



Urban Design Element

Santa Ana General Plan
FINAL, APRIL 2022



A SHARED VISION

Santa Ana is a city that promotes the health and wellness of all residents, with a civic culture that actively embraces the power of diversity. Our city invests in resources that create economic opportunities for the next generation, and it is a community that celebrates our past while working together to create a sustainable future.

OUR CORE VALUES

H HEALTH

The people of Santa Ana value a physical environment that encourages healthy lifestyles, a planning process that ensures that health impacts are considered, and a community that actively pursues policies and practices that improve the health of our residents.

Eq Eq EJ EQUITY

Our residents value taking all necessary steps to ensure equitable outcomes, expanding access to the tools and resources that residents need, and to balance competing interests in an open and democratic manner.

The value of equity that includes "EJ" in the upper corner indicates a policy related to environmental justice.

S SUSTAINABILITY

Santa Ana values land use decisions that benefit future generations, plans for the impacts of climate change, and incorporates sustainable design practices at all levels of the planning process.

C CULTURE

Our community values efforts that celebrate our differences as a source of strength, preserve and build upon existing cultural resources, and nurture a citywide culture of empowered residents.

Ed EDUCATION

We are a city that values the creation of lifelong learners, the importance of opening up educational opportunities to all residents and investing in educational programs that advance our residents' economic wellbeing.



▲ Calle Cuatro Plaza [Cover Photo]

At the intersection of 4th and French Streets, Calle Cuatro Plaza is a public space that provides a forum for a range of community activities in Downtown Santa Ana. The plaza has been enhanced with design features that welcome people, such as seating areas, a stage, murals, and other accessibility features.



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URBAN DESIGN

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RELATED ITEMS UNDER SEPARATE COVER

EIR CHAPTERS: 5.1, AESTHETICS; 5.10, LAND USE AND PLANNING



Santa Ana Artists Village. Looking west down the 2nd Street Promenade, Santa Ana's Artists Village is one of Orange County's most vibrant arts districts. It is a thriving home to art galleries, studios, creative businesses, and restaurants in historic Downtown Santa Ana. The Artists Village features restored historical brick buildings alongside ornate Spanish architecture on streets lined with fountains, palm trees, and sidewalk cafes.

URBAN DESIGN

The Urban Design Element establishes the long-range vision for the physical design, visual qualities, and sensory experience of the city. This element, in coordination with other elements of the General Plan, orchestrates a safe, functional, and aesthetically pleasing urban environment. Specifically, the Urban Design Element addresses the public realm and building form, and establishes programs and measures to improve the physical setting in which community life takes place while curtailing obsolete, dysfunctional, and chaotic development.



INTRODUCTION

Urban design is the process of shaping the physical character and organization of the city and defining the relationship between people and their environment. It respects the history of a place, considers existing organizational patterns and the form and character of existing buildings, supports healthy outdoor spaces, and is mindful of the natural environment. These considerations unite to define a distinct visual quality and sense of place that reflects community values.

Santa Ana's urban environment has continuously evolved since its establishment in 1869 (and later incorporation in 1886). The Urban Design Element identifies key components that define the city's visual form and provides a broad framework to guide the continued evolution of Santa Ana's visual vocabulary, ensuring it is respectful of the existing built environment and cultural heritage, reflective of local identity, and consistent with community values.

The design direction in this element is implemented by adopted design guidelines and standards, including the Citywide Design Guidelines, Heninger Park Architectural Design Guidelines, Historic French Park Design Guidelines, Hotel and Motel Design Standards, North Broadway Corridor Design Standards, and Residential Building Design and Materials Standards. The Santa Ana Municipal Code, specifically Chapter 41 (Zoning Code), also implements portions of this element.

The various design guidelines contain specific guidance that expounds upon the general goals and policies in this element, providing supplementary design guidance for issues not explicitly stated in the Santa Ana Municipal Code.



▲ Historic French Park

A view of the French Park neighborhood looking southwest toward Downtown Santa Ana. The neighborhood, first marketed as "Santa Ana East," was plotted in 1877 in anticipation of the railroad line extension. The streets in the original 160-acre tract were laid out parallel to the railroad tracks and at an angle to both the original townsite and the majority of subsequent development in the city. Areas where the two street patterns meet result in irregularly shaped blocks, like the triangular French Park, pictured above.



COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS



Through the community engagement process for this General Plan, participants identified numerous urban design considerations and values that they believe should form the basis of and be addressed by this element. Specifically, participants highlighted the following topics, areas of concern, and community strengths:

- ▷ Create well-designed, accessible, and attractive places for people
- ▷ Maintain well-designed private property
- ▷ Enhance the streetscape, greenscape, and urban forest
- ▷ Encourage architectural diversity and respect the city's architectural heritage
- ▷ Promote creative development that is compatible with existing land uses
- ▷ Promote sustainable design practices



▲ Old Santa Ana City Hall

At the corner of Third and Main Streets, the Old Santa Ana City Hall was constructed in 1935 and housed city offices until the 1980s. Today the art-deco building sits adjacent to Main Street Studios, a modern live-work project, blending the iconic corner building with modern architecture through thoughtful material selection and facade articulation.



▲ Community Input

Residents emphasized their desire to enhance their sense of identity and enjoyment of the city through improvements and standards that respect the city's and community's history, lead to a more sustainable future, attract new investment, and create more dynamic activity centers. This input was consistent throughout all phases of the General Plan preparation, including events such as the 2016 Ciclovia event (pictured above) and focused input such as the 2017 General Plan Advisory Group meetings.



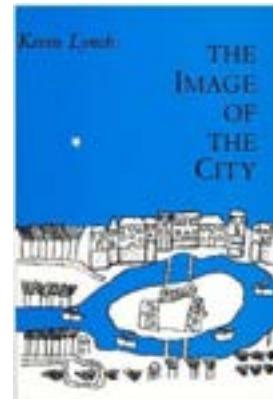
ELEMENTS OF THE CITY

For planning purposes, this element breaks the visual form of Santa Ana into several key components that organize the city, including *districts*, *travelways*, *activity nodes / urban hubs*, *focus intersections*, *landmarks*, and *gateways*. The following sections define these elements and describe their desired role in shaping the visual character of Santa Ana. The goals and policies detailed in this element provide a framework to guide future improvements and ensure that changes to the physical aspects of Santa Ana help create a more vivid and memorable urban experience that is reflective of community values.

DISTRICTS

As illustrated in Figure UD-1, Districts, Santa Ana is composed of component districts, which refer to the areas of the city that have consistent design features with a strong context and interrelationship of activities. For example, the Downtown, the Civic Center, the area around the transit center, and the industrial areas all form unique districts. Much of the city consists of neighborhood districts that are characterized by residential land-use patterns, including small amounts of neighborhood-serving commercial uses. There are, however, distinct districts within the neighborhood district category, like French Park, that are defined by the street grid, streetscaping, lot sizes, subdivision patterns, building scale, and other common physical features.

This similarity of physical characteristics can be expressed by any attribute that is repeatedly found throughout a district. For example, between 4th and 17th Streets, Tustin Avenue contains similar building types, landscaped edges, and other qualities that create a sense of place. Defining attributes may include architectural styles, scale, pattern, overall character, or support of a primary organizing feature (as in the Civic Center and mixed-use districts clustered around streetcar stations).



◀ The Image of the City

The approach used in the identification of key urban design issues in this element is adapted from the work of Kevin Lynch. Lynch characterized a city's urban form according to selected components or "Elements of the City."

KEY ISSUES

- » Older districts tend to be smaller and better defined near the city core.
- » The boundaries of neighborhood districts away from the city core tend to be more flexible and can overlap.
- » Newer, large-scale commercial and mixed-use developments generally create new districts that have well-defined characteristics and boundaries distinct from the existing urban fabric.
- » The boundaries of established neighborhood associations may divide a single district defined by common physical features, creating perceived districts not defined by physical characteristics.

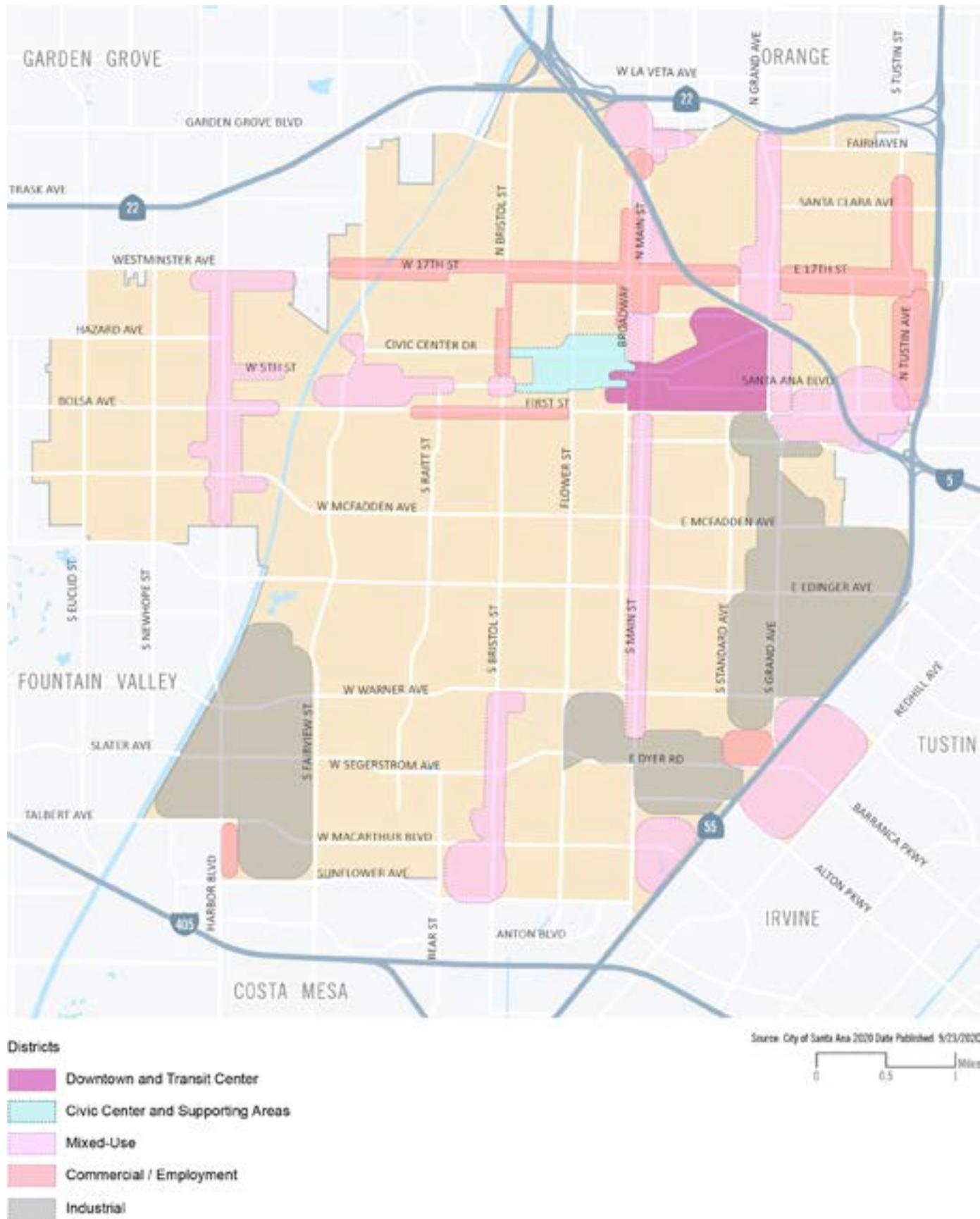


◀ District Boundary

A neighborhood district featuring single-family homes and narrower, tree-lined streets abuts a commercial district.



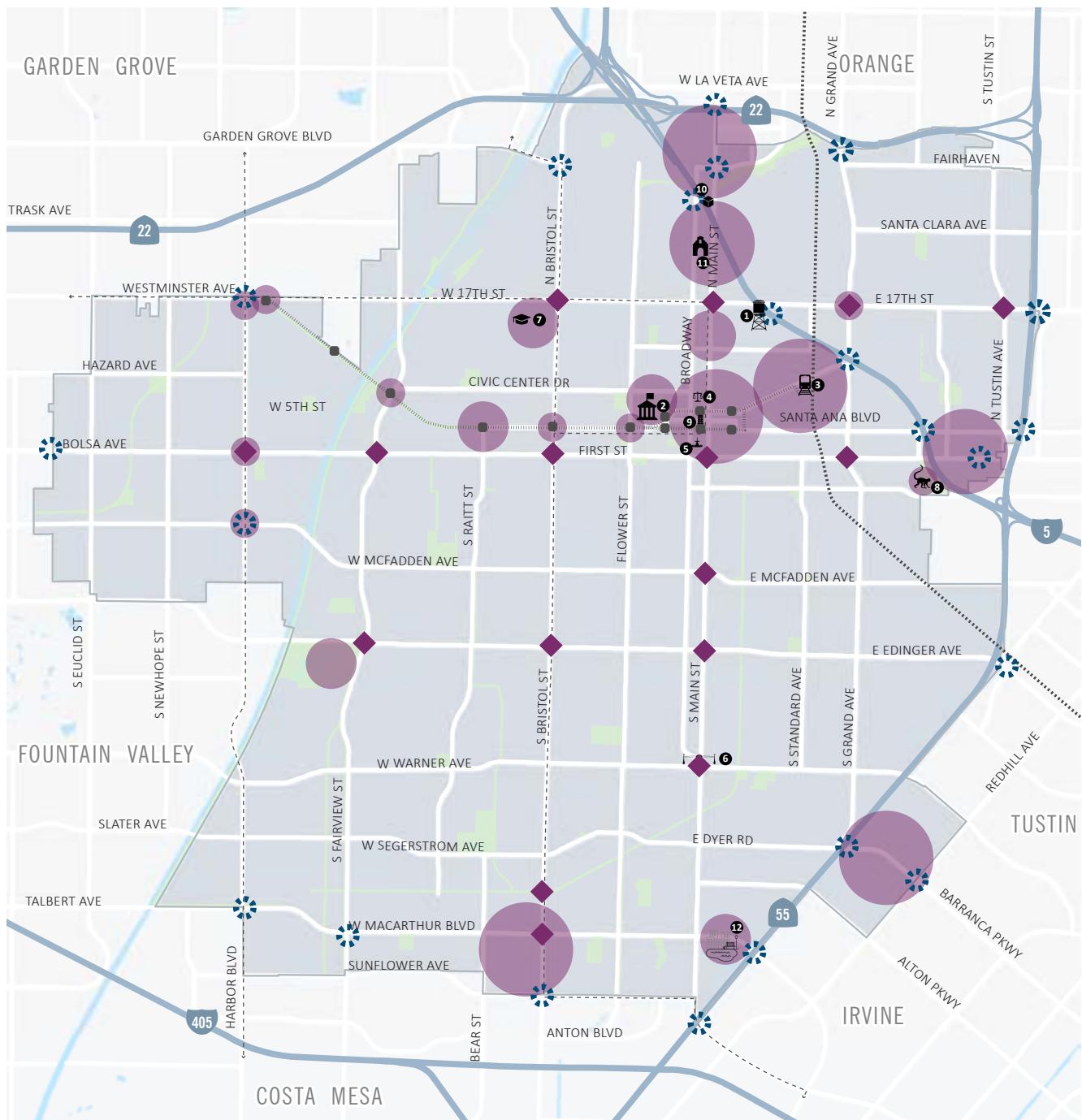
About the Map. Figure UD-1 shows the generalized district types and their locations within the city relative to major travelways, including streets, the future alignment of the OC streetcar/stations, passenger rail, and current/potential bus rapid transit lines.



**FIGURE UD-1
DISTRICTS**



About the Map. Figure UD-2 shows the location and types of the key urban design components that organize the visual form of the city, including activity nodes / urban hubs, focus intersections, major landmarks, and gateways. These components are presented relative to major travelways, including streets, the future alignment of the OC streetcar/stations, passenger rail, and current/potential bus rapid transit lines.



Source: City of Santa Ana 2020 Date Published: 9/23/2020



- Activity Node / Urban Hub
- Focus Intersection
- Gateway
- Park / Open Space
- OC Streetcar & Station
- OC Metrolink
- OCTA BRT alignment

- Major Landmarks
- ① Santa Ana Water Tower
- ② Civic Center
- ③ Transit Center
- ④ Old Orange County Courthouse
- ⑤ Chiarini Fountain & Historic Downtown
- ⑥ Historic South Main Street Sign
- ⑦ Santa Ana College
- ⑧ Santa Ana Zoo
- ⑨ Spurgeon Building
- ⑩ Discovery Cube
- ⑪ Bowers Museum
- ⑫ Hutton Center / MacArthur Place

FIGURE UD-2
URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS



TRAVELWAYS

Travelways are the paths people use to travel throughout the city, including roadways, walkways, bikeways, and transit routes. Travelways create linkages between districts, activity nodes / urban hubs, and other destination points, and the design of travelways plays a vital role in defining the visual identity of the city. The functional linkages and visual quality of travelways may be strengthened by view corridors, landmarks, natural features, and open spaces.



The city's network of streets, sidewalks, and bikeways form the primary travelways in Santa Ana and serve as the framework for the city's urban form. The city's travelways are described in detail in the Mobility Element.

KEY ISSUES

- » Many major travelways convey a progression through the city, providing a sense of movement across residential, industrial, and commercial areas.
- » Some travelways lack important attributes, such as a distinct hierarchy of uses, scale, and density of buildings.
- » A number of important travelways in the city do not relate to the surrounding land uses or reflect their importance.
- » Along some major travelways, disruptions in the rhythm and context of the established development pattern reduce the feeling of progression along the corridor.
- » In most of the city, vehicle circulation is given precedence over pedestrian or bicycle movement.



▲ The Urban Grid

Travelways, like Main Street shown here, define the layout and physical character of the city. Together with First Street, Main Street serves as an axis for the city's street numbering system, further reinforcing the role that travelways play in defining the urban environment.

Other corridors that define form of the city include First Street, 17th Street, Bristol Street, Harbor Boulevard, McFadden Avenue, MacArthur Boulevard, and Fairview Street.



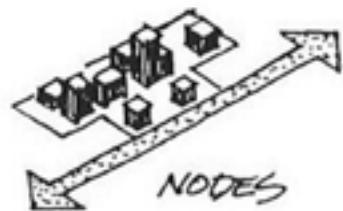
◀ Multimodal Travelways

The Harbor Corridor travelway shows how vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and bus routes can be accommodated within the same travelway. Pedestrians are protected by the sidewalk curb and street trees, and green paint on the bikeway makes it clear to vehicles that the zone is protected for cyclists.



ACTIVITY NODES / URBAN HUBS

Activity nodes / urban hubs, shown in Figure UD-2, Urban Design Elements, are strategic destinations in the city where activity is concentrated, or should be concentrated when development or redevelopment occurs. Activity nodes and urban hubs are typically defined by unique design characteristics and identifiable boundaries that provide a clear sense of place.



KEY ISSUES

- » District centers, as indicated in the Land Use Element, are well suited to act as urban hubs because they promote a concentration of assorted activities within their boundaries and they are well connected to automobile, bus, and pedestrian travelways.
- » Activity nodes occur in places with a concentration of similar activities. Examples include the Civic Center, which accommodates numerous government agencies; Santa Ana College, which serves thousands of students, faculty, and workers every day; and educational and cultural nodes such as the Santa Ana Zoo and Bowers Museum.
- » Some locations, like the 55 Freeway and Dyer Road Focus Area described in the Land Use Element, are considered nodes because they are anticipated to be centers of activity in the future.



▲ Downtown Santa Ana

The historic downtown is defined by historic buildings, consistent street-lighting, special sidewalk paving, strong pedestrian orientation, and smaller commercial parcels. The architecture, building orientation, and placemaking elements combine to establish a clearly defined activity node / urban hub.



◀ MacArthur Place

MacArthur Place offers an urban environment where housing and services are integrated in a collection of tall office buildings and residential towers. The southern portion of MacArthur Place surrounds a central lake that provides a scenic amenity with pedestrian linkages for all users. The area's perimeter is characterized by landscaped setbacks and structures increasing in height as you move east from Main Street.

Photo by Essex



FOCUS INTERSECTIONS

Focus intersections are prominent areas at the crossroads of two major travelways where the design of the buildings, streetscape elements, and travelways can establish or reinforce the identity of the city and underlying district, create rhythm and interest along the travelway, and define creative people-oriented spaces. Focus Intersections are identified in Figure UD-2, Urban Design Elements.



KEY ISSUES

- » Focus intersections are intended to enhance strategic crossroads by improving the aesthetic presence and creating memorable experiences that reinforce local identity along otherwise routine travelways.
- » Focus intersections also provide visual interest along important corridors to break up the city's grid pattern and reduce the feeling of excessive openness often perceived within typical intersections.
- » Many of the identified locations are not yet clearly defined focus intersections, but will be targeted for visual improvements as future development occurs and/or City programs are funded.
- » When appropriately scaled and articulated, the structures around focus intersections combine with other enhancements like landscaping to define the rhythm, enhance the visual quality, and convey the local identity of an area.



▲ 17th and Tustin

The corners around the intersection of 17th Street and Tustin Avenue incorporate consistent visual enhancements, including signage, landscaping, and public art.



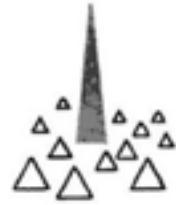
◀ First and Main

First Street and Main Street serve as the axis for the city's street numbering system. The corner of First Street and Main Street includes improvements such as landscaping, continuous pedestrian access routes, and enhanced crosswalks.



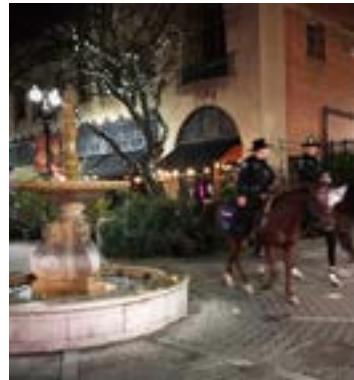
LANDMARK

Landmarks provide a point of reference that helps people to orient themselves within the city. Some landmarks are very large, like the Santa Ana Water Tower or landmark areas such as the transportation center or zoo. Major city landmarks are identified in Figure UD-2, Urban Design Elements. In addition to the major landmarks, most neighborhoods have reference points, such as schools, parks, churches, notable buildings, public art, or even well-established businesses, that serve as local landmarks. Landmarks should also distinguish districts and reinforce the local identity.



KEY ISSUES

- » There is a concentration of established landmarks along the Santa Ana Freeway and downtown, including several prominent landmarks of architectural or historical significance that help create a sense of place and communicate the local identity.
- » Most neighborhoods have reference points that serve as local landmarks in the community. These local landmarks generally include schools, parks, church buildings, or even a well-established corner store.
- » Some local landmarks, especially those farther from the city center, are recognizable and serve to orient people within the city, but may not reflect the local identity.



▲ Major Landmarks

Many major landmarks, like the Chiarini Fountain shown here, the old Orange County Courthouse, the Spurgeon Building, the zoo, and Santa Ana College, are well-established community assets that reflect the city's history and communicate the city's current identity and role in the region.



▲ Local Landmarks

Local landmarks can be anything that helps to orient people within a district and communicates the local identity. Public art, like the "Santa Ana" mural above Calle Cuatro Plaza, can function as both a local landmark that helps to orient people in the city and as a placemaking tool.

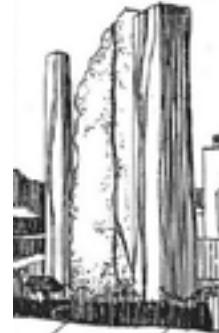
▲ Landmark as Catalyst

Newer landmarks, like the Historic South Main Street Business District sign, help orient people in the city but also function as a catalyst for reinvestment.



GATEWAY

Gateways are well-designed, prominent points of entry. They define boundaries, establish a sequence of arrival, enhance the city's identity, and contribute to creating a sense of place. Gateways may take many forms, including an attractive monument, landscaped median, neighborhood identification sign, landmark buildings, development projects with significant and attractive architectural features, or public art. While every entrypoint into the city is effectively a gateway, those where enhanced design consideration would be most appropriate are identified in Figure UD-2, Urban Design Elements.



KEY ISSUES

- » Several existing gateways, largely in the northern and eastern parts of the city, establish a sense of arrival marked by changes in the character of the environment, the pattern of development, distinct features like freeways that create a perceptual boundary, or changes in other physical characteristics near city entry points.
- » Gateways are the least defined in areas where districts expand outside the city and merge with surrounding communities in Garden Grove, Costa Mesa, and Irvine.
- » Several gateways are identified by posted signs or monument signs within a landscaped median that mark the borders but do not convey a sense of arrival.



▲ Landscaping That Creates a Sense of Arrival

The formal streetscaping along Broadway near the Santa Ana Freeway interchange establishes a distinct sequence of arrival.



◀ Landmarks as Gateways

The city gateway south of the Santa Ana Freeway / 17th Street interchange is defined by the iconic water tower, which is also a city landmark



◀ Distinct Buildings as Gateways

The Discovery Cube sits north of the Santa Ana Freeway next to the Main Street interchange. The building's instantly recognizable architecture establishes it as both a landmark and a gateway, greeting motorists as they approach the city from the freeway.



POLICY FRAMEWORK

GOAL UD-1: Physical Character

Improve the physical character and livability of the City to promote a sense of place, positive community image, and quality environment

POLICY UD-1.1

DESIGN QUALITY

Ensure all developments feature high quality design, materials, finishes, and construction.

Eq **S**

POLICY UD-1.2

PUBLIC ART

Require public art as part of major developments and the public realm improvements.

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POLICY UD-1.3

DELINeATION OF PUBLIC SPACES

Encourage site design that clearly defines public spaces through building placement and orientation.

C **Eq**

POLICY UD-1.4

SAFETY THROUGH DESIGN

Incorporate public safety design features into private and public developments to prevent loitering, vandalism, and other undesirable activities.

H **Eq**

► Urban Design Elements in Downtown Santa Ana

This view of the intersection of 3rd and Bush Streets in Downtown Santa Ana shows how the thoughtful layering of urban design elements unite to form safe, recognizable, functional, and attractive places for people. Here, complete streets, including a bike boulevard, sidewalks, vehicle travel lanes, and a bus stop, are flanked by drought-tolerant landscaping, street trees, and other placemaking elements like street lights and directional signage. Parking is screened by landscape elements, and a large mural serves as a local landmark, reinforcing the district's unique identity and contributing to a sense of place.

POLICY UD-1.5

ATTRACTIVE PUBLIC SPACES

Encourage community interaction through the development and enhancement of plazas, open space, people places, and pedestrian connections with the public realm.

C **H** **Eq**

POLICY UD-1.6

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Support the creation of citywide public street and site amenities that accommodate and promote an active transportation-friendly environment.

H **Eq^{EJ}** **S**

POLICY 1.7

VISUAL CLUTTER

Promote the beautification and accessibility of the public realm through the undergrounding of utility lines and aboveground equipment.

H **Eq**



GOAL UD-2: Sustainable Environment

Improve the built environment through sustainable development that is proportional and aesthetically related to its setting.

POLICY UD-2.1

ENHANCED PUBLIC REALM EXPERIENCE

Encourage development to enhance the existing environment through the use of creative architectural design and sustainable streetscape treatments that are consistent on each corridor.

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POLICY UD-2.2

COMPATIBILITY AND USE WITH SETTING

Employ buffers and other urban design strategies to encourage the compatibility of new development with the scale, bulk, and pattern of existing development.

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POLICY UD-2.3

NEW LIFE FOR OLD BUILDINGS

Encourage the preservation and reuse of historic and architecturally significant structures to maintain urban fabric and reduce overall energy consumption associated with new construction.

C S

POLICY UD-2.4

INTENTIONAL DESIGN

Encourage design and architecture on private and public property that accentuate focal points, activity nodes, and historic areas.

C

POLICY UD-2.5

RELATION TO SURROUNDINGS

Ensure new development exhibits a functional, comfortable scale in relation to its neighborhood.

C Eq

POLICY UD-2.6

PRESERVE NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Preserve the character and uniqueness of existing districts and neighborhoods.

C S

POLICY UD-2.7

BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING IDENTITY

Collaborate with community stakeholders to strengthen and foster development of community and neighborhood identity and district character through complementary architecture, unique streetscapes, and programming.

C S

POLICY UD-2.8

INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Explore development and subdivision options that promote new opportunities for sustainable, livable, and affordable development.

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POLICY UD-2.9

VISUAL AESTHETIC OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Ensure that on- and off-premise signs and communication equipment are situated to minimize detrimental impacts to the aesthetic quality, character, and image of the surrounding area.

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<< UD-2 SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

POLICY UD-2.10 GREENING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Promote planting of shade trees and require, where feasible, preservation and site design that uses appropriate tree species to shade parking lots, streets, and other facilities, with the goal of reducing the heat island effect.

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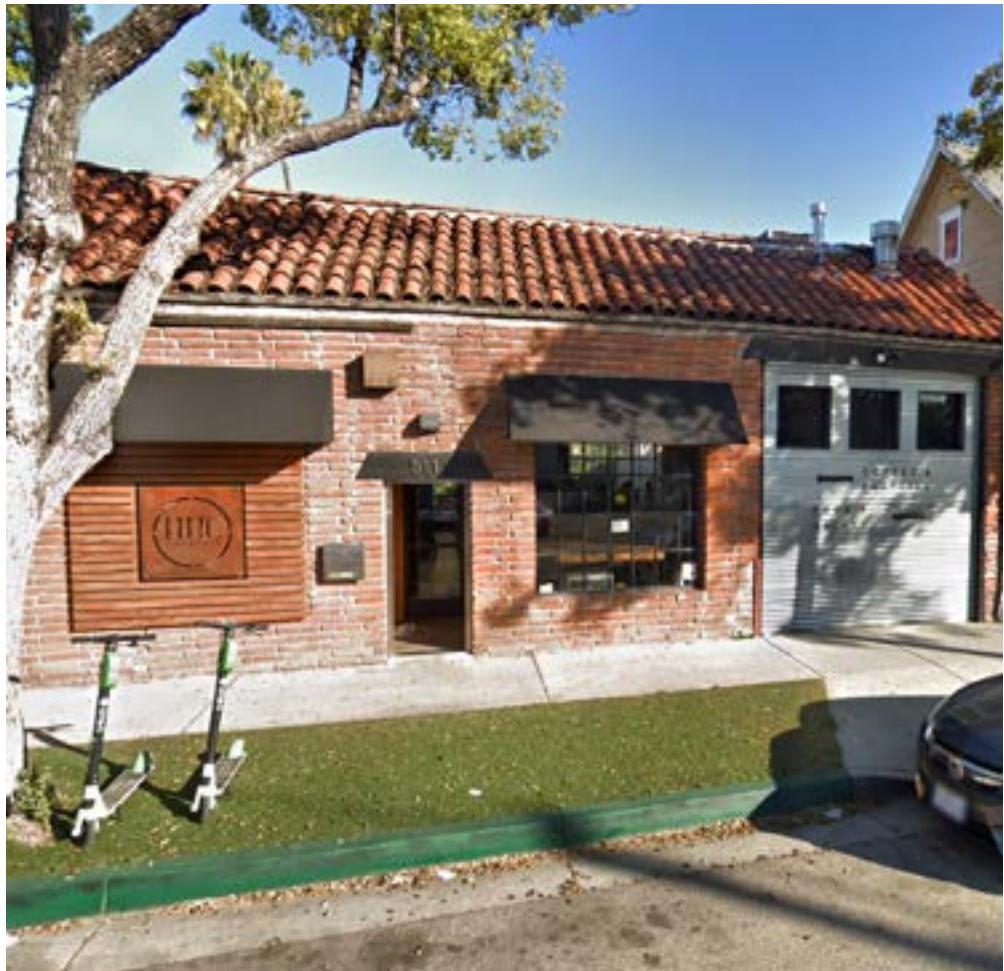
POLICY UD-2.11 SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Encourage sustainable development through the use of drought-tolerant landscaping, permeable hardscape surfaces, and energy-efficient building design and construction.

S

► New Life for Old Buildings

This 1914 brick structure was renovated and repurposed as a local coffee house in 2016. The original brick walls and high exposed wood ceilings were preserved, and the project complements the unique character of the surrounding neighborhood.



GOAL UD-3: Attractive Travelways

Create and maintain safe and attractive travelways through coordinated streetscape design.

POLICY UD-3.1

LANDSCAPED TRAVELWAYS

Promote visually appealing and sustainable landscaping along freeway corridors, roadway medians, and parkways.



POLICY UD-3.2

ACTIVATE PATHS

Strengthen and activate the design of paths and adjacent development through enhanced and cohesive streetscapes, architectural themes, and landscaping.



POLICY UD-3.3

FOSTER COMMUNITY BUILDING

Promote a safe environment that facilitates social interaction and improves active transportation along corridors.



POLICY UD-3.4

IMPROVEMENTS TO STREETSCAPE

Promote streetscape improvement plans that are responsive to community needs, the nature of adjacent uses, path characteristics, street classification, pedestrian scale, and view corridors.



POLICY UD-3.5

ACTIVITY NODE LINKAGES

Promote streetscape designs that link major destination points, landmarks, and local activity nodes.



POLICY UD-3.6

LINEAR PARK SYSTEM

Support open space improvements along roadways and nonvehicular paths, such as bike or multiuse trails, to create linear open space that connect to a network of parks and activity areas throughout the city.



POLICY UD-3.7

NATURAL RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

Enhance natural and recreational features of Santiago Creek and the Santa Ana River corridors and provide linkages throughout the community.



POLICY UD-3.8

PLEASANT TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

Maximize the use of street trees and parkway landscaping to create a pleasant travel experience and positive city image.



POLICY UD-3.9

SCENIC VIEWS

Preserve and enhance scenic views along corridors and other travelways.



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<< UD-3 ATTRACTIVE TRAVELWAYS

POLICY UD-3.10 COORDINATED STREET IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Coordinate citywide landscape medians and street trees with land use plans and development projects.



POLICY UD-3.11 URBAN FOREST

Create a diverse urban forest with a variety of sustainable trees in medians, parkways, public open space, and private development.



◀ Urban Forest

The City of Santa Ana maintains an urban forest that includes more than 60,000 healthy and attractive trees. Street trees and landscaping beautify the community, provide a welcome touch of nature, produce oxygen, clean the air, reduce the urban heat island effect, reduce flooding, improve street safety, promote exercise, and contribute to mental health of residents. Many of the city's existing street trees frame travelways in older residential neighborhoods.



GOAL UD-4: Nodes and People Places

Create nodes and urban hubs throughout the city to foster community, education, arts and culture, business activities, and entertainment and establish Santa Ana as a vibrant center.

POLICY UD-4.1

INTENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Support development growth in nodes consistent with the City's vision as the dynamic urban center of Orange County.

C S

POLICY UD-4.2

IMAGE MAKING THROUGH ARCHITECTURE

Promote development within nodes to reflect the significance of the area and cultivate a positive image of Santa Ana through high quality architecture.

C S

POLICY UD-4.3

ACTIVATE OPEN SPACE

Ensure architectural and landscape design activates open space as a means to promote community interaction and enhance the aesthetic quality of development.

C H S

POLICY UD-4.4

VIBRANT STREET LIFE

Encourage development within nodes that promotes pedestrian activities, enhanced amenities, and engaging designs that allow for discovery, excitement, and social interaction.

H Eq S

POLICY UD-4.5

OPEN SPACE AT NODES

Promote creative, multipurpose public space within nodes, major development projects, and people places.

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POLICY UD-4.6

COMMUNITY-LED INSTALLATIONS

Provide for opportunities to incorporate distinctive, innovative, and community-informed public art in plazas and open spaces to promote pedestrian activity.

C Eq



◀ Vibrant Street Life

The Roost project at Santa Ana Boulevard and Minter Street weaves outdoor uses that promote community interaction and pedestrian activities throughout the project, which includes repurposed cargo containers, a renovated craftsman bungalow duplex, a 1920 commercial building, and a reinvented two-story barn.

Photo by Studio Oneleven



GOAL UD-5: Focus Intersections

Create focal points at major intersections to enhance community identity and open space.

POLICY UD-5.1

BUILDING PRESENCE AT INTERSECTIONS

Create a strong presence at focus intersections by locating intense building mass and open space areas along the street that include high quality design and materials.

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POLICY UD-5.2

LINKAGES BETWEEN PUBLIC ART

Promote public art in conveniently accessible and prominent places to physically and visually link development with streetscape and paths.

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POLICY UD-5.3

ACTIVATING INTERSECTIONS

Encourage projects at focal intersections that incorporate vertical design features or mixed-use development as a means to provide visual presence and encourage pedestrian activity in these areas.

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POLICY UD-5.4

INTERSECTIONS FOR ALL TRAVEL MODES

Strengthen active transportation connections and amenities at focal intersections to promote a pleasant and safe experience for nonmotorized forms of travel.

H Eq S

POLICY UD-5.5

COORDINATED FEATURES

Ensure projects within focus intersections incorporate consistent architectural designs, enhanced landscaping, and coordinated signage.

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◀ Enhanced Landscaping

New development at focus intersections should incorporate corner enhancements that improve the aesthetic quality of the intersection.



GOAL UD-6: Landmarks

Create new and protect existing City landmarks and memorable places that convey positive images.

POLICY UD-6.1

DESIGN WITH LANDMARKS

Strengthen the design of development to frame and enhance landmarks, natural features, and view corridors.

C S

POLICY UD-6.2

APPROPRIATE DESIGN NEAR LANDMARKS

Ensure development near existing landmarks is supportive and respectful of architecture, site, and other design features of the landmark.

C Eq S

POLICY UD-6.3

CREATE NEW LANDMARKS

Encourage new development that will lead to the creation of new landmarks in the City and bolster community pride.

C

POLICY UD-6.4

DECORATIVE FEATURES

Promote coordinated landscaping and decorative features in projects near landmarks that appropriately enhance the vicinity and do not create visual clutter.

C S



◀ Santa Ana Zoo

The Santa Ana Zoo opened in 1952, after J. E. Prentice donated land to the city with the stipulation that the City must keep at least 50 monkeys on the property at all times. The project has since evolved into the Santa Ana Zoo, covering 20 acres at Prentice Park. Today, the zoo focuses on plants and animals from Central and South America, including dozens of primate species.

Photo by Santa Ana Zoo



GOAL UD-7: Gateways

Create and strengthen gateways into the City that promote a sense of arrival.

POLICY UD-7.1

FIRST IMPRESSION

Strengthen the architectural design of developments near gateways to communicate a sense of arrival and inspire positive images of the City.

C

POLICY UD-7.2

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Enhance Santa Ana's gateways to include unique and distinctive streetscape improvements.

C

POLICY UD-7.3

IMPROVED FREEWAY INTERFACE DESIGN

Collaborate with Caltrans and adjacent jurisdictions to enhance freeway interchanges that create a sense of place and arrival.

C Ed

POLICY UD-7.4

MONUMENTS AT GATEWAYS

Promote imaginative and distinctive features, such as entry monuments, public art, decorative landscape, directional signs, landscape statements, and architectural elements that project a positive image and community character at City gateways.

C

POLICY UD-7.5

TRANSIT CORRIDOR BEAUTIFICATION

Improve transit and rail corridors and interfaces to create a welcoming experience for all travelers.

C Eq S

POLICY UD-7.6

NEIGHBORHOOD SIGNAGE SYSTEM

Encourage the creation of a citywide signage system that identifies and promotes a sense of place for the city's various neighborhoods.

C

► City Gateway

Gateways establish a sense of arrival, denote city boundaries, and function as placemaking features contributing to the image of the city and its overall identity. Gateways may be articulated in many ways depending on the location, context, and how it will be viewed. This monument sign and decorative landscaping at Redhill Avenue and Dyer Road defines the boundary between Santa Ana and Tustin.



RELATED GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

Each policy in the City of Santa Ana General Plan is listed under the most related goal and element. Some policies, however, also reinforce other goals housed in different Elements.

To provide a more complete picture of all of the policies that support the goals of this element, Table UD-1 lists each Urban Design goal in the far

left column and, in columns to the right, identifies related policy numbers from other elements.

Goal UD-3, for example, is supported not only by the policies listed in this Element (UD-3.1 through 3.11), but also by Policy EP-3.2 and Policy EP-3.11 in the Economic Prosperity Element.

TABLE UD-1. RELATED GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

Urban Design Goals	Volume 1 Services & Infrastructure				Volume 2 Natural Environment				Volume 3 Built Environment				
	CM	M	EP	PS	CN	OS	N	S	LU	HE	HP	UD	
UD-1: Physical Character Improve the physical character and livability of the City to promote a sense of place, positive community image, and quality environment.	-	M-4.5 M-5.1 M-5.4 M-5.5	-	PS-1.1 PS-2.1	-	OS-2.9 OS-2.14	-	-	LU-3.7 LU-4.2	HE-1.1 HE-1.3 HE-1.5 HE-1.8	HP-1.1 HP-2.2	Current Element	
UD-2: Sustainable Environment Improve the built environment through sustainable development that is proportional and aesthetically related to its setting.	-	M-5.5	-	PS-3.5	CN-1.4 CN-1.6	OS-1.7 OS-3.6	-	-	LU-3.5 LU-4.10	HE-1.7 HE-2.5	HP-1.3 HP-1.4 HP-1.8 HP-1.9	Current Element	
UD-3: Attractive Travelways Create and maintain safe and attractive travelways through coordinated streetscape design.	-	M-4.5 M-5.1 M-5.3 M-5.4 M-5.5	EP-3.2 EP-3.11	-	-	OS-1.7	-	-	LU-3.7	-	-	Current Element	
UD-4: Nodes and People Places Create nodes and urban hubs throughout the City to foster community, education, arts and culture, business activities, entertainment, and establish Santa Ana as a vibrant center.	CM-3.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	LU-1.6 LU-1.10 LU-2.3 LU-2.5 LU-3.6 LU-4.10	HE-2.1 HE-2.2	-	Current Element

Notes:

CM: Community Element

CN: Conservation Element

LU: Land Use Element

M: Mobility Element

OS: Open Space Element

HE: Housing Element

EP: Economic Prosperity Element

N: Noise Element

HP: Historic Preservation Element

PS: Public Services Element

S: Safety Element

UD: Urban Design Element



TABLE UD-1. RELATED GENERAL PLAN POLICIES CONT'D

Urban Design Goals	Volume 1 Services & Infrastructure					Volume 2 Natural Environment				Volume 3 Built Environment			
	CM	M	EP	PS	CN	OS	N	S	LU	HE	HP	UD	
UD-5: Focus Intersections Create focal points at major intersections to enhance community identity and open space.	-	M-4.5 M-5.1 M-5.3 M-5.4 M-5.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	LU-3.7	-	-	Current Element	
UD-6: Landmarks Create new and protect existing City landmarks and memorable places that convey positive images.	-	M-4.5 M-5.1 M-5.5	-	-	-	OS-3.4	-	-	-	-	-	Current Element	
UD-7: Gateways Create and strengthen gateways into the City that promote a sense of arrival.	-	M-4.5 M-5.1 M-5.3 M-5.4 M-5.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	LU-3.7	-	-	Current Element	

Notes:

CM: Community Element

CN: Conservation Element

LU: Land Use Element

M: Mobility Element

OS: Open Space Element

HE: Housing Element

EP: Economic Prosperity Element

N: Noise Element

HP: Historic Preservation Element

PS: Public Services Element

S: Safety Element

UD: Urban Design Element



IMPLEMENTATION

An implementation plan is a coordinated series of actions the City desires to take in the future that are intended to advance, over the long term, the City's Shared Vision, Core Values, and the General Plan goals and policies. An implementation plan is thus a follow-up measure for this element. Taken as a whole, these programs represent the City's best thinking today on what actions should be taken to address the considerations and concerns of the community and make sure that the plan's aspirations are achieved.

Implementation is in large part contingent upon adequate funding. Many of these actions can be pursued through initiatives already underway.

Other programs will require additional resources. As such, the exact mix and timing of programs the City may pursue will in part be opportunity driven, dependent on the availability of funding, staffing, and other necessary resources. The Time Frame in the Implementation Table below is the target for completion of the Action.

This element may be implemented by amendments to existing plans, ordinances, development standards, and design guidelines; capital investments/projects; and interagency/interjurisdictional coordination. The following table identifies the implementation action, the responsible City agency, and targeted timeline for accomplishment.

TABLE UD-2. URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Ref #	Implementation Action	Agency / Time Frame
Goal UD-1: Physical Character Improve the physical character and livability of the City to promote a sense of place, positive community image, and quality environment.		
1.1	Public art program. Collaborate with the Arts Director and Commission to develop a citywide public art program. Pursue public art grant-funding opportunities. Evaluate the feasibility of revising the development standard to require public art as part of new development projects and/or imposing a public art impact fee on new development projects.	PBA/CDA 2022
1.2	Design guidelines. Update or develop design guidelines that direct architectural design, building siting and orientation, neighborhood identity including monumentation, wayfinding, placemaking elements, and other public realm features for transit-oriented and higher intensity areas.	PBA 2022-2027
1.3	Signage. Update the zoning code sign regulations to incorporate best practices to establish a cohesive identity and visually appealing integrated development or district.	PBA 2022-2027
1.4	Public Safety Through Environmental Design. Educate City staff on "public safety through environmental design" principles by sponsoring participation in workshops. Update existing design guidelines and require any new design guidelines to include public safety through environmental design best practices. Avoid aspects of public safety through environmental design that privatize or segregate open space areas, recreation facilities, and neighborhoods.	PBA/PD Ongoing
1.5	Property upgrades. Develop an incentive program to encourage residents and property owners to maintain and upgrade front yards and buildings.	PBA 2023
1.6	Funding for placemaking. Evaluate best practices and standards for public-private partnerships to fund placemaking elements on public property.	PBA 2023



TABLE UD-2. URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Ref #	Implementation Action	Agency / Time Frame
GOAL UD-2: Sustainable Environment Improve the built environment through sustainable development that is proportional and aesthetically related to its setting.		
2.1	Emerging technology. Consider updating the zoning code to require mixed-use and multifamily residential projects to incorporate on-site lanes/spaces for transportation network companies (TNC) and other emerging technologies. As parking demand begins to outstrip parking supply in established business districts, conduct curbside management studies to identify pick-up and drop-off areas for TNC services to maintain the character of historic and established districts; reduce parking demand; limit vehicle idling, searching, and circling; and encourage pedestrian activity.	PBA/PWA 2022-2027
2.2	Creative expression. Amend the zoning code to update the front yard fence requirements to address innovative designs and neighborhood characteristics.	PBA 2022-2027
2.3	Billboards. Amend the zoning code to update the Billboard Ordinance to reflect current advertising practices and capitalize on the freeways that run through the city.	PBA 2022-2027
2.4	LEED Projects. Evaluate program or policy options to promote energy efficient development practice such as fee waivers or expedited processing of projects that are certified LEED Gold or Platinum.	PBA 2022
GOAL UD-3: Attractive Travelways Create and maintain safe and attractive travelways through coordinated streetscape design.		
3.1	Corridors. Update the zoning code to require new development projects or major renovations along arterial roadways to meet the City's landscape standards and to reflect of the identity and values of the adjacent neighborhoods.	PBA 2022
3.2	Multimodal transit facility design. Develop a unique public realm plan for the land use focus areas and transit facilities to guide the design of landscape, hardscape, and amenities to promote walkability and linkages to all modes of transportation, consistent with the City's Active Transportation Plan.	PBA/PWA 2022-2027
3.3	Bicycle parking. Update design guidelines for safe and secure bicycle parking, and promote bicycle access for special events. Explore options to update the zoning code to require secure bicycle parking for any new development project that also has a parking requirement.	PBA/CDA 2022-2027
3.4	Cross-access. Amend the zoning code to require reciprocal access on commercial development projects adjacent to other commercially zoned developments.	PBA 2022-2027
3.5	Public realm impact fees. Create and implement public realm improvement impact fees to fund development and construction of public realm plan improvements.	PWA/PBA 2022
3.6	Linear parks and trails. Within the parks master plan, address needs for off-street trails, including new linkages and linear park improvements, such as lighting, security features, signage, and enhanced landscaping.	PRCSA 2022
3.7	Streetscape Improvements. Collaborate with community organizations to conduct a citywide windshield study to identify arterial streets or corridors in most need of comprehensive streetscape improvements. Identify funding or resources to complete Public Realm Plans for these corridors to enhance the pedestrian experience, amenities, safety, sense of place and aesthetics.	PBA/PWA 2022-2027
3.8	Maintenance District. Evaluate and consider a program that requires developers/owners to pay into a maintenance district that absorbs the costs for maintaining public realm improvements.	PBA/PWA 2022-2027



TABLE UD-2. URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Ref #	Implementation Action	Agency / Time Frame
GOAL UD-4: Nodes and People Places Create nodes and urban hubs throughout the City to foster community, education, arts and culture, business activities, entertainment, and establish Santa Ana as a vibrant center.		
4.1	Museum District. Continue to enhance and develop policies and design standards for the Museum District to encourage private and public improvements that promote the arts, education, culture, and activity centers.	PBA/CDA 2022
4.2	Channels. Explore opportunities to reestablish waterways for recreational and educational purposes.	PWA/PRCSA 2025
4.3	Allowable uses. Expand the types of outdoor uses in public spaces to allow for additional social activities and community-focused entertainment.	PBA 2022-2027
4.4	Community advertising. Explore options to incorporate digital signage or advertisements that promote community activities on small-scale structures such as bus shelters or trash receptacles.	PBA/PWA/ CDA 2022
4.5	Emerging technologies. Collaborate with wireless and technology companies to create wireless charging areas in public spaces. Evaluate the feasibility of installing solar-powered charging stations. Evaluate the feasibility of providing free public WiFi in select park areas and public plazas. In the parks master plan include consideration for adapting public spaces to respond to changes in the way residents live and interact with their environment as a result of emerging technologies.	PRCSA/PWA 2024
GOAL UD-5: Focus Intersections Create focal points at major intersections to enhance community identity and open space.		
5.1	Landscaping at focus intersections. Develop landscape design standards for developments adjacent to or at focus intersections.	PBA 2022-2027
5.2	Public art at focus intersections. Explore a collaborative program with schools, nonprofit organizations, and local artists to create and maintain public art in public spaces.	CDA 2023
5.3	Placemaking elements at focus intersections. Coordinate street signage and branding at focus intersections, consistent with public realm plans and district identity.	PWA/PBA 2022-2027
GOAL UD-6: Landmarks Create new and protect existing City landmarks and memorable places that convey positive images.		
6.1	Landmarks. Establish and implement a Landmark program that identifies, maintains, and promotes city landmarks and memorable places.	PBA/CDA 2024
6.2	Natural landmarks. Update the Santa Ana River Vision Plan to develop the Santa Ana River and Santiago Creek as natural landmarks within the city.	PRCSA 2024
GOAL UD-7: Gateways Create and strengthen gateways into the City that promote a sense of arrival.		
7.1	Enhanced gateways. Pursue funding to develop and maintain a signage, lighting, and landscape program at gateways leading into the city.	PBA/PWA 2023
7.2	Gateway impact fee. Consider amending the zoning code to require projects within proximity of a defined city gateway to incorporate gateway design features. If the development project is unable to integrate such features on-site, an in-lieu fee may be paid into a gateway fund.	PBA/PWA 2022

Notes:

CDA - Community Development Agency

PBA- Planning and Building Agency

PD - Police Department

EJ associated with environmental justice policies

CMO- City Manager's Office

PWA - Public Works Agency

HR- Human Resources Department

PRCSA - Parks, Recreation and Community Services Agency



