CITY OF CHULA VISTA

City of Chula Vista
Urban Core Specific Plan

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CHULA VISTA

Urban Core Specific Plan

April 2007

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Amended July 2011 (Minor)

Prepared for:

City of Chula Vista

276 Fourth Avenue

Chula Vista, CA 91910

Prepared by:

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creating environments people enjoy℠

CITY OF
CHULA VISTA

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CHERYL COX
MAYOR

As the City of Chula Vista approaches its 100th birthday in 2011, it is poised to embark upon the next chapter in its history. The 2005 General Plan update established a vision for the 21st century. The Urban Core Specific Plan provides the tools to see that vision become a reality. The Plan will create opportunities to renew the economic vitality of the City's urban core. With this stimulus, the urban core can enjoy the vitality of the early 1900s when lemon orchards thrived, through the transition to the 1950s and the flourishing of Rohr Industries.

Another lifecycle of the City's urban core is now set to emerge. We are ready to see more great things happen.

The City Council heard from the urban core's many stakeholders -- residents, property owners, business owners and investors. The Plan strikes a balance among more housing, additional shopping opportunities, greater emphasis on walking instead of driving, and new revenue sources for the public improvements necessary to the revitalized City's urban core.

Over the coming years, I look forward to seeing the gradual transformation of the City's urban core. Realization of that vision will take place over the next 20-25 years.

Today, the Urban Core Specific Plan is in its infancy, about ready to make that first step. You can expect to see new and exciting activity in the oldest parts of Chula Vista. Ultimately, the urban core will be strengthened so that it remains the heart of our city with places to live, work, shop and play.

Cheryl Cox
Mayor

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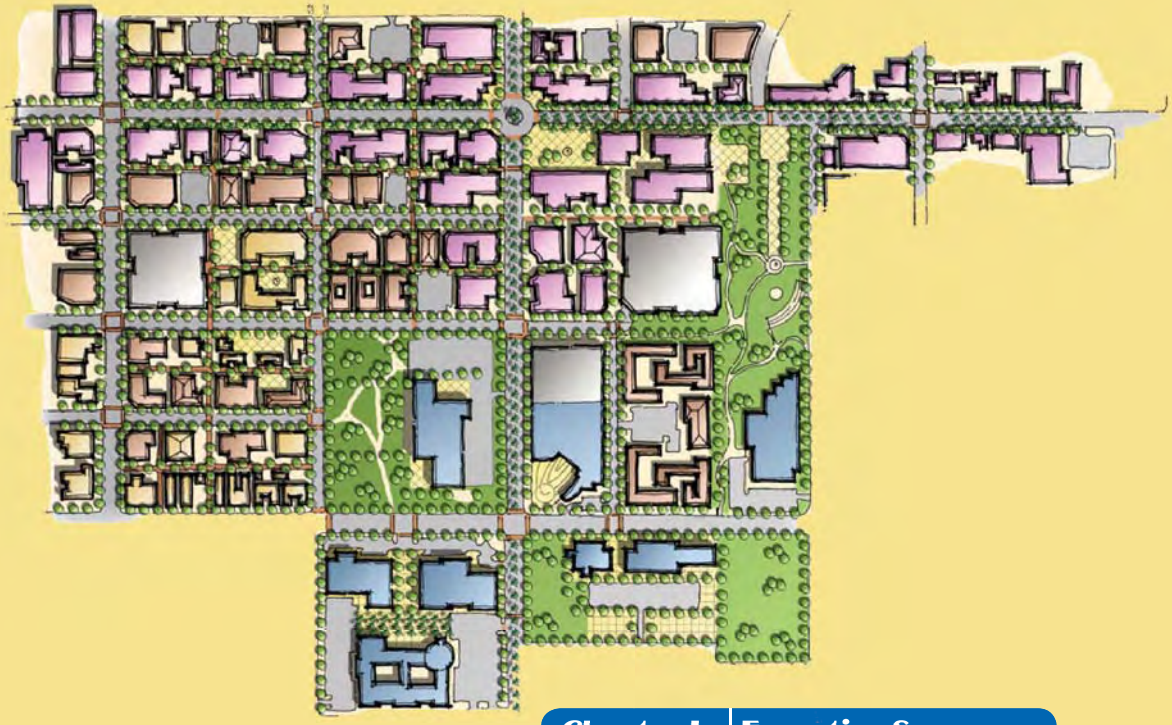
I. Executive Summary



I. Executive Summary

The City of Chula Vista has grown substantially over the years through annexations and development, and is the second largest city in San Diego County. Chula Vista continues to play a significant role in the region's growth and is emerging as the hub of civic and cultural activity in South San Diego County. Chula Vista is one of the most rapidly growing areas in the region with a projected population of approximately 300,000 by 2030. While much of the City's recent growth has occurred in large master planned communities developing on vacant land in the eastern portion of the City, demographic changes and other influences are bringing about population growth and renewed interest and need for revitalization and redevelopment in the older, developed western portion of the City.

The recent update to the City of Chula Vista General Plan focused primarily on revitalization and redevelopment within the older, developed area in the western portion of the City. The Urban Core Specific Plan follows the direction and vision provided in the City's General Plan and establishes a more detailed vision, guidelines, and regulations for future development and beautification in the traditional downtown area. The Specific Plan area is generally located east of I-5, west of Del Mar Avenue, north of L Street, and south of C Street. While there are approximately 1,700 acres within the Specific Plan boundary, it was determined that changes should be focused on areas more in need of redevelopment. Therefore, the Specific Plan focuses on the redevelopment of approximately 690 gross acres within the larger Specific Plan study area. The Specific Plan creates a framework to attract investment and be a catalyst for revitalization. The overall goal is to create pedestrian-friendly environments, gathering places and public amenities through community development.

The Specific Plan considers marketplace realities to increase the economic viability of the downtown and surrounding areas to meet City, business, and community needs. The Specific Plan addresses land use mixes and distributions; zoning; urban and sustainable design; vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian circulation; parking; transit services and facilities; public improvements and infrastructure; gateways and image; street furniture and pedestrian amenities; parks and public spaces; implementation strategies and possible funding sources. The Specific Plan is based upon the valuable comments and participation from residents, business leaders, and other community stakeholders, as well as the diligent and committed Urban Core Specific Plan Advisory Committee.

The intent of the Specific Plan is to facilitate and encourage development and improvements that will help realize the community's vision for the Urban Core area. The community wants the Urban Core to be a desirable San Diego County

destination for both visitors and residents alike, with an identity of its own. The community wants a downtown that is vibrant, forward thinking but respectful of its past, and alive with thriving businesses, attractive housing, and entertainment, cultural and recreational activities. The plan envisions a broad mixture of uses and business opportunities, as well as a wide range of residential housing types. The Urban Core is envisioned to be the "heart" of the community, where people gather to enjoy special events, farmers markets, street performances, and outdoor dining. It is a downtown with a synergistic mix of land uses, attractive streetscapes and sidewalks, full of people, all interconnected with a series of plazas and pedestrian paseos. To this end, the Specific Plan includes a variety of recommendations to help obtain this vision including:

- *Mobility recommendations*
- *Land Use Development Standards*
- *Development Design Guidelines*
- *Public Realm Design Guidelines*
- *Plan Implementation Strategies and Community Benefits Program*

Mobility

Specific Plan mobility recommendations provide a variety of approaches and strategies to "get people from here to there." Improvements for the main thoroughfares and other streets within the Urban Core are identified in Chapter V - Mobility and address pedestrian, bicycle, transit, automobile and parking opportunities.

Traffic calming elements and pedestrian improvements are introduced to slow traffic and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment, such as along Third Avenue in the Village District. The suggested improvements include bulbouts (sidewalk extensions), narrowed travel lanes, reducing the number of travel widths in some areas, special paving at crosswalks and median refuge islands. Paseos and pedestrian walkways are emphasized in the Specific Plan as well. For bicycle transit, the Mobility chapter includes recommendation for new and upgraded bikeway facilities throughout the area for both recreational and commuting users.

Three transit focus areas within the Urban Core provide multi-modal opportunities for both local and regional transit. The stations located at I-5/H Street and I-5/E Street link to the San Diego Trolley's Blue Line. As a feature of the Specific Plan, a new shuttle loop system called the West Side Shuttle is proposed. The shuttle route will serve both the Urban Core Specific Plan and Bayfront Master Plan areas in western Chula Vista. This new service would complement existing and planned future transit improvements.

A program of improvements to the roadway network is proposed, especially reintroducing the street grid in areas where it has been interrupted over time. The Mobility chapter also addresses off-street parking within the Urban Core Districts and offers public parking strategies, including parking districts for portions of Third Avenue and strategically located parking structures particularly for the transit focus areas.

Land Use Development Standards

Chapter VI – Land Use and Development Standards establishes three different Specific Plan Districts: Village, Urban Core and Corridors, as well as twenty-six subdistricts to allow for customized regulations and standards. The subdistrict regulations shape the building form and intensity, allowable land uses, and parking requirements. In summary, the land uses are customized to encourage a mix of pedestrian-oriented uses integrated with higher density residential. The development and parking standards have been relaxed to encourage investment in the Urban Core, including locating buildings closer to the street with parking behind or tucked under the building. The Specific Plan regulations stress flexibility and provision of urban amenities such as streetscape improvements, parks, plazas, transit, cultural arts and mixed use.

The tallest buildings are allowed in the transit focus areas located at I-5/H Street and I-5/E Street where support by alternative modes of transportation is readily available. Neighborhood Transition Combining Districts have been created for subdistricts adjacent to R-1 and R-2 zoning areas to protect and buffer existing residential neighborhoods and ensure compatible, stepped-back building heights and setbacks. Special provisions address live/work units, mixed-uses and parking structures. Zoning incentives are provided to entice developers to provide urban amenities such as parks and plazas beyond required levels.

Development Design Guidelines

In Chapter VII – Development Design Guidelines, comprehensive design guidelines are provided for development within the three Specific Plan Districts, as well as special guidelines for hotels, mixed-use projects, multi-family residential projects, and sustainability principles. The form-based guidelines supplement Specific Plan development regulations and the City's Zoning Ordinance to create a more attractive, well-designed urban environment. The guidelines apply to construction, conservation, adaptive reuse, and enhancement of buildings and street scenes. Although no specific architectural style is prescribed, the quality of design is guided by policies addressing site planning, building height/form/mass, building materials/colors, storefront design, landscaping, lighting, parking, circulation, signs and other development considerations. The goal of the guidelines is to create a positive image for the Urban Core and frame the streets and sidewalks with inviting buildings, entrances, awnings and outdoor dining areas.

Public Realm Design Guidelines

Chapter VIII – Public Realm Design Guidelines focuses on ways to create more attractive and pedestrian-friendly public environments and gathering places. Street furniture, landscaping, sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, paseos, public art, parks and plaza concepts are defined. Two main themes emerge within the Specific Plan: an art-deco inspired design theme is proposed along Third Avenue, building upon the era when much of the development along the street occurred, and a more contemporary theme is proposed for the remaining public realm areas in the Urban Core, indicative of a forward-looking Chula Vista. Gateway treatments are proposed at six locations to welcome people to the Urban Core and to reinforce the identity of the Urban Core.

Plan Implementation Strategies and Community Benefits Program

One of the most important elements of the Specific Plan is identifying the implementation programs that will result in the desired changes emphasized in the Specific Plan. The sole purpose of the Specific Plan is to improve the quality of life for Chula Vista in general, with a focus on the west side in particular. Visual simulations of potential future conditions for four areas of the Specific Plan are provided to help illustrate the possible positive changes and community benefits envisioned.

The visions expressed in the Specific Plan include investments in streets, transit, parks, plazas, cultural facilities, protection of historic resources, schools, and improvements to City services such as utilities, police, fire, health and human services. These investments will be supported by a partnership between the City and the private sector as new development occurs. Chapter X – Plan Implementation and Community Benefits Program contains realization strategies and forms a critical link between the improvements the City desires and how both the City and private investment will contribute to make the improvements happen. Specific improvements are identified, and financial tools and strategies are outlined.

II. Introduction and Background

A. What is a Specific Plan? *II-1*

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II. Introduction and Background

A. What is a Specific Plan?

The Urban Core Specific Plan ("Specific Plan") is established pursuant to the authority granted in the Chula Vista Municipal Code Section 19.07, Specific Plans, and the California Government Code, Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 3, Article 8, Sections 65450 through 65457 and contains all the mandatory elements identified in Government Code Section 65451.

Specific Plans must be consistent with the policies contained within the General Plan and may be adopted by resolution or by ordinance. This differentiation allows cities to choose whether their specific plans, or portions thereof, will be policy driven (adopted by resolution), or regulatory (adopted by ordinance). This Specific Plan is adopted by ordinance. All zoning related portions of this Specific Plan (i.e. land use matrix, permitted uses and development regulations) are prepared to serve as regulatory provisions and supersede other regulations and ordinances of the City for the control of land use and development within the Specific Plan subdistrict boundaries. Other portions, such as the development design guidelines and public realm design guidelines are provided as City policies aimed at providing direction for future planning and public improvement efforts. Future development projects, subdivisions, public improvement projects and other implementing programs should be consistent with the adopted Specific Plan.

B. Consistency with the General Plan

Over the last several years the City of Chula Vista has been in the process of updating the City's General Plan, which was last comprehensively updated in 1989. The main focus during the 1989 update was on the newly annexed and developing eastern portions of the City. Although comprehensive, the recent General Plan (2005) has instead been primarily focused on the currently developed areas of the city, in particular the western portions of the City. As such, the planning effort was confronted with balancing "how" the City should grow over the next 25 years given the continued growth projections with "where" the growth should occur, given the numerous established stable neighborhoods. This challenge was seen as an opportunity to utilize the key principles found in smart growth strategies relative to urban revitalization and apply them to areas that have experienced recent decline or underutilization.

The General Plan is based on many of the common elements and concepts of smart growth such as:

- *Provide a mix of compatible land uses*
- *Take advantage of compact building design*
- *Create a range of housing opportunities and choices*
- *Create walkable neighborhoods*
- *Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities*
- *Provide a variety of transportation choices*

In order to realize the vision for the urban core established by the updated General Plan, it was recognized that existing zoning for the urban core needed "re-tooling". The 30+ year-old zoning regulations either precluded or created a cumbersome entitlement process to achieve the variety of living, employment and service choices envisioned by the General Plan and quite commonplace in the 21st century. Therefore, the Specific Plan was prepared to provide a set of contemporary implementing tools to allow new development and redevelopment to occur over the next 20-25 years. To that end, the Specific Plan anticipates the following projected buildout over the life of the plan consistent with the General Plan. (Refer to Figure 2.1)

Projected Buildout			
Land Use	**Existing**	**Net Increase**	**Total**
Multi-Family Residential (dwelling units)	3,700	7,100	10,800
Commercial Retail (square feet)	3,000,000	1,000,000	4,000,000
Commercial Office (square feet)	2,400,000	1,300,000	3,700,000
Commercial - Visitor Serving (square feet)		1,300,000	1,300,000

Projected buildout of the Specific Plan area **Fig. 2.1**

Due to the length of time that buildout of the Specific Plan is expected to take (i.e. 20+ years), as well as the nature of urban revitalization, the exact extent, timing and sequencing of development is difficult to predict. However, the Specific Plan is not a static document and as such will be revisited on an on-going basis to evaluate progress towards buildout projections, priority ranking of important public improvements and other issues that may arise. A series of checks and balances will be part of that process and may include review under the City's Growth Management Ordinance, the biannual budgetary and Capital Improvements Program (CIP) cycle, and five-year progress check of the Specific Plan.

C. Plan Purpose and Intent

First and foremost, the purpose of the Specific Plan is to revitalize and enhance the economic, social, cultural, and recreational fabric of the City's Urban Core. An overall goal is to develop the Urban Core with a mix of retail, office, and residential uses that are supported by a variety of options for moving from one place to another, often referred to as "mobility". The Specific Plan is a tool to facilitate and prioritize community improvement projects, evaluate development proposals and new land uses, and enhance existing uses. To do this, the Specific Plan provides a structure to implement the Specific Plan vision over time. Implementation measures include development standards, design guidelines, land use regulations, and a series of specific actions that may be undertaken by both the City and private sector to make progress toward the Specific Plan goals. Existing City zoning is not adequate to realize the desired vision for the Specific Plan area and must be updated and retooled. As the existing zoning dates back to last century, revisions are necessary to modernize and allow for the living and lifestyle choices appropriate for current needs.

The Specific Plan provides detailed development scenarios and regulations for the Urban Core. It features focused design guidelines tailored to individual neighborhoods.

The Specific Plan focuses on increasing the economic viability of the downtown and surrounding areas in order to meet City, business, and community needs. Many of the stable residential areas within the Specific Plan area will be maintained with as few changes as possible, though all neighborhoods, including those outside the Specific Plan boundaries, benefit from the improved services and amenities (e.g. bikeways, parks, etc.) resulting from the revitalization efforts.

The Specific Plan seeks to establish a direct connection between the City of Chula Vista General Plan and revitalization and enhancement opportunities within the Urban Core of the City. An overall goal is the orderly development of Chula Vista's Urban Core in a method consistent with the City's General Plan and, more specifically, with the vision as developed through the Specific Plan public outreach process.

The intent is to produce a realistic, market-based action plan that will bring about programs, policies, and partnerships that will facilitate a major increase in the quality and quantity of retail and other commercial activity and provide additional housing opportunities in the Urban Core. The future Urban Core will contain a diversity of public, commercial, civic, financial, cultural, and residential uses that will emphasize its role as the central focal point of the City.

D. Boundaries and Setting

1. Background

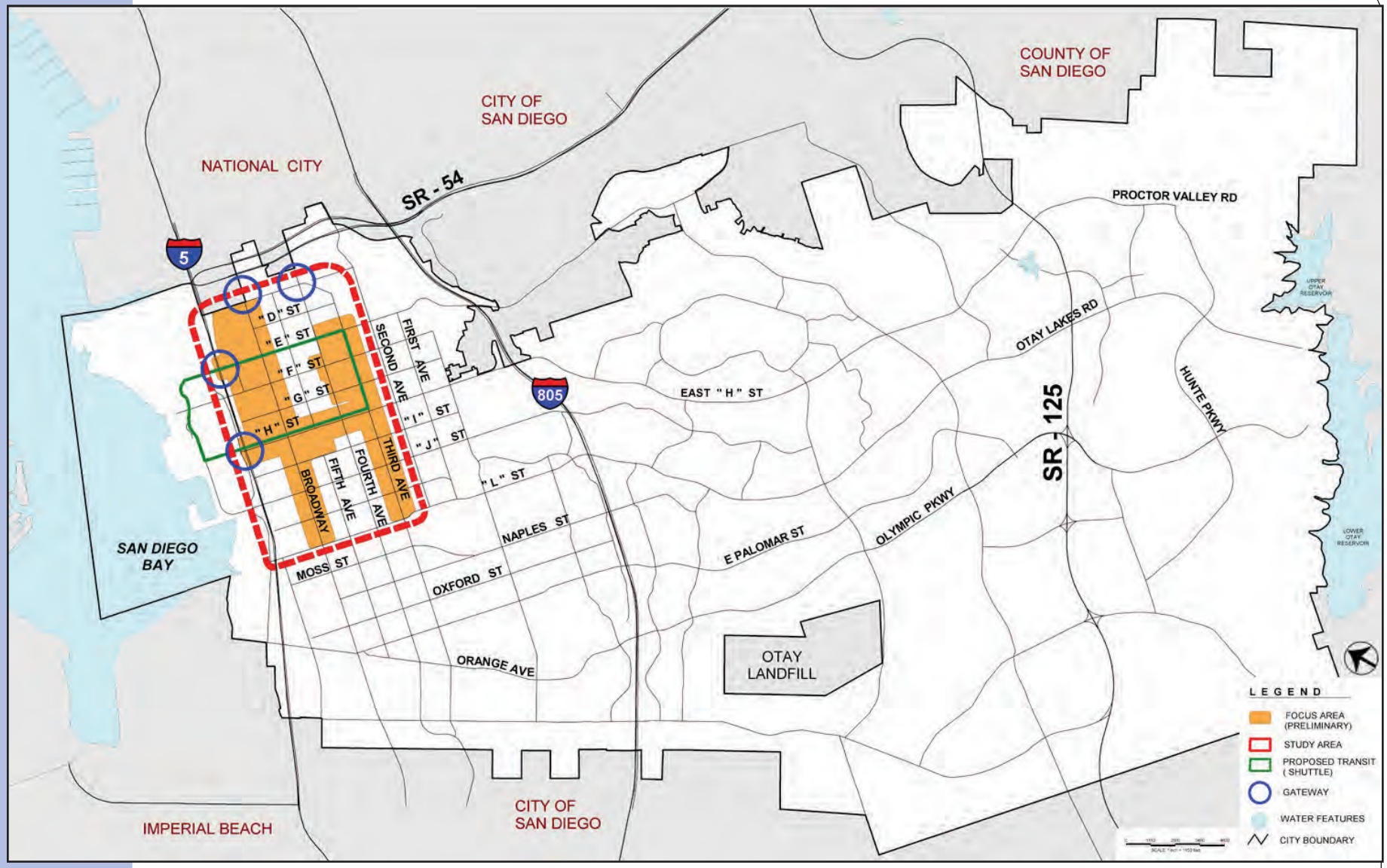
The Specific Plan area represents the traditional downtown heart of the City. This northwestern corner of the City was the nucleus of Colonel William Dickinson's town plan for Chula Vista from the late nineteenth century (see Figure 4.1 - Chula Vista Plat Map). Originally a thriving agricultural community known for lemon orchards, the City's main economic focus shifted to industrial production during the time of World War II, due to the opening of Rohr Aircraft Corporation, a major manufacturing company supplying the US military forces. Due to the proximity to the San Diego metropolitan area, the City of Chula Vista has since acted as a commuting suburb of the larger city. Over the last 30 years, large tracts of land have been annexed in the City's eastern area and subsequently developed as master planned communities. One major annexation was that of the Montgomery community, a 3.5 square mile area considered the largest annexation of an inhabited area in State history. Over the last century, especially the latter decades, significant annexation, and subsequent population growth led to a decentralization of the City center. The Specific Plan will revitalize the fabric of the City's Urban Core and reestablish the focus on the traditional center of the community.

2. Regional Context

The City of Chula Vista covers approximately 52 square miles of southern San Diego County and is the second largest city in the County. The City is bounded by the South San Diego Bay on the west, the Sweetwater River on the north, mountains and the Otay Lakes on the east, and the Otay River to the south. Please see Figures 2.2 - Regional Context Map and 2.3 - City Context Map.

Regional context map (Source: City of Chula Vista) **Fig. 2.2**

In 2004, the City had an estimated population of approximately 210,000. Based on the General Plan Update population projections, the population in Chula Vista will continue to rise, reaching approximately 300,000 by 2030.



City Context Map (Source: City of Chula Vista)

Fg. 2.3

Though for many years Chula Vista was largely a residential suburban community, the City is evolving into a regional economic center. Located just south of downtown San Diego and a few miles north of the United States-Mexican border, the City is well-situated to take advantage of two very different economic markets. Regional transportation routes, such as the I-5, I-805, and SR-125 corridors as well as links to the San Diego Trolley system, are contiguous to the Urban Core boundary and provide convenient connections to the surrounding region. The traditional downtown area along Third Avenue, as well as the Chula Vista Center and other retail facilities along H Street, have been regional shopping attractions for decades. However, expansion of the City to the east, as well as growth in other parts of the County, have led to a decline in the Urban Core's market share of consumers.

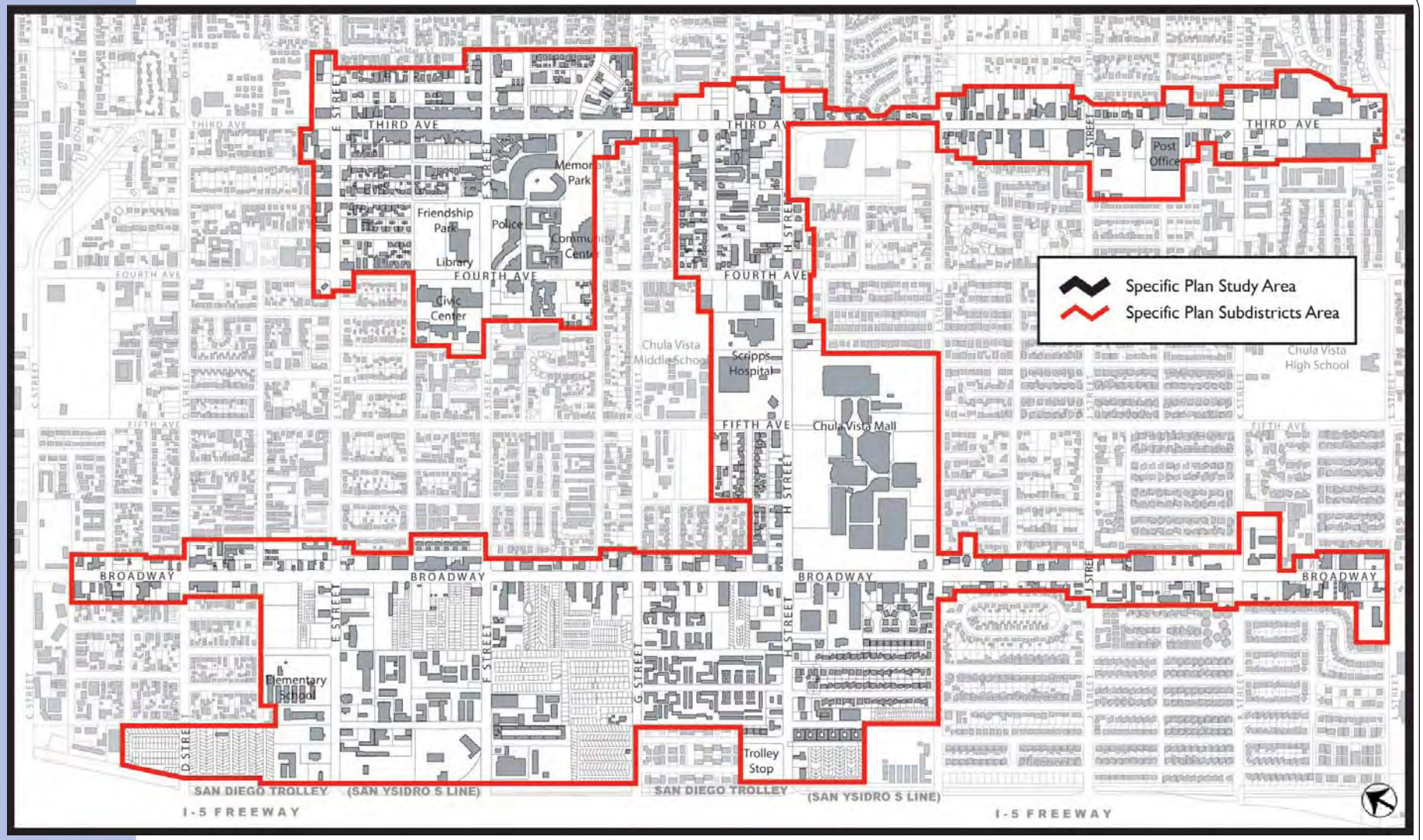
3. Specific Plan Boundary

The Specific Plan Study Area covers approximately 1,700 acres within the northwestern portion of the City of Chula Vista. It is generally bordered by the San Diego Freeway (I-5) to the west, C Street to the north, Del Mar Street to the east, and L Street to the south. While there are 1,700 acres within the Specific Plan Study Area, it was determined that changes should be focused on areas more in need of redevelopment. Therefore, the Specific Plan focuses new development zoning regulations and design guidelines for approximately 690 gross acres within the larger Specific Plan Study Area, denoted as the Specific Plan Subdistricts Area. Existing zoning outside of the Specific Plan Subdistricts Area is not modified by this Specific Plan and future development outside of the Specific Plan Subdistricts Area will be processed under the existing zoning ordinance. Its final form takes into consideration areas of unique urban design challenges, areas of particular economic interest, and areas in need of character retention or redefinition. (Refer to Figure 2.4 for a map of the Specific Plan area.)

4. Setting

The Urban Core area is flanked by the proposed Bayfront project to the west and the almost built-out territory east of the I-805. Residents from the east and west will primarily access the Urban Core by car; however, alternative transportation modes are encouraged. In addition, walking and bicycling between the Urban Core and the proposed Bayfront will be feasible as the distance from 3rd Avenue to Lagoon Drive is approximately two miles. E Street, F Street and H Street provide linkages over the I-5 between the Urban Core and Bayfront.

The Specific Plan area is characterized by urbanized development on relatively flat topography. The built environment largely consists of one- to three-story buildings with a few exceptions. Streets are generally laid out in a traditional grid pattern while some portions of the grid system have been substantially interrupted over time. Freeway access is predominantly provided at E Street, H Street and J Street.



Urban Core Specific Plan Area

Fig. 2.4

E. Relevant City Documents

The following documents provided the basis for many of the goals, polices, standards, guidelines and approaches developed for the Specific Plan. In some cases the Specific Plan provides the implementing regulations or further refinements to existing policies contained in these documents, and in other cases the Specific Plan replaces the relevant documents. Future development proposals must be found consistent with the Specific Plan, therefore, where inconsistencies arise in implementation documents, the provisions of the Specific Plan will take precedence.

1. City of Chula Vista General Plan

The City's General Plan is intended to guide the physical development of the City over a 20-30 year time frame. It establishes a vision for the City's future. The plan provides guidelines for making decisions concerning development of the City. Though largely focused on land use decisions, the plan addresses a range of elements, such as housing, open space and conservation, and public facilities and services that contribute to the City's well-being.

State law requires that the General Plan cover the following areas: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open-Space, Noise, and Safety. In addition, cities may choose to address subjects of particular interest to that jurisdiction; Chula Vista's plan includes elements on Public Facilities and Services, Growth Management and Child Care.

The Specific Plan is consistent with and furthers the objectives of the City of Chula Vista's General Plan by providing detailed criteria for development of specific sites and public streetscape improvements.

The update to the General Plan built upon the City's 1989 General Plan and provides a vision for the next 25 years of Chula Vista's future. Goals, objectives, and policies are presented that will guide the development of Chula Vista through the year 2030. Reference to the General Plan throughout this Specific Plan refers to the updated General Plan (2005) unless specifically referenced to previous versions (e.g. 1989).

The General Plan (2005) includes a new Economic Development Element and Environmental Element. It also features a combined Land Use and Transportation element that reinforces the link between land use planning and circulation throughout the City. An Implementation Chapter facilitates the ease of using the Specific Plan and makes the Specific Plan more beneficial for the citizens of Chula Vista. In the northwest area of the City, the General Plan recommended land use changes to "Focus Areas" primarily consisting of existing commercial corridors and residential areas close to transit facilities.

The Specific Plan's vision, goals, and implementation measures are based on direction given in the City's General Plan. There are many goals, objectives, and policies within the General Plan that are relevant to this Specific Plan; the most representative objectives have been selected and are listed below. These objectives may apply to the entire City or only to the specific district noted in the policy.

a. Vision and Themes

Each of the Vision and Themes established in the General Plan will be implemented in the Urban Core and are reflected in the subsequent pages and chapters of the UCSP. For example, General Plan Theme 4 - Improved Mobility is addressed through UCSP Chapter V - Mobility and Chapter VIII - Public Realm Design Guidelines. The following theme is of particular importance to the Urban Core:

- *Theme 8 - Shaping the Future Through the Present and Past: Chula Vista values its unique heritage and sense of place and manages change in a way that complements the important qualities and features that shape its identity.*

To this end, it is important to recognize the specific components of the UCSP that implement this theme.

1. *Regulate new development and other physical alterations to be completed in a manner that respects the character, scale, and historical value of the City:*

   Chapter IV - Existing Conditions

   Chapter V - Mobility

   Chapter VI - Land Use Development Regulations

   Chapter VII - Development Design Guidelines

   Chapter VIII - Public Realm Design Guidelines

   Chapter IX - Infrastructure and Public Facilities

   Chapter X - Plan Implementation and Community Benefits Program

2. *Harmonizing changes to blend in with and enhance the positive aspects of what is already there, see:*

   Chapter IV - Existing Conditions

   Chapter VI - Land Use Development Regulations

   Chapter VII - Development Design Guidelines

   Chapter VIII - Public Realm Design Guidelines

3. *Shaping established Chula Vista's future through policies that focus on preserving and enhancing stable residential neighborhoods, see:*

   Chapter VI - Land Use Development Regulations

   Chapter VII - Development Design Guidelines

   Chapter VIII - Public Realm Design Guidelines

   Chapter IX - Infrastructure and Public Facilities

   Chapter X - Plan Implementation and Community Benefits Program

4. *Enhancing community image, see:*

   Chapter VII - Development Design Guidelines

   Chapter VIII - Public Realm Design Guidelines

   Chapter IX - Infrastructure and Public Facilities

   Chapter X - Plan Implementation and Community Benefits Program

5. *Protecting cultural and historical resources, see:*

   Chapter IV - Existing Conditions

   Chapter V - Mobility

   Chapter VI - Land Use Development Regulations

   Chapter VII - Development Design Guidelines

   Chapter VIII - Public Realm Design Guidelines

6. *Implementing compatible land uses and edge transition, see:*

   Chapter VI - Land Use Development Regulations

   Chapter VII - Development Design Guidelines

   Chapter VIII - Public Realm Design Guidelines

b. Land Use and Transportation Objectives

- *Objective LUT-1: Provide a balance of residential and non-residential development throughout the City that achieves a vibrant development pattern, enhances the character of the City, and meets the present and future needs of all residents and businesses.*
- *Objective LUT-2: Limit locations for the highest development intensities and densities, and the tallest building forms, to key urban activity centers that are well served by transit.*

- *Objective LUT-3: Direct the urban design and form of new development and redevelopment in a manner that blends with and enhances Chula Vista's character and qualities, both physical and social.*
- *Objective LUT-4: Establish policies, standards, and procedures to minimize blighting influences and maintain the integrity of stable residential neighborhoods.*
- *Objective LUT-5: Designate opportunities for mixed use areas with higher density housing that is near shopping, jobs, and transit in appropriate locations throughout the City.*
- *Objective LUT-6: Ensure adjacent land uses are compatible with one another.*
- *Objective LUT-7: Appropriate transitions should be provided between land uses.*
- *Objective LUT-8: Strengthen and sustain Chula Vista's image as a unique place by maintaining, enhancing and creating physical features that distinguish Chula Vista's neighborhoods, communities, and public spaces, and enhance its image as a pedestrian-oriented and livable community.*
- *Objective LUT-9: Create enhanced gateway features for City entry points and other important areas, such as special districts.*
- *Objective LUT-10: Create attractive street environments that complement private and public properties, create attractive public rights-of-way, and provide visual interest for residents and visitors.*
- *Objective LUT-11: Ensure that buildings and related site improvements for public and private development are well designed and compatible with surrounding properties and districts.*
- *Objective LUT-12: Protect Chula Vista's important historic resources.*
- *Objective LUT-15: Improve transportation connections within Chula Vista and between eastern and western Chula Vista, particularly transit connections between major activity centers.*
- *Objective LUT-16: Integrate land use and transportation planning and related facilities.*
- *Objective LUT-17: Plan and coordinate development to be compatible and supportive of planned transit.*

- *Objective LUT-18: Reduce traffic demand through Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies, increased use of transit, bicycles, walking, and other trip reduction measures.*
- *Objective LUT-20: Make transit-friendly roads a top consideration in land use and development design.*
- *Objective LUT-21: Continue efforts to develop and maintain a safe and efficient transportation system with adequate roadway capacity to serve future residents, while preserving the unique character and integrity of recognized communities within the City.*
- *Objective LUT-23: Promote the use of non-polluting and renewable alternatives for mobility through a system of bicycle and pedestrian paths and trails that are safe, attractive and convenient forms of transportation.*
- *Objective LUT-26: Establish an Urban Core Improvements Program for the Urban Core Subarea.*
- *Objective LUT-27: Establish a program for development to provide public amenities and/or community services necessary to support urban development and implement the following policies. (Refer to General Plan for list of policies.)*
- *Objective LUT-28: Consider use of lot consolidation, where appropriate, so that projects meeting the objectives of this General Plan can be achieved, and a high level of community amenities can be provided.*
- *Objective LUT-29: Allow for the clustering of residential development to respond to site constraints, and improve amenities for project residents.*
- *Objective LUT-30: Use parking management to better utilize parking facilities and implement policies to reduce parking demand before considering public expenditures for additional parking facilities.*
- *Objective LUT-31: Provide parking facilities that are appropriately integrated with land uses; maximize efficiency; accommodate alternative vehicles; and reduce parking impacts.*
- *Objective LUT-32: Evaluate the use and applicability of various strategies to provide parking.*
- *Objective LUT-33: Ensure that parking facilities are appropriately sited and well-designed in order to minimize adverse effects on the pedestrian-oriented environment, and to enhance aesthetic qualities.*

The following objectives are provided in the General Plan for the Northwest Area Plan, which includes the Specific Plan area and contains "area specific" policies for the Urban Core.

- *Objective LUT-46: Establish linkages between the Urban Core Subarea and the Bayfront Planning Area for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit.*
- *Objective LUT-47: Establish roadway classifications in the Urban Core Subarea that respond to the special operating characteristics of roadways within a more urbanized environment, accommodate slower speeds in pedestrian-oriented areas, and facilitate multi-modal design elements and amenities.*
- *Objective LUT-48: Increase mobility for residents and visitors in the Urban Core Subarea.*
- *Objective LUT-49: Encourage redevelopment, infill, and new development activities within the Urban Core Subarea that will provide a balance of land uses, reinforce its identity as Chula Vista's central core, and complement land uses in other planning areas, including the Bayfront and East Planning Areas.*
- *Objective LUT-50: Provide for the redevelopment and enhancement of the Downtown Third Avenue District as a lively, higher density, mixed use area, while preserving the important elements that contribute to the charm and character of traditional Third Avenue.*
- *Objective LUT-51: Maintain Downtown Third Avenue as a focal point for the City so that it continues to express the City's history, provides a venue for cultural vitality, and retains its role as a center for social, political, and other civic functions.*
- *Objective LUT-52: Encourage redevelopment of the Chula Vista Center, as well as properties north of H Street, with a mix of land uses that will reinforce H Street as a future planned transit boulevard and gateway corridor, and establish the area as a significant public gathering space and vibrant mixed use area.*
- *Objective LUT-53: Encourage redevelopment to be mixed use along the H Street Corridor, between Third Avenue and Fourth Avenue, within walking distance of a planned future transit station near Third Avenue and H Street.*
- *Objective LUT-54: Encourage redevelopment activities within the North Broadway Focus Area that will result in the establishment of a pedestrian-oriented commercial corridor providing housing opportunities and local-serving compatible commercial uses.*

- *Objective LUT-55: Encourage redevelopment of E Street between Interstate 5 and Broadway with mixed use, especially near the E Street Trolley Station, and an emphasis on visitor-serving uses, with some offices and multi-family residential.*
- *Objective LUT-6: Encourage redevelopment of the area between Interstate 5 and Broadway, bounded on the north by F Street and on the south by G Street, with predominantly high density residential, supported by mixed use along Broadway.*
- *Objective LUT-57: Encourage redevelopment of the area between Interstate 5 and Broadway, between G Street and H Street, emphasizing transit-oriented mixed use near the H Street Trolley Station and reinforcing H Street as a major gateway and transit boulevard.*
- *Objective LUT-58: Encourage redevelopment of the area between Interstate 5 and Broadway, between H Street and I Street, as a regional shopping center or transit focus mixed use area that will complement redevelopment of the existing Chula Vista Center, and reinforce H Street as a major gateway and transit boulevard.*
- *Objective LUT-59: Encourage redevelopment activities within the Mid-Broadway District that will establish a pedestrian oriented commercial corridor providing housing opportunities and compatible neighborhood-serving commercial uses.*
- *Objective LUT-60: Reinforce the existing land use pattern of predominantly retail uses on the west side of Third Avenue, and office uses on the east side of Third Avenue between J Street and L Street.*

c. Public Facilities and Services Objectives

- *Objective PFS-14: Provide parks and recreation facilities and programs citywide that are well maintained, safe, accessible to all residents and that offer opportunities for personal development, health and fitness in addition to recreation.*

The Specific Plan provides for more precise implementation of the General Plan's goals, objectives, and policies. The Specific Plan has been prepared to reinforce all elements of the General Plan relative to the Urban Core.

2. Chula Vista General Plan Update Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

The General Plan Update EIR provides an assessment of the existing conditions within the City and the suitability of those conditions for meeting the goals for the City's future. The EIR evaluates potential impacts relating to the General

Plan Update and presents feasible mitigation measures where significant environmental impacts are identified. Environmental concerns identified through the General Plan Update EIR were taken into consideration in the development of the Specific Plan.

3. Chula Vista Municipal Code – Title 19 Zoning

The City of Chula Vista's Municipal Code, Title 19 Zoning, sets standards and regulations to protect and promote the public health, safety, welfare, and quality of life within Chula Vista and to implement the goals set forth in the General Plan. The Zoning Code provides site specific development and land use regulations that govern the size, shape, and intensity of development in the City and uses to which new development may be committed. The Zoning Code divides the City into districts, each of which establishes a set of regulations controlling such issues as the uses of land, uses and locations of structures, height and bulk of and open spaces around structures, signs, and parking. The traditional Euclidean zoning classifications found within the Specific Plan districts include: Central Commercial (CC), Administrative and Professional Office (CO), Commercial Thoroughfare (CT), Visitor Commercial (CV), Limited Industrial (IL), Mobilehome Park (MHP), Public/Quasi-public (PQ), One- and Two-Family Residence (R2), and Apartment Residence (R3). These classifications commonly allow only a single land use type; mixed-use areas are implemented through rezonings, conditional use permits, and General Plan changes. The Specific Plan customizes the standards and regulations found in the City Zoning Code in order to achieve the Urban Core vision. The Specific Plan sets more detailed zoning standards and regulations for the sub-districts within the Specific Plan and replaces the zoning regulations provided in 19.24 - 19.40 and 19.44. The provisions of the City Zoning Code apply to the properties within the Specific Plan area; in such cases where the Specific Plan and Zoning Code conflict, the Specific Plan regulations and development standards shall apply. Where the Specific Plan is silent, provisions of the zoning code shall apply..

4. Town Centre I Redevelopment Plan

Adopted in 1976, the goal of the Town Centre I Redevelopment Plan is to "revitalize the Town Centre area as the commercial-civic focus of the City. The Town Centre I Redevelopment Plan is a Specific Plan that provides permitted uses and controls and design guidelines for the project area. The Plan presents 12 objectives toward achieving this goal, including eliminating blighting influences and incompatible land uses, restructuring City infrastructure, such as the irregular block and lot subdivisions and poorly planned streets, attracting new capital and businesses to the area, establishing design standards and supporting "comprehensive beautification" of the area, incorporating increased multi-family housing and transit opportunities in the area. A series of redevelopment actions are proposed for Agency implementation, permitted

uses and controls are addressed, and methods for financing the project are proposed. The Plan also gives attention to the potential impact the Plan will have on existing neighborhoods in the area. The Town Centre I Land Use Policy acts as a land use guide for establishing the traditional downtown of Chula Vista into a focal business, commercial, and cultural area. The Town Centre I Land Use Policy delineates permitted, special, and prohibited land uses for the downtown district based on the objectives of the Town Centre I Redevelopment Plan (discussed previously).

The Town Centre Design Manual was prepared nearly 30 years ago and addresses the physical elements of the Town Centre area. The Design Manual provides general urban design guidelines, standards, and specifications for development within the project area. It covers such issues as siting, scale, and density of buildings, landscaping, streetscape elements, and transportation. A pedestrian orientation is a highlight of the Manual recommendations, including pedestrian-oriented mixed-uses and the development of pedestrian linkages between the various sub-sections of the Urban Core. Significant attention is also given to the importance of landscaping through the area and the opportunities for development of plazas and parks.

The Specific Plan more fully develops many of the ideas presented in the Town Centre I Redevelopment Plan, Land Use Policy and Design Manual, and offers an updated approach using contemporary regulations and design guidelines for the successful revitalization of the downtown and surrounding areas.

5. Third Avenue District Market Opportunity Study and Recruitment Strategy

This study was prepared in 2000 and provides a retail market analysis for the Town Centre I Redevelopment Project Area. An analysis of the marketing strengths and challenges of the area allows for development of a recruitment strategy that assists property owners in improving their sites while attracting new tenants to vacant commercial spaces. The document addresses the continued economic decline of Third Avenue, despite dedicated Redevelopment Agency efforts at revitalization. Identified opportunities include the potential to support a "fine limited local commercial district," establishing Third Avenue as a "unique or niche" destination within the larger economic community, the creation of a Third Avenue identity that sets it apart from other cities and districts, and the potential to intensify development near transit nodes, areas of greater pedestrian frequency, and civic uses. Major strategies include strengthening existing locations, providing transit linkages, developing an improved sign program and offering a variety of development incentives. These strategies are further developed through the Specific Plan. Implementation of the Specific Plan document will help Third Avenue overcome the existing economic challenges and foster a successful revitalization program for the area.

6. Broadway Revitalization Strategy

The focus area of this document is Broadway from H Street to L Street, with particular attention to the H Street entryway into the City. The plan strives to reverse deteriorating conditions along the auto-oriented strip and reform the area into a commercially viable and visually pleasing environment. The document outlines proposed broad economic, aesthetic, and circulation improvements along Broadway. The Specific Plan will implement many of the changes and improvements suggested in the Broadway Revitalization Strategy.

7. Bayfront Master Plan

The purpose of the Bayfront Master Plan is to create a world-class bayfront in Chula Vista. Goals of the Bayfront Master Plan include creating one unified Bayfront area from the three existing districts, finding a balance between being sensitive to both environmental and community recreational needs, creating an active boating waterfront in the deep water area, developing a sense of place at the Bayfront, and extending the City to the Bayfront. The Specific Plan strives especially toward the latter goal of connecting the City's downtown to the Bayfront. Design suggestions in the Specific Plan seek to restore and reinforce connectivity between the Urban Core and the Bayfront.

8. MTBD/South Bay Transit First Study

The Transit First Study evaluates potential future transit options for the City. The study identifies transit priority treatment options, alternate transit alignments, and potential transit station locations and types, such as mixed flow transit lanes, dedicated transit lanes, freeway HOV/transit lanes, guideways, queue jumpers, and transit priority signals. Based on ridership potential and the ability to best serve the established travel patterns of the region, alternative transit routes were divided into Tier One and Tier Two options. The Specific Plan supports increased public transit usage. Many of the recommendations made in the Specific Plan will benefit from the implementation of successful transit projects. Strategies from this report were considered in the Specific Plan Transportation Impact Analysis and also provide support for the transit intensive Urban Core.

9. Chula Vista Economic Development Strategy

The Economic Development Strategy was prepared in 2003 and serves as a blueprint for development of fiscal sustainability for the community. The Strategy has been updated and incorporated into the General Plan to serve as a blueprint for development to ensure short and long-term fiscal sustainability. The Strategy establishes 12 goals, supported by objectives and action items,

which will facilitate Chula Vista's economic prosperity through the year 2020. Goals that support increasing investment in western Chula Vista, providing the necessary physical infrastructure to support economic prosperity, and becoming the south county hub for leisure, recreational, shopping, and entertainment activities are directly reflected in the Specific Plan.

10. Historic Preservation Strategic Plan

The Historic Preservation Strategic Plan resulted from an effort by the Ad Hoc Historic Preservation Committee to evaluate the City's current historic preservation program and to make recommendations for the future of the City's historic resources. The Committee developed an action plan that could develop Chula Vista's Historic Preservation Program as a method for preserving the important historic resources of the City. Recommendations include becoming a Certified Local Government, establishing a predictable and consistent historic review process, establishing an historic preservation review board, and providing incentives for historic preservation. The Urban Core Strategic Plan encourages preservation of historic resources within the Urban Core area.

F. Community Outreach Process

An important component of the Specific Plan is the public participation process. The community outreach effort was designed to involve the various citizens and interest groups of Chula Vista in the Specific Plan process. Careful initial steps were taken to involve the citizens of Chula Vista. The following is a brief summary of the outreach efforts included in the public participation process that helped to shape the Specific Plan.

1. Key Person Interviews

A series of interviews were conducted in March of 2004 with various individuals, agencies, and organizations with strong interests in the Urban Core area. The purpose of these meetings was to listen to the issues and observations from key persons about the planning area. The interviews were quite informative for laying a foundation of background information and identifying many issues as well as visions for the Urban Core area.

Overall, most of the stakeholders voiced consistent feedback. Some of the most frequent comments included the following:

- *Third Avenue currently has the wrong tenant mix.*
- *Third Avenue should have more pedestrian-oriented uses and mixed-use projects.*
- *Broadway is an "eyesore" and is in need of aesthetic improvements.*
- *H Street is the major thoroughfare in Chula Vista.*
- *Uses such as liquor stores, pawn shops, dentist labs, adult stores, social service/employment agencies, and check cashing, etc. should be prohibited from the Urban Core.*
- *Single-family neighborhoods should be protected.*
- *The key project in the City is the Gateway project.*
- *The predominant architectural style should be Historic Spanish Mediterranean.*
- *Chula Vista should be connected to downtown San Diego via the trolley.*
- *A "small loop" trolley should circulate through Chula Vista and connect to the San Diego Trolley system.*
- *Connections to the Bayfront are needed.*

Stakeholders also voiced the top things they would change about Chula Vista. The most prominent ideas were:

- *Increase the density and building height of the Urban Core.*
- *Add open space to the Urban Core.*
- *Create a different tenant mix on Third Avenue.*
- *Make H Street more pedestrian-oriented through a variety of streetscape improvements.*

2. Advisory Committee Meetings

Beginning in August 2004, the Chula Vista Urban Core Advisory Committee met monthly in sessions open to the public. The Advisory Committee meetings allowed opportunities for the consultant team to present and refine ideas and concepts with substantial input from Advisory Committee members as well as the public at each stage of the planning process. The Advisory Committee was composed of 18 members that were representative of many community sectors, offering a broad variety of backgrounds and perspectives. The Advisory Committee members were essential to keeping the project on track for the benefit of the citizens of Chula Vista.

Topics discussed in the Advisory Committee meetings included:

- *Issue Identification*
- *Key Person Interviews*
- *Photo Tour and Visual Preference Survey*
- *Goals and Objectives for Vision Plan Areas*
- *Draft Vision Plan Review and Exercise*
- *Presentation of Vision Plans, Vision Statements, and Ten Key Principles*
- *Design Guidelines*
- *"At-A-Glance" Zoning Sheets and Land Use Matrix*
- *Gateways and Streetscapes Concepts*
- *Urban Amenities and Incentives*

Frequent updates on the traffic analyses and market conditions studies were also provided by the consultant team.

Advisory Committee meetings helped guide the Urban Core Specific Plan **Fg. 2.5**

The Advisory Committee meetings provided substantial feedback for the consultant team and were essential to the refining of the draft critical components of the Specific Plan.

Advisory Committee members and members of the public develop ideas | Fg. 2.6

3. Advisory Committee Charrette

In August 2004, the City Council appointed an 18-member Advisory Committee, chaired by Mayor Padilla and composed of various stakeholders, to help guide the Urban Core planning effort. The first meeting of the committee was a two-day visioning charrette, held on August 12-13, 2004. After participating in a bus tour of the Specific Plan area, an introduction was provided to the Urban Core visioning effort and an invitation was extended to the community to urge citizens to participate in the development of the Specific Plan.

The workshop meeting continued with a presentation on the importance of the work effort and its relationship to the General Plan Update and the Bayfront Master Plan project. A description of the Specific Plan effort and purpose was also provided. Following these presentations, a round-table exercise solicited preliminary thoughts and issues for the Urban Core.

After a preliminary review of the Land Use Concepts, Urban Core Focus Districts, Urban Design Themes, and Opportunities and Constraints of the site, the Advisory Committee members were asked to identify potential "big ideas" for the Urban Core.

The second day of the charrette kicked off with presentations from subconsultants regarding marketing and economics research as well as traffic and transportation research. A summary of the urban core market context and the regional economy and an overview of urban mobility concepts and transportation opportunities, respectively, were provided.

An Advisory Committee Charrette was held on August 12-13, 2004 | Fg. 2.7

The next portion of the meeting provided a visual overview of each of the nine original focus districts with a number of images ranging in height and massing. The images shown also included a variety of streetscape scenarios.

Committee members then participated in a Visual Preference Survey and were asked to rank the images as appropriate, neutral, or inappropriate.

Finally, both Advisory Committee members and the public were invited to write issues, concerns, and "big ideas" on six banners provided. Banner headings included Circulation/Transit, Land Use, Community Design, Parks & Services, Implementation, and Other Key Issues.

Issues, concerns, and "big ideas" were solicited at the Charrette **Fg. 2.8**

4. First Community Workshop

The first community workshop was held on September 13, 2004 at the Chula Vista Public Library (Civic Center Branch). Approximately 85 members of the public attended. The meeting began with an introduction to the project and process. A discussion on opportunities for public participation, anticipated timelines, and related projects followed. The consultant team then presented the basics of a Specific Plan, the boundaries of the study area, and a description of the existing conditions for each of the nine Focus Area Districts.

A Visual Preference Survey was then conducted where members of the public were to vote on various images with regard to building massing and scale. Participants were able to rate images for each of the nine Focus Area Districts as being appropriate, neutral, or inappropriate for that particular district.

In summary, participants consistently voted pedestrian-oriented streetscapes with the buildings located at the street edge as their preference. Buildings with interesting architectural details, such as well articulated windows, entries, rooflines, and buildings bases, were clearly preferred over large, box-like structures. In most districts, a building height of two to three stories seemed to be most acceptable, with higher buildings preferred near the freeway interchange districts.

Participants voted on images in terms of appropriateness of massing and scale **Fg. 2.9**

Public comments and questions were solicited. Comments received included:

- *A Website is needed as well as access for non-Internet users, such as a hotline.*
- *Focus on streetscape – shade trees.*
- *Consider free shuttle buses to connect to Bay area, 3rd Avenue, Broadway.*

About 85 people attended the First Community Workshop **Fig. 2.10**

- *Encourage public art.*
- *Create unified features to connect pedestrian paths.*
- *Consider allowing 2nd floor residences over commercial uses.*
- *Use "walkable communities" principles.*
- *Encourage adaptive reuse of existing historic buildings.*
- *Decide what is desirable about Chula Vista and reinforce that character.*

The workshop was very informative in setting a clear direction for how the community visualized the short and long-term future of Chula Vista's Urban Core. The feedback obtained helped the consultant team to further develop vision and design plans and ultimately this Specific Plan.

5. High School Presentations

Visual Preference Surveys were conducted at two local high schools on September 29, 2004. Sixty-four students at Castle Park high school and 53 students at Hilltop High School rated images for each of the nine Urban Core Focus Area Districts as being appropriate, neutral, or inappropriate for that particular district with regard to building massing and scale.

Students at Hilltop High School participate in a Visual Preference Survey **Fig. 2.11**

The students were enthusiastic about being involved in the planning process and having a chance to have their opinions heard. Both groups of students presented similar results. The students' preferences were comparable to those of the community at large; though the students often rated larger developments as more appropriate than did members of the

community participating in other visual preference surveys. In general, the students' preferences showed a greater affinity for higher intensity development and taller buildings as well as more contemporary architectural styles.

6. Planning Commission and City Council Workshop

The information and ideas generated from the initial committee meetings, community workshops, and high school surveys were used to create a series of "vision plans" for the Urban Core. The vision plans were intended to evoke an image of what the Urban Core could look like over the next 20 to 25 years and to set the frame work for the preparation of the Specific Plan. A workshop was then held on November 17, 2004 for members of the Chula Vista Planning Commission and City Council to review the draft Vision Plans and Ten Key Principles.

After some discussion on the differences between vision plans, which are representative of broad ideals, versus master plans, which are more literal representations of changes to an area, the Planning Commission and City Council were very supportive of the Vision Plans. Only minor revisions were suggested, such as the relocation of certain parking areas and structures and the addition of more commercial development along H Street.

7. Second Community Workshop

On December 1, 2004 citizens were invited to participate in a second community workshop. Results were presented from four visual preference surveys, conducted at an Advisory Committee meeting, the first community workshop, and two presentations at local high schools. The draft Vision Plans were also presented, including the 10 Key Principles for future Urban Core development. Public comments and questions were solicited using an interactive round-table discussion focused on the three key visioning areas.

In summary, participants were supportive and enthusiastic of the concepts and visions presented. Comments included concern over visitor parking, affordability of housing, and the need to develop the Broadway corridor as a retail, hospitality, and housing district that would serve the needs of existing Chula Vista residents. Participants were encouraged by the opportunity to provide feedback.

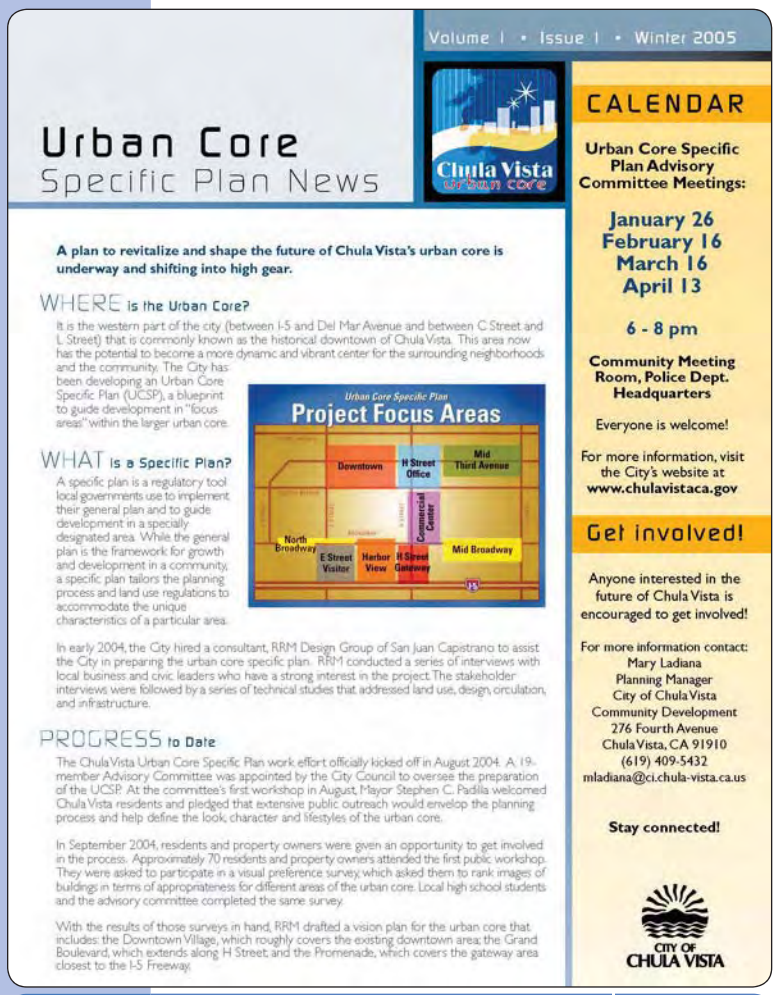
The Draft Vision Plans were presented at the Second Community Workshop Fig. 2.12

8. Other Outreach Efforts

Frequently updated information was made available to the public on the City's website regarding the progress of the Specific Plan effort. The website explained the Specific Plan project and process and kept citizens up to date on the latest work projects. Information and exhibits presented at Advisory Committee meetings were presented on the website and upcoming meeting dates were posted. The website acted as a convenient source of information for interested citizens.

9. Urban Core Newsletter

The City published an Urban Core Newsletter that informed residents of the purpose and progress of the Specific Plan. The Newsletter provided a summary of the initial planning effort culminating in the Vision Plans, which were completed in December 2004. The newsletter allowed citizens of Chula Vista to be more knowledgeable about the Specific Plan effort and afforded them an opportunity to be more involved in the overall Specific Plan process.



Volume I • Issue I • Winter 2005

Urban Core
Specific Plan News

Chula Vista urban core

A plan to revitalize and shape the future of Chula Vista's urban core is underway and shifting into high gear.

WHERE is the Urban Core?

It is the western part of the city (between I-5 and Del Mar Avenue and between C Street and L Street) that is commonly known as the historical downtown of Chula Vista. This area now has the potential to become a more dynamic and vibrant center for the surrounding neighborhoods and the community. The City has been developing an Urban Core Specific Plan (UCSP), a blueprint to guide development in "focus areas" within the larger urban core.

Urban Core Specific Plan
Project Focus Areas
Downtown
H Street Office
Mid Third Avenue
Commercial Center
North Broadway
E Street Visitor
Harbor View
H Street Gateway
Mid Broadway

WHAT is a Specific Plan?

A specific plan is a regulatory tool local governments use to implement their general plan and to guide development in a specially designated area. While the general plan is the framework for growth and development in a community, a specific plan tailors the planning process and land use regulations to accommodate the unique characteristics of a particular area.

In early 2004, the City hired a consultant, RRM Design Group of San Juan Capistrano to assist the City in preparing the urban core specific plan. RRM conducted a series of interviews with local business and civic leaders who have a strong interest in the project. The stakeholder interviews were followed by a series of technical studies that addressed land use, design, circulation, and infrastructure.

PROGRESS to Date

The Chula Vista Urban Core Specific Plan work effort officially kicked off in August 2004. A 19-member Advisory Committee was appointed by the City Council to oversee the preparation of the UCSP. At the committee's first workshop in August, Mayor Stephen C. Padilla welcomed Chula Vista residents and pledged that extensive public outreach would envelop the planning process and help define the look, character and lifestyles of the urban core.

In September 2004, residents and property owners were given an opportunity to get involved in the process. Approximately 70 residents and property owners attended the first public workshop. They were asked to participate in a visual preference survey, which asked them to rank images of buildings in terms of appropriateness for different areas of the urban core. Local high school students and the advisory committee completed the same survey.

With the results of those surveys in hand, RRM drafted a vision plan for the urban core that includes: the Downtown Village, which roughly covers the existing downtown area; the Grand Boulevard, which extends along H Street; and the Promenade, which covers the gateway area closest to the I-5 Freeway.

CALENDAR

Urban Core Specific Plan Advisory Committee Meetings:

January 26
February 16
March 16
April 13

6 - 8 pm

Community Meeting Room, Police Dept. Headquarters

Everyone is welcome!

For more information, visit the City's website at **www.chulavistaca.gov**

Get involved!

Anyone interested in the future of Chula Vista is encouraged to get involved!

For more information contact:
Mary Ladiana
Planning Manager
City of Chula Vista
Community Development
276 Fourth Avenue
Chula Vista, CA 91910
(619) 409-5432
mladiana@ci.chula-vista.ca.us

Stay connected!

CITY OF CHULA VISTA

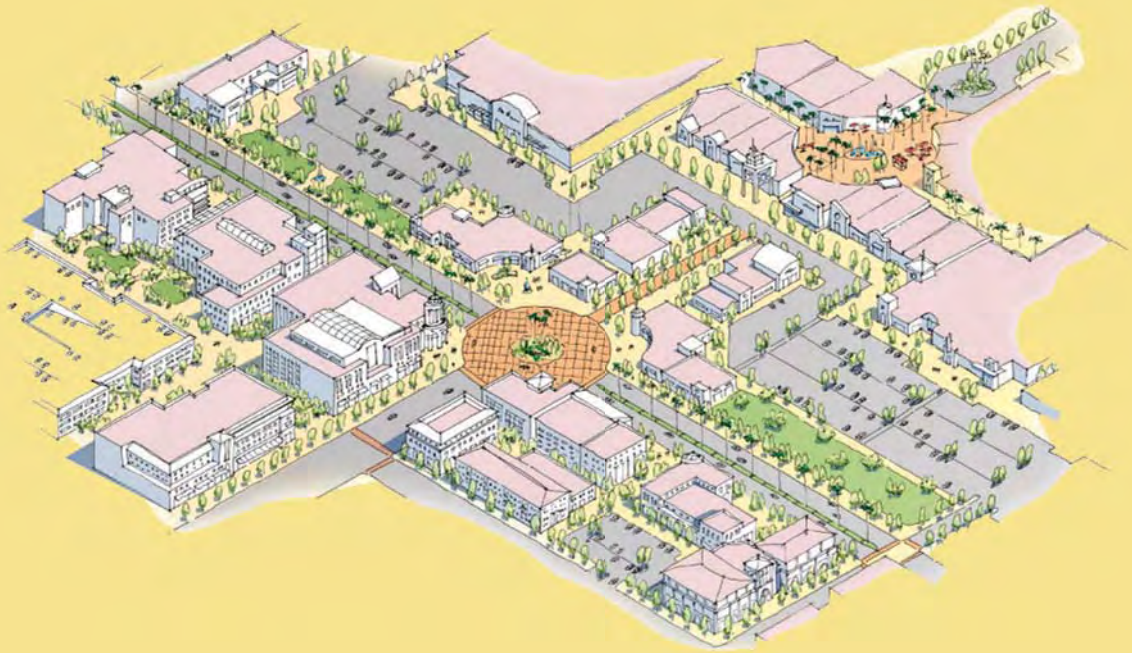
The City provided the Urban Core Specific Plan Newsletter as an update for residents **Fg. 2.13**

III. Vision

A. *Vision for the Urban Core* III-1

B. *Ten Key Principles* III-4

C. *Vision Areas* III-5



III. Vision

A. Vision for the Urban Core

The Specific Plan provides framework for enhancement to the economic, social, and community fabric of Chula Vista's Urban Core. The Specific Plan will produce an economically enhanced Urban Core that is once again a thriving downtown and focus of the City. The vision for the Urban Core builds upon the vision for the City in the General Plan. The area will exhibit revitalized core uses linked by pedestrian and bicycle connections with easy access to goods and services and exhibiting quality design. The vision for the Urban Core seeks to make a great place to live, work, and play even better.

While much of the existing stable residential fabric of the Urban Core will be preserved, an increase in living and lifestyle choices for existing and future residents will be afforded. These residents will further add to local business revenues and create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly activity center throughout the day. The Specific Plan provides framework for additional mobility options by creating linkages between the Urban Core, the Bayfront, and east Chula Vista and encouraging increased pedestrian, bicycle, and transit activity. Improved services and amenities will make Chula Vista's Urban Core an attractive and focal hub of the City, as well as the South County region.

The Urban Core will be a successful environment for a variety of retail, recreational, and residential opportunities **Fg. 3.1**

The Urban Core Vision aims to create a uniquely identifiable Urban Core for Chula Vista that is an economically vibrant, pedestrian-oriented, and multi-purpose destination.

As part of the early foundational planning process, a vision for the urban core was framed using the broad policies and objectives outlined in the General Plan (2005).

Imagine a future for the Urban Core that is...

- *A **pedestrian-friendly** City Center with an integrated mix of land uses (retail, office, residential, entertainment and civic/cultural) woven together by attractive and cohesive street improvements and buildings.*
- *The **entertainment "hub"** of the City with movie theaters, a playhouse, restaurants with outdoor dining, adorned with broad sidewalks, plazas and green parks that feature music and artistic performances.*
- *A place where **new businesses** are eager to locate and are attracted by the improvements and the encouragement the City gives to investors, downtown merchants, and property owners.*
- *A place for **living** as well as **working**. New "loft" style apartments that will allow artisans and small businesses to get a start in the Village, while new office spaces and residences for a diverse age group will flourish above and behind ground floor shops.*
- *Supported by an expanded and **improved public transit system**, including a **new west side shuttle**, with frequent and conveniently located stops and including connections to the proposed transit centers, the Bayfront, and the existing regional trolley system.*
- *Enriched with new cultural, recreational, and civic facilities to support the mixed-use environment and reinforce the Urban Core as the **"heart of the City."***
- *A **harmonious blend** of old and new, where new development takes its design cues from the existing culture, character, and history of northwest Chula Vista.*

Imagine a future for the Urban Core that embraces Chula Vista's unique culture and celebrates its rich heritage. ***The Urban Core of the future is the Urban Core of the past, only better.***

The Urban Core should again be the heart of the City

Fg. 3.2

B. Ten Key Principles

Based on input from the community and Urban Core Specific Plan Advisory Committee, ten key principles were established. The future development of Chula Vista's Urban Core shall be guided by the following overarching ideas and goals that apply to all of the vision areas.

1. *Develop a vibrant, distinct urban atmosphere with a day to evening environment.*
2. *Build on and enhance Chula Vista's cultural and historic traditions and diversity.*
3. *Foster visible cultural and civic amenities, such as urban parks, outdoor dining opportunities and civic promenades.*
4. *Establish a hierarchy of building forms with greatest densities at key nodes.*
5. *Connect and integrate the Bayfront, East Chula Vista and individual focus areas within the urban core.*
6. *Create lively and pedestrian-friendly environments through a concentration of activities in a compact, mixed-use setting.*
7. *Transition new development to minimize impacts on existing residential neighborhoods.*
8. *Provide creative parking strategies, including parking districts, structures and reductions.*
9. *Define unique identities for focus areas through individualized streetscape design and public spaces.*
10. *Restore the historic street grid in order to maximize transportation choices and increase mobility and circulation opportunities for pedestrians, transit and automobiles.*

C. Vision Areas

As part of the visioning process, three distinct "vision areas" were identified. The Vision areas were not intended to cover the entire Specific Plan Subdistricts Area but rather capture the most significant areas that required further planning guidance beyond that provided in the General Plan Update. The three areas selected included the "Village", consisting of downtown Third Avenue and the surrounding area, the "Grand Boulevard", concentrating on the H Street Corridor, and the "Promenade", focusing on the rectangle between E Street and H Street and I-5 and Broadway. Though the Urban Core area needs to be unified and identifiable as the Urban Core of Chula Vista, the individual vision areas each have distinguishing characteristics. Each vision area is described below and a vision statement for that area is delineated.

1. The Village Vision Area

a. Description

The Village Vision Area is the heart of Chula Vista's traditional downtown. This area is generally bounded by Church Avenue and Fourth Avenue on the east and west and by E Street and G Street on the north and south. Third Avenue is the primary retail and office district and is anchored by transitional office and residential uses. The Civic Center, including City Hall and associated facilities, is located at Fourth Avenue and F Street and is in the process of being upgraded pursuant to the Civic Center Master Plan. Friendship Park, Memorial Park, and other potential park opportunities link the Village and provide quality urban amenities to nearby residents. This area exhibits much of the traditional community character and is home to many community facilities, such as the Civic Center, the Central Library, Police Station, and Friendship Park.

b. Vision Statement

The Village will be a lively destination with a small town feel. Restaurants, outdoor cafes, bookstores, art houses, theaters, and shops will flank the expanded sidewalks and tree-lined streetscape. This entertainment and retail destination serves all of Chula Vista by energizing the 3rd Avenue corridor and vicinity. The district also celebrates cultural arts and civic functions linked by an enhanced park system. In addition, the new residential housing opportunities will allow the area to resurge and thrive.

Third Avenue

Gateway Monument

Typical Paseo

The Village Visionary Sketches

Fg. 3.3

2. The Grand Boulevard Vision Area

a. Description

The Grand Boulevard Vision Area is the central axis of the Urban Core area. This vision area consists of H Street and the adjacent area from Third Avenue to Broadway. This area includes the Gateway office development, the South County Regional Courthouse Complex, Scripps Hospital and associated medical facilities, and the Chula Vista Center regional shopping mall, as well as a variety of other office and commercial activities.

b. Vision Statement

The H Street corridor is the primary business, commercial and transit backbone of the Urban Core. Buildings, plazas and parkways activate the street edge and deliver a bustling pedestrian environment. The Grand Boulevard is the most urban of the vision areas with medium rise buildings forming the backdrop to the double rows of trees, extended sidewalks, frequent transit stops, newspaper stands and kiosks. A unique streetscape character provides continuity among diverse elements such as the regional mall, hospital, and office developments.

Plaza along H Street

Third Avenue and H Street

Row Housing adjacent to Retail Center

The Grand Boulevard Visionary Sketches

Fig. 3.4

3. The Promenade Vision Area

a. Description

The Promenade Vision Area acts as an attractive entryway to the City of Chula Vista. Stretching parallel to the I-5 corridor and generally west of Broadway, from E Street to H Street, the area is currently a mix of auto-oriented retail commercial uses and low-rise multi-family housing and mobile home parks. Redevelopment of the area will provide a mix of aesthetically pleasing visitor serving and resident serving uses and create a desirable neighborhood atmosphere.

b. Vision Statement

A dynamic mix of regional transit centers, visitor serving uses and a retail complex surrounds an enhanced, medium-rise residential quarter. Circulation is improved by re-establishing the traditional street grid. A tree-lined, extended linear park offers both neighborhood and community serving amenities supported by mid-block paseos. The park transitions from an active community venue with a more formal landscape to recreational features such as tennis and basketball courts to passive greens. Anchoring the park, the retail plaza links the Bayfront to the regional mall. Ample public spaces provide for open air markets, mercados, cultural festivals, art exhibits and other community events.

Plaza at Promenade Terminus

Park Atmosphere

Typical Paseo

The Promenade Visionary Sketches

Fg. 3.5

IV. Existing Conditions

A. *Introduction* IV-1

B. *Historic Resources* IV-2

C. *Land Use, General Plan, and Zoning* IV-12

D. *Circulation and Mobility* IV-17

E. *Economic Conditions* IV-19

IV. Existing Conditions

A. Introduction

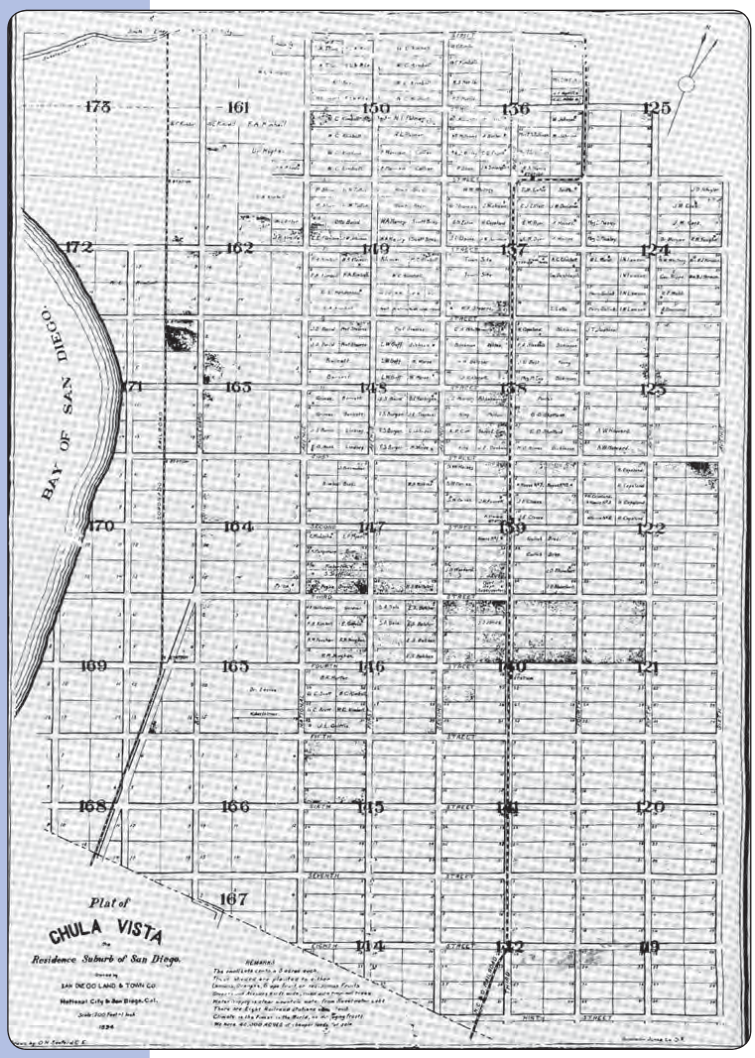
The purpose of this chapter is to describe the built environment within the Specific Plan area. A brief historical overview of the Urban Core is provided as well as significant historical structures and features in the area. The chapter also details the existing conditions within the plan area in terms of land use and zoning, circulation and mobility, and economic conditions.

B. Historic Resources

1. The Early Years Before Incorporation

The Otay Valley has been occupied by Native American cultures for more than 9,000 years. The early Native American inhabitants established settlements, hunted game, and utilized the abundant resources along the river valley. The first western settlers were Spanish missionaries sent by the King of Spain to establish missions along the coast of California. In 1795, the area known today as Chula Vista became part of a land grant from the King of Spain; the area was known as Rancho del Rey or the King's Ranch.

With Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821, Rancho del Rey became part of the new Mexican nation and was renamed Rancho de la Nacion, National Ranch. In 1845, National Ranch was granted to John Forster, son-in-law of the Mexican governor Pico. After the Mexican-American War and the subsequent admission of California to the United States, the US confirmed ownership and operation of the ranch by John Forster.



1894 Plat Map of the Chula Vista area **Fg. 4.1**

A change of ownership and several significant transportation improvements, such as the addition of several major rail lines, occurred throughout the mid and late 1800's. By 1890 a railroad had been built from San Diego, through Chula Vista, and ending in San Ysidro. In the late 1800's, San Diego Land and Town Company developed the 5,000-acre Chula Vista tract, as a product of the professional town planner, C.W. Dickinson. Lots were originally laid out in 5-acre parcels with 80-foot wide streets. Many of the new owners began citrus orchards on their acreage, particularly lemon orchards, leading to early Chula Vista claims of the "Lemon Capital of the World."

Lot purchasers were expected to build a modern house within six months; the house was subject to architectural approval and had a required setback of 125 feet. Land sales in Chula Vista began in 1887 and proved to be very popular. Most early houses were of a traditional Victorian style. Architecturally, Craftsman folk cottages and bungalows followed the Victorian style and an eventual transition was made to a more Mission Revival and Spanish Mediterranean architecture. Lot sizes also decreased over the years, to an average one-acre and half-acre lots, with continued generous setbacks.

Around this time, the intersection of Third Avenue and F Street was considered to be the center of town. In 1907, the National City and Otay Railroad line was converted to an electric streetcar line. The streetcar line ran north to south along Third Avenue for several years and was eventually replaced by a landscaped median.

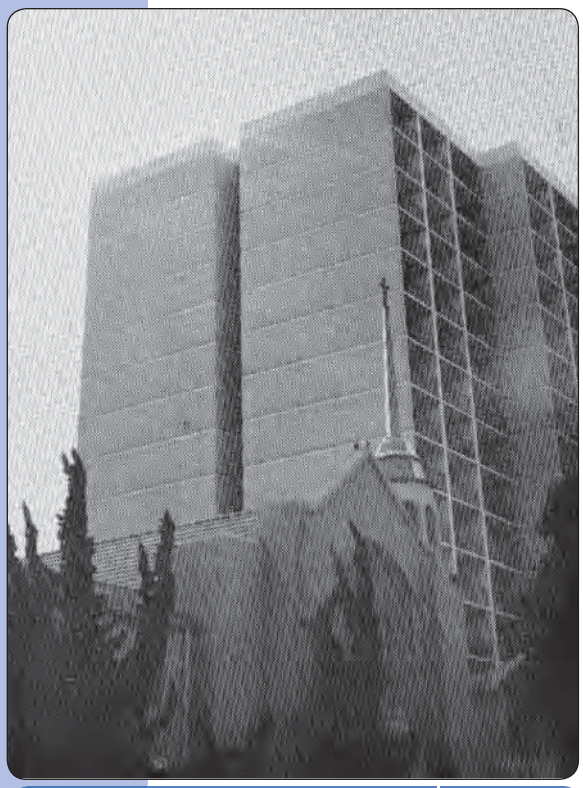
2. The City of Chula Vista is Formed

In 1911, the City of Chula Vista was officially incorporated with a population of 550. As a top priority, in 1913 the City installed 26 streetlights and paved several streets.

Looking south on F Street east of Third Avenue in 1911. The first church and school are to the right. **Fig. 4.2**

Over the next quarter century, the World Wars proved to have a significant impact on Chula Vista's future. The City's economic system began to shift from agriculture to manufacturing and Chula Vista expanded significantly during World War II due to booming wartime production in local industries. The largest of these companies was the Rohr Aircraft Corporation, a major military supplier during WWII that employed 9,000 at the height of production. In addition, the high concentration of military bases in the

Looking south at intersection of Third Avenue and F Street in 1936 **Fig. 4.3**



The 16-story Chula Vista Community Tower was the City's first high-rise

Fg. 4.4

area led to an increase in population as many veterans decided to remain in the area after the end of the war. These major changes caused the population of Chula Vista to triple in the time period from 1940 to 1950.

Major projects from the later twentieth century included the 1962 development of the Chula Vista Shopping Center on Broadway between H Street and I Street and the 1972 construction of the first high-rise building, the 16-story Chula Vista Community Congregation Tower on F Street. Throughout the century, the City of Chula Vista experienced continued annexation and expansion to the east, north, and south and developed into one of the largest communities in the San Diego region. However, in the midst of the expanding community, the central core experienced problems with the changing economic situation and began to develop a blighted atmosphere. In the 1970's, several City redevelopment projects, made the first steps toward revitalization of the declining Urban Core.

All great cities evolve over time but only the best cities recognize, build on and enhance their most valued traditions and resources. Beginning with the early 1900's and the City's incorporation, the City of Chula Vista progressed through a series of "lifecycles", each with it's own unique contribution to the City's history. The community's lifecycle during the early 1900's revolved around its agricultural heyday, the mid 1900's are remembered as the "Rohr" ing 50's and the changes of the latter 1900's focused on an expanding the City with annexing new lands and rapidly developing to the east. The City is now approaching its 100th anniversary and, with the new visions established for the urban core, is poised to write the next chapter in its history.

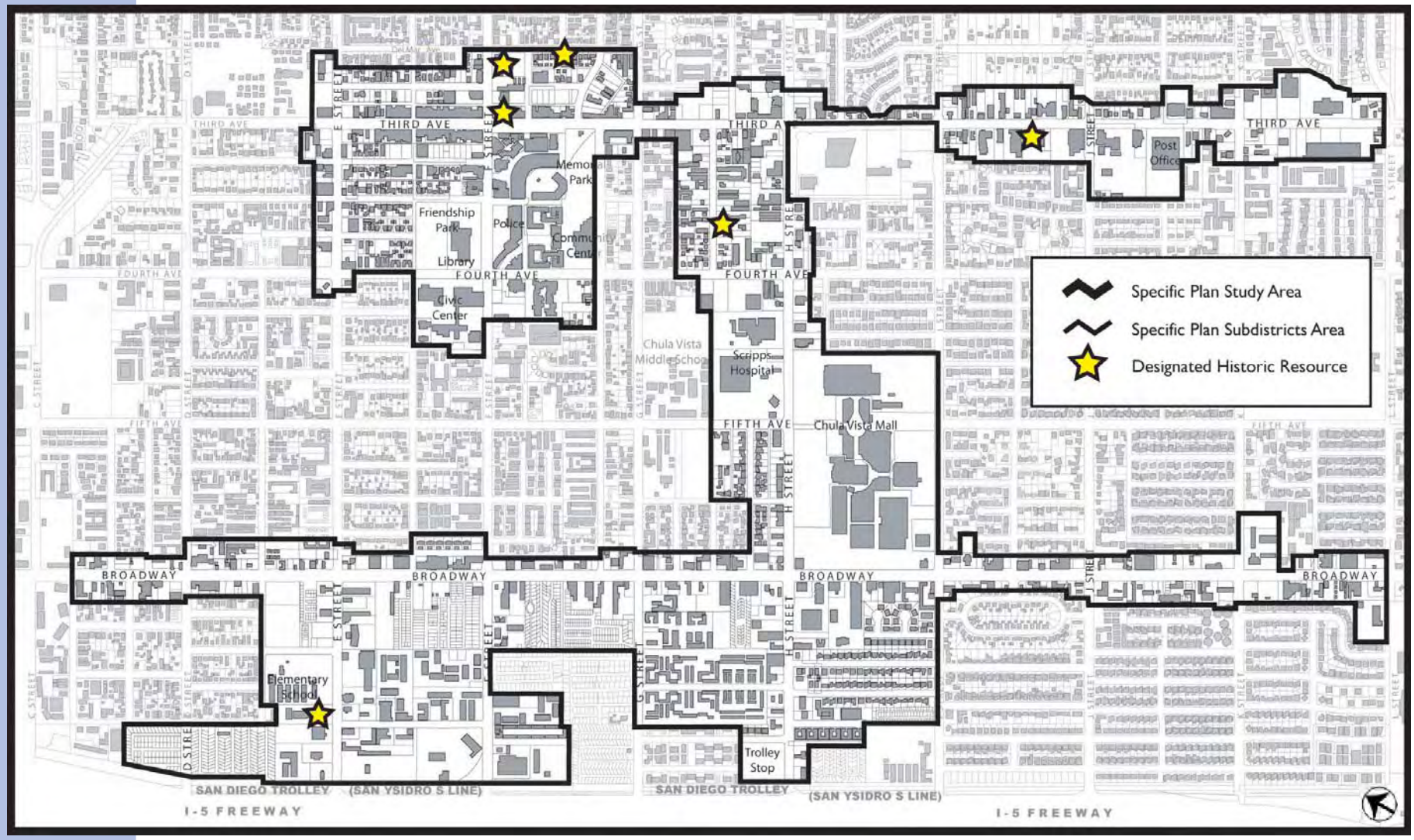
At the start of the current century, citizens of Chula Vista have high hopes for the future of their City. With over 200,000 residents and over 50 square miles of land, Chula Vista is now the second largest city in San Diego County. Citizens are eager for the City to reflect and reestablish its prominence and aesthetic quality, especially in the traditional Urban Core.

3. Historic Sites in the Study Area

In 1985, the City of Chula Vista sponsored a local historic resources inventory. The inventory was limited to the area bounded by Trousdale Drive to the north, L Street to the south, Interstate 5 to the west, and Hilltop Drive on the east. As a result, approximately 258 homes were included on the survey list with 42 of the homes being included on the Chula Vista List of Historic Sites. There are 68 sites currently designated as historic by the City of Chula Vista. These 68 structures have been determined by the City Council to meet the City's historic criteria.

Several City designated historic sites and structures are located within the Specific Plan area and provide context and historical reference for the Specific Plan's architectural and cultural character. (See Figure 4.5 Historic Resources Map.)

The Chula Vista Heritage Museum maintains information on the historical areas and structures in Chula Vista and is an excellent source for further information on historic properties. The Heritage Museum's "Take a Walk of History, Tour Historic Sites in Chula Vista" brochure provides detailed information on many of these non-designated sites. The following describes the designated historic sites and their features:



Historic Resources Map

Fig. 4.5

a. 699 E Street – Former Site of Greg Rogers House

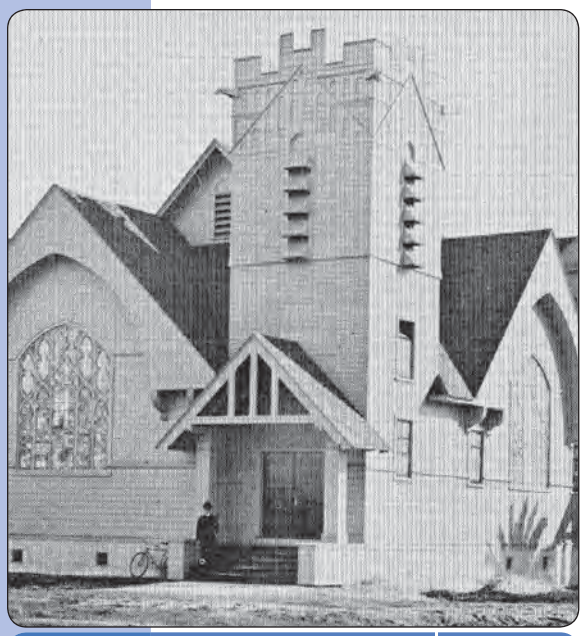
The Greg Rogers House, also known as "Bay Breeze" was built in 1910 at 699 E Street. The home was constructed by Greg Rogers, one of the founders of the City of Chula Vista and also founded the City's first bank. The 5,700 square foot Craftsman style house had multiple bathrooms and several fireplaces. In 1985, the home was threatened with demolition in its original location and was moved from 699 E Street. The home was eventually relocated to 616 Second Avenue. At this time, the site where the home once stood remains a City designated historical site.

Sketch of Bay Breeze, the Greg Rogers House — Fig. 4.6

b. 666 Third Avenue – Our House/Orchard House

"Our House", a large home in the Queen Anne style, once stood at 666 Third Avenue; however, the structure was destroyed by fire. At this time, the site where the home once stood remains a City designated historical site.

Photo of "Our House" before it was destroyed by fire — Fig. 4.7



Original First Congregational Church building constructed in 1911 | Fig. 4.8

New First Congregational Church building constructed in 1956 | Fig. 4.9

301-305 Third Avenue is known as the Melville Block | Fig. 4.10

c. 276 F Street – First Congregational Church

The First Congregational Church was the first church opened in Chula Vista. The original sanctuary for the church was constructed in 1894 at 276 F Street. Community members raised money to fund the sanctuary construction and the Land and Town Company donated the land. The original structure was torn down in 1951 and a new sanctuary was constructed in its place; the site of the former sanctuary is a City designated historical site.

d. 301-305 Third Avenue – Melville Block

The Melville Block was constructed by Edward Melville, one of Chula Vista's first businessmen. The Melville Block consists of a 1911 two-story building in the Eclectic Commercial style architecture. The Chula Vista State Bank originally occupied the corner spaces, followed by the Chula Vista Dry Goods Company. The first story of the building has been significantly altered from its original state and many of the original ornamental features have been removed, but overall the building retains its historical value. The structure was recently noted in a guide to San Diego Architecture published by the American Institute of Architects.

e. *374 Roosevelt Street – Mark Skinner House*

Constructed in 1924 by Mark Skinner, a well-known local businessman, this house is a unique variation on the Bungalow style popular in the early part of the twentieth century. The original siding on the house has been replaced but the original design theme remains.

The Mark Skinner house at 374 Roosevelt Street **Fg. 4.11**

f. *382/384 Del Mar Avenue – The First Women's Clubhouse*

The Women's Club was the first place in the City of Chula Vista for women active in civic affairs to meet and gather. The Club was involved in many community activities, including fund-raising for various events. The Club first convened at 382/384 Del Mar Avenue in the early 1900's and met at this site on Del Mar Avenue for many years until the Club eventually outgrew the site and relocated to a larger space at 357 G Street. The building on Del Mar Avenue retains its historical significance as the Women's Club's first meeting site.

The First Women's Club in Chula Vista met here on Del Mar Avenue **Fg. 4.12**

4. Other Sites of Historic Interest

The following sections document or describe sites that fall within the Specific Plan Subdistrict Area that are other sites of historical interest and sites that were identified as part of the Cultural Resources Report for the Evaluation of the Historical and Architectural Significance of 50 Properties within the Chula Vista Urban Core.

In addition to the six designated historic sites, the Urban Core Specific Plan Area includes other sites of historical interest. These sites include: The El Primero Hotel, The Memorial Bowl (A Works Projects Administration project), The Charles Smith Building, The People's State Bank, Leader Department Store, and Security Pacific Bank. These sites/structures, in addition to others, all contribute to the historic fabric of the Specific Plan area. Important historical sites such as these provide the context of the image, character, and history of Chula Vista's urban core that is to inspire and shape future development within the Specific Plan area.

A photographic essay has been included in Chapter VII - Development Design Guidelines to provide architects and designers with important visual cues that can be drawn from existing development and incorporated into new development. Used appropriately, new development can respond to Chula Vista's unique architectural heritage and promote the most positive aspects of existing development.

5. Sites Evaluated for Potential Eligibility as Historic Architectural Sites

In 2005, the City evaluated 50 properties within the Specific Plan Subdistrict Area for historic evaluation and determination of eligibility for listing. This evaluation is titled Cultural Resources Report for the Evaluation of the Historical and Architectural Significance of 50 Properties within the Chula Vista Urban Core.

This focused survey augments the 1985 inventory and is not intended to be representative of a comprehensive survey of the Specific Plan Subdistrict Area. The area around Third Avenue and F Street is considered to be the historic core of the City and includes important elements of the early residential and business activities of the City. Therefore this area within the Specific Plan Village District was the focus area for historic evaluation.

The structures were selected based on the periods of significance and include mostly structures within the Village District along Third Avenue, the City's traditional downtown, and adjacent side streets. The sites are also all located within adopted redevelopment areas and thus have an increased potential to redevelop over the short to mid term. Five sites were identified as potentially

eligible. For a complete listing of properties inventoried, please see the Specific Plan Program EIR NO. 06-01, Appendix B.

The potential for the existence of other significant historic properties within the Specific Plan Subdistrict Area is possible given the number of older commercial structures and homes throughout the Specific Plan Subdistrict Area. These could be identified as part of a more comprehensive survey conducted in the future.

In addition, the City is considering developing a Historic Preservation Ordinance and establishing design standards and other relevant requirements for historic properties. Currently, the City of Chula Vista historic preservation program is limited to voluntary historic designation and voluntary participation in the Mills Act. Under the Mills Act, a property owner enters into a contract that gives City oversight on matters of rehabilitation and renovation of the site in exchange for a reduction in property taxes. Conducting a current inventory and establishing an historic designation process, and seeking Certified Local Government designation are top historic preservation priorities for the City.

6. How Historic Information Will Be Used

The inventory of existing historical resources lends important reference for new development in the Specific Plan area. While the plan does not require strict application of traditional historic architectural styles, the historic influences, nonetheless, should be honored and retained where possible. Land use and development recommendations within the plan area will use and refer to the 1985 Historic Resources inventory. In addition, the Urban Core Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) provides an assessment of limited additional properties within the Specific Plan area that may qualify as historic and establishes mitigation measures to be considered in the event of redevelopment. See EIR NO. 06-01 for specific sites. Other sites that may be identified as part of other historic surveys should also be considered.

Consideration of important historical features is built into the planning process and is an important facet of land use planning and urban design throughout the plan area. The design guidelines encourage the use of building elements and/or features typically found on historical structures. The development standards emulate the form, massing, and relationship of building to sidewalk of these historical structures.

The plan is subdivided into various planning districts, each with a special set of planning and design directions. The degree to which historic structures influence the design direction within these districts may vary; however, protection of existing noteworthy structures and respect for the City's heritage is a theme that will guide new development.

C. Land Use, General Plan, and Zoning

1. General Plan

The General Plan (2005) divides land uses into six broad categories: Residential; Commercial; Mixed Use; Industrial; Open Space, Parks, and Public/Quasi-Public; and Special Plan Areas. Of these categories, the Specific Plan area encompasses residential, commercial, mixed use, and open space, parks, and public/quasi-public uses (see Figure 4.13). These designations are further broken down into subcategories, based on density and intensity of the use. For General Plan purposes, densities apply to residential uses and are measured in terms of dwelling units per gross acre (du/ac). Intensity applies to commercial, mixed use, and industrial uses and is measured by Floor Area Ratio (FAR). On the whole, the General Plan provides for an increase in density and intensity for most areas of the Specific Plan. As the population of the City continues to expand, increasing the intensity of uses provides an opportunity for more efficient use of land in the Urban Core and will create a more urban, rather than suburban, context.

One of the most significant changes related to land use designations for the General Plan is the addition of the new Mixed Use category. The combination of commercial and residential activities is expected to provide many benefits, including better utilization of scarce land resources and improved accessibility to public amenities.

Each General Plan land use designation is related to specific zoning districts, which are defined by the zoning ordinance. As an implementing action of the General Plan (2005), several new zoning categories will be created to be consistent with new General Plan standards. The Specific Plan will provide new zoning regulations for sub-district areas within the Specific Plan area. (See Chapter VI - Land Use and Development Standards and Figure 5.1 Specific Plan Key Map.)

2. Zoning

The majority of the Specific Plan Subdistrict Area is currently designated for some form of commercial uses, though the outer edges of the area permit broader uses. Zoning districts within the Urban Core include: Central Business, Central Commercial, Commercial Thoroughfare, Visitor Commercial, Administrative and Professional Office, Limited Industrial, Public/Quasi-Public, One- and Two-Family Residence, Apartment Residential, and Exclusive Mobilehome Park. (See Figure 4.13 and 4.14.)

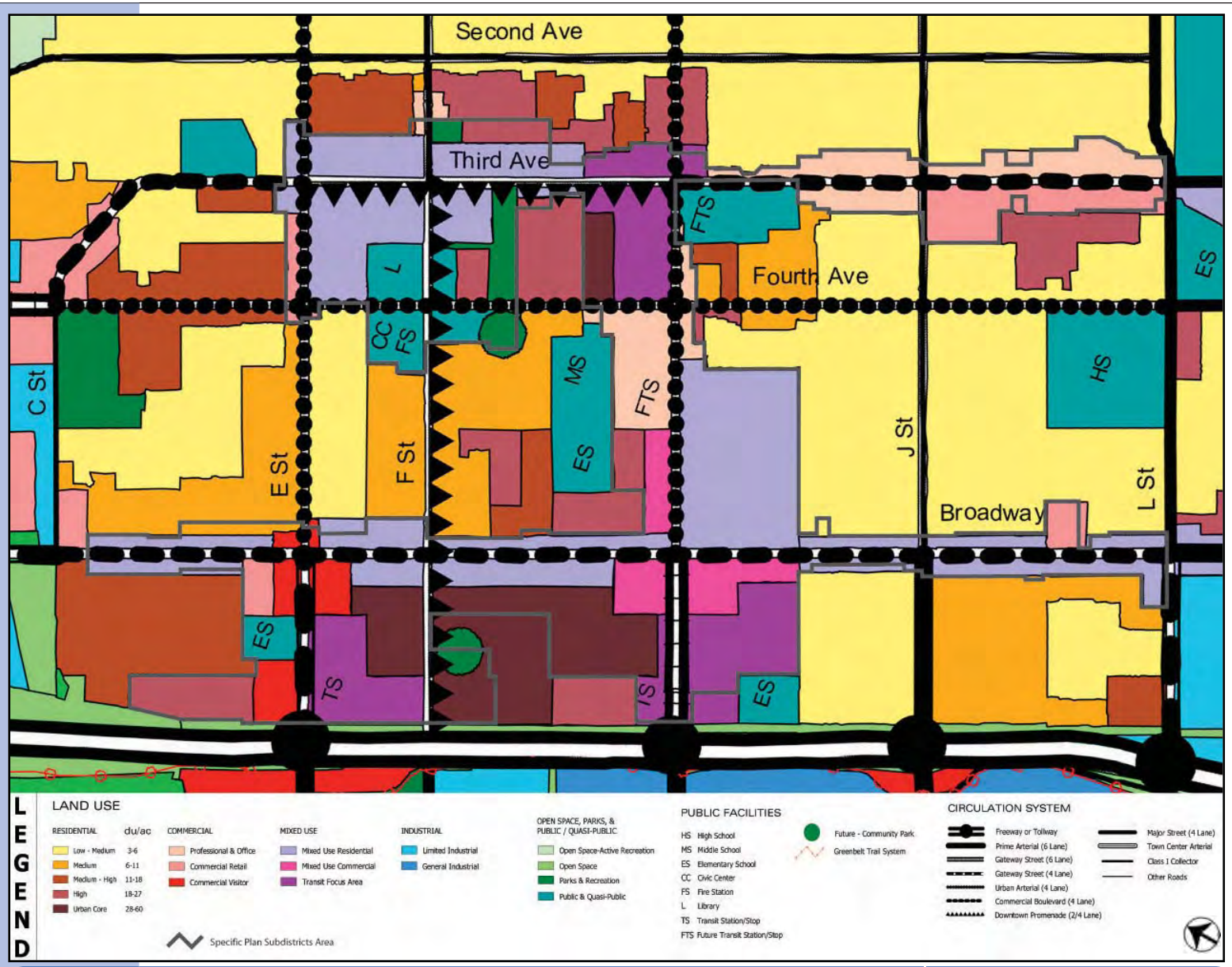
The existing zoning ordinance includes modifying districts have been attached to several of the zones within the Specific Plan area. These existing modifying districts impose special regulations in addition to those otherwise applicable to the zone. The modifying districts appearing within the Specific Plan area are: Design Control and Precise Plan. Property within the Design Control modifying district requires site plan and architectural approval of the City. The Precise Plan modifying district allows for diversification in structures, land uses, density, and landscaping. A precise plan for the area must gain City approval.

The traditional downtown along Third Avenue and the area of the H Street corridor consist mainly of Central Business, Central Commercial, and Administrative and Professional Office uses. These districts are primarily composed of general retail sales and restaurant uses that serve the city as a whole and/or the surrounding community, as well as medical, dental, executive, financial and other offices. Residential mixed-use development may be permitted with a conditional use permit. The center of the H Street corridor is marked by the retail uses of the Chula Vista Mall as a regional shopping destination.

The Broadway corridor is almost exclusively a Commercial Thoroughfare zone. The Commercial Thoroughfare zone allows the same types of retail sales as the other districts but also permits car dealerships, hotel uses, and other commercial recreational facilities. Less intensive multi-family residential, and occasionally industrial, uses extend out from these three core areas to the edges of the Specific Plan boundaries.

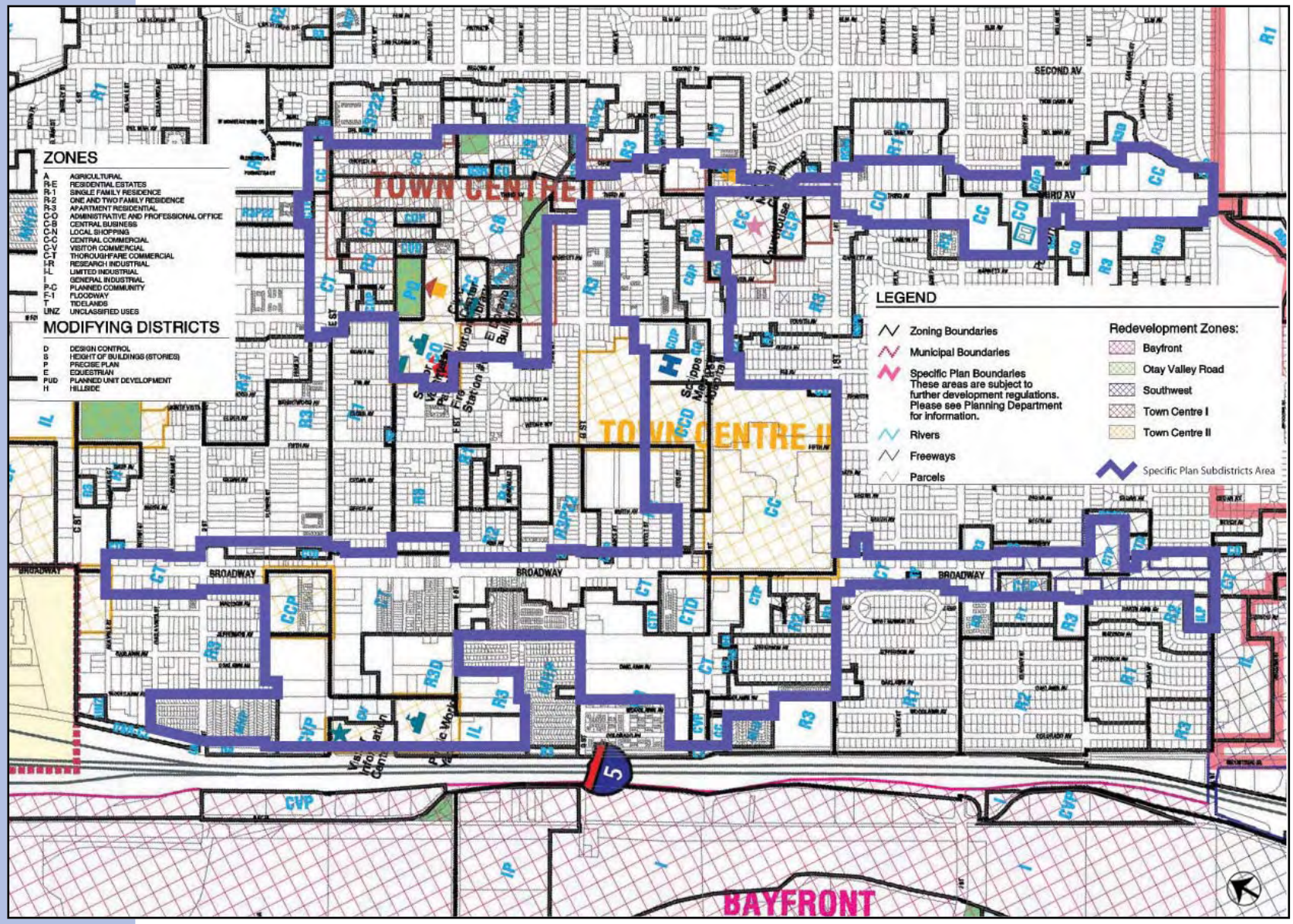
The Specific Plan subdistricts border established residential neighborhoods where measures are warranted to minimize impacts from more intensive commercial activities and development.

The majority of Public/Quasi-Public uses are concentrated in the traditional downtown area of Chula Vista, between Third and Fourth Avenues and E and G Streets. The Chula Vista Civic Center is comprised of a number of civic facilities, including the police headquarters, the library's main branch, administration offices, City Council chambers, a public services building, and Fire Station No. 1. The Civic Center is currently undergoing an extensive expansion to accommodate the long term needs and growth of the City. In addition to civic facilities, the Civic Center and downtown are surrounded by a series of parks and community centers. These public spaces include Will T. Hyde/Friendship Park, Memorial Park, Parkway Gymnasium and Pool, Norman Park and Community Senior Center, and Eucalyptus Park.



Existing City of Chula Vista General Plan Land Use Map (Source: City of Chula Vista)

Fg. 4.13



Existing City of Chula Vista Zoning Map (Source: City of Chula Vista)

Fg. 4.14

3. Land Use Opportunities and Constraints

A primary objective of the Specific Plan is to focus pedestrian-oriented retail and entertainment uses in the downtown core and minimize the amount of auto-oriented uses. The Specific Plan will also allow residential and office uses to mix above retail shops, forming a traditional downtown environment where living, working, shopping, and entertainment all coexist together.

The H Street corridor will have a continued focus on commercial uses, though revitalization of the regional mall area into a more pedestrian-friendly environment is a major goal.

The Broadway corridor will be reinforced as the main visitor-serving area of Chula Vista and new development will support this focus. The corridor includes a substantial number of culturally diverse restaurants, and with proper marketing, this cluster could lend itself to the formation of a successful restaurant row. Major transit centers are located in this area and will facilitate transportation throughout the Urban Core. A redeveloped residential neighborhood, which will provide expanded housing opportunities as well as a variety of recreational opportunities, will augment the aesthetic quality of the Broadway district.

When working toward achieving the Specific Plan vision, several issues have the potential to create challenges for the process. The Specific Plan subdistricts area contain multiple parcels under many different ownerships. Residential development within the Urban Core has occurred over an extended period of time and there are varying ages of the existing housing stock. In terms of commercial activity, there is a current lack of cohesiveness among the commercial corridors within the area. The Urban Core would also benefit from the addition of supporting neighborhood-serving commercial businesses.

The traditional street grid pattern offers a variety of connectivity and accessibility opportunities; however, the traditional grid is interrupted in several places within the Urban Core, limiting current connectivity options. In addition, the Urban Core is currently very automobile-oriented and a lack of pedestrian, bicycle and transit corridors exists. Implementing improvements to these areas will be a focus of the Specific Plan.

D. Circulation and Mobility

Circulation in the Urban Core is primarily provided through the traditional street grid pattern. H Street, an east-west urban arterial, is the central connector for the Urban Core, supporting important retail commercial activities for the region. Broadway runs north-south and provides a more auto-oriented environment, with a focus on visitor-serving commercial. In contrast, Third Avenue is the heart of the traditional downtown core of Chula Vista and offers a pedestrian-friendly, intimate retail/office environment. Other significant roadways include E Street and F Street. Appendix B provides a complete Traffic Impact Analysis for the Specific Plan.

Though not within the Specific Plan area, Interstate 5 and the San Ysidro Blue Line of the San Diego Trolley System form the western border of the Specific Plan area, thus developing a major connection between the Urban Core and the surrounding region and providing extended transportation opportunities. The City is currently served by a variety of mass transit options, including rail, trolley, and bus services.

In general, the street network within the Urban Core of Chula Vista is laid out in a grid system. Roadways running east-west are usually "Streets" and roadways flowing north-south are usually "Avenues". However, over time, the traditional street grid has been broken. Many roads have been interrupted, especially in the extreme northwestern corner of the Specific Plan area, between the I-5 Freeway and Broadway. The truncated streets create a connectivity problem within neighborhoods. The Specific Plan endeavors to reintroduce the traditional grid, thus diffusing traffic along multiple routes and providing a variety of opportunities for reaching one's destination.

Another challenge is to improve mobility by clarifying the system of street hierarchy. Though some streets are more significant than others in terms of community services provided, these streets are not differentiated from other roadways in terms of width, number of lanes, or other recognizable features. For example, as the address of a major regional retail center, H Street should be more dominant than some of the surrounding streets that provide access to other neighborhood servicing commercial uses and residences.

The General Plan and Specific Plan both focus on increasing the opportunities for multiple travel modes in this area. The synchronicity of the transit systems is also an important topic. Transit stops for different modes of transit should be located close to one another to provide easy access to changes in mode of travel. The scheduling of transit vehicles, both within a service and amongst services, should be coordinated to allow easy transfers between transit routes and different types of transit services. The Specific Plan addresses these issues and suggests ways to calm the behavior of traffic within the Urban Core.

Other key constraints to mobility within the Urban Core include an environment that is generally unfriendly to pedestrians and cyclists, as well as the lack of links from the Urban Core to other portions of the City, such as the Bayfront area or east Chula Vista.

E. Economic Conditions

The following is a summary of economic conditions that will influence the type and quantity of new and redevelopment activity in the Specific Plan area. Appendix C provides a complete Market Analysis for the Specific Plan.

1. Existing Conditions and Projected Trends

a. Regional

The City of Chula Vista is located in a strong and relatively stable regional economic environment. The City's location within South San Diego County, between the two growing economic hubs of San Diego and Tijuana, is a prime location for capitalizing on regional growth. Regional competition continues to thrive in this market. The diverse regional economy is powered by manufacturing, the military, tourism, business and technology services, and trade.

The defense portion of the City's trade has declined in recent decades due to successful efforts in international relations as well as national economic trends. However, recent international events have led to somewhat of a resurgence in this particular industry. Currently, in spite of its location, Chula Vista is not very competitive in the regional tourism market and tourism is only a minor player in the local economy. Bayfront development may provide a key for regional attraction to Chula Vista. Despite the recent challenges to these sectors, defense, tourism, and the City's proximity to Mexico will continue to be significant factors in the region's economy.

Currently, there is a regional shortage of affordable market rate housing; as long as San Diego County continues to rank as one of the highest priced housing markets in the country, affordable housing will continue to be an issue for the area.

b. Urban Core

Though the Urban Core exists in a relatively stable economic environment, revitalization is essential to the long-term future of the area. Western Chula Vista, which includes the Urban Core, is relatively built out compared to eastern Chula Vista, presenting both opportunities and challenges for development. Existing SANDAG forecasts predict that the Urban Core may see a declining portion of sub-regional growth over the next 25 years. However, western Chula Vista's share of jobs will continue to remain strong relative to other portions of the City. New competition may elicit a decline in the Urban Core's market share of regional sales, but as the market population grows, local sales are also expected to expand.

In comparison to eastern Chula Vista, the Urban Core overall receives lower rents but has higher land prices, which makes it difficult for new projects to achieve financial feasibility. Rents in the Urban Core, for retail, residential, and office uses, are lower than average, due mainly to the older building stock. Of these, the retail and residential sectors appear to be faring best overall. Rising prices and low vacancy rates are positive indicators for these sectors, despite the low rental rates. Trends show that the Urban Core could absorb at least 3,600 new housing units over the next 25 years while many opportunities exist for the retail sector. The office sector is slightly worse off, with both low occupancy rates and low rental rates. However, recent success in new office development indicates that there is a potential latent demand for higher quality office space in the Urban Core.

2. Economic Strategies

Opportunities for residential development appear to be a major basis for future development in the Urban Core. The shortage of affordable housing stock presents an immediate need and opportunity both within the Urban Core and the region as a whole.

Retail development is also key to the revitalization of the Urban Core. The traditional role of the Urban Core must adjust to growing competition from surrounding areas, including eastern Chula Vista, downtown San Diego, and border communities. The Urban Core should develop a strategy to recapture sales lost to these surrounding locations.

A strategy with high potential for success is that of focusing on a niche market. The Urban Core could greatly increase its retail trade by developing a unique niche environment, focused on culture, music, and food, that would attract its own visitors to the region. Tourism opportunities could increase from this development and the City may expand its regional entertainment value from its current state.

Another viable opportunity is that of leveraging the Mexican market. The Urban Core has potential to increase the quantity of cross-border shoppers for a variety of retail products, services, and entertainment needs.

3. SWOT Analysis

Development prospects within the Urban Core have many competitive strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) to capitalize upon or avoid and prepare against. SWOT analysis is a tool used to identify each of these potential market and economic issues early in the planning and development process to help concentrate efforts and avoid diluted or scattered development. Ultimately, the goal of any SWOT analysis is to focus efforts towards achieving early success and generate the momentum necessary to achieve the long-term vision. The following is an examination of the Urban Core's market and economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

a. Strengths

- *Location between San Diego and Tijuana*
- *Strong and established retail market*
- *Proximity to the Bay*
- *Established employment, retail, and residential center with high occupancy*
- *Public investment in infrastructure*
- *Quality entry-level and mid-market rate ownership housing*
- *Transit linkages*
- *Traditional downtown district*
- *Good regional access*

b. Weaknesses

- *Relatively lower incomes*
- *Practically nonexistent tourism industry*
- *Low hotel room costs and hotel occupancy rates*
- *Aging building stock*
- *Relatively lower rents*
- *Public facility deficiencies*
- *Relatively neutral regional market image*
- *Weak linkage with the Bayfront*

c. Opportunities

- *Affordable development relative to downtown San Diego*
- *Ability to capture a larger share of housing demand than SANDAG forecasts*
- *An alternative urban lifestyle from downtown San Diego*
- *Coastal view development and links to the Bayfront*
- *Pedestrian and transit-oriented development*
- *Intercept Mexican market consumers*
- *Become South County's office employment, retail, and entertainment center*
- *Housing for many incomes, preferences, and cultures*

d. Threats

- *Competition from other mixed-use urban nodes in the region*
- *Competition from Bayfront development if not linked with core*
- *Competition from the Eastern Urban Center if not adequately distinguished*
- *Cost and complexity of land assembly and infill development*
- *Infrastructure and public facility constraints*
- *Not overcoming "second tier" reputation in regional market*
- *Exposure to Mexican currency fluctuations*