

*Commercial*

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## **COMMERCIAL ELEMENT**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The Uptown planning area boasts a wide variety of commercial uses ranging from neighborhood commercial facilities, community-shopping facilities, specialized commercial centers and medical facilities.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL FACILITIES**

Neighborhood facilities normally contain about four to fifteen establishments ranging from supermarkets, drug stores, liquor stores, banks, barber services, cleaners, real estate office and limited medical and financial services. They are usually one to two miles apart and are intended to serve a population between 2,000 and 10,000 people. There are four neighborhood-oriented commercial areas in Uptown.

1. The Mission Hills Business Area - this area provides a variety of convenience goods and services to meet the daily needs of the adjacent residential neighborhood.
2. Reynard Way - this area provides convenience goods and services. They are conveniently located and easily reached by residents along Reynard Way.
3. University Heights - this area has a cluster of services on Park Boulevard southerly of Adams Avenue.
4. Park West - the area on First Avenue between Ivy and Juniper Streets and on Fifth Avenue at Laurel Street consists of readily identifiable shopping centers providing convenience goods and services to nearby residents and workers.

In addition to the larger neighborhood commercial facilities there are a number of singular commercial stores which tend to serve the specific needs of a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood.

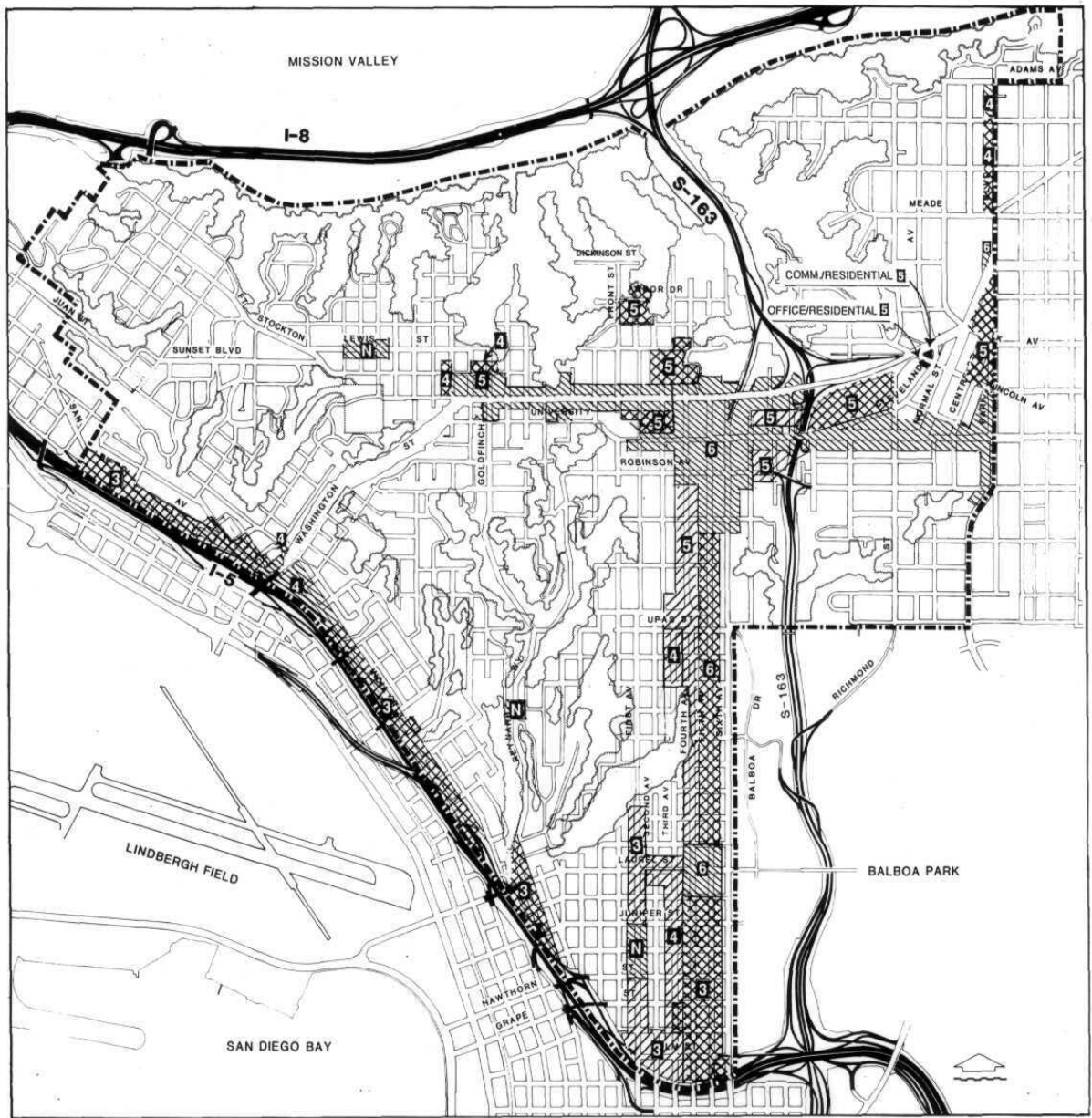
### **COMMUNITY SHOPPING FACILITIES**





This type of facility provides convenience goods, shoppers goods and specialized retail goods including personal, professional, repair, business and financial services. They usually contain between 15 to 50 establishments about three miles apart, and are intended to serve a population between 10,000 and 25,000 persons.

Hillcrest constitutes the most predominant community commercial district in Uptown.

- Hillcrest Business District - this area is the primary commercial area for Uptown.

This pedestrian oriented area provides a wide variety of shopping and convenience goods as well as cultural and entertainment facilities.



COMMERCIAL PERMITTED USES	DENSITY RANGES
 MIXED USE	Residential <b>4</b> <b>5</b> or <b>6</b>
 COMM./RESIDENTIAL	Residential <b>3</b> <b>4</b> <b>5</b> or <b>6</b>
 OFFICE/RESIDENTIAL	Residential <b>3</b> <b>4</b> or <b>5</b>
 NEIGHBORHOOD COMM.	Residential <b>3</b>



**COMMERCIAL LAND USE**  
**UPTOWN Community Plan**  
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FIGURE  
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## **SPECIALIZED COMMERCIAL**

This type of commercial activity offers retail activity such as discount and freestanding stores not typically found in shopping centers. These uses include photography studios, furniture stores, bicycle shops, automobile repair stores, secondhand merchandise stores and plant nurseries, discount stores, boutiques, night clubs, movie theaters, etc.

There are five main areas within Uptown that provide specialized commercial uses.

1. University Avenue - this area easterly of Interstate 163 (I-163) and westerly of Park Avenue is primarily an entertainment-artisan district. There are nightclub type facilities and other evening time activities as well as several interesting building facades and architectural features.
2. India Street - this area is primarily an automobile-oriented specialized commercial center. Freestanding commercial uses oriented to the freeway provide services community wide. In addition, the India Street art colony provides a second entertainment area within the community with theaters and restaurants.
3. State Street - this commercial strip south of Laurel Street includes a variety of small-scale offices and other specialized uses.
4. Washington Street - this area is a major automobile-oriented commercial thoroughfare that offers a range of goods and services not provided by the Hillcrest shopping area.
5. West Lewis Street Planned District Area - this area is one-block area that meets the needs of the nearby residents. It also contains a number of antique specialty shops. This area was designated as a planned district in April, 1985, in order to maintain the character of the area and compatibility of the commercial development with the surrounding single-family residential area.

## **MEDICAL FACILITIES**

There are two major hospitals located in Uptown north of Washington in the vicinity of the Fourth and Fifth Avenue corridor.

1. Mercy Hospital Medical Center - this facility is located in the southeast quadrant of the medical complex area just north of Washington Street and just west of Sixth Avenue. Mercy Hospital owns approximately 14.3 acres of land in this area. Mercy Hospital offers a wide range of acute care, including medical, surgical, obstetrical/pediatrics, psychiatric and laboratory and radiological services. They also provide a broad spectrum of outpatient services such as medical, surgical, pediatric, gynecologic and rehabilitative services. The hospital serves as the City's paramedic base station. The outpatient clinic is located on the south side of Lewis Street east of Fourth Avenue. The hospital intends to locate additional medical facilities north of Washington Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues.

2. UCSD Medical Center - this facility is located in the northwest portion of the medical complex area at Dickson Street and Front Street. The medical complex consists of approximately 51 acres of land of which 32 acres are undeveloped canyons north and west of the medical center. It offers a wide range of health services including acute and ambulatory care, and provides teaching and research facilities for medical students and the School of Medicine.

### **Objectives**

- Provide a wide range of commercial goods and services to the Uptown community.
- Preserve and expand the development of pedestrian-oriented commercial uses, especially those which generate activity after business hours.
- Enhance the vitality of commercial strips through the stimulation of a variety of commercial and mixed-use development.
- Require new development to provide adequate off-street parking.
- Improve pedestrian safety, access, and circulation within commercial areas.
- Concentrate neighborhood commercial activity in areas accessible to neighborhood residents.
- Improve the appearance of commercial activity in areas accessible to neighborhood residents.
- Provide for the development of convenience shopping facilities within or adjacent to higher density residential neighborhoods.
- Undertake a program of economic commercial revitalization to improve existing business and stimulate the development of new businesses, employment and housing.
- Stimulate the clustering of complementary uses in commercial areas to create a highly functional center.

### **Recommendations**

In order to provide appropriately located, attractive retail and office facilities that offer a wide variety of goods and services this plan recommends the consolidation and intensification of commercial activities. Mixed-use and multiple use projects incorporating residential use should be encouraged. It is recommended that all or most of the commercial areas be rezoned from the existing outdated zones to an appropriate planned district zone to implement the following recommended development patterns. Table 3 illustrates the full array of commercial designations described below. Commercial rezonings beyond the designated areas should not be permitted.

**MIXED-USE:** Areas designated for mixed-use development are the higher intensity neighborhood and specialized commercial nodes. These are the areas of focused retail and pedestrian activity, located at major street intersections.

The mixed-use designation generally indicates that pedestrian-oriented retail service uses are required on the ground floor, with either office or residential uses on the upper floors. These areas are recommended to be the higher intensity use areas, acting as both visual and activity focal points. Building heights should range from high-rise to two stories, depending upon the intensity of use designated on the land use map and upon guidelines contained in the Urban Design Neighborhood Elements.

There are three mixed-use designations, which differ in the intensity of permitted uses.

Very-High Intensity - This designation permits up to 109 dwelling units per acre (one dwelling unit per 400 square feet of lot area). A variety of commercial uses at high intensities or high floor area ratios are also permitted.

High Intensity - This designation allows up to 73 dwelling units per acre (one dwelling unit per 600 square feet of lot area). A relatively wide range of commercial uses should also be permitted under this designation.

Medium-High Intensity - The residential component of this designation is limited to 44 dwelling units per acre (one dwelling unit per 1,000 square feet of lot area). Commercial uses should focus on neighborhood and community needs, and the intensity of use should be limited.

Commercial/Residential Use - This designation is generally applied to linear areas between the mixed-use commercial nodes. Permitted uses include either general commercial, office or residential at densities ranging from very high to medium. Developments with a mixture of uses are also encouraged. These areas tend to be less intense in use and more automobile oriented. In contrast to areas designated for mixed-use, single-use residential projects are permitted in areas designated for commercial/residential use. A range of intensities of use is described below.

Very-High Intensity - This designation permits residential densities as high as 109 dwelling units per acre (one dwelling unit per 400 square feet of lot area), and/or general commercial and office uses.

High Intensity - Residential density is limited to 73 dwelling units per acre (one dwelling units per 600 square feet of lot area). A wide range of commercial and office uses are also permitted.

Medium-High Intensity - Up to 44 dwelling units per acre (one dwelling unit per 1,000 square feet of lot area) are permitted, as well as community oriented commercial and office uses.

Medium Intensity - Community and service oriented commercial uses should predominate over residential use, which is limited to 29 dwelling units per acre (one dwelling unit per 1,500 square feet of lot area).

**OFFICE/RESIDENTIAL USE:** This designation is generally applied adjacent to commercial use areas, on or near major streets. It allows projects to be either office or residential. Commercial retail and service uses are limited to support services. Mixed-use developments are also encouraged. There is a high intensity, medium-high intensity and medium intensity designation within this category of use. Discretionary approval for particularly large office projects should be required to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses.

High Intensity - Residential use is limited to 73 dwelling units per acre (one dwelling unit per 600 square feet of lot area). The intensity of office use should also be relatively high.

Medium-High Intensity - This designation is designed for areas with a greater mix of residential use. The residential component is 44 dwelling units per acre (one dwelling unit per 1,000 square feet of lot area). Office use should be limited in intensity to be compatible with residential development, and to encourage the preservation of older, desirable residential structures for office use. Limiting the intensity of office use will also ensure an adequate balance of residential use.

Medium Intensity - Office use is preferred over residential use with this designation. Residential density is limited to 29 dwelling units per acre (one dwelling unit per 1,500 square feet of lot area). A moderate intensity of office use should be permitted.

**NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL:** Uses within this designation should generally be limited to neighborhood oriented goods and services. Due to the individual character of the areas designated for this use, the permitted uses should be tailored for each neighborhood. Residential use should be limited to 30 dwelling units per acre.

Existing neighborhood markets in areas not designated for commercial use should be allowed to expand in a manner which is consistent with the needs of the neighborhood, the architectural scale of the surrounding residences, and with a minimum of parking which should be located either on-street and/or towards the rear half of the lot with adequate screening. Any such expansion should be in character with the existing commercial use and should not provide for an expansion of the number of businesses or type of services provided. A noticed public hearing should be required.

**TABLE 3  
COMMERCIAL LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

<b>Permitted Uses</b>	<b>Medium (15-29 du/ac)</b>	<b>Medium-High (29-44 du/ac)</b>	<b>High (44-73 du/ac)</b>	<b>Very-High (73-109 du/ac)</b>
Mixed-Use		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Commercial/Residential	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Office/Residential	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Neighborhood	<b>X</b>			

**PROJECTS WITHIN BOTH COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DESIGNATIONS**

It may be appropriate for a portion of a mixed-use commercial project to be permitted to be located in an area designated for residential use. Examples of such areas are between Fifth and Sixth Avenues adjacent to Balboa Park and along portions of Washington Street. In such cases, a Planned Commercial Development Permit (or its equivalent) should be required which addresses the following:

1. The project should be a mixed-use project which includes a residential component.
2. The project should not intrude into exclusively residential areas.
3. Traffic generated by commercial uses should not impact neighboring residential uses.
4. Commercial uses should be compatible in character with surrounding uses, such as hotels, offices and sit-down restaurants. Uses which should generally not be permitted include retail or fast-food restaurants. Traffic generation, noise, glare, and aesthetics should be criteria used to determine compatibility.

**COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

A commercial revitalization program should be initiated in targeted areas to rehabilitate the commercial districts in Uptown. Such a program should encourage the improvement of structures, facades, landscaping, signage, and streetscape to encourage interest in the development of a vital commercial element in Uptown.

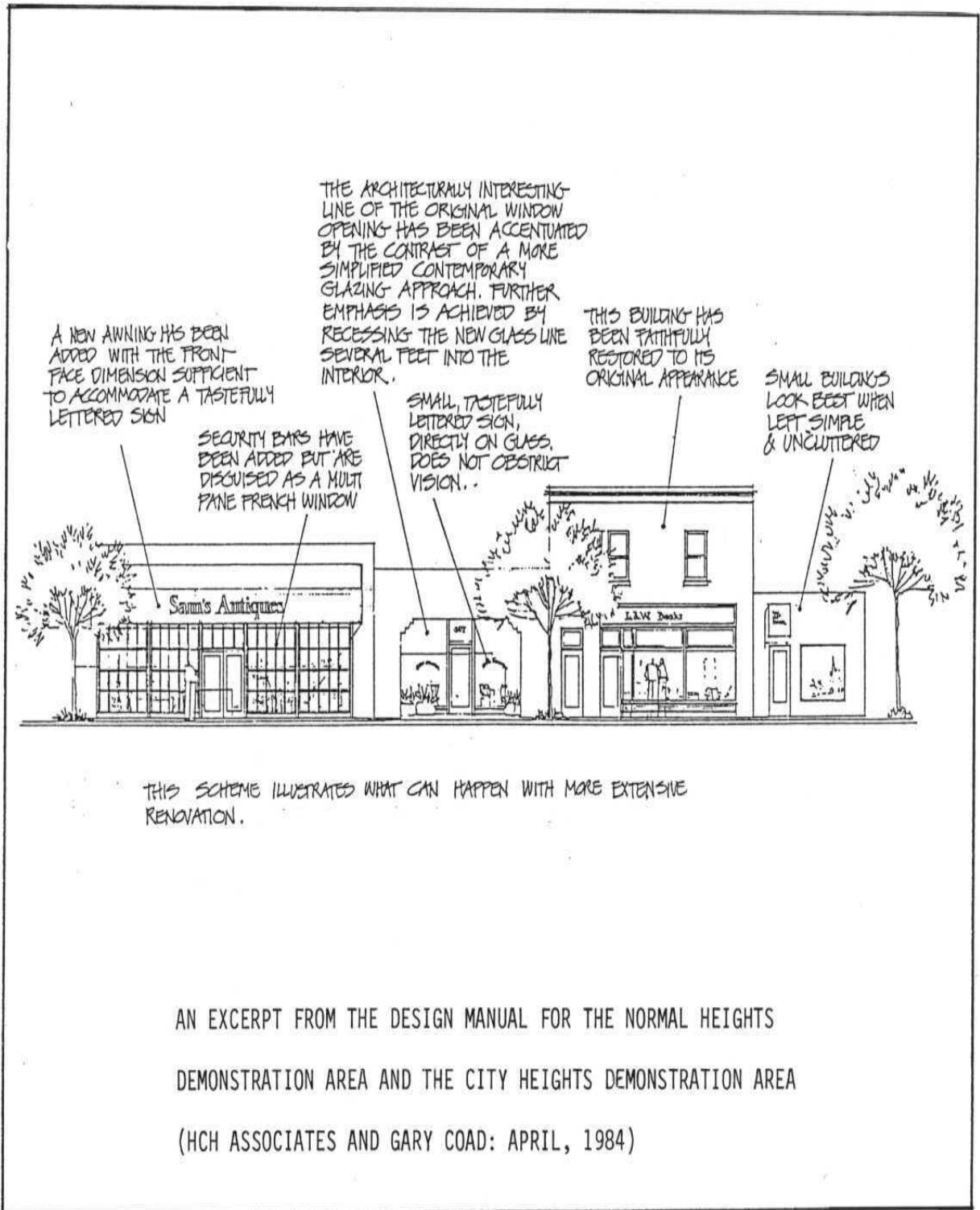
Target Areas - Recommended initial target areas for commercial revitalization are Park Boulevard north of Meade Avenue and University Avenue east of Highway 163 to Park Boulevard.



Rehabilitation Guidelines - The rehabilitation of commercial structures should focus on restoring facades to their original integrity and providing quality, tasteful signage (see also Figure 7). Any attempt to introduce a different architectural character should completely cover the original facade in order to hide any possible incongruity, and should only be undertaken on structures with no architectural or historic significance. Regular maintenance to eliminate signs of physical neglect is essential. Display windows which offer visibility to the interior are an important ingredient to a successful shopping environment, as is well designed, professionally executed signage.

Financing - Financing programs should be established to meet the financial needs of the community. The objective of these programs should be to encourage the participation of property and business owners in revitalization with the overall goal of improving the business climate. A loan program and rebate program funded by Community Development Block Grants should be considered in specific areas as needed.

1. Loan Program - This program should provide affordable property improvement financing at reduced interest rates. These loans can be used to make facade and certain interior improvements consistent with design guidelines provided in this plan or in separate revitalization studies. Adherence to rehabilitation guidelines should be a condition of approval.
2. Rebate Program - This program would reimburse participants for a portion of the cost of facade improvements in targeted areas. Rebates should also be subject to rehabilitation guidelines.
3. Business Improvement Districts (BID) - The expanded use of BID should also be implemented to assist business in their efforts to organize and upgrade their properties. The Mission Hills business community should pursue a BID given the cohesive character of that commercial area.



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FIGURE  
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