



4. LAND USE

Land Use and the Neighborhood Vision

The Neighborhood Vision for Land Use reflects both input from residents at the community meetings discussed in Section 2 and the policies of the General Plan 2025 summarized in Section 1. Thus the Neighborhood Vision embodies the:

- Neighborhood's desire to protect the single family neighborhoods nestled against the Box Springs Mountain Reserve Park to the east of the existing Watkins Drive and the University's need for quality, affordable housing for residents and UCR students, faculty and staff;
- Neighborhood's and the University's desire for improved Neighborhood shopping facilities where residents, students, faculty and staff can shop and meet in an appealing environment.



Relationship to the General Plan 2025

The General Plan 2025 accommodates the expansion of UCR while ensuring the preservation and enhancement of residential areas within the University Neighborhood. The General Plan also encourages the reuse and/or revitalization of underutilized commercial areas by encouraging appropriately scaled mixed-use developments to serve both residents and UCR students, faculty and staff.

The General Plan recognizes the importance of providing diverse housing opportunities in the University Neighborhood, including new rental apartments, the retention of existing and future rental stock, and affordable housing units. The General Plan stresses the importance of providing quality apartments and multi-family housing within the University Neighborhood, and recommends the development of future new student housing along the University Avenue corridor. Finally, the General Plan encourages the protection of single-family neighborhoods and the minimization of potential town-gown conflicts.





Land Use Challenges and Opportunities

The Challenges and Opportunities to achieving the Land Use Vision for the University Neighborhood include the:

- Need for an adequate supply of conveniently located housing for students, faculty and staff, which cannot be provided exclusively on the UCR campus due to the varied housing preferences of students, faculty and staff;
- Lack of adequate space for student housing in vacant parcels within the University Neighborhood;
- Student demand for rental units and overcrowding of rental units within the single family areas east of Watkins Drive;
- Current lack of development opportunities for new types of retail areas surrounding UCR that are attractive to and shared by University Neighborhood residents, students, faculty and staff; and;
- Economics of revitalizing small, Neighborhood shopping areas that have limited capacity for expansion and current tenant mixes that do not optimally serve either residents of the University Neighborhood or UCR students, faculty and staff.

Some of the major land use recommendations are illustrated in Figure 4 - Land Use.

Land Use Objective

The following Objective was defined based on the Neighborhood Vision and is used to formulate the Policies and Tools:

LU Objective: Enhance the University Neighborhood's quality of life by protecting single family areas, providing quality, affordable housing and enhancing neighborhood shopping.



UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



LEGEND

GENERAL PLAN 2025 LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

- B/OP - BUSINESS/OFFICE PARK
- C - COMMERCIAL
- HDR - HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- HR - HILLSIDE RESIDENTIAL
- I - INDUSTRIAL
- MDR - MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MHDR - MEDIUM HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MU-U - MIXED-USE URBAN
- O - OFFICIAL
- OS - OPEN SPACE
- P - PARK
- PF - PUBLIC FACILITIES
- VLDR - VERY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

PROPOSED ENHANCEMENT AREAS

- MIXED-USE VILLAGE ENHANCEMENT AREAS
- NEIGHBORHOOD-SERVING RETAIL
 - LOWER DENSITY APARTMENTS OR CONDOS OVER RETAIL
 - LOCAL SERVING OFFICE
1. **BIG SPRINGS PLAZA**
 2. **UNIVERSITY PLAZA**
 3. **IOWA AVE & BLAINE ST. CENTER**
- MIXED-USE URBAN ENHANCEMENT AREA
- NEIGHBORHOOD-SERVING RETAIL
 - RESTAURANTS AND ENTERTAINMENT
 - HIGHER DENSITY APARTMENTS OR CONDOS
 - LOCAL-SERVING OFFICE
4. **UNIVERSITY VILLAGE**
- UNIVERSITY-RELATED RENTAL HOUSING ENHANCEMENT AREA

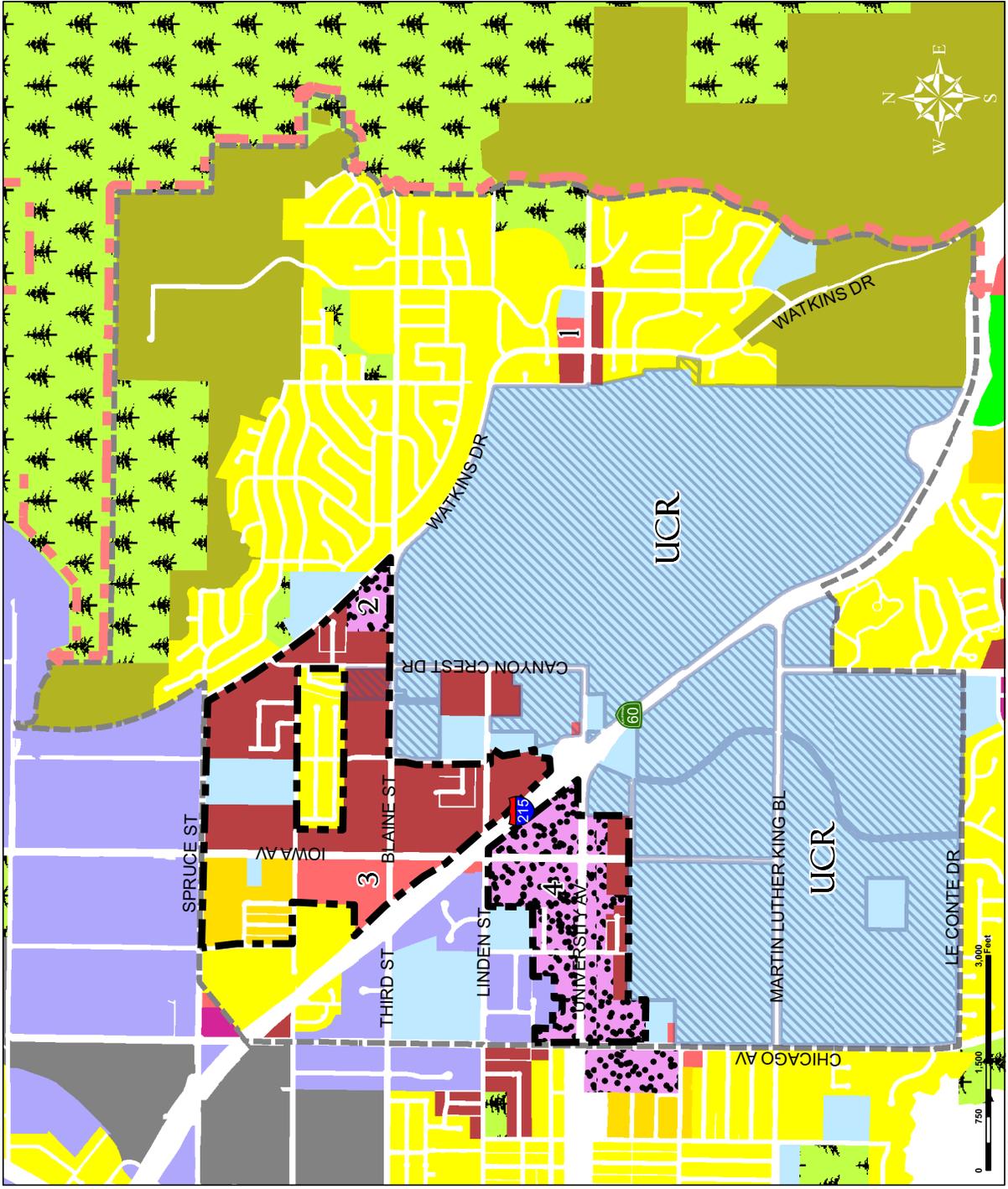


FIGURE 4:
UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD
LAND USE



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Land Use Policies and Tools

The following policies and tools are proposed to achieve the Land Use Vision and Objective, and address the Challenges and Opportunities.

LU Policy 1: Protect and maintain the single-family residential areas located primarily east of Watkins Drive and the pockets of single-family areas located west of Watkins Drive.

LU Tool 1.1: Initiate amendment of Section 19.520 of the Zoning Code to consider allowing the rental of rooms to a maximum of two individuals per dwelling unit, plus members of the family occupying such dwellings, within all Residential zones.

The existing Single Family and Mixed Densities Residential areas illustrated in Figure 3 are areas of the Neighborhood that are subject to Zoning Code violations and need to be protected. In order to maintain the quiet, family-oriented nature of these areas, it is recommended that the number of renters be limited to two people per dwelling unit plus members of the family occupying such dwellings. Limiting the allowable residential density to two individuals per dwelling unit will help preserve existing single-family areas by preventing overcrowding that creates traffic, excessive on-street parking and noise.

LU Tool 1.2: Develop and implement a Rental Housing Licensing Program that holds landlords accountable for code enforcement of their properties.

In areas where code enforcement has been an ongoing problem, landlords and property owners should be required to demonstrate that their properties meet existing Zoning Code and Municipal Code regulations, including noise-related regulations. This program would make license renewal contingent upon a proven track record of acceptable Code Compliance. By making landlords more accountable for the condition of their





properties, they will likely make their tenants more accountable as well.

LU Policy 2: Provide quality, affordable housing for University Neighborhood residents, students, faculty and staff.

LU Tool 2.1: Locate future private student-oriented housing areas where they do not impact existing single-family residential neighborhoods.

A common “town-gown” problem related to student housing arises when University students, in search of adequate off-campus housing, turn to existing single-family residential areas because it is the best housing they can find. Local houses are popular with students because they can live dorm-style—where two people often share a room—in order to cut the cost of housing. Many town-gown plans have recognized that the way to offset the intrusion of students into single-family areas is to provide private student-oriented housing in appropriately located developments that are close to campus and provide students with a variety of local amenities and services, including public transportation.

The most appropriate areas for these developments are within High-Density Residential and Mixed-Use Urban land use designations in the University Neighborhood and along University Avenue as illustrated in Figure 4, and within Downtown and the Riverside Marketplace. In addition to being affordable for students, the apartments should include or be located near amenities such as cafes, gyms, music stores, performance venues, coffee houses, clothing stores and other retail stores that are popular with University students as well as other residents.

LU Tool 2.2: Implement a Neighborhood Livability Program and aggressive code enforcement action to upgrade residential zones designated in the General Plan 2025.





Within the University Neighborhood, there are areas near campus that are designated as high-density residential. These areas are comprised almost entirely of student apartments, due to their proximity to campus. Many of these apartments were built in the 1970s and 1980s, and are now starting to show signs of age and neglect. In order to effectively plan for future growth and the expansion of UCR, this aging stock of local apartments must be upgraded. The City's Neighborhood Livability Program, along with aggressive code enforcement action, can be implemented to improve problem properties within the Mixed Densities Residential areas indicated on Figure 3.

The homes within the Single Family Residential areas indicated on Figure 3 are also subject to neglect and are increasingly being used as university-related rentals. The Neighborhood Livability Program can also be an effective tool to improve the conditions of these residences.

LU Tool 2.3: Explore opportunities to encourage property owners to upgrade older or neglected facilities.

In addition to aggressive code enforcement, there may be other solutions or assistance programs that could be developed to encourage upgrading of rental properties by the owners or tenants.

LU Tool 2.4: Encourage the development of new housing at the existing and proposed mixed-use districts within the University Neighborhood.

With the adoption of new mixed-use districts, as outlined in Land Use Policy 1, there will be new opportunities to construct a limited amount of multi-family and student, faculty and staff housing near the University. The City and UCR, with input from the University Neighborhood, should develop detailed conceptual plans for each of the mixed-use centers illustrated in Figure 3 and initiate a developer recruitment plan to construct these centers.





LU Policy 3: Implement mixed-use zoning at existing commercial centers to increase the level of neighborhood shopping and pedestrian amenities, upgrade the tenant mixes and encourage private sector investment.

LU Tool 3.1: Initiate a General Plan Amendment to consider changing the land use designation for Big Springs Plaza from Commercial to Mixed-Use Village to allow for retail and limited home ownership opportunities with special consideration to building height and parking.



Existing Big Springs Plaza character



Potential Big Springs Plaza character

Big Springs Plaza, shown in Figure 4, is a small commercial development situated on the corner of Watkins Drive and Big Springs Road, and currently has a General Plan designation of Commercial (C). In addition to being within walking distance of the UCR campus and surrounding residential areas, the Plaza is also near Islander Park and the Box Springs Mountain Reserve Park. Because of its proximity to existing single-family areas and existing apartments, the Plaza is an ideal location to construct a Mixed-Use Village (MU-V) environment with new retail, residential and local serving office at an appropriate density.

The General Plan defines a Mixed-Use Village as having medium to high-density residential development with retail, office and service use primarily at the street level to facilitate a pedestrian environment. The designation is intended to encourage new housing opportunities, such as live/work units and residential over retail, that are adjacent to commercial services. The maximum allowable FAR is 2.5, with a residential component of thirty dwelling units per acre.

The residents have stressed the importance of maintaining an appropriate scale for the Neighborhood with building heights of no more than 2 stories. Any future development proposals for this site should include coordination with neighborhood residents to ensure that any new development at this location is





consistent with the surrounding land uses and the neighborhood vision.

LU Tool 3.2: Initiate a General Plan Amendment to consider changing the land use designation for the University Plaza from Mixed Use-Urban to Mixed Use-Village.

The University Plaza, shown in Figure 4, is a commercial center located at the corner of Watkins Drive and Blaine Street, directly north of the UCR campus. The center is currently designated Mixed-Use Urban (MU-U), a high-intensity land use designation that allows for high-density residential development with commercial, office, institutional and business uses emphasizing retail, entertainment and student-oriented activities. The maximum FAR for Mixed-Use Urban areas is 4.0, with a residential component of 40 dwelling units per acre and a maximum building height of 60' whereas Mixed-Use Village areas allow a maximum FAR of 2.5, 30 dwelling units per acre and a maximum height of 45'.



The level of density allowed within the University Plaza is incompatible with surrounding single-family residential areas to the north and to the east. In order to provide a better transition, it is recommended that the University Plaza be designated as Mixed Use-Village. The lower densities allowed by this land use designation will lessen potential impacts on the nearby single-family areas. Any future development proposals for this site should include coordination with neighborhood residents to ensure that any new development at this location is consistent with the surrounding land uses and the neighborhood vision.

LU Tool 3.3: Initiate a General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation for the Kmart/Stater Brothers Center from Commercial to Mixed-Use Village.

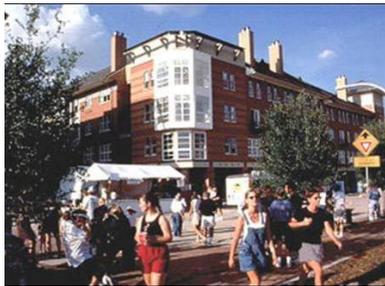
The Kmart/Stater Brothers Center, shown in Figure 4, is a large commercial area located at the corner of Iowa Avenue and Blaine Street, currently





designated Commercial (C). In addition to Kmart and Stater Brothers, the Center includes several other retailers and services. The Center is located near lower density single family areas as well as higher density apartments. Due to its proximity to higher density housing, it is recommended that the land use designation for Kmart/Stater Brothers Center be changed to allow for a Mixed-Use Village.

LU Policy 4: Upgrade University Avenue as a location for community and University related housing and commercial areas as well as enhancing University Neighborhood’s accessibility to Downtown and the Riverside Marketplace.



LU Tool 4.1: Initiate an amendment to the University Avenue Specific Plan to allow for higher-density, mixed-use developments consistent with the General Plan 2025 with additional design guidelines and public improvements.

The University Avenue corridor, shown in Figure 4, is an appropriate location for higher density mixed-use developments and student, faculty, staff and community housing.

The maximum FAR for this area should remain at 4.0, while the residential component of any future development should also be forty units per acre. However, higher densities are permissible for projects that have the potential to serve as transit-oriented developments. While the FAR for transit-oriented projects will remain at 4.0, a residential density of 60 dwelling units per acre is allowed. Qualifying projects must be constructed within one-half mile of a transit stop including Bus Rapid Transit stops along University Avenue.

