensity permitted in Downtown.
- 4.2.5.8 Maintain the historic scale and character on First Avenue south of Maple Canyon.
- 4.2.5.9 Concentrate office uses on Fourth Avenue north of Maple Street, Third Avenue south of Laurel Street, and First Avenue in the vicinity of Laurel Street. Encourage re-use of historically-oriented residential structures for office use.
- 4.2.5.10 Limit the intensity of development in areas subject to airport noise and where structures may obstruct flight operations.
- 4.2.5.11 Identify the community gateways in Bankers Hill/ Park West that include Laurel Street from Midway, Laurel Street from Balboa Park, and 1st and 5th Avenues from Downtown. New development in the vicinity of these gateways should incorporate neighborhood identification, distinctive architecture, public art, right-of-way improvements that signify entry into the neighborhood.

### UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

Critical issues to University Heights include preserving and enhancing single-family neighborhoods along canyon rims and ensuring that new development is unobtrusive and of the same character and scale of adjacent development. Buffering commercial activity along Washington Street, El Cajon, and Park Boulevard from residential areas is also important. The improvement of the pedestrian realm and commercial development on Park Boulevard is a priority.



*A lower-scale of development is desired for University Heights' residential areas to respect historic scale and character.*

### POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.2.6 Implement the following design recommendations to respond to University Heights' unique context

- 4.2.6.1 Implement programs for the Park Boulevard Neighborhood Center/ Node to include a façade improvement plan and streetscape plan to improve appearance and pedestrian amenities.
- 4.2.6.2 To conform to the historic development pattern, a lower scale of multi-family residential development should be maintained for parcels at the end of blocks, facing the east west oriented streets.
- 4.2.6.3 Continue plans to address redevelopment and reuse of the Normal School property at Park Boulevard and Normal Street. A mixed-use development including medium-high density development could be considered, including open space amenities.
- 4.2.6.4 Identify El Cajon and Park Boulevard intersection as priority for improved pedestrian crossings through the use of crosswalks, signalization and pavement variations.
- 4.2.6.5 Ensure that commercial development in the Mission Valley community plan area does not extend southerly along State Route 163 into the University Heights area.