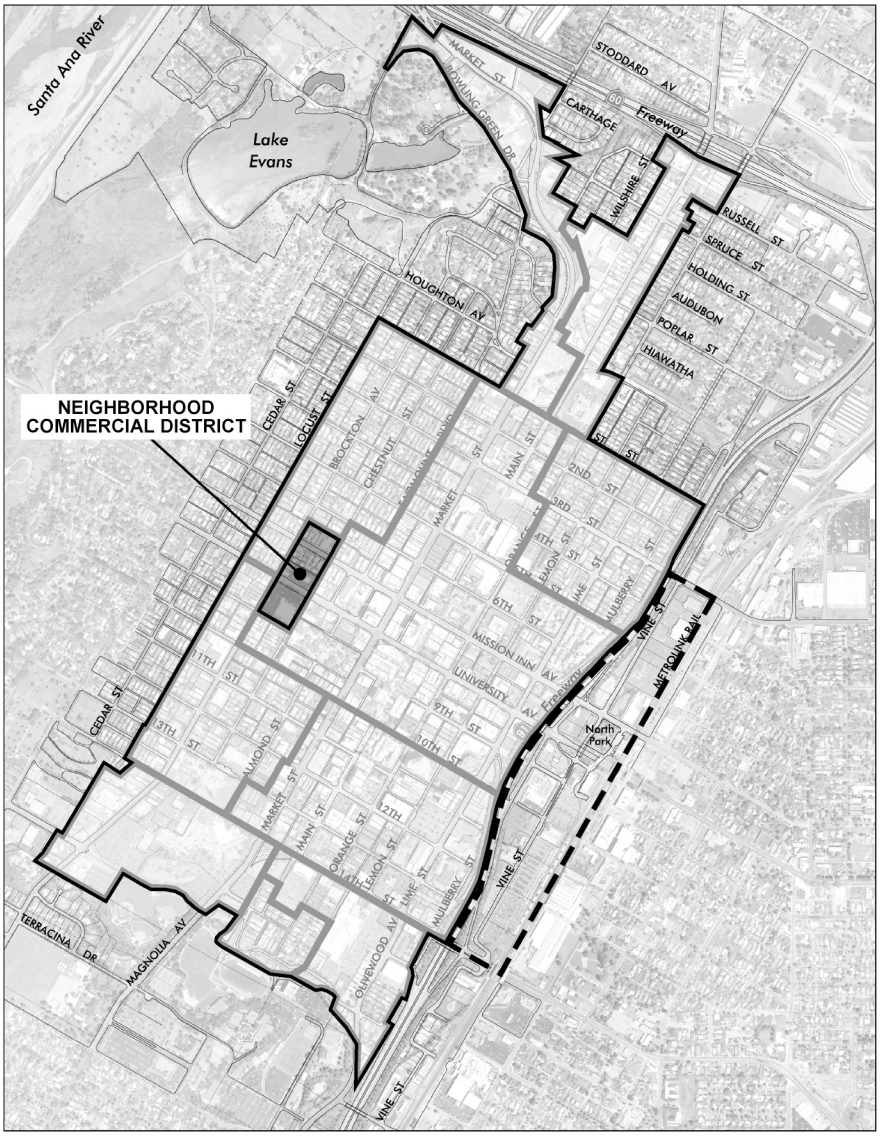
CHAPTER 14

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

This Chapter defines the land uses, development standards and design standards and guidelines for the Neighborhood Commercial District. This Chapter is organized as follows:

14.1 Purpose
14.2 Permitted Uses
14.3 Conditionally Permitted Uses
14.4 Prohibited Uses
14.5 Development Standards for the Neighborhood Commercial District
14.6 Design Standards and Guidelines for the Neighborhood Commercial District



14.1 PURPOSE

The Neighborhood Commercial District is intended to provide neighborhood-serving commercial uses to support nearby neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Commercial District promotes a concentration of businesses that provide convenience goods and services frequented by local residents. Development within this District should promote human scale elements while providing a sensitive transition between these uses and neighboring residences.

Two locations are identified that could serve the Downtown Area. Both are existing commercial centers. One is centered on the shopping complex at Brockton and University Avenues that consists of a grocery store, a multi-tenant strip building and two freestanding pads. The other is the Pine Center just outside of the Downtown Specific Plan area, at Pine Street and Tequesquite Avenue. This center includes a (presently vacant) grocery store space and several lease spaces in strip buildings that extend from the sides of the grocery space. The site also accommodates a small freestanding restaurant in a converted gasoline station building. Both of these centers are "suburban" in nature, with large parking areas to the front and the bulk of the commercial lease spaces to the rear. The Brockton/University location has an active grocery store, however, this location suffers from its proximity to the bus station and its associated social issues. The Pine Center suffers from the vacancy of its anchor grocery lease space that was formerly occupied by an Alpha Beta grocery store. This store was closed when the Alpha Beta company merged with Ralphs. One drawback to this lease space is that it is smaller than the size of most modern-day grocery stores and may need to be expanded or creatively marketed before it can be reactivated as a grocery store.

Presently, most residents in Downtown and vicinity travel to Magnolia Center, the University Community, or Canyon Crest to satisfy their daily shopping needs. This is an anomaly that begs to be addressed by convenient, attractive, secure, and appropriately stocked stores in the immediate Downtown area. In designating these existing centers as Neighborhood Commercial Districts, it is the intent of this plan that the City would partner with the private sector to revitalize these centers and help them realize their full potential to serve the daily shopping needs of the Downtown as well as the Northside and parts of the Eastside neighborhoods.

The Pine Center Shopping Complex

The Shopping Complex at Brockton and University Avenues

14.2 Permitted Uses

The following uses are permitted in the Neighborhood Commercial District:

a) Banking establishments 2,500 square feet or less in size.
b) Food stores.
c) Laundromats.
d) Medical and dental offices and laboratories 2,500 square feet or less in size.
e) Offices, general and professional, 2,500 square feet or less in size.
f) Parks and open spaces.
g) Personal service establishments, such as, but not limited to, barber or beauty shops, tailors, shoe repair, etc.
h) Pharmacies.
i) Restaurants, including outdoor dining, pursuant to the standards established in the Zoning Code for outdoor dining.
j) Retail uses, not otherwise listed, intended to provide neighborhood support services and goods.
k) Temporary uses pursuant to the standards established in the Zoning Code and consistent with the purposes of this District.
l) Wireless communication facilities, pursuant to the Zoning Code.
m) Accessory uses, incidental and subordinate to the principal permitted use.
n) Other uses, not listed above, which are determined by the Planning Director to be similar to those listed above.

14.3 Conditionally Permitted Uses

The following uses are permitted in the Neighborhood Commercial District with a Minor Conditional Use Permit:

a) Arcades.
b) Florist with incidental wine sales.
c) Minor expansions to nonconforming uses with a previously approved Conditional Use Permit.
d) On-sale of alcoholic beverages, pursuant to the standards established in the Zoning Code.
e) Outdoor food preparation.
f) Vapor recovery systems, pursuant to the Zoning Code.
g) Wireless communication facilities, pursuant to the Zoning Code.

The following uses are permitted in the Neighborhood Commercial District with a Conditional Use Permit:

a) Child day care centers.
b) Drive-thru pharmacy.
c) Exercise facilities.
d) Expansion of nonconforming uses.
e) Off-sale of alcoholic beverages (liquor stores, markets, etc.), pursuant to the standards established in the Zoning Code.
f) Public uses not permitted as a matter of right.
g) Public utilities or installations.
h) Unified commercial center development of one acre or more.
i) Veterinary clinic.
j) Wireless communication facilities, pursuant to the Zoning Code.

14.4 PROHIBITED USES

The following uses are prohibited in the Neighborhood Commercial District:

a) Car wash.
b) Drive-thru restaurants.
c) Motels.
d) Service stations (gas stations and minor repairs).
e) Vehicle repair.
f) Vehicle sales and vehicle parts sales.
g) Any use not specifically authorized.

14.5 DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

All property in the Neighborhood Commercial District shall be developed in accordance with the following standards:

14.5.1 Maximum Floor Area Ratio

The maximum floor area ratio shall be 1.5.

14.5.2 Maximum Height

The maximum building height shall be 35 feet.

14.5.3 Minimum Lot Size

The minimum lot size for new parcels shall be 10,000 square feet.

14.5.4 Front Yard Setback

The minimum front yard setback shall be 5 feet. No parking is permitted in the front yard setback area. The setback area shall be landscaped or improved pursuant to the design standards set forth in Chapter 15 of this Plan. The front yard setback shall also apply to side and rear yards adjacent to a street.

14.5.5 Rear Yard Setback

No minimum rear yard setback is required, except for the following:

(1) Where the rear parcel line abuts a residential district or zone, the minimum rear yard setback shall be 15 feet if there is a public alley (distance from building to rear property line or alley easement), and 25 feet where there is no public alley.

14.5.6 Interior Side Yard Setback

No minimum interior side yard setback is required, except where the side parcel line abuts a residential district or zone, the minimum side yard setback shall be 15 feet.

14.5.7 Parking

Refer to Chapter 16 for off-street parking requirements and standards.

14.6 Design Standards and Guidelines for the Neighborhood Commercial District

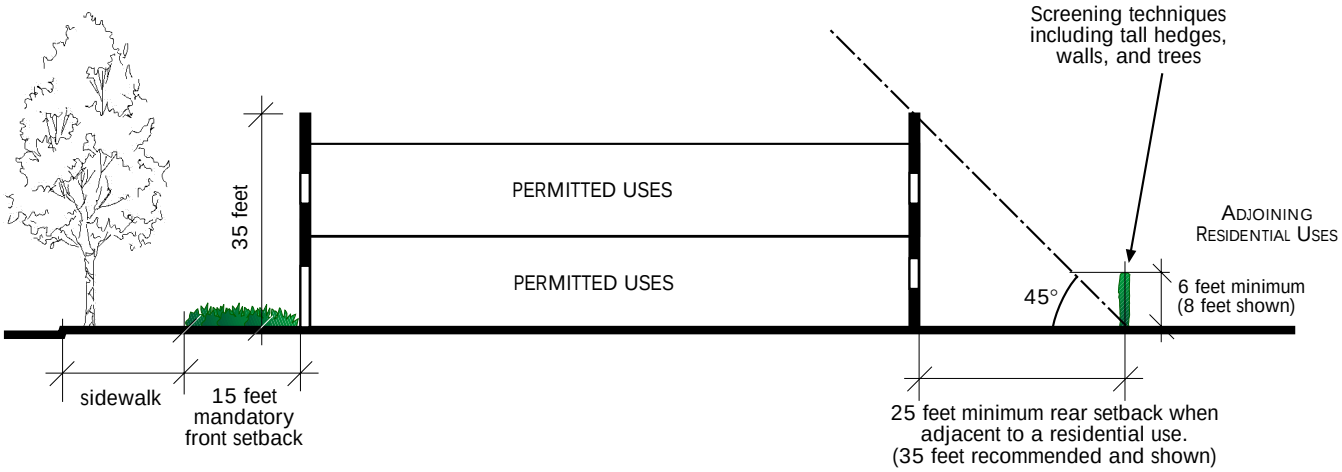
14.6.1 District Character Defining Statement

As new buildings are built, or as existing buildings are remodeled in the Neighborhood Commercial District, the predominant character should be that of an urban village center. Opportunities should be taken to create outdoor eating areas, plazas, and pedestrian walkways. The buildings should be given a small-town urban commercial look and the atmosphere should be that of a pedestrian-scale, walkable cluster of stores offering goods and services to meet the daily needs of the area's residential neighborhoods. Overall, the intent should be to reduce the existing automobile-oriented, suburban strip-commercial look of these centers and transition them to more pedestrian oriented centers where the automobile is accommodated, but not emphasized.

14.6.2 Site Planning

Building Orientation

(1) New buildings should orient both toward adjacent streets and the parking areas serving the businesses. In no case should the street frontage of a new building be flanked by a blank wall lacking an active commercial entrance or use. As opportunities arise, consideration should be given to retrofitting existing buildings (such as those at the University/Brockton Center) that back-up to public spaces with storefronts, pedestrian passageways, and/or store entrances.



Recommended Setbacks for Buildings adjacent to Residential Uses

(2) New development or additions should be sited to ensure privacy of existing residences on adjoining properties.

(3) Upper stories should be designed to avoid windows and balconies overlooking adjacent residential properties.

Setbacks

(1) Street frontages adjacent to blank walls should be softened with landscaping. Hardscape should be used in front of pedestrian entries, storefronts, and other active use areas.

Vehicular Access and Parking

(1) Surface parking is an integral part of both existing centers and will likely accompany any new uses. Parking areas should be designed to accommodate pedestrian circulation. The pedestrian should also be given careful consideration in the placement of driveways and parking.

(2) Parking should be located away from street views as much as possible.

Pedestrian Access

(1) Pedestrian access should be conveniently oriented toward both parking and the street.

Site Furniture

(1) Seating areas, including tables, chairs, lighting and openwork fencing should be located in gathering spaces to serve the outdoor dining needs of restaurants and coffee shops.

Courtyards and Passages

(1) In keeping with an emphasis on pedestrian amenities and circulation, courtyards and passages need to be integrated into both new construction and the remodeling of existing centers.
(2) To help assure the security of these areas, they need to be designed in relation to active outdoor uses, such as restaurants and coffee shops.

14.6.3 Architecture

Style

(1) The architectural style of any new buildings in neighborhood centers should reflect urban commercial styles such as those found on Main Street in Downtown.
(2) The architectural design concepts should include storefronts consisting of traditional tile bulkheads, clear glass storefront windows, transoms, inset entries, and simple roof parapets.

Scale

(1) Scale should be village-like with one to two story buildings. To further maintain a sense of pedestrian scale, all buildings should be broken into storefront bays about 25 feet wide.
(2) Place the highest portions and largest mass of the structure away from residential neighborhoods to ensure privacy.
(3) If a property adjoins a residential use, no portion of the building (including parapets) should be above an imaginary plane drawn at the rear property line and extended at an angle of 45 degrees towards the front of the property.

Detailing

(1) Detailing should be simple and include such things as stepped parapets, tile bulkheads, traditional canvas awnings, and terrazzo entries.

Roof Design

(1) Typically, roofs should be flat, with parapets providing mechanical equipment screening and a place for design expression.
(2) Pitched roofs should typically be used as an accent, not a predominant roof style. Mansard roofs are strongly discouraged as they are usually identified with suburban strip centers.

Colors and Materials

(1) Wall colors should be light and neutral, with richer accents in the form of tile bulkheads, storefront window framing, and awnings.

14.6.4 Landscaping

General Site

(1) Landscaping should occupy at least 10% of the overall site area, not including setback areas.

Plant Types

(1) Other than scale (noted below) any plant materials suitable for this climate would be acceptable. Plants should include a balance between color, deciduous, and evergreen materials.

Scale

(1) Generally, plants should include small shrubs and lacy trees, designed to accent, not obscure, the buildings. Larger shade trees should be placed in plaza and parking areas. The pedestrian perspective should be a significant factor in plant selection.

Relationship to Development

(1) The objective should be to accent buildings and enhance the pedestrian experience.
(2) Walkways and building entries should be punctuated with color; walking paths and plazas should be both colorful and shaded, and parking areas should be well shaded.

Hardscape

(1) The emphasis should be on creating a pleasant walking experience. Walking paths and plazas should be given an upgraded appearance with special textures and scoring.
(2) A good example of appropriate paving may be found on the pathways adjacent to the pool enclosure at the Mission Inn.
(3) Parking lots may have simple asphalt paving, however, decorative walking paths should penetrate into all parking areas.
(4) The use of heavily textured materials, such as deeply incised stamped concrete or pavers is discouraged as these materials tend to create an unpleasant walking surface.

14.6.5 Signs

Style

(1) Signs should be "traditional" in style. Standard franchise signing should be adapted to coordinate with the architecture of the building and the desired character of the center.

Scale

(1) Signs should be low key, and at a pedestrian/low speed vehicular scale.

Type

(1) Typical acceptable signs include sandblasted wood, painted metal, reverse channel letters, and traditional neon signs. More contemporary commercial signs, such as plastic faced canister and channel letter signs should be avoided.

14.6.6 Additional Design Standards and Guidelines

Refer to Chapter 15 for general design standards and guidelines that apply to the entire Downtown Specific Plan area.