



The City of Palm Springs

Interim Downtown Urban Design Plan

Adopted
July 20, 2005



DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

The City of Palm Springs would like to thank the following people for their contributions to the development of the Downtown Urban Design Plan prepared by The Planning Center:

City Council:

Chris Mills
Steve Pougnet

Planning Commission:

Marshall Roath
Leo Cohen

Design Community:

Jim Cioffi, Architectural Advisory Committee Chairman
Don Wexler, Retired Architect

Mainstreet:

Larry Pitts, Property Owner
Bill Matthews, Downtown Business Manager

Historic Tennis Club:

Bill Davis

Palm Springs Economic Development Corporation:

Steve Nichols, Property Owner

Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (ACBCI):

Todd Hooks, Director of Economic Development

Downtown Merchants Association:

Joy Meredith, Business Owner

Uptown:

Tony Larcombe, Business Owner

Historic Site Preservation Board:

Bill Scott

Palm Springs Art Museum:

Dr. Janice Lyle, Executive Director

Staff:

Jerry Ogburn, Downtown Development Director
John Raymond, Director of Community and Economic Development
Jing Yeo, General Plan Update Project Manager

Vision

A dynamic, vital, and economically successful downtown that retains the historic and cultural character of Palm Springs and yet meets the changing needs of residents and visitors alike.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION & PUBLIC OUTREACH	I
1. Introduction & Workshops	2
2. Visioning Map	5
3. Assets & Opportunities	8
4. Ideas & Strategies.....	12
DESIGN PRINCIPLES	15
1. Urban Design Concept	16
2. Streets & Circulation	20
3. Parking	26
4. Public Spaces & Gathering Places	30
5. Land Use & Development / Districts	34
6. Building Height, Orientation, Massing, & Design	36
7. Landscaping	44
8. Signage, Lighting, & Street Furniture	52

Introduction & Public Outreach



introduction & workshops

Background

Currently, a number of new, large scale development projects are proposed for downtown Palm Springs. These proposed projects, in varying stages of completion, are important to the downtown because of their location along Palm Canyon Drive and their large size. If completed, these projects are likely to dramatically affect the life, character, and vitality of downtown. They have the potential to infuse downtown Palm Springs with much needed economic and social energy while encouraging future development of other under-utilized sites. However, to ensure continuity between these new and future projects and the existing built environment, a set of comprehensive downtown design guidelines is needed. Thus, to have the greatest possible impact on the future development of downtown, the downtown design element of the General Plan update was fast-tracked and this workbook produced to serve as design guidelines for future downtown development prior to the adoption of the complete General Plan document.

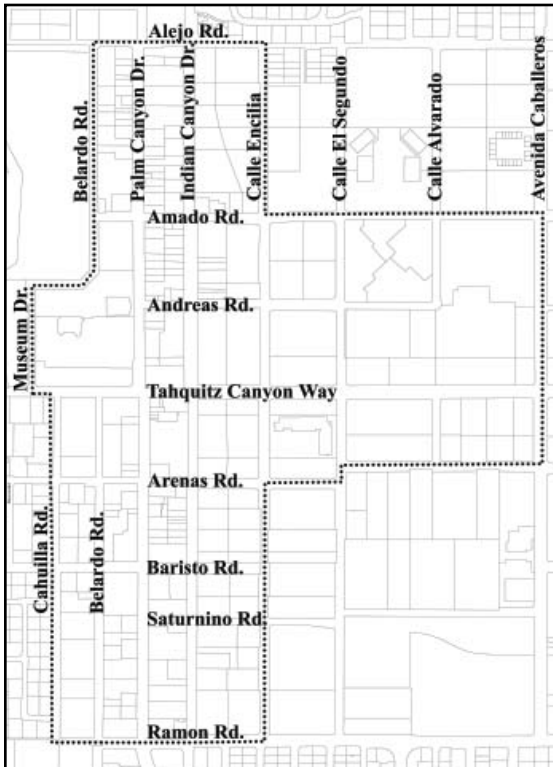
History

Historically known as the desert playground of the rich and famous, Palm Springs has a long and vibrant past. Originally a small railroad town, Palm Springs became world renown in the 1920s and 1930s when Hollywood stars began flocking to the desert to enjoy the warm, sunny climate. The stars brought with them the glamour and excitement of Hollywood, creating an unparalleled cultural oasis in the Coachella Valley.

Time has brought about change in Palm Springs. Today it is no longer just a seasonal tourist destination, but also the home of many year-round residents. Some of the glitter of movie stars has worn off and many of the large retail stores that were so prominent in earlier times have moved on. However, Palm Springs is still recognized worldwide as a destination resort. It has many advantages that perpetuate the reputation of the city including the international airport, the village center, the convention center, numerous first class hotels, the Desert Museum, and a wonderful physical setting and climate. But if Palm Springs is going to maintain its preeminence, it must take steps to energize the community and ensure an ongoing vitality. This revitalization must start in the downtown because it is the heart of the city.

Preparation Process & Workshops

These interim guidelines were prepared to address the complex issue of downtown development. Drawn from input from local stakeholders at the **Downtown Ideas and Directions Workshop** and the **Downtown Urban Design Workshop** held on February 24, 2005, these design principles are intended to apply to downtown development.



The Study Area.

The input of local stakeholders was an essential part of developing the design guidelines. On February 24, 2005, Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG) and The Planning Center hosted two downtown workshops at the Hilton Palm Springs Resort. The **Downtown Ideas and Directions Workshop**, which was held in the morning, was open to the general public. It was designed to create a forum for residents to express their visions for downtown Palm Springs and their opinions on current obstacles and opportunities in the downtown area. After a brief introduction and large group discussion about Palm Springs, the participants were broken into four small groups. Each group rotated between four themed stations to facilitate directed discussion on the natural setting, social and economic trends, traffic and circulation, and the built environment of Palm Springs. After circulating through all of the stations, the groups came together for a final idea collecting and summarizing session.

introduction & workshops

The Downtown Urban Design Workshop took place in the afternoon. In this session, select stakeholders, including several council members, planning staff, store owners, developers, architects, and a Tribal representative, were divided into three groups. Each group was asked to think about the best way to implement the concepts that had been developed in the morning session and to apply those ideas to a map of the downtown, creating examples of specific sites and strategies for future downtown development. At the end of the day, the three groups were gathered and each presented their maps and the concepts behind them.

While there were differing opinions on many issues in both the morning and afternoon sessions, the workshops provided a useful forum for identifying the important issues in downtown Palm Springs and possible ways to address those issues. Drawn from these discussions, a concept map and set of downtown design guidelines (starting on page fifteen) were created to help shape the future development of downtown Palm Springs.



Top: Participants in the Downtown Urban Design Workshop discuss strategies for downtown revitalization.

Bottom: Participants draw their ideas on a map of downtown Palm Springs.

Page Intentionally Left Blank

ideas and directions
workshop visioning map

DOWNTOWN WORKSHOP - ISSUES, OPTIONS - OPPORTUNITIES

ISSUES

- RENTS
- "JUNK" STORES
- FASHION PLAZA (REUSE - KEEP "SCALE")
- "DEAD" BUILDINGS (VACANT STOREFRONTS)
- SCALE / HEIGHT? (WHAT IS APPROPRIATE?)
- ECONOMICS & SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT
- REDEVELOPMENT (MIX OF USES, HIGH RENTS DEMAND LOWER USE TO PAY FOR COMMS)
- RETAILERS HAVE MOVED OUT OF DOWNTOWN
- HUMAN SCALE & WALKABILITY
- TRAFFIC
- VIEWSHEDS BLOCKED
- AFFORDABILITY
- LOSS OF LONG-TERM BIZ

"IT'S ALL HERE"

- WALKABILITY
- MOUNTAINS
- CLIMATE
- FLOWERS
- OPEN-AIR SHOPPING
- ACTIVITIES (SPORTS, LEISURE)
- SENSE OF COMFORT - FRIENDLY, RELAXED
- PUBLIC REALM
- VIEWS
- UNIFIED PEDESTRIAN DOWNTOWN
- ATTRACTIVE
- ENRICHMENT

ASSETS

- HISTORIC/DIVERSE CHARACTER ARCHITECTURE (20, 30s - 80s - MID CENT. MODERN)
- COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE
- SPANISH COLONIAL REVIVAL
- SENSE OF DISCOVERY / MYSTERIOUS
- VILLAGE ATMOSPHERE
- PERMANENT CITIZENRY
- GRIDWORK
- TOURISM
- "COFFEEHOUSE" ENVIRONMENT (LOW KEY... LOW URBAN POLLUTION FACTOR)

DESTINATION REBORN

- ATTRACTION: STOPS PEOP.
- VIEW CORRIDOR TO MTS
- LANDSCAPE BUILDS CONNECTIONS
- QUALITY BEAUTIFUL

VISION

FUTURE PALM SPRINGS

The City of Palm Springs

OPPORTUNITIES/DIRECTIONS

- ARCHITECTURAL INNOVATION (NOT HIGH RISE "IS A VILLAGE", "CURRENT TOO" DIVERGED - OUTSIDE THIS BOX! - ECLECTIC - MIX-DIVERSITY)
- OPEN AIR CENTERS
- WIDEN SERVIDO QUALITY SHOPPING PLACES (COURTYARDS)
- WALKABLE PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY (SMALL SCALE, VIEWS, ADD ACTIVITIES)
- KEEP WHAT WE HAVE (DIVERSE ECONOMIC BASE, LOCAL SHOPPING, TOURIST SHOPPING)
- IMPROVE (SHOPPING MOVING TO 1st PHASED PALM DESERT - GREAT ENVIRONMENT)
- INDIAN CANYON (OPEN-UP MIXED-USE WALKABLE PLACE, MAKE PART OF DOWNTOWN... NOT BACK OF DOWNTOWN, NEW FOOTPHORE CAPTURE SHOPPING)
- FASHION PLAZA REDEVELOPMENT (MAKE TOWN STRESS, SLOW TRAFFIC, TRAFFIC CALMING)
- BUIDS. GRID PATTERN LANDSCAPE/BUILD CONNECTIONS (LIKE EUROPE SCALE... "FLUID TRAFFIC" CROSS TOWN CONNECTIONS, WINDOW SHOPPING! CAFES/MUSIC)
- VIEW CORRIDOR... OPEN AIR
- SCALE OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT - ECONOMICS
- FASHION PLAZA (FOR ANY VAC. TEMPORARY USES, GALLEY FLOORS, INTERIM USES, WALL PAPER, STREET SCENE)
- SAN DIEGO DOWNTOWN (SPECIAL ATTRACTIVE)
- LAGUNA BEACH

DECEMBER 24, 2005, PAGE 1

The above exhibit is a sample of the ideas and concepts that were captured during the Ideas and Directions Workshop. This illustration was taken directly from the wall graphic developed during the workshop.

Page Intentionally Left Blank

Participants in the Downtown Ideas and Directions Workshop were asked to think about the existing assets and opportunities in downtown Palm Springs. Below is a summary of the assets and opportunities they identified.

assets & opportunities



Top: View of the mountains from Tabquitx Canyon Way at Calle Alvarado. Mountain views along streets in the downtown areas should be preserved whenever possible.

Above: Downtown is an eclectic mix of architectural styles with Modern and Spanish Colonial being the most prominent. This architectural history and variety sets Palm Springs apart from other desert cities and is an asset that should be preserved and enhanced.

Right: The historic Plaza Theatre on Palm Canyon Drive is one of Palm Springs' biggest cultural attractions.

LOCATION – Palm Springs enjoys a desert climate, which attracts people year round. Palm Springs also benefits from its location at the head of the Coachella Valley, close to I-10 and the Los Angeles metro area.

HISTORY – Unlike many newer cities in the Coachella Valley, Palm Springs has a rich social, cultural, and architectural history. This unique history creates a sense of place and character, which attracts visitors and residents alike to downtown Palm Springs. Due in part to its history, Palm Springs is internationally recognized as a premier tourist destination and desert resort city.

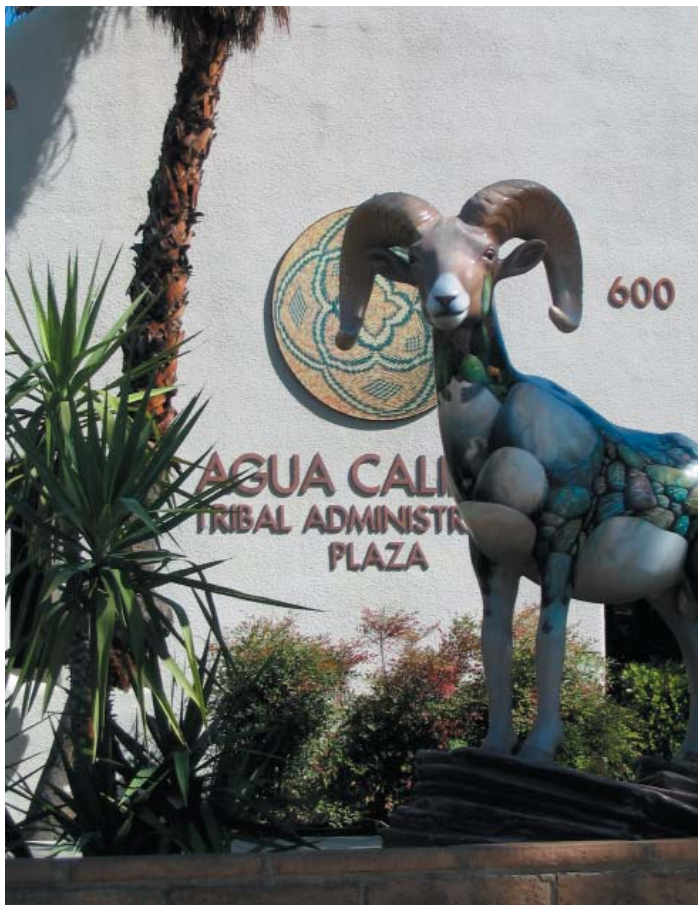
MOUNTAINS – Downtown Palm Springs is located at the base of the San Jacinto Mountains, resulting in spectacular mountain views to the west and a dramatic backdrop for the city. Downtown also has more distant views of the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north and the Santa Rosa Mountains to the south.



assets & opportunities

CULTURE – Downtown Palm Springs boasts a wide array of cultural attractions. *The Fabulous Palm Springs Follies* draws stars and guest acts from around the world. The Palm Springs Art Museum displays excellent permanent and traveling collections. The Annenberg Theater holds an annual performing arts series along with other cultural events and performances. The Agua Caliente Cultural Museum gives guests a better understanding of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (ACBCI) and their history. Statues of Hollywood stars, such as Sonny Bono and Lucille Ball, complement the streetscape and create photo opportunities for tourists.

Below: The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (ACBCI) plays an important role in the City. Section 14, which is partially located in the downtown, provides many cultural and recreational opportunities. The Agua Caliente Cultural Museum Information Center can be found on the Village Green (right bottom) and the Agua Caliente Tribal Administration Plaza on Tabquitx Canyon Way (below).





RECREATION & RELAXATION – The climate of Palm Springs makes it a year-round site for a wide range of outdoor activities and recreation. Located on the edge of downtown is the historic O’Donnell Golf Club. Downtown’s proximity to the mountains provides access to mountain sports and activities. A number of spas and resorts provide residents and visitors with many opportunities to relax and enjoy the sunny climate.

ARCHITECTURE – Downtown Palm Springs is set apart from other desert cities by its unique and eclectic mix of architectural styles ranging from Spanish Colonial to Modern. Numerous courtyards and passageways create a varied pedestrian experience and enhance downtown visits. The large number of historical buildings also adds to the character of downtown.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES -- Downtown has a number of vacant stores, buildings, and lots. These provide valuable opportunities for new development downtown. One of the most important development opportunities is the Desert Fashion Plaza, which is located in the core of downtown.



Top: Palm Springs’ collection of eclectic and historical architecture creates a unique sense of place and identity. The Town & Country Center and Lykken’s Department Store are just two of many unique buildings that add to the character of downtown.

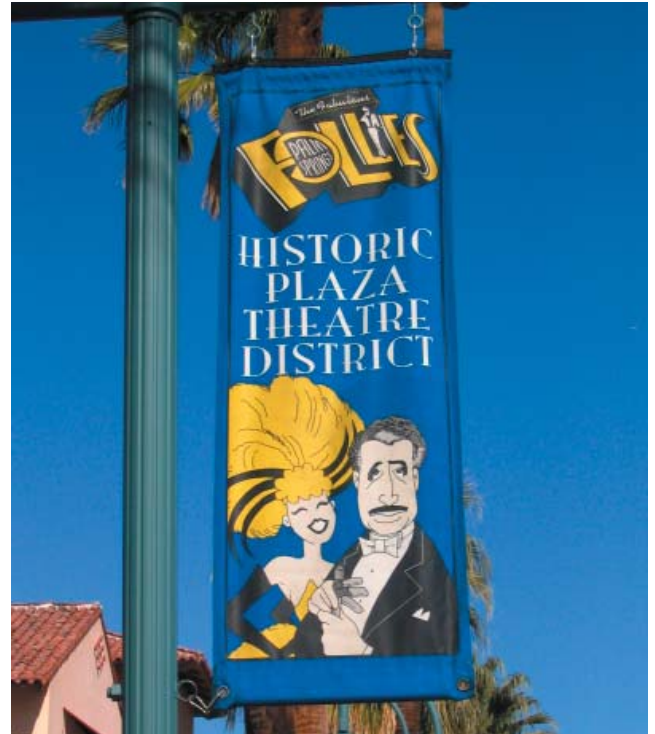
Above & Right: There are numerous resort and recreation opportunities in downtown Palm Springs such as The Springs (above) and the Spa Resort Casino (right).





RETAIL / RESTAURANTS – Downtown Palm Springs contains a unique mix of a wide variety of restaurants and shops. Many locally owned boutiques and stores create a unique and pleasant shopping experience. The large variety of excellent restaurants and open air dining options adds to the vitality of downtown.

VILLAGES / DISTRICTS – Downtown has a number of existing and developing theme based districts, such as a furniture and art gallery district, a restaurant district, the historic Tennis Club District, and the historic Plaza Theatre District to name a few. These districts add to the vitality of downtown by providing different experiences and serving as hubs of activity.



Top: Downtown has a wide variety of indoor and outdoor dining options. The Chop House and The Deck are two very popular downtown restaurants that provide outdoor dining opportunities and contribute to the vitality of the street scene.

Above: The downtown area consists of many theme based districts. These districts add to the eclectic nature of the downtown area. Signage should be used to strengthen the identities of the districts.

Left: The Mercado Plaza offers a number of different retail and dining options in addition to creating an interesting public space.



Palm Springs has a unique and vibrant history. However, with down-valley development and changes in demographics, it is a city in transition. With more and more year-round residents, it is important to find a balance between the needs and desires of the residents and those of the tourists while taking advantage of the unique history and many assets downtown Palm Springs has to offer. Participants of the Downtown Ideas and Directions Workshop and the Downtown Urban Design Workshop were asked to come up with a number of goals and proposed actions to help shape the downtown design guidelines to best meet this larger goal. Below is a summary of the general goals and actions proposed in the two workshops.

ideas & strategies

Streets & Circulation

Goals: Improve street life and the pedestrian experience; Slow traffic in the downtown core (especially on Palm Canyon Drive); Connect areas of activity in downtown through stronger vehicular and pedestrian connections; Enhance existing trails and create a city-wide trail system

Proposed Actions: Create “sidewalk bulbs” at intersections and wider sidewalks in between to facilitate pedestrian through traffic, reduce the length of pedestrian street crossings, and slow vehicular traffic (for an illustration of a sidewalk bulbs see page twenty-two); Re-configure traffic patterns and create a hierarchy of streets based on “go” and “slow go” concept (“go” streets allow for faster vehicular movement while “slow go” streets provide for slower vehicular movement and increased pedestrian activity); Open new east-west vehicular and pedestrian connections to improve circulation and access; Connect the Convention Center to the Desert Museum; Connect retail and cultural sites; Connect villages/districts to “core” downtown; Improve existing trails and create an interconnected trails system

Parking

Goals: More downtown parking; Easier access to popular locations

Proposed Actions: Build new, strategically located parking structures; Create design criteria for parking structures; Ensure safety through the incorporation of safety measures such as sufficient lighting, clear signage, and open stairwells

Public Spaces & Gathering Places

Goals: More public gathering places and pedestrian connections

Proposed Actions: Create a central public plaza or town center; Create more mid-block pedestrian connections; Create more interesting courtyards and small gathering spaces with places to sit

ideas & strategies

Land Use & Development / Districts

Goals: More downtown residential uses; More mixed-use; More cohesive, compact, and vibrant “core” of downtown; Strengthen the identity of the existing districts; Create new districts or recognizable neighborhoods

Proposed Actions: Create more residential and mixed use developments in downtown; Take advantage of the development opportunities provided by vacant stores and lots; Find short and long term uses for the Desert Fashion Plaza site; Develop Indian Canyon Drive to create a more pedestrian friendly street; Create an “events/entertainment center”; Use specialized landscaping, signage, lighting, flags, banners, and street furniture to differentiate between the various districts

Building Height, Orientation, Massing, & Design

Goals: Allow for mixed-use development while preserving mountain views and eclectic nature of downtown; Preserve view corridors and create new ones when possible; Preserve and enhance eclectic architecture

Proposed Actions: Orient buildings east-west to protect or create view corridors; Develop and implement building massing guidelines to frame views; Step back the upper floors of taller buildings to protect view corridors; Vary height and massing to maintain eclectic nature of downtown; Design buildings to add to and reinforce the eclectic nature of downtown architecture

Landscaping & Signage

Goals: Create a strong downtown identity through landscaping and signage; Encourage pedestrian activities by creating beautiful and easily navigated streets and spaces

Proposed Actions: Create comprehensive downtown landscaping and signage guidelines; Use desert and eco-friendly landscaping

Page Intentionally Left Blank

Design Principles



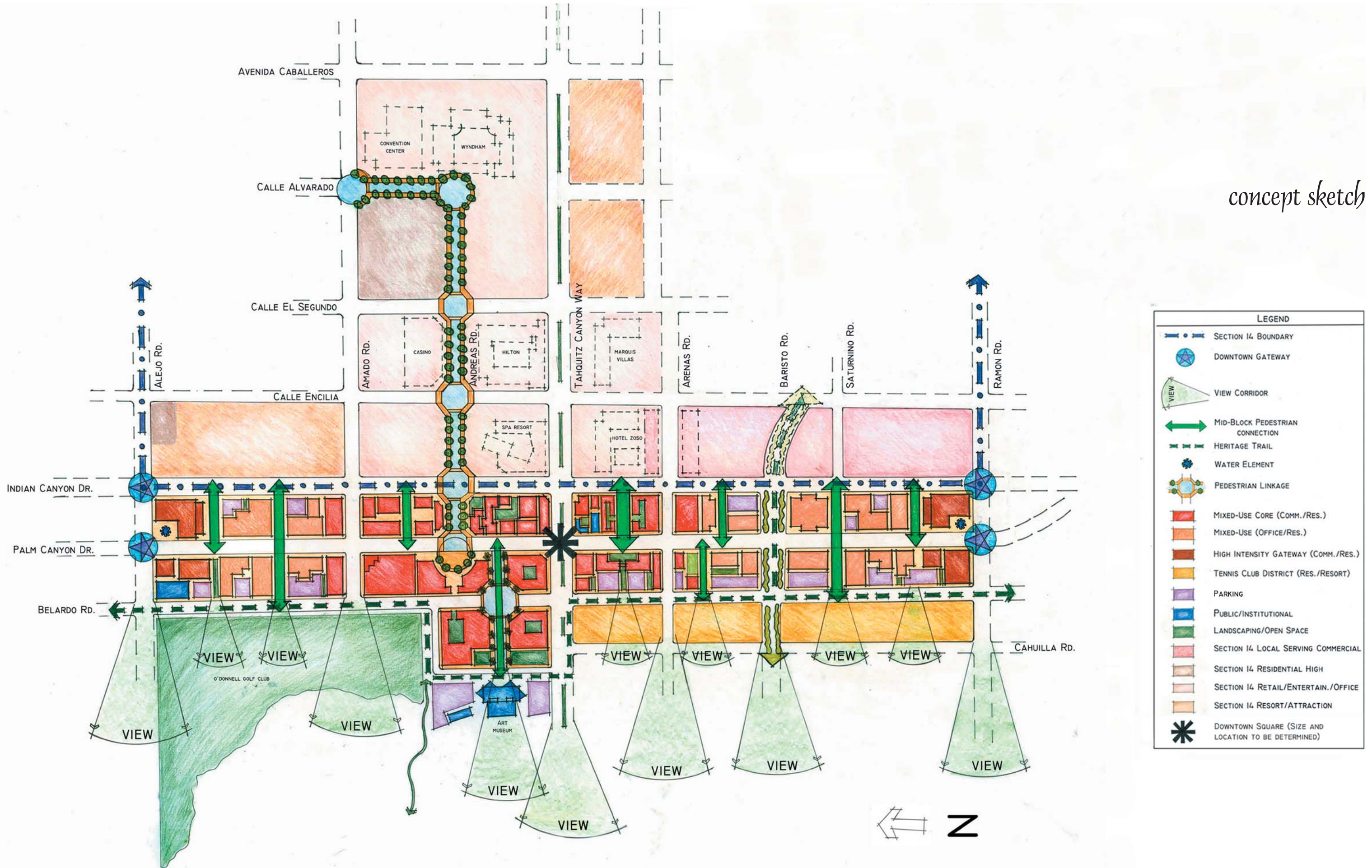
The bullet points below highlight the most important design and planning concepts derived from the downtown workshops. The map on the opposite page is a conceptual map that is intended to demonstrate how many of the design and planning concepts below could be implemented in the downtown area. The following parts of this section go into greater detail and expand upon these concepts to assist developers and planners in their planning and design processes.

urban design concept

Key Design Concepts for Downtown Palm Springs:

- Create a new central plaza/public space
- Create new mid-block walkthroughs and pedestrian connections
- Protect or create public view corridors along streets
- Create distinctive gateways to downtown with large water elements and signage
- Ensure a vibrant, compact, and walkable “core” downtown
- Enhance the existing trails through appropriate signage and landscaping and create a comprehensive trail system
- Create new mixed-use residential projects, especially in the central core area and the northern and southern ends of downtown.
- Concentrate tall, high density projects in the central downtown core and at the north and south gateways to downtown
- Strengthen or create pedestrian and vehicular connections between areas of activity/districts
- Enhance the pedestrian experience through improvements to the streetscape, such as wide sidewalks, ample shade, varied sidewalk pavements and textures, interesting public spaces with focal points, and consistent landscaping, street furniture, lighting, and signage
- Create “hot spots” of activity at key intersections through the use of “sidewalk bulbs,” special paving, building corner cutbacks, sidewalk cafes, kiosks, fountains, and public art
- Ensure access to safe and convenient parking through the creation of a comprehensive parking system
- Encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings and architectural excellence in the design of new projects
- Ensure access to public areas and buildings for people of all ages and abilities through consultation with appropriate City Staff and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Realize the role of the Section 14 Specific Plan in the success of downtown and ensure strong pedestrian and vehicular connections between Section 14 and the rest of the downtown area

concept sketch



LEGEND	
	SECTION 14 BOUNDARY
	DOWNTOWN GATEWAY
	VIEW CORRIDOR
	MID-BLOCK PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION
	HERITAGE TRAIL
	WATER ELEMENT
	PEDESTRIAN LINKAGE
	MIXED-USE CORE (COMM./RES.)
	MIXED-USE (OFFICE/RES.)
	HIGH INTENSITY GATEWAY (COMM./RES.)
	TENNIS CLUB DISTRICT (RES./RESORT)
	PARKING
	PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL
	LANDSCAPING/OPEN SPACE
	SECTION 14 LOCAL SERVING COMMERCIAL
	SECTION 14 RESIDENTIAL HIGH
	SECTION 14 RETAIL/ENTERTAIN./OFFICE
	SECTION 14 RESORT/ATTRACTION
	DOWNTOWN SQUARE (SIZE AND LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED)

Page Intentionally Left Blank

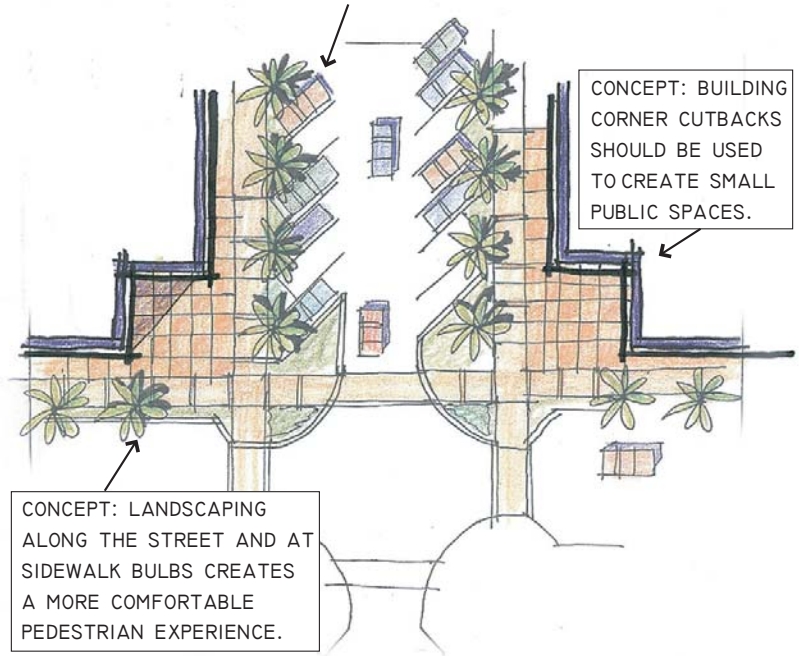
streets & circulation

Streets, sidewalks, and trails are all essential parts of the downtown experience. Streets not only allow vehicular movement between places, but also affect the vitality of downtown by either attracting or deterring pedestrian activities. Thus, streets and streetscapes must be designed with both cars and pedestrians in mind to ensure a healthy and vibrant downtown. A pedestrian oriented linkage along Andreas Road (see the concept map on page seventeen) should be created to strengthen the connection between the Resort and Convention Center district and the downtown core area (see the zones map on page thirty-four).

Trails should connect downtown with other parts of the city and the mountains, creating new greenway connectors between districts and providing better access to the mountains. All street, sidewalk, and trail elements should include consistent detailing to create a sense of continuity. Additional, more specialized detailing can be added to distinguish specific sites, areas, or districts if desired. However, this underlying design continuity is essential in strengthening the sense of place and identity for downtown Palm Springs.



CONCEPT: A PARKING STREET WITH ANGLED PARKING INCREASES CONVENIENT DOWNTOWN PARKING, SLOWS TRAFFIC, AND CREATES A MORE PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY STREET.



Top: Parking streets, which differ from other streets in that parking is an integral design element, are ideal for pedestrian oriented commercial uses and can be used to create areas with unique and lively streetscapes. La Plaza and Arenas Road between Calle Encilia and Indian Canyon Drive (above) are good examples of parking streets that create unique destination spots in the downtown.

Bottom: Plan view of a parking street. Parking streets are encouraged as east-west connectors in the downtown area to improve both vehicular and pedestrian circulation.

Streets & Streetscapes

- Along downtown streets, all the elements – buildings, signs, landscaping and street furniture – should work together to create a unified and coherent visual identity and public space.
- Commercial and mixed-use buildings should be located close to the public right-of-way to better define the urban space and create pedestrian interest. However, building frontages should be relieved with occasional courtyards, passageways, patios, and setbacks to add to the unique and eclectic character of downtown Palm Springs.
- Streetscapes provide visual interest, continuity, and identity and should include a consistent blend of themed street furniture, consisting of streetlights, banners, benches, bollards, bus stops, and trash receptacles. While retaining key basic detailing for downtown continuity and identity, these elements should be further specialized to help identify specific districts or villages within the downtown.

streets & circulation

- Colorful and themed awnings and outdoor sidewalk umbrellas can add a great deal of vitality and excitement to an area as well as provide important sources of shade for pedestrians and customers. Downtown stores and eating establishments are encouraged to use either or both techniques when appropriate.

- Street corners should be carefully defined by buildings that set the tone for the entire block and provide visual interest for pedestrians.

- Patterned pavement and special paving materials should be used to designate intersections, pedestrian crossings, entries, parking plazas, and places of special interest. The patterned and special paving should be designed in a style consistent with the historic context of the downtown area.



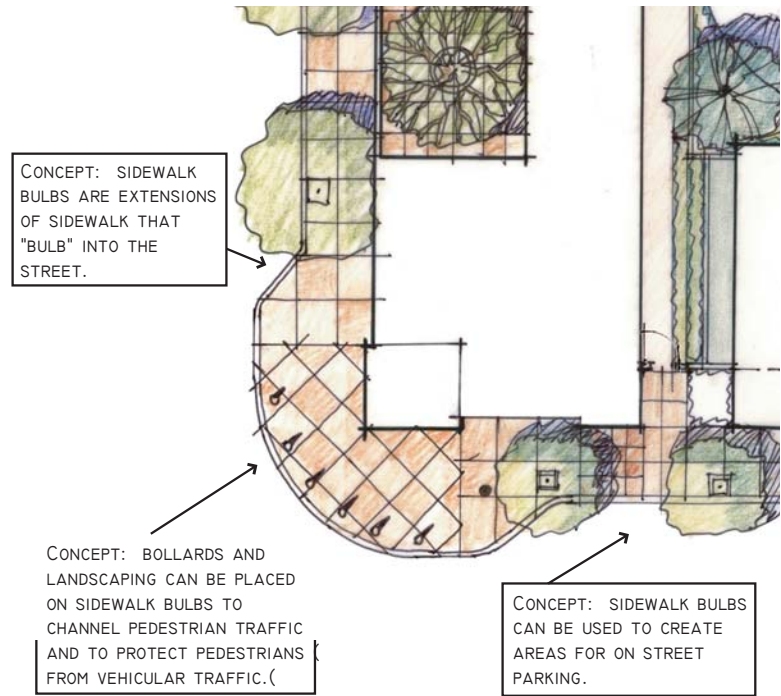
Top: The colorful umbrellas on these outdoor dining areas add vitality and excitement to the downtown area. Outdoor dining areas and shade umbrellas should be incorporated into streetscape design whenever possible.

Right: La Plaza combines a number of desirable design principles. Consistent architectural styles, signage, and landscaping create a sense of place. Special paving on Palm Canyon Drive clearly designates pedestrian crossings. The design of La Plaza's parking street creates an east-west mid-block vehicular and pedestrian connector and provides much needed parking spaces.



Intersections

- Corner building cutbacks create a sense of place and help to create a varied streetscape experience. They are recommended at the gateways to downtown, intersections along Palm Canyon Drive, Indian Canyon Drive, and Tahquitz Canyon Way, and any other important intersections in the central core area to denote significant intersections or points of interest in the downtown area.
- Corner “sidewalk bulbs” or “step-outs” are recommended at intersections to slow traffic, reduce the length of the crosswalk, and to create more sidewalk space.
- Clear sight lines should be maintained at intersections to ensure pedestrian and vehicular safety.



Above: Plan view of a sidewalk bulb. Sidewalk bulbs increase usable sidewalk area, allow for on street parking, slow traffic, and shorten the distance of crosswalks. They are ideally suited for commercial streets with on street parking and are recommended in pedestrian oriented areas where appropriate.

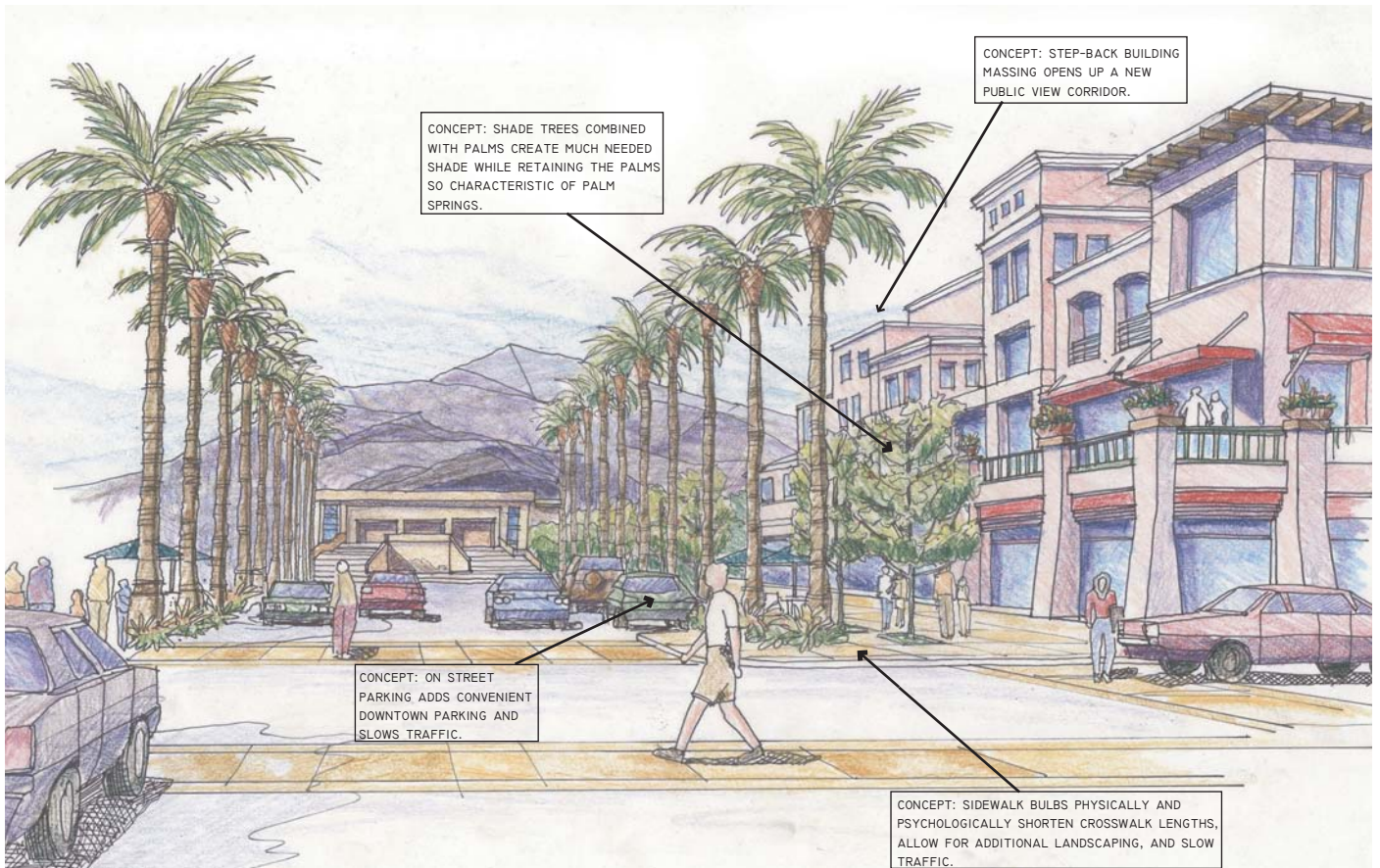


Above: Corner building cutbacks, sidewalk bulbs, and towers should be used at important intersections to create small public spaces with a sense of place. Additional design elements, such as architectural detailing, awnings, first floor retail with large display windows, outdoor eating areas, and landscaped areas, add to pedestrian comfort and are recommended when appropriate.

Top: This corner at Tabquitz Canyon Way and Indian Canyon Drive is an ideal location for a small public space. By removing the one story building in the foreground and adding additional outdoor eating opportunities and other pedestrian amenities (see the "Public Places" section starting on page thirty) a new vibrant space along the street could be created.



Bottom: High density residential mixed-use in the core downtown area and the north and south gateway areas (see zones map on page thirty-four) can extend the hours of use and bring social and economic vitality to the downtown. This perspective shows one concept for the possible redevelopment of the Desert Fashion Plaza, which is located in the heart of the downtown core. A new east-west connector street opening up to the Desert Museum and numerous pedestrian friendly elements in the design of the proposed mixed-use residential project would reduce the visual impact of the taller buildings and help retain the village character of the area while adding much needed vitality to the downtown streets.

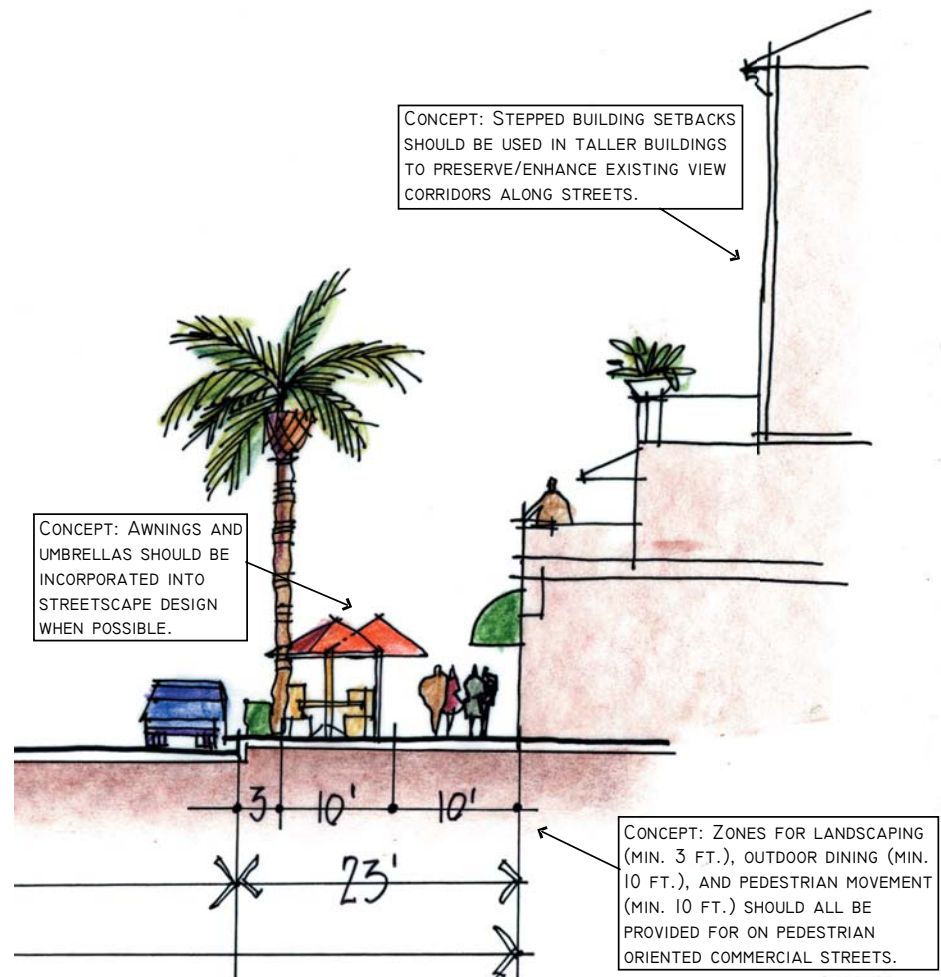


Sidewalks

- Sidewalk width is dependent on surrounding uses and scale of street. Core commercial areas need to include zones for window shopping, through pedestrian traffic, outdoor eating, trees, and landscaping.
- Where appropriate, sidewalks should reflect historic scoring patterns or distinctive paving or surface treatment to create patterns and consistency.
- Along pedestrian-oriented streets, large windows of ground-level retail should provide visual interest and information for shoppers and strollers.
- In commercial areas where pedestrian uses are encouraged, wider sidewalks and sidewalk shade trees are preferred over landscaped medians to maximize the usable space for pedestrian activities and movement.
- Sidewalks should be designed to be handicapped accessible as set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



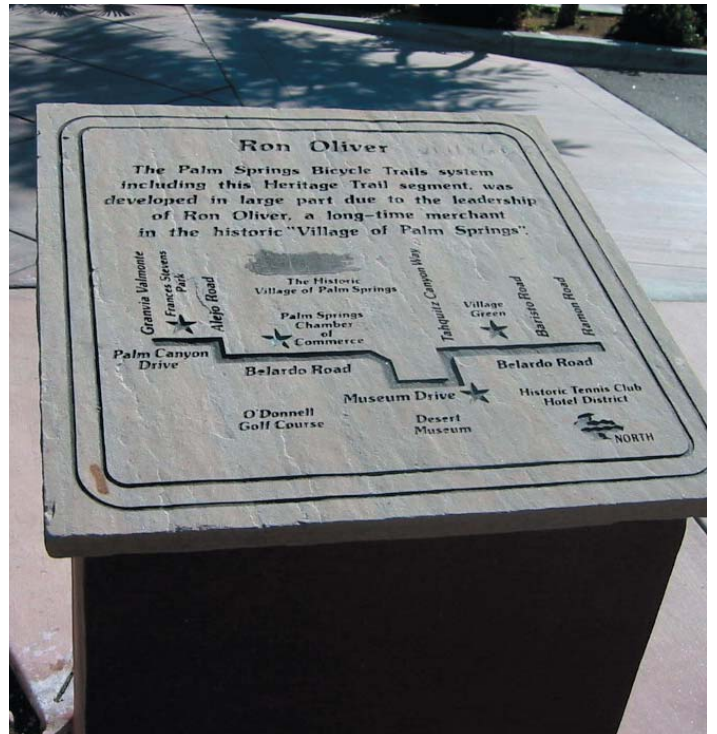
Above: The section of the Heritage Trail along Belardo Road is a wonderful asset. It is a good example of how a wide sidewalk can serve both pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The Heritage Trail should be extended to connect with other parts of the city and the mountains.



Right: Sidewalks should provide ample room for concurrent uses. It is recommended that sidewalks in pedestrian areas have at least ten feet for window shopping / pedestrian through-traffic, ten feet for outdoor dining, and three feet for landscaping and shade trees.

Trails

- An integrated trails system connecting the mountains, downtown, and other areas of the city should be created.
- The trail system should be clearly marked with consistent signage and lighting where appropriate.
- Landscaping and shade trees should be incorporated into the trail design in the downtown and other developed areas.
- Amenities, such as benches, public art, bike racks, and water fountains, should be strategically placed along the trails, especially in the downtown and other heavily used areas. The incorporation of these amenities into trail design will enhance the user's experience and create more interesting public spaces.
- Trails should be designed to minimize conflict between pedestrians and bicyclists. This can be done by creating separate, but parallel trails for different uses or by designating different parts of one trail for different uses.



Top: The Heritage Trail paving markings are an example of good trail signage. They clearly identify the trail and add texture and variety to the paving.

Above: Monument style Heritage Trail signs display the route and important areas along the trail. Similar signs should be created for the entire trails system.

Left: The sidewalk at the Mercado Plaza is an excellent example of patterned paving. Specialized paving adds to the unique sense of place and character in the downtown.

parking

Tourists and residents alike come to downtown Palm Springs to go shopping, to enjoy restaurants and cultural attractions, and to attend special events. The majority of these downtown visitors come by car. Without easily accessible downtown parking, many potential visitors, whose business is essential to the downtown economy, may be attracted to other commercial and entertainment centers with more convenient parking. Thus, the continued vitality and future economic success of downtown depends heavily on providing access to convenient, strategically located parking.

The most effective way to maximize access to convenient parking is through the creation of an integrated downtown parking system. This parking system should build upon existing parking programs and structures and should provide short, medium, and long term parking options in a number of strategically located parking structures and lots. These different parking areas should be integrated into the design of the surrounding neighborhood both architecturally and in scale. Efforts should be made to consult with the City's ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) coordinator to ensure adequate handicapped accessible parking in the downtown.



Top: The proposed integrated downtown parking system should incorporate existing parking structures (such as the one located on the corner of Indian Canyon Drive and Baristo Road shown above) and lots when appropriate and feasible.

Middle & Bottom: Step backs and landscaping on the sides of taller buildings, such as the Hyatt on Palm Canyon Drive (middle), can help frame view corridors along streets and are recommended when appropriate. Likewise, step backs and landscaping should be used to minimize the visual impact of parking structures (bottom). First floor retail along the base of parking structures is also encouraged because it minimizes the impact of the structure on the pedestrian experience by reducing gaps in pedestrian uses.

Parking System

- The downtown parking system should maximize the convenience of downtown parking while minimizing its impact on the visual quality of the street and pedestrian movement along it.
- The different components of the parking system should be easily located and identified through the use of consistent and unifying lighting and signage.

parking

Structured Parking

- Structured parking, when properly designed, results in higher parking densities and fewer interruptions in the pedestrian experience than surface parking lots. Therefore, structured parking is recommended in the central downtown area.
- Underground structured parking has the least impact on the visual quality of downtown and is encouraged when feasible.
- When it is necessary to locate a parking structure along a commercial street, the structure should be designed to provide ground level retail and office space. On streets where cars must occupy the ground level, a landscaped setback should be used to minimize and soften the visual impact of the structure.

- The facade of parking structures should reflect the exterior building materials, forms, and scale of surrounding buildings.
- Parking structures should incorporate security measures such as lighting, open stairwells, and clearly marked entry and exit points.

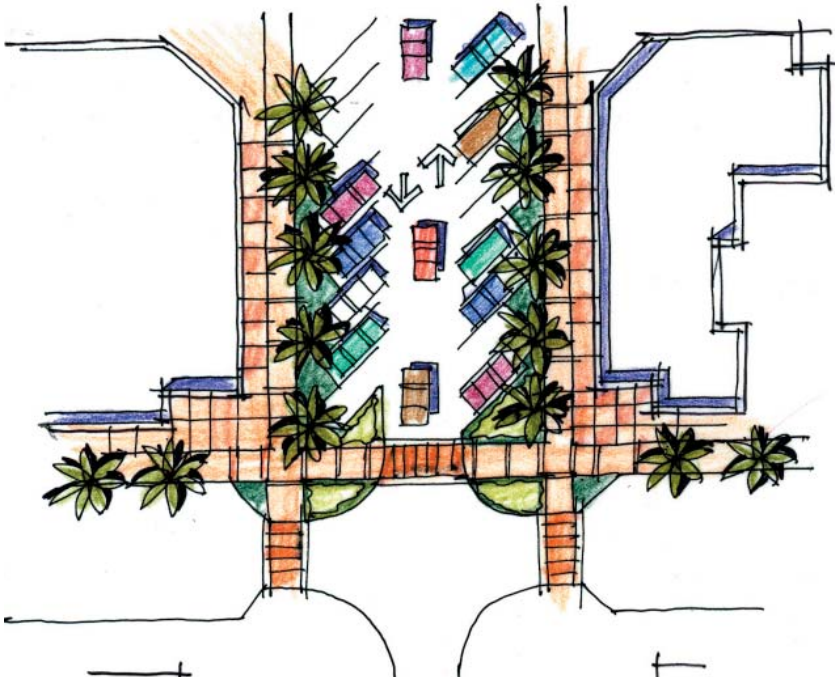
On Street Parking

- On downtown streets, both angled and parallel parking have their advantages. Compared to angled parking, parallel parking provides fewer

Top: Parallel parking on Palm Canyon Drive allows for higher traffic volume than angled parking while still providing some on street parking for nearby restaurants and retail establishments.

Bottom: The portion of Arenas Road between Calle Encelia and Indian Canyon Drive is a great example of how angled parking can create a unique and pedestrian friendly retail and restaurant area. Note the large display windows that also contribute to the interest of the streetscape.





spaces but can allow for wider sidewalks and fewer traffic disruptions. As a general rule, angled parking should not be used on arterial roads because of the traffic interruptions and safety hazards they create. However, on smaller roads, angled parking can reduce the speed of traffic and help create a varied streetscape.

- Parking streets (streets that include parking, usually angled, as a key design element and often incorporate other pedestrian friendly elements such as sidewalk bulbs and landscaping) are recommended as east-west connectors in the downtown area, especially between Palm Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive. It is also encouraged that parking streets be used to create special districts or destinations in the downtown area, such as the small shopping/entertainment district on Arenas Road between Indian Canyon Drive and Calle Encilia.

Parking Lots & Parking Plazas

- Parking plazas contain a number of design elements that make them more convenient and pedestrian friendly than traditional parking lots. They channel vehicles to building entrances and adjacent parking plazas, clearly designate parking areas and pedestrian crossing areas through the use of landscaped islands and special textured paving, provide passenger drop off points at building entrances, create pedestrian links to buildings through arcades, and increase pedestrian safety and comfort through the inclusion of benches, fountains, shade structures, and lighting.



Top: Plan view of a parking street. A two way parking street slows traffic and is conducive to pedestrian activities.

Middle: Low walls and landscaping make surface parking less visible from the street. Note that the sidewalk in this photograph is too narrow to accommodate more than a single pedestrian. When possible, sidewalks should be wider to allow for more than one person at a time. (See "Sidewalks" on page twenty-four.)

Bottom: Screening walls and landscaping reduce the impact of surface parking on the pedestrian experience.

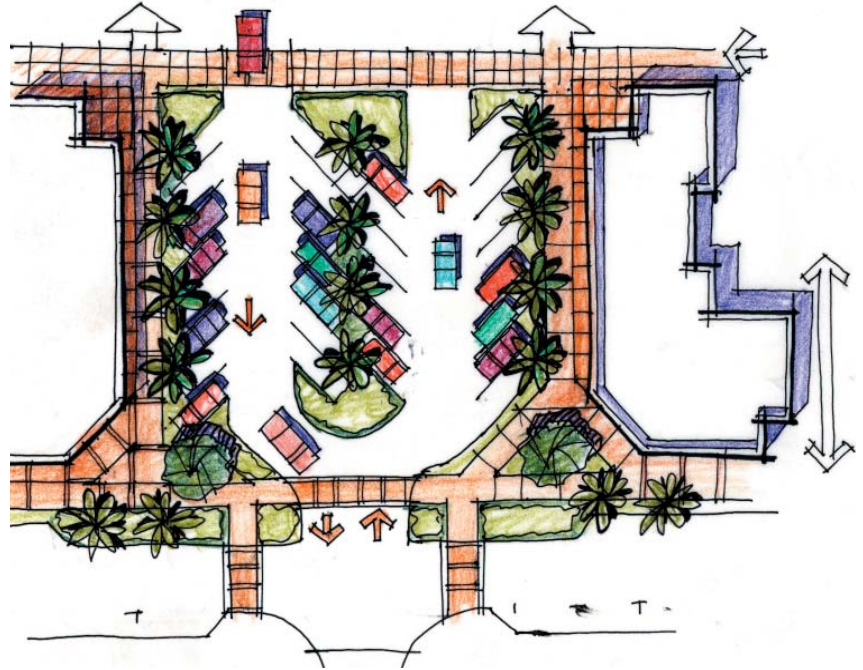
- Parking plazas should be used rather than traditional parking lots whenever possible.

- Because surface parking lots tend to create gaps along the sidewalk and interrupt the activities along the street, they should be located in ways that minimize their visibility from major arterials and pedestrian streets. It is recommended that surface parking lots not be located on Palm Canyon Drive or Indian Canyon Drive.

- Techniques for screening surface parking lots include perimeter-landscaped buffers of shade tree plantings or up to three-foot-high screen walls or shrubs.

- Surface parking lots should contain interior landscaping with curbed islands planted with shade trees and desert landscaping. One tree per four parking spots is recommended.

- Tipu (*Tipuana tipu*) trees are recommended in parking lots and parking plazas.



Top: Plan view of a parking plaza. Parking plazas that use one-way streets as part of the circulation system provide more parking spots than those that have a completely enclosed circulation system. This design is ideal for the blocks between Palm Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive.

Middle & Bottom: Desert landscaping, landscaped islands, shade trees, and textured paving at pedestrian crossings are all important elements in parking plazas. They help to maximize the convenience, safety, and visual pleasure of users.

public spaces & gathering places

Public spaces provide the visual and social accent for a downtown. Although sidewalks are the most important public spaces in a downtown, well-planned plazas, squares, and courtyards add a vital sense of place and comfort to the downtown experience. Every city should have a large central public gathering place near the heart of the city to create a center of activity and vitality in the downtown area. This central area should provide civic, social, retail, and recreational uses to meet the varied needs of different downtown users. Downtown Palm Springs would benefit from a new large public space that can serve as a true town square to attract visitors and to create a lively and defined center of the downtown area (see the concept map on page seventeen). In addition, new mid-block pedestrian connections (see page seventeen) should be created in the downtown, which should result in a more lively streetscape and better east-west circulation in the downtown area. A series of smaller public spaces (including courtyards, patios, and corner building setbacks) should also be incorporated into the existing urban fabric of downtown Palm Springs.

Top & Middle: These photos are examples of central squares. The proposed central square in downtown Palm Springs should include design elements to maximize pedestrian use and comfort.

Bottom: Smaller public spaces should include as many pedestrian oriented amenities as feasible. This space includes outdoor dining with sun umbrellas, comfortable seating, clear signage, consistent lighting fixtures, a water element, landscaping, and shade trees.



Public Spaces & Gathering Places

- Public spaces should be carefully integrated into the urban fabric of the downtown and contribute to the pedestrian experience.
- A large, centrally located city square should be created in downtown Palm Springs. To maximize accessibility and use by the public, it should be strategically placed between Palm Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive. The central square should be a hub of activity during both the day and night. In addition to a varied mix of retail, restaurant, and office uses, the public square should contain strong landscaping elements to create a sense of place, a central water element to serve as a focal point, ample pedestrian amenities to ensure pedestrian safety and comfort, and special features and events to attract users.
- Additional large public spaces should be located along the street to provide maximum visibility and accessibility. The transition from the street to the public space should be as convenient as possible by not raising or sinking the space more than three to four feet.
- Vibrant public plazas have a sense of enclosure defined by surrounding buildings and streets. However, they should not be completely enclosed or cut off from the street. Public areas should be defined by surrounding buildings with the general guideline that the width of the public space should not be more than three times greater than the height of surrounding buildings.

public spaces & gathering places

Below: The Mercado Plaza is a vibrant public space because it contains many elements of a well designed gathering place: retail and restaurant uses, a strong water element, outdoor seating, interesting architecture, shade elements, consistent landscaping, public art, and specialized paving.





- Attention to pedestrian amenities and comfort is crucial.
- All public spaces should have ample water misters, shade trees, awnings, and other sun coverings to shelter users from the hot summer sun and to provide a cool, inviting place for visitors to sit and rest.
- Public spaces should include landscaping and water elements to create a pleasant and relaxing environment.
- Comfortable and movable seating is crucial to the success of public spaces. Seating can be built into ledges, corners, and walls. Moveable seats provide choices and comfort whereas fixed seating tends to limit flexibility of use.
- Outdoor eating and seating provides convenience and social opportunities and should be incorporated into public gathering places.
- Public spaces in the downtown area should have a visual focal point that draws attention, connects visitors, and further enhances the sense of place. The amenity might be a sculpture, fountain, historical reference, public art display, or entertainment venue. The central plaza and north and south entrances to downtown Palm Springs should all contain similar strong water elements that will create a sense of continuity and thus connect the downtown area.

Top & Middle: Pedestrian mid-block passageways can aid pedestrian circulation and provide interesting spaces and experiences for users. These connections provide shaded walkways lined with commercial uses. Landscaping, outdoor dining, and water elements all add interest and comfort to the spaces. Mid-block pedestrian and vehicular connections are recommended on the blocks between Belardo Road and Indian Canyon Drive.

Bottom: This public square provides a wide array of pedestrian amenities. Interesting architectural elements, outdoor umbrellas, patterned paving, landscaping, and clearly defined signage all work together to create a pedestrian friendly gathering place.



- The use of special paving features and public art adds richness to the environment and are encouraged as long as they are consistent with the character of downtown.
- Smaller scale public spaces should complement larger spaces and add vitality and choice to the pedestrian experience. They should also be located along the street, be comfortable, and have amenities such as ample shade and seating.
- Mid-block pedestrian connections and walkthroughs connect streets on opposite sides of a block, aiding pedestrian circulation and creating a varied pedestrian experience. They are encouraged on the blocks between Belardo Road and Indian Canyon Drive. (For examples, see the concept map on page seventeen.)
- Connections and passageways should be unique spaces while retaining continuity with the rest of downtown. Landscaping, water elements, art, special paving, and shade are all encouraged.



Top: The Village Green's fountain provides a good example of a fountain serving as a focal point in a public space.

Middle: Public art, such as the Lucille Ball statue on Tabquitz Canyon Way, is encouraged.

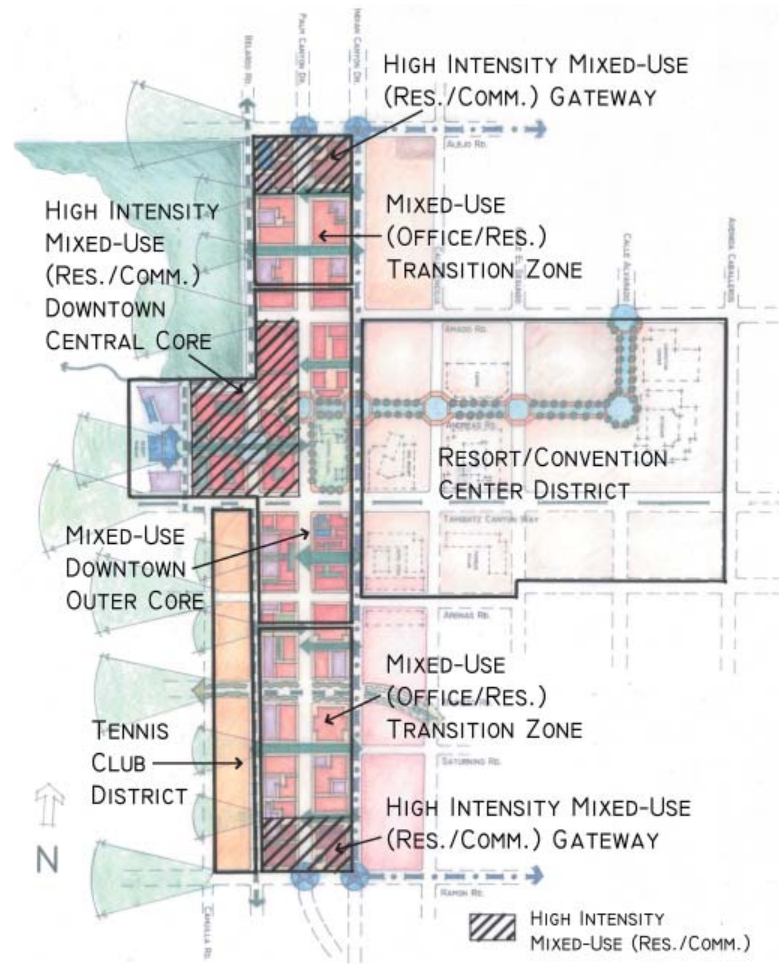
Bottom: Smaller public spaces, such as The Corridor off of Palm Canyon Drive, should provide a number of different pedestrian amenities to ensure the comfort and safety of the user. Shade elements, landscaping, seating, lighting, and signage should always be included in the design of public places. Other elements, such as water features, public art, and special paving are all recommended when appropriate.



land use & development / districts

Currently, the majority of downtown Palm Springs is used primarily during the daytime. However, there is potential to extend the hours of use and to create a more exciting and lively atmosphere in downtown Palm Springs through the introduction of mixed-use residential developments and the expansion of nighttime commercial/retail uses. People create a sense of vitality through activity and use of the streets and sidewalks. Downtown residents would enliven the area by using downtown areas when others have left and by creating a new nighttime market for activities, stores, and restaurants. Therefore, downtown Palm Springs would benefit from downtown residents and those new residents would benefit from the exciting and lively atmosphere of the area.

To achieve the desired mix of vitality and activity, downtown Palm Springs should be comprised of a number of different zones distinguished by land use and height. These zones include: the core (comprised of a high intensity mixed-use center with taller buildings surrounded by a vibrant mixed-use area); two shorter, less intense mixed-use transition zones to the north and south of the core; taller, more intense north and south gateway areas; the Resort/Convention Center District; and the Tennis Club District (see map to the right). Further defined theme based districts (areas identified by specialized uses, such as cultural and art uses, restaurant uses, nightlife uses, etc.) within these larger districts are encouraged and should be strengthened where they already exist when possible.



Above: A map of zones in downtown Palm Springs. (For building heights for the various zones see the "Building Height, Orientation, Massing, & Design" section starting on page thirty-six.) These zones should be further subdivided into theme based districts to create areas with separate and unique identities within the downtown.

Land Use & Development / Districts

- **Downtown Core:** The downtown core (approximate area bounded by Amado Road and Arenas Road and Museum Drive and Indian Canyon Drive) should be a vibrant, compact, and walkable center of activity in the downtown area. The core should be comprised of a central core area consisting of taller (max. 60 ft; see “Building Height, Orientation, Massing, & Design” section starting on the next page for more detail on allowed building heights in the downtown), high intensity mixed-use (residential/commercial) buildings surrounded by an equally vibrant, but shorter (max. 30 to 45 ft.) mixed-use (commercial/office/residential) outer core area.

- **Transition Zones:** The transition zones should serve as less intense connector areas between the high intensity downtown core and north and south gateways to help create a varied downtown experience. These areas are ideal for theme based districts (areas with similar or complementary uses such as restaurants, art galleries, etc.) and should consist primarily of shorter, one to two story (max. 30 ft.) commercial/office mixed-use buildings. Slightly taller mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail/office and residential lofts above (max. 45 ft.) are permitted on the east side of Palm Canyon Drive.

- **Gateways:** The north and south entrances to the downtown (along Alejo Road and Ramon Road between Belardo Road and Indian Canyon Drive) should be well defined areas that make one’s entrance into the downtown a memorable experience. They should be taller (max. 60 ft.), high intensity mixed-use (residential/commercial) areas with distinctive landscaping and signage marking the entrance to downtown.

- **The Resort/Convention Center District:** This district is completely contained within the Section 14 area and its land uses are defined by the Section 14 Specific Plan. The district’s location adjacent to the downtown core makes it an integral part of the downtown. It should be well connected with the rest of the downtown to ensure the success of the entire downtown area.

- **The Tennis Club District:** The Tennis Club district is an important historic area in downtown Palm Springs. It contains many architecturally, socially, and culturally important hotels, small resorts, and residences. This district should continue to retain the current land uses, sense of place, and character that currently exists.

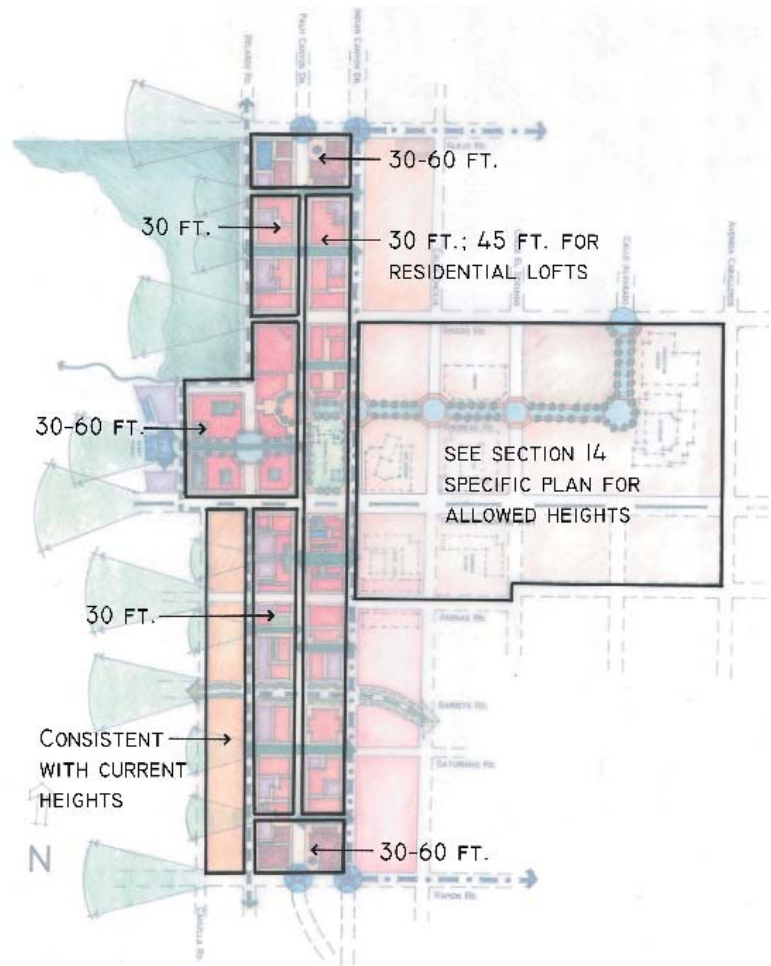
- Within all of the downtown zones (especially in the core and transition areas) theme based villages or districts are encouraged. These districts should be lively, walkable areas with similar or complementary uses that create a sense of district identity. These areas should be connected with each other and the central downtown core to create a dynamic and pedestrian friendly downtown. Existing theme based districts should be strengthened and new ones created when possible.

land use & develop- ment / districts

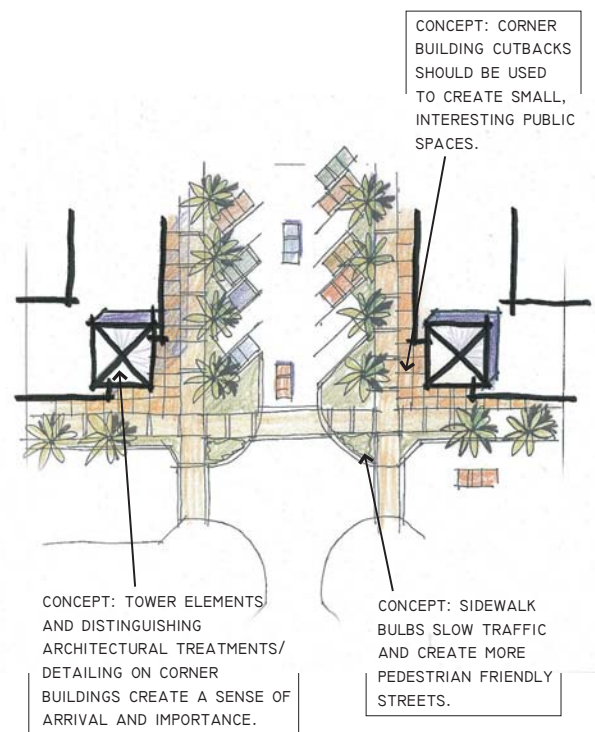
building height, orientation, massing, & design

Building height, orientation, and massing all affect the character of a downtown. Currently, the majority of buildings in downtown Palm Springs are low-rise structures facing onto the street. These building types help create the pedestrian friendly village character of downtown. If the correct techniques are used, taller buildings can produce the same effect while allowing for increased residential and retail uses in the downtown area. However, care must be taken to protect existing public view corridors along streets, and when possible, to create new ones.

Another defining feature of the village atmosphere of downtown Palm Springs is its eclectic architecture. Early homes were constructed primarily in Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean styles. Mid-century and post-World War II buildings and homes were designed by an array of well-known Modern architects. The result is an architecturally rich and varied downtown. New buildings should be sensitive to the historic context and complement the unique mix of architectural styles. In addition, new projects should strive for excellence in architectural design.



Above: A map of building heights by zone in downtown Palm Springs. (For more detail on the characteristics of the zones see the “Land Use & Development/Districts” section starting on page thirty-four.)



Above: Gateway corners, which have distinguishing buildings set back from the corner, should be used at entrances to the downtown area.

Building Height

- **Downtown Core:** Building height in the central core area should be a maximum of 30 feet on the street front stepping back to 60 feet in height with minor intrusions for architectural features. The surrounding mixed-use areas in the downtown outer core should be a maximum of 30 feet with intrusion areas for architectural features on the west side of Palm Canyon Drive and a maximum of 30 feet for office/retail mixed-use and 45 feet for buildings with ground floor office/commercial uses and second story residential lofts with intrusion areas for architectural features on the east side of Palm Canyon Drive.
- **Transition Zones:** Building height in transition areas should be a maximum of 30 feet with intrusion areas for architectural features. On the east side of Palm Canyon Drive mixed-use buildings with residential lofts are excepted from the 30 foot restriction. They should be a maximum of 45 feet (18 feet on street front stepping back to 45 feet on the second floor) to accommodate the residential lofts.
- **Gateways:** Building height in the north and south gateway areas should be a maximum of 30 feet on the street front stepping back to 60 feet in height with minor intrusions for architectural features.
- **The Resort/Convention Center District:** Allowed building heights can be found in the Section 14 Specific Plan.
- **The Tennis Club District:** Building heights should be consistent with current heights and zoning restrictions.
- Building heights should result in a varied skyline. Taller buildings, if properly designed, will create dramatic view corridors that will add to the vitality of downtown.
- Taller buildings (in excess of three stories) should compensate for their height through the provision of grade level public open space, preservation of views, superior design, and quality construction.
- First and second floors of taller buildings should be pedestrian friendly through the use of large display windows, awnings or other shade covers, architectural detailing, etc. They should contain elements at a pedestrian scale and provide pedestrian uses, such as retail, restaurant, and office spaces.

Orientation & Massing

- An east-west orientation of taller buildings will reduce the bulk facing the mountains, which will help create/preserve view corridors in the downtown area. The east-west orientation of taller buildings is recommended when appropriate.
- Building massing should step back above the ground floor to maintain and protect public view corridors along streets. (See the bottom of page twenty-four for a graphic representation of a building step back.)
- Buildings should have variable roof lines.

*building height,
orientation, massing,
& design*

Architecture & Architectural Detailing

- It is important that the rich architectural heritage of Palm Springs be protected. The City urges property owners to preserve, restore, and productively use class I and class II historical buildings whenever practical. An appropriate high level of maintenance is also an important prerequisite to the preservation of historic buildings as well as the ambiance of downtown. (See the historic sites map on page forty-one.) Listings of historical buildings can be found in the Historic Site Preservation Board 30-June-03 List of Class I and Class II Historic Sites and the June 2004 *City of Palm Springs Department of Planning and Zoning Citywide Historic Resources Survey*.

- New buildings should be sensitive to the architectural styles and detailing of surrounding buildings while adding to the architectural quality and eclectic nature of downtown.

- Detailed architectural treatment should be integrated and consistent on all of a building's exteriors (360 degree architecture). Provide the same level of detail on rear-facing building facades as on front and side elevations.



Top & Left: Arcades, such as those at Santana Row (above) and La Plaza (left), add character to the streetscape and provide shade for pedestrians. They are recommended in areas of pedestrian oriented retail.



- Storefronts are the most important component of commercial architecture. They should have appropriate decorative trim, ample window exposure, and clearly marked entrances.

- Distinctive architectural treatments should be incorporated into building design when appropriate to the architectural style of the building.

- Buildings placed on street corners define the street edge and create visual and pedestrian interest. These buildings should contain special design features and architectural detailing.

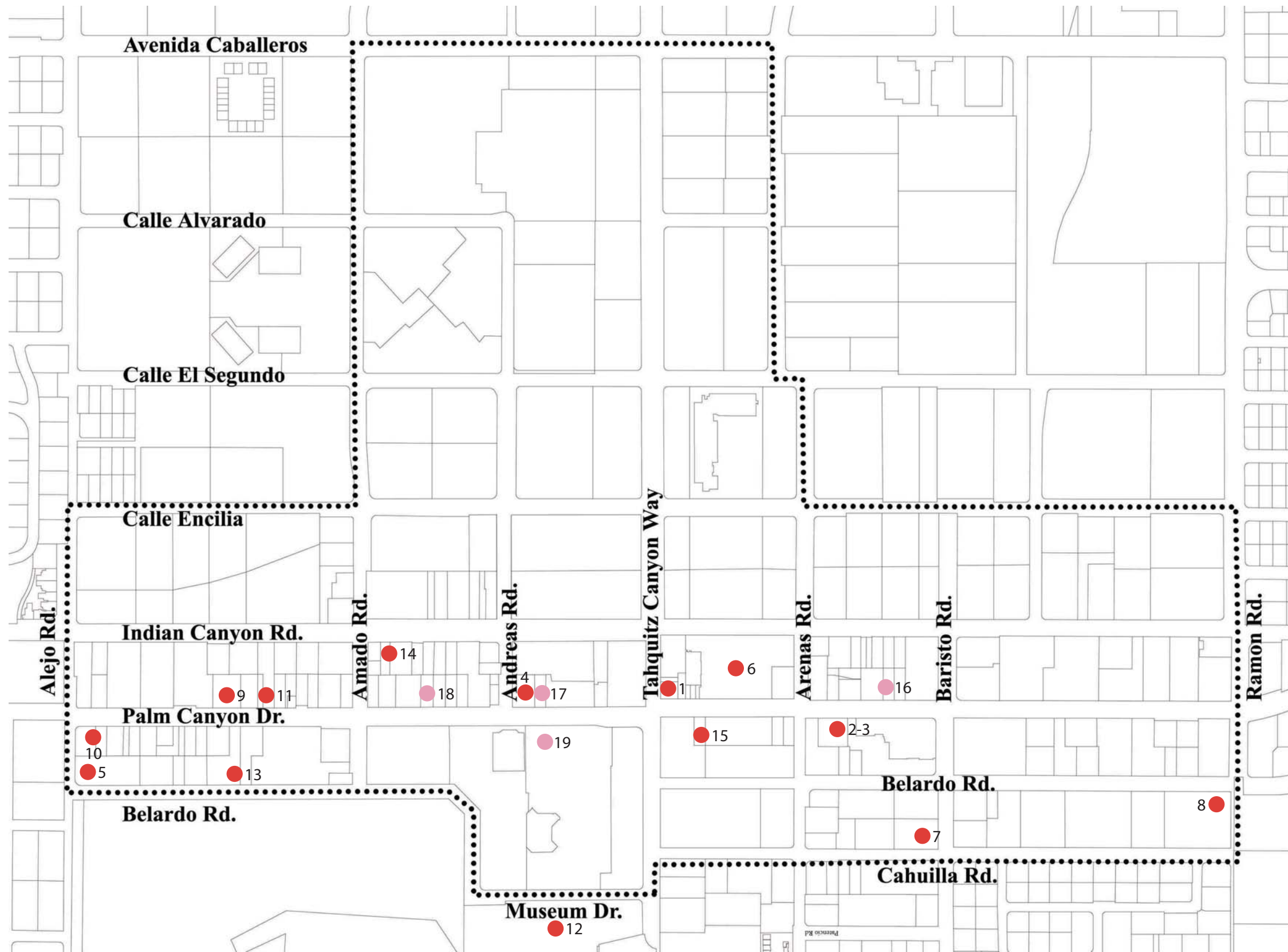
- Arcades, colonnades, overhangs, and awnings can add to the character of a building as well as provide pedestrians with protection from the hot desert sun. They are all encouraged when appropriate to the architectural style of the building.

- Building colors and materials should be consistent with downtown architectural styles and landscaping themes. They should complement surrounding buildings and public spaces while retaining a sense of uniqueness and individual building identity.

Top & Bottom: The eclectic collection of Spanish Colonial, Mediterranean, and Modern architectural styles in downtown Palm Springs is a valuable asset. New buildings should strive for excellence in architectural design while preserving or adding to the eclectic nature of downtown.



Page Intentionally Left Blank



sites of historical significance

- **Class I**
 1. Welwood Murray Memorial Library
 2. McCallum Adobe
 3. Miss Cornelia's "Little House"
 4. Lykken's Department Store
 5. Our Lady of Solitude Catholic Church
 6. La Plaza, including The Plaza Theatre
 7. Community Church
 8. Ingleside Inn
 9. General Telephone Building
 10. Drs. Pepper & Smith Building
 11. Cork'n Bottle
 12. Palm Springs Art Museum
 13. American Legion Post #519
 14. Fire Station #
 15. Oasis Hotel Tower

- **Class II**
 16. House of Murphy Site
 17. Carnell Building
 18. Indianoya Building
 19. Desert Inn Site

* Map Shows General Location of Historic Sites in Downtown Palm Springs

Source: Historic Site Preservation Board 30-June-03 List of Class I and Class II Historic Sites

Note: See the June 2004 City of Palm Springs Department of Planning and Zoning Citywide Historic Resources Survey for a listing of additional historic resources in the downtown.

Page Intentionally Left Blank

landscaping

Landscaping is an important part of the streetscape. It is essential in the creation of attractive public spaces and pedestrian friendly streets. Currently, downtown Palm Springs has an assorted collection of landscaping, which lacks continuity and consistency. The existing desert landscape theme should be protected and enhanced to create a stronger sense of place and to strengthen the historic “desert oasis” theme of Palm Springs.

The trees in the Downtown Tree Planting Plan and Landscaping Plan (see pages forty-three and forty-five) were chosen to be consistent with the Section 14 Specific Plan Tree Planting Plan and to strengthen the desert landscaping theme of the downtown.

The following trees were chosen to provide shade: *Acacia smallii*, *Brachybiton populneus*, *Cercidium floridum*, *Chilopsis linearis*, *Eucalyptus spathulata*, *Olea europea*, *Pinus eldarica*, *Pinus roxburgii*, *Prosopis alba* “Colorado,” *Rhus lancea*, and *Tipuana tipu*

The following trees were chosen because of their color: *Acacia smallii*, *Cercidium floridum*, and *Chilopsis linearis*

The following trees were chosen for decorative purposes: *Brabea edulis*, *Citrus species*, *Olea europea*, *Washington filifera*, and *Washington robusta*



Top, Middle, & Bottom: A comprehensive desert landscaping theme is an attractive and environmentally sound landscaping strategy to strengthen the “Desert Oasis” theme of Palm Springs.

Landscaping

- Signature desert plants and distinctive tree selection should be used to enhance the special identity of the downtown area. (See pages forty-three and forty-five for the Tree Planting Plan and Landscaping Plan.)
- Landscaped areas should be designed with the objective of minimizing long term water use. The use of native and drought tolerant plant materials and water efficient irrigation practices is recommended.
- Within the parameters of the unifying desert landscaping design theme, distinctive landscaping for specialized sub-areas of the downtown is encouraged.
- Smaller shade trees should be combined with the existing palm trees along commercial streets and within surface parking lots. This alternation of tree type will create a sense of rhythm and continuity while providing shade for pedestrians and parked cars.
- Landscaping should be used as a buffering technique to soften the impact of adjacent land uses which may be different in scale, use, or design.



Landscaping

Below: Landscaping in parking lots near the Casino and Convention Center in Section 14 provide good examples of desert landscaping.

Left: Desert flowers can add brilliance and vitality to the downtown area.



Page Intentionally Left Blank

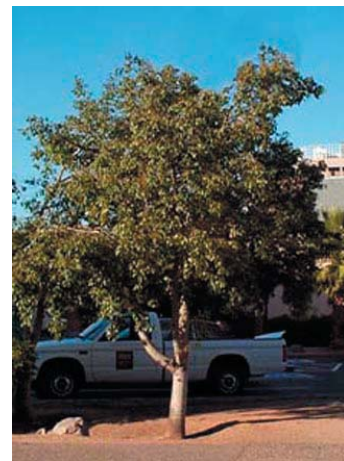
Tree	Alejo Rd.	Amado Rd.	Andreas Rd.	Tabquitz Canyon Way	Arenas Rd.	Baristo Rd.	Saturnino Rd.	Ramon Rd.	Avenida Caballeros	Calle Alvarado	Calle El Segundo	Calle Encilia	Indian Canyon Dr.	Palm Canyon Dr.	Belardo Rd.	Cabvilla Rd.	Museum Dr.
<i>Acacia smallii</i> - Acacia Minuta		S	S			S	S	S	S	P	P				P	S	S
<i>Brachybiton populneus</i> - Bottle Tree			S			S		S		S							
<i>Brabea edulis</i> - Guadalupe Palm				S				S	S		S	S					S
<i>Cercidium floridum</i> - Blue Palo Verde				P					S						S	S	S
<i>Chilopsis linearis</i> - Desert Willow	S	S			S	S					S	S			S	S	S
Citrus Species- Orange, Lemon, Lime, Grapefruit	S	S	S	S	S				S	S	S	S			S	S	P
<i>Eucalyptus spathulata</i> - Swamp Mallee		S		S			S	S	S		S	S			S	S	
<i>Olea europea</i> - “Fruitless” Olive	S		S			S			S	S	S					S	S
<i>Pinus eldarica</i> - Mondell Pine	S		S				S	S		S		S					
<i>Pinus roxburgii</i> - Chir Pine	S			S			S	S				S				S	
<i>Prosopis alba</i> “Colorado”- Argentine Mesquite	S				S		S								S	S	S
<i>Rhus lancea</i> - African Sumac	S	P			P	P									P		
<i>Tipuana tipu</i> - Tipu	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S			S	S	S
<i>Washington filifera</i> - California Fan Palm	S	S	P*	S**	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	P	P	S	S	S
<i>Washington robusta</i> - Mexican Fan Palm			S	P					P				S	S	P	S	P

tree planting plan

P - Primary formal street tree
 S - Secondary and/or informal tree grouping/screening
 * - Double row formal planting in core of city
 ** - Sole primary tree west of Indian Canyon Dr.; Double row formal planting in core of city; If median provided, plant single row in median



Acacia Minuta



Bottle Tree



Mondell Pine



African Sumac



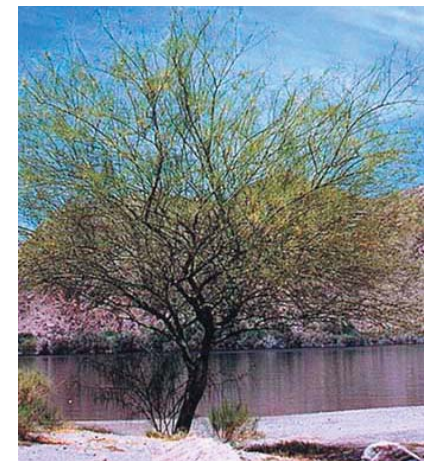
Guadalupe Palm



Mexican Fan Palm

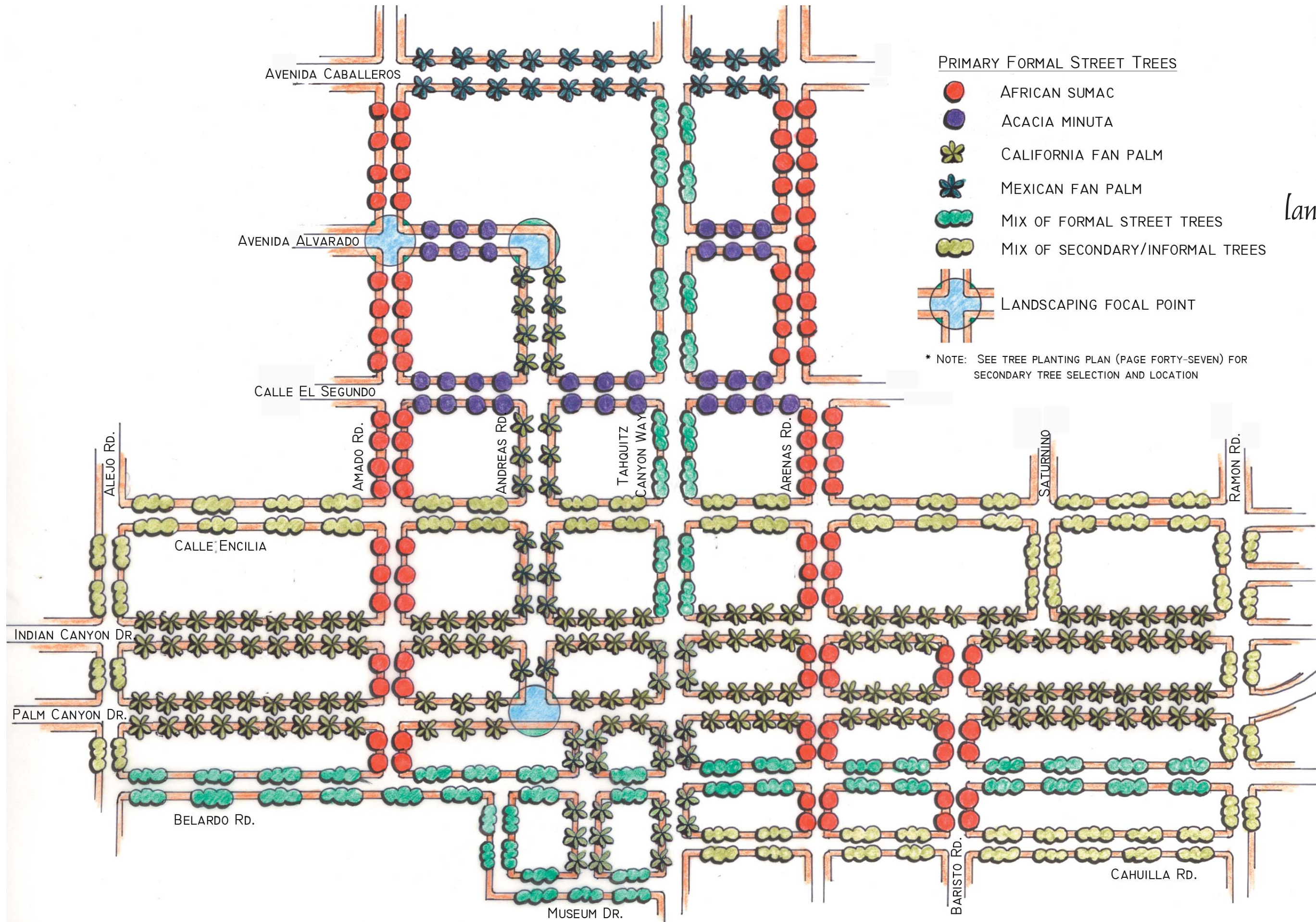


California Fan Palm



Blue Palo Verde

landscaping plan



Page Intentionally Left Blank

signage, lighting, & street furniture

Signs, lighting, and street furniture are all important elements of the streetscape. They affect the overall ambiance of the area and can add to the comfort and safety of the downtown area. They should be appropriately sized to the scale of the area. Pedestrian-oriented areas (Palm Canyon Drive, Indian Canyon Drive, and other streets with pedestrian-oriented uses) should have shorter trees, lower lights, and smaller signs than car-oriented areas. Many areas that involve both vehicular and pedestrian traffic will have two different scales and these streetscape elements should accommodate both through the concurrent use of multiple types and sizes of signage, lighting, and trees.

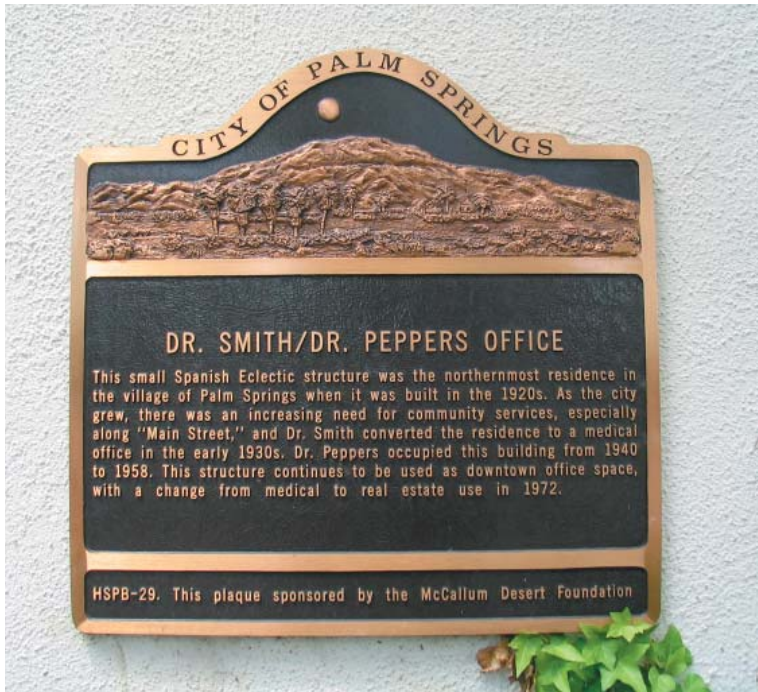
These streetscape elements should also add to the vitality and excitement of the downtown area. Signs, lighting, and street furniture should create a sense of continuity and unity within the downtown area. Within the constraints necessary to retain an overall downtown identity, these elements can be specialized to differentiate specific parts of downtown. Specialized event signs, banners, and flags should be used to create a sense of excitement and activity in downtown. Permanent signs, lighting fixtures, and street furniture should be consistent with and strengthen the overall character of the downtown area.



Top: Good signage is tasteful, interesting, and easy to read.

Middle: This awning sign attracts attention in a tasteful manner. The downward facing lighting helps to prevent glare at night.

Bottom: The gateways to downtown and the separate villages/districts should each have their own specialized signage, such as that of the Uptown Heritage Galleries & Antique District. All downtown signage should have consistent unifying elements with areas that can be further specialized for specific sites, locations, or districts.



signage, lighting,
& street furniture

Signage

- Signs should be visually interesting and informative. They should be distinctive and eye-catching yet simple, avoiding cluttered designs and excess advertising.
- Signs should complement the architecture of the building and also provide a unifying element along the streetscape.
- The size, scale, and style of signs should be determined by the scale of the buildings of which they are a part and the scale and speed of the intended viewer (pedestrian vs. vehicle).
- Along traditional multi-story commercial streets, the best placement for signs is along the lintel or sign frieze (generally defined as the area between the ground floor storefront or windows and the upper story windows or cornice).

Top: Historic signage around the City and the downtown area informs visitors of historically significant places.

Bottom: Two sided monument signs, such as the sign to the right, add visual interest to the streetscape and provide valuable information for visitors.



- If possible, signs along a blockface should be located at approximately the same height to create a unifying horizontal pattern.
- Desirable sign types along pedestrian streets include indirectly lit signs, raised letter signs, monument signs, wall signs, awnings, and double faced projecting signs.
- Double-faced projecting signs are desirable along commercial streets provided that they are of an appropriate size, scale, and location.
- Specialized City event signs, banners, and flags should be used to create a sense of excitement and activity in downtown. They can also be used to define specific downtown districts.
- Window signs, where lettering is affixed directly on the glass, can be attractive and eye-catching provided that the style is in keeping with the scale and style of the building.
- Undesirable signs are internally illuminated, plastic, flashing signs, billboards, generic trademark signs, and any sign temporarily affixed to ground floor windows. Roof signs are discouraged, although exceptions for historically appropriate designs can be made.
- Generally, signs should be externally lit with downward facing lights to avoid nighttime glare.
- Signs should be located so that they do not interfere with pedestrian movement or block the sight lines along the road.



Top: Awnings protect from the hot summer sun and the rare rain shower as well as serve as signs.

Middle: Tasteful signage can come in many colors, shapes, and forms.

Bottom: Monument style signage placed along the street can clearly and tastefully identify buildings located off the street.



Top: Lighting elements in Section 14 combine attractive lighting fixtures and signage to designate the area from the rest of Palm Springs.

Top Right: Street furniture can be specialized to designate specific destinations or larger districts.

Bottom: Themed signage or banners should be used to strengthen the identity of new and existing districts.

Lighting and Street Furniture

- Lighting and street furniture should contain consistent, unifying elements throughout the entire downtown area. In specific districts or areas, lighting and street furniture can be specialized to create a sense of identity as long as they contain the unifying elements.
- Lighting should be designed to accommodate the scale of the user. Thus, there should be taller lighting fixtures for vehicular traffic and shorter lighting fixtures for pedestrian movement. For streets with both types of movement, multiple types of lighting should be used concurrently.
- Street furniture should be attractive and comfortable.





What Makes a Successful Downtown?

- ▶ Downtowns should be concentrated, compact and walkable.
- ▶ There should be a perception of safety.
- ▶ There should be adequate parking without the creation of “voids” in the street frontage.
- ▶ Street level activity should keep people out of their cars.
- ▶ There should be an attractive, well landscaped environment and a positive identity.
- ▶ Landscaping, sidewalks and buildings should be well maintained.
- ▶ There should be a variety of unique retail tenants (not found in malls).
- ▶ Cultural and recreational amenities are important; museums and libraries can be viewed as anchors.
- ▶ Nearby residential neighborhoods should have character.
- ▶ Institutional uses such as city halls, courts and jails should not be located in the core areas of downtown.
- ▶ Gathering places for people to socialize are important.
- ▶ Avoid super blocks and keep the downtown pedestrian-friendly.
- ▶ There should be diversity and intensity—the mix of uses should include offices, residential and entertainment, as well as retail and restaurants.



10 Myths About Revitalizing Downtown

1. If we build it they will come.
2. If we demolish it they will come.
3. If we complete it they will come.
4. If we can't get a major department store to come back to downtown, downtown will never be healthy again.
5. We can't get a department store to locate downtown, so downtown can no longer support retail trade.
6. Competition is bad for business.
7. To be successful, downtown's retail business must keep uniform hours.
8. We have to be as lenient as possible with developers or they won't do business in our community.
9. We have to be as tough as possible with developers or they'll take advantage of us.
10. If we had more parking they would come.

Source: *Western City Magazine*



7 Secrets of Downtown Success

1. Define and aggressively pursue a shared community vision of downtown.
2. Form partnerships between the business sector, the public sector, civic organizations and community residents—none of these can or should go it alone.
3. Create and use a business plan and engage the community leadership to implement it.
4. Be market-driven—the “field of dreams” approach won't work.
5. Dare to be different—you can't outmall the mall, and you can't out discount the discounters—find a niche.
6. Concentrate limited resources in well-defined focus areas.
7. Know the indispensable 6 M's:
 - Manage like a business
 - Marketing
 - Maintenance
 - Market knowledge—create a niche
 - Money
 - Mix uses

Some Interesting Facts About Town Centers

- ▶ National retail chains achieve \$250 to \$300 of sales per square foot.
- ▶ 40% of all retail sales come from discount stores.
- ▶ 60% of all sales occur after 3:30 p.m.
- ▶ Online sales amount to only 2% of all sales today; it is projected to go up to 5% in the future. This is not a significant percentage.
- ▶ Stores have to be where people are.
- ▶ The U.S.A. has 20 square feet of retail commercial for each person.
- ▶ Europe has 2 square feet of retail per person.
- ▶ The most successful stores operate during hours before 8:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m.
- ▶ 80% of strip malls are dying.
- ▶ Mixed use projects in town centers are proving to be up-scale.
- ▶ An ideal balance of retail downtown seems to be one-third national chains, one-third regional and one-third local.
- ▶ "In town" home sales will be high during the next six years because of the baby boomers becoming empty nesters.
- ▶ There are 700 failed strip centers in the USA today, that number will double in the next five years.
- ▶ Downtown without an anchor is high risk.
- ▶ Anchor can be a post office or library or other similar use.
- ▶ When attempting to revitalize a town center, know the trade area and income patterns.
- ▶ Town centers should be located in areas of high income (an average of at least \$80,000 per year).
- ▶ Town centers thrive in high growth areas.
- ▶ Main Street should be no longer than 1,000 to 1,200 feet.
- ▶ Anchors should be in the middle of the block.
- ▶ Main Street should have at least 20,000 cars travel it per day.
- ▶ Town centers must have favorable weather.
- ▶ The town center must be indigenous to the area.
- ▶ The most common problem in the design of down towns is trying to put too much retail commercial in the center.
- ▶ There must be a partnership between the developer and the City.
- ▶ Specialty food stores seem to be very important.
- ▶ Town centers range in size between 25 and 65 acres.
- ▶ Design urban streets at 62 feet from building face to building face.
- ▶ Width of sidewalks should range from 12 to 18 feet or wider.
- ▶ The most important part of any public space is the sidewalk.
- ▶ Public space is used to create a focal point and sense of place.
- ▶ Design to create great corners.
- ▶ The setting of the town center provides a premium of between 10% to 30%.
- ▶ Design elements should include intimacy, pedestrian orientation, relationship of uses and secure parking. Don't let any one use dominate the other.
- ▶ Residential densities in mixed use town center areas range 25 to 60 units per acre.
- ▶ It will be difficult to define costs because of mixed uses, civic uses, parking and ownership. This makes financing difficult but not impossible.
- ▶ Successful developers work with the community from the get go.
- ▶ Successful cities help with parking, land assembly, and landscaped open space.
- ▶ Successful developers know their market and share information with the City.

from research conducted by The Planning Center



1580 METRO DRIVE, COSTA MESA, CA 92626
(714) 966-9220 WWW.PLANNINGCENTER.COM

This report was prepared for
the City of Palm Springs by
The Planning Center.