DOWNTOWN VILLAGE SPECIFIC PLAN

CITY OF LA MESA

Adopted By the La Mesa City Council

April 17, 1990

Zucker Systems
With
Gerald Gast, Urban Design
Nateison, Levander, Whitney, Inc., Economics
Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Transportation
Paul McKim, Architecture
Land Design of San Diego, Landscape Architecture

Sorrento Mesa Design Center
9909 Huennekens St., Suite 120
San Diego, CA 92121-2928
(619) 457-0277

Staff For Study

ZUCKER SYSTEMS

Paul C. Zucker, President
Jan Lindsey, Typing & Research
Amy Crews, Drafting & Research
Lyn Meckstroth, Graphics
Lynn Fleschutz, Graphic Design & Research
Lucio Cervantes, Computer Operations & Research
Sheila Perlingos, Computer Operations & Research

GERALD GAST

Gerald Gast, AIA, Principal
James Guthrie, AIA, Associate

NATELSON LEVANDER WHITNEY, INC.

Dale Levander
Ronald Wade, Sr. Associate
Rossi Riebman, Analyst

PAUL McKIM & ASSOCIATES

Paul McKim
Ken Backes, Project Architect

PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF QUADE & DOUGLAS, INC.

James G. Douglas, Sr. Transportation Planner
Elaine Longobardi, Transportation Planner

LAND DESIGN OF SAN DIEGO

Karen Hanna, Landscape Architect

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Specific Plan Citizen Advisory Committee

Gordon L. Austin
Judy Blyther
Conjetta M. Butt
William R. Dick
Robert Duff
Robert L. Gibson
Davis Sutton Jeffries
Patricia Jessop
Pat Kettler
Merrit Kriedeman
Hardy G. Kuykendall
Doug Neill
Catherine R. Porter
Donna Regan
Carlton Sell
Raymond Splinter, M.D.
Dennis Tuttle
Patricia J. Tyson
Shirley Whaley

City of La Mesa Primary Staff For This Study

Dave Witt, Assistant Planning Director
Janice Weinrick, Redevelopment Director

Other City Staff of Assistance

Dennis Hackett, Finance Director
Jim O'Grady, Assistant City Manager
Karen Stauffer, City Manager's Office
Cecil Leonardo, Public Works Director
Dennis Ross, City Engineer (Former)
Howard Long, Traffic Engineer
Skip Fenn, Parks and Recreation
Colleen Finnegan, Cultural Arts
Jim Orsborn, Fire Chief
Bob Soto, Police Chief
Frank Pedersen, Parks Department
Eric Johnson, Parks Department
Caren Greene, Parking Enforcement Officer

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Intent of the Specific Plan

The Downtown Village Specific Plan is designed to provide a clear image and direction for the future of Downtown La Mesa over the next twenty years. A variety of plans and projects have been completed or proposed for Downtown, but there has been no comprehensive agreement on direction, no clear image of the future, nor a plan to carry out such a direction. Single purpose improvements could not proceed with the comfort that they were part of an overall approach to Downtown improvement.

The adoption of a Specific Plan can provide a Vision for the Downtown Village future. A synergistic approach, where the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts. A system where each part of the plan can add to and reinforce another. A Plan that City residents can use to coalesce around a group of ideas to create a Downtown Village matching their highest aspirations.

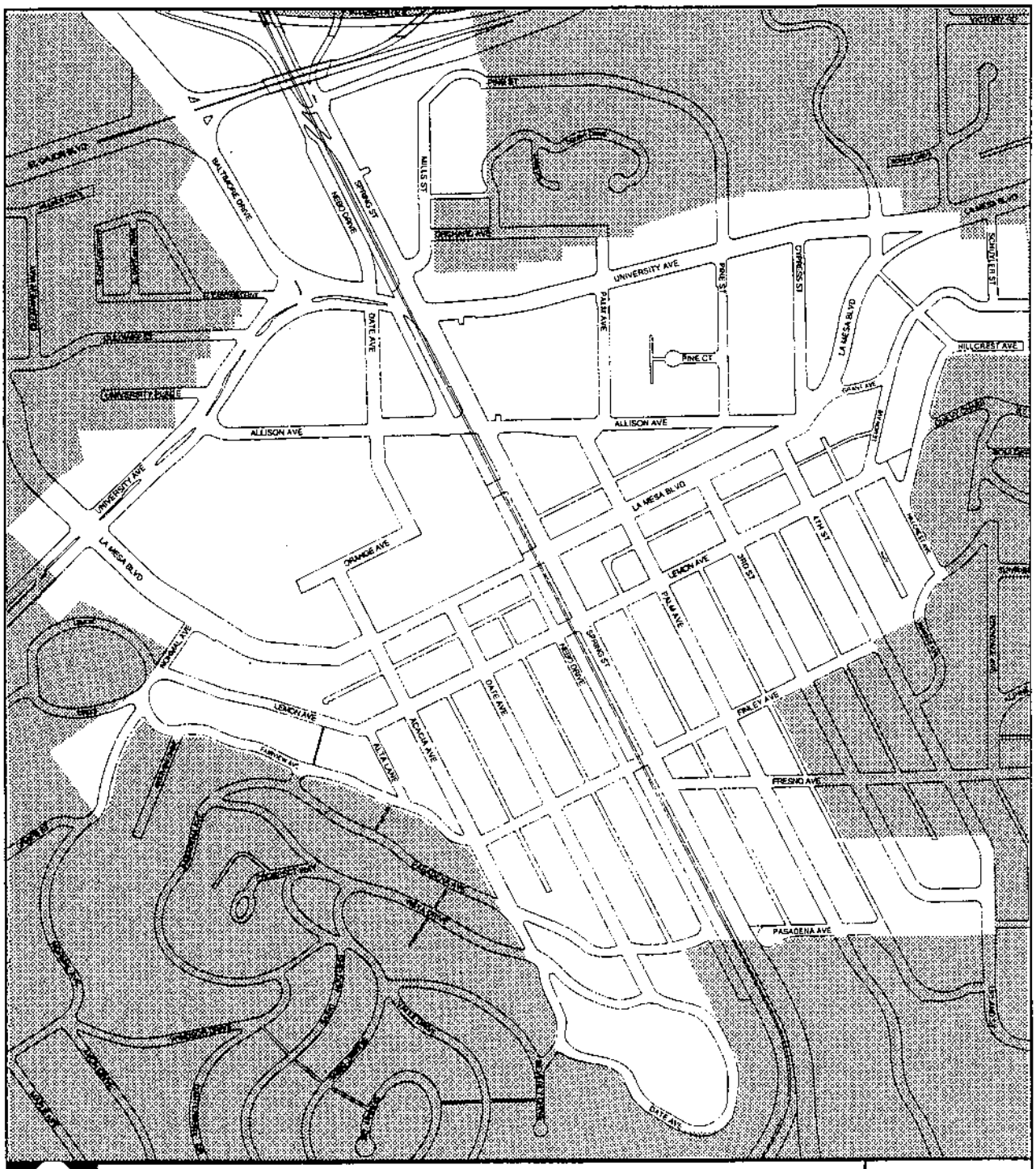
This Specific Plan serves as a planning tool for carrying out the objectives of the La Mesa General Plan. The Specific Plan bridges the gap between the general policy oriented language of the General Plan and more detailed criteria guiding the development of specific sites or public improvements. It also adds additional criteria for carrying out projects under the City Zoning Ordinance. It is authorized by Article 8 of the California Government Code (Section 65450 et. seq.) and this document meets all of the requirements as specified in this Article.

The Specific Plan is a flexible planning document which features precise parcel specific design guidelines in some areas with less specificity in others. The Plan promotes public/private coordination of development efforts.

Specific Plan Project Area

The project area as shown on Figure 1 consists of approximately 161 acres of land plus street rights-of-way. This area extends from the Route 8 Freeway south along Spring Street to Pasadena Avenue. It is roughly bounded on the east by the University Avenue - La Mesa Boulevard intersection and on the west by the University Avenue - La Mesa Boulevard intersection.

The project area encompasses the downtown commercial activities, Civic Center and surrounding residential neighborhoods. The area is also divided into 13 sub-areas, which were used for analysis and specific design guidelines as discussed in the Design Guidelines.



Specific Plan Area

Figure 2

0 500 1000

The Planning Process

The Specific Plan was prepared during a year long process which began with interviews of 30 of La Mesa community leaders and executives. These interviews provided a breadth of opinion, ideas and issues about Downtown that formed the focus of subsequent studies.

Nationally renowned urban designer, Allan B. Jacobs, was asked to look at Downtown La Mesa, and present his findings at a well-attended public meeting. As part of this meeting citizens were asked to complete a questionnaire giving their thoughts and goals for Downtown. Many did, and more than 50 questionnaires were completed and returned for analysis.

The City Council appointed a 19 person Citizen Advisory Committee that met throughout the study to give thoughtful analysis and direction to the study effort. Extensive background studies were completed by the consulting team with a detailed analysis of land use, circulation and parking, urban design and economic and market conditions. These studies were published in an extensive report available in the Planning Department, Background Studies - Technical Memorandum 1. A second extensive report, highlighting issues and plan alternatives, is also available, Conceptual Plan Alternatives - Technical Memorandum 2.

All of this work formed the basis for the Downtown Village Specific Plan, a Plan designed to match the aspirations of La Mesa residents and provide a long term guide for Downtown's future.

The Village

Summary

Downtown is envisioned as **La Mesa's Symbolic Center** - the shopping, cultural, governmental and housing center of the entire community - the place that can provide citizens with a sense of belonging, roots, history and pride. In discussing how to best capture this image, the Downtown Citizen Advisory Committee decided on the words, Downtown Village.

The Vision for this symbolic center focuses on 5 major themes or ideas and a number of sub themes.

1. COMPACT PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL AREA WITH RESIDENTIAL EMPHASIS

The Plan proposes to **keep the commercial area concentrated** and easily walkable. The **emphasis is on the pedestrian** rather than the automobile. This compactness will not only add to the visual interest of the area, but also makes economic sense by creating a more inviting shopping atmosphere.

The compactness is reinforced through an **emphasis on residential development** by preservation of the surrounding residential neighborhoods, requiring residential development in the Residential/Business Zones, restricting any future 3rd floor development within the Village to residential uses and creating a historic area in the Date Avenue neighborhood. The residential emphasis also reinforces the commercial activities by providing close by customers and night time street activity.

2. CIVIC CENTER - URBAN FOREST

The Civic Center complex is proposed to **remain on its present site** to reinforce the symbolic center of La Mesa. The existing Civic Center buildings are not distinguishable; however, many remain highly functional. To preserve these resources, but provide an appropriate "civic" image, **a dramatic urban forest landscape** is proposed with a thick density of canopy trees over the entire site including parking lots. The visual focus will shift to the entire landscaped campus setting, rather than on individual buildings.

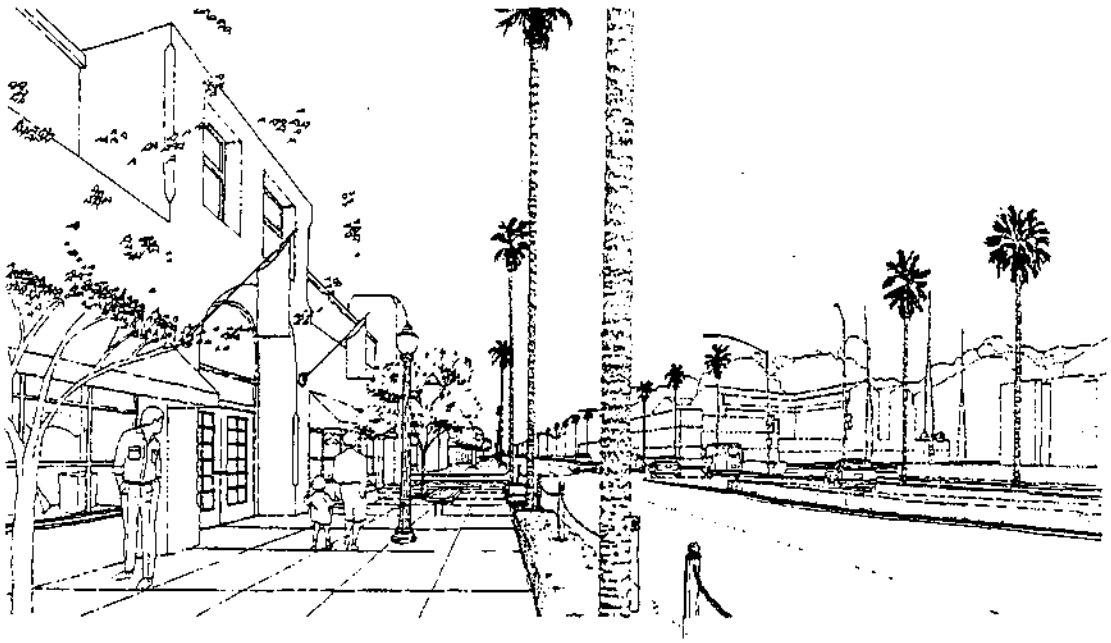
New uses as needed such as City Hall space, library, or a theatre, **should be added to the east side of the existing City Hall** in a visually prominent relation to **Spring** Street. A park-like open space, with pedestrian paths and informal seating areas, should be developed between the Civic Center buildings and the railroad tracks. The construction of a **parking garage** will allow the existing parking areas to be transformed into pedestrian courtyards with covered walkways as circulation elements between buildings. The courtyards would provide settings for gardens, fountains and sculpture, and could be used for public events and ceremonies.

The return of **diagonal parking and street trees to Allison Avenue** will mirror the theme already established on La Mesa Boulevard in the Village, visually tie the Civic Center to the rest of the Village, and return a pedestrian scale to this entire area.

3. CIVIC BOULEVARD - SPRING STREET

Spring Street should be developed as a **unifying civic boulevard** that provides a strong entry sequence into Downtown and integrates several points of focus - Civic Center, The Village, La Mesa Village Plaza, Trolley stop and Depot Museum.

Spring Street would be lined with a **dramatic row of Mexican Fan Palms** on both sides of the street; include special paving at the Freeway entrance and at the intersection with La Mesa Boulevard; include a special design element at La Mesa Boulevard; landscaped medians where possible; dense canopy trees at the freeway entrance; building set backs that narrow to focus on La Mesa Boulevard; pedestrian-scaled street lights; new Civic Center buildings on one side of the street and redeveloped commercial buildings across from the Civic Center.

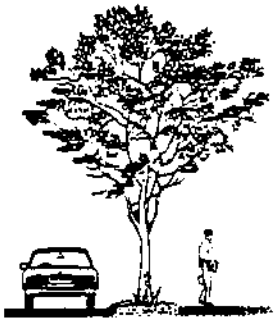


4. PEDESTRIAN/TRANSIT/PARKING STREETS (PTP)

La Mesa Boulevard and Allison Avenue would be turned into a new street category - Pedestrian/Transit/Parking Streets. These streets **would tie the Downtown Village together**. They would include the major bus routes and access all of the proposed parking lots and garages. They would be heavily landscaped with trees. Allison Avenue west of Spring Street would be returned to diagonal parking, and diagonal parking would be added to the south side of La Mesa Boulevard from Acacia Street to University Avenue. Pedestrian-scaled lighting would be included on both streets.

5. PEDESTRIAN EMPHASIS - TREES

The entire Downtown Village would emphasize the pedestrian. Design guidelines will emphasize pedestrian-scaled buildings, streets and parking lots. Pedestrian-scaled street lights would be used throughout. **A thousand trees** would be added to the streets, located at the curb between the travel way and sidewalks to create pleasant pedestrian paths. Commercial activity will remain compact and highly walkable. Small scale residential developments would be favored over larger apartment buildings.



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Not This

The Pedestrian scale is also emphasized through adding a landscaped median to Baltimore Drive and narrowing University Avenue east of Spring Street. Bikelanes would be added to both streets.

6. Sub Themes

a. Design Diversity

No one architectural theme is proposed; rather, human-scaled diversity is the theme. The buildings on La Mesa Boulevard west of Spring Street would be restored to expand the Village image.

b. Heritage Preservation

Heritage structures would be protected and provide design ideas for new development. The Date Avenue neighborhood would be preserved as a **historic district.**

c. Parking Adequacy

The Plan provides many long term options for adding to the area's parking supply with as many as **1000 new parking spaces**.

II. GOALS

PROLOGUE

If American cities are to change into something worth having, there must be a clear image clearly conceived of what that city should be, and this image must be injected into and mature within the processes which actually dictate the form the city will take. If the image exists but does not make contact with the form-determining processes, the city will fail to achieve the humane character we seek for it. **Edmond Bacon, The City Image.**

Overall Goals

1. Downtown Village - Symbolic Center

The image for Downtown La Mesa should be a Downtown Village, the City's symbolic, shopping, cultural, governmental and housing center.

2. Pedestrian Scale - People

The focus for the Downtown Village should be on people - living, working, shopping and recreation. The entire area should be highly walkable from end to end. Pedestrian and bicycle movements should be given equal weight with the automobile. New development should emphasize interesting places enticing people to walk.

3. Image, Beauty, Service

Emphasis for Downtown Village development should be on image, beauty and service for human satisfaction. Although many downtowns emphasize increasing sales tax, La Mesa's Downtown Village will always produce a small part of La Mesa's total sale tax revenue, and its emphasis should be on features that strengthen its function as La Mesa's symbolic center.

Land Use

4. Emphasize Compactness and Diversity

An intimate concentrated blend of diverse prosperous pedestrian-oriented small shops and services, as distinguished from sprawling auto-oriented strip retail or shopping centers, should be encouraged. Small friendly stores with personal service, a variety of eating places, sidewalk cafes, combined with professional offices and governmental services is the desired image.

5. Retain and Encourage Residential Development

Although over time natural economic forces will tend to replace residential development with commercial development, the goal for the Downtown Village is to retain a variety of viable residential neighborhoods in close proximity as well as within the area, and thus provide a balanced community.

Circulation and Parking

6. Provide for Accessibility

Vehicular access and parking to serve the Downtown Village should be convenient and efficient; however, with a clear emphasis on the pedestrian. Traffic should operate at no worse than Level of Service D during the peak hours.

7. Route Through Traffic Around Downtown

Through traffic should be encouraged to use alternative travel routes which by-pass downtown such as Route 125.

8. Create Pedestrian-Scaled Streets

Streets should be designed to emphasize safe and pleasant pedestrian and bicycle movements, views of surrounding hills, and a close relation to abutting landscape. This is in contrast to streets that emphasize wide ribbons of concrete and rapid auto movement.

9. Encourage Transit Use

People coming to the Downtown Village should be encouraged to use travel modes other than the automobile and take advantage of the San Diego Trolley.

10. Increase Parking as Area Grows

The Downtown Village parking supply should be sufficient to accommodate demand for parking as business grows, but should not be provided in a way that will encourage automobile use nor negatively impact pedestrians.

Public parking areas (not restricted to patrons of a particular business or shopping area) should be encouraged. Parking facilities should be available within a reasonably short walk of destination, so that excessive searching for a parking space is not required.

11. Recognize Alleys as Important Resource

Alleys are in keeping with the Downtown Village character, humanize the area, should be retained, and should be named.

Public Facilities

12. Retain City Hall in the Downtown Village

City Hall is a symbol of the community and should be retained at the center of the Village area. It should focus on service rather than be a monument to government.

Design

13. Encourage Diverse Architecture

A varied and diverse architecture should be encouraged without one architectural theme, like a jewel with many facets. Buildings should have a small pedestrian/human scale rather than be institutional or auto oriented. Neglected buildings should be rehabilitated. Commercial buildings in close proximity to residential uses should respect and accommodate the residential values.

14. Honor and Respect History

The historic buildings in the area should be honored, restored and preserved, and downtown's historic role in the community should be emphasized. This provides a link with the past (sense of the past), creates a pleasant ambiance, and adds to the architectural diversity.

15. Pedestrian and Human Scale Housing

Buildings should have a pedestrian/human scale, and entrances and windows should be oriented to the street to emphasize a village, pedestrian atmosphere. While accommodating the automobile is important, the automobile should not dominate the front yard or streetscape. Small scale, fine-grained structures should be favored over large scale condominiums and apartments where feasible.

16. Trees - Trees - Trees

An appropriate design theme for the Downtown Village is one of streets heavily landscaped with street trees. Parking areas should also be heavily landscaped, with cars visually screened to emphasize the pedestrian/landscape/architecture images, i.e. "parking parks".

III. LAND USE

Background

As part of the background studies for the Specific Plan an extensive inventory and review of land and building uses was conducted. Summary acreages and square footages are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Land Use by Acres
No. of Establishments and Building Footage

Uses	Acres of Land	Number of Establishments	Buildings Sq. Footage	%
Auto & Industrial	13.2	16	129,196	11%
Food Services	2.1	21	65,050	5%
Institutions & Gov.	11.5	29	290,638	24%
Offices	13.1	127	271,203	23%
Parking	3.9	-	-	-
Residential	88.3	-	-	-
Retail	5.1	65	157,151	13%
Services(Non-Food)	4.7	40	87,489	7%
Vacancy or under construction	18.9	-	203,084	17%
	160.8 Acres	483	1,201,811	100%

Twenty five per cent of the business properties are owner occupied, 38% owned by other City of La Mesa residents, with the remaining 37% owned by people living outside of La Mesa.

The Plan area is surrounded by a series of single-family R-1 neighborhoods. The Plan area contains 996 units. Of these, 341 units or 34% are in single family use, 162 or 16% in two-family use, and 493 or 49% are in multi-family use. Twenty seven per cent of all units are owner occupied, and 59% of the single-family units are owner occupied.

The project area is a major focal point for La Mesa's historic resources. It contains 142 sites listed in La Mesa's Historical Resource Inventory which is 43% of all sites located in the city.

Two key goals of the plan are to emphasize compactness of the commercial areas and retention of residential development. The Plan study explored a variety of zoning changes as one approach to achieving these goals; however, the Plan recommends

an approach leaving most of the zoning intact and modifying it through design guidelines or other special regulations.

As part of the analysis leading to the Specific Plan, a market and economic study was conducted by Natelson, Levander, Whitney, Inc. This study, included in Technical Memorandum 1, found that ample population exists within the marketing area to support new commercial development, not in direct competition with the regional malls, but rather for regionally oriented specialty retail coupled with local services. Some office expansion is also likely with a focus on local-serving offices rather than regional. Also, housing growth demand should continue within the marketing area. Principal development determinants for all uses will be adequate site assembly, appropriate site pricing, and creating a desirable commercial and residential environment.

Sales tax data was analyzed for the CD Zoned part of the Downtown Village. This area generated $222,955 in sales tax from July '87 to June "88, equating to gross sales of $22,295,500. This same area contained 136,150 sq. feet of occupied space in the categories of retail, food services and auto-related, which yields an average sale of $97 per sq. ft. A sampling of individual stores is even more revealing. Restaurants are averaging about $100 per sq. ft. However, a few are doing very well at $300-$325/sq. ft. range. Many stores are averaging $50/sq. ft. or less. However, a few stores are doing quite well in the $300-$325/sq.ft. range. As the area revitalizes, average sales per square foot can be expected to increase at least by 50% and many stores should be expected to readily double or triple current sales.

Policies

1. Land Use Clusters

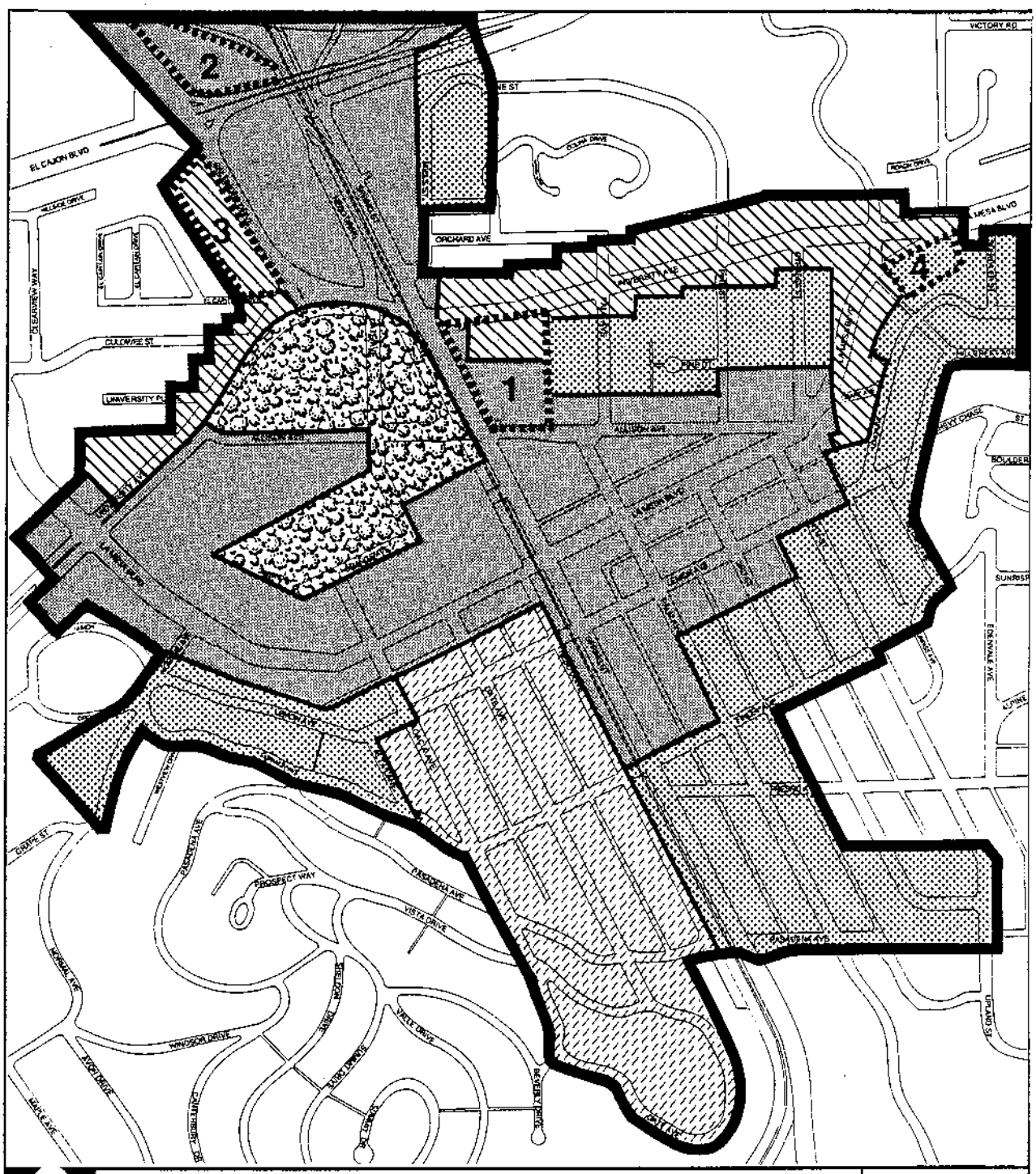
Land use areas are shown in Figure 2 and are clustered in five categories:

Village Commercial
Residential/Office
Residential
Civic Center
Historic

Figure 2 also designates four specific sites which are subject to special policy as designated in Policy 5.

2. Zoning Ordinance Modifications

Land use policy in the Specific Plan is consistent with the General Plan. It is also consistent with the Zoning Ordinance except as modified by the Design Guidelines and as follows (see Figure DG-6 for drawing of the zones):



Land Use Clusters

Figure 2

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Village Commercial

Civic Center

Residential/Office

Residential

Historic

Special Sites

CD Zone

1. Institutions providing services accessible to persons who remain in their automobile shall be prohibited.

2. Residential uses shall not be allowed on the first floor elevation facing the street on La Mesa Boulevard or Spring Street.

C Zone

1. Institutions providing services accessible to persons who remain in their automobile shall be prohibited.

2. Manufacturing uses shall be prohibited except for sale on premises only.

3. Outdoor rental of tools and equipment is prohibited.

CN Zone

1. Institutions providing services accessible to persons who remain in their automobile shall be prohibited.

2. Automobile service stations shall not be allowed.

R-B Zone

1. Institutions providing services accessible to persons who remain in their automobile shall be prohibited.

2. Retail sales shall be prohibited except restaurants may be allowed by Conditional Use Permit when the Board of Adjustment can make the finding that any adverse affect on residential property is mitigated through project design.

3. Although the Zoning Ordinance describes this zone as "in transition from residential to business development", the intent of the Specific Plan is to emphasize and encourage residential uses in the RB zones, while still allowing some office uses. The goal for properties in the RB zone is that, where feasible, roughly half of the uses on the parcel should be residential. This provision should be implemented as part of the Design Review process.

Parking

1. **Off-Site Parking Fund**

   All properties within 300 feet of a public parking lot or planned public parking lot should be allowed to contribute to a parking fund rather than provide on-site parking. As an incentive, fees for such contributions should be set at 75% of current estimated value. A discretionary review and approval should be

required to implement this procedure. The resulting shared group parking provides for better parking space utilization, improved parking location identity, discourages driving from one store to another, increases pedestrian activity, and allows for improved concentrated pedestrian oriented business development.

2. **Residential Parking Standards**

As an encouragement for residential development in the Downtown Village and because of close proximity to the MTDB Trolley Station, the Zoning Ordinance parking standards for residential development may be reduced by 25%.

3. **Theatre Parking**

Although a movie theatre or other theatres are considered desirable uses for the Downtown Village, land values and parking requirements may discourage such uses. As part of a conditional Use Permit for theatres, and to encourage such uses in the Downtown Village, the City may waive part of the parking requirement when it is determined that street parking, public parking or other joint use parking will be sufficient to accommodate the use.

Density

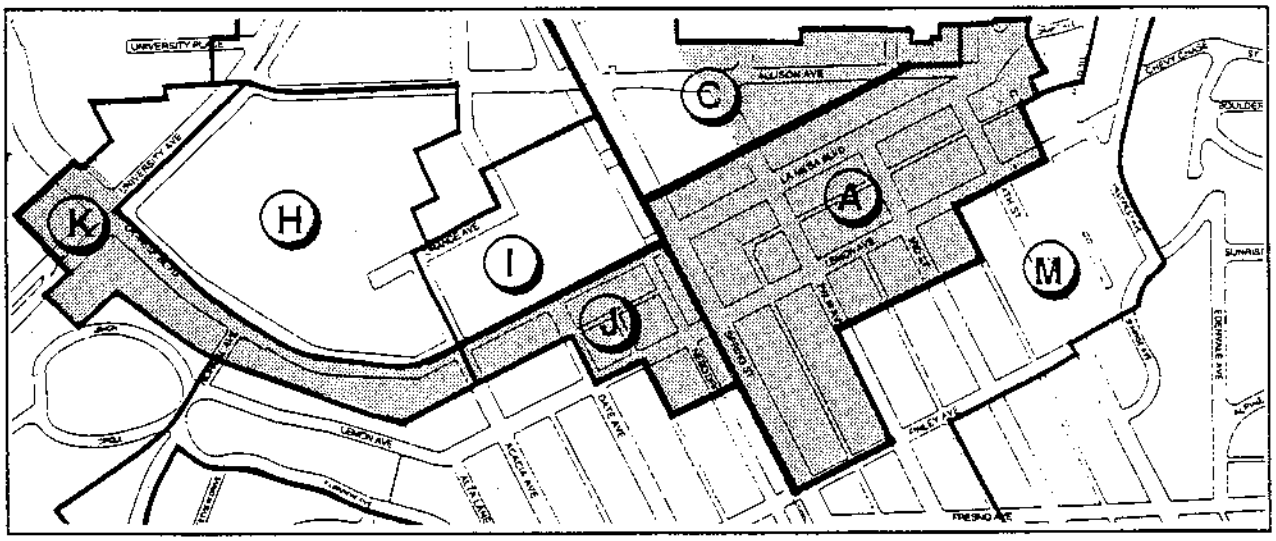
1895 sq. ft. of lot area per residential unit is authorized for Site 4 see Policy 5.

Height

Height restrictions shall be as shown in the City Zoning Ordinance except that:

a - All street facing facades should be limited to 2 stories. Third stories or above shall be set back at least 10 ft from the street facing facade in order to reduce the apparent building height.

b - The areas shaded on the map below shall be limited to two stories except that a third story may be permitted if the third story is exclusively for residential use.



3. Civic Center

The Civic Center should remain on its current site as the symbolic central focus of La Mesa and the Downtown Village, and should expand east across Date Avenue and Nebo Drive to Spring Street. The City Hall, Library and Police Station should remain within the Civic Center complex. Other appropriate long term uses include an art gallery and theatre or similar civic uses. Other compatible uses include the Fire Department, Water District, School District, and Chamber of Commerce, although these uses may also be appropriately located at another site.

La Mesa's Civic Center should retain its informal, friendly character as a focus of service rather than a monument to government. The Civic Center concept is to retain most of the present buildings and add a parking garage. This is to be accompanied by new uses as needed at the east end, in a visually prominent relationship to Spring Street. The entire site is to be developed as an "urban forest".

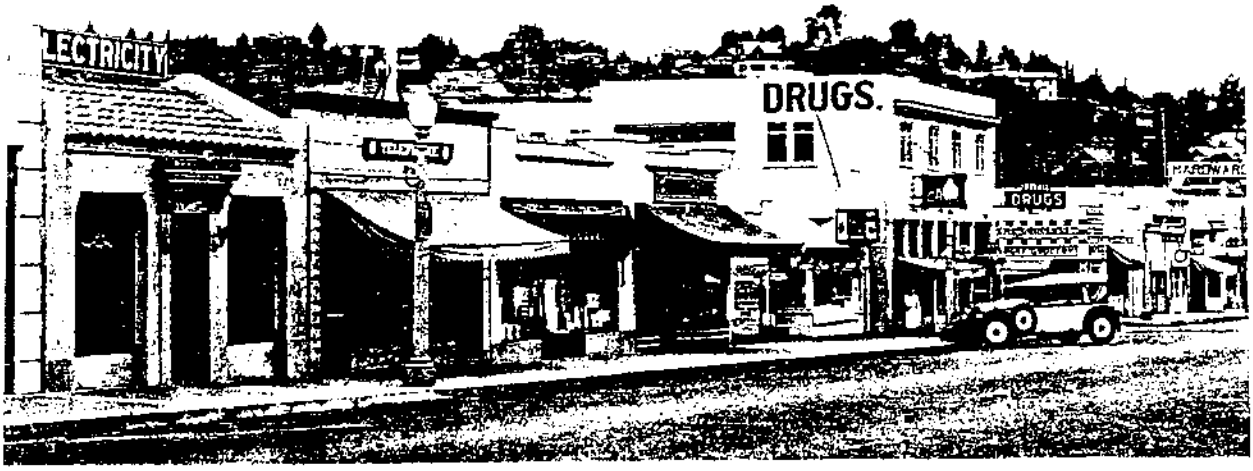
The existing Civic Center buildings are not distinguishable; however, many remain highly functional. To preserve these resources, but provide an appropriate "civic" image, a dramatic urban forest landscape is proposed with a thick density of canopy trees over the entire site including parking lots. The visual focus will shift to the entire landscaped campus setting rather than on individual buildings.

Additional details on the proposed Civic Center complex are shown in the Design Guidelines, Sub-Area F.

The Post Office should be considered an interim use with the wholesale functions to be re-located outside the Downtown Village. A retail post office use should be retained within the Downtown Village on a site with appropriate parking and traffic control facilities. For example, the southwest corner of Date and Allison would be appropriate.

4. Cultural Resources

Development of any site located within the Downtown Village that is listed in La Mesa's Historic Resources Inventory shall be subject to design review.



5. Specific Development Sites

Four specific development sites are shown on Figure 2 and are subject to the following specific site by site policy.

Site 1: East Side of Spring Street

The existing lumber yard site and surrounding uses represents a special opportunity to develop 4.73 acres at a highly-visible location in the heart of the Downtown Village. Development could take place through private land assembly or public redevelopment. The entire site should be designed at one time. In response to an acceptable proposal, considerations should be given to re-zoning the entire parcel to the "CD Zone" classification. (The area is currently zoned C, CD and RB). Development should be in strict accordance with design guidelines in Chapter V for sub-areas C and E, as well as the following guidelines.

Envisioned is a mixed-use development of ground floor retail and upper floor offices and residential, with residential uses concentrated on the east side (away from Spring). Key design issues for development should be:

- The Spring Street edge - it would be preferable to place buildings fronting Spring Street, with a 10 foot setback, to be used as a paved pedestrian area and place parking at an internal location out-of-view from Spring Street.

- Access should be from University and Allison Avenues - no driveways opening directly to Spring.

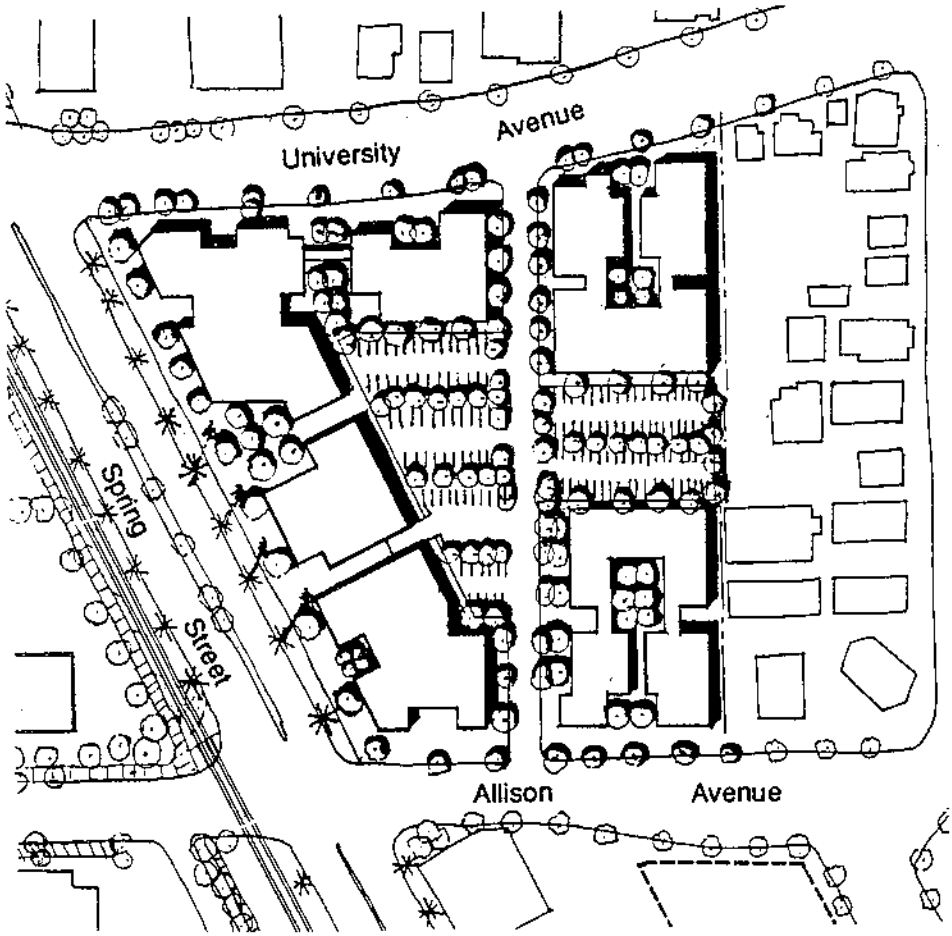
- The relationship to the Civic Center across Spring Street is important. The building heights and profiles of the two projects should be similar or complementary, producing a sense of unity between the two as one moves through on Spring Street.

- The size of the development has potential to produce large buildings. It will be important for building masses to be divided into smaller parts to keep the

project at a scale similar to neighboring buildings and the Downtown Village atmosphere.

- The historic building at 8200 Allison Avenue could be moved to another site or incorporated as a special feature on this site.

- Palm trees should be planted on the curb side on the Spring Street frontage. Landscaping for Allison Avenue and University Avenue should follow the specifications for those streets.



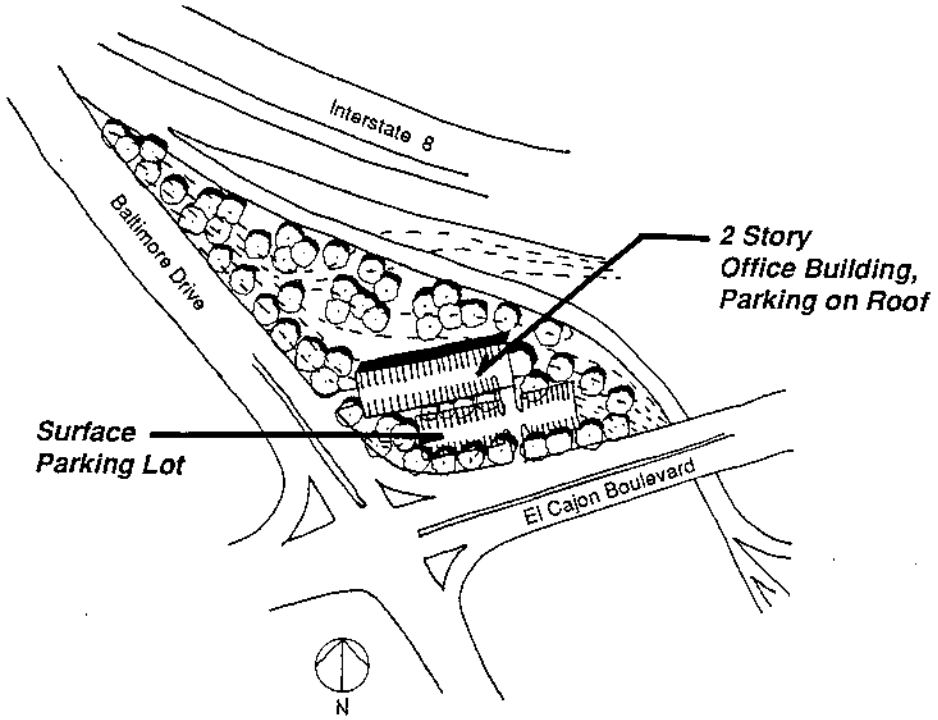
Concept Drawing

Site 2: N.E. Corner of El Cajon Boulevard and Baltimore Drive

Site 2 is a 2.5 acre undeveloped parcel owned by the City. It should be retained as a landscaped entrance to the City for as long as feasible. If developed, the City should retain the underlying ownership or control of the use of the property to adequately limit development of the site in a manner which is consistent with the design objective of the Specific Plan.

Although Zoned "C", the property should be restricted to office uses under strict design guidelines. Envisioned is a 20,000 - 25,000 sq. ft. general purpose office building. The building would be 2 stories with parking on the roof with access off Baltimore Drive. The building would be set back from Baltimore Drive 25 - 30 feet and be heavily landscaped with the landscape theme established by Baltimore Drive to the north, i.e. pines, eucalyptus, etc. The roof elevation would be at or slightly below the grade of Baltimore Drive. Views to the north from the Baltimore Drive - El Cajon Boulevard intersection would remain unobstructed, and the building and parking areas would be virtually unseen from this location. Although the building could be seen from the Route 8 Freeway off-ramp to Spring Street, it should be set back 50 to 150 ft. from this ramp, should be heavily landscaped, and because of the direction of the car movements, would not generally be noticed. A second surface parking area could be located between the building and El Cajon Boulevard. This parking area should be set back 25 to 30 ft. from the curb and heavily landscaped. The elevation of the parking surface should be 5 ft. below El Cajon Boulevard so as to retain the natural open space feeling of this important intersection.

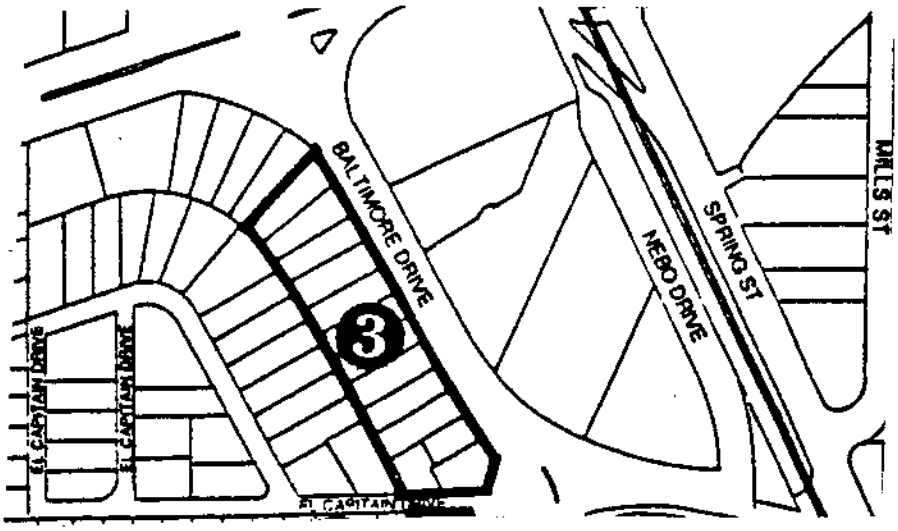
Access to the building would be right turns only on Baltimore Drive, with no crossing of the median. While this is not the most desirable access, the market should exist either today or in the future for this type of building, attracting tenants with limited public access needs.



Concept Drawing

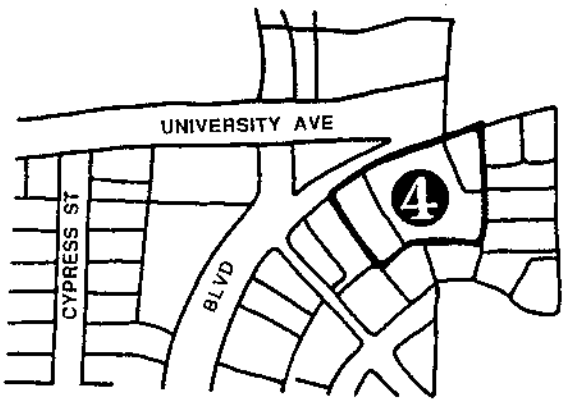
Site 3: West Side of Baltimore Drive

This area consisting of 15 single family houses on 98,265 sq. ft. of land, is of special concern because it contains many small lots (3760 to 7980 sq. ft.), and each lot includes a driveway onto one of the heaviest traffic streets in the Downtown Village. Conversion of properties to higher density or office uses on a lot by lot basis should be discouraged. For multi-lot integrated development with joint access to Baltimore Drive, a mixed-use garden office/residential development is encouraged. Envisioned is 20-30,000 sq. ft. of office space and 20 to 30 apartments. A cobblestone wall located on site is listed as a Historic Resource and should be retained.



Site 4: La Mesa Boulevard

This important site of 34,600 sq. ft. sits at the entrance to Downtown from the east. Although the site has been zoned commercial, it is located on a difficult busy corner for automobile access and is therefore proposed for residential development. Residential at this location will also help to break up the strip commercial flavor of University Avenue and further enhance the La Mesa Boulevard residential character. To encourage residential development of this site, density may be allowed at 1,895 sq. ft. of lot area per dwelling unit without having to meet the normal bonus requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.



6. **La Mesa Boulevard** (Between Acacia Avenue and Nebo Drive)

La Mesa Boulevard store facades on these two blocks should be preserved and rehabilitated to preserve the Village scale. The City should not pursue clearance and rebuilding; however, some of these buildings could be replaced in a similar pattern and in some cases be expanded to two stories.

Illustrative Design - Nebo Drive to Date Avenue.
(See Design Guidelines, Figure DG-3 for enlargement of this drawing)

IV. CIRCULATION & PARKING

Background

As part of the background studies for the Specific Plan, future (year 2010) average daily traffic and peak hour traffic was projected for the Downtown Village area as shown in Figure 3. Under this projection, the existing streets can accommodate future traffic without adding any travel lanes. Morning peak hour travel will remain at a high level of service with some increased congestion in the afternoon peak hour. However, all intersections operate at peak hour level of service D or above (See Appendix A for level of service descriptions). The highest level of congestion is anticipated on La Mesa Boulevard west of Spring Street. However, congestion at this location can be viewed as a normal part of the function of this street which is proposed as a "pedestrian/transit/parking street."

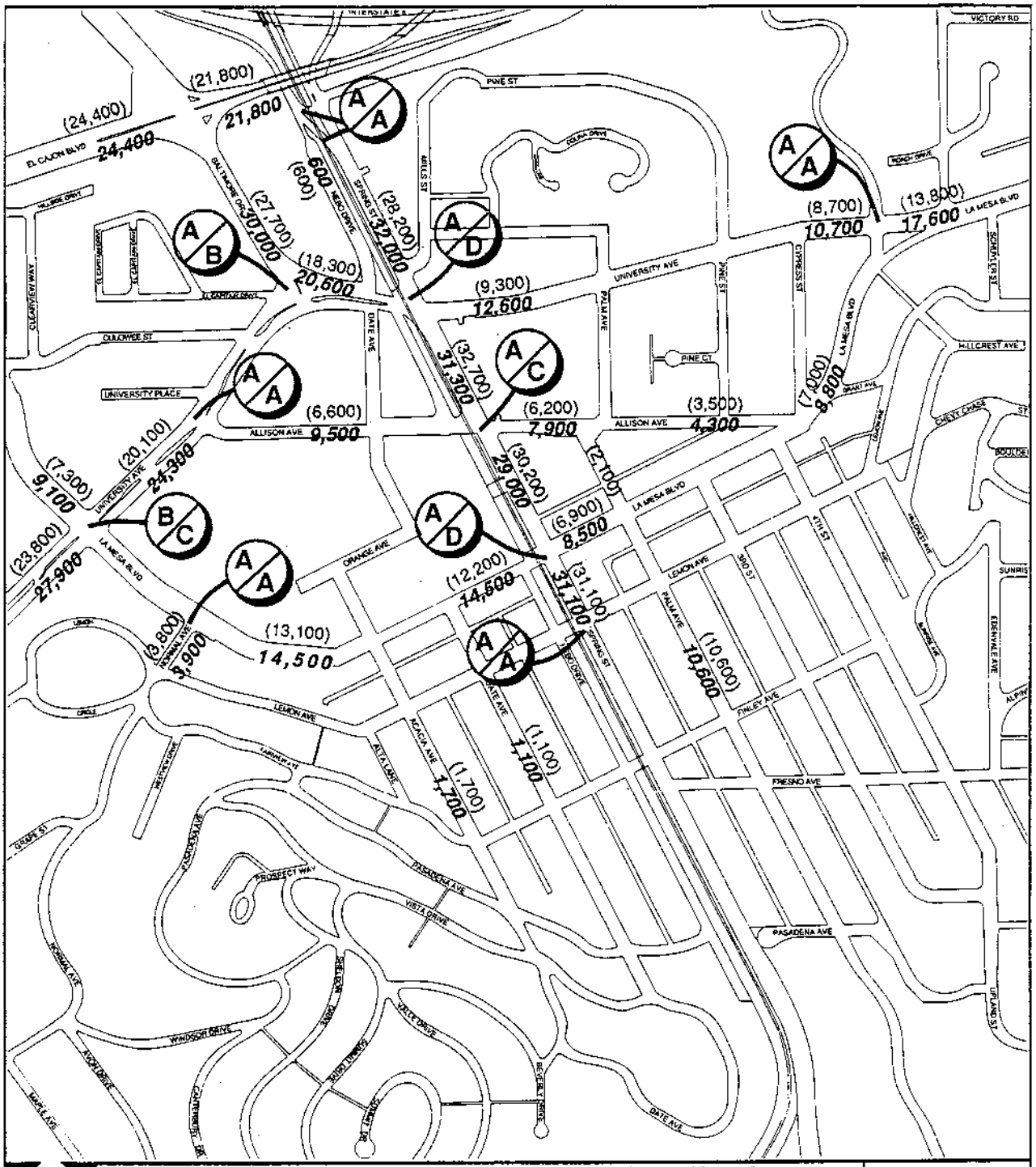
The Plan proposes to keep the same number of travel lanes on all streets as exist today. Streets, however, will be heavily landscaped with medians where possible. Large canopy trees will normally be placed at the curb-side, rather than at the back of the sidewalk. This has the effect of visually narrowing the street since trees are closer together, and creates a friendlier pedestrian atmosphere, since trees create a buffer between the pedestrian and moving traffic. A number of other minor street changes are also proposed.

Although the existing parking supply in the Downtown Village is more than adequate to serve the existing uses, provision is made so that the long-term supply is sufficient to support projected long-term development. It is anticipated that major new developments would provide sufficient off-street parking to support their own uses, but parking will need to be added to accommodate a projected increase in activity from existing development. Parking demand was projected using a low demand of one space per 400 square feet of commercial activity and a high demand of one space per 300 square feet of activity. This resulted in a long term shortage of between 350 to 1100 spaces. The proposed parking additions could accommodate 900 to 1000 new spaces.

Policies

7. Street Classification

The street classification system is shown in Figure 4 and consists of a Civic Boulevard (Spring Street), Prime Arterials (Baltimore Drive, El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue), and Pedestrian/Transit/Parking streets (Allison Avenue



Future Average Daily Traffic & Peak Hour Conditions

Figure 6

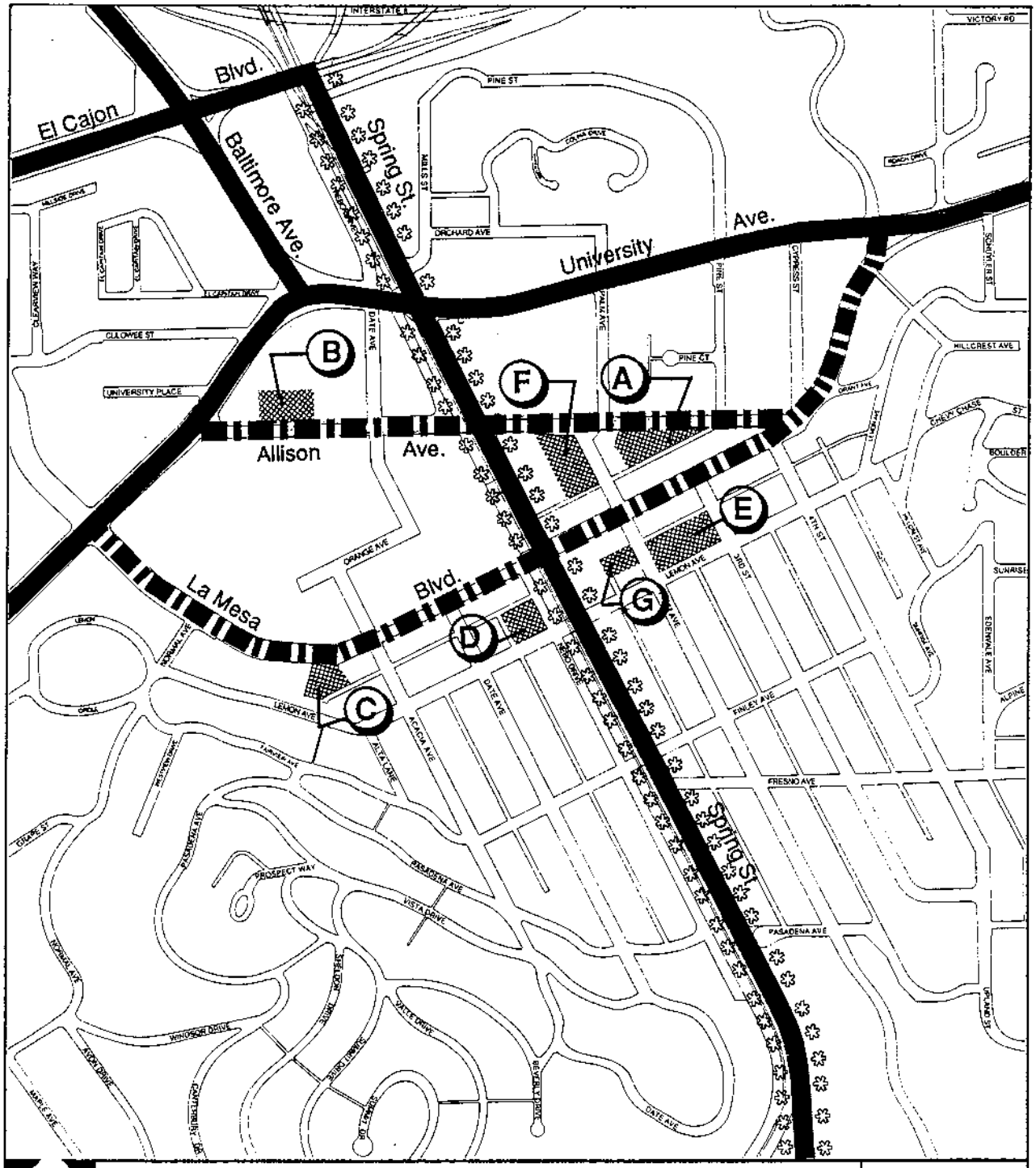
0 500 1000

(0,000) Existing Average Daily Traffic

0,000 Future Average Daily Traffic

Future AM Peak Hour Level of Service

Future PM Peak Hour Level of Service



Street Classification System & Parking Lots

Figure 10

0 500 1000

Civic Boulevard (Prime Arterial)

Prime Arterial

Pedestrian/Transit/ Parking Street (PTP)

Public Parking Lots

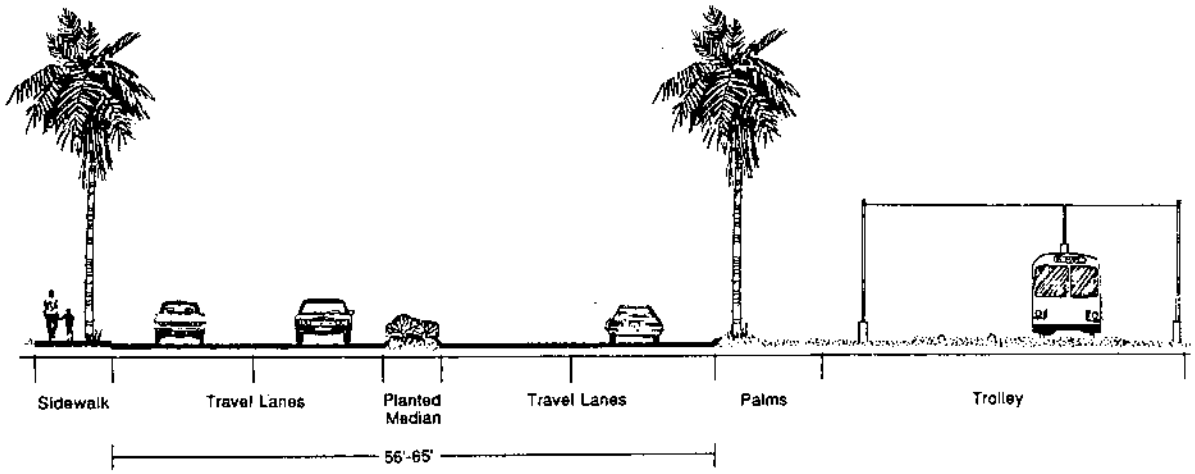
and La Mesa Boulevard). The Civic Boulevard and Prime Arterials category meet the Prime Arterial category of the General Plan, except for University Avenue which is proposed for 3 lanes. The Prime Arterial category requires 4 lanes. The Pedestrian/Transit/Parking streets meet the Class 4 Collector category of the General Plan.

8. Civic Boulevard (Spring Street)

Spring Street should be developed as a unifying Civic Boulevard that provides a strong entry sequence into Downtown and integrates several points of focus - Civic Center, The Village, La Mesa Village Plaza, Trolley stop and Depot Museum.

It should consist of four travel lanes, no parking, a divided median for landscaping where possible, safety islands and turn pockets, a strong rhythmic row of Mexican Fan Palm trees on both sides of the street at the curb line, with sidewalks and landscape behind where feasible.

Although Spring Street is classified as a Prime Arterial due to functional needs both within the Downtown Village and the City of La Mesa, the street shall serve an important dual role as the Civic Boulevard which is intended to unify the Downtown Village and create an important visual street image. Details of the suggested design are shown in the Design Guidelines, Sub area E.



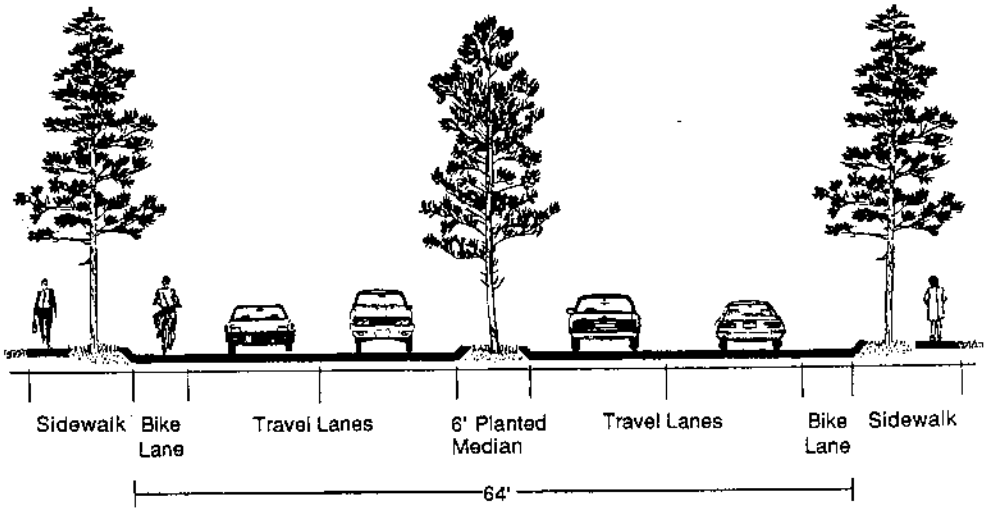
9. Prime Arterials

University Avenue, Baltimore Drive, El Cajon Boulevard are designated as Prime Arterials and are intended to carry traffic that bypasses the core of the Downtown Village and connect the Downtown Village to La Mesa north of the Freeway. Individual configurations will vary for each street as follows:

Baltimore Drive

Baltimore Drive is an important gateway to the Downtown Village. In order to better serve this function both visually and functionally, it should include a divided landscape median at least 6 feet in width, parking restricted to accommodate four travel lanes and bike lanes, and have trees planted at the curb line with sidewalks behind in order to visually narrow the street.

In order to visually and symbolically tie this part of Baltimore Drive and Downtown to the residential areas north of the Freeway, the landscape selection shall continue the theme already established on Baltimore Drive north of Fletcher Parkway. See Design Guidelines for specific tree recommendations.



El Cajon Boulevard

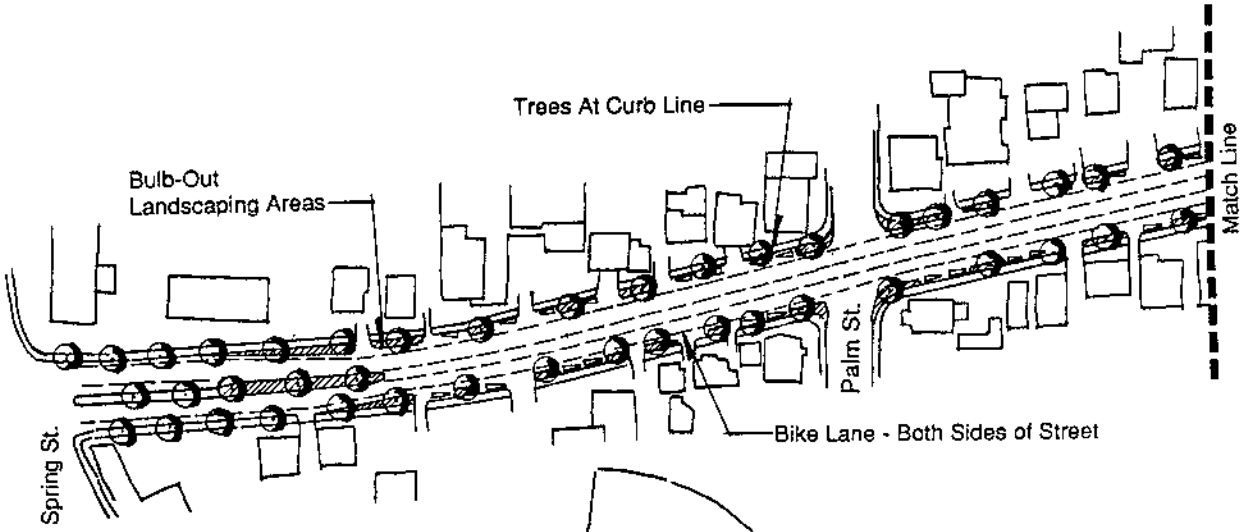
As per City standards

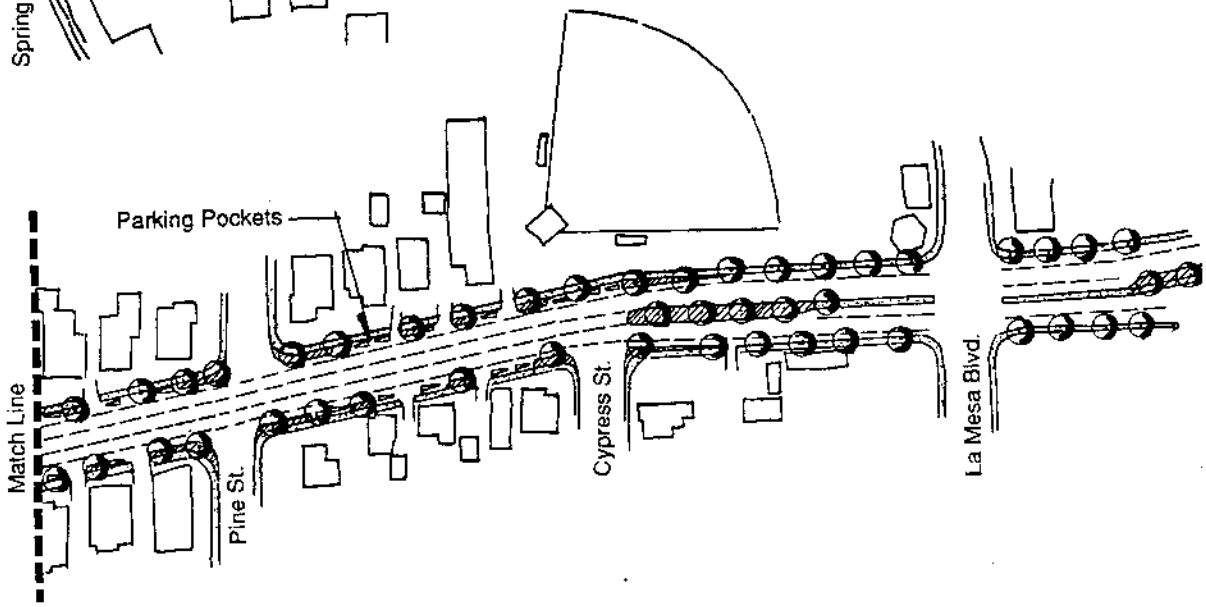
University Avenue East of Spring Street

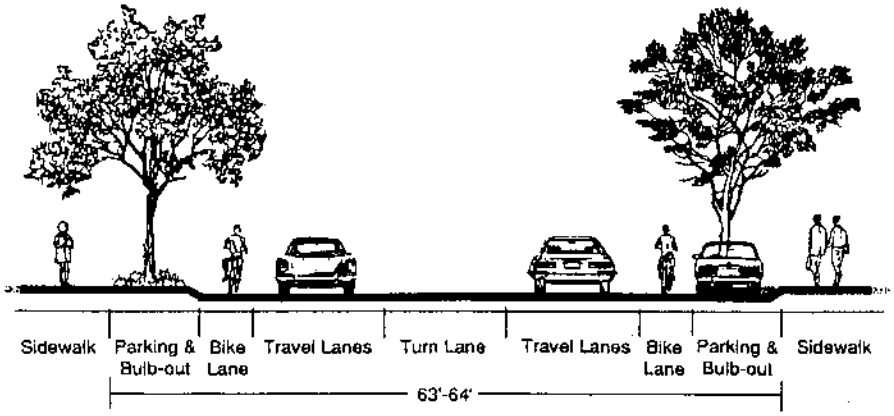
Should include two travel lanes, a central turn lane, two Bike Lanes and parallel parking on both sides. At intersecting streets, curbs should be extended to the edge of the Bike Lanes, and large canopy trees shall be located at the curb line in these extended areas. Curb lines should also be periodically extended to the travel way between parking areas (bulb-outs) as shown in the illustrations. Because of the numerous driveways which can be used for parking maneuvering, the bulb-outs can be added and still retain much of the parallel parking. Large canopy trees should be located at the curb line in these bulb-out areas. Median islands shall be lengthened where feasible, and planted with trees. At Spring Street, University Avenue west

bound should allow for three lanes; a left turn, through, and shared through/right turn. Also, two eastbound through lanes should be provided after the intersections before tapering down to one lane.

Where redevelopment of abutting properties allows, curb side parking should be removed in favor of creating landscaped mediums or narrowing the street.

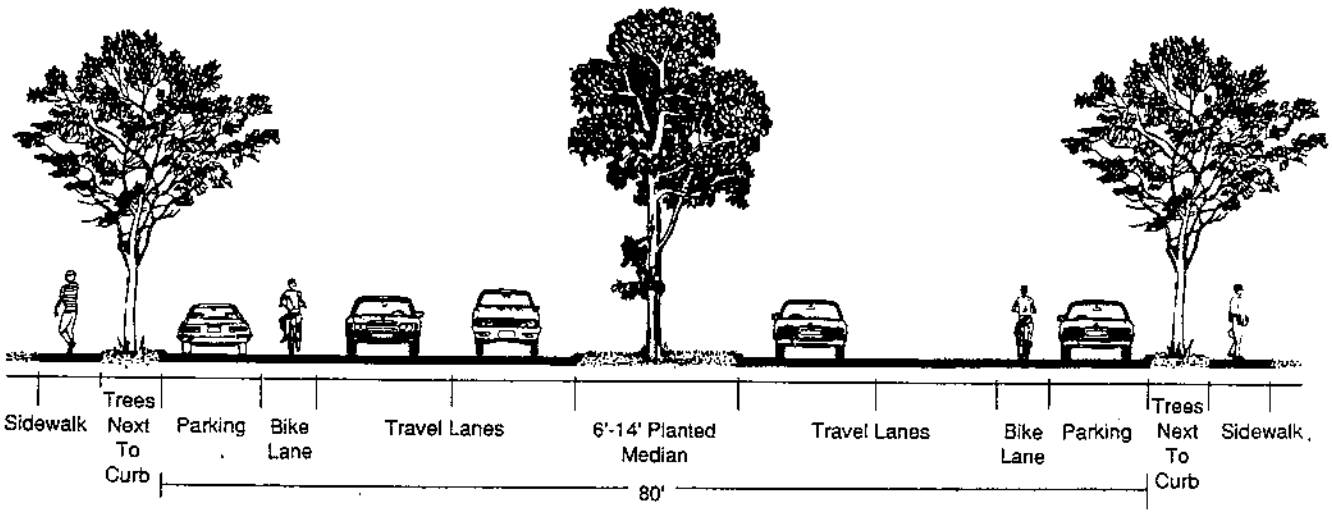




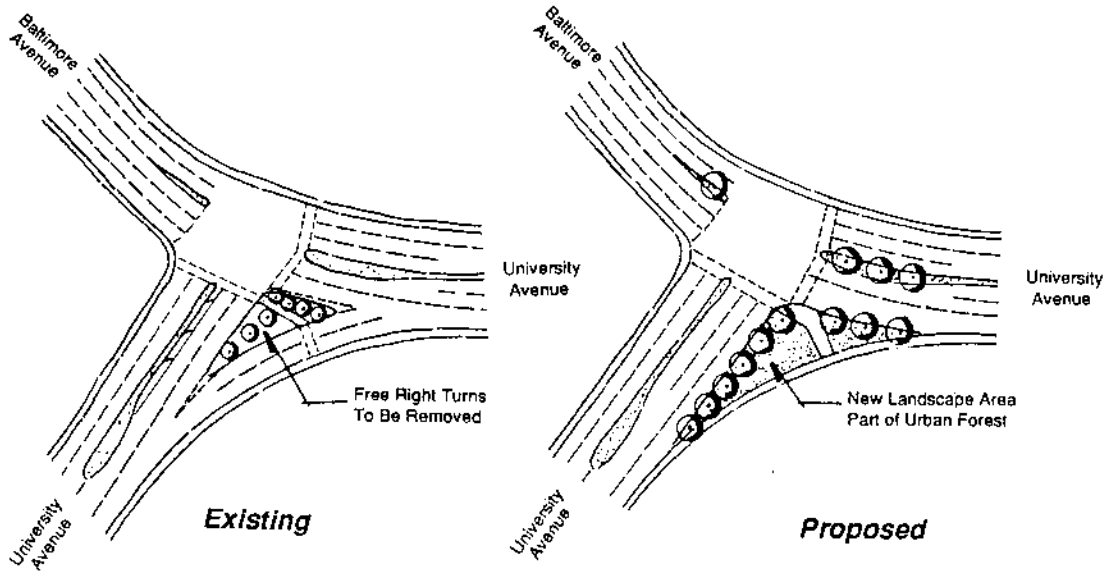


University Avenue West of Spring Street

Should include a divided landscape median 6-14 feet in width with large canopy trees, spaced 35-50 ft. on center, four travel lanes, two Bike Lanes, parallel parking, large canopy trees at the curb line, spaced 35-50 feet on center with sidewalks behind.



The dual University Avenue eastbound right turn lanes and traffic islands should be replaced with a single right turn lane with a typical T-intersection configuration. This change will improve traffic flow at this intersection, narrow a wide and visually undesirable intersection, and add land area for the proposed Civic Center Urban Forest.

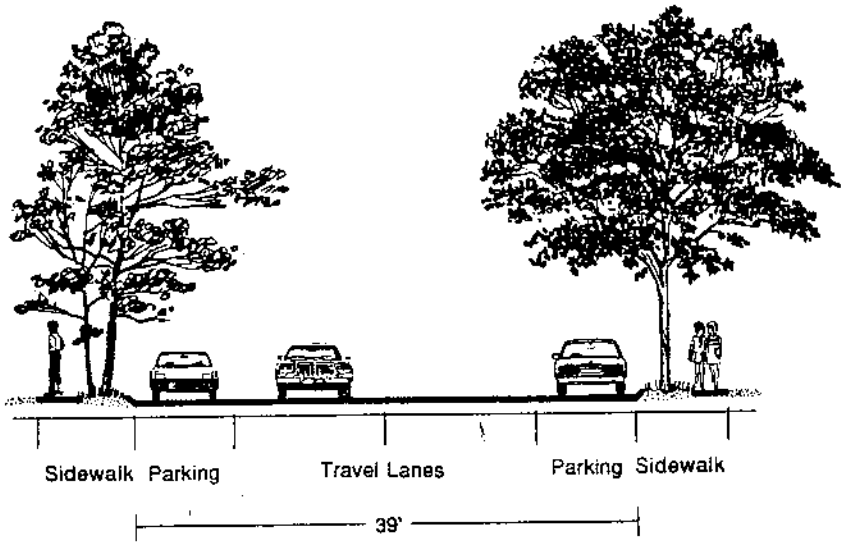


10. Pedestrian/Transit/Parking Streets (PTP Streets)

La Mesa Boulevard and Allison Avenue are designated as pedestrian/transit/parking streets. For these streets, the needs of pedestrian, transit and parking shall take priority over traffic movement. The configuration of each street shall vary as outlined below.

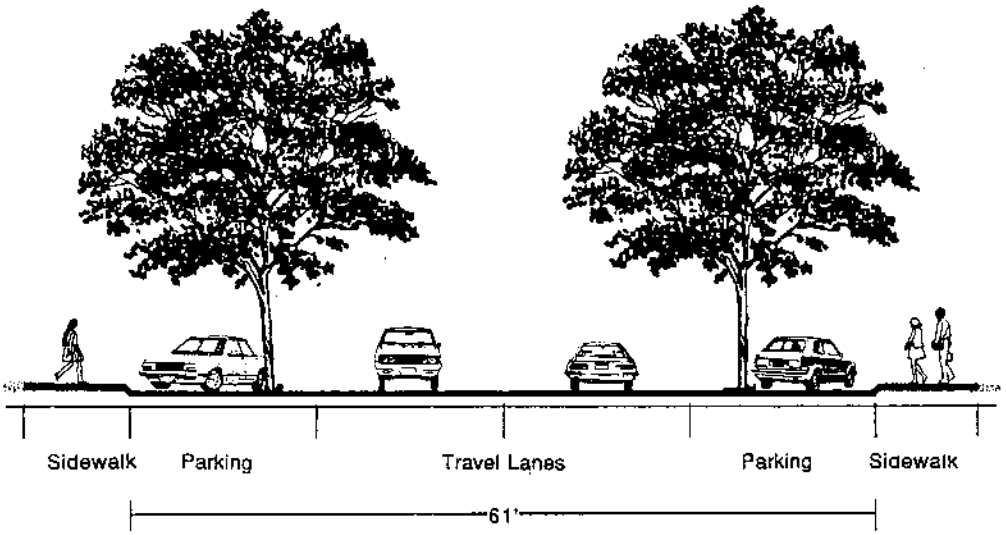
Allison Avenue East of Spring Street

Should consist of two travel lanes with parallel parking as exists today. Large canopy trees should be planted at the curb line spaced 25-50 feet on center with sidewalks behind.



Allison Avenue West of Spring Street

Should consist of two travel lanes with 45° angle parking, and tree wells for large canopy trees every third parking space. Tree guards should be used to protect these trees from automobiles. This configuration will match the theme already established on La Mesa Boulevard, help visually tie the Civic Center area to the rest of the Downtown Village, create a pedestrian scale, and add needed parking. A bus transfer area should be located on the east end of the street in front of the Police Station. Sidewalks and curb lines should be extended to the travel lanes at all intersections.

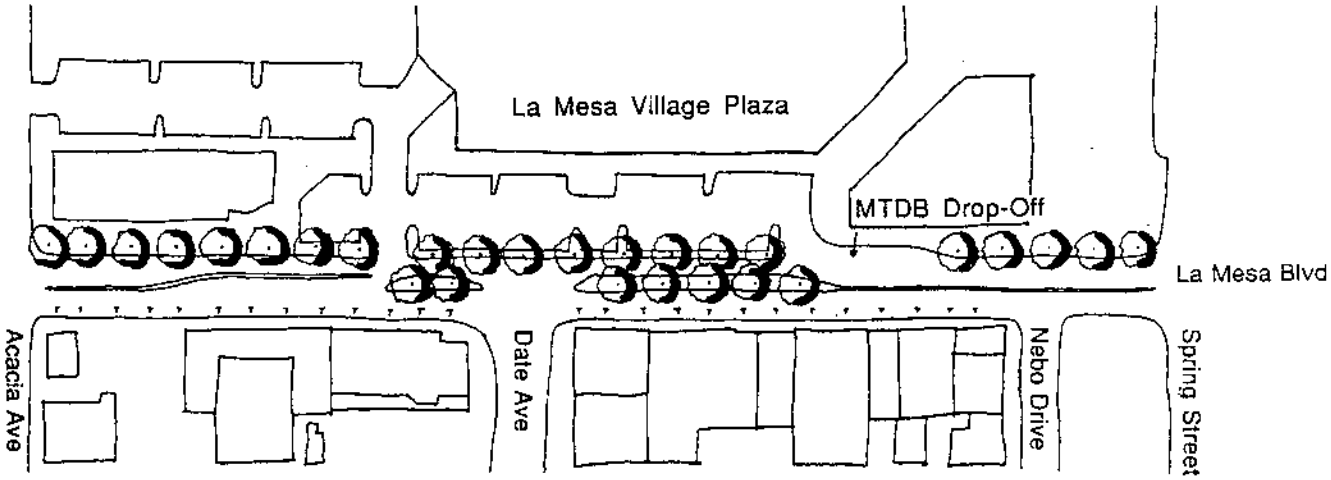


La Mesa Boulevard East of Spring Street

Should retain the existing configurations consisting of two travel lanes with angle parking, and tree wells for large canopy trees every third parking space. Metal tree guards should be added to each tree to protect them from damage.

La Mesa Boulevard (Spring Street to Acacia Avenue)

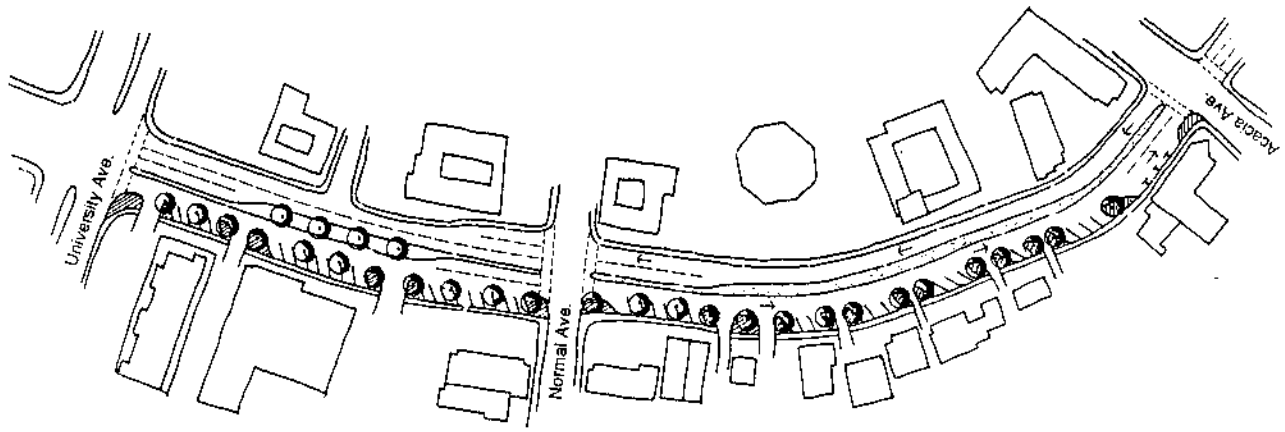
The configuration of this part of La Mesa Boulevard has been set as part of the Phase II A Redevelopment Project and consists of one travel lane each direction, turn bays, parallel parking south side, sidewalks north and south sides, and MTDB drop off and bus stop on north side. Large canopy trees should be added in the median and at curb side as space permits.



La Mesa Boulevard (Acacia Avenue to University Avenue)

Proposed is one travel lane each direction, turn bays at Acacia, Normal Avenue, and University Avenue, no parking north side, 45° perpendicular parking south side, large canopy trees at curb line north side, tree wells for large canopy trees every third parking space south side. Extend curbs to travel lanes at intersections with large plantings and sidewalk areas. It should also be possible to include a landscaped median for the wider sections from University Avenue to Normal Avenue. This new configuration will be in keeping with the function of this street as a Pedestrian/Transit/Parking street, will increase parking, allow the removal of current front yard parking, and visually tie this area to La Mesa Blvd. east of Spring, which has the same type of diagonal parking.

Since the east end of La Mesa Boulevard (Spring to Acacia) has been downgraded to a two lane facility, it is appropriate to also downgrade the section from Acacia to University Avenue. The current four travel lanes at University Avenue is misleading to drivers who turn onto this roadway believing it maintains this type of facility throughout its entire length, and thus creates a dangerous situation with high speeds.



11. Street Closures and Changes

11.1 Nebo Drive (I-8 to University Avenue)

To remove confusion for drivers entering the Downtown Village from I-8 and add to the design of the Civic Boulevard (See Urban Design Guidelines), the access to Nebo Drive from I-8 should be closed and Nebo Drive either abandoned or cul-de-saced. Access to the City's sewer pumping station at the location should be retained.

11.2 Nebo Drive (University Avenue to Allison Avenue)

As part of a future Civic Center expansion, this portion of Nebo Drive should be abandoned as a public street, and either converted to landscaping or incorporated into an access drive for the Civic Center. (See Urban Design Guidelines). The Street is not needed to accommodate traffic, will add needed space to the Civic Center, and will allow new Civic Center uses closer visual proximity to Spring Street.

11.3 Date Avenue (University Avenue to Allison Avenue)

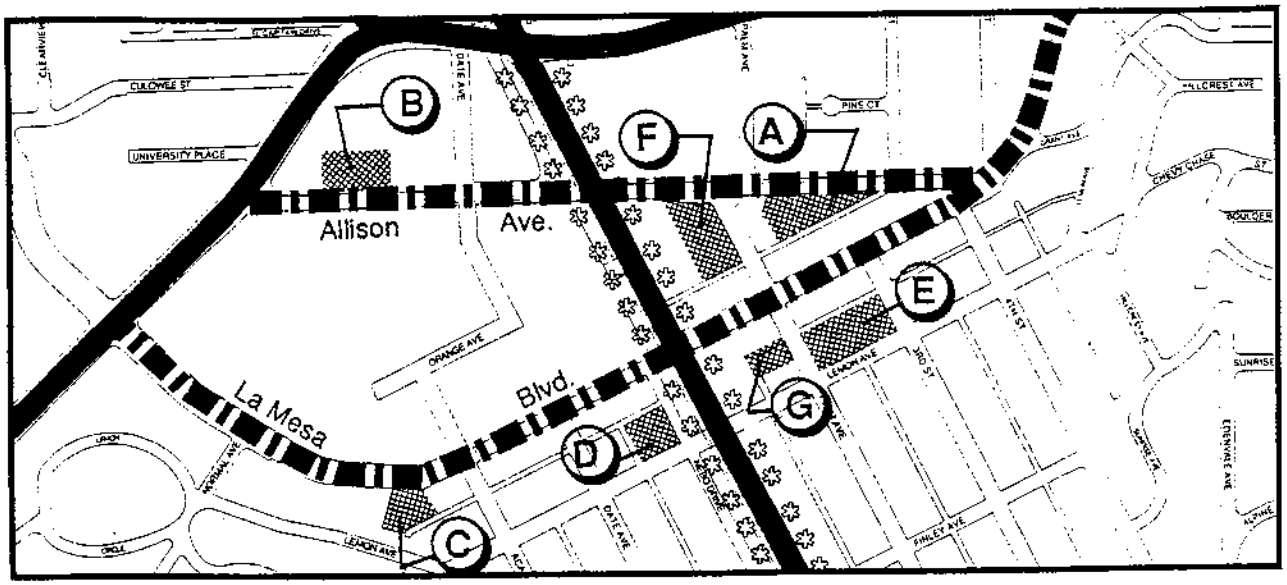
Date Avenue at this location should be abandoned as a public street and incorporated as a landscaped pedestrian way in a new Civic Center Design. The large trees west of the Post Office should be retained.

11.4 Palm Avenue at Allison Avenue

Future consideration should be given to the cost/benefit of re-aligning Palm Avenue at Allison to remove the intersection off-set. This review should take place in conjunction with consideration of a new parking structure on Palm Avenue and possible re-location of the Allison Avenue bus transfer stop.

12. Public Parking Lots

Public surface parking lots are proposed in locations indicated on the drawing below.



Any or all of these lots may be converted to structured parking in the future based on parking demand and careful visual analysis. Conceptual designs should be completed for each lot now so that most trees may mature without being removed in the future for parking structures. In no case should structures exceed two stories or four floors of parking (i.e. one basement, one surface, and two parking levels above). Strategy for each specific lot is as follows:

Lot-A. Allison Avenue (East of Spring)

Because of this lot's visual relation to Allison Avenue, the stores on La Mesa Blvd., the triangular shape, and the usability of this lot for public events such as the October Fest, it should be kept as a surface lot until parking demands dictate an extreme need for parking. At that time, a complete visual, functional and financial analysis should be conducted prior to any decision for structured parking.

Lot-B. Allison Avenue (West of Spring)

A structure parking lot is proposed at this location to accommodate current Civic Center parking needs and free up Civic Center land for landscaping. (See Urban Design Guidelines discussion). To add to the street scene and pedestrian vitality of Allison Avenue, public offices should be located on the Allison Avenue ground floor.

Lot-C. La Mesa Boulevard

The City's current parking lot on La Mesa Boulevard could accommodate a 2 story building (4 floors of parking) built into the side of the hill. The La Mesa Street frontage should be used for retail space to provide pedestrian oriented continuity to the street.

Lot-D. Lemon Avenue and Nebo

This important property should be acquired at an early date. Initially, the building could be leased and excess yard space used for parking. The property should be heavily landscaped. The second phase would remove the building and convert the entire site to public surface parking. The third phase would be construction of a public parking garage with retail uses on the ground floor Nebo Drive frontage.

Lot-E. Lemon Avenue (Palm Avenue to 3rd Street)

As opportunities present themselves, the City should acquire this entire 1/2 block. Initially buildings could be leased. As parking demand increases, a public surface lot or parking structure should be built. Commercial uses should occupy the ground floor street frontages.

Lot-F. Palm Avenue (North of La Mesa Blvd.)

A public/private partnership is proposed for the open parking areas currently owned and utilized by the two free standing banks on Spring Street. Proposed is a joint use (banks and public) parking garage with new commercial uses on the first floor Palm Avenue frontage.

Lot-G. Palm Avenue (South of La Mesa Blvd.)

No changes are proposed for this existing public surface parking lot.

13. Parking Controls

13.1 Parking Meters

Parking meters should be used within the Village commercial and Civic Center areas to regulate curb-side and surface parking lot parking and to help finance parking enforcement. Existing meter locations should be expanded as needed within the commercial and Civic Center area (for example, on Date Avenue south of La Mesa), but should normally not be installed in RB zoned or residential areas. The amount of meter fees should be periodically adjusted in relation to the needs of a Downtown Village marketing strategy and financial needs.

13.2 Two Hour Parking Limits

Where streets are signed for restricted parking (such as two hour limits), these limits should be enforced. Parking limits should be extended as necessary into residential areas to control all day commercial employee parking, or MTDB related parking.

14. Transit

14.1 MTDB Drop Off & Bus Access

MTDB drop off points and bus loading bays should be located on both La Mesa Boulevard and Allison Avenue at roughly Nebo Drive. Good pedestrian access should be provided from these points to the MTDB station.

14.2 Encourage Trolley Ridership

Merchants should provide free trolley tickets or other incentives to encourage use of the trolley for persons coming to the Downtown Village.

14.3 Bus Transfer Location

A detailed study should be undertaken to examine the feasibility of moving the Bus Transfer stop on Allison Avenue east of Spring Street to West of Spring Street, between Date Avenue and Spring Street. This would provide for better coordination with the MTDB Trolley Station and to ease traffic congestion at the intersections of Allison Avenue and Palm Avenue.

15. Pedestrians

Pleasant pedestrian ways shall be emphasized throughout the Downtown Village area. Features shall include planting of trees and other landscape between the pedestrian way and the travel or parking lanes on streets, the use of texture or other interesting paving surfaces, and the use of safety islands at intersections on wide streets.

A sidewalk should be added on the east side of Spring Street for roughly a 450 foot area north and south of Pasadena Avenue.

Amenities for pedestrians shall be provided throughout the Downtown Village such as benches, planters, trash cans, and works of art.

16. Alleys

The alleys in the Downtown Village are particularly useful for service, supplementary parking and pedestrian ways, and should be retained.

Many of the alleys are used for primary access to housing, and add interest and variety to the Downtown Village and should be named. The word "alley" suggests a rather negative image to most people. They should be renamed "lanes" or "walks" which suggests a more positive image.

Special paving treatment should be extended to as many of the alleys as feasible and the ornamental paving that has deteriorated in the Downtown Village area should be repaired.

17. Bicycle Network

17.1 Bike Lanes

El Cajon Boulevard, Baltimore Drive, University Avenue south of Baltimore Drive and University Avenue east of Baltimore Drive to La Mesa Boulevard, should contain bike lanes (a lane on the paved area of the roadway for the exclusive or semi-exclusive use of bicycles.) - See Figure 5.

17.2 Bike Routes

Designated bike routes (identified as a bicycle facility by signing only) should include Allison Avenue, Lemon Avenue, Palm Avenue and Normal Avenue - See Figure 5.

17.3 Bicycle Facilities

Safe, convenient bicycle racks should be installed throughout the Downtown Village area.

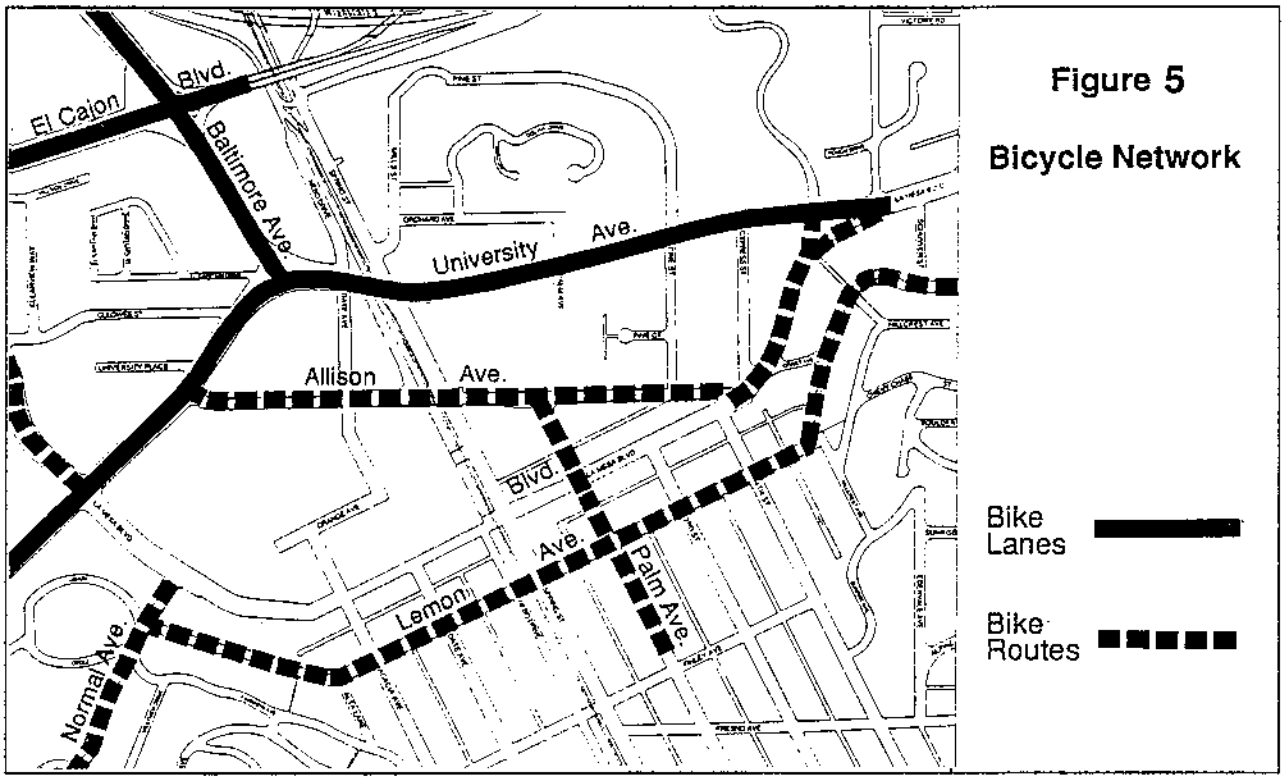


Figure 5

Bicycle Network

V. DESIGN

Background

As part of the background studies for the Specific Plan, a variety of urban design studies were conducted. These studies found that the Downtown area already contains many admirable design features including many "pedestrian scaled" commercial buildings, attractive surrounding residential areas, and in some cases, dramatic landscaping.

Key problem areas included the addition of a variety of new non-pedestrian scaled buildings, a number of wide barren streets that emphasize the automobile, and many asphalt parking lots with little or no landscaping.

Policies

18. Design Review

All property within the La Mesa Downtown Village Specific Plan area should be subject to design review. Single family dwellings located outside the historic area that are not listed as a historic resource are exempted from this requirement.

Design review should follow the Downtown Village Specific Plan Design Guidelines as well as policies, procedures and guidelines established in the City-wide Urban Design Program.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

Forty six specific actions are recommended to implement the Plan as outlined in Chapter I to V. These actions are discussed below and summarized in Table 3. Fourteen of these actions are administrative or operational in nature, will cost little to implement and should be completed within 1 to 2 years after Plan adoption.

The other 32 actions relate to public improvements which could be implemented over the next 15 to 20 years and which will be relatively costly. A funding goal of 5 million dollars plus Civic Center improvement costs would not be unreasonable. Funding sources for these public improvements will need to be developed and will likely include bonds, assessment districts, land sale revenues, Block Grants, redevelopment funds, parking fees and City Capital Improvement Funds. (See Appendix B for discussion of revenue sources)

1. General Plan Amendments

1.1 La Mesa Boulevard. La Mesa Boulevard from Spring Street east to University Avenue shall be re-classified from a Collector - Class I (4 lanes) to a Collector - Class II (2 lanes).

The Specific Plan classifies this street as a pedestrian/transit/parking street. Its current use as two travel lanes with diagonal parking is a more appropriate use than four travel lanes.

1.2 Bicycle Network Plan. Baltimore Drive from El Cajon Boulevard to University Avenue and University Avenue east of Baltimore Drive to La Mesa Blvd. should be reclassified from Bike Routes (streets identified as a bicycle facility by signing only) to Bike Lanes (lanes on a paved area of a roadway for the exclusive or semi-exclusive use of bicycles).

Baltimore Drive is one of the few streets in Downtown wide enough to accommodate a bike lane. This change will connect the bike lane on Baltimore Drive north of El Cajon Boulevard to the University Avenue bike lane. This will also be helpful to bicyclists because Baltimore Drive carries a heavy automobile traffic flow of 27,700 ADT.

This change on University Avenue will enhance the abutting Downtown Village residential areas and will connect the Baltimore Drive and University Avenue Bike Lanes to McArthur Park.

1.3 Prime Arterial Standards. The General Plan sets standards for a Prime Arterial as 4 moving lanes. In order to accommodate the proposed 3 lane University Avenue configuration, the General Plan standards for a Prime Arterial should be modified or a new street classification created.

2. General Plan and Zoning Map Amendments

2.1 Spring Street. The C-D Zone on the east side of Spring Street from University Avenue south to Allison Avenue shall be changed to a CD-D zone. The C Zone allows uses such as manufacturing that are incompatible with the goals for the Downtown Village. The General Plan designation for this area should also be changed from 12-General Commercial to 11-Downtown Commercial.

2.2 La Mesa Boulevard. To implement Policy 5, Site 4 on La Mesa Boulevard should be re-zoned from C to R3D. The General Plan designation for this area should also be changed from 12 General Commercial to 6 Multiple Unit Residential.

3. Implementation Staffing

In order to facilitate early implementation of the plan, the City should assign a half time to full time staff person to plan implementation for at least the next year. The need for the position should be re-evaluated after the first year. Responsibilities should include:

a. **Parking Lot Landscaping.** Meeting with owners of each parking lot needing landscaping to encourage a voluntary landscaping program. As part of this program the City should provide free design guidance and perhaps grant or loan incentives.

b. **Capital Improvements Programs.** Coordination of the City's capital improvements program for the Downtown Village, including design studies, prioritizing, and funding strategies.

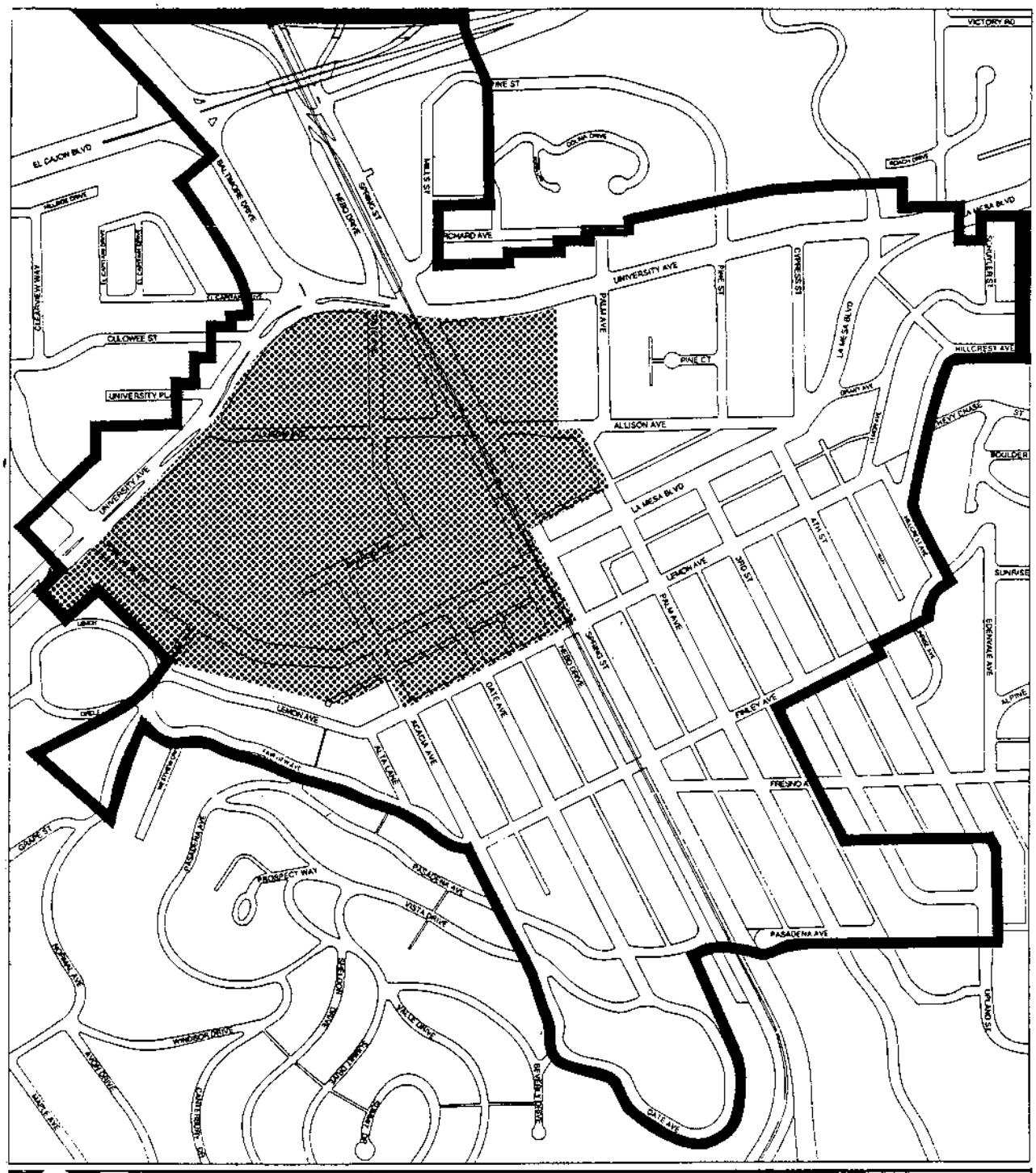
c. **Facade Rehabilitation Program.** Encouraging owners to participate in the Facade Rehabilitation Program. This effort could focus on specific needs, such as the proposal to add display windows to the telephone building.

d. **Marketing.** Working with merchants, property owners, citizens and City officials to obtain long term support for the Downtown Village Plan.

As trees are periodically added to the area, it will also be necessary to expand existing city tree maintenance crews. This need should be periodically evaluated as the plan is implemented.

4. Redevelopment Area

Consideration should be given to expanding the Downtown Redevelopment Area to encompass as much of the Downtown Village area as possible. This would potentially increase the tax increment available for revitalization and allow a larger area to benefit from needed public improvements. Likely high priority areas for expansion are shown in Figure 6, and include the commercial area on the north side of the area, the RB Zones on University Avenue and Baltimore Drive, and Site 4 on La Mesa Boulevard.



Redevelopment

Figure 6

0 500 1000

Current Redevelopment Area

Specific Plan Area

5. Paving Permits

In order to protect existing landscaping and assure that new parking lots meet City landscape requirements and Specific Plan Design Guidelines, permits should be required for any new or re-surfaced parking lot or driveway paving. The City should adopt a new ordinance to carry out this Policy.

6. Commercial Rehabilitation Programs

Many downtown improvement programs throughout the country provide loans and grants to property owners and tenants of commercial properties to improve their properties. Through such programs the downtowns hope to stimulate the process of downtown revitalization. These are viewed as public/private action and investment.

Typical assistance includes:

Design Assistance

Either the community retains the service of an architectural consultant and makes such services available to applicants, or in some cases loans and grants are made to pay the applicant's architect.

The architect provides a design proposal including, where appropriate, color and material selections and budgets. Most programs fund facade improvements, and many will include structural repairs. Some fund sign improvements, others do not.

Most programs offer the design assistance as a grant.

Construction Assistance

Most programs reimburse the applicant for a portion of actual expenses incurred. Some offer full grants; however, these are normally restricted to a few demonstration structures or a demonstration block. Many of the programs work on a sliding scale. The smaller the improvement, the higher the percentage of the grant. Normally, there is also a maximum sized grant.

Other Factors

The success of a commercial rehabilitation program hinges on a number of factors, often unique to the local community. Some experimentation with the program will likely be necessary. Almost all programs require a marketing effort. In addition to heavy involvement by property owners and merchants, it can be helpful to market the program to contractors such as painting, masonry, sign, window, awning, and landscape contractors.

La Mesa Program

It is proposed that La Mesa form a committee to actually design the program. Members should include representatives of the city, property owners, merchants and contractors. Suggested ingredients include the following:

Design:	Initially, the use of one City-hired architect and landscape architect should prove cost effective, provide continuity, and help in integration and refinement of the design guidelines. As the program matures, the use of owner architects could be added.
Design Grants:	To stimulate interest in the program, design grants up to $2,000 per property should be authorized.
Final Plans and Specifications:	An initial grant of 75% of cost is proposed. As the program becomes successful, this might be reduced to 50%.
Construction Grants:	Construction grants will be highly dependent on the interest in the program and the amount of money available. Assuming an initial allocation to the program of $100,000, consideration should be given to the following schedule of rebates or grants:

Signs:	50% of cost
Landscaping	75% of cost
Facades, Sidewalks, Lighting, Etc.	50% of cost

Maximum construction grants under the program should be limited to
$5,000.

Priorities:	The Specific Plan has a heavy emphasis on landscaping, and landscaping can be more effective in changing the character of the Downtown Village than facade improvements. A higher percent and better incentive is proposed for landscaping than for facade improvements.
Area:	The program should cover the entire Specific Plan area.
Evaluation:	The program should be continually evaluated as it proceeds. Priorities and criteria should be adjusted as necessary to either encourage utilization of the program, or if necessary, reduce the size of grants to increase the number of users.

7. Organization-Promotion-Economic Restructuring

The adoption and implementation of the Downtown Village Specific Plan can provide a major impetus for downtown revitalization in La Mesa. However, most communities involved with downtown revitalization have found that focusing on land use, circulation and design can be most effective when coupled with an additional emphasis on organization, promotion and economic restructuring.

The Merchants Association and Chamber of Commerce have both been involved in a variety of successful activities aimed at bettering Downtown, such as the Octoberfest and joint advertising. However, much more could be done and is being done by active downtowns. Generally some form of funding is needed and in California this is often provided by a Business Improvement District which allows assessing businesses within the area to fund downtown activities, often including paid staff. Activities include:

Organization:	Building consensus for action. Seeking cooperation from all parties. Providing long-term management and planning.
Promotion:	Advertising downtown as a place to shop, invest and live through publicity, promotional materials, etc.
Economic Restructuring:	Recruiting businesses or developers to fulfill specific downtown needs and assisting existing businesses through business seminars and the like.

Because of the importance of this item, the Downtown Village merchants and owners should create a Business Improvement District and increase funding and action on organization, promotion and economic restructuring activities.

8. Public Improvements

A variety of public improvements are needed to implement the Downtown Village Plan. While proposed expenditures may seem well beyond the current means of the City, the program is designed for a 15-20 year implementation. The Plan is a necessary first step to be ready to take advantage of external long term funding potential as well as a mechanism to provide a focus for likely needed assessment districts or City-wide bond issues.

Improvements are grouped below in the topics of streets and tree planting programs, parking lots, Civic Center, street lights, undergrounding of utilities and other improvements. An approach to each topic is outlined along with a rough cost estimate,

described in more detail in Appendix C. The cost estimates are only to be used to set the over-all direction of the program. Considerable refinement will be necessary as actual designs are prepared and costed.

Street Improvements and Tree Planting Program

Many downtown revitalization programs undertake comprehensive street and sidewalk modification programs similar to that undertaken in La Mesa Village a number of years ago. Such programs often include new sidewalks with ornamental paving, street narrowing, street trees, street lights, street furniture, special intersection paving, undergrounding of utilities and signs. While this type of program can add much to a downtown area, it is also quite expensive. Typical costs run $500 to $800 per linear foot of street. An example of this kind of program is currently being pursued in downtown Escondido. Such a program for the Downtown Village could easily cost 7 to 11 million dollars.

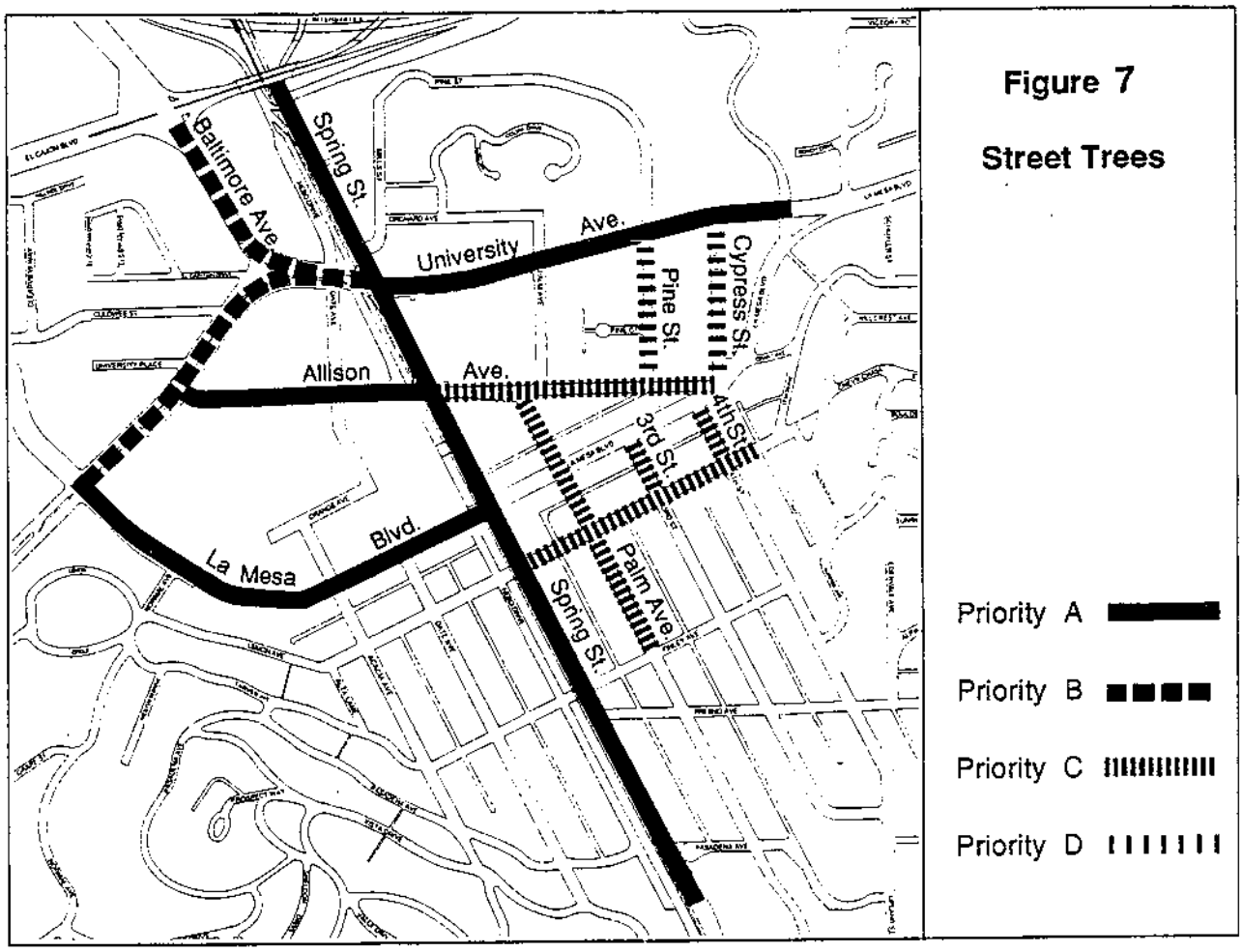
More modest programs are similar to the one being developed for Linda Vista Road in the City of San Diego. This program will add medians, street trees 40 ft. on center, and irrigation, at a cost of $150 per linear foot. A similar program for the Downtown Village would cost 2 million dollars.

Given the likely shortage of funds to implement the Downtown Village Plan, the City should be clear on priorities as related to both the most important streets and the improvements that will have the greatest impact. The primary components of the street improvement program recommended for the Downtown Village include trees, underground utilities and street lights as discussed below.

The improvement that will have the most impact on the Downtown Village at the lowest cost is the addition of street trees. Given growth times, these should be planted as soon as feasible. Over a period of 5 to 15 years, such a program can dramatically transform the appearance of Downtown.

Envisioned are generally small trees (15 gallons), planted at curb side within the sidewalk area, with minor modifications or expansions of sidewalk areas as needed. These trees will cost roughly $545 each, plus irrigation costs (See Appendix C). An exception to the use of small trees is the recommended larger palm trees for Spring Street. These will cost $1545 each for 20 ft. clear tree height.

Priorities for street tree planting are shown in Figure 7. This proposal would add 813 new street trees in the Downtown Village.



Five of the Downtown Village streets have been recommended for more comprehensive change. Each of these streets should undergo a comprehensive design study including preparation of detailed cost estimates. Recommendations and preliminary costs are summarized below and described in detail in Chapter IV.

Allison Avenue (Spring Street West to University)
Convert to diagonal parking, tree wells every third space, extend curb at corners.

Baltimore Drive
Add landscaped median island, bike lanes, and trees at curb line.

La Mesa Boulevard (Acacia to University)
Convert to 2 lanes with turn pockets, diagonal parking on south side with tree wells every third space, trees on curb line on north side. Selected median islands as appropriate.

University Avenue (East of Spring to La Mesa)
Convert from four lane to three lanes, add bike lanes, extend curbs (bulb-outs) in many places for landscape islands, narrow intersections.

Spring Street
Add landscape or safety median islands where possible, special paving at I-8 entrance and La Mesa Boulevard intersection, Palm trees at curb both sides, entrance sign, and close Nebo Drive.

Table 2

Costs for Comprehensive Street Changes

Street	Length	Cost/Linear Ft.	Cost
Allison Avenue	1000	$130	$130,000
Baltimore Drive	800	$175	$140,000
La Mesa Blvd.	1250	$210	$262,500
University Avenue	1900	$245	$465,500
Spring Street	2925	$310	$906,750
			$1,904,750

Parking Lots and Structures

The Downtown Village Plan recommends seven parking lots distributed throughout the area. Six of these lots could readily accommodate parking structures should future demands and land values dictate. Current parking demands and land values do not support structures which cost $7500 to $10,000 per parking space.

The parking lots are shown in Figure 4. Four of the lots are currently in public ownership: Lots A, B, C and G, and Part of Lot E. Lot F is in private ownership and is currently used for parking. The long term proposal is for a joint public/private parking structure combined with retail uses. Lot D and part of Lot E are privately owned and may be available for purchase. The City should actively pursue purchase of these two lots before they are pre-empted for other uses.

Lot D is estimated at a cost of $400 - $600,000. Lot E at $1,200,000 - $1,400,000. Both lots and their buildings could be leased to private uses on an interim basis until needed for public use.

Civic Center

Civic Center costs cannot be determined until decisions are made in relation to specific building needs. The first step should be the completion of a detailed master plan for the existing site to clarify a variety of technical, financing and planning issues.

This master plan should include a design for the Urban Forest. Cost for the master plan is estimated at $75,000 - $100,000.

Major construction cost components would likely include: A New Library, City Hall Expansion, Parking Structure, The Urban Forest, Possible Theatre, and a New Fire Station.

These components would total an amount that would likely require a city-wide bond issue.

Street Lights

Many of the streets in the Downtown Village are poorly lit or lit by automobile-oriented street lights. The long term goal for the area should be the addition of shorter, closely spaced pedestrian scaled street lights. The specially designed lights being used on La Mesa Blvd. in the Village would be expensive to add to the entire area and costly to maintain. A standard pedestrian scaled street light similar to those currently used in the Civic Center parking lot and in keeping with the Downtown Village historic character should be used.

Pedestrian scaled street lights are estimated to cost roughly $3,000 each and should be located approximately 80 ft. on center. Conversion of the entire Downtown Village would require 334 street lights at a cost of a million dollars (See Appendix C for cost estimate). Since it is unlikely that these funds will be available, a long term incremental program is necessary in which lights can be installed as part of other street re-building programs. Suggested priority streets are shown in Figure 8.

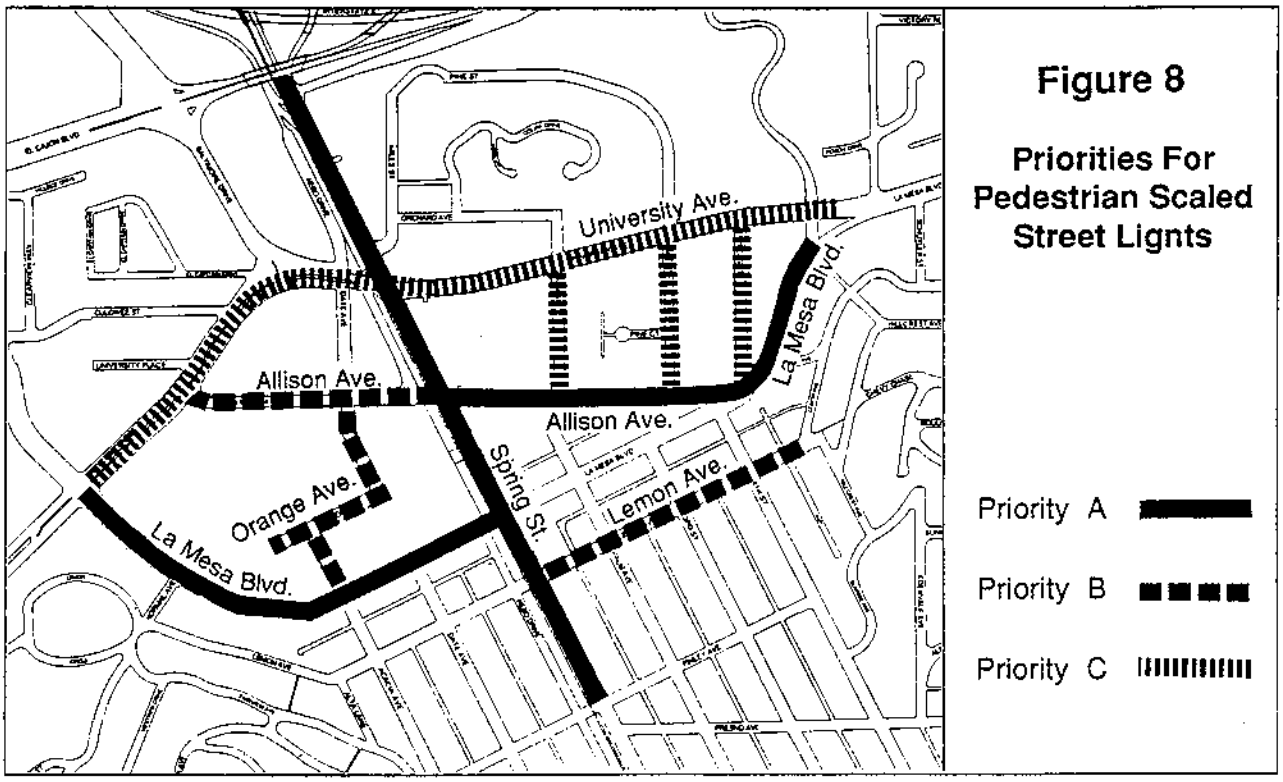


Figure 8

Priorities For Pedestrian Scaled Street Lignts

Undergrounding of Utilities

The City participates with SDG&E in a program to underground overhead utilities. The Downtown Village will need to compete in priority with other areas of the City. Suggested streets in the Downtown Village and recommended priorities are shown in Figure 9.

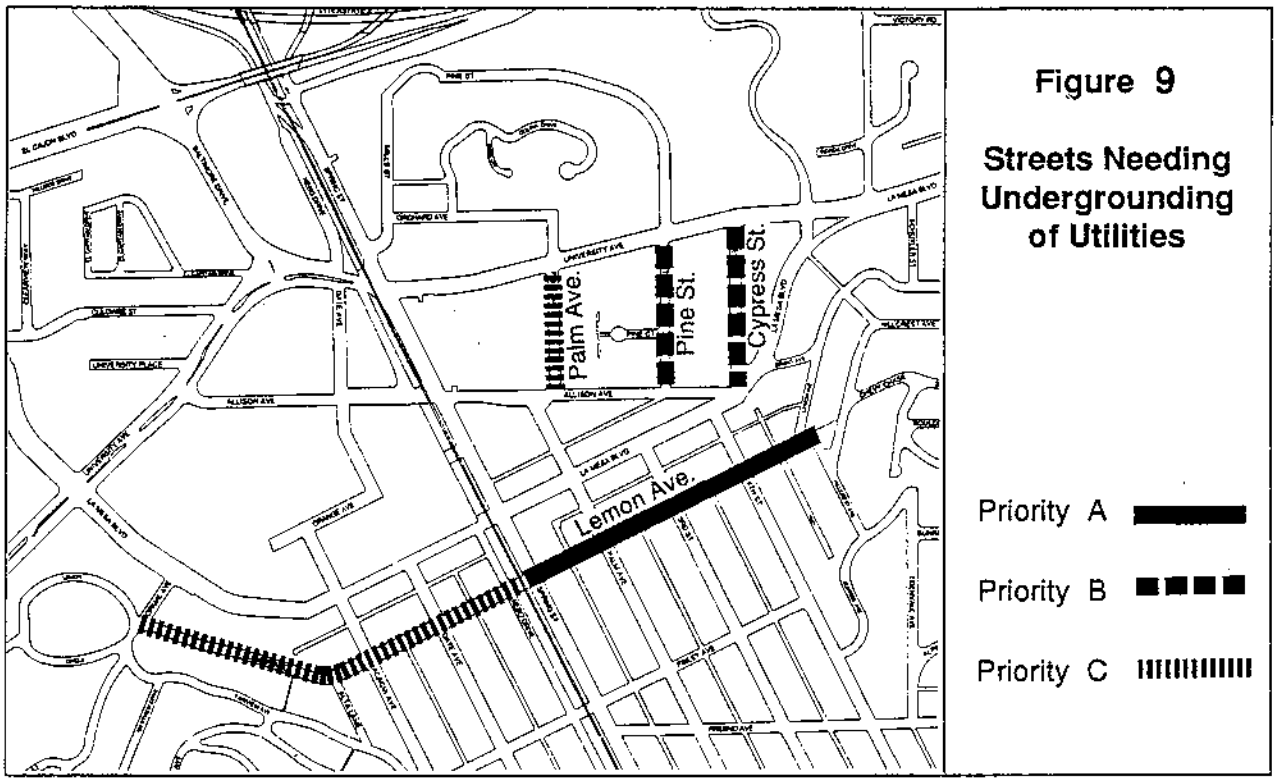


Figure 9

Streets Needing Undergrounding of Utilities

Other Improvements

Other desirable improvements for the Downtown Village are as follows:

	Item	Cost
1.	Additional Street Furniture	$50,000
2.	Design Element La Mesa & Spring Street	$100,000
3.	Revise University Ave./Baltimore Dr. Intersection	$30,000
4.	Sidewalk on Spring Street at Pasadena (450 ft.)	$6,100
5.	Sidewalks - West Side of University Ave. near Allison	$2,900
6.	Repair Ornamental Sidewalk & Street Paving	$3 - $5 per sq ft

TABLE 3 Implementation Program Summary

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	RATIONALE	IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES	COST	SOURCE OF FUNDING	TIME HORIZON (YEARS FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	PRIORITY
			MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS				
1	Adopt Specific Plan & Design Guidelines	Essential for implementation.	City	Nominal	City Operating Budget	1	A
2	General Plan Amendments	State law requires.	City	Nominal	City Opertaing Budget	1	A
3	General Plan & Zoning Map Amendments	State law requires. Will facilitate interest in Plan.	City	Nominal	City Operating Budget	1	A
4	Implementation Staffing	Will be essential to provide momentum to plan.	City	$30,000	City Operating Budget	1	A
5	Expand Tree Maintenance Crews	Maintenance of added trees.	City	?	City Operating Budget Maintenance District	5	B
6	Expand Redevelopment Area	Provide tax increment and needed improvements.	Redevelopment Authority	$30,000	City Operating Budget or Block Grant	1	B
7	Implement Commercial Rehabilitation Program	Will improve visual qualities of area and stimulate revitaliztion.	City	$125,000	Block Grant	1	A
8	Sell Site 2	* Provide $ to implement Specific Plan * Increase tax revenue	City	Nominal	City Operating Budget	1 - 2	A
9	Business Improvement District	Successful downtown programs have demonstrated the need for organization, promotion and economic restructuring activities.	Merchants and property owners	?	Assessment Districts	2	B
10	Require Paving Permits	Will assure implementation of landscape guidelines.	City	$5,000	City Operating Budget	2	B
11	Increase Parking Meter Rates	Revenue for Downtown Village improvements	City	Nominal	City Operating Budget	1 - 2	B
12	Increase Parking Permit Rates	Revenue for Downtown Village improvements	City	Nominal	City Operating Budget	1 - 2	B

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	RATIONALE	IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES	COST	SOURCE OF FUNDING	TIME HORIZON (YEARS FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	PRIORITY
13	Consider Expanded Developer Exactions	Revenue for Downtown Village Improvements	City	Nominal	City Operating Budget	2 - 3	B
14	Develop Off-site Parking Fund	Provide Improved Group Parking	City	Nominal	City Operating Budget	2 - 4	C
			CIVIC CENTER				
15	Master Plan	Set Stage for Incremental Additions	City	$100,000	Operating Fund	2 - 4	A
16	Urban Forest	Visual Improvement to Area	City	To Be Determined	C.I.P. Bonds	3 - 7	B
17	New Library	Shortage of Space	City and County	To Be Determined	Bonds	5 - 10	B
18	Parking Structure	Needed to Implement Design Improvements	City	To Be Determined	Bonds	5 - 10	B
19	City Hall Expansion	Shortage of Space	City	To Be Determined	C.I.P. Bonds	5 - 10	C
20	Fire Station	Existing Station Outmoded	City	To Be Determined	C.I.P. Bonds	5 - 10	C
21	Theatre	Community Desire	City or Non-proffit Corp.	To Be Determined	Bonds	5 - 10	C
			PARKING LOTS				
22	Acquire Lot D	Is Currently Available and Fullfills Longterm Needs	City	$500,000	City C.I.P., Assessment District, Sale of Site 2	1 - 2	A
23	Aquire Lot E	May be Available, Fulfills Longterm Needs	City	$1,300,000	City C.I.P. Assessment District, Sale of Site 2	2 - 4	B

TABLE 3 Implementation Program Summary

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	RATIONALE	IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES	COST	SOURCE OF FUNDING	TIME HORIZON (YEARS FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	PRIORITY
24	Build Parking Garages	Will fulfill parking needs as Economics become Feasible	City, City/Private Joint Venture	To Be Determined	Assessment Districts, Bonds, Private	10 - 20	C
			MAJOR STREET IMPROVEMENTS				
25	Allison Ave. (Spring St. went to University)	Increase Parking, Create visual enhancement that ties Civic Center to the rest of the Downtown Village	City	$100,000	City C.I.P., Assessment District Bond Issue		
26	Baltimore Drive	Create Improved entrance to the Downtown Village, visually tie to La Mesa north of the Freeway, Implement Bike Lane	City	$120,000	Prop A, Assessment District, Bond Issue	6	
27	La Mesa Blvd (Acacia to University)	Increase Parking, Visually Improve	City	$390,000	City C.I.P., Assessment District, Bond Issue		
28	Unviersity Avenue (East of Spring to La Mesa)	Visually Improve, Implement Bike Lanes	City	$380,000	Prop A, Assessment District, Bond Issue	6	
29	Spring Street	Visually Improve, As Center piece to Downtown	City	$585,000	City C.I.P., Assessment District, Bond Issue	6	
			STREET TREE PLANTING				
30	Allison Avenue (East of Spring Street)	Improve Visual Quality, Create Pedestrian Atmosphere Reduce Greenhouse Effect	City	$32,700	Prop. A, Assessment District, Bond Issue	3 - 10	B
31	Cypress Street	Improve Visual Quality, Create Pedestrian Atmosphere Reduce Greenhouse Effect	City	$19,075	City C.I.P., Assessment District Bonds	3 - 10	D
32	Fourth Street	Improve Visual Quality, Create Pedestrian Atmosphere Reduce Greenhouse Effect	City	$7,085	City C.I.P., Assessment District Bonds	3 - 10	C

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	RATIONALE	IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES	COST	SOURCE OF FUNDING	TIME HORIZON (YEARS FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	PRIORITY
33	Lemon Avenue (East of Spring)	Improve Visual Quality, Create Pedestrian Atmosphere Reduce Greenhouse Effect	City	$24,525	City C.I.P., Assessment District Bonds	3 - 10	C
34	Palm Avenue	Improve Visual Quality, Create Pedestrian Atmosphere Reduce Greenhouse Effect	City	$32,700	City C.I.P., Assessment District Bonds	3 - 10	C
35	Pine Street	Improve Visual Quality, Create Pedestrian Atmosphere Reduce Greenhouse Effect	City	$17,712	City C.I.P., Assessment District Bonds	3 - 10	D
36	Third Street	Improve Visual Quality, Create Pedestrian Atmosphere Reduce Greenhouse Effect	City	$7,085	City C.I.P., Assessment District Bonds	3 - 10	C
37	University Avenue (West of Spring Street)	Improve Visual Quality, Create Pedestrian Atmosphere Reduce Greenhouse Effect	City	$57,770	City C.I.P., Assessment District Bonds	3 - 10	B
			OTHER ITEMS				
38	Design Element La Mesa & Spring Street	Provide Visual Focus	City, Merchants, Property Owners	$100,000	City, C.I.P., Block Grant Assessment, Donations	3 - 5	B
39	Street Lights	Improve Pedestrian Scale and Safety	City	$1,000,000	City, Bonds, Assessment District	2 - 10	A,B,C.
40	Underground Utilities	Visual Improvements	SDG&E	?	SDG&E, Property Owners	7 - 10	A,B,C.
41	Street Furniture	Improve Functioning Attractiveness of Downtown	City	$50,000	City C.I.P., Assessment District, Sale of Site 2, Bonds	5 - 10	B
42	Revise University Ave./ Baltimore Intersection	o Better Functioning o Improved Visual & Open Space	City	$30,000	C.I.P.	3 - 5	C
43	Add Tree Guards to Trees on La Mesa Blvd.	Protect Trees for greater growth	City	$6,000	C.I.P.	3 - 5	A

TABLE 3 Implementation Program Summary

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	RATIONALE	IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES	COST	SOURCE OF FUNDING	TIME HORIZON (YEARS FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	PRIORITY
44	Repair ornamental Sidewalks & Street Paving	Safety	City	To Be Determined	City C.I.P., Assessment District, Bonds	3 - 10	B
45	Sidewalk - west side of University near Allison	Complete missing piece of Pedestrian System	City	$2,900	Assessment District	3 - 5	B
46	Pasadena Sidewalk	Improve Pedestrian access to Downtown	City	$6,100	Assessment District, C.I.P.	3 - 5	C

Appendix A:

LEVELS OF SERVICE

A. Represents free flow. Individual users are virtually unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream. Freedom to select desired speeds and to maneuver within the traffic stream is extremely high. The general level of comfort and convenience is excellent. Volume/Capacity 0.00-0.60.

B. Is in the range of stable flow, but the presence of other users in the traffic stream begins to be noticeable. Freedom to select desired speeds is relatively unaffected, but there is a slight decline in the freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream from LOS "A". The level of comfort and convenience provided is somewhat less than at LOS "A", because the presence of others in the traffic stream begins to affect individual behavior. Volume/Capacity 0.61-0.70.

C. Is in the range of stable flow, but marks the beginning of the range of flow in which the operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by interactions with others in the traffic stream. The selection fo speed is now affected by the presence of others, and maneuvering within the traffic stream requires substantial vigilance on the part of the user. The general level of comfort and convenience declines noticeably at this level. Volume/Capacity 0.71-0.80.

D. Represents high-density, but stable, flow. Speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted, and the driver experiences a generally poor level of comfort and convenience. Small increases in traffic flow will generally cause operational problems at this level. Volume/Capacity 0.81-0.90.

E. Represents operating conditions at or near the capacity level. All speeds are reduced to low, but relatively uniform value. Freedom to maneuver with the traffic stream is extremely difficult, and it is generally accomplished by forcing a vehicle or pedestrian to "give way" to accommodate such maneuvers. Comfort and convenience levels are extremely poor, and driver frustration is generally high. Operations at this level are usually unstable, because small increases in flow or minor perturbations within the traffic stream will cause breakdowns. Volume/Capacity 0.91-100.

F. Is used to define forced or breakdown flow. This condition exists wherever the amount of traffic approaching a point exceeds the amount which can traverse the point. Queues form behind such locations. Operations within the queue are characterized by stop-and-go waves, and they are extremely unstable. Vehicles may progress at reasonable speeds for several hundred feet or more, then be required to stop in a cyclic fashion. Volume/Capacity over 100.

Source: Highway Capacity Manual, Transportation Research Board, Special Report No. 209, Washington, D.C. 1985.

Appendix B:

REVENUE SOURCES

A variety of revenue sources are available to implement the Downtown Village Specific Plan recommendations. Each is discussed briefly below with a current estimate of funding potential. Since it is anticipated that it may take 10 - 20 years to implement this plan, the revenue sources will need to be periodically re-examined.

La Mesa Central Area Redevelopment Project

The currently operating Downtown Redevelopment Project is shown in Figure 6. The Project area includes Phase IIA (La Mesa Village Plaza) and Specific Development Site 1 identified in the Specific Plan, Policy 5. It is assumed that all tax increments generated from this Redevelopment Area will be used to pay off bonds for Phase IIA or to acquire and develop Site 1.

Expanded Downtown Redevelopment Area

The expanded redevelopment area shown in Figure 6 could accommodate some new uses that would generate tax increments for Downtown Village improvements.

Block Grant Funds

The City currently receives $400,000 per year in Federal Block Grant monies. Under new regulations 60% of these funds must be used for low and moderate income related activities. Normally another 15% is needed for Agency administrative costs. It is projected that $125,000 per year could be available for Downtown Village improvements from this funding source. Part of these funds would be used for the Village Rehabilitation Program with the remainder for capital improvements.

Parking District Number 1

The City created Parking District Number 1 in 1955 to build several parking lots. The district issued $210,000 in Bonds and the City contributed an additional $56,710 to the project. The District was established for 31 years and the Bonds were paid off a few years ago.

The District levied an assessment of roughly 7¢ per $100 of valuation. These funds along with revenue from parking meters were used to build the parking lots, maintenance and enforcement.

The Parking District has a revenue of $114,000 available for maintenance or repair of paving. This District does not appear to have any additional funding potential.

Parking Meters

Parking meter revenue and expenditures are placed in a special fund. Current annual revenues are roughly $63,000 per year with annual meter related expenditures of $60,000 per year.

Current meter rates are 10¢ per hour. For analysis purposes, an increase to 25¢ is estimated to generate an additional $67,000 per year.

The City also has a policy authorizing parking permits for some of the spaces at a cost of $20 for every 3 months. These permits are summarized in Table B-1

Table B-1

City Parking Lots, Meters and Permits

Parking Lot	No. of Meters	No. of Authorized Permits	Permits Available
La Mesa Boulevard	34	15	3
Allison Avenue	77	50	Waiting List of 50
Lemon Avenue	36	25	Waiting List of 50
Palm Avenue	25	10	Waiting List of 50

These permits generate roughly $8,000/year. For analysis purposes, if for example the permits were $20 per month (the private parking rate in the Downtown Village), they would generate $24,000 per year. This could be a short term revenue source until the parking spaces are needed for customer parking or as part of a parking garage construction program.

Sale of City Property

The sale of Specific Development Site 2 (See Policy 5) could generate $500,000 to $1,000,000. These funds should be earmarked to implement the Specific Plan.

General Fund

Each year the City appropriates some funds for Capital Facilities from the General Fund. For FY88-89, the appropriation was:

Park Projects	$ 32,250
Street Projects	186,650
Sewer Projects	0
Drainage Projects	139,000
Building Projects	12,000
	$369,900

It does not appear that the City will have any major increase in General Funds available for Capital Facilities in future years. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that only $25,000 - $50,000 per year will be available for Downtown Village Capital Improvements.

Undergrounding of Utilities

SDG & E funds a number of projects each year to underground utilities. The property owner pays the cost from the property line to the building and SDG&E pays the remaining costs. The City has priorities already set through 1995. Projects in the Downtown Village will be eligible to be considered for funding in future years.

Developer Exactions

Most communities in California now require development projects to contribute to both on-site and off-site public improvements related to the project. Developer exactions could be used as a source to fund some of the street tree, sidewalk and street improvements.

Proposition A Funds

The voters of San Diego County passed Proposition A, otherwise known as the San Diego Transportation Improvement Program Ordinance and Expenditure Plan. This imposes an additional 1/2 percent transactions and use tax, bringing the local sales tax rate to 6 1/2 percent. This is effective for a twenty-year period beginning in April 1, 1988 and ending in March 31, 2008. The additional revenue generated by the 1/2 percent increase will be used to fund transit, street and road projects. The additional revenue will supplement the local funds already being spent on transit, street and roads. Each local agency receiving funds must maintain the same minimum level of local discretionary funding expended for streets and roads purposes. The City is anticipating $718,000 of revenues for Fiscal Year 1988-89 with a total estimated funding of $17,570,000 over the twenty-year program.

The City Council has allocated $700,000/year for the next five years for Fletcher Parkway Improvements. After the 5 year period Proposition A funds could be used for some Downtown Village improvements such as street improvements to Baltimore Drive, Spring Street and University Avenue.

Assessment Districts

A variety of assessment districts are available to fund Downtown Village activities such as:

Parking Districts
Lighting and Landscape Districts
1913 and 1915 Bond Acts
Mello Roos

Appendix C:
COST ESTIMATES

Street Trees

Table C-1 shows estimated street tree costs. Table C-2 lists the appropriate number of trees needed for each street, costs and recommended priority, A being the highest priority. This program would add 813 trees to the Downtown Village at a cost of $667,195 plus irrigation costs.

Table C-1

Typical Street Tree Costs

	Palms	Other
Street Tree - 15 Gallon Can	---	$ 90
Mexican Fan Palm - 20 ft. clear trunk height skinned,includes crane	$1,040	---
Root Barrier	$ 40	$ 30
Tree Grate	$ 450	$360
Expand Sidewalk as Needed ($2.70/sq. ft.)	$ 65	$ 65
	$1595*	$545*

* Additional cost will include irrigation which is difficult to estimate without a detailed street by street study. In some cases, it may also be appropriate to add tree guards to protect the trees from automobile bumpers. Tree guards will cost approximately $220 each.

Table C-2

Street Tree Cost Estimates

Street	Length	# Trees(3)	Cost of Tree(1) Program Only	Priority
Allison Avenue (East of Spring)	1200	60	$ 32,700	C
Allison Avenue (West of Spring)	1000	40(2)	30,600	A
Baltimore Drive	800	60	32,700	B
Cypress Street	700		19,075	D
Fourth Street (La Mesa to Lemon)	275	13	7,085	C
La Mesa (Spring to Acacia)	700	17(North Side) 17(South Side)(2)	9,265 13,005	A
La Mesa (Acacia to University)	1250	31(North Side) 31(South Side)(2)	16, 895 23,715	A
Lemon Avenue (Spring to 4th)	900	45	24,525	C
Palm Avenue (Allison to Finley)	1200	60	32,700	C
Pine Street	650		17,712	D
Spring Street (Freeway to Finley)	2925	195 (Palms)	311,025	A
At I-8 (Canopy Trees)	—	30	16,350	A
Third Street (La Mesa to Lemon)	275	13	7,085	C
University Avenue (West of Spring to La Mesa)	1600			B
Sides of Street		80	43,600	
Median		26	14,170	
University Avenue (East of Spring to La Mesa)	1900	95	51,775	A
TOTAL	15,375 ft.	813	703,982	

(1.) Excludes irrigation costs.
(2.) Includes tree guards at $220/tree.
(3.) Assumes trees at an average of 40 ft. on center except Palms at 30 ft. on center.

Table C-3

Street Light Costs

Street	Estimated No. of Fixtures	Cost	Priority
Acacia Ave. (La Mesa to Orange)	6	$18,000	B
Allison Avenue (East of Spring)	30	90,000	A
Allison Avenue (West of Spring)	24	72,000	B
Cypress (Allison to University)	16	48,000	C
La Mesa Blvd. (Spring St. West to University)	48	144,000	A
La Mesa Blvd. (Grant Ave. to University)	22	66,000	A
Lemon Avenue (Spring to Hillcrest)	22	66,000	B
Orange Avenue (Acacia to Allison)	16	48,000	B
Palm Avenue (Allison to University)	12	36,000	C
Pine Avenue (Allison to University)	16	48,000	C
Spring Street (East Side) (El Cajon to Finley)	36	108,000	A
University Avenue (Spring St. West to La Mesa Blvd.)	40	120,000	C
University Avenue (Spring St. East to La Mesa Blvd.)	46	138,000	C
	334	$1,002,000	

Priorities are shown in Figure 8 and total as follows:

Priority A	$ 408,000
Priority B	204,000
Priority C	390,000
	$ 1,002,000

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Downtown Village
Specific Plan
City of La Mesa

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DESIGN REVIEW REQUIRED

All property within the La Mesa Downtown Village Specific Plan area is subject to design review as outlined in these Design Guidelines. Single family dwellings located outside the historic area that are not listed as a historic resource are exempted from this requirement.

HOW TO USE THE GUIDELINES

In order to assist property owners and developers in carrying out the intent of these Guidelines it is suggested that you follow the following procedure:

1st. Goals.
Read the Goals for the Downtown Village contained in Chapter II of the Specific Plan. These Goals should help you understand the over-all intent of the Plan.

2nd. Sub-Area Guidelines.
Locate your property within one of the thirteen specific Downtown Sub-Areas (See the fold out map, Figure DG-7 located at the back of the Design Guidelines). Read the specific guidelines that only apply to your sub-area.

3rd. Guidelines Applying to All Sub-Areas
Read the remainder of the Design Guidelines that apply to the entire Specific Plan area. To assist you with steps 2 and 3 you may wish to use the Design Review Checklist, Figure DG-2.

4th. Zoning Ordinance
Your project must continue to meet the requirements of the City Zoning Ordinance. However, the specific Plan modifies these requirements in a few cases. See Policy 2 of the Specific Plan for these modifications.

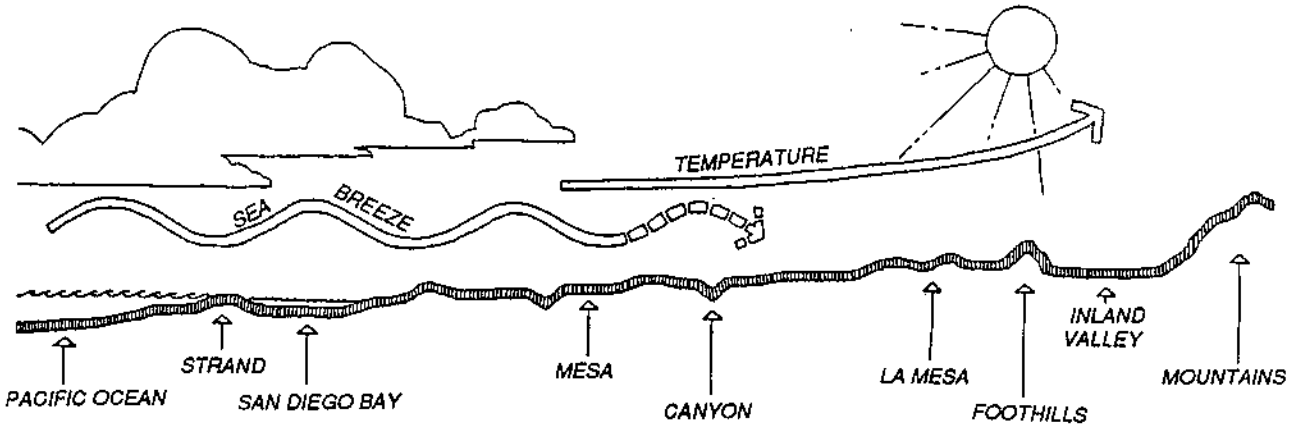
5th. Store Front Designs
If you are remodelling a store front, you may wish to review the illustrative designs shown at the end of this document, Figures DG-3, 4 and 5. These are not intended to be specific designs, but will provide some guidance in relation to implementing the Design Guidelines.

GUIDELINES THAT APPLY TO ALL SUB - AREAS.

1. General Design Principles

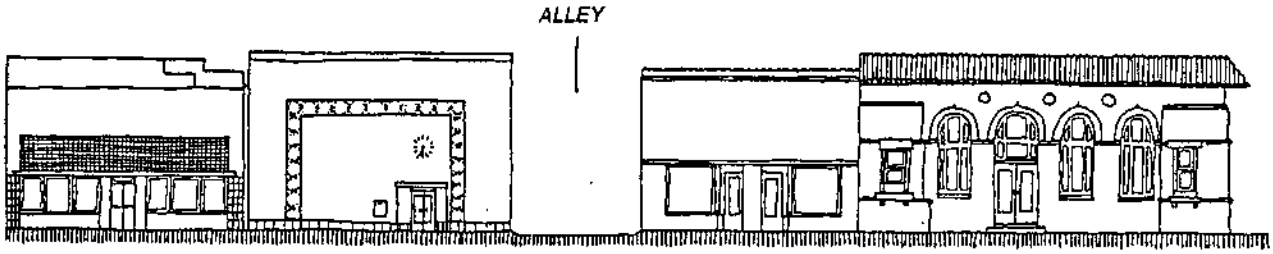
1.1 All Elevations. All elevations of a building should be given careful design consideration, including those which do not directly face a street.

1.2 Climate. Site design should give consideration to solar influences, energy efficiency and prevailing breezes. The summer climate of La Mesa is characterized by predominantly a hot-humid to infrequently hot-arid zone. In this zone air movement constitutes the main comfort-restoring and cooling element. Wind currents generally are in an easterly direction creating a pleasant sea breeze, although this condition may vary in certain areas. Building openings and outdoor living spaces should be oriented to take advantage of this prevailing west to east direction.



San Diego County's varied climate ranges from a "Hot Humid Zone" along the coast to a "Hot Arid Zone" inland. There are varying climatic zones in between as one goes from West to East; La Mesa is characterized by a Hot Humid Summer and a Mild Wet Winter.

1.3 Design Theme. No one design theme is required. Good architectural character is based upon the relationship of a building to neighboring buildings, the suitability of a building for its purpose, and its relationship of proportion and materials.



La Mesa's downtown is representative of a variety of distinguishable architectural styles.

1.4 Details and Ornamentation. Surface detail, ornament and other architectural elements that add to building character are encouraged. This is especially important at the pedestrian level. Details should be carefully integrated with the design concept of the building.

The variety, scale, and rhythm provided by window, door and other openings should be used to improve building character, especially for large expanses of exterior building surfaces.

Parapet walls should be treated as an integral part of the building design. Such walls should not appear as unrelated visual elements. Unnecessary height and bulk should be avoided. Where mansard roofs are incorporated into the parapet design, views from above the building onto the flat roof area must be considered.

1.5 Exposed Rooftops. Due to the topography of La Mesa, exposed roofs are a significant factor in establishing a building's appearance and character. Design should assure that color and texture of roofing materials complement those used for walls and other elements. Exposed rooftops should be treated as building elevations. Such rooftops should be free of mechanical equipment clutter where it may be visible from surrounding buildings and streets. Rooftop mechanical equipment is discouraged, but if used, its design and screening should incorporate the building's materials and design.

1.6 Lighting. To achieve the desired lighting level for most projects, use of many short low intensity fixtures is encouraged, instead of a few tall fixtures that illuminate large areas.

For commercial parking areas, overhead lighting should be mounted at a maximum height of 20 feet above the paved surface, with a lower height preferred. For residential parking areas, overhead lighting should not be mounted at a height of 15 feet, with lower heights preferred. The placement of lighting in residential parking areas should avoid interference with bedroom windows.

Overhead fixtures used for pedestrian areas should be limited to 8 feet in height. Along walkways, low-level lighting in the form of bollards or fixtures mounted on short posts or low walls is encouraged. When this type of lighting is used, fixtures should be placed to minimize glare. Shatter proof coverings are recommended. Posts should be located to avoid hazards for pedestrians or vehicles.

1.7 Orientation of Buildings. The siting and orientation of buildings should respond to the pedestrian or vehicular nature of the street. Buildings on streets of high pedestrian use should face on and be directly accessible from the sidewalk, with minimal interruption by driveways or parking areas. Buildings on streets with heavy traffic, particularly those with no on-street parking, should provide a clearly legible major entry to the off-street parking area as well as orienting the building to the streetscape.

1.8 Refuse Containers. Refuse containers should be located away from public streets and building entrances and should be completely screened with materials that are compatible with building exteriors. Enclosures should be durable and designed for long-term use.

1.9 Safety Design. Because the Downtown Village Plan focuses on pedestrian activity and the retention of a residential environment, safety concerns in design are of paramount importance. Designers should carefully review the Safety Design Guidelines contained in the City's Urban Design Review process.

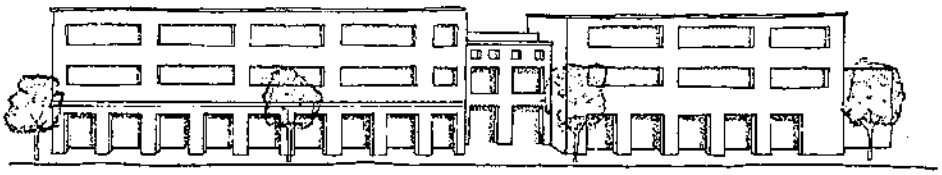
1.10 Trademark Buildings. Building design should strive to represent the character and image of La Mesa through the use of appropriate design elements. Trademark buildings may be prohibited if they are not consistent with other design principles established in these guidelines.

1.11 Utilities. Meters and electrical transformers, telephone junction boxes, utility poles, light standards, and other utility equipment should be screened and located to reduce their visual impact. Utility services should be placed underground. Roof mounted equipment should be screened from view from adjacent streets, properties and pedestrian areas. Special attention should be given to changes in elevation which may provide a view down to a roof. In this case enclose the equipment in a screened shelter or design the layout of exposed equipment in an orderly fashion.

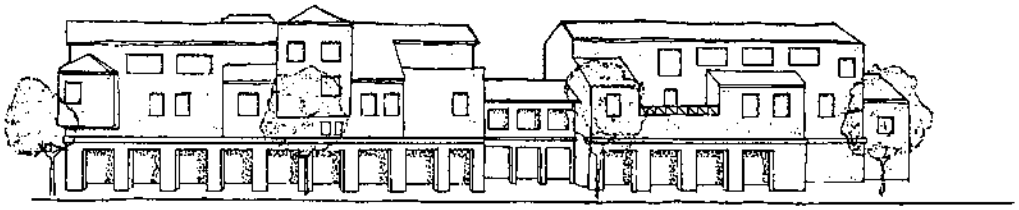
2. Building Form and Scale

2.1 Proportion and Scale. Proportion is defined as the relationship between parts of a building or building element. Scale is the relationship of the building to human size. Varied proportions are generally desired in the design of building elevations. The scale of building elements, especially at the pedestrian level, should be kept intimate and close to human size with relatively small parts.

Apparent building height and bulk should be reduced by dividing larger building masses into smaller-scale parts. Development proposals should show evidence they have studied the predominant scale of buildings in the district and street where they are located.



Avoid Repetitive Proportions



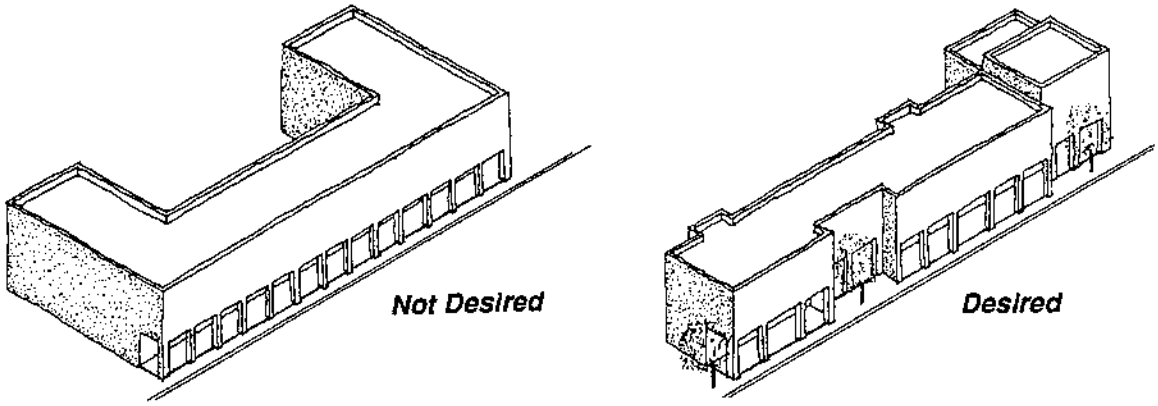
Varied Proportions Are Encouraged

2.2 Reduction of Apparent Height and Bulk. Suggested methods of reducing the apparent height and bulk of buildings are illustrated. Although these methods are encouraged, other approaches that achieve the same objectives are equally acceptable.

a. Reduction of Apparent Width. Buildings over 50 feet wide are encouraged to divide their elevations into smaller parts. This can be accomplished by a change of plane, projection or recess.

Recesses and projections are encouraged to divide the mass of the building into smaller-scale elements and to provide strong areas of shade and shadow. Recesses may also be used to define courtyards, entries or other outdoor spaces along the perimeter of the building. Recessed or projected balconies, porches and arcades create a sense of depth in a building wall, contrasting surfaces exposed to the sun with those in shadow.

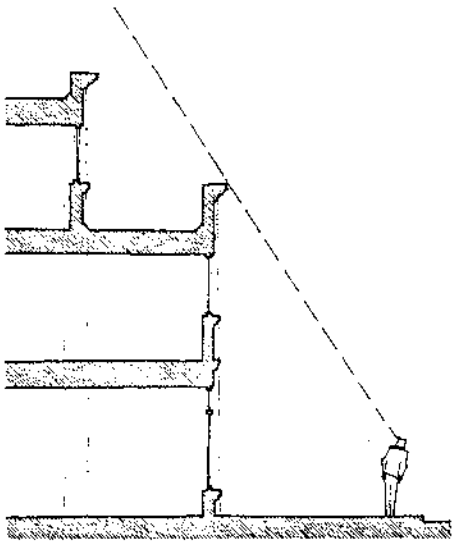
Projections may be used to emphasize important architectural features such as entrances, bays, stairs, balconies and arcades.



Reduction of Apparent Width

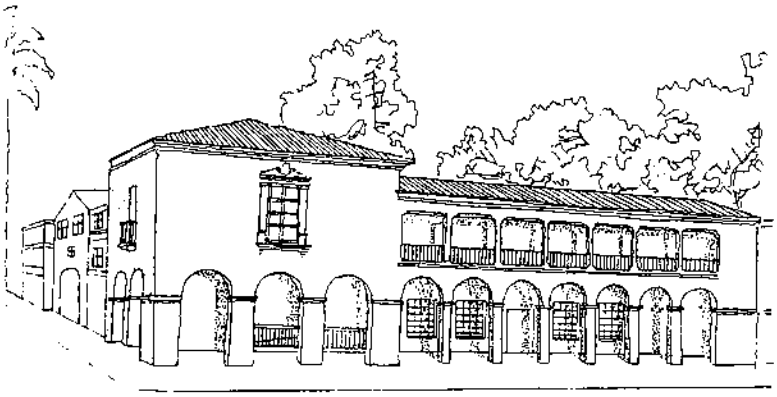
b. Details. Building details such as deep reveals, expressed columns, deeply-recessed doors and windows, and changes in texture help divide a wall plane into smaller-scale parts that relate to human size and scale.

c. Vertical Setbacks.
Buildings over two stories high should set back their upper story street-facing facades to reduce apparent height.



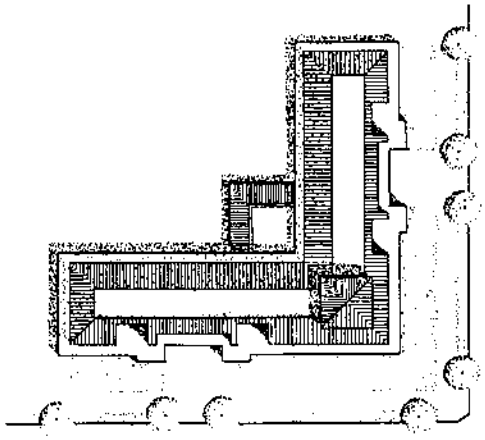
Vertical Setback

2.3 **Vertical Composition.** A traditional principle which is often helpful in reducing building bulk and improving scale is to divide the mass of the structure into distinct horizontal parts that express a sense of base, mid-section and top. This is especially helpful for buildings of three or more stories, and can achieve a more sculptured quality of building form.

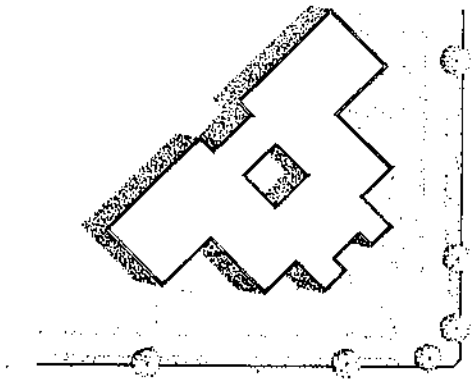


3. The Street-Edge

3.1 Corner Buildings. Corner buildings should make a strong tie to the building lines of each street. Buildings should close in the corner rather than open it as is often the case in strip shopping centers.



Encouraged

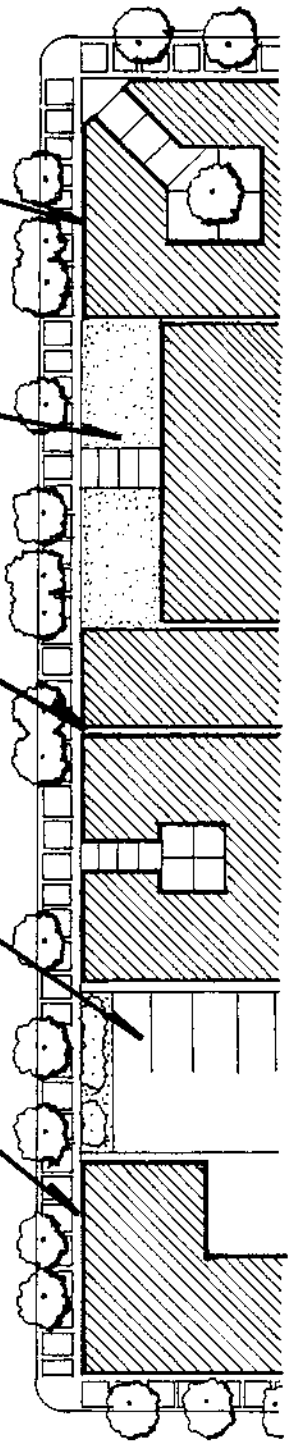


Discouraged

3.2 Street Edge. "Street spaces" include both the public right-of-way and adjacent building setback zone. The network of street spaces establishes the basic scale and character of the Downtown public environment. The objective in La Mesa's Downtown is to create consistent street spaces that unify separate buildings and developments into a tightly-knit, walkable district with a traditional Downtown Village atmosphere. Four standard conditions for street edge treatment are described in the following pages. The condition that applies to each street is shown in the specific sub-area design guidelines.

Condition 1: Continuous Building Edge - Commercial Areas

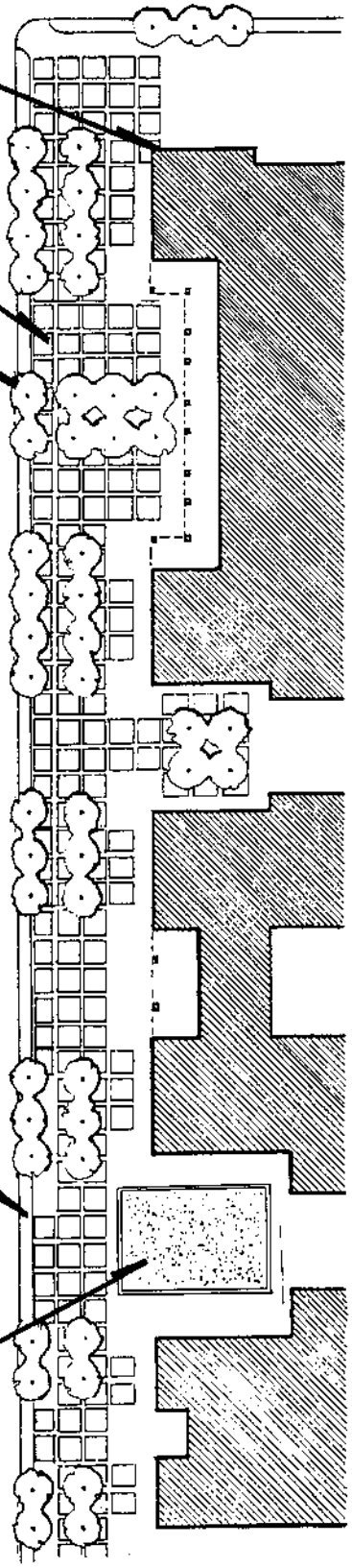
- ✔ Place as much of the ground level front elevation of the building as possible on the front property line and at the sidewalk edge to maintain the continuity of the "street wall."
- ✔ Avoid deep set-back from the sidewalk edge.
- ✔ Strive to create continuous pedestrian activity in an uninterrupted sequence by minimizing spatial gaps between buildings.
- ✔ Avoid parking lots that interrupt commercial space.
- ✔ Avoid blank walls and other "dead" spaces at the ground level.



Condition 2: Courtyard, Patio or Plaza at the Street Edge Commercial Areas

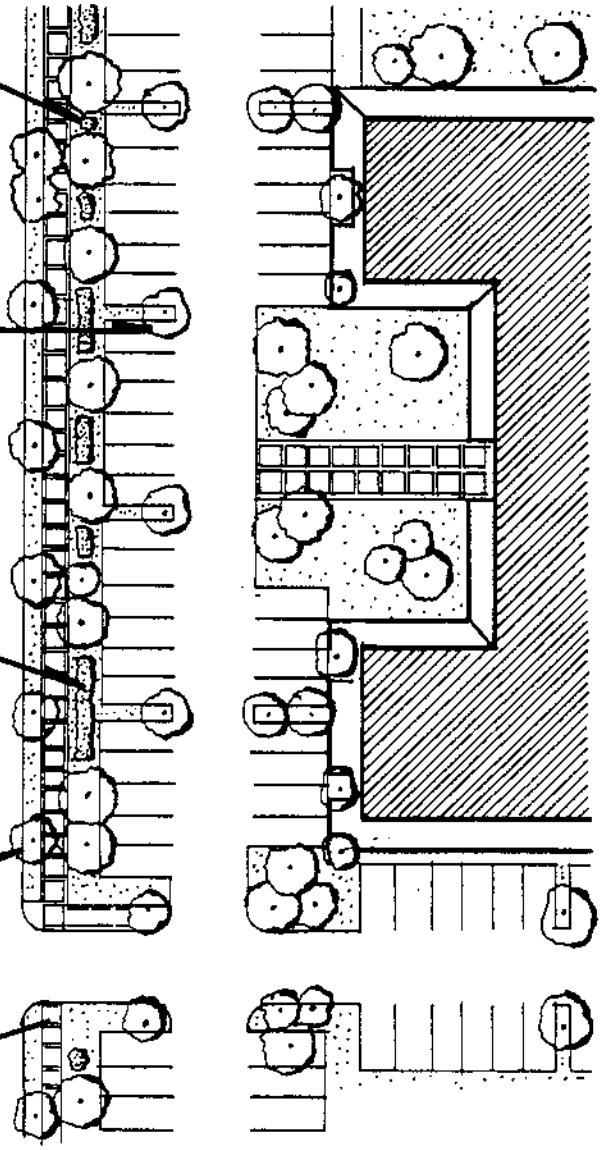
- ✔ Paved pedestrian space that is continuous from curb to building, except for planters, trees, shrubs and fountains. Buildings should be set-back 10 ft from the property line.
- ✔ Paving with a variety of textures and colors.
- ✔ Trees located along the street edge planted in a linear, rhythmic pattern with occasional contrasts and accents.

- ✔ Site furnishings scaled to human size.
- ✔ Lighting at pedestrian height to supplement street lighting.
- ✔ On major arterials such as Spring Street, there should be a buffer between the pedestrian and street: bollards, raised planter beds, and site furnishings such as street lamps, inward-facing benches or low walls help give the pedestrian a sense of protection from passing traffic.
- ✔ Avoid large expanses of lawn, using turf grasses only in small areas.
- ✔ Parking to be located at rear of buildings.



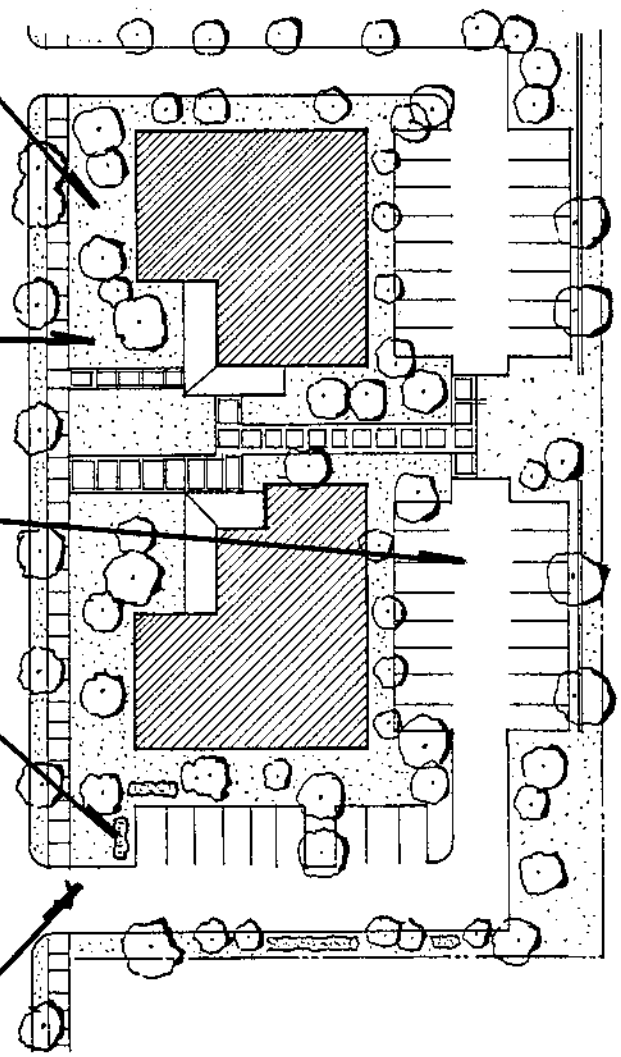
Condition 3: Landscaped Buffer at the Street Edge Commercial Areas

- ✔ Provide a minimum 10 foot deep fully-landscaped buffer at the street-facing edge of all parking lots.
- ✔ Provide at least one tree per 300 square feet of the total landscaped buffer area.
- ✔ Trees, shrubs and/or low walls at least 30 inches high should be used to screen the parking area from street view.
- ✔ Provide street trees on curb edge.
- ✔ The sidewalk should be set back from the curb edge at least 4 feet.

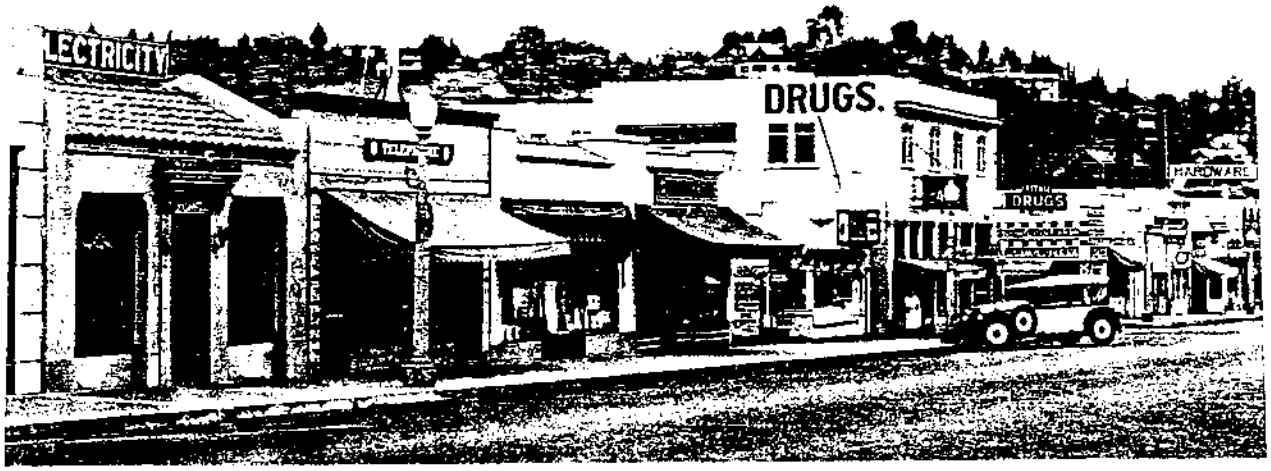


Condition 4: Planted Front Yard Space - Residential and RB Zones

- ✔ Provide a richly-planted front yard and garden space in the setback area along all front and side street property lines. The setback area should be fully-landscaped, interrupted only by pedestrian areas and sidewalks.
- ✔ Parking should not be located in the setback space.
- ✔ Locate parking at rear of building.
- ✔ When parking lots are located to the side of the building or elsewhere on the site where they may be visible from the street, they should be screened from street view by low walls and/or shrubs at least 30 inches high.
  No Parking shall be located within required front yards.
- ✔ Driveways are permitted, but should be of minimal number and width as necessary for safety.



4. Historic Buildings & Cultural Resources



A variety of architectural styles occupy the Village area to serve as a "guide" or "theme" for revitalizing the Downtown Village.

A historic building or other cultural resource which retains the historic character from the period in which it was created can substantially contribute to new development and the surrounding community. The contributions to the community include many tangible and intangible elements, such as the documentation of history in "brick and mortar", providing a record of human achievements, a sense of place and continuity with the past.

For new developments, the contributions a cultural resource can make are equally varied. The historic element can add character and charm to a modern backdrop; it can inspire a design direction which will find broad-based public support; it can be a source of pride. The resource can also provide financial advantage to a project through the benefits of recycling, the special allowances of the State Historic Building Code and various tax incentives.

4.1 Compatibility With Historic Resources. New development should recognize, respect, preserve and be compatible with existing Downtown historic resources. Particular emphasis should be placed on achieving an intimate scale, and a concern for craftsmanship.

New developments which are built on or adjacent to designated historic sites or older buildings of substantial historic character should be respectful of the historic building or site. While not mimicking the older structure, the development should consider the compatibility of size, shape, scale, materials, details, textures, colors and landscape features.

4.2 Diligent Effort to Rehabilitate. New improvements to renovate, or alter an historic site, especially a site listed in the La Mesa Historic Resources Inventory, which have a rating of 1, 2, or 3, should demonstrate a diligent effort to retain and rehabilitate the resource.

For a detailed explanation of the laws and guidelines affecting Designated Landmark properties, see the Historic Preservation Element and Inventory, La Mesa, California, Volume 1, especially Chapter 2, "Historic Preservation Ordinance" and Chapter 3, "Resource Management Guidelines."

Historic buildings and sites which are rehabilitated are encouraged to follow The Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings" published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

The Guidelines are too lengthy to be repeated here, but the Standards for Rehabilitation are as follows:

1) Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.

2) The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.

3) All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.

4) Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.

5) Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.

6) Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition,

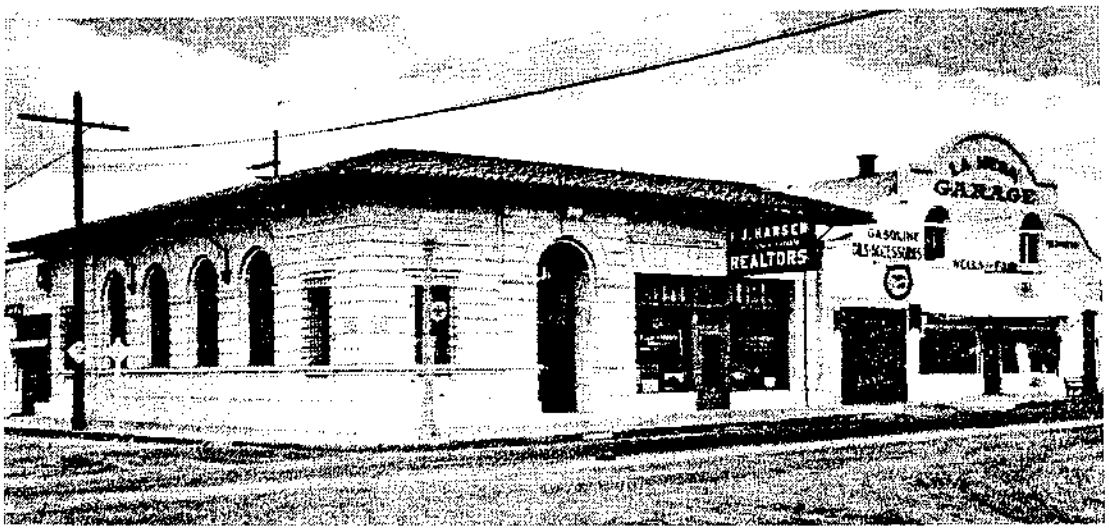
design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.

7) The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.

8) Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archaeological resources affected by, or adjacent to any project.

9) Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.

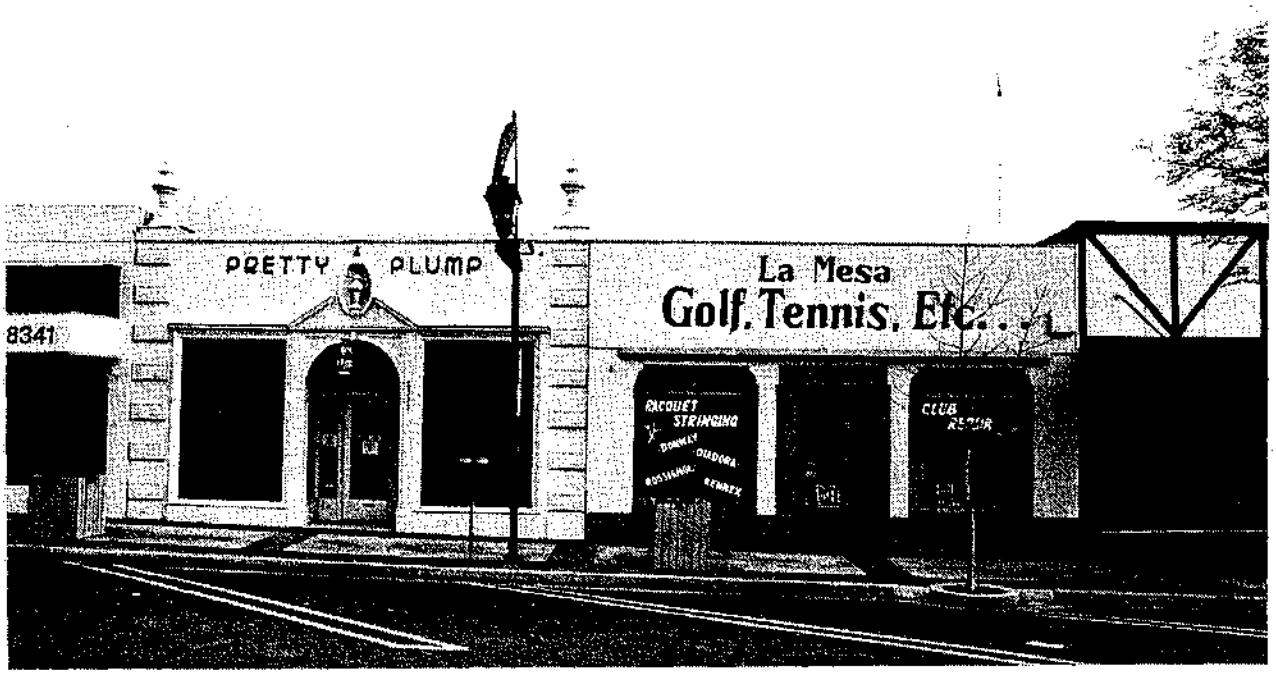
10) Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.

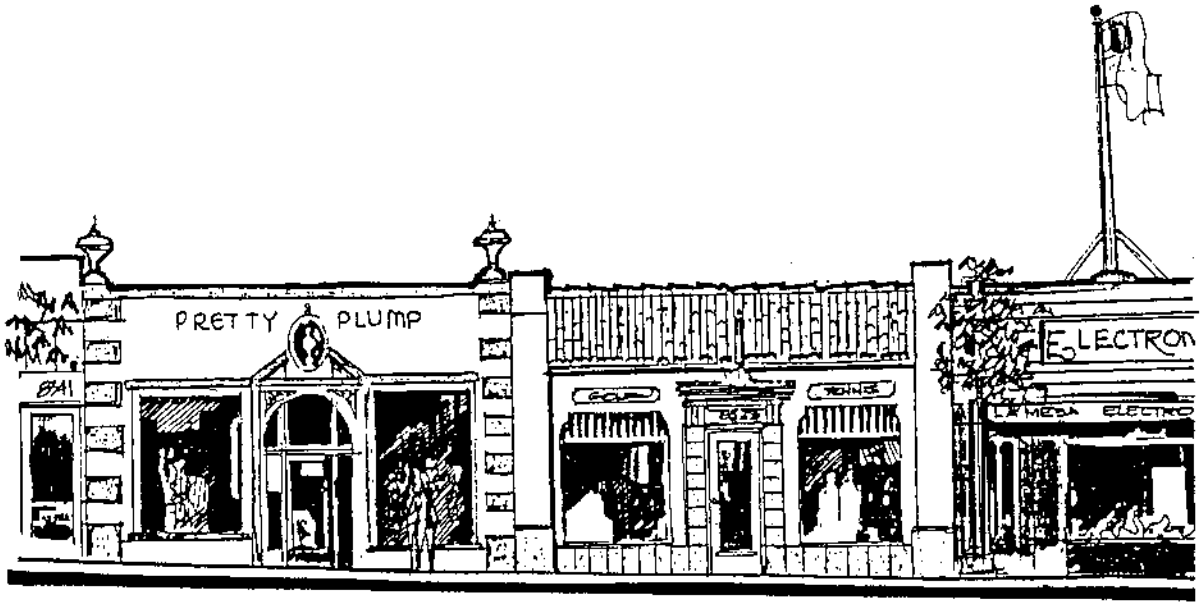


The City and local Historical Groups will offer advice to owners remodeling heritage buildings. It is hoped a "Rediscovery" of our heritage will take place in the Village. This will be two-fold by saving heritage structures for future generations to enjoy and to reinforce the image needed today in the Village.

4.3 Design Example. There are many heritage structures existing in the Village today; however, many have been covered with pseudo-modern facades. Many key design elements are still present and with little difficulty, storefronts could be renovated into their original character.

Some shops are unchanged like the "Pretty and Plump" store at 8333 La Mesa Boulevard; however, the "La Mesa Gold, Tennis, Etc." store, its neighboring building at 8329, has been modified. This building, a former local Gas and Electricity office, could easily be restored to its original condition as shown below.





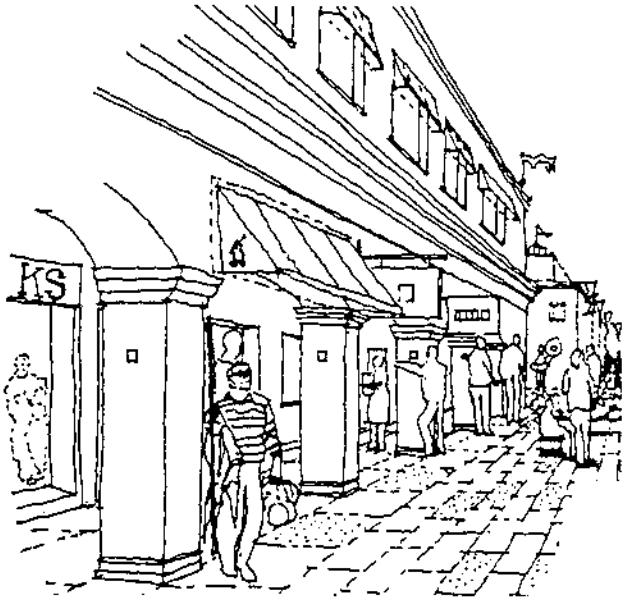
5. Pedestrian Emphasis

5.1 Address Pedestrian Needs. The emphasis of design throughout Downtown La Mesa should be to create a high-quality pedestrian environment. Designs should address pedestrian needs and develop creative approaches to improving pedestrian interest, access and enjoyment.

5.2 Active Building Frontages. Pedestrian interest should be maximized by creating active building frontages with inviting indoor and outdoor spaces visible from the sidewalk and street.

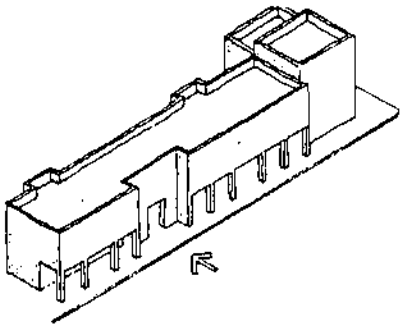
Active building frontages are essential to strengthen Downtown La Mesa's pedestrian character. Buildings should provide generous openings at ground level to allow views of display windows by pedestrians and passing traffic.

Entry courtyards, gardens and street-facing patios can create inviting outdoor spaces that offer a similarly-rich pedestrian experience. Site amenities such as seating, shade structure, public art, special landscaping and paving are helpful to further this intent.

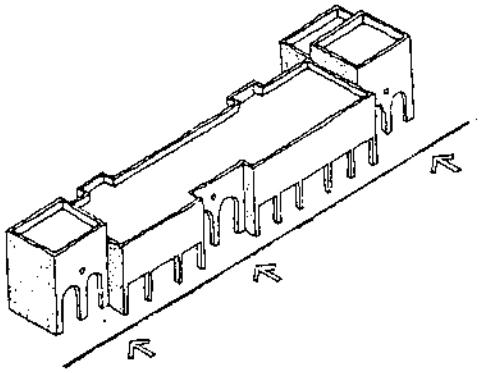


Active Building Frontages

5.3 Building Entrances. Commercial buildings with long frontages should provide frequent building entrances along the street. Side or rear building entrances should always be accompanied by a front, street-facing entrance.



Discouraged.
Long distance between entrances.

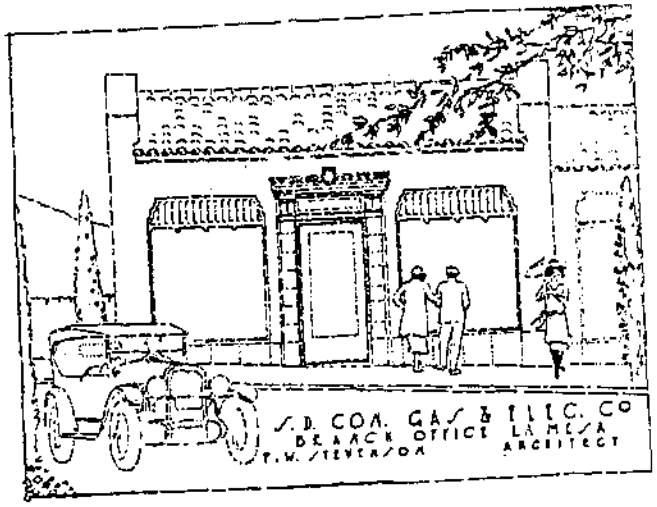


Encouraged.
Frequent street entrances.

5.4 Storefronts. All new buildings and renovations in the Downtown Village shall give careful consideration to providing an attractive storefront to provide pedestrian variety and interest.

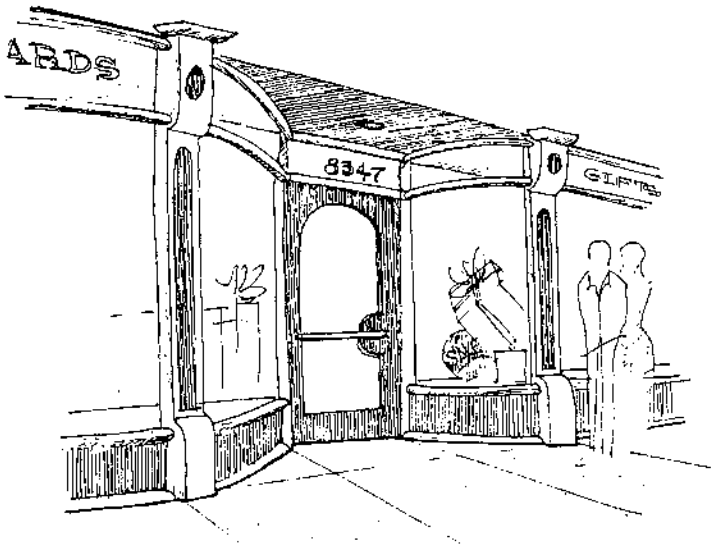
Storefronts are the most important elements to a pedestrian oriented streetscape. Together with display windows, awnings and signs, storefronts make up the character of each building, and all the buildings together make up the total character of the Village.

Historically, storefronts were well-integrated with the rest of the building. Doorways, windows, signs, awnings were balanced and complemented the building above, including the second story windows, parapet walls and cornices.



Through the years, due to buildings being remodeled for the needs of particular merchants, regard to integrating each storefront to the total building has often been overlooked.

5.5 Entry Ways. Entry ways to stores should be recessed in a variety of ways for visual interest and to minimize doors swinging into the sidewalk right of way. However, recessed areas should be designed with security of the pedestrian in mind. Lines of sight should be maintained.



Building entries should be protected form the elements and should create a focus or sense of entry for the structure. Wall recesses, roof overhands, canopies, arches, signs and similar architectural features should be integral elements of the building design calling attention to the importance of the entry.

5.6 Windows/Transparency. Pedestrian activity should be encouraged by providing views into shops, offices and restaurants

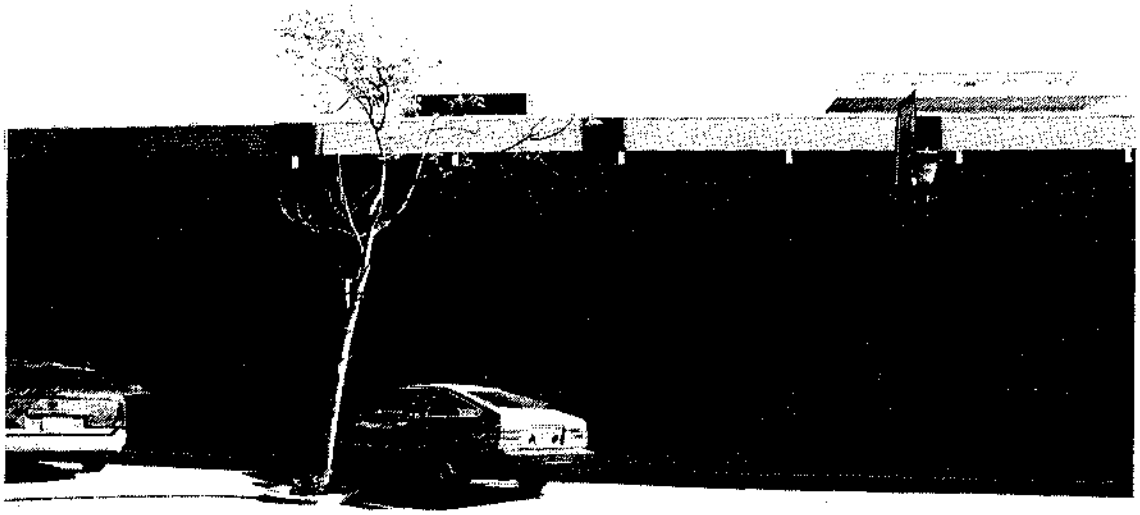
At sidewalk level, buildings must be primarily transparent. A minimum of 50% of all first floor facades with street frontage should consist of pedestrian entrances, display windows or windows affording views into retail, offices, gallery or lobby space. The building wall subject to transparency requirements shall include the portion between three feet and ten feet above the sidewalk. Blank walls should be avoided and lively facades encouraged.

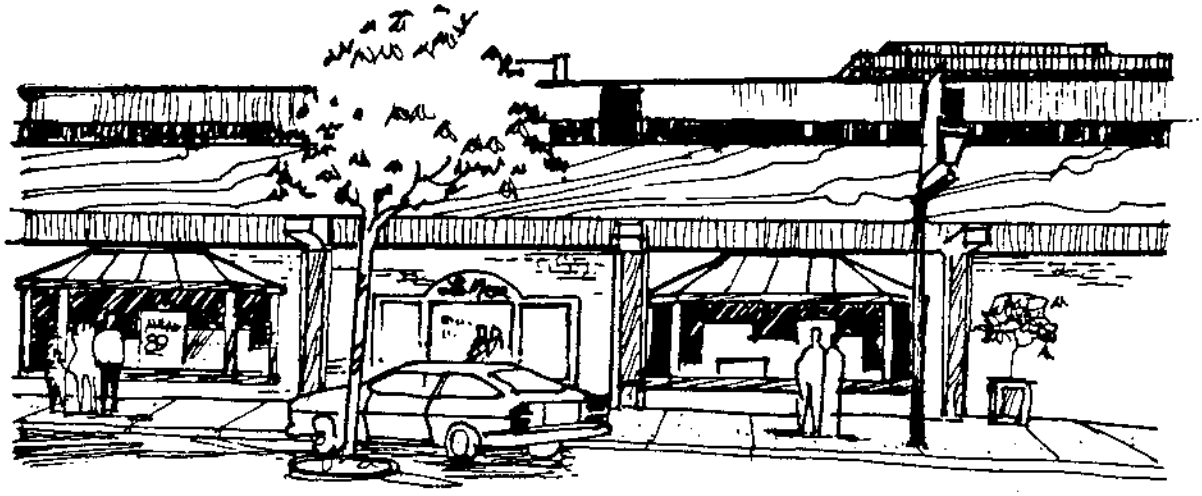
All glass in windows and doorways should be clear for maximizing visibility into stores. A minimal amount of neutral tinting of glass to achieve some sun control is acceptable if the glass appears essentially transparent when viewed from the outside. Opaque and reflecting glass should not be used.

Buildings and establishments where goods and services aren't offered, shall contain at least passive elements focused to the pedestrian. These may include architectural detailing, art work, landscaped areas or windows for public service use.

Perhaps the best advertising a merchant can do is to have an attractive storefront. A storefront that is visually exciting to the pedestrian will cause him to pause long enough to see well displayed merchandise, and this will, in turn, sell itself.

The Pacific Telephone building fronting on La Mesa is an example of the type of large, expansive walls that should be avoided. Display bay windows for public use combined with landscape planters could be added for creating the visual interest that is necessary within the Village.





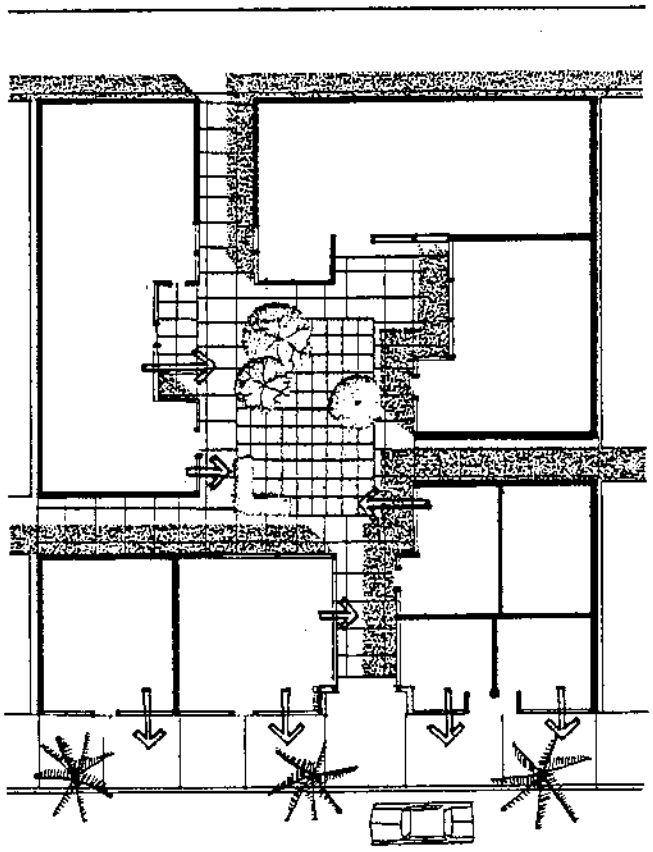
5.7 Courtyards, Patios, Plaza, Gardens. Downtown projects are encouraged to provide courtyards, patios, plazas and gardens which accommodate outdoor activities, give scale and focus to a building or site, and provide a sense of transition between indoors and outdoors. Courtyards should supplement rather than take away from street activity. Courtyards that are designed to diminish street activity should not be allowed.

Downtown La Mesa has potential to develop more courtyard buildings that take advantage of the City's exemplary climate. Characteristics of courtyards and courtyard buildings encouraged are:

- It is preferable that courtyards be partially visible from the street or linked to the street by a clear circulation element such as an open passage or covered arcade.

- The edges of courtyard spaces should contain retail shops, restaurants, offices or other activities that show signs of life. Blank walls and dead spaces without pedestrian interest should be minimized.

- The design of the courtyard may provide a choice of sunny and shaded areas, variety of texture and color, movable seating and tables, sculpture or fountain as a focus.



6. Materials and Colors

6.1 Materials and Colors. Materials and colors should provide for a pleasant pedestrian atmosphere, reinforce the continued quality of the Village look, and harmonize individual buildings into a cohesive and attractive environment.

When refurbishing old structures or constructing new buildings, the material and color choices are an all important step taken to assure the continued quality of the Village look.

There are enough buildings of the Old La Mesa Style, 1920's through the 1950's that are of stucco, terra-cotta tile to establish a theme. All materials and colors used should be compatible with the original styles and colors.

6.2 Materials. Development proposals should show evidence that the use of building materials in the area of the new project has been studied. In districts where a particular material predominates, the new project is encouraged to use a similar material palette or one compatible in texture, color and scale with the predominant materials.

Although the range of building materials may be quite broad, surface materials should be only those in keeping with the tradition of the community. Natural materials (such as wood, stone or brick), are prevalent and contribute to the character of La Mesa. Use of imitation materials, such as artificial stone, should be avoided.

Surface materials that are in keeping with the tradition of the community are:

- Natural materials, such as wood, brick, unpolished stone, etc.
- Stucco.
- Textured masonry.
- Formed concrete with integral color and a textured finish.

Surface materials that are not in keeping with the community include:

- Metal panels exceeding 10% area of the facing of the building.
- Glazed tiles exceeding 20% coverage of the face of the building.
- Polished marble or granite exceeding 10% of the building face.
- Plain concrete block.
- Plastic materials of any kind exceeding 10% coverage of the facing of the building.

- Highly reflective or mirror-like materials that reflect glare into the surrounding environment. These materials should be used only in small areas for architectural details near the ground level.

6.3 Color. Building color(s) should be compatible and blend with the existing colors of the surrounding neighborhood. They should strengthen the existing character, not detract or compete for attention. A range of color recommendations has been created that will allow diversity and yet maintain color harmony in the Village.

Cleaning up a storefront and repainting it can enliven the identity of each individual building as well as harmonize separate structures into a cohesive and attractive environment. Color selection is a major design consideration; therefore, it is important colors be in good taste.

Surface colors in keeping with the community are:

- Off white.
- Natural brick and wood tones.
- Light pastel and earth tones are encouraged for similar buildings or any elevation containing 100 sq. ft. or less.
- Darker pastel and earth tones are encouraged for larger plain elevations exceeding 100 sq. ft. of facing.
- Very bright or very dark tones along with garish colors are prohibited for the primary colors of buildings in the Village.

Accent colors, other than those colors in the color palette, for doors, window frames and other detailing, are allowed, provided such building accents do not exceed 10% of any exterior building elevation.

Base colors (primary building color) should be in the light pastel range. Small buildings should range from white to medium earth tones. Large buildings should all range in the medium toned colors. Slightly darker tones can make large, dull buildings look smaller. Colors for accents, including signs and awnings, should be considered at the time the base colors are selected.

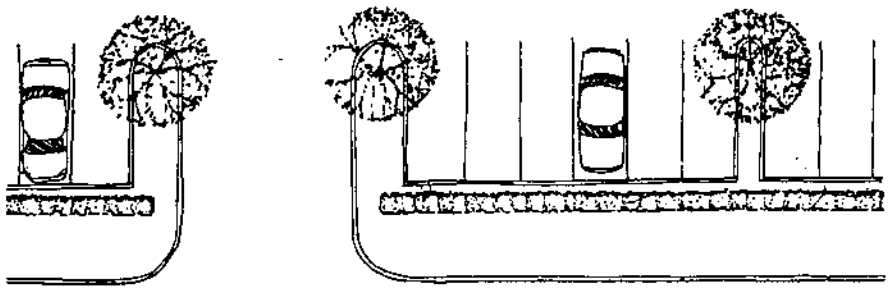
The following chart shows combinations of colors to use as a guide.

Color Group	Building Type	Base Color	Accent #1 Trim	Accent #2 Awning	Accent #3 Signage
A.	One-Story Spanish Revival with some ornamental detailing	White Warm White Warm Beige	Natural Tan Slate Green	Rust Antique Ruby	Ruby Green
	Turquoise	Pale Peach	Teal Blue Turquoise	Pale	Blue,
B.	Two-story Spanish Revival with ornamental detailing	Warm Beige	Light Tan	Rust	Deep Rust
		Peach	Medium Blue/Green	Sea Foam Green	Dark Green
C.	One story typical building from 50's thru '80's	Pale Blue	Off Whites	Medium Blue	Pale Yellow
		Dove Gray	Dusk Gray	Burgundy	Red Tones
		Beiges & Off-Whites	Dark Brown	Tan Tweed	Blue, Copper White
	Two story typical building from '50's thru '80's	See Group B above			
	Any style or any size building using natural materials for primary color such as brick, wood, siding, etc.	Face Brick-Tan, Rust	Any Earth Tone	Slate Gray or Black	Gold
		Wood Siding-Medium Brown Stains	Light Tan Transparent Stains	Rust	Copper

7. Off-Street Parking Facilities

7.1. Surface Parking Areas. Off-street parking areas should be designed and heavily landscaped so as to minimize the visual impact of large paved areas. Parking areas should include the following elements:

a. Dense landscaping should be used at the perimeter of the paved area to meet the City's Parking and Landscape Standards. Generally, trees and shrubs should be used in conjunction with walls and fences to provide visual enclosure and screening.

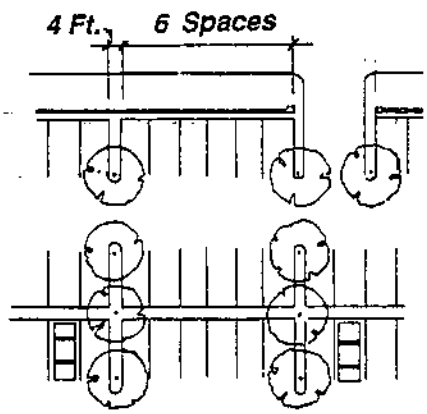


Landscaped Parking Area

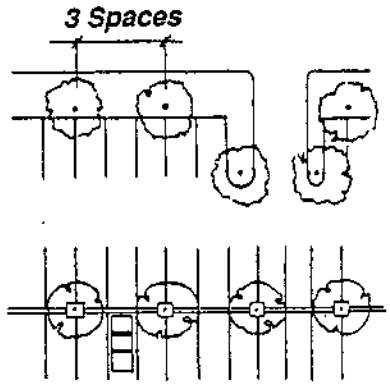
b. In parking areas over 6000 square feet, interior landscaping should be provided to screen and visually separate the parking areas into smaller increments.

   Both perimeter and interior landscaping should use canopy-type trees. The location and spacing of trees is dependent on the type of tree used, but the overall effect should be of a relatively consistent tree cover which will shade the pavement and autos.

   As a general guideline, a planted break at least 4 feet wide for canopy trees should be provided at a minimum interval of 6 parking spaces in a row. As an alternative to a planted break, one tree at a minimum interval of 3 parking spaces in a row may be located in the center of the parking bay, by a grate, planter or other protection device.



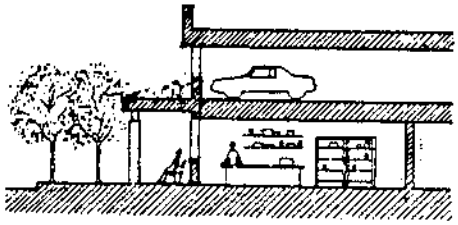
Parking with 4 Ft. planted break.



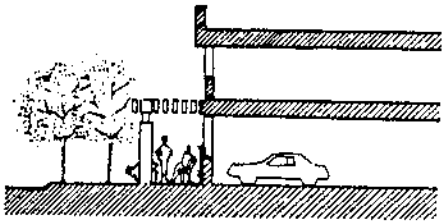
Parking with planter or grate.

7.2. Parking Structures. Parking structures which must be located on public street frontages should:

- Minimize the street frontage of the structure by placing its short dimension along the street edge when possible.
- Develop activities such as shops, offices or other commercial space along the ground level of street frontage.
- When this is not possible, provide a planted patio space between the structure and the street.



Parking structure with ground floor shop.



Parking structure with planted patio space.

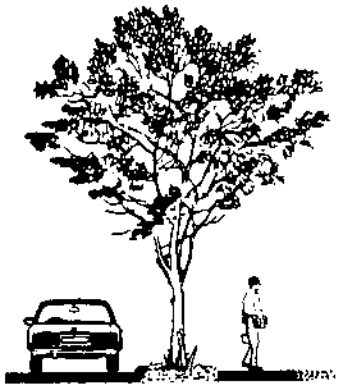
8. Landscape

8.1 Mature Trees. All mature trees should be retained when feasible. This will require careful judgment weighing the value and hierarchy of all natural features, the size and species of the tree, and the developer's program for the site. This Guideline is not meant to preclude removal of noxious or undesirable trees.

8.2 Landscape Heritage. La Mesa has been nationally recognized as a "Tree City" for its concern and dedication to the maintenance and preservation of the urban landscape. All development proposals shall include a well thought out and executed landscape plan. Innovation in planting design and choice of landscape materials is encouraged. Artificial plants and grass are discouraged.

Trees planted around homes, businesses and along streets consume carbon dioxide directly, and therefore help lessen the "global greenhouse effect". They also minimize the "heat islands" produced by sunbathed streets and parking lots.

8.3 Street Trees. Street trees are a required element for all projects unless otherwise directed by the City. Locations for street trees are specified in the sub-area guidelines for each street. The basic design theme for all of Downtown is to locate the trees between the curb and the sidewalk. This reinforces the pedestrian atmosphere by providing a psychological barrier between the sidewalk and the street and by visually narrowing the street.



This

Not This

Specific trees are specified for some streets as part of the Sub-District design guidelines. Other trees recommended for commercial areas are as follows.

a. Theme Tree (a dominant tree which signifies the commercial area theme)
   Choices: American Sweetgum
   Stone Pine
   Jacaranda

b. Processional Tree (a medium size, evergreen tree used between theme trees)
   Choices: Fern Pine
   Carrotwood
   Brisbane Box
   Queen Palm

c. Accent Trees (trees with showy flowers, dramatic form or fall color; used at focal points or transitional nodes)
   Choices: Chinese Flame Tree
   Purple Orchid Tree
   Chinese Pistache
   Queen Palm

Recommended trees are described below. Descriptions refer to mature sizes anticipated for these trees as street trees in La Mesa.

STREET TREE DESCRIPTIONS

American Sweetgum (Liquidambar styraciflua) The American Sweetgum is a medium sized tree. In southern California is has a mature height of 30 to 40 feet and a spread of 8 to 20 feet. Its form is pyramidal at youth and more columnar when mature. The tree is deciduous with fall foliage colors of yellow, orange and crimson red. The root system is deep and will take wet soils. The tree is free from disease and pests. It has dry seed balls that may cause more maintenance than many other fruits.

Brisbane Box (Tristania conferta) This medium sized tree has an oval form and will grow to a height of 40 to 50 feet with a spread of 15 to 25 feet. The small white, star-shaped flowers bloom in small clusters from May to June. The root system grows to an average depth. The tree is susceptible to scale.

Cajeput Tree (Melaleuca quinquenervia) The Cajeput Tree is a narrow, columnar tree with a height of up to 40 feet and a spread of 15 feet at maturity. Its pendulous branches and peeling bark add interest to the tree, as do its clusters of creamy white flowers. The root system grows to an average depth and can withstand wet conditions. The tree is free from pests and diseases.

Canary Island Pine (Pinus canariensis) This tree is a large, pyramidal evergreen that can grow from 40 to 60 feet in height with a spread of 20 to 30 feet. The root system is deep and the tree is free from pests and disease.

Carrotwood (Cupaniopsis anarcardioides) The Carrotwood is a medium sized evergreen tree with a rounded canopy form. It can grow to a height of 30 feet and a spread of 20 feet at maturity. The root system is deep and the tree is free from pests and disease. It is important to plant male trees only as the female produces messy yellow-orange fruit about one inch in diameter.

Chinese Flame Tree (Koalrauteria bipinnata) The Chinese Flame Tree is a medium to large deciduous canopy tree. It will grow to a height of 20 to 40 feet with a spread of 10 to 30 feet. In December, the leaves turn yellow before dropping. The tree produces more color in late summer and fall with 2 inch long capsules of red, orange or salmon color. The root system is deep and the tree has no pests or disease.

Chinese Pistache (Pistachia chinensis) The Chinese Pistache is a medium to large, round-headed, deciduous tree that will reach a height of 20 to 30 feet with an equal spread. The foliage will turn bright red and orange in the fall for color accent. Female trees will produce clusters of small red-bronze fruit in the fall. The root system is deep and the tree is relatively free from disease and pests.

Jacaranda (Jacaranda mimosifolia) This deciduous tree is known for its profuse lavendar bloom in the spring. It has a dense cover of fine, light green leaves and is bare for a brief time prior to flowering. The tree can attain a round form, but requires pruning to avoid an irregular structure. At maturity, it averages 25 to 40 feet in height, with a width of 15 to 25 feet. The tree is relatively pest free, with deep roots. However, it requires good drainage and will not tolerate wet soils.

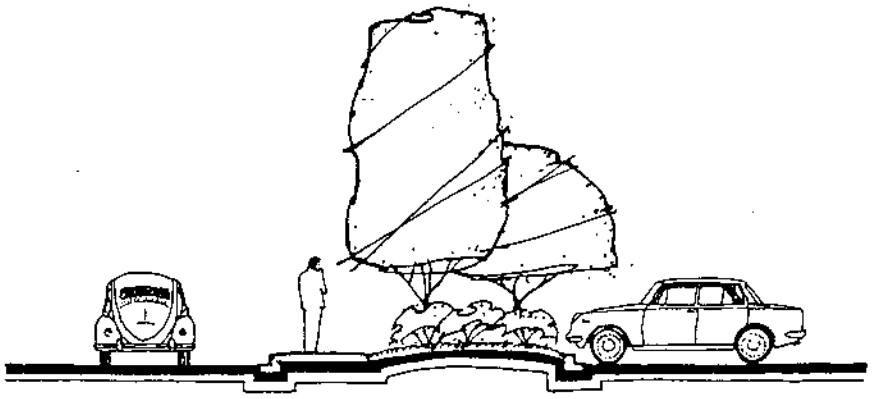
Mexican Fan Palm (Washingtonia robusta) The Mexican Fan Palm is a tall tree with fan-shaped leaves and a tall, slender trunk. It can reach a height of 40 to 100 feet tall with a spread of 5 to 10 feet. Its has a shallow, fibroxus root system (not invasive) and is free from pests and disease.

Purple Orchid Tree (Bauhinia variegata) This deciduous tree has a rounded form and grows to a height of 20 to 35 feet. Its lavender-purple flowers put on a show from January to April. The dry seed pods produced after flowering can be messy. The root system grows to an average depth. It is not susceptible to pests or disease.

Queen Palm (Arecastrum romanzoffianum) The Queen Palm is a tall, slender tree with long, feathery leaves that form an arching head of 10 to 15 feet in width. The tree will reach a height of 40 feet at maturity. It produces small white flowers and small orange fruit which hang in clusters from the base of the crown. The root system is shallow and fibrous, but not invasive. Disease and pests are not a problem.

Stone Pine (Pinus pinea) The Stone Pine is a large, massive tree with a possible mature height of 30 to 40 feet and a 30 foot spread. the branches sweep upward forming a flat-topped umbrella-like crown. The tree produces 4 to 5 inch cones which ripen in 2 years. The root system is deep and there are not pests or diseases.

8.4 Specific Areas Needing Landscaping. Numerous buildings throughout the study area have unattractive asphalt paved parking lots with no landscaping or poorly defined tree lawns. In these lots the paving abuts the sidewalk with no differentiation. These lots should be separated from the sidewalks by low walls, hedges, trees or other landscape and at least partially screened form public view as shown below. The larger lots also need trees and landscaping internal to the lot.



The following list of 24 sites, mapped on Figure DG-1, include most of the more important sites.

P.1 Legion Hall. There's no differentiation between the parking lot and the sidewalk at this location and the parking lot needs landscaping.

P.2 Liquor Barn. This entire parking area needs landscaping. The landscaping on Spring Street is particularly poor, and the entire frontage needs trees at the curb line.

P.3 United Methodist Church. The tree lawn on the Lemon Street frontage from Spring Street to the alley is asphalt. It could be changed to grass like the next half block. The Palm Avenue frontage is a green gravel tree lawn. This should either be planted in grass or an attractive hard surface. Both frontages should have trees planted at the curb line.

P.4 Gaines Laundry. This area has a painted gravel tree lawn that needs trees at the curb line. Additionally, the parking lot needs landscaping.

P.5 North Side of Lemon Street (Palm to Third Avenue). This entire half block consisting of three parking lots needs landscaping. The city parking lot has two existing nice trees. However, overall the entire area needs landscape screening of the cars.

P.6 Alley South of Lemon (Between Palm and Third). This is a typical example of an alley that needs landscaping.

P.7 Lot on Third Street South of Lemon. Landscaping is needed on the front part of this lot.

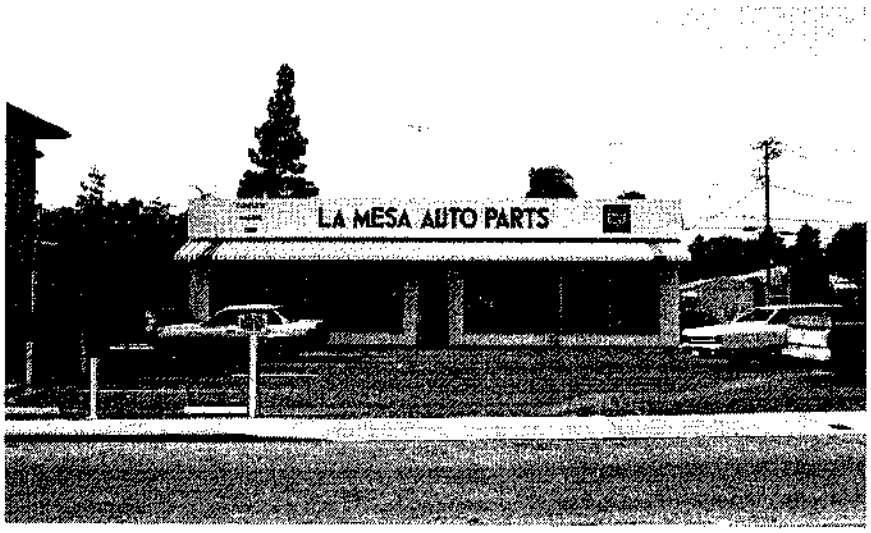
P.8 Palm Avenue (West Side Between Lemon Avenue and Finley). This commercial lot needs landscaping.

P.9 Mortuary on Cypress. This parking lot needs landscaping needs landscaping.

Attractive Parking Lot Landscaping on La Mesa Boulevard

P.10 Telephone Building. This property needs trees at the curb line on Spring Street.

P.11 La Mesa Auto Parts on Allison Avenue. This parking area needs landscaping



P.12 City Parking Lot on Allison. The new walkway coming through Van's Cleaners should be extended through to Allison Avenue. Also, this entire parking lot could use more landscaping.

P.13 Grossmont Escrow. This parking lot needs landscaping. Additionally, the blank undifferentiated north wall should be screened from the Palm Avenue view, since Palm Avenue is a residential street.

P.14 Residential Court on Pine Street. This development could be substantially improved with the addition of trees.

P.15 8037 To 8047 La Mesa Boulevard. This entire parking area needs to be redefined. Currently, cars drive on the sidewalk or back on the sidewalk to maneuver.

P.16 South Two Corners. Normal Avenue and La Mesa Boulevard. The 7-11 Store and Alinda Flower Shop both have bad parking lots that need landscaping. The intersection should also be visually closed through the addition of trees.

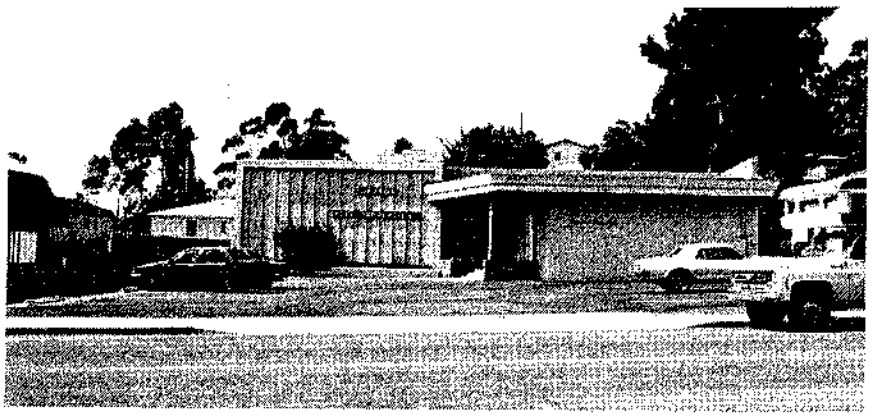
P.17 7979 La Mesa Boulevard. The parking lot for the retirement home, and particularly the hill behind the parking lot, need additional landscaping.

P.18 Bob Stall Chevrolet on Baltimore. This entire frontage needs landscaping. Trees should be placed at the curb line with a high canopy which would not block the auto display.

P.19 Police Department Parking Lot. This parking lot at the corner of Date and Allison needs landscaping and street trees.

P.20 Grant and Lemon. The Dansk Tea Room parking lot needs landscaping Additionally, the chain link fence along the street line might be replaced with an attractive wrought iron fence or some similar feature.

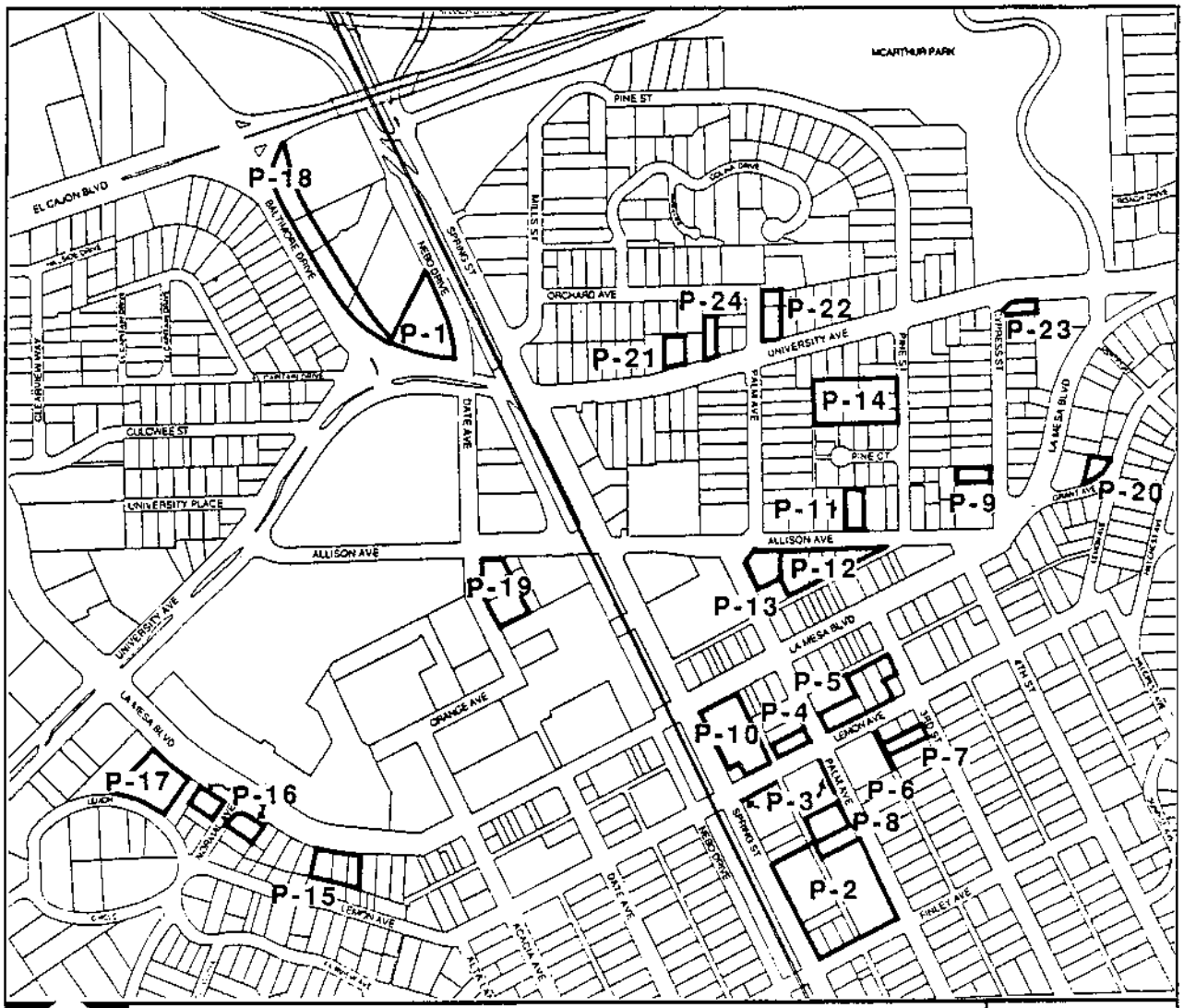
P.21 University Avenue Law Office. This parking lot needs landscaping.



P.22 Northeast Corner of University Avenue and Palm Avenue. The parking lot behind the chiropractor's office at 8300 University needs landscaping. This is particularly important since the lot abuts a single family area.

P.23 Senior Center Parking Lot on University. This parking lot needs landscaping.

P.24 University Avenue Architect's Office. This architect's office at 8270 University Avenue has paved the front yard for parking with no landscape. The area needs trees and landscaping.



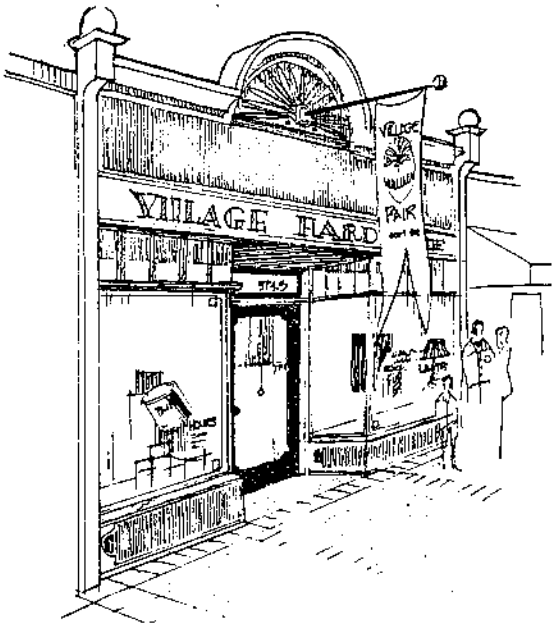
Parking Areas Needing Landscaping

Figure DG-1

9. Signs

9.1 General Design Criteria. Signs and related graphics should make a definite architectural contribution and function as an integral part of the building and site design. Sign concepts should be considered during the design of buildings, so that signs and graphics are architecturally incorporated into those buildings. Size, heights, location, and material should strongly relate to building design. Permanent signs should serve to identify a business. They are an index for the streetscape, and are not primarily intended to advertise specific products. They should provide visual interest to the pedestrian, enticing people to walk and browse. They should have graphic balance and be an integral part of the overall storefront. Signs should be sized and placed so as not to cover up architectural features. Signs of exceptional design quality of a historic design may be given special permission to modify these requirements.

Signs communicate information about the business, and the quality of the sign can communicate something of the quality of the business. A well designed sign greatly contributes to the character of the building facade and can enhance the total character of the Village.



Merchants depend on signs to communicate goods or services available to the shopper. Signs are the first thing the merchant wants one to notice. Historically signs have become larger and larger due to the necessity for them to be seen from passing automobiles. Here, in the Village, it is the intention to focus signs to a walking pedestrian, or a slow moving vehicle.

Well designed signs get their "clue" or inspiration" from a well designed building and/or the product or services offered. A good building is generally easy to sign, while a poorly designed building cannot be made interesting by the signage alone.

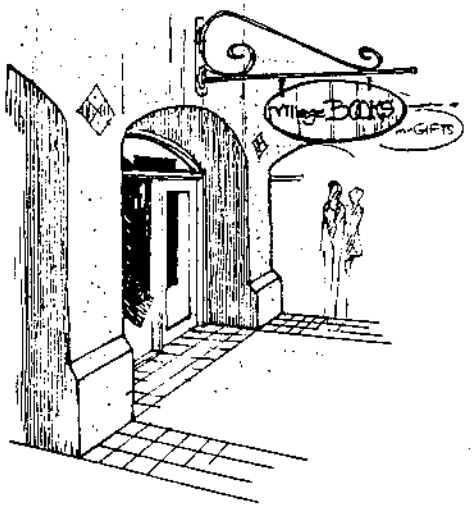
9.2 Sign Programs. Complete sign programs for entire buildings or building complexes shall be included with design review applications.

9.3 Freestanding Signs. Signs that are permanently attached to the building facade are encouraged. Freestanding signs should be considered only in the following special instances:

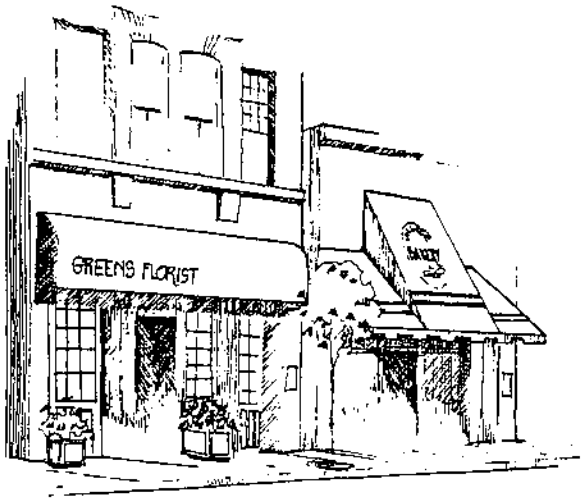
- For the identification of a building group, commercial or otherwise, such as a shopping center, professional office group, or community center, in instances where more than one use is to be identified by a single sign.

- When attached signing would be ineffective due to:
  - location of the building on the site
  - design of the building
  - location of other buildings or structures on or adjacent to the site.
  - topography or other existing natural features.

9.4 Projecting Signs



- Projecting signs are appropriate and encouraged because they are best oriented to the pedestrian.
- All projecting signs should be pedestrian oriented and should not exceed a size of 8 square feet. All projecting signs shall provide vertical clearance to sidewalks of a minimum of eight feet, and shall not extend more than four feet from the buildings or 1/3 of the sidewalks width, whichever is less.
- Although roof signs are not allowed, projecting signs may extend to a maximum of three (3) feet above the parapet roof line.



9.5 Awning Signs.

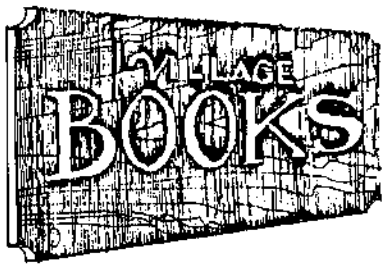
- Awning signs are permitted but are limited to 15% of the awning area.

9.6 Illumination. The preferred illumination method for Downtown signs is to project light onto the face of the signs, with the light sources shielded from view. Small neon signs create an "ambient"mood while communicating a message and are allowed in the Village. Back-lit plastic box signs are discouraged. When such signs are allowed, they should consist of illuminated individual symbols or letters or have dark or opaque backgrounds with light colored letters.

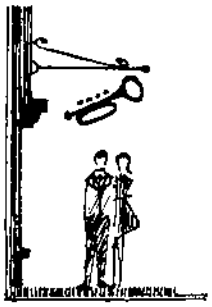
9.7 Colors. Sign colors shall relate to the building's architecture and surroundings. Excessive brightness and overly brilliant colors should be avoided.

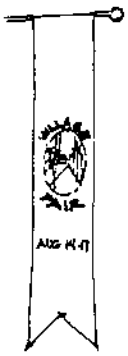
9.8 Graphics. Sign style should be simple and easy to read, with text kept to a minimum. Signs that are of complex type face should be avoided because they are generally too difficult to read. Signs that are faddish should also be avoided.

- Lettering, logos and other graphics are too often cramped onto the signboard. Lettering and logos need room to breathe. The space surrounding the lettering is an important part of the sign design. The following is a good rule of thumb. An imaginary rectangle that describes the area of lettering, logo or other graphics, should not exceed 40% of the total sign board area.



- Words communicate the sign's message; therefore, the typeface is important. Generally, simple block letters for a short message work well. The sign might be one word like "Hardware" or "Books", etc.
- Individual letters mounted on a facade are accepted; however, cut out letters above the parapet line are not allowed. Letters should not exceed 12 inches in height.
- Building signs should only communicate the primary message. Secondary information (description of goods or services) should be at eye level.
- Banners are permitted but must only communicate a general public message, such as "festivals".
- Pictograph signs can communicate very rapidly. A cut out of a musical instrument, for example, as a sign, is easily recognizable.
- Three dimensional icons, such as a barber pole, are encouraged and appropriate in the Village.





DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR SUB AREAS

Specific Guidelines are established for the thirteen sub-areas shown in Figure DG-7, which is a fold-out located at the end of this document.

A. THE VILLAGE

The Village

The design objective for the Village is to preserve its unique qualities including:

- **Streets, walks and buildings that are in scale with a pedestrian-oriented experience.**
- **Historic buildings and architecturally significant stores that establish a diverse, pedestrian-scaled architecture.**
- **A sense of friendliness and security for the shopper.**
- **Well placed landscaping that acts as a backdrop for Village activities.**

- **A sense of place and experience not found in shopping centers.**
- **Specialty shops not found elsewhere.**

✔ **Street Edge:** Follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge, Condition 1.

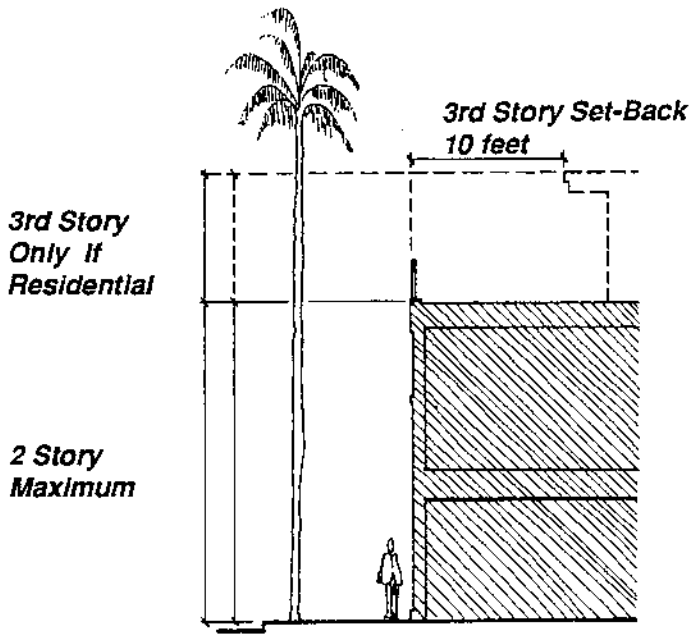
✔ **Landscape Design:** Metal protective grates should be installed to protect the trees planted in the La Mesa Boulevard parking areas.

✔ **Rooflines:**

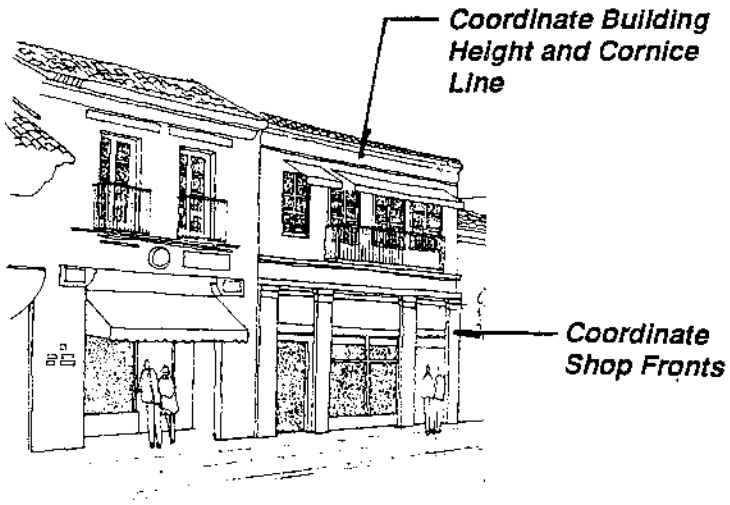
- The silhouette of buildings against the sky should provide interest but avoid visual clutter.
- Rooflines should vary as storefronts do, from one to the other.
- Old unused signs and brackets projecting above parapet walls should be removed.

✔ **Mass and Scale:** To insure the Village character, mass and scale of new or remodeled buildings are important considerations. The following points are designed to maintain this scale.

- The maximum permitted building height in the Village is two useable stories. A third story is permitted if the third story is exclusively for residential use. All street facing facades should be limited to 2 stories. If a building contains a third story, the third story should be set back at least 10 feet from the street-facing facade in order to reduce the apparent building height.



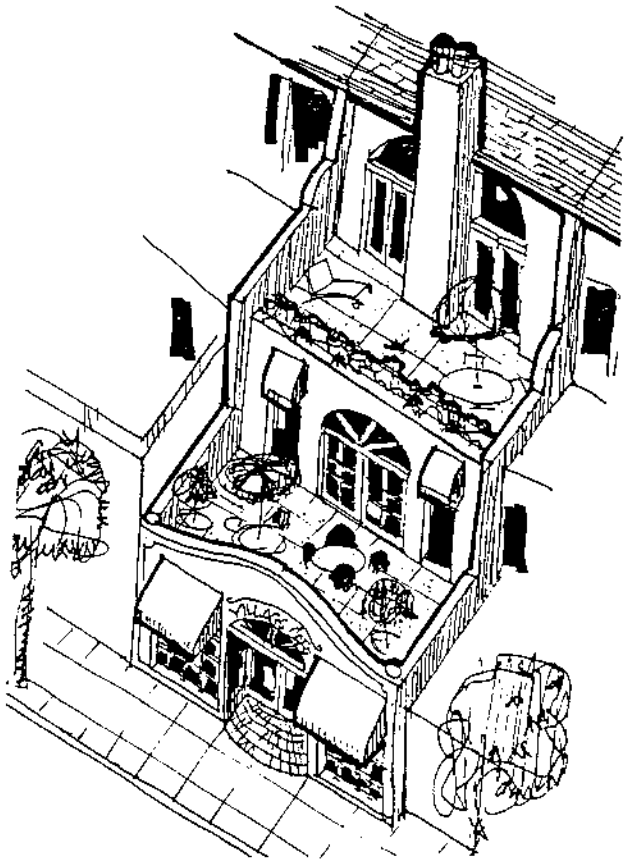
- Efforts to coordinate the actual and apparent height of adjacent structures are encouraged. This is especially applicable where buildings are placed very close to each other. It is often possible to adjust the actual height of a wall, cornice or parapet line to be a similar height to that of an adjacent building. Design linkages can also be achieved to adjust apparent height by placing window lines, belt courses or other horizontal elements in a place or pattern that reflects the same elements on neighboring buildings.



- Along public streets, at least 50% of all building frontages should be placed on the property line with a higher percentage desired. Set backs should not exceed 4 feet at any point including recessed door entry ways.

- The drawing to the right illustrates how the rhythm and scale can be maintained in the future. Lively narrow storefronts. with activities, i.e. restaurants, shops and/or offices should be encouraged on second floors. Third floors should be for residential only.

  Note the scale at the street level. Although there are two levels shown above, the pedestrian's experience is not adversely impacted.



✔ **Building Width**

The rhythm of the narrow one and two story buildings along La Mesa Boulevard offers the pedestrian maximum variety and interest while window shopping.

Twenty five to thirty five foot storefronts should be the pattern for the Village. Existing large, expansive store fronts should be broken into smaller pedestrian-scale bays.

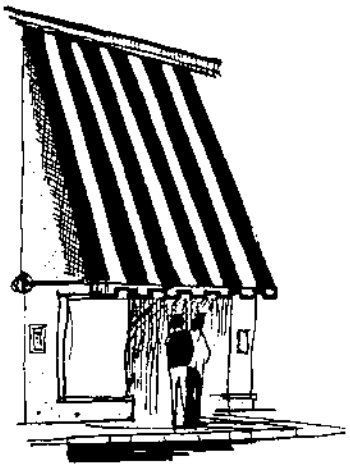
✔ Canopy and Awnings

Incorporation of canopies and awnings into storefront design is encouraged since they add architectural interest to buildings, protect shoppers from inclement weather, provide places for signage, and shade merchandise display windows.

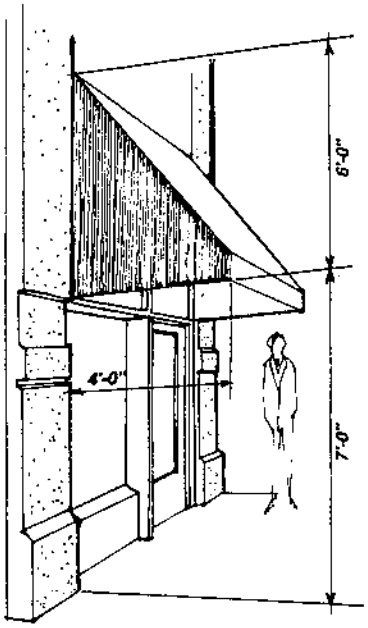
A variety of shapes and compatible colors of awnings are encouraged, such as these rounded window awnings.

- **Awning and Canopy Design**

Awnings and canopies should not be the major design element of a storefront. Awnings that extend vertically to the upper parapet are overpowering to the pedestrian and should not be allowed.



Awnings and canopies are limited to a projection of four (4) feet into the public right of way and are to be a minimum of seven (7) feet above the sidewalk to the soft flexible portion and eight (8) feet to any solid portion or frame of an awning. Awnings are also limited to a maximum of six (6) feet vertically along the building line.

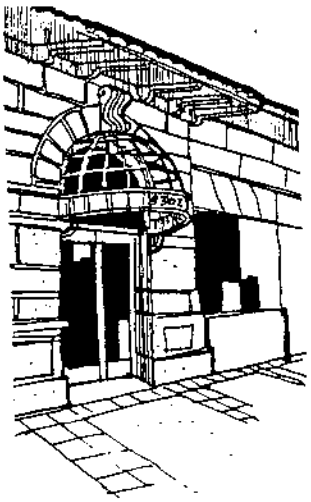


- **Projection Into Street**

Because the sidewalks are rather narrow, canopies and awnings should not project more than four feet from the property line toward the street. Some canopies exist in the Village that project over most of the sidewalk.

- **Solid Canopies**

Fixed canopies or marquees must primarily be transparent and require an encroachment permit.



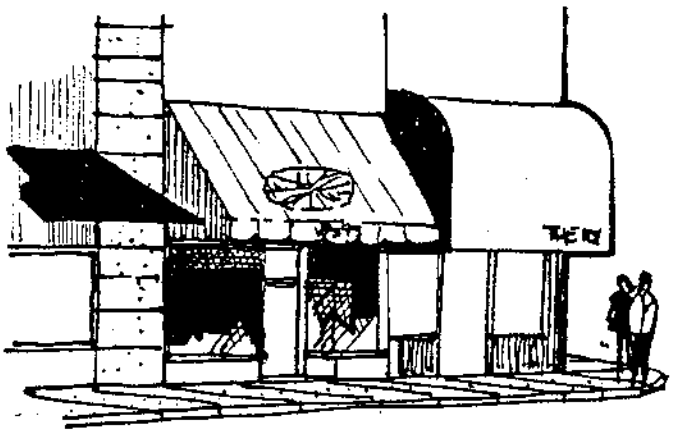
Solid canopies extending to the street block views of awnings and signage for the pedestrian and should not be used in the Village.

- Adjacent awnings should be within eighteen (18) inches in vertical height of each other. This creates a pattern that flows horizontally with the streetscape.

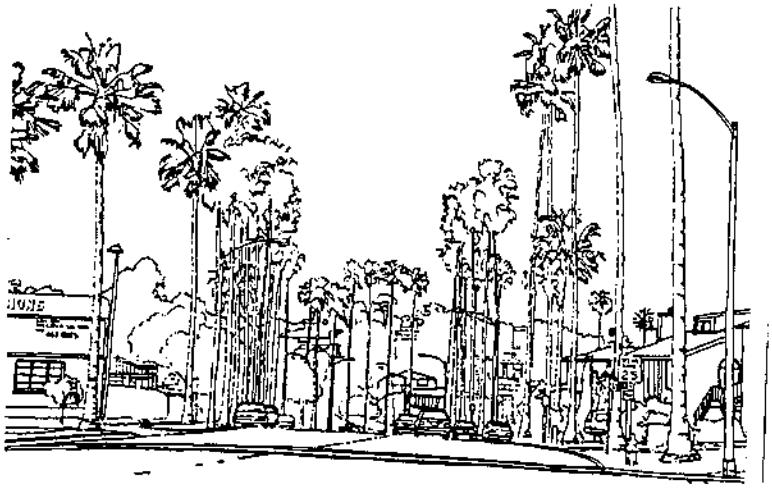
- Awnings must be of flexible materials such as canvas and reinforced plastic.

- Awnings may be translucent or opaque. Translucent awnings may be illuminated from within.

- Replacement of existing awnings that exceed the size requirements must be reviewed for color approval.



B. LA MESA BLVD. (EAST OF 4TH STREET)



The tall palm trees, small-scale buildings of consistent 1 and 2 story height and well-planted front yards give this part of La Mesa Boulevard a distinction and unity, making it one of Downtown's best scenes. New infill development should preserve the present residential character of the street and district.

✔ **Street Edge:** Follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge, Condition 4:

✔ **Building Location:** In order to maintain a consistent street setback and yard pattern, locate the building on or near the front setback line.

✔ **Landscape Design:** Street tree plantings should repeat the present Fan Palms. Front yard trees of this species are encouraged, and may be combined with canopy and ornamental trees of other species.

✔ **Scale:** Retain the present fine-grain building pattern by dividing building masses into smaller-scale parts. Larger projects are encouraged to divide their buildings into more than one structure, or provide a courtyard or deep recess to reduce the apparent size of the building.

✔ **Building Height:** Buildings over two stories high should step back the street-facing facade of the upper story in order to reduce apparent building height on La Mesa Boulevard and maintain the consistent 1-2 story building scale of the street.

✔ **Pedestrian Interest and Front Entries:** It is extremely important for buildings in this district to maintain pedestrian interest on La Mesa Boulevard. Buildings should emphasize their La Mesa Boulevard facades as "fronts", with street-facing entrances, porches, windows and entry courtyards strongly encouraged. Garage doors and service areas should not face the street.

✔ **Specific Development Site 4:** This sub-area contains Specific Development Site 4 that includes additional policy. See Policy 5, Site 4.

C. ALLISON AVENUE (BETWEEN SPRING STREET AND LA MESA BOULEVARD)

Restaurant Patio

The design objective on Allison Avenue is to extend the pleasant pedestrian character that now exists on the north side of the street (at its east end near La Mesa Boulevard) toward Spring Street.

✔ **Street Edge:**

North side of Allison Avenue and Spring Street: Follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge, "Condition 2. A front yard setback of 10 feet, developed as a "patio landscape", is strongly encouraged.

South side of Allison Avenue and Palm Avenue: Follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge "Condition 1 or Condition 2.

✔ **Landscape Design:** Provide regular street tree planting on both sides of the street at curb line. The front yard "patio landscape" on the north side of the street should emphasize ornamental trees and shrubs to attain a pattern of small-scale outdoor spaces with color, texture and pedestrian interest. The restaurant patio on the northwest corner of Allison and Pine Street is an excellent example of the desired landscape character. Install perimeter landscape screening at all existing and new parking lot edges.

- ✔ **Building Scale**: Retain the present fine-grain building pattern on the north side of the street. Building masses should generally be less than 50 feet wide along the street, with larger buildings divided into smaller parts. New buildings on the south side of the street should follow a similar pattern. While this may not be possible in the case of a new parking structure, careful architectural detailing should be used to break down the scale of the structure to reduce its apparent width and visually divide it into smaller parts.

  When the La Mesa Lumber site and adjacent property are developed, give careful design attention to the building scale and pedestrian interest along the street edge. Specific guidelines and policy for this area is included in the Specific Plan, Policy 5, Site 1.

- ✔ **Building Height:** Retain the pattern of low building heights along the street edge. Buildings over two stories high should step back the street-facing facade of the upper story(ies) in order to reduce apparent building height along the street to two stories. Buildings east of Palm Avenue should be limited to two stories in height except a third story may be allowed for residential uses.

- ✔ **Pedestrian Interest:** Buildings on Allison and Palm Avenues should give careful attention to creating pedestrian interest with active street frontages, placing shopfronts along the street and creating inviting outdoor pedestrian patios. If parking structures are built at a future date, they should contain shops along street frontages.

D. UNIVERSITY AVENUE (EAST OF SPRING STREET)

The residential character with well-planted front yards and small-scale building pattern along University Avenue should be retained.

✔ **Street Edge:** Follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge, Condition 4 for RB zoned property. Locate the building on or near the front 15 ft. setback line in order to maintain a consistent street setback and yard pattern. Follow , Condition 2 for C or CD zoned property.

✔ **Landscape Design:** Generous front and side yard plantings of canopy and ornamental trees, shrubs and ground covers are encouraged. New development should implement the street landscape as recommended in the Specific Plan.

✔ **Building Scale:** Retain the present fine-grain building pattern and scale by dividing building masses into smaller parts. Larger projects should avoid large single buildings. Instead, create a grouping of smaller structures, or provide a deep street-facing courtyard to reduce apparent building size.

✔ **Building Height:** Buildings over two stories high should step back the street-facing facade of the upper stories in order to maintain a consistent 1-2 story building scale along the street.

✔ **Pedestrian Interest**: Buildings should maintain pedestrian interest, emphasizing University Avenue facades as "fronts," with street-facing entrances, porches, windows and entry courtyards encouraged. Garage doors and service areas should not face the street.

E. SPRING STREET CORRIDOR

Spring Street should be developed as a unifying civic boulevard that provides a strong entry sequence into Downtown and integrates several points of focus - Civic Center, The Village, La Mesa Village Plaza, Trolley stop and Depot Museum.

Specific Design Guidelines are set for each Downtown Sub-Area as it abuts Spring Street. Additional Guidelines for Spring Street are discussed in this section.

Spring Street is the primary entry to Downtown from Interstate-8. The freeway exit ramp is very short. It delivers the driver from the high speed, grand scale of the Interstate to Downtown within a few seconds. Currently, the scene is one of railroad tracks, overhead electric lines and confusion. It is unclear whether Spring Street is straight ahead (onto Nebo Street) or to the left. This northern end of Spring Street needs to: identify the entry to the Village of La Mesa; slow the driver's speed so the details of the street can be noticed; direct the driver to the commercial and civic areas of town; and, introduce the driver to the Downtown La Mesa Village.

The proposed design includes the following features:

- ✔ **Close Nebo Drive:** The Spring Street entrance from Interstate 8 should be simplified by closing off Nebo Drive.

- ✔ **Distinctive Paving:** Distinctive paving should be used on Spring Street just south of the El Cajon Boulevard overpass to announce the entrance to Downtown.

- ✔ **Entrance Sign:** A "Downtown La Mesa Village" entrance sign should be placed on the north side of the El Cajon Boulevard overpass.

- ✔ **Screen Parking Lots:** A dense row of tall trees should be added on the east side of Nebo Drive to screen views of the parking lots.

- ✔ **Restrict Access:** In order to reduce traffic congestion, access to properties on Spring Street should be from side streets only, except when no other alternative exists.

- ✔ **Canopy Trees:** Dense canopy trees which, at maturity, will extend from 8 to 10 feet above ground to an overall height of 30 ft. should be planted on the freeway off-ramps and on both sides of the Spring Street south of the El Cajon Boulevard overpass for a portion of the block, The comparative intimacy of this landscape will serve to slow the driver's speed from the freeway.

Other Spring Street design features should include the following:

- ✔ **Dramatic Landscape:** A strong rhythmic row of Mexican Fan Palm trees should be added on both sides of Spring Street at the curb line to provide a dramatic element and identity for Downtown. Trees should be planted no more than 30 ft. to 40 ft. on center and preferably at a mature height of 20 to 40 ft. Many San Diego County residents associate the City of La Mesa with the striking rows of skyline palm trees lining the railroad tracks on the west side of Spring Street. These Washingtonia Robusta have become part of a designated historic site and will be part of La Mesa's image for many more years. This theme will be extended with the Mexican Fan Palms.

- ✔ **Pedestrian Scaled Street Lights:** Pedestrian scaled street lighting fixtures should be used on the east side of Spring Street.

- ✔ **Spring Street-La Mesa Boulevard Design Element:** A special street paving pattern should be used at the intersection of Spring Street and La Mesa Boulevard to announce the actual entrance to the Village. This should be accompanied by a vertical design element such as a "La Mesa Village" arch on the east side of La Mesa Boulevard. The city should consider a design competition to design the actual improvements for this intersection.

- ✔ **Civic Center:** New civic center uses should be built on the east side of the existing City Hall and be visually prominent on Spring Street.

- ✔ **Street Edge:** The building setback areas recommended in each of the abutting sub-districts result in set-backs that are wide at the northern and southern end of Spring Street and come to a more narrow focus at La Mesa Boulevard.

- ✔ **Landscape Medians:** Median islands should be added and landscaped where feasible and pedestrian safety islands should be added at all intersections.

- ✔ **Height:** Building facades facing Spring Street should be limited to two stories with upper stories set-back a minimum of ten feet.

F. CIVIC CENTER SUB-AREA

The Civic Center sub-area consists of both the government buildings and surrounding private properties. Each is discussed in a separate section below.

Civic Center

La Mesa's Civic Center should retain its informal, friendly character as a focus of service rather than a monument to government. The Civic Center concept is to retain most of the present buildings. This is to be accompanied by new uses as needed at the east end, in a visually prominent relationship to Spring Street. The entire site is to be developed as an "urban forest".

The concept of fitting public buildings into downtown has been heavily researched by the national organization, Downtown Idea Exchange with the following conclusions:

> *"All new public buildings should be well-integrated physically and functionally with the downtown context. Old buildings should be retrofitted better into downtown. An impressive or grandiose city hall or central library that is walled off from effective interaction with downtown is a mistake. These facilities are triply important. They bring people downtown to work in them. They attract people who need the services. Where they fail is in facilitating the ability of people to use the facilities easily and conveniently, and interchanging people and activities with downtown's many other facilities."*

The concept includes the following features:

- ✔ **Urban Forest:** The existing Civic Center buildings are not distinguishable; however, many remain highly functional. To preserve these resources, but provide an appropriate "civic" image, a dramatic urban forest landscape is proposed with a thick density of canopy trees over the entire site including parking lots. The visual focus will shift to the entire landscaped campus setting rather than on individual buildings. The Civic Center "forest" tree types will be selected by a consultant at a future date. The trees along the adjoining streets should come from the trees selected for each specific street.

- ✔ **New Uses As Needed**: New uses as needed such as City Hall space, library or a theatre should be added to the east side of the existing City Hall in a visually prominent relation to Spring Street. A park-like open space, with pedestrian path and informal seating areas, should be developed between the Civic Center buildings and the tracks. Buildings should be set back a minimum of 20 feet from the Trolley tracks.

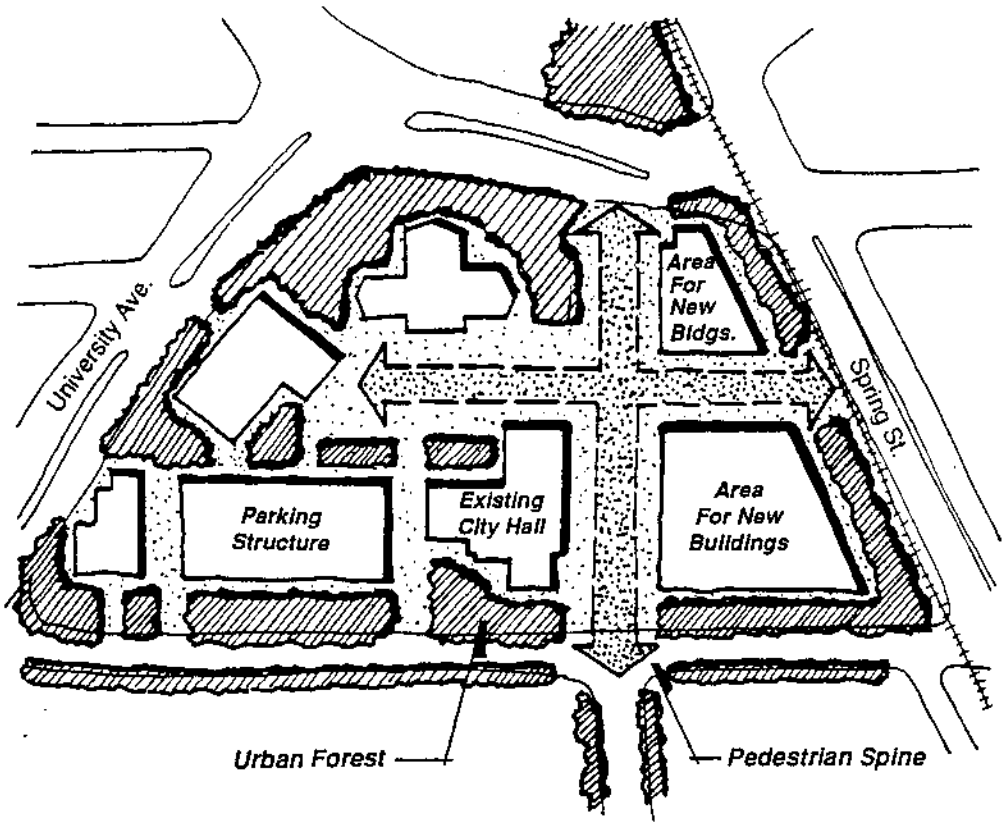
- ✔ **Pedestrian Spines**: A north-south pedestrian spine in the vicinity of Date Street and an east-west spine between the existing City Hall and the Helix Water District Building are proposed. Around these would be an internal sequence of landscaped courtyards and gardens, with covered walkways as circulation elements between buildings. The courtyards would provide settings for gardens, fountains and sculpture, and could be used for public events and ceremonies.

- ✔ **Parking Structure**: In order to provide for increased landscaping and to meet parking needs, a two story parking structure is proposed for the area west of City Hall. Portions of the ground floor could be used for additional public offices.

- ✔ **Allison Avenue:** Allison Avenue should be returned to a pedestrian-scaled street (pedestrian, parking, transit street) with diagonal parking and tree wells in the street similar to La Mesa Boulevard in the Village. This will not only add needed parking but will visually tie the area to the rest of the Village through the similar street treatment.

- ✔ **University Avenue-Baltimore Drive Intersection:** This intersection is re-designed to clarify traffic movements and visually reduce the size of the intersection. In the process, extra land is added to the Civic Center area for landscaping.

- ✔ **Design Plan:** The City should prepare a detailed master plan to carry out the proposed Civic Center improvements. The design should allow for long term incremental implementation. Consideration should be given to conducting a design competition.



Civic Center Concept Plan

SURROUNDING PROPERTIES

✔ **Street Edges:**

- Allison Avenue frontage (south side): Follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge, "Condition:2.
- University Avenue frontage (west side): Follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge, "Condition 4.
- Date Avenue and Orange Avenue, south of Allison Avenue: Follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge, "Condition 2. A landscaped area of trees and shrubs may be provided instead of a pedestrian space.

✔ **Building Height:**

Buildings over two stories high should step back the street-facing facade of the upper stories to reduce apparent building height and develop a consistent low building scale as seen from the street.

✔ **Pedestrian Interest:**

Buildings should maintain pedestrian interest, emphasizing street-facing facades as "fronts".

G. BALTIMORE DRIVE

Baltimore Drive - Looking North

Baltimore Drive needs a strong street tree planting program and median island to eliminate its present barren character and to improve its appearance as an important gateway to Downtown.

✔ **Street Edge:**

- West side: Follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge, "Condition 4.
- East side: Follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge, "Condition 3: The provision of the guideline encouraging a 3-foot high low wall or shrubs along the street edge may be modified at the existing automobile agency property. A planted edge with ground cover or other low shrubs may be used.

✔ **Landscape Design**: Tree planting for properties on Baltimore Drive should reflect the landscape theme already established for the Baltimore Drive residential areas to the north. This can help to symbolically tie Downtown to this part of La Mesa. Street trees should be planted next to the curb with sidewalks behind, and a median island should be added to the street and heavily landscaped with trees.

Appropriate street trees include:	Trees for private property include:
American Sweetgum	Pines
Cajeput Tree	Eucalyptus
Southern Magnolia	
Brisbane Box	

✔ **Specific Development Sites 2 and 3:** The Specific Plan contains detailed policy for two sites in this sub-district, see Policy 5.

H. LA MESA SPRINGS SHOPPING CENTER

Provide a better pedestrian scale through landscaping.

✔ **Street Edge**: Follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge, "Condition 3:

✔ **Landscaping**

- Provide added street tree plantings along the University Avenue and La Mesa Boulevard street edges. Trees should be located at the curb with sidewalks behind.
- The parking areas of the shopping center are not adequately landscaped and should receive tree canopy plantings throughout the interior, as well as additional edge plantings at several locations.

I. LA MESA VILLAGE PLAZA AND TROLLEY STOP

Approved development is under construction. No guidelines needed.

J. LA MESA BOULEVARD (BETWEEN ACACIA AVENUE AND NEBO DRIVE)

La Mesa Boulevard - Looking East

Preserve the present building scale and pattern to attain a character similar to the Village on the east side of Spring Street.

✔ Follow all Design Guidelines listed for the Village, District A, except that Date Avenue between Lemon Avenue and the alley shall follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge "Condition 4.

✔ La Mesa Boulevard store facades on these two blocks should be preserved and rehabilitated to preserve the Village scale. The City should not pursue clearance and rebuilding; however, some of these buildings could be replaced in a similar pattern and in some cases be expanded to two stories. See Figure DG-3 for illustrative store front designs.

K. UNIVERSITY AVENUE AND LA MESA BOULEVARD (BETWEEN ACACIA AVENUE AND NEBO DRIVE)

Re-organize parking and landscape to create a pedestrian atmosphere and transition to the Village.

✔ **Parking:**

- On the south side of La Mesa Boulevard, from Acacia Avenue to Normal Avenue, replace parking in front yard areas with landscaping where possible. Provide diagonal parking on the south side of La Mesa Boulevard, from Acacia Avenue to Normal Avenue.
- Develop pedestrian and landscaping improvements at the intersections of Normal Avenue and La Mesa Boulevard, and La Mesa Boulevard and University Avenue.

✔ **Street Edge:**

- La Mesa Boulevard, from Acacia Avenue to University Avenue: Follow Guideline 3.2 Street Edge, "Condition 1 or 2.
- University Avenue RB-D Zone: Follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge, "Condition 4.
- University Avenue CD-D Zone: Follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge, "Condition 1 or 2.

✔ **Landscape Design:**

- Trees should be located at curb edge with sidewalks behind. Closely spaced trees should be used at the intersection of Normal Avenue and La Mesa Boulevard and La Mesa Boulevard and University Avenue. This landscape is intended to visually narrow these visually expansive intersections.

✔ **Height:**

- Maximum of two stories except third story permitted for residential.

L. MILLS AVENUE AND SPRING STREET

A development was approved for this sub-area during the course of this study. Should this project not be built, the City will develop guidelines for this sub-area.

M. RESIDENTIAL ZONES

Residentially zoned properties in the Downtown Specific Plan area are important resources that should be preserved and retained as desirable residential neighborhoods.

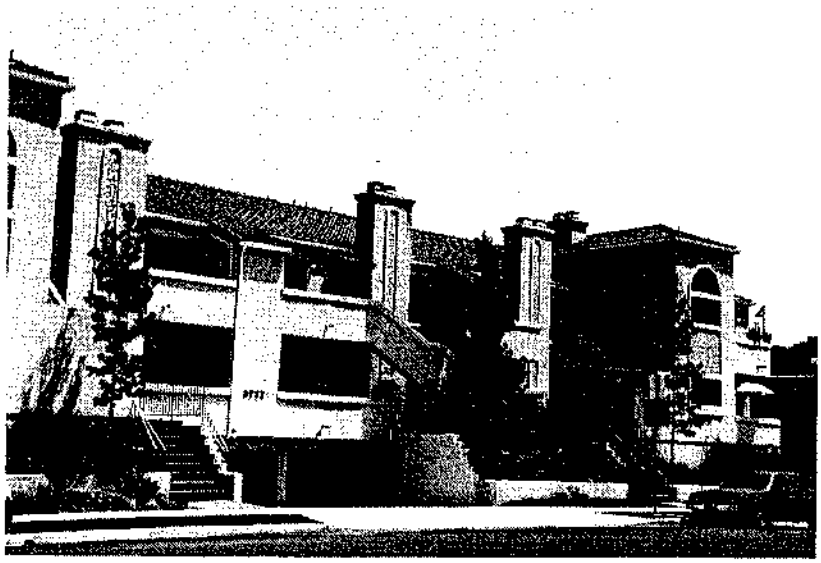
✔ **Street Edge:** Follow Guideline 3.2, Street Edge, Condition 4.

- Organize as many dwelling units as possible to front the street. The use of traditional front porches, entry patios, terraces and windows facing public streets is encouraged.
- Courtyard buildings with single or multiple entrances to dwelling units are common in the region, with several fine examples in La Mesa. When this building type is used, orient the courtyard toward the street.
- Internal corridor buildings are generally discouraged, except for senior citizen or other specialized residential applications. When buildings of this type are used, the primary entrance should face the street and be given special architectural emphasis.

✔ **Preservation Emphasis:** Preservation of existing structures, through additions to buildings rather than demolition for new, larger structures, is strongly encouraged. Retain and recognize historic houses when possible.

✔ **Garages:** Garage doors of multi-family buildings should open to the rear or side of the lot and not face a public street, except in the case of corner lots or lots with less than 100 feet of frontage. On small lots, when it is necessary for a garage door to face a public street, reduce garage door numbers and frontage on the street to a minimum.

- Buildings which contain a common enclosed parking garage may orient one garage door opening toward the street.
- Garages and carports should be compatible with the architecture of the principal building(s).



Common Garage Opening Tucked Out of View

✔ **Pedestrian Access:** Driveways should not be used for pedestrian access to residential developments.

✔ **Landscape:** La Mesa's tradition of well landscaped residential streets should be preserved in the Downtown residential areas. Street trees should be selected to match an existing street tree theme. Normally only one tree type per street should be used as the dominate tree for that street. Suggested tree choices are:

American Sweetgum
Cajeput Tree
Canary Island Pine
Chinese Pistache
Mexican Fan Palm
Queen Palm
Carrotwood

APPENDIX A

Design Review Checklist

Required	Encouraged	Discouraged
1.1 All Elevations ___Careful consideration of all elevations.		
1.2 Climate ___Site design shall give consideration to energy efficiency and prevailing breezes.		
1.3 Design Theme	___Suitability of building for its purpose.	___One design theme.
1.4 Details & Ornamentations ___Good use of variety, scale and rhythm.	___Surface details that add to building character. ___Parapet walls treated as integral part of the building.	
1.5 Exposed Rooftops	___Treat with same care as building elevations.	___Rooftop mechanical equipment.
1.6 Lighting	___Short low intensity fixtures.	___Commercial parking area lights over 20 feet in height. ___Residential parking area lights over 15 feet in height. ___Pedestrian area lights over 8 feet in height.
1.7 Orientation of Buildings ___Respond to pedestrian needs.	___Clear entry to off - street parking areas	
1.8 Refuse Containers	___Screen with durable materials compatible with building exteriors.	
1.9 Safety Design ___Development proposals shall consider safety as an important site planning element.		
1.10 Trademark Building		___Trademark buildings that are not consistent with design principles of these Guidelines.
1.11 Utilities ___Reduce visual impact of all utilities	___Special design attention to roof. mounted utilities.	
2. Building Form and Scale ___Study of predominant scale of buildings in the district and street. ___Human scaled buildings.	___Divide larger building masses into smaller-scale parts. ___Set-back 3rd story and above. ___Divide the mass of the structure into horizontal parts.	___Large or long continuous wall planes.

Design Review Checklist (cont.)

Required	Encouraged	Discouraged
3. The Building-Street Edge ___Design the Building Street Edge according to one of the four standard street edge conditions.	___Corner buildings to make a strong tie to the building line of street.	
4. Historic, Buildings & Cultural Resources ___Diligent effort to retain and rehabilitate sites with a rating of 1, 2, or 3. ___Buildings shall reflect the intimate scale and concern for craftsmanship.	___New developments should be compatible with existing historic resources.	
5. Pedestrian Emphasis ___Design should address pedestrian needs. __Provide views into shops, office and restaurants. ___Clear glazing on windows and doorways.	___Active building frontages. ___Frequent street facing building entrances. ___Attractive storefronts. ___Recessed entry ways for visual interest and protection from elements. ___50% of first floor transparent. ___Courtyards, patios, plazas and gardens that do not diminish street activity.	___Blank walls. ___Opaque and reflecting glass. ___Courtyards designed to discourage street activity.
6. Materials and Colors ___Provide for a pleasant pedestrian atmosphere, quality Village look, and cohesive harmony. ___Colors compatible with surrounding neighborhood.	___Wood, brick, unpolished stone, stucco, textured masonry. __Off-white, natural brick & wood tones, light pastel and earth tones.	___Plain concrete block. The following materials exceeding 10% of the face of building: metal panels, polished marble or granite, plastic. Also glazed tile exceeding 20%. ___Very bright or very dark tones or garish colors.
7. Off-Street Parking Facilities ___Interior & perimeter landscaping.	___Locate parking at rear or interior portion of site. ___Use ground floor street edge of parking structures for commercial use.	
8. Landscape ___Well thought out and executed. landscape plan. ___Street trees.	___Retain mature trees.	___Artificial plants and grass.

Design Review Checklist (cont.)

Required	Encouraged	Discouraged
9. Signs ___Signs and related graphics shall be integral to overall building and site design. ___Complete sign programs for multi-occupancy buildings. ___Focus signs to a walking pedestrian.	___Pedestrian oriented projecting signs. ___Lettering area should not exceed 40% of total sign board area. ___Three dimensional icons.	___Excessive brightness and overly brilliant colors. ___Complex type faces and faddish. ___Cut out letters above the parapet line. ___Freestanding signs. ___Back-lit plastic box signs, flashing signs and chasing light signs. ___Letters exceeding 12" in height.
SUB-AREAS		
A. The Village ___Preserve unique qualities of Village.	___Street edge Condition 1.	
Rooflines	___Avoid visual clutter. ___Vary rooflines. ___Remove unused signs and brackets.	
Mass and Scale ___Maximum of two stories except third story permitted for residential.	___Front yard setback 0 (zero) feet for at least 50% of frontage, 4 feet for remainder. ___Outdoor gardens and patios. ___Coordinate actual and apparent height of structures.	
Building Width ___Expansive store fronts shall be broken into smaller pedestrian scale bays.	___25-35 ft. storefronts should be the pattern.	
Canopy and Awnings	___Use of canopy and awnings. ___Should not project more than 4 ft. into right-of-way. ___Should be within 18" vertical height of adjacent awning.	___Solid-fixed canopies. ___Awnings that extend vertically to upper parapet.
B. LM Blvd.(East of 4th St.) ___Preserve the residential character of area. ___Retain fine-grain building pattern.	___Locate bldgs. on or near front set-back. ___Fan Palm street trees. ___Step back street facades over two stories. ___Face development to street. ___Street edge Condition 4.	

Design Review Checklist (cont.)

Required	Encouraged	Discouraged
C. Allison Ave (Betw. Spring Street and LM Blvd.) ___Provide pleasant pedestrian character with active street frontages.	___North side of Allison Ave & Spring Street: street edge condition 2 ___South side of Allison Ave & Palm Ave: street edge condition 1 or 2. ___Buildings over 2 stories should set back upper stories. ___Buildings east of Palm, maximum of two stories except third story permitted for residential.	
D. University Ave (Between LM Blvd. & Spring Street) ___Retain residential character.	___Buildings over 2 stories should set back upper stories. ___Front buildings to the street. ___Street edge Condition 4 for RB Zoned property. ___Street edge Condition 2 for C or CD Zoned property.	
E. Spring Street Corridor. ___Rhythmic row of palm trees on both sides of Spring Street. ___Dense canopy trees at I-8 entrance to Spring Street.	___Pedestrian scaled street lights. ___Vehicular access from side streets only. ___Street edge Conditions as specified in abutting sub-districts. ___Buildings over 2 stories should set back upper stories.	
F. Civic Center	___Develop urban forest over entire site. ___Locate any new city hall and library space on the east side of the site. ___Internal sequence of courtyards & gardens.	
Surrounding Properties	___Allison Avenue, street edge Condition 2. ___University Avenue (west side), street edge Condition 4. ___Date Avenue and Orange, street edge, Condition 2. ___Buildings over 2 stories should setback upper stories. ___Emphasize pedestrian oriented street facades.	

Design Review Checklist (cont.)

Required	Encouraged	Discouraged
G. Baltimore Drive ___Curb side street trees and landscaped median island.	___West side - street edge Condition 4. ___East side - street edge Condition 3.	
H. LM Springs Shopping Ctr. ___Provide pedestrian scale through landscaping.	___Street edge Condition 3.	
I. Phase II Redev. Project La Mesa Village Plaza	___Approved development is under construction.	
J. La Mesa Boulevard (Between Acadia and Nebo) ___Attain character similar to the Village on the east side of Spring.	___Same guidelines as District A, the Village, except Date Ave. to follow street edge, Condition 4. ___Preserve and rehabilitate store fronts.	
K. University Ave & LM Blvd. ___Re-organize parking and landscape to create a pedestrian atmosphere and transition to the Village. ___Height maximum of two stories except third story permitted for residential.	___Acacia to University, street edge Condition 1 or 2. ___University Avenue (RB Zone), street edge Condition 4. ___University Avenue (C Zone), street edge Condition 1 or 2. ___Replace front yard parking with landscaping. ___Pedestrian and landscape improvements at the intersection of Normal Ave. & La Mesa Blvd.	
L. Mills and Spring Streets.		
M. Residential Zones ___Presevation as desirable residential neighborhoods.	___Street edge Condition 4. ___Preserve existing structures and retain and recognize historic houses. ___Dwellings to front on street.	___Garage doors fronting on street.