



9. COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Palm Springs has historically been the preeminent city in the Coachella Valley, drawing the rich and famous who seek a desert retreat. Today, the City's image as a premier desert resort community continues to attract visitors from around the world, as well as an increasing number of year-round residents. Palm Springs' image is based upon the City's unique past and diverse collection of assets, including the City's "village character," desert climate, mountain views, eclectic architecture, attractive streetscapes, and well-defined neighborhoods. A rich array of cultural, social, and recreational attractions, historic sites and buildings, and exclusive accommodations adds to the allure of the City.

Palm Springs is extremely fortunate to be recognized as a world-renowned community and should take steps to protect and enhance that identity. The goal of the Community Design Element is to create a cohesive and comprehensive community design strategy that reinforces and strengthens the City's image while enhancing the unique character of individual neighborhoods/districts.

Palm Springs has been active in urban design activities from its inception. The City Council created an Architectural Advisory Committee in 1967. Its duties were to determine whether (a) a proposed development will provide a desirable environment for its occupants, (b) is compatible with the character of adjacent surrounding developments, and (c) whether aesthetically it is of good composition, materials, textures, and colors. The City continues to seek opportunities that will further strengthen the quality of the built environment.

DESIGN OBJECTIVES

The Community Design Element is intended to enhance the current community identity through the identification of design techniques, guidelines, and features that will enhance the City and its neighborhoods. It

will serve as a practical guide to City leaders, developers, architects, and residents as they develop the best possible projects for the City. Its contents are intended to stimulate rather than stifle design creativity. This part of the General Plan focuses on Citywide and neighborhood-level details rather than project- and parcel-based specifics. The objectives of this element are to:

- ◆ Preserve and enhance the visual quality of the City.
- ◆ Reinforce/strengthen the community identity of Palm Springs.
- ◆ Protect and strengthen the sense of place and character of neighborhoods.
- ◆ Enhance vehicular and pedestrian corridors through the use of consistent design features.
- ◆ Enhance the energy, vitality, and urban village character of the downtown.
- ◆ Retain the architectural quality and diversity of Palm Springs.
- ◆ Protect the character of historic neighborhoods.
- ◆ Protect viewsheds and scenic corridors.
- ◆ Encourage environmentally friendly and sustainable design and building practices.

COMMUNITY DESIGN FEATURES

The City of Palm Springs is visually defined by both its natural and built environments. Traditionally, the City's built environment has respected and complemented the natural environment, creating an attractive and pleasant place to live and visit. The focus of this element is on maintaining and strengthening the City's community design identity—the collection of streets, buildings, neighborhoods, commercial centers, landscaping and public spaces which together comprise the image of the City. Figure 9-1, *Community Design Features*, identifies key gateways, corridors, and activity centers and shows how they interrelate. These features serve as a foundation for achieving the design objectives established by the City. The following are descriptions of these and additional features that contribute to Palm Springs' unique identity.

Gateways. Gateways are areas that define one's entrance to the City or a specific area within the City. They can consist of a number of design elements, including signage, landscaping, natural topography, monument features, water features, trees and other plantings, public art pieces, and specialized lighting.

Transportation Corridors. Residents and visitors view large parts of Palm Springs only by travel along corridors. Thus, these roadways provide excellent opportunities to create a design identity throughout the City. They should contain consistent design features such as formal landscaping, distinctive

lighting elements and signage and specialized paving at key intersections to create a unified sense of place and identity throughout the City. Unique treatments along secondary and tertiary roads will strengthen the individual characters of the neighborhoods they serve.

Activity Centers. Activity centers, also called nodes, draw large numbers of people and serve as important public gathering places and economic centers of the City. Activity centers can include historical and cultural sites, such as the Palm Springs Art Museum, as well as commercial, office, mixed-use and industrial areas, such as the Downtown, the Uptown mixed-use centers, and Destination Ramon. The Convention Center, the casino, the airport, and community parks also serve as important activity centers for the City and the region. Despite the variety of uses and sizes of these activity centers, they all share the important role of serving as public gathering places. These nodes should be unique and clearly defined areas that add to the visual quality of the City while reinforcing the eclectic village character of the City.

Neighborhoods. Palm Springs has a unique and varied collection of easily identified neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are defined by the mix of predominant design elements, such as unique architectural styles and detailing, landscaping, walls, building heights and setbacks, and pedestrian connectivity that exist within the community. While some neighborhoods are defined by the surrounding roadways, others with a more defined design character and architectural style may span several blocks.

Districts. In addition to distinct neighborhoods, Palm Springs is comprised of a number of unique districts. Districts are defined by a collection of integrated uses or activities and are larger than neighborhoods. The Downtown, Uptown, and Section 14 are examples of districts in Palm Springs.

Architecture. Palm Springs' architectural eclecticism is essential to the charm and character of the City. Its large concentration of mid-century buildings designed by significant architects distinguishes it from any other city of its size in the nation. Sites and buildings of historical significance should be preserved when possible. New buildings should be designed to complement the desert climate and lifestyle, providing opportunities for solar access and outdoor living. They should also be attractively designed in styles, colors, and materials appropriate to the City and the surrounding natural environment.

Scenic/View Corridors. Palm Springs' location at the base of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains creates opportunities for unparalleled mountain and desert views and multiple means of immediate access into these beautiful natural areas. Efforts should be taken to protect existing scenic/view corridors and to create new ones when possible, and to enhance and increase the character and quality of those natural resource access points.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DOCUMENTS AND PROGRAMS

The Community Design Element provides a guide for the visual design of the City. Zoning and Municipal Codes should be updated as appropriate to reflect the goals, policies, and action items found in this element. Future development should reflect the intentions of the Community Design Element and should consult the Downtown Urban Design Plan and applicable specific plans, master plans, and area plans when appropriate.

Figure 9-1 Community Design Features

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GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

The following goals, policies, and action items identify and address key design issues facing the City of Palm Springs. The goals describe the desired end-state while policies guide the City's actions and priorities. Finally, the action items present specific programs, products, or adoptions that will help to realize the goals and implement the policies. A priority list and implementation strategy for the action items in this element should be created. The City's Capital Improvement Plan should be updated accordingly.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Palm Springs' image is based on the City's unique collection of community characteristics, including the unique character of neighborhoods and architectural styles, the numerous resorts and recreation opportunities, the City's location at the base of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains, the desert climate, and the City's varied landscaping. While it is important to retain Palm Springs' eclectic nature, it is equally important to ensure a comprehensive and cohesive community identity through the implementation of certain design elements. This section provides goals and policies to guide the overall design of the City and its neighborhoods to ensure a vibrant and visually cohesive community.

GOAL CDI:

Create a safe, aesthetically pleasing community appearance that utilizes high-quality architecture—a hallmark of Palm Springs.

Policies

- CD1.1 Enhance the City's identity through the use of distinct City graphics in the design of gateways, street signs, city signage, public facilities and public gathering places, bus shelters, and other areas where appropriate.
- CD1.2 Use public landscaping, banners, and signage along streets, sidewalks, and property frontages and in public spaces to strengthen the City's identity.
- CD1.3 Recognize the importance of street trees in the aesthetic appeal of residential neighborhoods and encourage the planting of street trees throughout the City's residential neighborhoods.



The City logo and other distinctive City graphics should be incorporated into the design of gateway features, street signs and public signage, public facilities, and public gathering places when appropriate.

CD1.4 Implement appropriate review procedures that advance the aesthetic quality of the community through high-quality architecture, outstanding site design, and responsiveness to the desert environment.

CD1.5 Encourage the use of natural colors, materials, and textures in public and private development and streetscape improvements to complement the natural environment. Allow for the use of accent colors to complement the desert color palette.

CD1.6 Ensure that traffic signal boxes are hidden or designed to blend in with the surrounding buildings and landscaping.

CD1.7 Encourage design of visually attractive retention/detention basins.

CD1.8 Encourage the use of *CPTED* (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) and defensible space design concepts.

CPTED

CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) is a physical design approach to crime prevention. The concept is based on the idea that crime can be reduced through the use of planning and design strategies that discourage crime and encourage people to keep an eye out for others. CPTED concepts include design strategies that increase visibility, reduce potential hiding spaces, create well-defined public and private areas, and encourage directed pedestrian movements. Specific examples include open fencing around parking lots to ensure visibility from and onto the street, low landscaping around commercial areas to reduce potential hiding areas, and well-lit pedestrian connectors to discourage unwanted nighttime activities.

Actions

CD1.1 Develop a priority program and funding plan and work with the utility companies, citizens, and others to accelerate the undergrounding of overhead utility lines.

CD1.2 Create a master streetscape plan addressing landscaping, signage, lighting, gateway design, and special design features along major roadways and at key entryways to the City. (See Figure 9-2, *Special Streetscape Treatments*, for a map of major roadways that should be included in the master streetscape plan.)

CD1.3 Implement a program to address the maintenance of vacant lots.

CD1.4 Incorporate the Retention Basin Policy introduced in a Planning Commission Study Session on December 1, 2004, into the Municipal Code.

CD1.5 Identify and support opportunities to expand public art in conjunction with redevelopment and new development projects.

Figure 9-2 Special Streetscape Treatments

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GATEWAYS

Carefully placed and well-designed gateways at the primary entrances to the City will serve as visual cues that one has entered the City and will help set the tone for one's aesthetic experience within the City. Secondary gateways at the entrances to distinct neighborhoods and districts will help define the areas and create a series of arrival points as one travels through the City. Both primary and secondary gateway features can also serve as traffic-calming devices to slow traffic at these important locations.

Palm Springs has a relatively small number of roads entering the City, providing an excellent opportunity to create well-defined and memorable gateways. City gateways that incorporate multiple design elements are located along North Palm Canyon Drive and North Indian Canyon Drive at the northern edge of development within the City. Other major entrances to the City are generally defined by signage.

Existing gateways and key entrances to the City should be enhanced through the use of consistent landscaping, monument features, and signage.

Secondary neighborhood and district gateways already exist in the Uptown, Downtown, and Section 14 areas, as well as in a number of residential neighborhoods. Secondary gateway features, incorporating distinctive signage, landscaping, and other design features, when appropriate, will help strengthen the identity of existing neighborhoods and districts.



Secondary gateway entries, such as this Downtown gateway, add to the sense of place of a neighborhood and create arrival points within the City.

GOAL CD2:

Create clear, distinctive, and attractive gateways at key primary and secondary entry points that incorporate unique design attributes and high-quality architecture.

Policies

CD2.1 Create or enhance distinctive entries to the City through the use of signage, landscaping, public art, monuments, and walls at the following locations.

- Palm Canyon Drive at Tramway Road
- Indian Canyon Drive at the Whitewater Wash
- I-10 and Indian Canyon Drive interchange
- I-10 and Gene Autry Trail interchange
- I-10 and Highway 111 interchange



Gateway features in residential neighborhoods add visual interest and help define the neighborhood.

- Ramon Road at the easterly entry to the City
- Intersection of East Palm Canyon Drive and Gene Autry Trail
- East Palm Canyon Drive at Golf Club Drive
- Mesquite Avenue at eastern City boundary
- Gene Autry at Vista Chino
- Selected roadways defining the entry to Downtown

CD2.2 Ensure that all gateways incorporate consistent community design themes.

CD2.3 Replace obsolete entry elements and enhance the gateways to the downtown area with the incorporation of signage, landscaping, building setbacks, architectural detailing, and other elements that reflect the high-quality architecture and design of Palm Springs.

CD2.4 Strengthen the identity of neighborhoods/districts through the addition of community gateway features, special street signs, or monuments.

CD2.5 Preserve and enhance the scenic desert character along the I-10 Corridor.

Actions

CD2.1 Create and adopt a Citywide gateway program to identify and implement gateway improvements.

CD2.2 Expand the current City signage program identifying distinct districts/neighborhoods.

CD2.3 Encourage neighborhood community organizations or homeowners associations to fund gateway features for their neighborhoods.

NODES/ACTIVITY CENTERS

Nodes are recognizable areas with a high intensity of social/cultural or commercial/retail/industrial uses that attract many users and serve as hubs of activity within the city. Often nodes not only serve as public gathering places, but also act as economic focal points within the City. Nodes should be attractive and visually unique places that are well connected to each other and to other parts of the City, facilitating the movement of residents and visitors between these areas of activity. Primary nodes tend to draw visitors and residents for specialized goods, services, activities, and events, while secondary nodes are typically used only by residents and are visited on a more frequent basis for everyday goods and services.

Primary nodes within Palm Springs include:

- ◆ **Art Colony Commercial Center.** This area, located roughly at the intersection of Racquet Club Road and Palm Canyon Drive, should be a high-intensity, mixed-use neighborhood drawing residents from the northern portions of the city.
- ◆ **Uptown District.** The Uptown District, generally located along North Palm Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive between Vista Chino and Alejo Road, contains multiple uses that collectively create an important center of activity within the City. The uses in this area should be further concentrated to create a hub consisting of three well-defined areas within the node: the Desert Regional Medical Center and related medical offices located to the east of Indian Canyon Drive, the Heritage District (an artist district with galleries and artist lofts) to the south of the hospital area, and a concentration of mixed-use development to the north of the hospital area.
- ◆ **Downtown.** The Downtown area, roughly bounded by Alejo Road, Ramon Road, Cahuilla Road, and Indian Canyon Drive, is the historic heart of Palm Springs. It provides retail, entertainment/cultural, and restaurant uses that draw both residents and visitors. This is an essential node that ties the City together and should be a cohesive community center. (See the Downtown section of this element and the Downtown Urban Design Plan for goals, policies, action items, and design guidelines for the downtown area.)
- ◆ **The Gene Autry Trail Corridor.** The area along Gene Autry Trail from Vista Chino to Ramon Road provides the opportunity for the creation of a regional jobs center. The area's proximity to the



The Downtown is a vibrant collection of retail/restaurant and entertainment/cultural uses. It contains a number of areas such as La Plaza (above) that attract a wide range of residents and visitors of all ages.

airport, prevalence of vacant parcels, and easy access to I-10 and Highway 111 provide a valuable opportunity to create a regional employment center.

- ◆ *Destination Ramon and The Springs Regional Shopping Center.* The development of the large scale regional retail near the intersection of Ramon Road and Gene Autry Trail creates a regional shopping node drawing customers from around the Coachella Valley. This location should be augmented with special streetscape and landscaping features and improved linkages for bicycle trails and access to adjacent areas to promote its regional importance.

Secondary nodes within Palm Springs include:

- ◆ *Smoke Tree.* Located on the south side of East Palm Canyon Drive east of Sunrise Way, the Smoke Tree Village Shopping Center and Smoke Tree Commons serve as important neighborhood commercial centers for nearby residents. They provide a variety of everyday goods and services and create a place for residents to meet and interact with each other.
- ◆ *Sunrise and Vista Chino.* The intersection of Sunrise Way and Vista Chino is surrounded by an established single-family neighborhood to the north and west and by neighborhood commercial uses to the east and south. This intersection is intended to serve as a mixed-use center and gathering place for residents of adjacent neighborhoods. The scale of this mixed-use area is smaller than those proposed along Palm Canyon Drive and, as a result, building design should maintain a lower profile consistent with the heights of the adjacent uses.
- ◆ *The Palm Springs Mall.* Located between Baristo Road and Tahquitz Canyon Drive east of Farrell, the Palm Springs Mall is also surrounded by established single-family and multifamily neighborhoods. The Mall area includes movie theaters, supermarkets, hardware stores, and other retail establishments that create an important center in this central part of the City.

GOAL CD3:

Establish strong and clearly defined nodes that add to the visual quality of the City and provide activity areas/gathering places for the City's residents and visitors.

Policies

- CD3.1 Ensure that development in the above nodes is appropriate to the character and identity of the area through the use of specialized architectural styles and treatments, landscaping, signage, and other design elements at an appropriate scale and height.
- CD3.2 Strengthen or create pedestrian and vehicular connections between areas of activity.
- CD3.3 Encourage the creation of a consistent design theme within each node that will differentiate the node from surrounding areas.
- CD3.4 Create a sense of arrival at nodes through the use of specialized paving, landscaping, architectural treatments, signage and lighting.

Actions

- CD3.1 Create streetscape and landscaping plans for each node that reflect and emphasize the character of that area to create a unique sense of place and destination image.
- CD3.2 Create specific design guidelines for the above nodes.
- CD3.3 Ensure that nodes and activity centers are provided with appropriate pedestrian amenities such as shade structures, seating, bike racks, drinking fountains, and public toilet facilities.

ENHANCED TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS

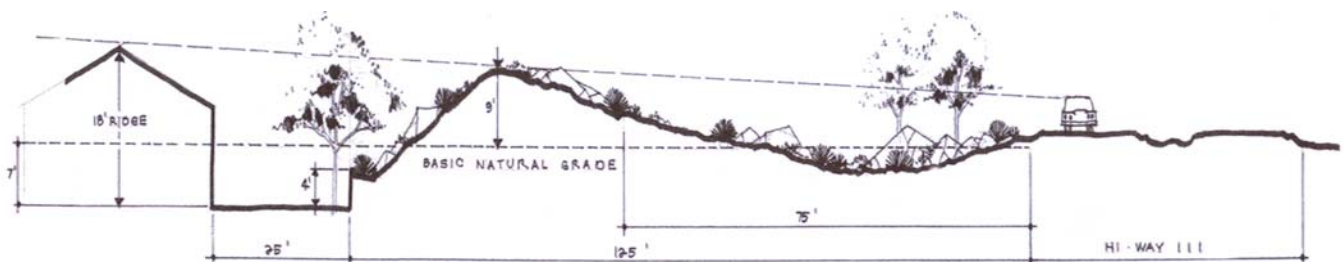
Corridors play an important role in Palm Springs. Not only are they essential for vehicular and pedestrian circulation, but they also provide valuable opportunities to reinforce the City's community identity. Design treatments on corridors should be sensitive to the uses along the corridor and create a clean and positive image of the City. The following corridors should be enhanced through the application of cohesive, yet clearly differentiated design features. The locations of Enhanced Transportation Corridors can be seen on Figure 9-1.

Highway 111 from I-10 to Tramway Road

State Highway 111 serves as a primary entrance to the City from the west. The corridor should be enhanced with a coordinated landscaping program marking the entrance to Palm Springs. The visual impact of development along the western edge of the corridor should be minimized. Berming and native landscaping should be incorporated into the design of new development along Highway 111 to protect views of the mountains and to prevent the visual appearance of a "sea of rooftops" along this important corridor.

North Palm Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive between Racquet Club Road and Ramon Road

This corridor consists of two parallel roads, North Palm Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive, which are one-way roads between Alejo Road and Ramon Road. They act as a couplet serving the Uptown and Downtown areas and are the primary route into and out of the Downtown for the majority of Downtown visitors. Currently, North Palm Canyon Drive has a fairly well-defined design identity along the Downtown section of the road due to



Development along the western edge of Highway 111 should be buffered to protect the dramatic mountain views as one enters the City. A meandering berm along the western edge of Highway 111 should be set back 75 to 125 feet with an average of 100 feet, covered with natural vegetation, and should incorporate special trail/walking treatments to screen development and prevent the encroachment of roofs into one's view along the highway. Above is a conceptual diagram of how development along the western edge of Highway 111 could be screened from the highway to prevent the appearance of a "sea of rooftops" as one looks towards the mountains.

consistent building frontages and tree plantings along the street. Indian Canyon Drive is visually less defined because of the number of large vacant parcels that line the street, the variety of land uses along the road and the lack of tree planting/landscaping consistency. This corridor's visual identity should be strengthened through the use of consistent design details, tree plantings, and landscaping along both North Palm Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive. The existing median in Indian Canyon Drive north of Alejo Road should be extended to Vista Chino to provide traffic calming for the Movie Colony residential neighborhood.

Indian Canyon Drive from I-10 to San Rafael Drive

Indian Canyon Drive is one of the three main entrances to the City from the north and should be enhanced with a coordinated landscaping program marking the entrance to Palm Springs.

Gene Autry Trail

Gene Autry Trail serves as a primary north-south corridor, connecting I-10 with East Palm Canyon Drive. Despite its importance for vehicular circulation, Gene Autry Trail does not have a well-defined visual identity. As regional uses continue to develop at the intersection of Gene Autry Trail and Ramon Road and along other sections of Gene Autry Trail, this corridor will gain increased exposure to residents and visitors. It will be important to ensure that this corridor conveys a strong visual statement that differentiates it from the North Palm Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive corridor and yet adds to a cohesive community identity. The addition of consistent design features, such as landscaping and tree plantings, well-articulated walls and architectural detailing, and increased conformity of land uses along the corridor, would enhance the street's visual identity. Steps, such as the creation of landscaping, streetscape, and signage plans, should be taken to improve the visual quality and identity of Gene Autry Trail to reflect its growing importance within the City.



North Palm Canyon Drive (top) has a fairly well-defined visual identity, while Indian Canyon Drive (above) is less visually unified. The visual identity of the North Palm Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive Corridors should be strengthened and made more visually cohesive through the implementation of consistent design features, landscaping, and tree plantings.

Sunrise Parkway Connector

The proposed connector between North Palm Canyon Drive/Highway 111 and Sunrise Way along the southern edge of the Whitewater Wash will serve as an important east-west connector with both roadways and trails. The connector should be designed to include a comprehensive landscaping

program that complements the wash and surrounding areas and provides an attractive “edge” to the urbanized northerly portions of the City.

Maintenance of Existing Design Features

Vista Chino, Ramon Road, and East Palm Canyon Drive serve as important east-west corridors within the City. The existing design features along these arterials serve as a foundation for the visual appearance of these areas and should be enhanced to ensure the continuing success and appeal of these streets.

Tahquitz Canyon Way

Tahquitz Canyon Way serves as a primary east–west corridor, connecting downtown with the Civic Center and airport. In Section 14, Tahquitz Canyon Way has a well-defined, although somewhat dated streetscape identity due to its consistent landscaping and lighting and signage features. These design themes and elements should be adapted with appropriate changes along the entire length of the corridor.

Andreas Road

Andreas Road between Calle Alvarado and Palm Canyon Drive is an important east–west connection between the Convention Center, the casino, and the Downtown area. Specialized streetscape elements and landscaping should be applied to this corridor to create an attractive and pedestrian-friendly connector.

Sunrise Way

Sunrise Way serves is an important north–south corridor through the central city for the City’s residents. The street currently has partially built landscaped medians, which should be completed and continued along the entire length of the corridor to create an attractive and visually unified corridor identity. Additional streetscape elements appropriate to the residential character of the corridor, such as pedestrian–scaled lighting fixtures or bollards, benches, and marked pedestrian crossings, should be added along the length of Sunrise Way to encourage pedestrian use and reduced vehicular speeds.

South Palm Canyon Drive and East Palm Canyon Drive

These two roadway segments serve as important connectors to adjacent cities and the South Canyon neighborhoods and should be developed with an attractive and unified corridor identity that delineates these areas as unique from other areas of the City.

GOAL CD4:

Design attractive and visually unified corridors that strengthen the City's identity while retaining their own unique design identities.

Policies

- CD4.1 Utilize unifying and consistent streetscape elements—landscaped parkways and distinctive medians, regularly spaced trees, specialized lighting, street furniture, banners and public signs—to visually unify the City's major corridors.
- CD4.2 Allow design variation of special sections along corridors (such as the section of Tahquitz Canyon Way in Section 14) as long as they are compatible with the design intent of the corridor and fit into the overall design theme and hierarchy of the City's streets.
- CD4.3 Ensure that new development along the Highway 111 Corridor is designed to minimize views of homes while protecting views of the mountains as one enters the City. This can be done through the appropriate incorporation of screening features, such as berms and native landscaping, into a project's design.
- CD4.4 Continue to explore the impact of reconfiguring traffic flow and parking along Palm Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive from San Rafael Drive to Ramon Road. Ensure that enhanced streetscape elements—such as landscaping, signage, street furniture, textured pedestrian crossings, and specialized lighting fixtures—are incorporated into the final design of the corridor's street sections.

Actions

- CD4.1 Develop a coordinated program and design hierarchy for public signs and lighting along major corridors.
- CD4.2 Institute a program to evaluate the current signage regulations and alter them as necessary to encourage a visually consistent and attractive sign program along corridors.
- CD4.3 Annex the county areas along the Highway 111 entry corridor.
- CD4.4 Analyze the impact and feasibility of converting the landscaping along Tahquitz Canyon Way and other lushly landscaped areas to a desert plant palette.

- CD4.5 Develop an inventory of the defining landscape characteristics for major corridors in the City and compile them into a design standards reference guide. The reference guide shall address not only an inventory of existing corridor treatments, but it shall also identify corridors where specialized treatments need to be developed, such as Highway 111 from Cathedral City to Sunrise Way.



Historically, the Movie Colony served as the residential desert retreat for many of Hollywood's movie stars. Today, the area remains an exclusive residential neighborhood that is defined by its consistent streetscape.

NEIGHBORHOOD STREETSCAPES

The design and aesthetic quality of secondary streets play an integral role in the identification of distinct neighborhoods and districts. These secondary streetscapes dictate one's visual experience as one passes through various neighborhoods, affecting one's impression of both the city and the neighborhood. Thus, high-quality and well-designed neighborhood streetscapes are important in enhancing and reinforcing the design identity of Palm Springs. Streetscape design should be a comprehensive collection of streetscape elements—including parkways and sidewalks, landscaping, tree plantings, traffic-calming features, lighting, signage, walls, building setbacks, architectural styles, and detailing and paving—that create a cohesive community identity, encourage pedestrian movement, and preserve the quality and character of the existing neighborhoods and city as a whole.

GOAL CD5:

Encourage high-quality, diverse streetscapes within residential neighborhoods.

Policies

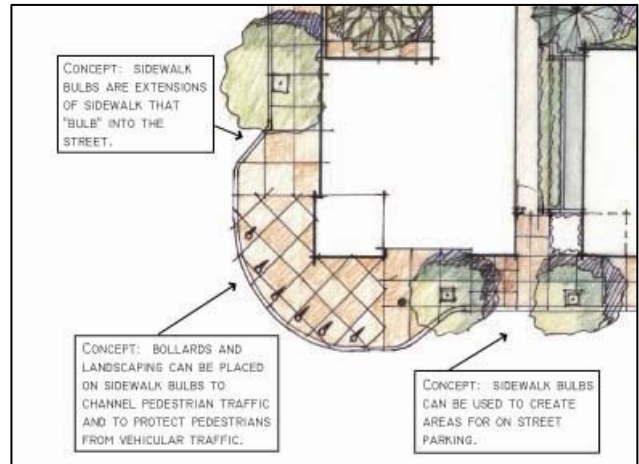
- CD5.1 Encourage high-quality streetscape design within neighborhoods and throughout the City.
- CD5.2 When new residential structures are developed in existing neighborhoods with established uniform or consistent non-conforming setbacks, allow the setbacks of new structures to be consistent with those of the existing surrounding development.

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- CD5.3 Develop paved rural street profiles (curbs, gutters, sidewalks, drainage swales, etc.) in historic areas or where a customized neighborhood streetscape plan has been developed to provide adequate alternatives to retain the neighborhood character while addressing issues of drainage and safe pedestrian movement.

Actions

- CD5.1 Initiate a survey of minor roadways and neighborhood streets and identify streetscape deficiencies, signage problems, etc.
- CD5.2 Develop a phased program to correct problems and deficiencies and revise the zoning ordinance to shorten the timeframes for requiring noncompliant conditions (such as chain-link fencing, open industrial yards, etc.) to be brought into compliance to enhance the aesthetic character of neighborhoods and streetscapes.
- CD5.3 Study landscape enhancement opportunities on Avenida Caballeros from Via Escuela to Racquet Club Drive along the median between the frontage road along Avenida Caballeros.



Sidewalk "pull-outs," also known as "sidewalk bulbs," are areas of sidewalk that "bulb" out into the street. They create a more pedestrian-friendly environment by reducing the length of the crosswalk, slowing vehicular traffic, creating interesting intersections, and providing more sidewalk area at intersections.

BIKEWAYS AND RECREATIONAL TRAILS

See the Circulation Element for more detail on bikeways and recreational trails.

On- and off-street bikeways and recreational trails are important components of the community’s nonvehicular circulation system. They allow pedestrians and bicyclists to move safely and effectively through the City as well as provide recreational opportunities for the City’s residents. The design of bikeways and trails will vary throughout the community depending on their intended use and location. However, bikeways and trails should be designed with a focus on the comfort and safety of users.

GOAL CD6:

Achieve and maintain a safe and functional environment along the City’s streets and trails to stimulate pedestrian and bicycle activity.

Policies

- CD6.1 Ensure that crosswalks are clearly marked, maintained, and replaced where they are appropriate and necessary to safely accommodate pedestrian activity.
- CD6.2 Consider establishment of a comprehensive maintenance program for pedestrian paths, recreational trails, and bicycle trails/lanes and associated signage and infrastructure.
- CD6.3 Evaluate new and existing pedestrian paths, recreational trails, and bicycle trails/lanes to determine where signage and amenities such as shade trees and structures, bike racks, benches, drinking fountains, etc., should be provided.
- CD6.4 Use sidewalk “pull-outs” at intersections in pedestrian-oriented areas.
- CD6.5 Design trails, sidewalks, crosswalks, street furniture, and other open-space amenities to be accessible to the physically impaired.

Additional goals and policies addressing the City’s trails can be found in the Circulation Element.

Actions

- CD6.1 Require new public and private projects to consult with the City’s Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator.
- CD6.2 Create a priority list for parkway, sidewalk, and trail improvement and incorporate that list into the Capital Improvement Plan.

LANDSCAPING

Landscaping is a crucial component of Palm Springs' identity and appeal and greatly strengthens its sense of place. The City's unique mix of landscaping and trees adds to the character of the City's neighborhoods and reinforces the design identity of the community. A consistent and comprehensive landscaping palette should be adopted and incorporated into community design to: (1) provide a unifying design element along arterials, (2) accent gateway features and special areas, (3) provide shade along streets and sidewalks and in parking lots, (4) buffer adjacent uses, and (5) create a strong sense of place. Landscaping within neighborhoods and districts should be used to create unique and clearly defined areas within the City.

GOAL CD7:

Use both public and private landscaping along streets, sidewalks, and property frontages to strengthen the existing City identity and ensure a pleasant environment.

Policies

- CD7.1 Encourage the use of native desert plants and trees that require minimal water and maintenance.
- CD7.2 Select plant species that will: (a) enhance the pedestrian character and convey a distinctive and high quality visual image for the City's streets, (b) be drought tolerant and fire and pest resistant, (c) require low maintenance and no pesticides, and (d) complement existing landscape.
- CD7.3 Amend the City's Palm Tree Trimming policy to require skinning of trunks of *Washingtonia robusta* (Mexican fan palms) in the public right-of-way to create a more maintained appearance.



- CD7.4 Phase out the use of *Washingtonia robustas* (Mexican fan palms) in the public right-of-way. As robustas die or are replaced, use *Washingtonia filiferas* for their replacement and in new landscape designs in the public right-of-way.
- CD7.5 Ensure that all public landscaping is adequately maintained. Overpruning and pruning into unnatural shapes is discouraged. Rather, landscaping should have a natural look and feel. When appropriate, a licensed arborist should be consulted prior to installation and maintenance of public landscaping.
- CD7.6 Ensure that new development provides for the installation of public landscaping in accordance with an approved landscaping plan.
- CD7.7 Encourage the use of compacted coarse-grained sand, decomposed granite or pebbles in medians and areas with exposed ground to prevent dispersion by wind.

Actions

- 7.1 Adopt a tree preservation ordinance.
- 7.2 Create a street-tree plan with a hierarchy of street trees for major thoroughfares. (See Figure 9-2, *Special Streetscape Treatments*.)
- 7.3 Create a landscape maintenance plan and develop a protocol for consulting with a licensed arborist as appropriate.
- 7.4 Facilitate the creation of volunteer groups to assist the City with the beautification of the public streets through fundraising and assistance in planting and maintenance of landscaping.

GOAL CD8:

Achieve and maintain a high level of landscape quality on private properties throughout the City.

Policies

- CD8.1 Encourage property owners to maintain the existing vegetation on developed sites and replace unhealthy or dead landscaping.
- CD8.2 Require that developers incorporate appropriately sized vegetation and provide sufficient watering and maintenance in the landscaping of the project site that will provide a mature-looking landscape within three to five years of installation.

COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

- CD8.3 Ensure that landscape design provides for individual and public safety by applying “defensible space” concepts and addressing appropriate fire safety concerns (especially in hillside areas).

Actions

- CD8.1 Update the City’s water-efficient landscape ordinance.
- CD8.2 Develop an educational pamphlet for distribution to residents and property owners and placement on the City’s website addressing appropriate landscape materials and maintenance guidelines.
- CD8.3 Create incentives for developers and individual residences to incorporate low-water, drought-tolerant, and sustainable landscaping into site design.
- CD8.4 Work in coordination with the Desert Water Agency in outreach efforts to encourage residents and tourists to utilize water more efficiently.



Landscaping helps define residential neighborhoods. Typically, older and historic neighborhoods tend to have lush landscaping with many bushes, flowers, shade trees, and shrubs while newer neighborhoods tend to have more environmentally friendly and sustainable landscaping that incorporates native, low-water, and drought-resistant plants.



City banners, such as the Historic Plaza Theater District banner above, can be an attractive method for reinforcing the identity of an area and creating a festive street scene.

SIGNAGE

Signage is a highly visible component of the City’s visual character. Clear, well-designed, and appropriately scaled public and directional signage can add character and visual interest to the community, as well as aid circulation and movement between and within areas. Attractive, well-placed, and appropriately scaled commercial and industrial signage can create visually pleasing commercial and industrial areas and add to the overall visual appeal of the City.

Generally, signage should be colorful, interesting, easy to read, and made from materials appropriate to the desert. Signs should be of styles, scales, and locations appropriate to their function. Signs should also be consistent with the architectural style of the building to which they are attached or adjacent. Monument-style signage should be used along corridors to create gateway features and destination images for commercial or business park centers. Wall signs should be used along smaller commercial streets to inform passing motorists. Smaller, double-faced projecting (blade) signs should be used in pedestrian areas to create a pedestrian interest. Signs mounted on poles should be discouraged and flashing signs, signs with moving parts, and signs incompatible with adjacent architectural styles should be prohibited.

GOAL CD9:

Convey a positive image through the use of attractive and well-designed public and private informational signage.

Policies

- CD9.1 Encourage the use of creative, well-designed, and high-quality signage that will add to the visual continuity and community identity of the City.
- CD9.2 Establish a consistent design vocabulary on a Citywide level for public signage, including fixture type, lettering, colors, symbols, and logos.
- CD9.3 Create a “way-finding” signage system with directional and informational signage located strategically throughout the City. The way-finding system should include signage at two scales: one for motorists and one for pedestrians.

COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

- CD9.4 Ensure that signage is adequately spaced and clearly visible during the day and night to control vehicular traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians.
- CD9.5 Place distinctive signage to identify principal entries to the City, unique districts, neighborhoods, locations, public buildings, and parks.
- CD9.6 Utilize lively, colorful, well-designed, and well-placed banners for holidays, City events, and other City-approved special occasions.
- CD9.7 Ensure that public signage is carefully placed and as appropriate to prevent clutter and confusion. Public signage should complement, not detract from, adjacent commercial and residential uses.

Actions

- CD9.1 Replace existing public signage with new fixtures that consolidate, as feasible, the diversity of signage information (parking, locational, traffic control, etc.).
- CD9.2 Develop a program to identify locations for way-finding signage, create interesting and attractive designs for the signage, and implement a phasing plan for the financing and placement of the signage.
- CD9.3 Restrict flashing and animated LED message board signs and phase out existing signs of this type.
- CD9.4 Continue to place signage at the entrances to distinct neighborhoods and districts.
- CD9.5 Complete an update of the existing sign ordinance to address deficiencies and ensure consistent sign guidelines and standards.



Clear and attractive monument-style signage, such as the sign at La Plaza, provides useful information while adding to the visual appeal and character of the City.

GOAL CD10:

Design visually attractive commercial and industrial signage that contributes to the visual quality of the City.



Attractive and well-designed commercial signage comes in many shapes and sizes. However, the color, scale, and design should be appropriate to the building of which it is a part and the surrounding area. Commercial signage should be simple yet visually interesting and easy to read.

Policies

- CD10.1 Encourage the use of simple, distinctive, and appropriately scaled signs in pedestrian-oriented areas. Awnings, wall signs, raised-letter signs, and projecting blade signs are preferable and should be encouraged.
- CD10.2 Design signs that complement the architecture of the building without dominating it.
- CD10.3 Encourage the placement of wall signs at approximately the same height along a continuous façade of storefronts to provide a unifying, horizontal design element.
- CD10.4 Encourage complementary yet distinctive signage within commercial centers.
- CD10.5 Discourage the use of free-standing signs. When free-standing signs are necessary, encourage the use of vertical monument-style signs with consistent lettering, styles, and colors appropriate to the architecture of the commercial center of which they are a part.
- CD10.6 Prohibit pole, roof, flashing, and animated signs.
- CD10.7 Ensure that signs are made of durable materials that can withstand the City's desert climate—plastic signs and wood signs in direct sunlight should be prohibited.

LIGHTING

Lighting is necessary to encourage nighttime activity and ensure pedestrian safety. However, lighting levels should be minimized to help retain the “village” character of the City, to preserve the dramatic views of the night sky, and to conserve energy. In addition, lighting levels should be maintained at a low level to help ensure the success of the Palomar Observatory, located in northern San Diego County.

The California Energy Commission’s Title 24 presents lighting and energy standards for the State. The majority of properties in Palm Springs fall within Lighting Zones 1 and 2. Typically, Zone 1 consists of properties that are government designated parks, recreation areas, and wildlife preserves. Zone 2 is comprised of areas designated as rural by the 2000 US Census. City lighting standards should be updated to reflect the new requirements for these zones and should be applied to new projects and significant alterations to existing projects.

GOAL CD11:

Utilize low lighting levels to emphasize the “village” character of the community and to minimize light pollution in the Coachella Valley.

Policies

- CD11.1 Use illumination levels that are appropriate to the activity level or the size of the area.
- CD11.2 Encourage the use of unifying and visually pleasing lighting fixtures throughout the City and on private property.
- CD11.3 Encourage the incorporation of lighting into signage design when appropriate. Such lighting should be designed to minimize glare and lighting spillage while accentuating the design of the signage. Spot, back-lit, and downward-facing lighting fixtures and internal illumination features are preferred methods of signage lighting.



Lighting elements should be incorporated into commercial signage when appropriate. Downward-facing lighting elements, such as those above, reduce nighttime glare and spillage of light onto adjacent properties.



Lighting fixtures in Section 14 incorporate signage into their design.

Night Sky Ordinance: Cities in the Coachella Valley have recognized the need to minimize light pollution and protect the night sky. An unpolluted desert night sky provides valuable opportunities for research at the Palomar Observatory and adds to the desert oasis image of the region. To protect the night sky, Palm Springs passed a night sky ordinance that limits light pollution.

- CD11.4 Require that outdoor light fixtures used for flood lighting, general illumination, or advertisement be fully shielded and properly focused to minimize glare and spill light into the night sky and onto adjacent properties.
- CD11.5 Limit street lighting to safety lighting at intersections of streets designated as collectors or larger. The intensity of light should be related to the street classification, surrounding land uses, and traffic volumes.
- CD11.6 Encourage that outdoor lighting, other than that used for safety and security, be turned off or lighting levels reduced to conserve energy when the area, business, or activity is not open to the public or otherwise in use.
- CD11.7 Ensure that new projects and significant alterations to existing projects meet Title 24 outdoor lighting zone standards and energy conservation in lighting.

Action

- CD11.1 Review City lighting standards and change as necessary to reflect updates to Title 24 requirements.

GATHERING PLACES



Outdoor dining areas create pleasant places to socialize and relax. They enliven the streetscape and are recommended in pedestrian-oriented areas, when appropriate.

Gathering places can take on many different forms. They range from large recreational facilities and open spaces to public plazas to pedestrian-oriented commercial areas. Gathering places serve as hubs of activity within the community and provide opportunities for large public events as well as day-to-day interactions with other members of the community. Gathering places can be public areas (such as streets, parks, and plazas), privately owned but publicly accessible areas (such as commercial centers), or privately owned and restricted spaces (such as open spaces within private developments that are restricted to that project’s residents or authorized users). It is important that all types of gathering places are designed to provide cool, shady, and comfortable areas for people to relax and interact with others in the community. High-quality gathering places can dramatically improve the quality of life in the City.

GOAL CD12:

Create active, vibrant, and attractive gathering places.

Policies

- CD12.1 Integrate interactive, visually pleasing, and convenient gathering places—including plazas, pedestrian areas, and recreational open spaces—into the City’s design.
- CD12.2 Design public spaces with pedestrian safety and comfort in mind.
- CD12.3 Provide as many pedestrian amenities as feasible, including:
- Ample shade
 - Mister systems for outdoor air conditioning
 - Fixed and movable seating
 - A central focal point, such as a fountain, piece of public artwork, historic marker, or monument feature
 - Outdoor dining, where appropriate
 - Wide paths or trails
 - Drinking fountains and toilet facilities, where appropriate
 - Decorative water features
- CD12.4 Include landscaping, signage, and other design elements that reinforce the village character and design identity of the City into the design of gathering places.
- CD12.5 Locate public spaces in areas with high levels of activity and visibility.
- CD12.6 Orient development toward plazas, parks, village greens, outdoor eating areas, and other public gathering places.
- CD12.7 Encourage the creation of small sitting areas and/or shaded courtyards within or close to shopping areas. Use landscaping and other buffering strategies in the design of these sites to minimize the impact of traffic and parking.
- CD12.8 Design plazas that contain well-defined spaces, such as those created by the sides of buildings and other structures.
- CD12.9 Ensure that gathering places are at a scale appropriate to the area and intended use.
- CD12.10 Design gathering places so that they can be used by all age levels and are accessible to people with disabilities.



The shooting fountains in La Plaza (above) create a focal point that invites public interest and interaction. Such interaction will create a more memorable experience and encourage the user to return to the gathering space.

- CD12.11 Incorporate design features that encourage interaction, such as fountains, outdoor seating areas, small amphitheaters or staging areas, and terraced walkways and patios.
- CD12.12 Encourage well-designed, privately owned gathering spaces through public outreach and the design review process.

Actions

- CD12.1 Require developers to include gathering spaces within the project site the size of which are designed appropriately to the size of the development.
- CD12.2 Ensure that gathering places are provided with appropriate pedestrian amenities such as shade structures, seating, bike racks, drinking fountains, and public toilet facilities.



Section 14 has an attractive collection of culturally themed public art. The statue above serves as a gateway feature for the area.



Sculptures with accompanying signage, such as the Lucille Ball sculpture located in the Downtown, help to connect pedestrians with the art and culture of the City.

PUBLIC ART

Public art creates focal points and adds variety to public spaces and streets. Well-designed public art engages people, enriches the pedestrian experience and creates a connection between the public and the culture of the community. Palm Springs currently has a number of interesting pieces of public art that add to the charm and character of the City. The existing public art should be maintained and new public art added where appropriate.

GOAL CD13:

Establish a varied collection of public art pieces that add to the charm and character of the City.

Policies

- CD13.1 Maintain the existing collection of public art pieces throughout the City.
- CD13.2 Encourage the placement of public art pieces that will add to the character and charm of the City where appropriate.
- CD13.3 Encourage the incorporation of public art into large-scale private development projects in locations accessible to the public.
- CD13.4 Encourage public art that is functional and interactive, such as bench sculptures and fountains incorporating seating into their design.

- CD13.5 Use public art to reflect and reinforce the City's culture, history, and character.

Actions

- CD13.1 Collaborate with the Arts Commission to establish a public art master plan that identifies key gateways into the city and areas within the city where public art should be located and possible alternative sources of funding.
- CD13.2 Involve local artists and students in the creation of new public art through public outreach programs and design competitions.

WALLS AND FENCING

Walls and fencing define the visual identity of many of the City's neighborhoods and serve as an important component of the City's streetscapes. Thus, it is essential that walls and fencing not only provide privacy, but also present a visually appealing element along the street. Walls and fencing should be of a scale, color, and design appropriate to the surrounding area as well as the building(s) they are intended to serve. They should be made of materials that complement the desert context as well as adjacent architecture and landscaping.

Walls and fences often create long and monotonous views along the street. To avoid this, walls and fences should be designed to provide variation and visual interest as one moves along the roadway. They should undulate, provide openings for pedestrian connectivity, and vary in height. They should incorporate special treatments and materials, such as patterned blocks, artistic designs, and tiles, as appropriate.

GOAL CD14:

Ensure that appealing and attractive walls and fencing add to the visual quality of the City's streetscapes.

Policies

- CD14.1 Ensure that walls and fencing are attractive and well designed, especially along major corridors and in historic neighborhoods.
- CD14.2 Encourage the use of styles and materials that complement the surrounding community and architectural styles.
- CD14.3 Encourage the use of quality materials that are appropriate to the desert climate, such as stone, stucco, plaster, and metal.



Walls can provide privacy and create a pleasant environment along the street. Walls should be low enough to preserve views of the mountains and other points of interest from the street.

- CD14.4 Prevent long and monotonous walls and fencing through undulation, modulation, surface articulation, and landscaping.
- CD14.5 Limit the height of walls and fencing and encourage the use of wall breaks and transparent fences to protect views.
- CD14.6 Prohibit gated community entries and perimeter walls around entire neighborhoods. Instead, provide privacy through design features such as meandering streets, ample landscaping, and house placement that provides privacy and exclusivity.
- CD14.7 Install landscaping along the edge of walls and fences to soften their appearance.
- CD14.8 Enhance the visual appearance of utility enclosure fencing with the addition of landscaping.
- CD14.9 Prohibit the use of chain-link fences.
- CD14.10 Encourage metal fences to be dark colors to be less visually obtrusive.

Actions

- CD14.1 Update the walls and fencing ordinance to address appropriate materials and designs for wall and fencing, including temporary construction fencing.

PARKING

Attractive and well-designed parking is essential for maintaining the visual quality and economic success of the City as well as for ensuring the safety and comfort of residents and visitors alike. Off-street parking areas should be screened from the street to reduce the visual impact of the parking on passing vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Design techniques, such as berming, walls, landscaping, and trellises, should be used to buffer these parking areas from the roadway. Parking areas should also be designed with the user's safety and comfort in mind, including safe circulation, ample shade, and clearly defined pedestrian crossing areas in the design of the parking area.

Ample on-street parking should be provided in the downtown and other commercial areas. The type of on-street parking (parallel vs. angled) should be appropriate to the size and traffic speeds of the street. Ample shade and landscaping should be incorporated into the design of on-street parking where appropriate.

GOAL CD15:

Provide safe, attractive, and well-designed off-street parking areas.

Policies

- CD15.1 Encourage the use of *parking plazas* rather than traditional surface parking lots whenever possible.
- CD15.2 Incorporate shade trees, landscaping, patterned paving, sidewalks, and other pedestrian amenities into the design of parking areas.
- CD15.3 Screen parking from roadways through the use of sidewalk trees, landscaping, low berms, trellises, or grade changes.
- CD15.4 Encourage the placement of parking lots behind or on the side of buildings to minimize the visual impact of parking areas on the street scene.
- CD15.5 Encourage the use of permeable paving materials to increase on-site percolation and reduce stormwater runoff.
- CD15.6 Encourage shared parking, including guest parking, for adjacent uses with different peak hours.
- CD15.7 Provide shaded pedestrian and clear vehicular interconnections between adjacent parking lots to reduce short trip car movement between commercial centers.
- CD15.8 Assess off-street parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance and revise as necessary to provide adequate guest parking.

Actions

- CD15.1 Update the off-street parking ordinance to include standards for parking plazas and to correct for any existing deficiencies.

Parking Plazas

Parking plazas contain a number of design elements that make them safer and more convenient and pedestrian friendly than traditional surface parking lots. Typically, 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. Parking plazas can be incorporated into projects of all sizes. They are typically included in the design of commercial, mixed-use, and office projects as well as in Downtown areas to ensure the safety and comfort of people visiting those areas. See the Downtown Urban Design Plan for further description of parking plazas.

GOAL CD16:

Provide adequate on-street parking.

Policies

- CD16.1 Retain existing and encourage the creation of new on-street parking in the Downtown and neighborhood commercial centers, when appropriate.
- CD16.2 Encourage the creation of east–west parking streets with angled parking (such as Arenas Road) in the Downtown area.

Actions

- CD16.1 Initiate a study of Downtown streets to identify opportunities for angled parking.

REGIONAL RETAIL ACTIVITY CENTERS



Retail activity centers should include attractive gathering spaces that provide multiple amenities for pedestrian comfort.

Historically, retail uses in Palm Springs were limited to the Downtown and smaller neighborhood centers that lined the City’s arterials. However, new, larger commercial centers serving the growing region have developed in concentrated areas in the eastern portions of the City. As these larger commercial centers are developed, the City has a valuable opportunity to ensure the high quality of these projects. Rather than follow a more uniform and mundane model, the City should seek designs that are pedestrian friendly, visually attractive, and consistent with the City’s design identity. Existing big box retail development near the intersection of Gene Autry Trail and Ramon Road should be enhanced to create a destination image and a special place within the City.

Attractive and well-planned centers will not only support a new and largely untapped economic base for the City, but also provide much-needed publicly accessible gathering places. In the often harsh desert climate, protection from sun, heat, and wind are particularly important. More and more, cities are realizing that attractive public spaces provide comfort and interest for the shopper and a solid investment for developers and tenants.

GOAL CD17:

Ensure attractive regional retail centers that provide pleasant, convenient and visually appealing shopping and work opportunities for the City and surrounding communities.

Policies

- CD17.1 Design highly visible entrances to retail activity centers through the use of accent landscaping and lighting, enhanced intersection features, façade detailing, monument signs, public art, differential paving, and other design amenities.
- CD17.2 Ensure the creation of pedestrian-friendly retail centers by requiring developers to include in site design gathering places and pedestrian amenities such as mini-plazas, arcades, court-yards, benches, outdoor eating areas, shade structures, accent lighting, public art, shade trees, and water.
- CD17.3 Incorporate architectural interest and variety within the context of a unified design theme for large-scale retail activity centers. Architectural interest should be provided through varied rooflines, rich architectural detailing, accent lighting, and differential massing. Consistency should be maintained through commonalities of architectural style, color, landscaping, signage, and lighting.
- CD17.4 Buffer parking areas from the street and adjoining uses through perimeter walls and landscaping.
- CD17.5 Provide safe, clearly marked, and strategically located pedestrian walkways between parking areas and commercial uses.
- CD17.6 Incorporate shade features, such as trees, shade structures, and canopies, into walkway and building entry design.
- CD17.7 Avoid monotonous expanses of blank walls through the use of richly detailed and well-articulated façade designs and landscaping.
- CD17.8 Encourage internal access between adjacent properties to minimize curb cuts along major thoroughfares.



Entry monumentation to retail activity centers, such as the example above, should create attractive and highly visible entries to the center. They should incorporate a distinct design motif and landscaping theme that will be carried throughout the development.



Parking and service entrances in retail activity centers should be buffered from the street and adjoining uses through the use of landscaping, trees, berms, fences/walls, and special paving when appropriate.

- CD17.9 Provide landscaped buffers between the curb and sidewalk along major perimeter roadways surrounding retail centers. Doing so will improve pedestrian safety as well as create a more visually appealing streetscape.

Actions

- CD17.1 Update zoning standards to require specific design features from the above policies with special emphasis on pedestrian-friendly amenities, such as gathering places, shade structures, and outdoor seating.



Distinctive and attractive entry monumentation should be placed at the entrance of neighborhood retail centers.

NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL CENTERS

Neighborhood retail centers provide shopping, dining, and gathering opportunities at a smaller scale than community commercial centers. They serve the residential areas immediately surrounding the center rather than Citywide or regional markets. However, these areas should include many of the same high-quality design elements as the larger centers, although at a smaller scale. These features include, but are not limited to, street-facing orientation, buffered parking, comfortable pedestrian amenities, mini-plazas and gathering places, distinctive signage, theme landscaping, and consistent architectural detailing. Additionally, a focus should be made on creating strong pedestrian and bicycle connections with the surrounding neighborhood.

GOAL CD18:

Create attractive neighborhood retail centers that provide generous pedestrian amenities, distinctive architecture, and convenient access.



Interesting architectural detailing, large display windows, and awnings/arcades add to pedestrian interest and comfort and should be incorporated into the design of neighborhood retail centers when feasible.

Policies

- CD18.1 Create visual interest and focal points at the corners of retail centers. Measures include special architectural features (such as towers), distinctive roof design, accent landscaping, monument signage, and sculpture elements.
- CD18.2 Locate parking in a neighborhood retail center in parking plazas where practical. Massive, oversized parking lots should be avoided. (See the Parking section of this chapter for a description of parking plazas.)

- CD18.3 Screen views of surface parking areas using shade trees, low-perimeter hedges, and other plantings. Incorporate landscaped planters, shade trees, and defined pedestrian pathways into the parking lot design.
- CD18.4 Incorporate pedestrian-scale design amenities such as awnings, large storefront windows, arcades, small sitting areas, special paving and color treatments, and accent landscaping into building and site design.
- CD18.5 Encourage pedestrian access to and from adjacent uses by providing pedestrian and bike paths and breaks in perimeter walls or landscaped buffer areas.
- CD18.6 Develop a consistent sign program that encourages distinctive and high-quality design within the overall theme of the retail center. Such a program should include style, scale, type, and placement of signage.
- CD18.7 Ensure that the scale and massing of neighborhood retail centers are sensitive to the context of surrounding residential development.
- CD18.8 Encourage the provision of at least one accessible, attractive, and comfortable public gathering place within the center.
- CD18.9 Encourage the creation of vehicular and pedestrian access between adjacent commercial properties with similar or compatible uses.

Actions

- CD18.1 Create a point-based project evaluation checklist to encourage design submissions consistent with the above-stated policies.

MIXED-USE AND MULTI-USE DEVELOPMENT

Mixed-use and *multi-use* developments allow for greater flexibility and a more varied environment than traditional single-use land use designations. Mixed/multi-use areas should consist of commercial, office, and residential uses in either vertical or horizontal proximity to each other. This type of development is appropriate for areas of higher intensity uses and can be used to create hot spots of activity.

Palm Springs has the opportunity to create interesting and vibrant nodes through the placement of mixed/multi-use in the downtown area and along corridors, especially North Palm Canyon Drive. These mixed/multi-use areas should fit into and add to the visual quality of the surrounding area.

Mixed-Use: Mixed-use projects contain two or more uses located vertically within a building. The most common design for mixed-use projects consists of ground floor commercial/office uses with second floor and above residential/office uses. This positioning allows ground floor commercial/office uses to benefit from easy pedestrian access and upper-story residential/office uses to retain more privacy because of their location above the ground floor.

Multi-Use: Multi-use projects contain two or more uses located within horizontal proximity to each other. This type of land use designation allows for multiple uses within one project site. Multi-use projects allow for a flexible positioning of uses, such as commercial uses along a street front with residential or office uses located behind and off the street.

GOAL CD19:

Create mixed-use and multi-use areas that are visually attractive, pedestrian friendly, easily accessible, and contain a blend of commercial, office, and residential uses.



La Plaza, above, is an excellent example of vibrant and successful mixed use. It contains retail on the ground floor and offices above.

Policies

- CD19.1 Encourage design flexibility in mixed/multi-use development by allowing the vertical and/or horizontal mix of uses in specified areas.
- CD19.2 Ensure that new mixed-/multi-use developments are compatible with adjacent neighborhoods through project design, scale, and appropriate buffers and transitions between uses. In general, taller projects should step down their heights as they approach adjacent development.
- CD19.3 Locate mixed/multi-use development in areas of high visibility and accessibility, and along streets that balance vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- CD19.4 Locate commercial or office uses on the ground floor with residential or office uses on the upper floors in vertical mixed-use projects.
- CD19.5 Encourage architectural design that differentiates ground-floor commercial/office uses from residential uses above.
- CD19.6 Locate ground-floor commercial uses near the sidewalk to provide high visibility from the street.
- CD19.7 Design new development with the pedestrian in mind by including wide sidewalks, shade street trees, sitting areas, and clearly defined pedestrian routes.
- CD19.8 Minimize the visual impact of surface parking by providing parking structures or rear or side-street parking with effective landscape buffering.
- CD19.9 Segregate residential parking from commercial and office parking.
- CD19.10 Ensure privacy for residents by providing each residential use with its own private space (such as balconies, patios or terraces) and larger communal spaces such as lobbies, central gardens, or courtyards.

Actions

- CD19.1 Amend the zoning code to create mixed-/multi-use development standards. The standards should remove potential barriers to this type of development, such as parking, open space, and setback requirements, as well as ensure the feasibility of the implementation of the above policies.

MIDBLOCK CORRIDOR RESIDENTIAL

Midblock corridor residential is a viable option for mixed-/multi-use areas with marginal uses along a corridor. The creation of midblock corridor residential within mixed-/multi-use areas allows for the concentration of commercial uses at key intersections and the placement of higher-density residential development along roadways such as arterials or collectors. Due to their location along roadways that generally accommodate higher volumes of traffic, midblock corridor residential developments should be set back from the street and oriented to create an interesting and attractive streetscape while allowing for safety and livability and shield units from roadway noise to the greatest extent possible. Midblock residential developments should create a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly environment that is compatible with and will successfully transition into the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Land Use Element identifies portions of the North Palm Canyon Drive/Indian Canyon Drive corridor as mixed-/multi-use areas. These areas are ideal for the introduction of midblock residential development. Midblock corridor residential development in this area will provide a viable alternative to the existing array of underutilized sites and prevent the introduction of strip commercial along the corridor. It will allow commercial uses to be concentrated at prominent intersections, increase the housing stock, and create a varied and visually interesting corridor leading into the downtown area.

GOAL CD20

Encourage attractive and well-designed midblock corridor residential development along the North Palm Canyon Drive/Indian Canyon Drive corridor, and other corridors where appropriate.

Policies

- CD20.1 Create a pedestrian-friendly environment along midblock corridor residential development through the use of landscaping, shade trees, special paving, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and small gathering spaces.

- CD20.2 Design street-facing building façades to include a diversity of architectural detailing, materials, colors, and rooflines.
- CD20.3 Encourage alley-loaded or rear parking in areas where they exist.
- CD20.4 Require a minimum landscaped setback between the sidewalk and the front yard or building façade to provide more privacy for residents and to allow for an additional row of trees and landscaping.
- CD20.5 Require that each dwelling unit have a reasonable amount of usable private open space, such as elevated decks, terraces, and rear yards.
- CD20.6 Provide highly visible and well-lit connections to nearby retail, transportation, recreation, and educational centers.
- CD20.7 Encourage visual breaks in appropriately scaled walls and fencing along the corridor to balance privacy needs with aesthetic impacts. Long continuous blank walls are highly discouraged.

Actions

- CD20.1 Identify potential areas for midblock corridor residential development along the City’s corridors.
- CD20.2 Create development standards for midblock corridor residential projects. Ensure that these standards address design features as well as open space, parking, and setback requirements.

INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS PARK DEVELOPMENT



Attractive signage and public art in industrial and office buildings will add to the visual aesthetics of the City.

Palm Springs has a number of developing light industrial and business parks within its boundaries. The majority of these new industrial and business parks are located around the airport and along I-10, Gene Autry Trail, and Indian Canyon Drive. The City currently has the opportunity to influence the design of these employment centers because, for the most part, they have not yet been fully developed. While industrial and business parks generally do not receive the same level of design scrutiny that more visible areas in the community do, Palm Springs has the chance to influence the appearance and visual projects. High-quality design of industrial development could be achieved by updating zoning standards to require design features including pedestrian-oriented amenities; large and clearly visible entries; architectural variety and detailing; screened parking, loading and storage areas; attractive landscaping, pleasant

gathering spaces as well as integration of retail commercial uses that support industrial businesses.

GOAL CD21:

It is a goal of the City of Palm Springs to create convenient, attractive, and well-designed industrial and business parks.

Policies

- CD21.1 Strengthen the image of business park areas through entry monument signage, distinctive landscaping, and complementary architectural design elements.
- CD21.2 Encourage clean and distinctive industrial/office buildings with clearly visible entrances.
- CD21.3 Avoid the use of long, blank walls by breaking them up with vertical and horizontal façade articulation achieved through stamping, colors, materials, modulation, and landscaping.
- CD21.4 Use screening techniques, such as landscaping, walls, and berms, to minimize views of surface parking, storage and service areas.
- CD21.5 Encourage adjacent buildings to share open spaces to serve as employee outdoor eating and gathering places.
- CD21.6 Require buffers, such as walls, landscaping and berms, between industrial and business parks and adjacent residential areas.

Actions

- CD21.1 Update zoning standards to require specific design features that will ensure visually pleasing and pedestrian-friendly industrial and business park developments, as well as protect adjacent residential areas.

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS



Many of the City's single-family residential neighborhoods are clearly distinguished by design features such as landscaping, walls, tree plantings and architectural styles.

A large part of Palm Springs' charm comes from the City's eclectic, well-defined, single-family residential neighborhoods. The older neighborhoods tend to be characterized by walls, landscaping, and unique architectural styles. Areas such as the Movie Colony and Las Palmas are distinguished by their walls and intense landscaping, which create a sense of seclusion. Other neighborhoods, such as the Deepwell Estates and the Racquet Club Estates, are distinguished by the prevalence of distinctive architectural styles. The Tennis Club district and areas along East Palm Canyon are distinguished by the mix of single-family residential uses and small hotel/resort uses with similar architectural and landscaping styles. Newer areas, especially those along the fringe of the mountains in the northwest and southern sections of the City, tend to be defined by their desert landscaping and the incorporation of the natural environment into building and site design.

Where there are single-family residential neighborhoods with unique character, they should be preserved and strengthened when possible. Additions to existing buildings and new or infill development within existing neighborhoods should be consistent with the character of the area and should add to the overall charm and visual appeal of the neighborhood. Potential design issues should be defined for key neighborhoods and studies or programs initiated to address the potential design concerns. (See Figure 9-3 and Table 9-1 for examples of key neighborhoods and a chart of important design characteristics and issues in each of the mapped neighborhoods.) New neighborhoods should be designed with their own unique design elements and styles to create visually interesting communities that will add to the character and diversity of the City.

The unique location of many single-family residential neighborhoods near and at the base of the San Jacinto Mountains creates opportunities for unparalleled views and mountain access. However, to preserve this asset for all residents of Palm Springs, care must be taken to ensure that development near and within hillside areas respects and enhances the surrounding topography and environment as much as possible and provide for adequate access to the natural areas. Hillside development should take the form of low profile homes that fit into the terrain and accentuate the surrounding natural environment. This type of development should be strictly regulated through development

standards that ensure the protection of view corridors, prominent natural features, and public access to local and regional trails.

GOAL CD22:

Create and maintain safe, attractive, visually interesting, identifiable, and well-connected single-family neighborhoods.

Policies

- CD22.1 Require new and infill development to be of compatible scale, materials, and massing as existing development. Also ensure that the design character of the new development is appropriate to the area.
- CD22.2 Allow new and infill projects to be excluded from sidewalk and other streetscape improvement requirements if those requirements are not consistent with the existing neighborhood character (especially in historic areas). However, do not allow exceptions where the General Plan Circulation Element requires streetscape improvements along arterial highways.
- CD22.3 Ensure that new neighborhoods and communities are designed to be unique and visually pleasing additions to the City.
- CD22.4 Ensure that new residential development does not overwhelm natural features, especially washes and views of the mountains.
- CD22.5 Actively enforce development standards, design guidelines, and policies to preserve and enhance the character of neighborhoods in Palm Springs.
- CD22.6 Encourage buffers or transitions such as landscaping, or decorative screening, between single-story homes and multistory development.
- CD22.7 Ensure that residential communities are well connected with each other and with nearby commercial uses through the inclusion of pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly design features, such as trails, paths, and pedestrian-oriented streets, in the neighborhood's design.

Office of Neighborhood Involvement:

In 2005, the City Council established the Office of Neighborhood Involvement and created a neighborhood empowerment program. The intent of the City Council was to create a mechanism to facilitate communication between residents and the City staff and encourage continuous neighborhood improvement throughout the City.

Neighborhoods registered with the Office of Neighborhood involvement include:

The Historic Tennis Club, the Deepwell Estates, the Tahquitz River Estates, the Movie Colony, Bel Desierto, the Sunmor Estates, Warm Sands, and Vista Las Palmas.

Actions

- CD22.1 Identify and enhance the key design elements (landscaping, design character and detailing, etc.) that characterize the City's existing neighborhoods. (See Table 9-1 for key design elements for some of the City's important neighborhoods.)
- CD22.2 Institute special neighborhood improvement programs in areas that lack a distinct identity, that struggle with day-to-day maintenance issues, or have a repeated history of code violations.
- CD22.3 Update the existing single-family residential zoning ordinance to require that new development be appropriate to and compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- CD22.4 When traffic calming is required within residential neighborhoods, encourage the placement of appropriate traffic-calming features (such as corner sidewalk bump-outs, special paving, and curvilinear streets) that are both effective and aesthetically pleasing.
- CD22.5 Continue to involve architects, landscape architects, and other trained professionals in the design review of new residential projects currently subject to such review.
- CD22.6 Encourage the creation of neighborhood organizations or homeowner associations in areas where they do not currently exist.
- CD22.7 Encourage neighborhood organizations and homeowner associations to form volunteer groups for the beautification and general improvement of the neighborhood.
- CD22.8 Conduct yearly meetings with organized neighborhoods within the City to identify neighborhood issues and develop strategies to address them.
- CD22.9 Explore creation of a residential street tree program.

Figure 9-3 Examples of Residential Neighborhoods Recognized
by the Office of Neighborhood Involvement

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Table 9-1 Special Neighborhoods
Table 9-1, Page 1

Table 9-1, Page 2

GOAL CD23:

Ensure quality residential development that respects and protects the existing hillsides.

Policy

- CD23.1 Encourage hillside development that respects the natural terrain rather than detracts from it by designing houses that fit into the natural contours of the slope.
- CD23.2 Encourage hillside development to preserve natural vegetation during the construction process and to incorporate the natural environment into the design of structures as much as possible.
- CD23.3 Encourage the use of natural and environmentally friendly materials and design features.
- CD23.4 Require hillside development to preserve viewsheds and view corridors.
- CD23.5 Preserve public access to open space and trails through hillside areas.
- CD23.6 Require development on slopes of 10 percent or greater to undergo special design review to ensure it is sensitively integrated into the existing landform.

Hillsides

Hillsides are defined as any area with a slope of 10 percent or greater. The goals, policies, and action items in this section are intended to apply to all hillside development with the exceptions of the Chino Cone and Palm Hills, which have their own standards.

Actions

- CD23.1 Evaluate the Chino Cone development standards to identify those standards that may be appropriate for other hillside lots in the City.



Palm Springs has an array of multiple-family housing, ranging from apartments and townhomes to condominiums.

MULTIPLE-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Palm Springs has an assortment of multiple-family housing, ranging from small apartment buildings to large-scale resort golf community condominiums and townhomes. The range of multiple-family development in the City is both an asset and a challenge. A wide array of housing options accommodates the needs of different segments of the population. However, care must be taken to ensure that multiple-family housing adds to the visual quality and character of the City.

Existing multiple-family residential neighborhoods and multiple-family housing in predominantly single-family neighborhoods should be well maintained to preserve the visual quality of the City. New multiple-family development should be designed to complement the character of the surrounding neighborhood. Efforts should be made to ensure that these developments are visually attractive and interesting through the use of architectural detailing and variety, appropriate landscaping and developed open space and playgrounds, screened parking, and building setbacks and heights appropriate to the neighborhood.

GOAL CD24:

Ensure safe and attractive multiple-family housing developments that complement the surrounding neighborhood.

Policies

- CD24.1 Encourage the use of landscaping, colors, and materials comparable to those used in the surrounding neighborhood.
- CD24.2 Encourage architectural creativity that is appropriate to the neighborhood.
- CD24.3 Encourage architectural definition, façade articulation, and the modulation of large, flat surfaces to create a more visually appealing streetscape.
- CD24.4 Reduce the visual impact of parking by encouraging alley-loaded, tuck-under, garage, or subterranean parking when possible. Where on-street and street-facing parking are necessary or already exist, landscaping and special paving should be incorporated when appropriate to the neighborhood.

SCENIC RESOURCES AND CORRIDORS

One of Palm Springs' most cherished assets is its spectacular mountain views. Bounded by the San Jacinto Mountains on the west, the Santa Rosa Mountains to the south, and more distantly, the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north, Palm Springs is located in a stunning natural setting. The National Monument and San Jacinto State Park are recognized as outstanding and unique scenic resources in Palm Springs. Within the National Monument, the State of California has designated two sites as wildlife-viewing areas: the Palms to Pines Scenic Byway and the Mount San Jacinto Park. The City should also coordinate with regional and county agencies to ensure that any new projects proposed in the City do not conflict with any scenic resource programs that may be in place.

From the valley floor, the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains provide a stunning backdrop. The Indian, Chino, Palm, Andreas, and other canyons that wind through the mountains display exquisite rock formations, varied topography, and diverse flora. Hillsides rising gently from the valley floor provide visual relief. These scenic resources define the character of Palm Springs.

The City's proximity to the mountains creates numerous views of these dramatic backdrops. These views should be protected through the designation and special treatment of Citywide *scenic corridors* and *enhanced landscape streets*. (See Figure 9-4, *Citywide Scenic Corridors and Enhanced Landscape Streets*.)

Citywide scenic corridors are key *view corridors* that serve as entries to the City and provide unparalleled views of the mountains. Special care should be taken to ensure that intensified landscaping and other streetscape treatments frame rather than block these views. These view corridors can also be marked with the use of specialized trees, street furniture, and medians. Additional view corridors along secondary and tertiary streets should be preserved when possible.

Scenic Corridors: All major thoroughfares and freeways are designated as scenic corridors. Views along these roadways should be preserved and enhanced whenever feasible.

Enhanced Landscape Streets: Enhanced landscaping treatments should be used to frame the views along these streets.

View Corridor: A view corridor is a direct line of sight from an area to a point of interest or significant feature, such as the mountains or built landmarks. View corridors often exist along streets or between buildings.

Viewshed: A viewshed is the landscape or topography visible from a geographic point, especially that having aesthetic value.

GOAL CD25:

Recognize, preserve, and enhance the aesthetic value of the City's hillsides, mountains, canyons, and natural terrain.

Policies

- CD25.1 Preserve the frontal slopes of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains and slopes of individual landmark peaks that face the desert floor as permanent open space to protect their scenic value.
- CD25.2 Preserve scenic views along primary corridors in the Chino Cone and along Highway 111.
- CD25.3 Require that all land uses and future development proposals respect and protect the scenic values of the desert and mountain terrain.
- CD25.4 Windfarms, where technically feasible, shall consist of equipment that is of a uniform type, size, color, and placement.
- CD25.5 Preserve and maintain, through public acquisition and placement into a public trust, environmentally sensitive hills, canyons, or other topographical features that exhibit exceptional scenic value.

Actions

- CD25.1 Continue active interjurisdictional and interagency planning for the conservation and preservation of the Santa Rosa Mountains in their natural state with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Coachella Mountains Conservancy.
- CD25.2 Continue implementation of the Hillside Development Ordinance that regulates development on hillsides with a slope of 10 percent or greater. Periodically review the ordinance to ensure that it contains:
 - a) Grading standards;
 - b) Water quality and runoff;
 - c) Development standards, including open space; and
 - d) Site planning standards (landscape, street design, etc).

Figure 9-4 Citywide Scenic View Corridors and Enhanced Landscape Streets

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GOAL CD26:

Preserve and enhance view corridors.

Policies

- CD26.1 Protect and enhance view corridors by undergrounding and screening utility lines and facilities.
- CD26.2 Create/enhance building height and massing restrictions to ensure the preservation of existing public view corridors.
- CD26.3 Frame views along streets through the use of wide parkways and median landscaping.
- CD26.4 Require specialized design review for development along scenic corridors including, but not limited to, building height restrictions, setback requirements, and site-orientation guidelines.
- CD26.5 Orient new streets to maximize the view of open space, parks, mountains, and built landmarks where possible.
- CD26.6 Create attractively landscaped street edges in residential neighborhoods to frame mountain and other views.
- CD26.7 Coordinate scenic highway programs with City, county, and state levels of government and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments.
- CD26.8 Promote continuity in scenic highway programs through coordinated planning with neighboring jurisdictions.
- CD26.9 Seek to preserve and maintain, through acquisition or regulation, those areas or sites that are found to have exceptional scenic value.
- CD26.10 Require the removal of billboards along scenic corridors and encourage their removal along enhanced landscape corridors.

Actions

- CD26.1 Develop and adopt landscape plans for the identified Citywide scenic corridors and enhanced landscape streets. The landscape plans should identify tree types and placement.
- CD26.2 Create a priority list for the creation of street landscape plans that reinforce view corridors.



Many parts of the City have excellent views of the mountains. These views should be preserved wherever possible. Top: View west from the intersection of Tabquitz Canyon Way and Indian Canyon Drive. Above: View west from a residential neighborhood.

CD26.3 Alter existing building height restrictions and setback requirements when necessary to adequately preserve view corridors.



Bill Krisel's "House of Tomorrow," better known as the "Elvis Honeymoon Hideaway," is one of Palm Springs' many Modern style homes.

ARCHITECTURAL DIVERSITY AND CONTEXT/ HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Palm Springs is an architecturally rich city. Early settlers built notable examples of Spanish Colonial, Mission Revival and Mediterranean-style buildings, many of which are still standing. Subsequently Mid-Century modernist architects designed a wide array of significant buildings throughout the City. High-quality architecture—regardless of style—continues to be a trademark of Palm Springs. This rich architectural collection sets it apart from other cities in the Coachella Valley, creating a unique sense of place and a strong aesthetic identity. New buildings should add to this rich architectural legacy.

Ordinance 8.05: Adopted in 1981, Ordinance #1140 was intended to protect the City's architectural and historical heritage through the designation and preservation of historic sites. The ordinance also created the Historic Site Preservation Board, which provides the City Council and City staff with recommendations concerning historic preservation matters.

Because of economic pressures to develop in the City, it will become increasingly important to recognize and preserve historically significant buildings. The preservation of historic buildings will help retain the City's character and charm, which are crucial to the City's international reputation and economic success. In addition, the creation of historic districts may provide a means to revive deteriorating neighborhoods by providing building owners with incentives to invest in preserving historic buildings. In June 2004, the City completed a Citywide Historic Resources Survey intended to serve as a foundation for the documentation and designation of potentially significant historic and architectural resources within the City. The survey includes a detailed study of 200 buildings and sites. Continuing efforts should be made to identify and preserve historically significant buildings and sites when feasible.

Palm Springs Modern Architecture: The City is best known for its Mid-Century Modern architecture. The clean lines and creative style of Modern architecture fits well into the desert environment.



The Kaufmann house, above, designed by Richard Neutra in 1946, is one of the most famous examples of Palm Springs' Modern architecture. Other Modern houses can be found throughout the City's many residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

GOAL CD27:

Preserve and enhance the architectural quality of Palm Springs.

Policies

- CD27.1 Design new structures in architectural styles that reflect the City's diversity and creativity yet are compatible in scale and character with the City's existing buildings and natural surroundings.
- CD27.2 Encourage visual diversity in the predominant architectural styles of different parts of the City.
- CD27.3 Encourage the use of high-quality materials and materials that are appropriate for the desert climate.
- CD27.4 Ensure that publicly owned buildings and structures serve as examples of superlative architecture.
- CD27.5 Continue to require the application of 360-degree architecture on new buildings, to ensure all sides of structures contain architectural treatments and detailing.

Actions

- CD27.1 Continue to include design professionals in the City's planning process to encourage a high level of design review in new construction and renovations.
- CD27.2 Enforce the vacant buildings ordinance to ensure property owners maintain and secure their buildings to prevent "demolition by neglect."



The City has a wide range of historic sites and buildings representing the City's unique past.

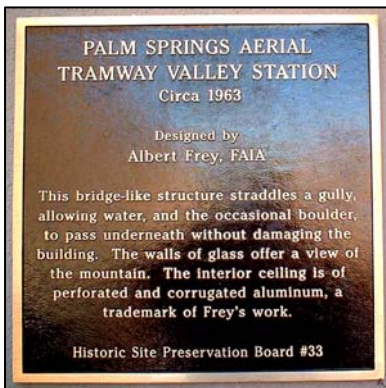
Top: The Welwood Murray Memorial Library

Middle: The McCallum Adobe

Bottom: The Oasis Hotel Tower

The Mills Act: The Mills Act is a tool that local governments can use to participate in the preservation of historic buildings. The act allows cities to enter into contracts with property owners with the expressed intention of preserving historic sites. Under these contracts, property owners agree to restore, maintain, and protect their historic property for a minimum of 10 years in exchange for potential property tax relief during that period.

Existing Historical Sites: As of 2005, Palm Springs had one site on the State Historic Register: the Frances Stevens School. Locally designated historic sites Class I and Class II sites. Class I sites are usually in good or excellent condition and have not been significantly altered. Class 2 sites are typically structures that have been demolished or have lost all structural and design integrity but still merit historic recognition.



Signage identifying historically and culturally significant sites and buildings creates pedestrian interest and adds to the character of the City.

GOAL CD28:

Ensure the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings and sites.

Policies

- CD28.1 Support the preservation of historically, architecturally, or archaeologically significant structures and sites as prescribed by the Historic Preservation Ordinance.
- CD28.2 Encourage the establishment of historic districts to identify suitable concentrations of historically significant structures.
- CD28.3 Support tax incentives (such as the *Mills Act*), mutual covenants, protective covenants; purchase options; preservation easements; building, fire, and City code modifications; application fee reductions; and any other methods deemed mutually agreeable between the City and the landowner that will help to preserve historic resources.
- CD28.4 Establish a program of low-interest rehabilitation loans for the maintenance and upkeep of significant architectural, historical, and cultural buildings.
- CD28.5 Encourage property owners to submit applications to qualify appropriate properties and buildings for the local historic register.
- CD28.6 Require that new construction in designated architectural/historical/cultural districts complement the existing historic structures and open space characteristics such that the new construction does not imitate or copy the style of the historic structures.
- CD28.7 Encourage developers of sites containing a significant architectural, historical or cultural structure to adaptively reuse and expand it, in lieu of demolition and replacement, where financially feasible.
- CD28.8 Make historic markers available to identify individually designated structures, sites, and features of architectural, historical, or cultural significance and require owners to display their historic markers so they are readable from the public way.
- CD28.9 Periodically require that the Citywide Historic Resources Survey be updated.

Actions

- CD28.1 Update the historic preservation ordinance to provide a clear review process for the development or alteration of survey properties.
- CD28.2 Coordinate preservation efforts with local historic and architectural preservation groups.
- CD28.3 Provide property owners, upon their request, with information on how to research, rehabilitate, and preserve their architecturally, historically, and culturally significant property.
- CD28.4 Provide information to the public on historically significant sites in Palm Springs.
- CD28.5 Encourage residents to identify historic sites and districts for possible Class I designation.
- CD28.6 Investigate certification of the local historic program as a Certified Local Government Program (California's federally funded historic preservation program).

GREEN BUILDING AND PLANNING PRACTICES

In the face of increasing energy costs, dwindling natural resources, and irreversible impact on the natural environment, Palm Springs has the opportunity to take a forward-looking approach in its design and planning practices. Palm Springs' location and desert climate make it an ideal setting for the implementation of *green building* and planning practices. These practices not only conserve energy and reduce the impact of development on the natural environment, but can also improve the quality of life of the City's residents through the creation of more attractive, livable, and sustainable spaces. Efforts should be made to encourage green building, construction and planning practices whenever possible.

Palm Springs intends to be an environmental advocate and a leader in environmental compliance and protection. We will strive to be a model for environmental excellence and a prevailing force in environmental protection.

To accomplish this, the City shall endeavor to establish policies that will incorporate environmental responsibility into its daily management of urban residential, commercial, and industrial growth, education, energy and water use, air quality, transportation, waste reduction, recycling, economic development, and open space and natural habitats.

Green Building: Green building is the term used to describe design, construction and planning techniques that are more environmentally friendly than traditional building practices. Green building includes design and planning practices that take advantage of new environmental technologies and environmentally sustainable design and planning concepts, such as the use of solar energy, the incorporation of passive heating/cooling design techniques, the use of low VOC (volatile organic compound) building materials, and the utilization of water and energy conservation design strategies and appliances. Recent advances in environmental technologies have made green building a more economically feasible option and increased waste stream diversion for recyclable material and minimized construction debris that heads to landfills.

The City recognizes that growth and opportunity cannot be conducted at the expense of environmental protection and enhancement, and that growth and environmental stewardship are intimately related. The City shall make every effort to cultivate superior environmental standards that will provide for green and sustainable municipal development.

A “green,” sustainable city is a community of residents, neighbors, workers, and visitors who strive together to balance ecological, economic, and social needs to ensure a clean, healthy and safe environment for all members of society for generations to come.

The City believes that the protection of the urban and natural environments is a social responsibility and a fundamental obligation of this City, and that an ecologically impoverished and polluted environments adversely impacts human health. To ensure a viable future, the city will take a leadership role and address the impacts placed on the environment by urbanization and a growing populace. These impacts include air and water pollution, climate change and habitat loss.

The City believes that the implementation of an environmental ethic need not interfere with economic development and that practicing such an environmental ethic can ultimately be expected to enhance economic affairs and provide for responsible, farsighted development.

Realizing that Palm Springs’ rich architectural fabric and community livability should be complimented with environmentally sound buildings, the City will pursue the development of green buildings and sustainability programs wherever possible.

GOAL CD29:

Establish the City as a leader in energy efficient and environmentally sustainable development and planning practices.

Policies

- CD29.1 Require the use of energy-efficient and green building practices that are appropriate to the desert climate. Developers should identify energy and resource savings measures that they have incorporated into their project.
- CD29.2 Require the use of green building techniques in the design and construction of public buildings and facilities.
- CD29.3 Encourage site planning and building orientation that maximizes solar and wind resources for cooling and heating.

COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

- CD29.4 Require landscaping practices that increase energy efficiency and conserve natural resources, such as drought-tolerant landscaping, seasonally and locationally appropriate tree plantings, and natural drainage systems. These practices could include things such as desert-friendly landscaping on medians and other public lands.
- CD29.5 Encourage the use of resource-efficient and ecologically sound building materials.
- CD29.6 Encourage the use of solar energy systems and energy- and water-conserving appliances.
- CD29.7 Encourage infill development to make efficient use of existing land.
- CD29.8 Encourage on-site design practices that reduce stormwater runoff, including on-site retention, permeable paving, and increased native landscaping.
- CD29.9 Continue to provide and expand recycling services and maximize waste stream diversion.
- CD29.10 Become a conservation leader in the Coachella Valley with respect to resource conservation in parks, medians, greenbelts, and public buildings.

Actions

- CD29.1 Develop a green building ordinance.
- CD29.2 Consider participation in the *CEEP* (Community Energy Efficiency Program) Certificate and Recognition Program.
- CD29.3 Adopt *LEED*[®] (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) design standards for public buildings.
- CD29.4 Implement “green planning” site design incentives, such as density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, reduced processing fees, and expedited plan checks.
- CD29.5 Publicize information on green building/site design concepts and environmentally friendly/sustainable landscaping strategies and plant palettes.
- CD29.6 Collaborate with other Coachella Valley organizations, programs, and initiatives to promote energy and resource conservation.

LEED[®]: LEED[®] (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) design standards were created by the US Green Building Council to provide a voluntary national standard and rating system for the design of sustainable buildings.

CEEP: CEEP (Community Energy Efficiency Program) is a program that local governments can implement to encourage builders to construct energy-efficient housing that meets or exceeds the national Energy Star guidelines. Participating local governments provide builders that meet CEEP standards with benefits such as local recognition, fee deferral, prioritized plan checks, and expedited field inspections. In exchange for these benefits, builders must create homes that are 15% more efficient than California's Title 24 energy code requirements.

SPECIAL DESIGN CONSIDERATION AREAS

A few specific areas within the City require special design attention because of the important role that they play in the City's image and success. The areas discussed in this section include the Downtown, Section 14, Gene Autry Trail, and the I-10 corridor.

Downtown

Downtown Palm Springs is the heart of the City. Once the center of activity for the Coachella Valley, the Downtown remains an important part of Palm Springs and is still a key attraction for visitors and residents. The Downtown has a strong sense of place due in part to the eclectic mix of architectural styles and land uses, the prevalence of historically significant buildings, and the many cultural/entertainment attractions (including retail uses) located within the area. The unique character and charm should be preserved while allowing for the changes necessary to ensure the continued success of the Downtown area. Because of the Downtown's importance to the City, the Downtown Urban Design Plan was created to provide detailed design concepts and principles for the downtown area. This study should be consulted for design considerations for new projects in the Downtown.



Downtown should remain a vibrant, walkable, pedestrian-oriented area with appropriately scaled and designed development to retain the eclectic nature and village character of the area.

GOAL CD30:

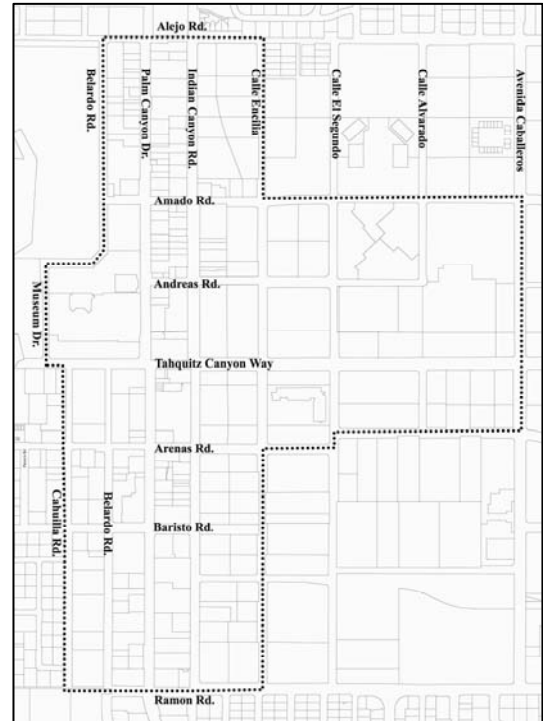
Support and sustain a vibrant and active Downtown.

Policies

- CD30.1 Require new development in the Downtown area to conform to the Downtown Urban Design Plan for design guidelines. New development applications in the Downtown area shall include an analysis of a project's compliance with the provisions of the Downtown Urban Design Plan.
- CD30.2 Integrate streetscape improvements, landscaping, and signage that uniquely identify the Downtown area as the principal commercial activity center of the City.
- CD30.3 Encourage retail uses that maintain extended evening hours and support nighttime activity.

Actions

- CD30.1 Evaluate and adopt the appropriate regulatory tools in the Zoning Code to implement the Downtown Urban Design Plan such as Specific Plan, design overlay, and/or zoning amendment.
- CD30.2 Distribute the Downtown Urban Design Plan to prospective merchants, developers, architects and others who might have an interest in developing projects Downtown.
- CD30.3 Facilitate continued communication between the Downtown merchants association and City staff to help maintain the unique character of the Downtown area.
- CD30.4 Coordinate and guide volunteer groups to assist with the beautification and maintenance of the Downtown area.



A map of the study area covered by the Downtown Urban Design Plan.

Section 14 Specific Plan:

The Section 14 Specific Plan approved by City voters via Measure U in November 2004, provides guidance for the future development of Section 14. The document includes zoning and land use designations, design guidelines, and streetscape and landscaping plans.



Section 14 contains a number of the City's attractions, such as the Convention Center (top), a casino, and numerous hotels and resorts (bottom). This area has a clearly defined design identity (middle) based on the culture of the ACBCI. Efforts should be made to ensure design continuity between Section 14 and the surrounding areas.

Section 14

The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (ACBCI) and its members own large portions of the City, including the area known as Section 14. Bounded by Indian Canyon Drive, Alejo Road, Sunrise Way and Ramon Road, Section 14 is located adjacent to the downtown and near the Civic Center and airport. Section 14 contains a number of hotels and resorts, the Palm Springs Convention Center, and a casino in addition to residential, commercial, and entertainment uses. Large parts of Section 14 are vacant or unimproved, creating opportunities for future development projects. The area's development potential and proximity to the downtown makes it an important area within the City.

In November 2004, the City adopted the *Section 14 Specific Plan* to guide the development of the area. As a result, Section 14 currently has an attractive and well-defined visual identity that incorporates distinctive lighting, signage, public art, and landscaping elements. Efforts should be made to ensure design continuity between Section 14 and surrounding areas while allowing Section 14 to retain a distinctive visual identity. Such efforts will help create a stronger Citywide identity while allowing for unique neighborhoods and areas within the City.

GOAL CD31:

Reinforce visual continuity between Section 14 and areas directly adjacent.

Policies

- CD31.1 Ensure the implementation of the design guidelines and landscaping plan sections of the Section 14 Specific Plan.
- CD31.2 Refer to the Downtown Urban Design Plan when appropriate.
- CD31.3 Encourage future projects to be sensitive to the need for visual as well as physical continuity (pedestrian, vehicular, etc.) between Section 14 and the surrounding areas.
- CD31.4 Strengthen the physical and visual linkages between Downtown and attractions in Section 14, such as the convention center.

Actions

- CD31.1 Continue to work with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians to visually integrate new development into the

surrounding areas through the use of appropriate scale, height, building orientation, and landscaping.

- CD31.2 Ensure that parks and the downtown are provided with appropriate pedestrian amenities such as shade structures, seating, bike racks, drinking fountains, and public toilet facilities.

Gene Autry Trail

Gene Autry Trail, which runs from I-10 in the north to East Palm Canyon Drive/Highway 111 in the south, is currently underutilized and poses a valuable opportunity for the City. The corridor provides easy truck access to the airport and through the city to major regional transportation corridors without passing through the Downtown and many residential neighborhoods. The regional commercial development at the intersection of Gene Autry Trail and Ramon Road, Knott's Soak City Water Park, and the Palm Springs Air Museum serve as commercial/entertainment anchors for the southern portion of the corridor. Existing uses along major portions of the corridor provide opportunities for greater intensification through new development. Vacant parcels opposite the airport and along Gene Autry Trail to the north provide the prospect to create a new employment center benefiting from access to the airport and I-10. Such development would allow the city to create jobs and expand its economic base without negatively impacting the downtown or residential neighborhoods within the City.

The Gene Autry Trail corridor represents an important city gateway and provides an opportunity to create a more unified and attractive arterial. The corridor should be enhanced through the intensification of high-quality uses along the corridor's edge, the implementation of a comprehensive streetscape plan creating a unified corridor identity, and the inclusion of specialized gateway features at I-10 and the intersection of Gene Autry Trail and Vista Chino.



The low intensity of uses along the Gene Autry Corridor creates the opportunity for the development of a regional jobs center along the corridor.



Gene Autry Trail lacks a unified corridor identity. A comprehensive streetscape plan for the corridor should be adopted.

GOAL CD32:

Create more intensive high-quality development and streetscape improvements along the Gene Autry Trail corridor.

Policies

- CD32.1 Encourage the development of quality commercial, office, and industrial uses and business parks along Gene Autry Trail. (See the

Industrial and Business Park Development section of this element.)

- CD32.2 Incorporate Citywide design features and specialized streetscape elements to give the corridor a distinctive identity and visual continuity. Such elements may include consistently placed parkway trees and landscaping, medians, street furniture, banners, and public signs.
- CD32.3 Use key intersections as opportunities for design improvements such as specialized paving, enhanced setbacks, accent landscaping, and intensified uses.
- CD32.4 Provide landscape and safety buffers between pedestrian and bikeway areas and vehicular lanes.

Actions

- CD32.1 Implement a program to guide the development and visual enhancement of the Gene Autry Trail corridor.
- CD32.2 Develop plans for design enhancements at key intersections along Gene Autry Trail.
- CD32.3 Include the Gene Autry Trail improvement program and plans in the Capital Improvement Plan.

I-10 Corridor

The first exposure most visitors have to Palm Springs is along I-10. This “window to the city” is currently underutilized and nondescript, offering the traveler little indication of what lies beyond. The opportunity exists to distinguish Palm Springs more clearly from other cities in the Coachella Valley and to create an attractive gateway to the City.

The placement of specialized design features, such as landscaping, signage, and lighting elements along the I-10 corridor will improve the visual image of the City from the freeway and reinforce the City’s design identity.

GOAL CD33:

Create a visually distinctive and attractive entry to Palm Springs along the I-10 corridor that reflects the high-quality architecture and design of Palm Springs.

Policies

- CD33.1 Develop a unified design theme for development along the I-10 corridor, including architectural elements, colors, signage, and landscaping.
- CD33.2 Incorporate specialized design elements, including accent landscaping, monument signage, and specialized lighting, at key locations along the I-10 corridor.
- CD33.3 Encourage high-quality development along the freeway.
- CD33.4 Buffer unattractive uses with landscaping and walls.
- CD33.5 Encourage modulation and articulation of walls to avoid large expanses of blank walls facing the freeway.
- CD33.6 Stimulate continued investment of properties within this high profile location to ensure a positive first impression of the City.
- CD33.7 Promote the use of multi-tenant signs adjacent to the freeway right-of-way to minimize the visual clutter along the corridor.

Actions

- CD33.1 Develop design criteria for project evaluation along the I-10 corridor.
- CD33.2 Develop and implement landscape standards for properties fronting the I-10 corridor.
- CD33.3 Continue to enforce the Wind Energy Conversion Systems ordinance.

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