Community Design Element

PURPOSE

The Community Design Element establishes general design principles and mechanisms that help define and guide patterns of development in Cathedral City. The goals, policies, and programs set forth in this element also help to assure that new and revitalized development is consistent with and complements the existing built and natural environments. The design of the community and its physical development should reflect the essential values of the residents and represent the character and diversity of the community. For Cathedral City residents, these values include the preservation of valuable natural resources and the desert environment, vital and sustainable business districts, and the preservation of the City's affordable residential character.

BACKGROUND

The Community Design Element is directly related to the Land Use, Circulation and Mobility, Housing, Economic and Fiscal Health, Open Space, and just about every other element in the 2040 General Plan. Attitudes toward land use, traffic systems, community safety, and environmental resources shape the physical development of the community and help define its character. With major local, state, and interstate roadways passing through the City, and the associated dependence on various modes of travel, sustaining Cathedral City's identity and quality of life depends on maintaining continuity, uniqueness, and a "sense of place." Building and site designs that reflect the natural and historic features of the City and the Coachella Valley provide continuity of design throughout the valley.

Legislative Basis

California law clearly recognizes the need for and appropriateness of community design standards and development criteria within the community. Most relevant is Government Code Section 65302, which states that "*the General Plan shall consist of a statement of development polices and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards and plan proposals,*" Government Code section 65302(a) addresses standards that affect population density and building intensity. Also applicable are Government Code Sections 66477 and 66470, which set forth local empowerment for preservation of open space lands.

Other legislation reinforces the adoption of community design standards, including the 1990 California Legislature enactment of Assemble Bill 325, the Water Conservation In Landscaping Act, which recognizes the state's responsibility in mitigating the effects of urbanization on its finite water resources, and the potential savings from water conserving landscape practices. In accordance with the act, the City has adopted a water conservation-oriented landscape ordinance, which meets conservation targets and addresses Community Image and Urban Design Element concerns.

"The concept of the public welfare is broad and inclusive. The values it represents are spiritual as well as physical, aesthetic as well as monetary. It is within the power of the legislature to determine that the community should be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clean, well-balanced as well as carefully patrolled."

-U.S. Supreme Court, 1954 Berman vs. Parker, 348 US 26, 75 Supreme Court 98, Ed. 27 (1954).

The health and appearance of the community, environmentally and aesthetically, is essential to preserving and enhancing the diverse economic and neighborhood-based character of Cathedral City. The Community Design Element reflects the changes in scale and scope of the City's land use patterns, diversification and refinements to the transportation plan, and the appearance of and access to open desert, mountains, floodplains, and all open space and conservation lands. The Community Design Element responds to and complements the human (built) and natural environment, and reflects the City's long-term community character as a diversifying resort residential community.

Cathedral City: A Sense of Place

The concept of "placemaking" is discussed in detail elsewhere in this element (see Placemaking and Urban Design, below). The creation of a sense of place begins with embracing our unique (and sometimes demanding) desert environment and the human history of the region. The City Downtown has become a central focus and an internationally recognized model of City placemaking, anchored by the Civic Center, the interactive Fountain of Life plaza, Mary Pickford Theatre and Experience, CV Repertory Theater, the new Community Amphitheater, the events green, dining and shopping venues, and 1,100-space parking structure/solar power plant.

Future Downtown projects will include additional entertainment retail, gaming, more multi-family housing, restaurants, shops, plazas and other public gathering places, all of which will enhance the city center and contribute to a renewed and expanded sense of place. Other new and revitalized developments, including commercial and other non-residential development, can also provide an important basis for "placemaking" in the city.

New Urbanism Principles

Cathedral City has taken bold and decisive steps to enhance the City as a livable, vibrant and sustainable community with the adoption of the *Ahwahnee Principles,* those of *New Urbanism,* and the *Smart Growth* movement. These principles focus on vision and strategy for economic development and a life-enriching community. Visioning, planning and implementation efforts continually involve all sectors of the community, including the voluntary civic sector and those traditionally uninvolved in the public planning process. These principles are summarized as follows:
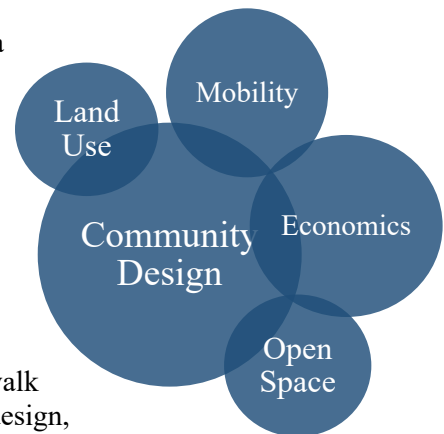
Multi-Modal Access: Design to locate most daily needs within a 10-minute walk or bike ride of home. Ensure pedestrian and cyclist-safe and friendly street design, including placing some buildings close to the street, homes with street-oriented porches, enhanced transparency with windows and doors, shade trees and structures, on-street parking, screened parking lots, garages away from streets, and traffic-calming design elements.

Connectivity: Interconnected urban design implies a street grid network that efficiently disperses traffic and eases walking, biking and LSEV access. It also provides a hierarchy of narrow streets, boulevards, and alleys and service roads. The goal is a high-quality multi-modal network and public realm that makes walking, biking and all forms of travel pleasurable.

Mixed-Use & Land Use Diversity: This principle should be practiced at all levels, including retail commercial, offices and professional services, and integrated multi-family housing. In principle, it is desirable to have a mix of uses within neighborhoods, within blocks, and even within large buildings. In summary, responsive urban design will provide complete and integrated communities containing housing, shops, work places, schools, parks and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents.

Demographic Diversity: Social diversity generally provides social strength and cohesion when our differences are appreciated and celebrated. Diversity includes ethnic backgrounds, age, income levels, employment status, personal and social cultures, and religion. While the City population in 2018 is approximately 78.8% white, 59.4% of the community is also identified as "Hispanic or Latino. Asians comprise 5.9% and African Americans 3.9% of the community, while "Other Races" comprise 12.4%, further diversifying the City ethnic makeup.

Mixed and Diverse Housing: The integrated design of New Urbanism assumes that communities will provide housing for all socio-economic sectors, including an appropriate range of ownership and rental housing offering a variety of sizes, and prices or rental rates. If not an integral part of a planned community or neighborhood, housing should otherwise be located in proximity to schools, parks and commercial services.

Quality Architecture & Urban Design: Consideration must be given to beauty or aesthetics, human comfort, and creating a sense of place. Special placement of civic uses and sites within the community, as has been achieved in the City Downtown, should also be considered. Beautiful human-scale architecture and attractive surroundings nourish the human spirit and engender an attachment to and love for the community.

Traditional Neighborhood Structures: While fashions even in community design change, the basic needs of households and communities do not. The value of home and neighborhood is essential. Therefore, neighborhoods should have an identifiable center (park, retail village and plaza, etc.) comprised of "public space" or the "public realm". These neighborhood centers should be within a 10-minute walking distance.

Density By Design: As an essential part of a town center or urban village, increased development densities at these locations means more buildings, multi-family residences, retail shops and restaurants, and services that are close together and easily and enjoyably accessible by walking or bike.

Smart Transportation: The concepts found in "smart transportation" include those set forth in the *Complete Streets* program (see Circulation and Mobility Element) but also include infrastructure intelligence and technology that synchronizes traffic signals and makes way for autonomous vehicles and other coming advances. In the near-term, as described in the City's *Active Transportation Plan,* it involves diversifying the City's network to encourage walking, biking, LSEVs and transit.

Quality of Life: Taken together, all of the above design principles add up to designing and building a community that enhances the quality of life at all levels for all residents. The overarching goal is to create a cohesive and coherent community that enriches, uplifts, and inspires the human spirit.

Planning the Urban Cross-Sections

Sometimes referred to as "transect planning", the applied principles include placing the highest densities at town center with progressively lower density toward the community edges. The transect is an analytical system that conceptualizes mutually reinforcing elements, creating a gradient of specific human and natural habitats, and associated urban and open space settings.

The transect integrates habitat assessment with zoning for community design. The artificial boundary between the natural and man-made disappears, enabling urbanists and environmentalists to assess the design of the human habitat and the planners to support the viability of nature. This urban-to-rural transect hierarchy has appropriate building and street types for each area along the gradient, as graphically presented below.
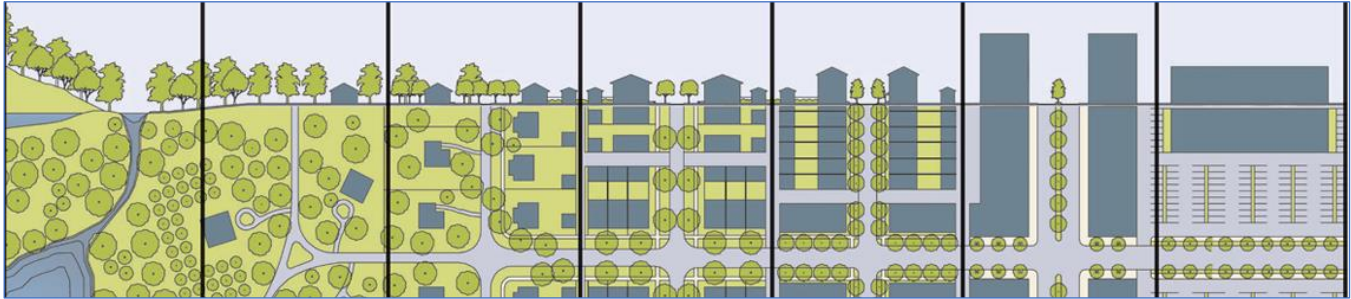
Sustainable Community Design

The idea of sustainability is now integral to all community design and development. The primary goal of sustainability is design and development with an enduring, long-term perspective that values the environment and the various materials, energy and services it provides. Therefore, in the context of community design, guiding principles include minimal initial and long-term environmental impacts, use of eco-friendly technologies, and use of renewable materials, energy sources and energy efficiency.

Social equity and environmental justice are also essential aspects of sustainable community design. The very term "sustainable" is a community that reflects and supports these values. No community, regardless of scale, can sustain itself if there is no equity and justice. These are inherent in the principles of *New Urbanism* and sustainable design. Our communities must work for everyone and be level playing fields where residents and economic interests have real opportunity to pursue happiness and thrive. Also see the *Environmental Justice Element.*

Designing With Nature

We know that urban development and population growth result in substantial environmental effects, that can be best addressed through a thoughtful integration of the natural systems with those of the built environmental. Developing and projecting a holistic picture of the mature city with a sensitivity to site-specific design and development provides the basis for innovative application of old and new approaches. Flood control channels, for example, are viewed not only as storm drains but also as opportunities for development of wildlife corridors and as improved open space for hikers, equestrians and bicycle enthusiasts. The City shall partner with local flood control agencies to maximize access to and use of levees and service roads for hiking and other recreational uses.

FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNITY DESIGN

The technical and philosophical basis for community design affects how the city will look and function as it builds out and is renovated and revitalized. Over the past two decades, there has been a revolution in land planning and community design that is being driven by the high costs of low-density development and supporting infrastructure. Moreover, the City has come to realize that the cost of quality design is no greater than, and in the long run can be less costly than poorly conceived and insensitive design. The near and long-term benefits to the community from well-envisioned design and quality development are significant. The following categorical discussion summarizes key considerations of quality community design.

Cohesiveness: Functional and Visual

Cohesive and coherent design is achieved by thoughtful connections of the built environment to the natural and historic features of the City and the Coachella Valley, and maintained by the recognition and continuation of characteristics that have been handed down to us over time. The City's integration of *New Urbanism* and *Ahwahnee Principles* into its design and development, along with attention to creating a pleasing balance between the natural and built environments, are the guidelines by which a sense of community will be enhanced.

Cohesiveness in design can be achieved through adherence to the essentials of scale and proportion, site and setting, and materials and color. The integration of the natural desert environment into the urban fabric enhances cohesiveness in design of the community. Within these essential principles, a variety of architectural styles can be supported, ranging from mid-century modern to mission style.

The desert provides an inspiring and pliable palette for design. It also presents clear constraints and opportunities for living in a dry and sunny climate. The use of native and other drought tolerant landscaping also extends the continuity of the desert into the built environment. The use of gravels, rocks, and boulders further promotes the continuity of the built and natural environments, emulates our surroundings and conserves resources.

Coherent Character and Identity

Cathedral City's natural setting, its mountains, foothills and desert washes are highly recognizable features that define the City's character and identity. A distinctive attribute of the City is the remarkable mountain views. The character of the community and its setting should be preserved and enhanced through thoughtful grading, revegetation and the use of building and landscape materials indigenous to the area. With spectacular natural and built environs that attract families, vacationing visitors, and second home residents from all walks of life, artists, professionals and others that value Cathedral City's environment, the City has unique and valuable resources.

Encouraging the re-integration of native desert landscaping materials also preserves and enhances the City's uniqueness. A wide variety of native and introduced plants make up the local landscape palette: ocotillo, barrel cactus, encilia, agave, date palms, California fan palms are essential symbols of the community and provide endless design opportunities. The emulation of the natural landscape and the protection of open space further the unique and marketable qualities of the community.

Placemaking and Urban Design

The City is committed to the creation of a diverse, livable and sustainable community made up of residential, commercial and mixed-use neighborhoods that enhance the quality of life for all residents and visitors. An essential part of creating a desirable community is a local and City-wide sense of place unique to Cathedral City. Over the past several decades, the City Downtown has evolved from a highway-fronting stretch of disjointed commercial development, to civic-centered entertainment retail-oriented urban village with national and international recognition. It has also evolved to include a variety of residential areas that range from high-density planned communities to low-density single-family neighborhoods. It also includes golf course-oriented destination resort developments that are iconic parts of the Coachella Valley.

The Public Realm

One of the most important concepts of integrated design is that of the "public realm", where social interaction takes place and where the sense of neighborhood and community is forged. The public realm is the shared space or community commons created at an intimate scale and enhanced to provide a pleasant and comfortable environment for sitting, talking and dining. It is this public realm that creates the coherent and cohesive nature of successful community design. Examples of the public realm include sidewalks, squares, pedestrian marketplaces, plazas and piazzas. The City's downtown event lawn and Fountain of Life area are an excellent example of the public realm.

Downtown: The Cathedral City Piazza

The Cathedral City Downtown has become a celebrated center of community life and the core of arts, entertainment and cultural activity, that attracts attention locally, regionally and nationally. The City's downtown design is recognized as a notable example of the urban village that mixes business, government, entertainment and culture, and hospitality and residential. The downtown emphasizes quality planning, design, materials and craftsmanship creating a built environment of which the City is rightfully proud.

Cathedral City addresses placemaking and urban design through the Community Design Element and other elements, including Land Use, Circulation and Mobility, and Open Space and Conservation. They describe the relationship between land use, family and broader social interactions, and the image and character of the built environment with the ultimate goal of attaining a strong sense of place, and social interaction and cohesion. Public open space is the critical component and staging area for diverse building types, transition space, sidewalks, landscaping, and other components that support and enhance the social environment.

Nodes and Corridors: Network Components for Moving and Living

The transportation network is inextricably tied to and makes the connections between the places we live and work and play and shop. Nodes are the parts of the network where we come together, whether it is by car, bike or walking, and where are lives intersect. Nodes are places of the highest density and greatest mix of uses. Ideally, they are places where we can leave our cars, bikes and LSEVs and walk between and among the various mix of uses. They are places for convenient living and working, and where there is immediate access to shopping, services, entertainment and socializing.

Network corridors are integrated with *Complete Streets* where we can safely drive, catch a bus, bike or walk to the neighborhood and community nodes. They provide for both higher speed travel and for the more relaxed and safe travel along attractive parkways and interesting adjoining development. Traditional suburban commercial and office development along corridors also serves to buffer and insulate residential neighborhoods from the noise and busyness of the corridor. Corridors are also where we can best see and appreciate the scenic vistas of our dramatic desert and mountain landscape.

Gateways and Focal Points

Cathedral City has a variety of important entry and focus points that provide opportunities to reinforce the City's identity and showcase scenic viewsheds. Entry monuments and iconic streetscape and landscape treatments reflect the community's unique character. Focal points can be located anywhere along major routes, including important street corners, within parks and other public open space, civic buildings, schools and historic areas. They should provide a welcoming experience to motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians as they enter and travel through the City.

Neighborhood parks are among the city's most valued scenic places, as they provide an enhanced sense of community and a visual sense of relief, calm and well-being. The layout of parcels within a residential subdivision can influence the economic impact, traffic safety, and livability of a neighborhood. Placing parks in the center of the neighborhood, for example, serves to provide a community with its own meeting point, a place for family activities, and a central neighborhood gathering place. Compatibility will be achieved through thoughtful planning and design.

COMMUNITY DESIGN: THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Community design does not occur in a vacuum or on a blank canvas. It involves the design, layout and construction of buildings, other structures and landscapes that are a visual layer that intervenes between the viewer and the natural desert and mountain environment. It is a three-dimensional construct that changes as we move past and through the built environment. Adhering to height limits, the use of natural materials, and complementary colors and tones for building surfaces, and the liberal integration of open space into community design concepts are the central character of the City. The following briefly describes the major components of the built environment and how they blend with the natural environment to create our urban habitat.

Harmony and Disharmony

The City's character is reflected both in the degree of harmony between the built and natural environment, and among and between the built elements. Does the building (or buildings) harmonize with the landscape and with surrounding buildings? Does the mix of buildings and architectural styles result in a harmonious whole? Does the plan harmonize with surrounding buildings and avoid excessive disruption, or does it overtly compete with and dominate the setting?

Diversity of design can and should avoid being abrasive and should result in elegant and dynamic integration with the existing and planned environment. At the same time, it is equally important to allow thoughtful and tasteful collections of styles, not homogenize the design elements or result in a boring repetition of elevations, roof lines and building materials and colors. Design diversity is healthy design.

Site Analysis and Development Planning

Site analysis is the first and most important opportunity to understand the limitations and possibilities of the site. Development proposals on highly exposed sites with valued scenic resources may conflict with the scenic, open space, and/or other design goals of the community. An adherence to the goals, policies and programs set forth in this element will focus the design process and the intent of this element. Site analysis and efficient development staging can help limit the amount and cost of grading, can optimize lot and building orientation, and provide a site and structure that fully exploits the opportunities and minimizes the constraints of the development site. Applicants should be encouraged to meet and confer with City staff early in or before initiating site planning and design. Major design components that should be reviewed include the following.

Building Proportions, Height and Setbacks

New structures should be similar in height to, and compatible with, other buildings in the vicinity, with the goals of preserving and enhancing design qualities of the built environment and preserving viewsheds. Setbacks should be compatible with those of surrounding structures and scenic resources, providing building presence without allowing the structure to dominate other buildings, the streetscape or the scenic viewshed.

Building proportions will also affect their compatibility with site and surrounding conditions. Establishing a relationship between existing and planned development may set a standard that is meant to rejuvenate a neighborhood, giving it greater influence in establishing future design criteria for and unique to the neighborhood. Generally, height and width of building elevations should not be significantly out of character with existing neighborhood development or natural scenic viewsheds.

Pattern and Rhythm

Nature makes, and human communities strive to adopt, natural and instinctively pleasing patterns and rhythms of motifs and massing. How well these elements are handled in community design can range from harmonious to dissident or clashing relationships. The recurrent alteration of peaks and slopes of the hills and the mountains can

be emulated and complemented in the design of roof lines, and between the space and solids of buildings. At close quarters, pedestrians should be provided with a varied integration of structure and landscaping to soften and tie the structural elements to the natural ones.

Roof Types and Materials

The rhythmic patterns in new buildings and landscaping should complement and integrate with the established structures and surrounding natural environment. Roof types and materials can play a critical role in either complementing or degrading the scenic viewshed. Roof types, from flat to multiple arrays of hipped roofs, provide a range of possibilities for contrasting or imitative treatment. Excessive building heights are frequently related to roof design, and the roof should be balanced with the building elevation it helps to create. Scale, pattern and rhythm are also applicable to roof design and materials.

Surface Texture and Color

Prevailing sunny conditions and the predominantly light color of the surrounding desert make the selection of surface texture and color especially important. Surfaces that emulate the coarse, warm tones of the surrounding valley and hills are highly desirable, while slick and shiny finishes, if not properly applied, can produce glaring surfaces that detract from the viewshed and are not pleasing to the eye. However, the emergence of post-modern and other hybrid architectural styles, with their juxtaposition of architectural motifs and the use of contrasting, unusual colors and building materials, are examples of how contrast can be made compatible within broader standards.

Surface texture differs from patterns and rhythm in that texture is generally applied on a substantially reduced scale. It is seldom as strong a design element as architectural pattern or massing. Although styles change with time, and while the use of strong color may play a dominant role in the design, color is easier to change once development has occurred. The use of texture ranges from smooth adobe-type stucco or plaster to fluted, split-face concrete aggregate block. New materials and manufacturing are also yielding sculptural, highly articulated surfaces now found in many contemporary buildings. As with other elements of design, texture must be used carefully to complement the overall design while being compatible with surrounding materials.

Building Projections and Architectural Details

In many cases, a building's design is expressed in the detail and projections that grow out of the building envelope. Building projections and other architectural details play important functional and aesthetic roles in a building's efficiency as shelter and in its appearance, providing shade, privacy and screening from the elements, projections and architectural detail that also affect surrounding development. The use of porches and verandas can further enhance residential living space and provide protection from sun and wind. Whether simple or ornate, architectural details represent legitimate design elements; however, care must be taken so that buildings don't overtly clash or contrast with surrounding development, and suffer from the comparison. The appropriateness of a particular building design must be viewed within the context of the building's natural setting and man-made environment.
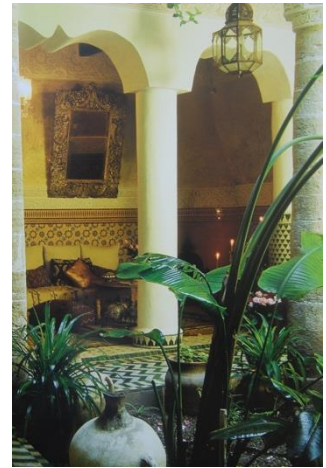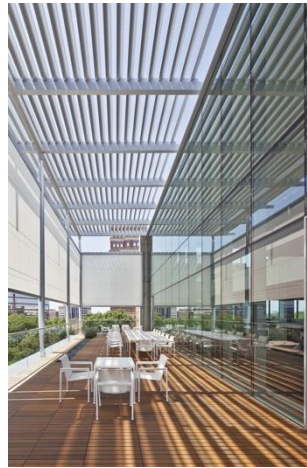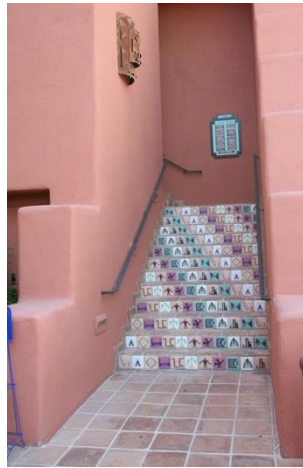
Site Planning and Design Review

The distribution of buildings and other structures, parking, driveways and landscape areas are the first and most critical aspects of project design, establishing relationships to the street and surrounding lands. The influences and effects of site planning are not always easy to visualize or assess without a detailed site plan. Even then, the complexity or importance of a development site may warrant the preparation of perspective renderings of the plan and structures. Care must be taken to not allow artistic applications of color, landscaping and graphic "eye wash" to obscure or misrepresent the design or how it will appear once built. Together with architecture, site planning is a critical process determining the compatibility of proposed development with the existing and planned development and the character of the community.

Signage, Viewsheds and the Public Realm

The East Palm Canyon Drive commercial corridor, Date Palm Drive and Ramon Road are the most frequently traveled, and are most impacted by signage of businesses attempting to make their presence and location known. Commercial signage should provide effective business identification while preserving the viewshed along existing and planned commercial corridors.
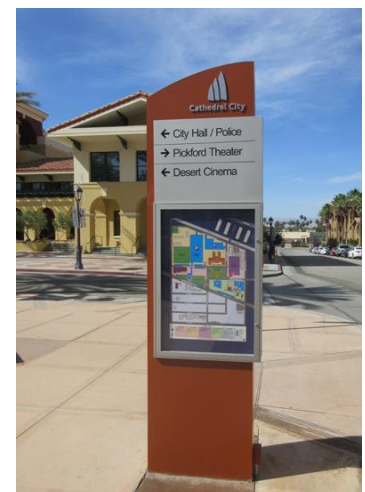
Transportation and Community Design

The transportation network is a critical component of community design and has a profound effect on the appearance of the City. Important components include street width and median and parkway design and landscaping. Other important components include gateway monument signage, street signage, commercial signage, street lighting levels and fixtures, and bus turnouts and shelters. Curb and pavement treatments, bike lanes and other on-road graphics, and utility structures and facilities also influence the appearance of the roadway. Adjoining development should buffer large expanses of parking with landscaping and pedestrian paths, locating some buildings at the street and parking at the sides or rear of the buildings. This design approach also serves to provide the streets with a sense of vitality and community that activates this important part of the public realm.

Perimeter Wall/Fence Treatment

Walls are used throughout the community and serve multiple purposes, from defining the parkway edge of commercial, residential and other developments, to screening trash enclosures and outdoor storage areas. Designs and materials include stucco-coated and precision concrete or split-face block, plain and painted slump stone with brick-capping or tile accents, and intermittent columns or pilasters. Fences range from decorative wrought iron to utilitarian chain-link (not generally endorsed by this element). Interspersing solid walls with wrought iron fencing provides views into development open space areas and relieves the closed-in feeling that walls can create. Wall breaks and fenestration along public rights-of-way help to integrate private community open space and viewsheds that can still be enjoyed by the traveling public. The City should encourage the continued use of this type of viewshed window to reduce the tunnel effect and preserve scenic vistas along roadways.

Parkway Landscaping

One of the most prominent and visible exterior features of neighborhoods and private communities is parkway landscaping. Design can range from the formal to the "natural" or combinations of both approaches. Formal design may include ordered rows of date palms or other distinctive tree, regularly interspersed with equally ordered shrubs and beds for annuals plantings. More informal designs seek to imitate nature by interspersing native and non-native desert plantings with gravel, cobble and boulders in a free-form or random pattern. Groupings of major elements, and the use of lawn areas may also be integrated into both more and less formal designs.

Community Design in Public Facilities

Community Design encompasses the entire City and includes public buildings, utilities, and street traffic control and safety devises that have the potential to detract from the appearance of the community. The City must consistently make quality appearance one of its prime priorities. Current efforts include the development of unique and distinctive desert landscape treatments on major roadways. Desert colors and tones can also be integrated into street signs, traffic signals and lighting standards to soften their impact on the surrounding viewshed.

Bus shelter design should also be a high priority, making these facilities functionally superior and aesthetically pleasing. These structures can utilize architectural styles that complement the streetscape treatment and elevate the appearance of these utilitarian structures. Utility cabinets located along the street, including traffic signal and telephone switching facilities, are frequently painfully obvious. To the greatest extent possible, these features should be installed in underground vaults, or enhanced graphically to enliven the public realm. Overhead utility lines also present visual obstructions to the natural setting and may pose safety hazards that should be minimized by a program of utility undergrounding.
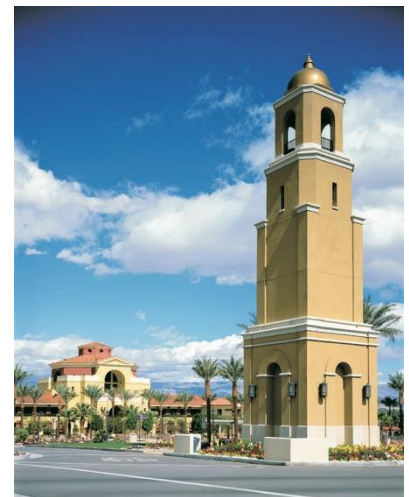
BUILDING AND SITE REPURPOSING

As the face of retailing changes, some "brick and mortar" retailing has moved to the internet, while previously successful sites and buildings have fallen out of favor and some have remained in a state of disuse for years at a time. Through a process sometimes called "adaptive reuse" or re-purposing, old buildings are being renovated and updated to meet the new commercial, professional and even residential needs of the community.

Even if these sites and buildings are well-maintained, which is not always the case, their vacancy still causes a sort of blight on the neighborhoods where they are located. Vacant commercial buildings send the message to the retail industry that this location or area, or the surrounding neighborhood, will not support more retail or other development.

The rediscovery of mixed-use development and the synergies of assembling diverse land uses on one site can be a guiding principle for at least some of the City's building repurposing opportunities. For instance, the accompanying photos include a vacated Sam's Club building that has been repurposed for mixed use development.

Larger buildings of this sort, with large expanses of clear space, have been successfully redesigned to accommodate a mix of uses, including multi-family residential. While the opportunities will differ based on building type, location and surrounding development, a new and fully activated development can be realized with creative design and marketing.

These include the vacant K-Mart/Burlington building immediately south of the old Sam's Club. Both of these buildings are located on a pleasant stretch of Date Palm Drive with good access to major roadways and surrounding development and uses that would complement mixed-use development, including residential components.

One of the keys to successful building re-purposing on this scale is making it a destination rather than just a shopping center that meets daily needs. It should be a place where people want to be, not where they have to be. Therefore, as with the City Downtown, such re-purposed centers need to be active and dynamic with retail, dining and entertainment that makes it a one-stop "experience". Uses being successfully integrated in this type of large-scale re-purposing include eating and drinking establishments, arts and cultural venues, clubby bookstores with cafes, day spas like *Spa Envy*, and fitness centers.

There is always a need for multi-family housing and the inclusion of residential in these mixed-use projects extends their activation and time-of-day use, enhancing their economic viability and also making them excellent candidates for transit-orient service. In essence, this type and scale of building repurposing can create attractive and appealing *live/work/play* venues that diversify Cathedral City and make it a trending place to live and do business.

PRINCIPALS OF MIXED-USE AND TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Integral to *New Urbanism* and mixed-use planning and development is the integration of multi-modal and transit mobility. The purpose of transit-oriented development (TOD) is to bring a critical mass of people and activities close to well-served multi-modal and transit stops so people who want or need an efficient alternative to the private car can walk, bike or use the bus. Several fundamental conditions are necessary for successful mixed-use and TOD projects:

- **Connectivity** – you can get from "here" to "there" easily; home, work, shop and social are connected by a network of sidewalks, bike and LSEV paths, lanes, and streets; you can drive, take the bus, bike or walk.
- **Density** – lots of people live close by; the housing choices fit the needs and desires of a variety of people in the community.
- **Intensity** – most needs can be met close by; everyday shopping and services are right there, and residents are on-site and a part of the action.
- **Design** – the place looks and feels comfortable, solid and soft (like home) at the same time; the transit, the sidewalks, the trees, the buildings all contribute to a whole that is hip and dynamic.

The "transit" part also has requirements:
- It must be safe, convenient, pleasant, efficient, and reliable
- It goes where those who live nearby want to go
- It is viewed as a viable alternative to the car

Land Use and Design
Transit-oriented and mixed-use developments are based upon land use policies that promote diverse uses and higher densities combined with high design standards applied to the public realm and the "community commons". More people and more diverse uses in close proximity are essential for successful mixed-use and TOD development.

- **Land use:** The immediate area around a transit hub supports the activities needed by people who use multi-modal transportation (coffee shops, incidental shopping, food, retail and entertainment, as well as parking). A synergy of uses in a fine-grain, walkable neighborhood of stores, services, and workplaces.
- **Land use:** The allowable density and floor area ratio should be increased compared to other areas within the community. This brings more density and intensity, and is an economic incentive for developers to undertake the costlier buildings typical of TOD. Less parking should be required in these mixed-use areas.
- **Design:** The public realm should be beautiful and rewarding to the pedestrian; a place where one is glad to spend time.
- **Design:** The buildings should be "active" at the ground level and the walls more or less transparent. This enhances safety (eyes on the street), it evokes pedestrian/building interaction, and it offers service/food businesses a window to prospective customers.
- **Design:** The ground floor of buildings should be adaptable to changes in use over time so the framework of the neighborhood remains, but the businesses can adapt and evolve.
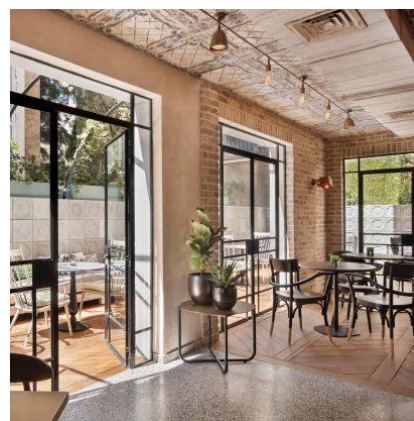
Design Principle No. 1
Entry/Connecting Streets and Internal streets

In suburban patterns of development of the recent past, the entry is flanked by isolated pads separated from the main stores by 250 to 400 feet. There is no connection between the main street and the stores, and even when lined by trees, the driveway is a riskier place for a pedestrian or biker. In TOD and mixed use projects, the entry must be a street with sidewalks and that is lined with stores to animate the environment for both cars and people.

Similarly, to create the pedestrian environment necessary for connectivity, internal streets should not be simply driveways that connect adjacent developments or buildings within a development. They should be designed as streets that function equally well for pedestrians, bikes, LSEVs as well as cars. In this way they help reduce local traffic, and they create the fine-grain network of connectivity.

Internal streets can and should be narrower, with much slower speeds and buffers to allow adjacent uses but creating a sense and real safety.
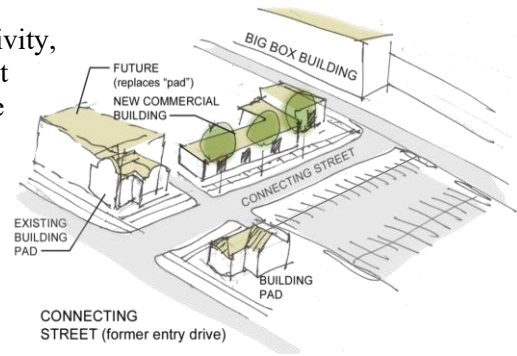
Connectivity and Parking

Another part of adapting to compact, mixed-use or transit-oriented development, is adjusting parking requirements. As workplaces and shops become more integrated with where people live, the 300-to-400 square feet of land devoted to parking car will become more valuable. Shared parking, or park-once-and-walk, frees up land for more revenue-producing use. But simply bringing uses together is not enough, the pedestrian realm must be enhanced so once out of the car, one can get around in the environment with continuity of storefronts, access to workplaces and home tied together by a safe, convenient and beautiful integrated network of paths. Also see the discussion of *Parking for Commercial Uses* below.

Simply creating a beautifully landscaped walkway between "pad buildings," however, is not connectivity; it will not by itself entice someone out of their car. Pedestrians are fickle, and the public realm devoted to them must also serve real needs – social and commercial.

It is common in TOD and other mixed-use development to park cars toward the center with buildings lining streets – internal and external. This helps create continuity, a defined slow-speed realm, and recreates the "street life" that has been sacrificed in recent development patterns. As this pattern is implemented, the major intersections will express the street life and activity that accompanies density and intensity. Two levels of connectivity emerge; one oriented to the public street and one that is an "internal" network of connectivity.

Design Principle No. 2: Density

The term "density" generally means more dwelling units or more commercial floor area per acre; but it ultimately means more people. This idea, also called "intensification", is often resisted by communities in the early stages of developing a full spectrum of connectivity and housing choices. The City leaders, staff and community must be comfortable with the positive contributions that mixed-use development, including TOD, make to the community, which can be summarized as follows:

Transit-oriented and mixed-use development in general is not for everyone. But for some, and perhaps for many of us at certain stages in our lives, being near "the action" is desirable; this is important to old and young alike. Diversity of housing alternatives reflects the diversity of our society.

RESIDENTIAL & TWO-STORY TOWNHOUSE OVER PARKING

More Housing Choices

The detached single-family residential (SFR) remains the dominant housing type built today, even as household make-up has diversified, morphed and splintered. Besides the well-documented growth of "millennials" and "boomers" there are other trends that indicate that denser housing choices are desirable as part of a strong, diverse community. Responding to these demographic changes, along with transit alternatives, will generate more multi-modal users, bus ridership and acceptance of connectivity, density and diversity within the community.

3-STORY WOOD FRAME TOWNHOUSE W/OFFICE

RESIDENTIAL OVER OFFICE & PARKING OR RETAIL
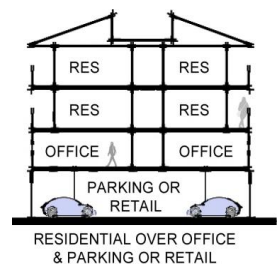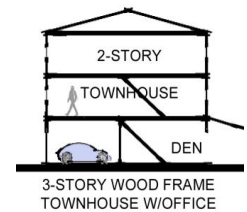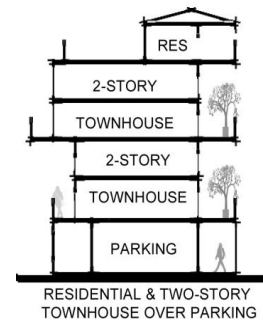
Building types that mix uses vertically increase both density and diversity and help shape the pedestrian realm. More people, including and especially millennials and retirees, want to live where they don't need a car to do shopping, grab a coffee or dine out, or go to a movie or other form of entertainment. As noted, housing that offers live/work opportunities have ancient roots and are also making a comeback in the new and revitalized urban village.

Design Principle No. 3: Diversity of Uses

Compact mixed-use and transit-oriented developments are based on the idea of bringing together the parts that make up the life of the community – home, work, shopping and social. The scale of these developments and the integration of uses is best characterized as "urban villages", as discussed above. The density and intensity of uses reverses the pattern of isolated, single-purpose buildings and designs toward an integrated and synergistic mix of activities. This principle includes mixed and related uses that are a destination in itself and connected by sidewalks and nonintrusive parking.

Land Use: To accommodate diverse and intense activity, land use regulations should be more permissive in terms of uses, and more selective in terms of requiring conditional use permits.

Flexible and Diverse Commerce: To make more dense development desirable to residents, the immediate area around multi-modal and transit facilities should be developed for a fine-grain mixture of housing types (studios, one- and two-bedroom units) and commercial space that can serve a coffee shop, a small office, specialty retail stores, nail and hair salons, dry-cleaners, a green grocer, specialty wine/beer store, and personal business services that are not even in existence yet.

Instead of zoning for specific isolated uses, compact development permits the overlapping of functions; it can be challenging at times, but it is more convenient and offers more opportunity for interaction.

LEGEND

A	**Internal Parking**
B	**Corner Prominence**
C	**Retail**
D	**Office over retail & plaza at corners**
E	**Residential over commercial**
F	**Three story Residential**

Enrichment of the Social Experience: Compact and diverse development that was common in small downtowns two generations ago still serves as a model for urban villages with the integration of commerce and social exchange. This pattern is especially relevant today when time has shrunk and space has expanded leaving only small islands of social experience in our towns and cities (Starbucks thrives on the need for social encounters more than on the need for caffeine). The public realm in mixed-use and TOD development is the stage setting for a rich public social life.

Buildings: The design and composition of buildings also must adapt and provide flexibility to accommodate the needs of diverse uses within the mixed-use/TOD environment, where buildings should:

- Create ground floor volume with ground-to- 2nd floor heights of 14'.
- Increase variety at the ground level by designing the storefront module as multiples of 6' (12', 18', 24' and 30').
- Encourage retail and food as the primary uses along a sidewalk.
- Require continuity of storefronts to enrich visual communication between inside and outside. Limit blank walls to 24'.
- Compose and animate the facades of multi-use buildings to tell the story of what goes on inside.
- Allow/encourage home-offices and live/work developments.
- Allow regulated signage in second floor home office windows.

Connectivity, Density, Diversity and the Public Realm

The following design principles are intended to help shape the development at nodes and along corridors in ways that support multi-modal and transit systems. Integrated design and development makes alternatives to the car efficient, convenient and pleasant, and contribute to economic strength, sustainability and social cohesion.

In general, the design principles are in line with what is called "compact development" or "mixed-use development." Both terms describe an approach to development that emphasizes connectivity, density of population, and diversity of uses within new and in-fill projects along travel paths with access to alternative modes of travel and a rich, safe and beautiful public realm.

It is important to recognize that the people who are drawn to the compact urban village include demographic groups that are large and have significant economic clout. Recent trends show that seniors who are downsizing may want to be less dependent on the car and enjoy the activity in a pedestrian-friendly mixed-use neighborhood. For "millennials" the appeal is similar – being able to integrate the social, work and shopping aspects of their lives, and not have to own, store or insure car. As the principles of density and diversity shape new developments, design becomes increasingly important. Not necessarily because things should simply be "pretty" but because the public realm increasingly influences the lives of people in these compact mixed-use centers.
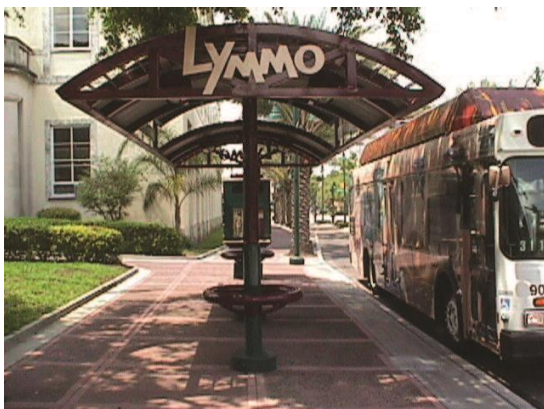
THE PEDESTRIAN

For both multi-modal systems and transit-oriented developments, success hinges on the pedestrian. We are all pedestrians at some point during the day. Whether simply walking from our parked car or on our daily route, mobility must be designed for the pedestrian experience. When we walk, we are part of the public realm, but for many decades the public realm has been designed primarily for the driver.

Enhance the Public Realm

We are social animals and the "public realm" is the space where we share our lives in public. The public realm is not just the public rights-of-way – streets, alleys, sidewalks and parkways, it also includes the facades of buildings, plazas, parking areas, "open space". The General Plan and Zoning Ordinance already extend the influence of the City onto private property; they recognize the shared impact private development has on surrounding lands and the public space. The purpose of the design principles in this element is to create a shared public realm that is functional, legible (understandable), coherent, attractive and expressive of the values of Cathedral City. The public realm complements the density and diversity necessary for successful mixed-use and multi-modal mobility by creating an environment that rewards being part of the community.

The Community Design Element design principles start where those of the *Circulation and Mobility Element* and SunLine leave off. The SunLine Design Manual makes a modest effort toward bus stops pleasant, convenient and reliable; they fall short of what is needed to fully integrate these facilities into the urban village. For transit to be successful, more integral design principles must apply to the public and private realms surrounding the stops. The goal is to create a pleasant experience for the rider from home-to-bus-to-work. The diversity of the transit-oriented urban village will help assure loyal ridership.

The Pedestrian Experience

For both multi-modal and transit-oriented design, the pedestrian experience must be the starting point. The overall experience for the pedestrian must be a travel path that is safe, pleasant, convenient, connected and interesting. For every pedestrian –resident, visitor, bus rider, worker, shopper – the experience of the public realm is an essential element of a successful community. It is as a pedestrian that we are most aware of the impact of the public realm on our well-being. Future decision made by traffic and civil engineers, architects and landscape architects will enhance or detract from the pedestrian experience. Following this element's design principles can influence the incremental as well as broad, full-sweep of changes at an activity node and along the corridor.

Designing at Different Scales

There are essentially three scales at which these design principles apply, the eye-level sidewalk scale, the street scale, and the highway scale. Because so much depends on the pedestrian experience and how it relates to the success of alternative modes of travel, we first address the area immediately adjacent to a the multi-modal (including bus) "stop".

Pedestrian Stop and Go: Among the many elements and issues related to a good mobility stop, the following stand out:

- Transit and other modes must operate efficiently and reliably
- The stop must protect the pedestrian from traffic
- The stop must be identifiable for pedestrian, biker and driver
- The stop must create an environment that is interesting and facilitating

Protecting Pedestrians and Bikers: Pedestrians and bicyclists are vulnerable near traffic; to be a safe setting at multi-modal stops, the following elements should be included:

- Street lights, monuments and bollards arranged at the stops to contribute to pedestrian safety.
- Where possible, large "urban" street trees that have stout trunks and large shade canopies should be placed as part of the overall stop design. Specific species that are distinctive and majestic, such as date palms, are a symbol of sustainability within the urban fabric, and reinforce the continuity of the rich pedestrian realm. The trees must be setback from the curb so they do not interfere with travelers regardless of mode.

Making An Identifiable Place: Along East Palm Canyon Drive the City has already implemented a pattern of street trees, enhanced paving, lighting and monuments that clearly show a community that cares about its image, and have improved the experience for bicyclists and pedestrians. At multi-modal stops, these elements should be concentrated and accentuated.

- street light with banners, active route and time display, bollards that identify the actual door locations, and site-specific paving or monument when designed together will convey the importance of the stop along the roadway.
- Supportive and informative graphics and in-stop lighting.
- A specific species of urban canopy trees – for shade, protection and identity.

Identifiable Places

- Big trees
- Banners
- Bollards
- Benches
- Bike park
- Paving
- Shade
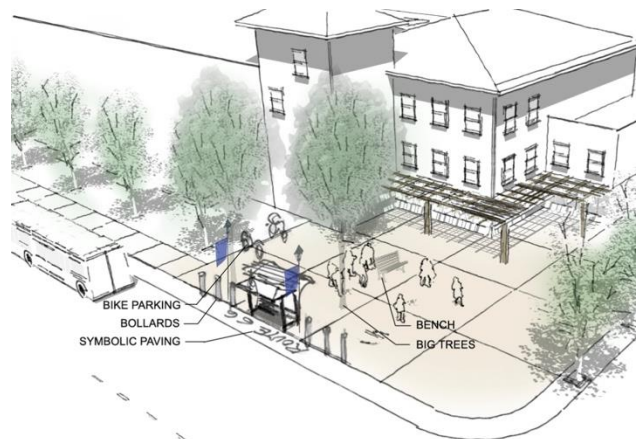
Multi-Modal Stop at the Sidewalk Scale: The multi-modal stop is one of the elements of connectivity throughout the community, and each stop is the gateway into the local fabric of the street and neighborhood. The sidewalk is the next link in the overall network of connectivity. So, in addition to street trees and pedestrian protection, sidewalks leading to the mobility stops should follow these principles:

- Link the mobility stops with plazas, buildings, and parking
- Define the public realm by connected buildings - no large gaps
- Be adjacent to accessible stores with significant transparency and interest – no long blank walls

Building to Sidewalk Experience: Buildings, their placement, scale and design are the essential elements that define the public realm and create the pleasant and interesting pedestrian experience. Buildings within mixed-use and transit-oriented developments should follow these principles:

- Place buildings at the back edge of sidewalks ("build-to" the sidewalk as opposed to "setback" from the sidewalk)
- Have a regular rhythm of storefront piers (multiples of 6' work well; 12', 18', 24', and 30' are all workable store widths in creating a dense and diverse pedestrian commercial area)
- Have a horizontal element at between 12 – 14 feet above the sidewalk to suggest the "pedestrian scale." A "belt cornice" is the traditional means of creating vertical scale. Also, to provide adequate volume for ground level retail, the second floor should be at about 14' so the cornice lends legibility to the façade.
- Extend over the sidewalk with awnings, canopies or arcades.
- The store windows themselves can contribute to the pedestrian scale. With a bulkhead at about two feet, and a header at about eight feet, the human eye is right in the middle of the glass panel.
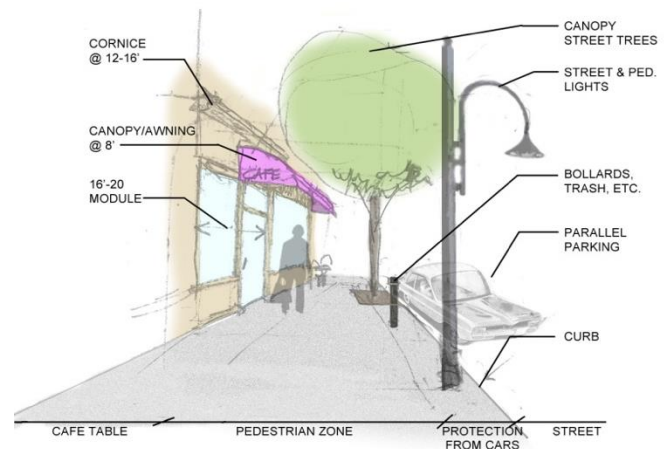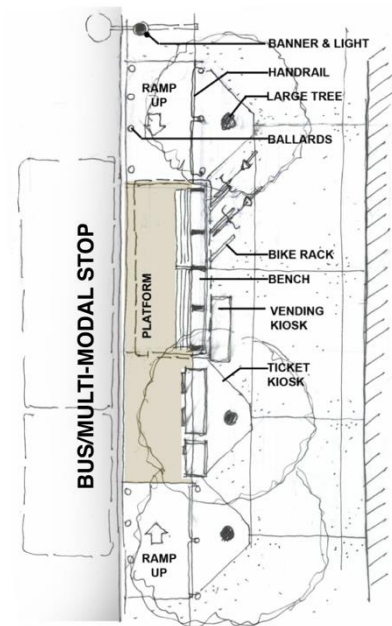
These elements together create a legible framework for the façade. Of course, styles and tenants change over time, but a building or set of buildings that will endure should have legible structure, rhythm and proportions.

The Pedestrian Experience – Open Space: Another important element of the successful sidewalk scale and pedestrian realm is properly-sized open space. Plazas, piazettas, and outdoor rooms require the sidewalk and buildings to make accommodations to the "build-to" line. The successful outdoor pedestrian space should provide the following:

- protection from cars
- shade from trees, awnings, and arbors
- partial enclosure by walls and overhead elements
- a view of street activity; plazas are part of the street scene, not isolated from "the action"
- connection to stores, parking and the sidewalk

Sense of Place – The Plaza, Piazza and Piazzetta: Generally bigger is not better for creating a lively "place." We, as individuals, are the measure of "placeness"; it is the human scale that matters. It is the individual who feels safe, connected, welcomed, so bigger

may undermine the sense that an outdoor area seems to "fit". A too-big plaza conveys a feeling not unlike peering into a large empty restaurant. Too many people is better than too much space. The "places" created suggest that one can linger; outdoor places provide for the social interaction that is essential to a lively and diverse "street life".
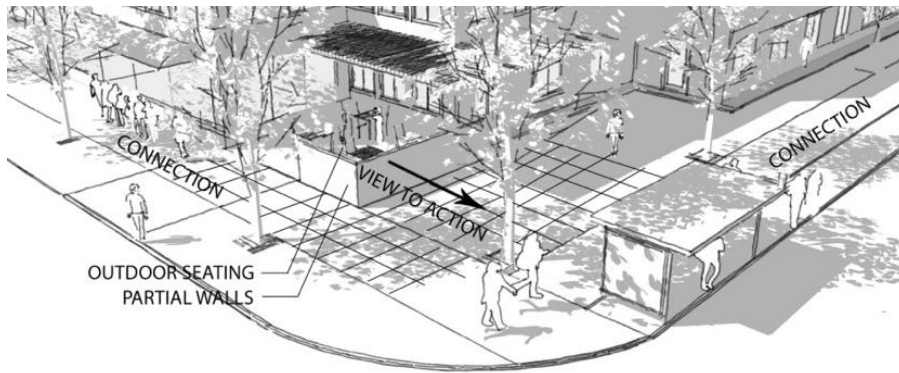
These places may simply be a bulge in the sidewalk where one can step out of the way of other walkers/shoppers, or it may be a line of outdoor tables where one can stop and have a coffee or sandwich, or it may be a semi-formal piazza with benches, an arbor, perhaps a fountain – all of which suggest that "open space" is intended as a *public place* and available for a longer "break". These "outdoor rooms" may be along streets, in alleys or lanes, or slipped in between buildings entries. In every case, they are meant to be part of the network that is the fine-grain pedestrian life in the public realm.

Street-Scale Design Principles: These design principles are also intended to influence the street. To link mobility stops to the greater neighborhood, and to accommodate a range of mobility choices, the street should be viewed as a linear space that is enlivened and defined by flanking buildings, parkway landscaping, sidewalks, trees, lights and signs. The street section (from building to building) is critical to creating the scale that gives pedestrians, bikes and LSEVs the same consideration and respect as motor vehicles. Current standard engineering practice in street design emphasizes efficiency and safety based upon the needs of vehicles, and are often "driven" by perceived needs of

fire and trash trucks. The unintended consequence is that the street becomes intimidating to the pedestrian, and bicycle and LSEV users. The recent movement toward "Complete Streets" (see *Circulation and Mobility Element*) is a mandate to define the public realm to include a desirable experience for pedestrians, bikers and LSEV users.

Complete Street driven design should follow these principles:
- be as narrow as possible. This is a traffic calming strategy as well as an aesthetic consideration
- provide parallel parking. The parked cars protect pedestrians from traffic and provide dispersed parking.
- accommodate bicycles and LSEVs
- be framed by vertical elements - street trees, lights, banners
- sidewalks wide enough for protection, movement and seating
- be lined by buildings with storefronts
- provide enhanced pedestrian street-crossing to encourage flowing movement and enliven both sides of a street
- animate facades to express life and variety within
- shape the building to create plazas or other "people places" at transit stops and corners. These outdoor rooms are both functional and symbolic - they convey "importance" and people-oriented activity at the various street scales
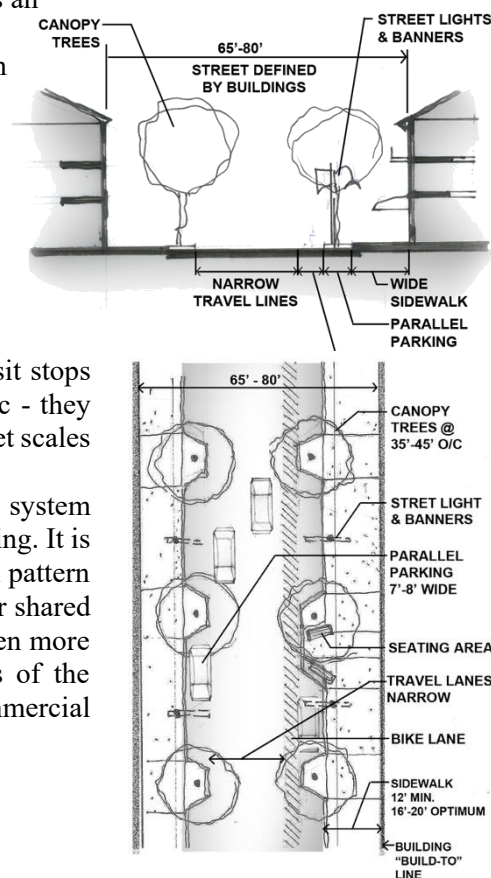
One of the most challenging aspects of making the multi-modal stop system successful is finding the balance between too much and not enough parking. It is generally agreed among planners and traffic engineers that the historical pattern of commercial development does not take into consideration joint-use or shared parking. Land use synergies and reciprocal parking plans should be given more attention so that the emphasis is on the dynamic and activated parts of the development and less on the parking. Residential multi-family and commercial parking demand is further discussed below.

PARKING: THE NEW PARADIGM

Multi-Family Residential Parking Demand[1][2]

In California, valuable research has been conducted on the travel behavior of those living near transit-oriented development, which is a useful proxy for mixed-use developments and those sharing a multi-modal stop such as transit. Analyses of mixed-use-serving transit use within one-quarter mile of transit services looked at 20 to 60 acre multi-family developments and found that most residents were young professionals, singles, retirees, childless households, and immigrants. These residents also needed less dwelling space compared to other households, and were drawn to residences in mixed-use developments by convenience and finances. Also relevant and important for mixed-use and transit-oriented development success is that most residents worked "downtown" and in other locations with convenient transit and multi-modal service.

An analysis of twelve housing projects near transit stations in denser areas found that occupancy rates averaged 1.66 people with 1.26 vehicles per household. These results were compared with an analysis of the overall average household size and vehicle ownership in the same census tract and found that household occupancy averaged 2.4 people and 1.64 vehicles. While 48 percent of all households had fewer than two vehicles, about 70 percent of mixed-use and TOD residents had fewer than two vehicles.

Several years' analysis, including extensive study of transit use and TOD development in California, clearly indicate the potential to reduce parking by 23 percent in multi-family developments within or in proximity to a transit stops. These efficiencies are best realized in mixed-use and TOD development by providing a variety of household types, as mentioned above. It is also apparent that with changing economics and demographics, more and more residents are choosing to live within mixed-use developments and near transit services.

---

[1]   "Statewide Transit-Oriented Development Special Study Parking and TOD: Challenges and Opportunities", California Department of Transportation, 2002.

[2]   "Vehicle Trip Reduction Impacts of Transit-Oriented Housing", Robert Cervero, University of California, Berkeley, G.A. Arrington, PB Placemaking. 2008.

Parking for Commercial Uses

There has generally been a lack of systematic analysis of the parking demand effects of incorporating office and retail commercial in mixed-use and especially transit-oriented development. More research has been conducted on the common problem of providing too much parking for both office and retail commercial within such developments. It must be realized, however, that numerous factors affect commercial parking demand, including residential densities, employee demographics, retail sales volumes, employee densities, and types of adjacent land use. Some of the mixed-use/TOD-style developments that have been analysed indicate that convenient access to multi-modal/transit can substantially reduce office and retail parking demand.

Table CD-1
Commercial Parking Reductions at Selected TODs

TOD	Land Use	Parking Reduction
Pacific Court (Long Beach, CA)	Retail	60%
Uptown District (San Diego, CA)	Commercial	12%
Rio Vista West (San Diego, CA)	Retail/Commercial	15%
Pleasant Hill (CA)	Office	34%
Pleasant Hill (CA)	Retail	20%
Dadeland South (Miami, FLA)	Office	38%
City of Arlington (VA)	Office	48%-57%
Lindbergh City Center (Atlanta, GA)	Speculative Office	19%
Lindbergh City Center (Atlanta, GA)	Retail	26%
Portland (OR) Suburbs*	General Office	17%
Portland (OR) Suburbs*	Retail/Commercial	18%

* Based on maximums specified in Metro's Title 2 Regional Parking Ratios.

Mixed Land Uses and Shared Parking

The mix of residential, office and commercial uses can be optimally integrated in a manner that makes shared or reciprocal parking possible and adequate, and can reduce overall parking demand for such developments. This sharing of parking by different land uses is possible because peak activity and parking demand periods can differ between land uses. This integrated land use and parking approach generates parking demand that is substantially less than that typically called for each of the individual land uses. This frees up valuable land for other on-site uses.

As implied above, there are important issues of land use management that must be addressed to make shared parking effective and adequate to serve all users. First, it is critical that the various mix of land uses have differing peak activity periods and associated parking demand. Such complementary land uses might include offices (a daytime use) adjacent to a dinner house or movie theater (evening uses) which share parking but during different times of the day.

Another characteristic of an effective mix of land uses are those that provide retail and personal commercial service that may have a typical daytime peak activity period, but which can tap into a substantial pedestrian market of nearby residents and office and other employees that take advantage of these commercial services before, during or at the end of the work day. This type of land use mix can realize market synergies that draw from a wider geographic area without a commensurate increase in parking demand.

The bottom line is that thoughtfully matched and integrated land uses in mixed-use developments can significantly reduce the total parking demand for these uses, including residential. Examples show that an overall reduction in parking demand can be realized through thoughtful mixed-use/TOD planning and use management. A conservative rate of reduction of about 25 percent could significantly affect the quality, appeal and amenities of these projects.

LEGEND

A	Internal Parking
B	Corner Prominence
C	Highway-scale building
D	Retail & plaza at corners
E	Access to parking
F	Residential over parking
G	Residential over medical
H	Residential over retail
I	Buildings at sidewalks
J	Bus/Multi-Modal Stop
K	Arterial streetscape

COMMUNITY DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY

Cathedral City has taken a very pro-active stance in promoting and realizing sustainable development in every aspect of community design. These efforts are described in detail in the *Healthy and Sustainable Community Element*, and in the City's *Sustainability Plan* and its *Green for Life Program.* Sustainability is a foundation principle of community design and its implementation is found in site planning and building orientation, solar access, construction materials and design, energy and water needs, access to multi-modal transportation, and other design considerations. It sets an example by thinking globally and acting locally.

Under the California Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan, the state has established ambitious goals for the development of zero net energy (ZNE) buildings. These include:

- All new residential construction will be zero net energy (ZNE) by 2020.
- All new commercial construction will be ZNE by 2030
- 50% of commercial buildings will be retrofit to ZNE by 2030
- 50% of new major renovations of state buildings will be ZNE by 2025, and 100% by 2035

Net-Zero buildings will include solar arrays ranging from 6 kilowatts to 8 kilowatts in size, and linked systems. The US Department of Energy's Energy Star program suggests that a *Green Home* might include the following systems: photovoltaic array with batteries, compact and ultra-efficient appliances, super-insulated walls, basement, and ceiling, low-energy lighting, optimized HVAC mini-split systems, triple-glazed windows, skylights with summer shades, recycled building materials, and low water use toilets and dishwashers, and xeriscape landscaping.

LIGHTING AND PROTECTION OF THE NIGHT SKY

It is a well-known principle of human values that you cannot love what you do not know or cannot see. There are few wonders of the world that are free to all than being able to see the moon and stars on a clear night. And yet, modern society and the built environment have done more to destroy our view of the night sky, this wonderful gift that has helped propel humanity forward.

Light pollution has been associated with an increase in sleep disruption and human disease, and has a profound impact on wildlife. Controlling and managing artificial light in our built environments can be done, while still achieving the basic goals of lighting. The International Dark Sky Association (IDA) provides a wide variety of educational and technical data and information that can help the community to meet its lighting needs while preserving the night sky. IDA also provides model lighting ordinances. Preserving and restoring our views of the night sky must be an essential goal of community design.

> *"A starry sky is something that touches your soul. Our civilization's religion, philosophy, science, art and literature all have roots with our views of the heavens, and we are now losing this with consequences we cannot fully know. What happens when we cannot be inspired by the night sky?"*
> — *Alisha Sevigny, Summer Constellations*

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The future of the community and its design would have been unpredictable half a century ago. And the urban sprawl example of the Levittown model of residential neighborhoods is less and less sustainable or even desirable. Physical, environmental and financial resources are not infinite, and substantially greater efficiencies and sustainable use of resources are now the rule. New technologies in communications, energy and transportation are also changing the community design paradigm. So, the question becomes what sort of future should we plan?

The Community Design Element attempts to preserve the best of Cathedral City, evolve residential neighborhoods and downtown areas, and plan for more integrated mix of uses that increase community cohesiveness, reduce material needs and increase social and economic equity. Trends that are in our futures include expansion of shared and automated transportation systems, expansion of education and culture as essential quality of life matters, improved health and wellness, and renewed efforts to improve the human ecosystem and preserve the natural ones.

Community design considerations, including preservation and enhancement of scenic highways, can subtly and profoundly shape the image of the community. Establishing basic criteria to promote good and conscientious design that enhances community cohesiveness will allow Cathedral City to emerge as a thriving community. Community design considerations are directly related to issues associated with land use, traffic, arts and culture, health and safety, economic development and environmental systems.

The Community Design Element can be implemented by several mechanisms, which include the thoughtful application of the other elements of the 2040 General Plan, robust Specific Plans, the City Zoning Ordinance, and development plans for individual project areas. The most effective instrument will be the Zoning Ordinance, which set forth specific standards and establishes design parameters and guidelines for site planning and building design. The following goals, policies and programs will help to guide the design of the community and all of its various parts well into the future.

GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Goal 1: A high quality of life through careful, meticulous planning, and sustainable community design and development that balances aesthetic, economic, social and environmental needs and goals, while ensuring a highly livable urban and natural environment for future generations.

Policy 1: The City recognizes the importance of quality planning and design and shall develop and update standards and guidelines that address all areas of community design.

Policy 2: The City shall apply the design standards and associated Municipal Code to the processing of all development proposals within the City's designated Downtown district as set forth in the Downtown Design Guidelines.

> **Program 2.A:** The City shall initiate a review of the 2002 Downtown Design Guidelines and shall update this document in a manner that builds from and extends the aesthetic, functionality and values reflected in the Community Design Element and the other General Plan elements.
> **Responsible Agency**: Planning, Architectural Review Committee, Public Works, Planning Commission, City Council
> **Schedule**: 2020; Every five years

> **Program 2.B**: The City-Wide Design Guidelines and Zoning Ordinance shall be periodically reviewed and, as appropriate, revised and updated to reflect the changing urban pattern and needs of the community.
> **Responsible Agency**: Planning
> **Schedule**: 2021; Every five years

Policy 3: The City shall continue to take bold and decisive steps to realize a livable, vibrant and sustainable community based on the principles of *New Urbanism*, *Smart Growth* and social equity, and focused on a vision and strategy of economic development and life-enrichment for all of its members.

Policy 4: The City shall confer and consult with Riverside County Flood Control and CVWD to expand the use of stormwater channels, levees and service roads for hiking and other appropriate recreational uses.

> **Program 4.A:** Consistent with multi-use agreements with flood control agencies to use stormwater channels, levees and service roads for portions of CV Link, the City shall seek to expand the use of channel levees and service road for hiking and other appropriate recreational uses.
> **Responsible Agency**: Planning, Public Works
> **Schedule**: 2020; Ongoing

Goal 2: A community that is beautiful as well as healthy, spacious, clean and well-balanced.

Policy 1: Neighborhoods shall establish a well-defined edge or boundary, consisting of landscaping, green belts, open space, and/or entry monumentation, in appropriate locations to help create a unique community image and sense of place.

> **Program 1.A** : The City shall require the incorporation of parks and open space into new development projects, and shall ensure that new parks and open space are developed in the early phases of development projects.
> **Responsible Agency**: Planning; Planning Commission; City Council
> **Schedule**: On-going

Policy 2: Community design, architecture, and landscaping standards and guidelines shall be compatible with and enhance the City's desert setting and natural scenic resources.

Policy 3: The City shall pro-actively work to preserve and restore the community's night sky by updating and revising the Lighting Ordinance based on the guidelines set forth by the International Dark Sky Association.

> **Program 3.A:** To preserve and restore the community's night sky, the City shall review and, as appropriate, update the Lighting Ordinance to require outdoor lighting to be shielded, limit in height, number, and intensity of fixtures to the minimum needed to provide sufficient security and identification on residential, commercial, and other development.
> **Responsible Agency**: Planning, Public Works, Engineering, Planning Commission, City Council
> **Schedule**: 2020; Ongoing

Goal 3: A community where principles of sustainability and environmental stewardship are an inherent and fully integrated part of the design and development of the entire city.

> **Policy 1:** The City shall apply the principles of sustainability in all aspects of community design, development and regulation on both a public and private sector level.

> > **Program 1.A:** The City design review process, whether for public or private development projects, shall include a thorough assessment of how and to what extent projects are sustainable, and a sustainability check list derived from the City Sustainability Plan, this element and other regulatory and policy documents, shall be developed and used to assess all project's sustainability.
> > **Responsible Agency**: Planning, Public Works, Planning Commission, City Council
> > **Schedule**: 2020; Ongoing

> **Policy 2**: Native desert landscape materials and site-sensitive architectural designs shall be incorporated into all public and private building projects to complement and enhance the functional and aesthetic relationships between the natural and built environments.

> **Policy 3**: The City shall actively pursue land use agreements with individual landowners to retire billboards located within the City limits.

> **Policy 4**: The City shall maintain and enforce a general Sign Ordinance and the Auto Center Sign Ordinance, which define permitted sign locations, sizes, maintenance, and other related requirements.

> **Policy 5**: Overhead utility lines shall be undergrounded to the greatest extent practical through the establishment of an undergrounding program and guidelines.

Goal 4: A communitywide development pattern of multi-level functional design that supports and promotes social equity and environmental justice.

> **Policy 1:** To the greatest extent practicable, promote residential development that provides a variety of housing types and affordability within a single neighborhood, instead of separating people by income level, age or family situation.

Goal 5: A community-wide multi-modal transportation system that addresses the City's desire to facilitate all modes of travel and reduce dependency on the use of motor vehicles, while helping to meet the City's other community design goals.

> **Policy 1**: As many services and activity areas as possible, including commercial, professional and health services, should be located with convenient multi-modal access, including within easy walking or biking distance of transit stops.

Program 1.A: The full range of community design principles shall be applied to all public and private development proposals to ensure that streets, pedestrian paths and bike paths contribute to a system of fully-connected, interesting routes to all destinations.
Responsible Agency: Planning, Public Works, Engineering
Schedule: On-going

Program 1.B: The City shall implement its *Active Transportation Plan* and *Complete Streets* principles in a manner that encourages pedestrian and bicycle use and shall be spatially defined by buildings, trees and lighting, and discourages high speed traffic
Responsible Agency: Public Works, Planning
Schedule: On-going

Program 1.C: The City shall review proposed and existing commercial development for opportunities to enhance pedestrian and other multi-modal circulation, safe and convenient ingress and egress, screening of outdoor storage/loading and other unsightly areas, lighting, signage, and the planting of mature landscaping.
Responsible Agency: Planning, Public Works, Engineering
Schedule: On-going

Policy 2: The City shall strive for population densities around prospective transit and other multi-modal stops to provide the critical mass of people and activities in these areas needed to make transit and other alternative modes of travel practicable and economically viable.

Program 2.A: Public and private sector development proposals shall be subject to citywide design guidelines and standards that reflect principles of *New Urbanism*, *Smart Growth,* and which are intended to promote economic development and justice, protect the community's natural resources, provide community cohesion, and enhance the image of the City.
Responsible Agency: Planning, Public Works
Schedule: On-going

Program 2.B: To ensure that development proposals are initiated consistent with the City's community design principles and values, the City shall maintain comprehensive development application packages that provide detailed information on and direct applicants to City design guideline documents, ordinances and other requirements, standards and guidelines.
Responsible Agency: Planning
Schedule: On-going

Program 2.C : Promote development plans that are based on the principles and values set forth in the Community Design and other General Plan Elements that define and support positive and unique qualities of existing and planned neighborhoods.
Responsible Agency: Planning; Planning Commission; City Council
Schedule: On-going

Program 2.D: New residential development proposals shall be reviewed by City staff to assure compliance with applicable design standards and guidelines, and promote design features, such as entry statements, recreational facilities, neighborhood parks and schools, and landscaping along public rights-of-way.
Responsible Agency: Planning; Planning Commission; City Council
Schedule: On-going

Program 2.E: The City shall continue to implement its program of City entry monumentation that reflects the community's character and dedication to quality design.
Responsible Agency: Planning; Public Works
Schedule: On-going

Program 2.F: Require the submittal of detailed landscape, architectural, and special signage designs for project entries and other design features in or adjacent to the public realm to assure compliance with community design standards and guidelines, and compatibility with the natural and built environments.
Responsible Agency: Planning
Schedule: On-going

Policy 3: Community and Neighborhood Activity Centers, including squares, plazas and piazzas, shall be established at appropriate locations to encourage public social interaction and a sense of public space.

Program 3.A: Actively pursue joint use agreements with the Palm Springs Unified School District to promote public school grounds as integral parts of neighborhood activity areas.
Responsible Agency: Planning; School District
Schedule: On-going

Policy 4: The City shall support and conduct a high level of Code Enforcement to encourage neighborhood beautification and to maintain property values and quality of life.

Program 4.A: The City shall develop and adopt a program of Code compliance standards for existing and future neighborhoods, and enforce the program through regular Code Compliance inspections.
Responsible Agency: Code Compliance, City Council
Schedule: 2020; Ongoing

Policy 5: The City shall support the development of an ordinance and management plan that maximizes the use of NEVs and other LSEVs throughout the community.

Program 5.A: To the greatest extent practicable, the City shall support the development of an expanded NEV/LSEV network through the adoption of an ordinance that allows greater use of NEV and other LSEVs on City streets and wherever else feasible in the City.
Responsible Agency: Planning, Public Works, Planning Commission, City Council
Schedule: 2022; Ongoing