

# ***APPENDIX C DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDE***

The El Cerrito General Plan identifies three major business centers, a business corridor along San Pablo Avenue, and two neighborhood business districts, all of which need special design attention. The three major development centers include the Del Norte BART Station area, the Midtown Area, and the El Cerrito Plaza area. The San Pablo Avenue corridor also includes the adjoining, higher density residential areas to the east of San Pablo Avenue. The two neighborhood serving commercial centers include the shopping area on Fairmount at Colusa Avenue, and the shopping area on Stockton at Ashbury. This section describes each of these special areas and illustrates concepts for their future improvement.

The Design and Development Guide is intended for use in the development of future plans for these special areas. The guidelines provided here serve two primary purposes. The first is to ensure that new development in the City of El Cerrito, both private and public, is designed to fit within the overall urban design vision for the City. The realization of this vision will create a physical setting that attracts new businesses that ensure the long-term economic viability of the City. The second purpose is to ensure the successful integration of the various development areas in the City with adjoining residential neighborhoods, thereby mutually strengthening both the commercial centers and their surroundings.

The guidelines help convey to investors, property owners and developers, as well as to their designers, the overall design approach for the special development areas, and the level of quality that they will be expected to meet. In addition, the design guidelines provide the development community with the assurance that the type, design and quality of neighboring structures will be compatible and consistent with their development. The private builder also knows the plan and the quality of future public improvements, both in public buildings and in streetscape and open spaces.

Design improvement does not happen all at once. The community design process is an incremental process that occurs over time as each individual project is completed. It is a process of a series of individual actions by the City, private property owners, and developers over time. Thus, the Design and Development guide provides a means to coordinate these individual actions to achieve the City's vision for the overall community design.

The ideas and recommendations in this section are consistent with the stated goals and policies of the El Cerrito General Plan. The guidelines are intended as “general directions” for new development and revitalization of each special planning area. More specific planning and design guidelines and principles will be developed as an implementation tool for the City and in conjunction with the development of specific Area Plans for the major development areas – Del Norte, Midtown, El Cerrito Plaza, and San Pablo Avenue.

The City may use the design guidelines in any requests for development proposals for future development projects. In addition, the guidelines establish the general design and programmatic directions for the City's future investments in streets, public buildings, landscaping and parking, and thereby provide a basis for capital improvement programming efforts.

## Design Details for Major Development Centers

The following design guidelines apply to the major development centers at the Del Norte BART Area, El Cerrito Plaza Area, and Midtown Area:

### *Design Details*

- Streetscape improvements will provide enhanced pedestrian spaces along the major commercial frontages, including decorative sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting, benches and other pedestrian amenities.
- Buildings adjacent to pedestrian routes, San Pablo Avenue, Kearny Street (Midtown Area), and the Ohlone Greenway, should be sited and designed to produce well-defined pedestrian spaces on a human scale. Building facades should provide windows, doorways, entries, outdoor patios and recreation spaces opening onto the greenway with appropriate lighting to increase safety and activity along the trail.
- Building design and character should allow for a diversity of styles integrated with the use of common design elements. Common design elements include use of common building materials; consistent landscaping and streetscape components; application of general rules insuring consistency in the heights, bulk, and siting of individual buildings; creation of continuous street frontage at the back of sidewalks; and use of storefront windows, awnings, and entries along commercial streets.
- Use of building materials can vary according to the building height and scale. In order to create a more human scale at the street level, commercial buildings should use brick, masonry, granite, decorative concrete, or marble on the ground floor levels to help accentuate the pedestrian oriented commercial frontages.
- Building design should avoid the use of large expanses of glass, mirrored glass, and undifferentiated steel and concrete facades. Windows, doorways, and entries, balconies and overhangs can be used as architectural elements to create greater variety and a more human scale in building facades.
- Building materials consistent with a more urban place are encouraged such as brick, granite, concrete, marble, tiles, and decorative block.
- Buildings should avoid featureless, monumental, large scale massing with unarticulated building surfaces. Buildings should be designed to suggest a more ornamented building facade. The landscape of the area should be scaled to the person, not the car, suggesting a more intimate urban character.
- Corner sites provide opportunities for landmark building elements to be incorporated into the building design and site layout. Landmark elements may include towers, unique roof shapes, unique façade treatments, and taller buildings at the corners and at major building entries that help to visually identify the area from San Pablo Avenue.
- Building signage should adequately convey directional information needed by motorists and pedestrians, provide sufficient business identification, and reflect the character and scale of pedestrian areas. Large outdoor advertising signs should not be permitted.
- All outdoor storage areas should be located away from major pedestrian streets and screen from view with decorative fencing and landscaping.

## **Del Norte BART Area**

The Del Norte BART area is a major transportation hub, with links to BART and its commuter parking lot, the Interstate 80 and I-580 interchanges, and San Pablo Avenue. Recent improvements along I-80 and I-580 provide direct access to the area and the BART parking lots from freeway HOV lanes and an exclusive freeway off ramp. The confluence of these major transportation systems has impacted the congested San Pablo Avenue and local residential neighborhoods. While traffic congestion is a major issue, the area's strategic location also provides a great opportunity for future development of the site.

The Del Norte BART station area contains a mix of newer, community and regional-serving, retail facilities, and a number of underutilized and vacant sites. In addition, the area contains a new mixed-use retail and housing complex, Del Norte Plaza, near the BART station.

### ***Future Development Concept***

While it will continue to be a challenge to facilitate the movement of people across San Pablo Avenue, the Del Norte area has the potential to take advantage of its significant regional role as a major transportation hub in West Contra Costa County. The Del Norte Area is envisioned as a major concentrated regional, mixed-use center for regional offices, commercial, and residential uses, taking advantage of its proximity to the BART station and I-80. Future uses are envisioned to evolve over time from big-box, auto oriented retail uses to more intense, mixed-use office and specialty commercial uses.

The area will be designed to be more pedestrian friendly, with stronger pedestrian connections to the BART station. An outdoor public plaza or gathering place surrounded by ground floor retail uses, cafes and restaurants will provide an inviting and active place for local residents and office workers in the area.

### ***Design Guidelines***

The design guidelines presented below are based in part on the assumption that at some future time, development will take place on all or portions of BART's surface parking lots (if alternate parking arrangements are made, or if the demand for BART parking is reduced).

#### ***Land Use and Site Organization***

- The future development should consist of a concentration of mixed uses, including regional, high-tech offices and retail uses, and residential development oriented to take advantage of the area's proximity to the Del Norte BART station.
- Major mixed-use office developments will be concentrated along San Pablo Avenue, including offices for major high-tech office employers, smaller entrepreneurial businesses, professionals, and banks and financial service industries.
- Retail uses that provide services and goods for offices and local residents should be provided on the ground floor of new projects, opening onto wide pedestrian friendly sidewalks, public spaces, and plazas.
- Residential uses are allowed on upper levels of mixed-use projects on the east side of San Pablo Avenue. Residential uses east of San Pablo Avenue (to the BART tracks) should be allowed at a density of up to 45 dwelling units/acre, with ground-floor retail activity and active pedestrian friendly streets, sidewalks, and plaza spaces.

- Residential uses could be developed on the existing surface BART parking lots east of the BART tracks with medium density housing and designed in keeping with the scale and character of adjacent residential uses.
- Higher intensity commercial development (offices and retail uses) is envisioned on the west side of San Pablo Avenue with improved auto access to parking structures from I-80.
- Additional BART parking may be provided adjacent to I-80, west of San Pablo Avenue with more direct pedestrian connections across San Pablo Avenue to the Del Norte BART Station.

### ***Transportation and Circulation***

The Del Norte Area will continue to be a major transportation hub in West Contra Costa County, providing major commuter links to BART from I-80 and surrounding cities. Major transportation and circulation improvements will consist of improving pedestrian connections throughout the area, across San Pablo Avenue and to the BART station.

- Existing streets should be improved as necessary to provide for efficient, safe and attractive vehicular circulation around the area and access to major users and BART parking.
- Regional users should be discouraged from parking in neighboring residential neighborhoods.
- Through traffic should be discouraged from using neighboring residential streets.
- Bus access and drop-off areas will be maintained and improved in and around the BART station to enhance the pedestrian connections to surrounding developments and across San Pablo Avenue.
- If financially feasible, a grade-separated pedestrian crossing (bridge or tunnel) should be provided across San Pablo Avenue at Cutting Boulevard.
- In higher intensity developments, parking shall be provided in parking structures either above or below grade level. Ground floor levels of parking structures should provide for retail uses adjacent to commercial streets – San Pablo Avenue, Cutting Boulevard, Hill Street and Potrero Avenue.
- Surface parking should be located to the side and rear of development sites to maintain a continuous building face along San Pablo Avenue.
- Within the Del Norte BART area, pedestrian access to and from the BART station and surrounding development should be clearly marked with graphically emphatic crosswalk markings (such as zebra stripes, special textures, or paving treatments) and unobstructed sidewalks.

### ***Landscaping and Open Space***

- Trees along commercial streets should be carefully selected to help give distinctive character to the commercial area, to provide shade along the sidewalks, and to have an open growth pattern that avoids the hiding of storefronts and signs.
- A plaza or gathering place should be provided at the center of the area adjacent to the BART Station.
- Pedestrian improvements will provide greater access to the Ohlone Greenway from new projects along San Pablo Avenue.
- All pedestrian spaces should be well designed with shade trees and other pedestrian amenities including benches, trash cans, public art, water features, lighting, and other streetscape elements.

### ***Building Design***

- Building heights should allow for higher intensity development in keeping with the higher development costs at transit nodes. Higher structures may also be permitted for landmark towers, steeples, and other architectural building elements that would help create more character and identity to a given project. In all cases, extraordinary heights must be balanced with their impacts on local neighborhoods and communities. Since in most communities the most memorable, and often most criticized, buildings are larger buildings, higher visual standards should be applied to the design of larger buildings.
- Building heights on the current BART parking lots, east of the BART tracks on Key Boulevard, should be limited to three stories. The appropriate development pattern would allow for reuse of the BART parking areas as medium density residential uses, such as townhouses, duplexes or small-lot residential designs consistent in design with the surrounding lower density residential neighborhoods.
- All ground floor commercial spaces should provide a minimum 60% of the building face with windows, window display areas, entries and other forms of pedestrian activity spaces adjacent to sidewalks.
- Outdoor sidewalk sales, seating, restaurants, and cafes are encouraged on all ground floor retail levels adjacent to sidewalks.
- All housing units should provide a useable outdoor patio or deck for each unit. In addition, housing projects should provide for common recreational uses such as a swimming pool, tennis court, workout gym, sauna, etc. for the use of the project's residences.

### **El Cerrito Plaza Area**

El Cerrito Plaza is a commercial center in transition. Currently the Plaza is an aging suburban mall, with large open parking lots, vacant retail space, a major grocery store and a drug store. The old mall no longer fits today's marketing strategies and is considered to be too far from I-80 to function as a large regional shopping center. The land use mix and site organization of the Plaza will most likely undergo a number of changes in the years to come. Over time, the major function of the Plaza will shift as market demands and economic development opportunities continue to grow.

Although the Plaza may no longer be viable as a regional "mall," the area has great potential for reuse and redevelopment in part because of its proximity to the Plaza BART station. The site is strategically located to serve a large segment of the East Bay. In the future, the Plaza could take advantage of its location in El Cerrito and adjacent communities as a mixed-use, transit-oriented village.

### ***Future Development Concept***

The Plaza is envisioned as a future mixed-use, commercial town center with higher-end retail establishments, restaurants, and office space. The Plaza could continue to provide for community needs with an enlarged major grocery chain, drug store and medium sized department store. In addition, the Plaza area may accommodate additional office uses and upper floor residential uses. Cerrito Creek should be restored with a more generous riparian zone and additional segments opened up where possible, providing more park space, a healthy riparian habitat, and pedestrian and bicycle trails connecting to the Ohlone Greenway. The site should be organized as a pedestrian friendly town center,

with new pedestrian friendly streets with wide, tree-shaded sidewalks that have distinctive paving surfaces, seating areas, and other amenities. Street connections should be extended through to adjoining neighborhoods, the El Cerrito BART, Station and San Pablo Avenue. New buildings should be oriented around a new major public gathering place. This new public square, green, or plaza would be flanked with active retail spaces, cafes, restaurants, and outdoor eating.

## ***Design Guidelines***

### ***Land Use and Site Organization***

- The Plaza is intended to provide for a range of local and regional commercial uses that could include a major grocery store, a drug store, a department store, specialty retail outlets and boutiques, cafes, restaurants, offices and residential units above ground floor retail uses.
- The Plaza area is envisioned as a pedestrian oriented, mixed-use town center, with ground floor retail uses and upper levels of office and residential uses.
- The Plaza should provide for a major outdoor public gathering place, square, plaza or green at the center of the commercial uses. The public gathering place should provide for active uses opening onto the public space such as outdoor eating, cafes, sidewalk sales and specialty events that encourage active use during the day and evening hours.
- Buildings should be formed around the public space to create an “outdoor room” that creates a sense of enclosure around the plaza. The public space should also provide direct access to at least one commercial street in the Plaza area to allow views onto and from the street.
- Activities, entries, public outdoor spaces, patios, and windows should open onto the Ohlone Greenway to improve the safety and security of the area and to provide for increased activity on the greenway.
- Buildings should be located fronting directly on to Fairmount and San Pablo Avenues.
- Mixed-use development of the BART parking lots west of the BART station is encouraged. Development should be linked functionally and visually to the commercial Plaza area across Fairmount Avenue, and should be designed as an attractive gateway into El Cerrito for people exiting from the BART turnstiles.
- Residential use of the BART parking lots would be permitted east of the BART station.
- Development of the BART stations assumes BART parking would be integrated into the overall development in new parking structures or in below grade parking lots.

### ***Transportation and Circulation***

- The Plaza Town Center area could be redeveloped with a new urban street pattern by extending the existing street grid connecting through the site to adjoining areas to the south and San Pablo Avenue.
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections should be provided to the surrounding neighborhoods, the BART Station, the Ohlone Greenway, and to San Pablo Avenue.
- Parking should be provided in smaller parking courts located behind commercial buildings and away from Fairmount and San Pablo Avenues.

- Parking structures can also be used to meet parking requirements of higher intensity development. Parking structures should include ground floor commercial activity opening onto major pedestrian oriented streets.

### ***Landscaping and Open Space***

- Landscaping in the Plaza area should create a continuous, safe and connected system of pedestrian friendly, urban streetscapes with wide sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian amenities (benches, lighting, water fountains, public art, signs, information kiosks, etc.).
- The Plaza area should be designed to provide a large plaza or public gathering place in the center of the commercial area with pedestrian amenities to create an active and comfortable outdoor public space. Pedestrian amenities on the plaza should include public art, trees, lighting, a water fountain, benches and a variety of seating, with food and other activities that open onto the space.
- Where possible, the Cerrito Creek should be opened up to create a recreational and open space amenity for the area with trails and bike paths connecting from San Pablo Avenue and the surrounding neighborhood to the Ohlone Greenway and the commercial center.

### ***Building Design***

- New buildings should be located directly behind the sidewalk of all major streets, to create a continuous and connected building face along major pedestrian ways.
- Buildings should provide a continuous open frontage to the street with display areas, windows, entries and other pedestrian oriented activities at the ground floor. Open areas allow for views in and out of buildings along the streets and should occupy a minimum of 60% of the ground floor building frontages.
- Buildings in the Plaza area should be designed with a distinctive architectural character and create a consistent and unified them or image using similar building materials, building scale, buildings style, and other building design elements and details that tie the Plaza together as one unified whole.

## **Midtown Area**

Midtown City Center area is located in the center of El Cerrito along San Pablo Avenue. It stretches from south of Moeser to north of Manila Avenue along the east side of San Pablo Avenue to the BART tracks.

The existing land use pattern consists principally of two older community shopping centers (grocery stores and a drug store), a lumber mill, City Hall and the Public Safety Building. The shopping centers are characteristic of suburban, auto-oriented strip commercial centers with large surface parking lots along the street frontage, few trees, and buildings set back deep in the lots. The area also contains a number of vacant and underutilized sites.

### ***Future Development Concept***

Modern retailing trends could make these retail centers obsolete in the near future, leaving these sites potentially available for redevelopment to higher and better uses. The Midtown area should be planned

and developed through the adoption of a Specific Plan for the area. The Specific Plan should outline a detailed land use, site development and circulation patterns, and implementation strategy for the area.

## ***Design Guidelines***

### ***Land Use and Site Organization***

- The Midtown City Center area would allow for a mixed use, pedestrian friendly town center design with ground-floor retail uses and higher density housing and office uses above.
- The mixed-use center should be designed around a new pedestrian-oriented, “slow street” as an extension of Kearney Street through the site connecting from Moeser to Manila Avenue.
- An expanded civic center, including a new City Hall, the existing Public Safety Building, and possibly other civic activities, would be clustered at the north end of the area adjacent to the existing Public Safety Building. The civic function should include building entries and activities opening onto a public gathering place, plaza, or “green”.
- Future redevelopment of the lumberyard would permit mixed-use development with higher density housing and office space above ground floor retail uses. The lumberyard sites east of the BART tracks would permit medium density housing compatible with the scale, height, and character of the adjoining residential neighborhood.
- Buildings should be designed with entries, plazas, courtyards, and activity areas opening onto the Ohlone Greenway, allowing for greater visual surveillance of activities along the trail.

### ***Circulation, Access and Parking***

- The Midtown concept envisions extending Kearny Street south from Schmidt to Moeser Lane through the existing shopping center parking lots. Kearny would be revitalized as a major pedestrian oriented, commercial street.
- Kearney Street would become the main street through the Midtown blocks with wide pedestrian oriented sidewalks, buildings close to the street, and parking placed in structures or behind or to the side of new commercial stores.
- Parking should be tucked under mixed-use development or located to the rear or side of lots in smaller well-landscaped parking courts.
- Pedestrian connections would be created mid-block through the site from the Ohlone Greenway to San Pablo Avenue.

### ***Building Design***

- Buildings should be designed to create a common image and character throughout the Midtown area through the use of common building materials, building styles, heights and other building element and details.
- Commercial spaces along San Pablo Avenue and Kearney Street should provide for openings onto the street with windows, entries, and other pedestrian oriented activity spaces allowing for views into and out of the ground floor building frontages. Openings should occupy a minimum of 60% of the ground floor of building frontages.

- Street level building materials should use brick, masonry, granite, decorative concrete or marble to help accentuate the pedestrian oriented commercial frontages and creates a more human scale.
- Building frontages should incorporate awnings, arcade and other architectural devises that impart a sense of visual unity to the area and provide weather protection and sun shading for pedestrian shoppers.
- Buildings east of the BART tracks should reduce heights by stepping down the building form in scale with adjoining residential uses.
- Building design and character should allow for a diversity of styles integrated with use of common design elements or building styles. Common design elements include use of common building materials; consistent landscaping and streetscape components; application of general rules insuring consistency in the heights, bulk, and siting of individual buildings; creation of continuous street frontage at the back of sidewalks; and use of storefront windows, awnings, and entries along commercial streets.
- Building design should avoid the use of large expanses of glass, mirrored glass, and undifferentiated steel and concrete facades. Windows, doorways, and entries, balconies and overhangs can be used as architectural elements to create greater variety and a more human scale in building facades.
- Buildings in the Midtown Area should avoid a monumental look and instead, suggest a more subtle urban character. Buildings should be of human scale in keeping with the residential context of El Cerrito.

### ***Landscaping***

- Landscaping elements along the Kearney Street should create a strong, pedestrian friendly urban character with wide sidewalks, canopy street trees, and pedestrian amenities such as seating, public art, water features, lighting, and other street furniture.
- A public outdoor gathering place should be provided in the Midtown area adjacent to Kearny Street. This outdoor space should be designed as a plaza or town square with pedestrian amenities and retail stores, cafes and restaurants opening onto the public space.

## **San Pablo Avenue Corridor**

San Pablo Avenue is currently characteristic of an older suburban commercial strip. Although sufficient for smaller retail establishments, many of the commercial lots along San Pablo Avenue lack sufficient size or parking space to accommodate modern retail development. Many of the existing older buildings are too small, antiquated, or vacant. However, it is expected that San Pablo Avenue will continue to play a role as a major retail corridor as new developments slowly consolidate smaller lots and replace old buildings.

### ***Future Development Concept***

The El Cerrito General Plan envisions creating opportunities for consolidating smaller lots and sites, and rehabilitating older sites for new office, retail and residential uses. Where appropriate, commercial and mixed-use development will expand through to adjoining streets in the rear of the San Pablo frontages. Mixed use and higher density housing can reflect and compliment the surrounding neighborhoods

through appropriate site design, building orientation, use of materials, detailing, landscaping, and site amenities. Mixed-use development has the additional benefit of creating opportunities for shared parking, thus reducing the total amount of necessary surface parking.

## ***Design Guidelines***

### ***Land Use and Site Organization***

- The land use pattern along San Pablo Avenue would permit a mix of uses including retail stores, offices and mixed-use residential developments. The depth of the mixed-use commercial uses would allow for new development to extend two lots deep, east to the adjoining residential streets.
- Pedestrian friendly, mixed-use development is encouraged to extend as fingers from San Pablo Avenue along major cross-street east to the BART tracks and the Ohlone Greenway including Moeser Lane, Fairmount, Manila and Stockton Avenues. The pattern of development should be designed to complement existing surrounding neighborhoods and provide ground floor retail uses, with upper floor office and residential uses.
- New development should be designed with active pedestrian spaces opening onto the Ohlone Greenway with entries, windows, and outdoor activity areas with views into and out of the ground-floor spaces.
- Pedestrian friendly, mixed-use development is also encouraged to extend as “fingers” from San Pablo Avenue along major cross-streets east to the BART track and the Ohlone Greenway – Moeser Lane, Fairmount, Manila and Stockton Avenues. The pattern of development should be designed to complement existing surrounding neighborhoods.

### ***Circulation, Access and Parking***

- Parking and residential uses would be allowed to extend the full depth of the blocks. However, the rear of commercial buildings and commercial delivery areas should not open on to the back streets. All parking lots extending through to back streets should be heavily landscaped, well lighted, and screened from adjoining residential neighbors.
- Pedestrian friendly street improvements will contribute to the character and safety of these activity centers. These street improvements could include street trees, special lighting, decorative pedestrian walkways, and pedestrian amenities and furniture, such as seating, trashcans, fountains, phone booths, directional signs, entry landmarks, banners, and landscaping.
- New development along San Pablo should provide easy and prominent access from the street for convenience of bus patrons.

### ***Building Design***

- The site layout of mixed-use development would permit residential heights to step down to the street east of San Pablo Avenue, to create a smooth transition to the adjacent lower density residential area. Entries to residences would be required from the back streets. Auto access to these residential units would also be permitted.

- New development should be designed to open onto pedestrian ways and provide entries, windows and activities with views into and out of the ground-floor spaces, especially where such development abuts the Ohlone Greenway.
- Entries to residential uses would be required from the adjoining residential streets. Auto access to residential parking would also be permitted from residential streets.
- Commercial sites should locate buildings behind the sidewalks along San Pablo Avenue to help create a continuous commercial building frontage along San Pablo Avenue.

### ***Landscaping***

- San Pablo Avenue should be designed with a continuous urban streetscape character, with buildings placed at the back of wide pedestrian oriented sidewalks, with large canopy street trees, pedestrian scale lighting and street furniture.
- The residential streets should be designed with a residential character with front yard setbacks similar to adjoining residential lots, street trees, and residential building entries and windows facing onto the street.
- Where parking lots serving abutting commercial activities are permitted within multi-family residential districts, parking areas should be screened from adjoining residential uses with appropriate setbacks, decorative fencing, berms and landscaping materials (shrubs, trees and ground cover).

### ***Design Details***

- Commercial lighting and parking lot lighting should not shine onto adjoining private outdoor spaces and yards of adjoining residences.
- Signs on residential streets should be limited to building identification signs, directional signs, and unit numbering signs. Commercial signage should not face adjoining residential areas.
- Corner sites provide opportunities for landmark building elements to be incorporated into the building design and site layout. Landmark elements may include towers, unique roof shapes, unique façade treatments, and taller buildings at the corners and at major building entries that help to visually identify the area from San Pablo Avenue.
- Building signage should adequately convey directional information needed by motorists and pedestrians, provide sufficient business identification, and reflect the character and scale of pedestrian areas. Large outdoor advertising signs should not be permitted.

## **Neighborhood Commercial Districts**

Two neighborhood commercial districts are located in El Cerrito. One center is on Fairmount Avenue between Colusa and Ramona Avenues. The second center is on Stockton between Ashbury Avenue and Everett Street. A third small retail store, a food market, is located on Potrero Avenue and Liberty Street. These centers are small, unique retail and office districts that provide local services and goods to surrounding residents. Neighbors can easily walk to the retail shopping centers, thus reducing their dependence on automobiles.

## ***Future Development Concept***

The commercial centers are encouraged to continue and improve at their current locations and to emphasize a range of goods and services for the convenience of nearby residents. Pedestrian and streetscape improvements would help make these centers more enjoyable and attractive places. More intensive development is encouraged in these neighborhood centers, such as upper-floor residential uses, and additional retail stores providing goods and services to local residents.

Additional small neighborhood retail centers may be permitted in residential areas provided the use does not create undue traffic congestion or otherwise overburden neighborhoods.

## ***Design Guidelines***

### ***Land Use and Site Organization***

- The neighborhood commercial districts are envisioned to provide primarily local retail goods and services to residences in the immediate surrounding neighborhoods. The areas are intended to provide opportunities for residents to walk or ride bikes to nearby stores for food and services and other daily needs. These small centers also allow space for cafes, small restaurants, and other specialty retail outlets that help create a unique friendly environment for locals to gather and meet on an informal basis. Uses encouraged for these areas include a small pub, bakery, clothing store, tailor, barber and hair salon, and a small conveyance grocery store.
- These small centers would also allow for small office uses such as realtors, professional offices, and small banks, either on the ground floor or on upper floor of mixed-use buildings.
- Mixed-use retail and residential developments are also encouraged with ground floor retail uses and upper floors for residential units.

### ***Circulation, Access and Parking***

- Parking should be provided in the rear or to the side of commercial buildings.
- Street parking should be maintained directly in front of commercial buildings wherever possible.
- Pedestrian crossing and sidewalks should be enhanced to make them more pedestrian friendly and accentuate the neighborhood center through the use of decorative paving materials, special pedestrian street lighting, landscaping and other streetscape elements.

### ***Building Design***

- Buildings in the neighborhood commercial areas should be designed in a scale and character compatible with surrounding residential areas.
- Buildings should be located at the back of sidewalks in the neighborhood commercial centers with building openings facing onto the sidewalks.
- Building openings, windows, entryways, and other pedestrian oriented activities should occupy a minimum of 60% of the ground floor building frontage.

- Buildings should avoid use of modern styles with large expanses of glass, steel, and concrete. Buildings should use materials typical of historic commercial frontages using brick, stone, masonry, wood, and tiles.

### ***Landscaping***

- Landscaping in the neighborhood commercial centers consist of streetscape improvements to help strengthen the pedestrian scale and character of the street. Streetscape improvements are intended to enhance the pedestrian experience with street trees, seating, water features, public art, decorative trashcans, water fountains and other amenities.
- Pedestrian street furniture of each neighborhood center should be designed with their own distinctive character to help distinguish one center from the other and to give each area its own unique identity.

### ***Design Details***

- Each neighborhood commercial area should establish its own, unique design character with pedestrian amenities, street furniture, public art and a district sign or landmark feature.
- Signage should be in scale and character with the neighborhood commercial function. Signage should be integrated into and fixed to buildings. Monument signs or pole signs should not be used.