
El Cerrito

**Community Council
(ECCC)**

Design and Development Guidelines

August 3, 2006

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of these guidelines is to set out design principles that reflect existing public policy as it relates to the development of property along El Cajon Boulevard. They are generic in nature and may be used by anyone interested in the El Cerrito Community portion of El Cajon Boulevard (54th Street to College Avenue), yet specific enough that any potential project can be objectively assessed for conformance with current policy. The document provides input from the citizens of El Cerrito to the planning process for improving our community. We address topics that are tailored to meet the specific needs of this community. It is unique to this community and identifies concerns for the future of our residents, homes, local commerce, and infrastructure. In addition, these guidelines are based on both the

College Area Community Plan (1989) and the Mid-City Community Plan (1998) - both of which El Cerrito is a part.

Redevelopment will be influenced dramatically by improvements in El Cajon Boulevard. The El Cerrito Community Council has requested that a Traffic Study be conducted along El Cajon Boulevard between 54th Street and College Avenue to address a variety of known issues concerning traffic flow, pedestrian safety, and parking. And with street realignment, it is critical that efforts be made to address wider sidewalks, landscaping and beautification, and incorporate other elements which would make the area more community friendly.

Purpose

Because El Cerrito spans both the north and south sides of El Cajon Boulevard, it engages two city planning committees; CACC or College Area Community Council, and EACPC or Eastern Area Planning Committee. All are bound by common interests and concerns unique to the quality of life in this geographical area of San Diego. This statement of design principles is essential for comprehensive planning in our community to resolve existing problems.

Participation

It is in the best interest of the Community that everyone involved in the physical development plans along this portion of El Cajon Boulevard should review and work within the recommendations adopted by the College Area Community Plan, the MidCity Community Plan, and these guidelines. This document is to be reviewed and approved by the El Cerrito Community Council and the 7th District Council Member, City of San Diego, CA. Additional interested parties, including the College Area

Community Council, the Eastern Area Planning Committee, the Crossroads Project Area Committee (PAC), and the College Area Business Improvement District (BID), will be provided copies for informational purposes. An additional El Cerrito Site Specific Plan will complement these community guidelines, and will be provided separately.

Communication

In the interest of clear and open communications, all parties in the land development process should disclose their full intent and planned approach to particular parcel(s) of land at the earliest possible time. These parties should include the property owner(s), the developer and/or applicant, their professional staff, the City, the community and business groups having jurisdiction or interest.

Summary

This community input arises out of an El Cerrito Planning Committee study, a process that has included community meetings over a three year period. Additional activities have included large community attendance at several Project Area Committee meetings, a denied request for a Revitalization Area Plan, and participation in the Business Improvement District planning. The residents of El Cerrito respectfully, and with a sense of acute concern, request the consideration of our issues in all planning activities affecting the El Cerrito community.

HISTORY and CHARACTERISTICS**Community History**

Formerly called El Cerrito Heights, El Cerrito ("little hills" in Spanish) is a hilly neighborhood. It is a predominantly single-family homes neighborhood with some multi-family development along the commercial corridors of El Cajon Boulevard, 54th Street, College Avenue, and University Avenue. Along 54th Street are Jackson Elementary School, Mann Middle School, and Crawford High School. A small hospital, University Care Center, is located on a knoll overlooking University Avenue to the south.

El Cerrito has evolved from a rural area to suburbia, and from suburban to urban from the 1920's to the present. Large growth came as San Diego State College moved to the area in the 1940's after World War II (renamed San Diego State University or SDSU in 1973). Slower growth continues today in a virtually built-out community as the population of San Diego continues to grow. El Cerrito is well located to benefit its residents by proximity to all areas of San Diego and it is likely to remain a popular residential community as it is developed predominantly with singlefamily houses in subdivision patterns reflective of the hills and canyons within the community. Much of it recalls the manner and design of "old Hollywood" Mission style residences, while many dwellings are of 1940's - 1950's retro, ranch style, etc. in an eclectic mix.

Community Characteristics

El Cerrito is no longer the suburban neighborhood it once was, nor is it "downtown." The communities surrounding El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue, at least the eastern ends, form a transition from urban to suburban regions of San Diego County (west to east). With the current RS-1-7 zoning, the transitional nature of these communities is not likely to change soon because of the dominant single-story, single-family character of neighborhoods surrounding these transportation corridors. Site and streetscape design in El Cerrito should reflect this community's transitional character.

Historically, El Cajon Boulevard or US-80 served as the major east-west transportation corridor for San Diego until the completion of Interstate 8 in the early 1960's. El Cajon Boulevard remains a predominant thoroughfare that not only cuts through the center of the community, but continues to serve as a major transit route, creating a roar of traffic most of the day. Additionally, 54th Street and College Avenue are major north-south arterial roads to CA-94, I-8, and I-15, and serve other communities such as Lemon Grove and Oak Park. With redevelopment, the goal is to make El Cajon Boulevard friendly to pedestrians and business patrons, and unite the community of El Cerrito rather than divide it.

El Cerrito is bordered by heavy traffic on College Avenue, University Avenue, and 54th Street/ Collwood Boulevard which bring traffic from the interior of the community to the freeways. Little has been done to improve this situation after the completion of Interstate 8; subsequently the nature of the commercial zone has not adjusted accordingly, and has declined.

Appropriate Redevelopment along El Cajon Boulevard

Redevelopment in El Cerrito should encourage community life by transforming public spaces into vital places with many activities. It should develop gathering places, cafes, and other activities which can draw the community together on both sides of El Cajon Boulevard. Further, development should promote a pedestrian-friendly business district, and eliminate some of the negative characteristics of suburban sprawl, such as parking lots separating businesses from the street and narrow sidewalks situated too close to heavy traffic. It should also avoid crowding and the claustrophobic feel associated with more urban neighborhoods, such as the redeveloped sections of Little Italy, where streets and sidewalks seem too narrow for the height of the new buildings.

A transitional community like El Cerrito should have room for outdoor dining and store displays that don't spill out onto the sidewalk and disrupt pedestrian use. El Cerrito's transitional character can be distinguished from more urban neighborhoods with a more balanced integration of commercial and residential concerns through adoption of wider streets, wider sidewalks, deeper setbacks, more trees/plants (including landscaping between the curb and the sidewalk), and more communal open space.

It would be desirable to reduce the close proximity of single family residences from traffic corridors by creating landscape buffers wherever possible. Policies are already in place for public hearings to rezone property in accordance with the College Area Community Plan, the Mid-City Community Plan, the Business Improvement District's Design Guidelines, and these guidelines.

LAND USE

Wherever feasible, the use of land should be determined through collaborative communication, negotiation and consensus among all interested parties as described above in the "Process" section. Mixed use is encouraged with the understanding that a variety of uses can fit the description of "mixed". It is in the best interests of all parties to select a mix that complements and serves adjacent neighborhoods, and contributes to the El Cerrito section of El Cajon Boulevard.

Residential Uses

El Cerrito has a variety of new and old housing; owner-occupied single-family residences and condominiums; high, low, mid-price rental units; and affordable housing. El Cerrito's current residents are also diverse in terms of age, income, education, ethnicity, and lifestyle. This diversity of residents, living in a variety of housing types, helps make El Cerrito a lively, interesting, and safe place to live. The residents' mix of knowledge, experience, and abilities helps to address the economic and security problems that exist in the community. For this reason, El Cerrito and the surrounding areas are already models of communities that benefit from diversity.

Mixed-use redevelopment is expected to make El Cajon Boulevard safer by increasing the population density and putting "eyes on the street," which is necessary to provide customers and clients for the revitalized businesses a sense of security and the willingness to linger in the area longer. This strategy will only improve security if residents are drawn from a diverse cross-section of San Diego's population. El Cerrito's diversity along a redeveloped El Cajon Boulevard will help to deal with the security problems that exist, but without a substantial proportion of market-rate and single-family homes in the housing mix, existing problems could become worse.

Examples of other San Diego projects are:



Mission Hills example



Mission Hills example



Kensington



example

Linda Vista example



El Cajon example

Residential Goals: A variety of housing types along El Cajon Boulevard will help to achieve the following goals:

- Maintain population diversity
- Increase security
- Limit to a "fair share" of affordable housing with other San Diego neighborhoods
- Balance the ratio of Market rate vs. "Affordable" housing
- Retain the residential/family nature of the community, with a high level of home ownership
- Retain the privacy of nearby single-family homes.

Housing Types: In order to achieve these goals, successful redevelopment along El Cajon Boulevard should create a variety of housing types, such as:

- Single-family townhomes for young professional working couples
- Market-rate and affordable condominiums for teachers and advanced-study students
- Mixed use commercial space with market-rate and affordable condominiums.

Past Commercial Uses

Commercial development over the last 30 years along the major streets of El Cerrito presents troubling images, in part due to the lack of any cohesive community guidelines. For example, in an effort to make each individual store or groups of stores stand out from its neighbors, developers and property owners have used a variety of unrelated architectural designs, incoherent colors, and competing signs. The results are visually cluttered and confusing commercial areas which are in need of both economic and physical rehabilitation. Further, many of the commercial areas are utilized by businesses which do not meet the needs of the community or are better situated away from residential zones, such as auto resales.

Currently, El Cajon Boulevard has too many low-end commercial uses that don't serve the needs of the community. Increased density, with a variety of market-rate and affordable housing, will help support an improved commercial district. The intersection of major streets in El Cerrito will also bring potential customers from surrounding areas in their own cars and by public transportation.

Commercial Goals: An improved commercial district will achieve the following goals:

- Increase the number and variety of businesses that serve residents' needs
- Ensure a vibrant commercial district which is patronized by local residents

- Improve pedestrian access and provision for public space activities
- Include a mix of large and small businesses
- Provide more products and services for families and children
- Create a distinctive business environment.

Business Types: In order to achieve these goals, successful redevelopment along El Cajon Boulevard should create commercial spaces for a variety of businesses, including:

- Commercial centers with an "anchor" tenant that will attract customers to smaller retail businesses at the "gateway" nodes defined at 54th Street and College Avenue
- Business courtyards
- Specialty grocer, to balance the current discount and retail grocers
- Space for a farmers' market
- Independent-owned family restaurants
- Coffee houses
- Bookstore/Music store/Movie rental
- Bank
- Professional offices
- Doctor's office/Dentist's office/Health clinic
- Copy center/Office supply/P.O. box
- Art galleries/Art supplies
- Photo shop
- Hardware store/Appliance store
- Convenience store/Small general market
 - Bakery
- Boutique clothing shops/Specialty store
- Pet store/Veterinarian clinic
- Dry cleaner/Laundromat
- Shoe repair/Tailor
- Barber shop/Beauty shop
- Health club
- Entertainment venue.

Topography and Site Design

El Cajon Boulevard's rise from 54th Street to 58th Street is an important asset, offering commanding views of San Diego Bay, the Coronado Islands, Point Loma, North Park, and Mount Soledad. This asset should be protected in new development, and site plans should take advantage of this existing topography.

Views: Due to the high visibility of structures on sloping sites between 54th and 58th Street , views of the slopes from surrounding neighborhoods and public rights-of-way should be given strong consideration.

Buildings located near hillside rims should be sited to avoid a wall effect and to maintain views of surrounding hillsides and canyons from public rights-of-way. Designs should consider sloping to suit the terrain.

Rooflines: The treatment of rooftops should be varied on sloping sites, rather than consisting of extended horizontal lines. Rooflines should be used to emphasize the variety in shape and flowing character of the hillside instead of masking it.

Grading: As has already been done in most existing neighborhoods of the community, structures/housing should be designed to fit into the hillside, complementing the land's natural character, rather than altering the hillside to fit the structure.

Graded slopes should be shaped to conform to existing landforms. Building sites should be graded so that they appear to emerge from the slope.

Drainage: Site design should adapt to the existing natural drainage system and should not alter surface runoff and water table conditions. It should not impose drainage problems on neighboring properties, nor should it increase the potential for soil erosion.

Variation: Large, monotonous expanses of flat areas such as parking lots should be avoided.

Deliveries

Businesses should be able to receive deliveries without blocking traffic or on-street parking.

Social Interaction

El Cajon Boulevard divides El Cerrito, and careless redevelopment will intensify this division by creating a third community facing inward on the Boulevard, with its back turned toward the north and south sections of the existing community. Thoughtful redevelopment will help to unite the south and north sections of El Cerrito by integrating new neighbors into a single community and overcoming the divisive elements of El Cajon Boulevard. Careful consideration should be paid to traffic flows in order to mitigate overflow onto the residential side streets intersecting El Cajon Boulevard, and preclude deterring pedestrian activity and interaction.

The design of new development should encourage new residents to become part of the existing community. There should be places for new residents and current residents to meet and communicate, but the design of these spaces should dampen loud noise, preserve privacy, promote safety, and prevent criminal activity such as prostitution or drug dealing, and discourage homeless people and gang members from loitering.

Alleys

Alleys should be considered into the overall design of each project with a focus on improving the appearance of alleys and improving security.

The design of alley improvements should discourage business customers, residents, and their guests from blocking these narrow streets with cars. This will probably call for more parking spaces than codes require for new development.

Common Areas

Where there is no alley at the back of new residences, siting patio and common areas along the property line of existing residences should encourage new residents and current residents to communicate across the back fence as neighbors, but the design should dampen noise, preserve privacy, and promote safety. This site design will also set new buildings further back from existing residences.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Commercial and mixed-use development along both sides of El Cajon Boulevard should enhance a sense of community identity and create a pedestrian-friendly environment, as well as integrate new buildings and their residents into existing neighborhoods while maintaining a sense of privacy and personal space. Parties involved in redevelopment should evaluate the potential of consolidating adjacent parcels to optimize the overall project scope.

Community Identity

Streetscape and place names should identify El Cerrito as a unique, attractive, and desirable neighborhood where everyone knows each other and helps each other out. In addition to a publicity campaign to promote El Cerrito, a sign should clearly identify the nucleus of the community. Likewise, the western and eastern "gateways" at 54th Street and College Avenue should boldly announce to visitors their entry into the El Cerrito community.

Transition to Existing Single-family Neighborhoods

Architectural Style: The design of new structures should be compatible with the architectural character of surrounding single-family homes, including a variety of designs such as:

- Spanish Eclectic
- Mission
- Mexican Hacienda
- Art Deco
- Art Moderne/ Streamline Moderne.

The transitions and visual relationships of commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family buildings with adjacent lower density development should be harmonious. A conscious effort to achieve balance and compatibility in design between different densities of development is needed. This can be accomplished by: •

Repeating existing building lines and surface treatment

- Gradual transitions in height and bulk
- Use of setbacks at ground level and above ground level
- Step-backed buildings.

New buildings should be visually integrated with the existing community by giving the rear and side walls the same decoration and detailing as the fronts.

Buffers and Screens: To minimize the impact at transitional boundaries, a buffer between existing residential areas and commercial/mixed-use development should incorporate the use of:

- Appropriate building setbacks
- Fences
- Landscaping
- A combination of any of these.

Screen the following areas from adjacent residences and from the street:

- Trash enclosures • Parking areas • Service areas.

Visually Reducing Bulk and Mass

Since new commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family buildings are usually larger than adjacent lower density structures, special consideration should be given to adjacent parcels to ensure that new development does not visually overwhelm them and degrade existing privacy.



Transition example

Step-back or break-up building masses and help avoid the creation of a wall or canyon effect along El Cajon Boulevard with architectural variations, such as:

- Articulating and texturing large surfaces to reduce their apparent size and to reflect the pattern of adjacent buildings
- Ground level and upper level setbacks
- Pedestrian breezeways or corridors
- Facade variation
- Recessed or protruding entryways
- Porches
- Balconies
- Bay windows
- Detailing - around roofs, windows, doorways, etc.

Pedestrian Orientation

Develop a pedestrian orientation in commercial and mixed-use development through:

- Placement of commercial uses on the ground floor
- Residential uses located above and/or behind commercial space

- Location of buildings close to the street
- Requirements for transparency of ground floor facades
- Restrictions on curb cuts and driveways.

It is imperative to give importance to the pedestrian scale with respect to the width of the street and heights of the buildings. A high quality pedestrian network and public realm makes walking pleasurable. Placing buildings heights at human-scale architecture with beautiful surroundings nourishes the human spirit. It is intended to embrace the pedestrian, create ease of walkability, encourage public right of way uses and establish a sense of enclosure to protect the pedestrian.

Public Open Space

Usable outdoor open areas, preferably at street level, should be integrated into the design to provide natural sunlight (direct or indirect) and circulation through the use of:

- Gardens
- Courtyards
- Terraces.

Open areas should observe solar access principles to provide shade in the warm months.

Privacy

Designs should preserve privacy of current residents by considering:

- Setbacks at ground level and above ground level
- Screening through the use of landscaping or privacy fencing •
Off-set windows to deflect sightlines away from adjacent homes.

In new residential structures, private open areas located on the ground level should be screened from public view by landscaping or privacy fencing.

Social Interaction

Along the street, the design of new residences should encourage social interaction along El Cajon Boulevard. In addition to making space for outdoor dining and retail displays in commercial spaces, street-level setbacks for residences should create "front porch" spaces where residents could relax and converse with neighbors passing by on the sidewalk. However, the design of these spaces should incorporate elements that prevent criminal activity such as prostitution or drug dealing, and discourage homeless people and gang members from loitering.

Positive social activity might be encouraged through elements including:

- Ground level setbacks or breezeways that extend the traditional sidewalk
- Small plazas to break up long expanses of commercial or residential frontage
- Small parks or social “convergence” zones that integrate engaging resources such as public seating, public art, historical markers or memorials, fountains, etc.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY

Complementing Existing Architecture

The existing properties should be studied by architects/designers to better understand the features that contribute to the neighborhood and should be complemented by any new development in the immediate vicinity.

Architectural Preservation

In both residential neighborhoods and along El Cajon Boulevard, existing architectural styles reflect the community's history and heritage, and one objective of redevelopment should be to rehabilitate existing buildings that represent the community's architectural character and adapt them to new uses where appropriate. Considerations for rehabilitating existing structures include the following:

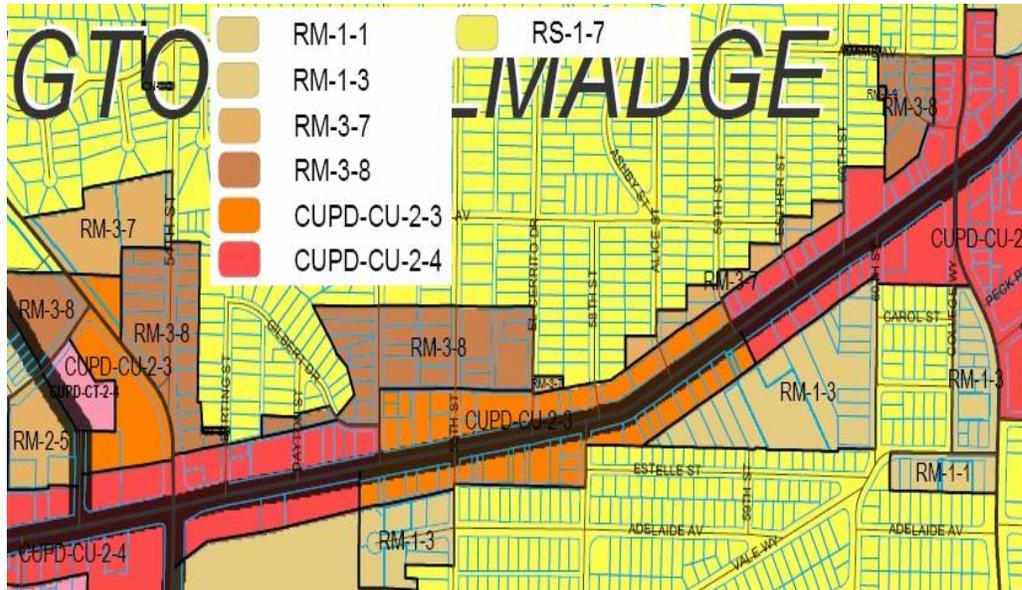
- Hidden ornamentation that may have been covered up should be restored to its original character where feasible, and appropriate
- Buildings housing multiple merchants should be renovated uniformly
- All additions/alterations to existing buildings should look as if they belong
- Signs should complement the existing structure’s architecture, not compete with it or degrade it.

BUILDING SCALE

The El Cerrito section of El Cajon Boulevard has many land uses with various heights and it is not always possible to know what new development is most appropriate by looking at adjacent properties. However, the College Area Community Plan states “...there must be sensitive transition between the centers and adjacent neighborhoods. The existing scale of the neighborhoods should not be overwhelmed by the large-scale development proposed for the mixed-use area along the El Cajon Boulevard corridor.” A provision of any new development must be that it is compatible with the bulk, scale and architectural character of the older existing development in adjacent neighborhoods, i.e. the single family neighborhoods surrounding El Cajon Boulevard. Current zoning encourages high density, pedestrian-oriented development at the node areas (the intersections of El

Cajon Boulevard with 54th Street and College Avenue) and less so between nodes, and provides appropriate buffering from surrounding residential uses.

Structures should be no higher than three stories and step-back where necessary. Projects will focus their designs on mitigating the impact associated with excess density (e.g. parking), and load on the city infrastructure (e.g. trash, clogged alleys, etc.) which can easily lead to “slumification” adjacent to established and thriving residential housing.



Zoning
Summary

Existing Zoning Definitions

The propose of the RS (Residential- Single Unit) zones is to provide appropriate use regulations for the development of single dwelling units that accommodate a variety of lot sizes and residential dwelling types and which promote neighborhood quality, character, and livability.

- RS-1-7: located in an urbanized community, requires minimum 5,000-square-foot lot per unit.

The purpose of the RM (Residential--Multiple Unit) zones is to provide for multiple dwelling unit development at varying densities. The RM zones individually accommodate developments with similar densities and characteristics. Each of the RM zones is intended to establish development criteria that consolidates common development regulations, accommodates specific dwelling types, and responds to locational issues regarding adjacent land uses.

- RM-1-1: permits a maximum density of 1 dwelling unit for each 3,000 square feet of lot area.
- RM-1-3: permits a maximum density of 1 dwelling unit for each 2,000 square feet of lot area.
- RM-3-7: permits a maximum density of 1 dwelling unit for each 1,000 square feet of lot area.
- RM-3-8: permits a maximum density of 1 dwelling unit for each 800 square feet of lot area.

The purpose of the CU (Central Urbanized Commercial) zones is to allow different types of mixed uses at varying densities.

- CUPD-CU-2-3: intended to accommodate development with pedestrian orientation and medium-high density residential use.
- CUPD-CU-2-4: intended to accommodate development with pedestrian orientation and high density residential use.

Visual Harmony

The future image of El Cerrito needs to maintain the visual character of the residential neighborhoods and strengthen the businesses along the El Cajon Boulevard corridor. The few remaining large commercial parcels of developable land must be made available for El Cerrito citizen-preferred businesses.

The primarily single-family residential community and existing multi-family residences are the major components of the community. The use of transition of scale, abundant yet suitable landscaping, the organization of transportation and parking facilities, and the organization of land uses are essential to achieving visual harmony between the commercial areas and nearby neighborhoods.

Commercial/Mixed-Use Integration

As the El Cajon Boulevard corridor develops, it will become more organized, giving clearer identity to commercial uses with upgrades of existing structures, new commercial, mixed-use and multi-family housing. With the mixture of residential and commercial development, a higher level of pedestrian activity is essential and warrants careful consideration of open space integration. The improved image

resulting from better landscaping, sign control and screening requirements can integrate this corridor functionally and visually with the community as a whole.

Existing Single-family Residential Neighborhoods

Located between busy streets requiring much improvement, the single-family residential neighborhoods will remain at their present scale and appearance as established by zoning ordinances. These neighborhoods should continue to respect the views, canyons and mesas within and on which they are built. They should also remain visually distinct from development in the commercial areas, although they should not appear to be cut off from those areas and from multi-family residential neighborhoods. The major streets of the community should continue to link the neighborhoods to the activity centers, and circulation within the neighborhoods should continue to be confined to local streets.

New development should take into consideration the bulk and scale of older existing development in adjacent neighborhoods. Abrupt differences in scale should be avoided.

APPEARANCE

Red tile roofs, colored foundation, tile & wrought iron are appropriate materials for use with mission revival buildings. Colored foundation tile and glass, especially glass block, are more appropriate on modern and art deco style buildings. However, there should be no flat roofs on any new development. Wood trim and stucco is compatible with masonry buildings. Extreme use of rock, wood, metal and plastic is not compatible with the dominant architectural styles found in the neighborhood.

Incorporated into the appearance of new buildings should be the neighborhood's history and cultural ties to the architectural style of SDSU.

COLORS

Colors of building materials and paint should be pleasing, not overpower the eye, and enhance the appearance of the neighborhood.

Best practices of architectural design should be used on the exterior of a building and may include two or three colors which complement the building to give the appearance of reduced size and/or to give an enhanced facade.

Adjacent buildings should consider the use of different, but complimentary, colors in order to differentiate themselves from each other.

Storefronts in the same building should be painted the same color scheme.

Architectural trim, including doors, window frames, moldings and cornices should be painted to highlight details and to complement the main colors of the building.

Bright, clashing colors should be avoided.

WINDOW TREATMENTS

Rehabilitation and development efforts should strive to meet the goal of opening storefront windows to the interior, which should become part of the character of the building through the use of window displays and inviting interior arrangements. Security bars are uninviting and unattractive and should not be attached to exterior windows, doors or any storefront. Newer designs should disguise the security aspects so that they become an integral part of the design by the use of multi-pane windows. Clear, un-tinted glass is preferred to permit a view of the interior. Limited tinting can be useful for protection from the sun's rays if the glass appears essentially transparent. Dark tinted, frosted, or reflective glass is generally discouraged, together with the use of blinds; however, the use of ultraviolet coatings to enhance energy efficiency should be considered.

AWNINGS and CANOPIES

Awnings and canopies can provide protection from the elements and also enhance structures by their shape, placement and use of color. Signs and logos can also be used as part of a canopy's design. Size, placement and signing should conform to appropriate regulations and codes.

FENCING and ENCLOSURES

There are circumstances that lend themselves to the use of fencing, e.g. the need for privacy, to direct movement, protect inventory or simply define a space. Fencing, while a barrier, should not necessarily restrict visibility. Fencing materials can be attractive, or intimidating and ugly. A chain link or razor wire fence communicates hostility. Ornamental fencing is friendly and can become part of the overall design and look attractive.

Trash Receptacles

Trash receptacles should be screened. Refuse collection areas should be surrounded by a solid wall (preferable made of concrete or stucco) or fence (preferable painted) with a minimum height of four feet or the height of the container,

whichever is greater. A six-foot solid wall or fence should be constructed between the container and any adjoining residentially zoned property. Wherever possible, refuse collection areas shall be directly accessible from alleys and adequately spaced. All enclosures should be constructed with finishes and colors that are harmonious to the architectural theme of the primary buildings.

Service Areas and Loading Docks

Service areas and loading docks should be screened. These areas should be located, if possible at the rear/alley access of buildings, so that they do not create visual clutter or problems with vehicular/pedestrian circulation.

Parking Lots

Berms, bushes or fencing should be used to screen parking lots that front roadways. Walls should be continuous with variation of surface relief. Fencing should incorporate posts at regular intervals, and fencing should not be over four feet in height to allow for protective surveillance.

Adjacent Residences

Trash enclosures, parking areas and service areas should be screened from adjacent lower density residential neighborhoods.

Private Open Areas

When located on ground level, private open areas should be screened from public view by landscaping or privacy fencing.

Fencing along streets that is used to screen or to enclose private yards should avoid "walling off" the street. Shrubbery, trees, and architectural detailing should be used to add visual interest.

LIGHTING

The appropriate use of lighting, including indirect lighting, lends not only ambience but accentuates a building's design elements and leads to a sense of security. Aggregated building lighting along the El Cerrito portion of El Cajon Boulevard will assist in defining the character of the street and its components.

Street Lighting

Street lighting should be at different illumination levels to reinforce circulation hierarchy (public roads, private roads, parking areas, pedestrian walkways). Lighting should be designed and located to avoid shining on adjacent properties.

Pedestrian Orientation

With pedestrian friendly zones, lighting should be sufficient to provide safety and support greater activity in the evening, when temperatures are cooler in the summer and encourage walking.

Peripheral Lighting

In addition to walkway lighting, peripheral lighting should be provided for multifamily developments. Peripheral lighting provides security for surveillance of the units and allows residents and visitors to see into their surroundings and determine if passage through an area is safe.

Low Hanging Fixtures

Low hanging fixtures should be placed so that they do not produce glare. Shatterproof coverings should be used for all lighting fixtures close to the ground.

SIGNS



Signs need to be an integral part of a building's design and should complement rather than compete with its surroundings. A wide variety of signs are encouraged and a few should be discouraged or prohibited, for example:

- Encouraged: Wall, Blade/Fin, Window, Canopy
- Discouraged: Pole, Backlit, Banner

*Storefront signage
example: North Park*

Signs should be designed for compatibility with the architecture of surrounding development. Signs should not dominate the streetscape, but blend with it while providing an element of interest. For example:

- Wall-mounted signs should not project above the roofline
- Multiple signage within a development should have a standardized format and uniform design
- Off-premises advertising (billboards) should not be permitted
- Distinctive signs identifying the university should be located along key thoroughfare streets. These streets, including College Avenue, should occur as a "gateway" to the university.

LANDSCAPING

In an urban setting, trees and shrubs soften the hard surfaces and angular forms, and provide an element of nature in an otherwise unnatural environment. They both provide shade, color and fragrance, plus clean the air. The type of plant/tree, its location and amount should be discussed as an integral part of the development project.

All landscaping projects should complement streetscape improvements in the adjacent public right-of-way. Exterior rooms, with landscaping accents, should be integrated into the project where feasible. Shade trees are encouraged to complement seating/dining areas, particularly outdoor accommodations.

Vegetation

Areas that have been disturbed by construction should be replanted with drought tolerant plant materials and shade trees. Noninvasive plants should be used in areas adjacent to native vegetation. Landscaping adjacent to natural canyons or open areas should be selected to be fire retardant while still being sensitive to impacts on native vegetation.

Mature and reasonably well maintained landscaping as well as native vegetation on hillsides and canyon bottoms is a characteristic of the community. Views from hilltop areas to the ocean to the west, mountains to the east and down into small finger canyons are also present. With successful El Cerrito redevelopment, it is expected that even more homeowners will take more pride in the community and, specifically, their homes.

Fire Suppression

Development adjacent to canyon areas should incorporate fire protection features. Fire retardant plants should be used in landscaping areas adjacent to canyons and an irrigation system installed. Property owners should thin out and clear dead underbrush in canyon rim areas. Fire retarding structures such as walls, paved patios or swimming pools should be placed to help slow the spread of fires

originating in canyons. Fire retardant building materials, particularly roofing materials, should be used on structures.

Transition to Adjacent Neighborhoods

Landscaping on side streets adjacent to new multifamily development should repeat the landscaping character of the lower intensity adjacent neighborhoods. This will improve the transition of development between the different intensities.

Landscaping should be used to tie buildings and site developments to existing street and sidewalks, visually anchoring buildings to the larger environment of the neighborhood.

Projected landscaping should be complementary to existing and planned streetscape improvements. If the development is responsible for public right-of-way improvements, these should continue with the appropriate theme.

Parking Areas

Landscaping islands should be provided at regular intervals in parking areas. Tree canopies and patterned paving are encouraged to soften large areas of paving.

Landscaping should be used to screen parking areas from the street nearby residences. To allow opportunities for surveillance of parking areas, shrub planting or low walls may be used to partially screen parking while still allowing a line of site into the area.

Plant Choice

Landscaping which de-emphasizes turf areas and utilizes native and drought resistant plants is encouraged. Street development should provide for trees and shrubs along sidewalks and should utilize native or drought resistant plants where possible.

OPEN SPACE and PARKS

The El Cerrito Community has been identified as a "Facilities Deficit Zone". Currently the College Area is deficient approximately 40+ acres of parks and open space. Developers should be required to mitigate any further deterioration in open space. The redevelopment process will seek to define new open space along El Cajon Boulevard to establish an urban retreat within the main commercial zone. Such amenities within the commercial district include increased setbacks and landscaping, street side plazas, and more expansive parks. These public spaces should maximize the usable space and incorporate serviceable, yet attractive,

resources in their design. Sufficient trash containers should be provided to encourage cleanliness.

It is envisioned that a joint-use park, perhaps towards the center of El Cajon Boulevard near 58th Street with views of downtown, should be incorporated into the potential realignment of the boulevard (addressing the narrowness, bend, and rise in the street). Mini-parks or patios should be scattered along El Cajon Boulevard to make areas more pedestrian/ pet friendly and should incorporate receptive elements such as public art or fountains. Good examples of these are Kensington, Little Italy, or the ballpark downtown.

Spaces adjacent to traffic zones should be protected with decorative barriers as a safety measure and to separate the recreational activities of the general public from the commuter corridors, for example:



Little Italy park



*example Downtown park
example*

STREETScape

El Cajon Boulevard splits the El Cerrito community from 54th Street to College Avenue, and its appearance should reflect the image and shared values of the neighborhoods north and south of the street.

Gateway Identification

Portions of El Cajon Boulevard in El Cerrito have been designated “gateways” in the community plan and warrant significant public design elements. The 54th Street and College Avenue crossroads have been identified as the western and eastern “gateways” to El Cerrito, and the area between these nodes has been defined as the “central core.”

College Avenue and 54th Street at El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue are crossroads of major streets that lead into and transverse the community. These intersections are also major access points to the other residential communities and commercial areas surrounding El Cerrito. These are streets with high volumes of auto and pedestrian traffic, and with high intensity uses located adjacent. Landscaping, street furniture, and lighting should be utilized to emphasize these streets.

With the prospect for street changes and realignment along El Cajon Boulevard as part of redevelopment, extra space to widen the street not only makes room for medians and turn lanes, but could also make space for wider sidewalks and public



plazas, as well as more efficient use of lots for development purposes. Given that El Cajon Boulevard east of 58th Street sits atop a high mesa with long views to downtown, the ocean, and the southeast mountains, street improvements offer the ideal opportunity to provide for a public use area so all residents can share in the spectacular placement of this community.

North Park example



*University
Heights
example*



*I-15 Interchange
example*



example

College Area



Gaslamp example

Additionally, custom street signage can be adopted to further define the character of El Cerrito along El Cajon Boulevard.



*Custom street signage
example: North Park*

Pedestrian Orientation

All streetscapes should be pedestrian friendly and make accommodations for bicycles and public transport. The focus should be on pedestrian-friendly commercial frontage designed to attract patrons walking along El Cajon Boulevard.

Streets should be designed and developed as pleasant places to walk, as well as drive. Pedestrian areas should be emphasized through the use of wider sidewalks, benches, pedestrian scale signs, paving materials and landscaping, but these elements should not create places for criminals to hide or homeless people to loiter. Using landscaping and street furniture to create a separation between the street and sidewalk is one option for making new development more pedestrian-friendly. Also, adequate accommodations for trash receptacles that blend with the overall design are required to minimize the affect of trash and litter.

Building Orientation

Multi-family and commercial development along El Cajon Boulevard should front on the public street and provide identifiable pedestrian access from the street into the project. Parking lots should not be located between the street and the project, which would further widen the gap between structures and diminish the community perspective.

Curb Cuts

Curb cuts should be minimized to avoid pedestrian/handicap conflicts with turning traffic, and allow more landscaping and parking along the streets.

Key Community Nodes

Key focal points within the community should be developed to add identity within the community. The following intersections are important as focal points: • 54th

Street - western gateway (possible theme related to El Cerrito's namesake hills, the adjacent public schools, or the multi-ethnic element of this border with City Heights)

- College Avenue - eastern gateway (possible theme related to SDSU)
- 58th Street - central core (possible theme related to the scenic overview offered from the 58th Street vantage point)

Landscaping

Projected landscaping should be complementary to existing and planned streetscape improvements. If the development is responsible for public right-of-way improvements, these should continue with the appropriate theme.

Existing mature trees within the public right-of-way or adjacent to it should be preserved, and where possible relocated with efforts to widen the street and landscape adjacent areas. Similar species of trees should be planted in the public right-of-way, adjacent to the curb or landscape zone so that the trees are continuous, on both sides. Native Shade trees should be used in pedestrian areas to shield pedestrians from mid-day sun.

Existing trees should be maintained. Sidewalk and street improvements and maintenance should include additional trees to enhance these areas as designated open space.

Any new landscaping along El Cajon Boulevard, College Avenue, 54th Street, and University Avenue should incorporate design consistency, with a few preferred species integrated into the landscape.

A strong sense of edge along public streets should be developed to spatially define streets. This can be accomplished by the arrangement of street trees near the public right-of-way in a linear pattern. El Cajon Boulevard, College Avenue, 54th Street, and University Avenue should be improved with this sort of edge.

Streets leading to the Andrew Jackson Elementary School, Horace Mann Middle School, and Crawford High School should be developed in a manner that emphasizes safety and the presence of the schools. Pedestrian bridges should be constructed for safe access to schools and businesses.

Public Transit

As a transit corridor, accommodations should be made to integrate an attractive El Cerrito transit center that ties to the Trolley to the north. This center should be within the community core, between 59th and 60th Streets. All transit stops should have seating with shade and plenty of trash containers in the immediate vicinity.



*Transit stop example:
North Park*

Design Standards

All street widening and related improvements should have high design standards, with

considerations for traffic flows, pedestrians, cyclists, public transportation, public amenities, and appropriate landscaping. The Planning Department should review all Capital Improvement Program projects to ensure the aesthetic quality and cohesiveness of street improvements.

Utilities

Development should transition electricity, cable, and telephone wires in neighborhoods to underground distribution.

Street Closings

Street closings are discouraged, except where public benefit can be shown. Any street closing should be negotiated early in the development process.

PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY, SIDEWALKS, and PEDESTRIAN AREAS

Sidewalks and other pedestrian areas such as walking paths through community parks will provide a safe passage to a variety of users, including disabled or handicapped citizens, and have a capacity to allow two individuals to pass. Encroachment of commercial activities into the public right of way will not be acceptable. The ability to maximize the pedestrian element along El Cajon Boulevard is critical, and providing fourteen foot wide sidewalks is required.

The use of landscaping, lighting, underground utilities, step-backed stories, parking in the rear, etc., will add to the ambiance when pedestrians stroll or drive along the Boulevard. In particular, designs should consider wider sidewalks where appropriate in order to accommodate shade trees which provide relief from the direct sunlight.



Sidewalk example, and integration with parallel parking: North Park

PARKING

To ensure redevelopment is compatible with the residential character of the neighborhood, and takes into consideration the narrow side streets and heavy traffic flows along El Cajon Boulevard, all proposed projects will require sufficient, or preferably excess, onsite parking per existing zoning- with no deviations. This will eliminate “side street parking” on surrounding residential streets which are too narrow for more than one car to pass at a time. In some cases, the community may request an increase in the parking requirements in response to the anticipated use of the land. For example, given the community's proximity to the university, a two bedroom condominium could be occupied by four college students with a total of four vehicles, along with several guests.

Parking concerns associated with urban redevelopment are two fold: commercial and residential. General guidelines include:

- Parking lots should not directly abut sides of buildings. A landscaped walkway area should-be provided between all parking areas and the building
- Several small parking areas are preferable to a large lot
- Special areas for bicycle parking should be included in project designs.

Commercial Parking

To support commercial parking requirements, it is preferable to have multiple small parking lots with appropriate landscaping versus a large lot separating the streetside

pedestrian traffic from the storefront. Development should not be separated from the sidewalk by parking or service areas.

Provide adequate off-street parking, screened from adjacent residential development. Off-street parking areas should be placed in unobtrusive locations and should be designed to minimize visual impact on the site and the surrounding neighborhood.



On-street parking along El Cajon Boulevard will be situated to calm traffic and accommodate patrons along the storefronts. Into-curb parking along El Cajon Boulevard will improve business access, improve pedestrian access, and attract customers. Additionally, it will reduce the pace of traffic and enhance safety.

Landscaping and angled parking example: Hillcrest

Residential Parking

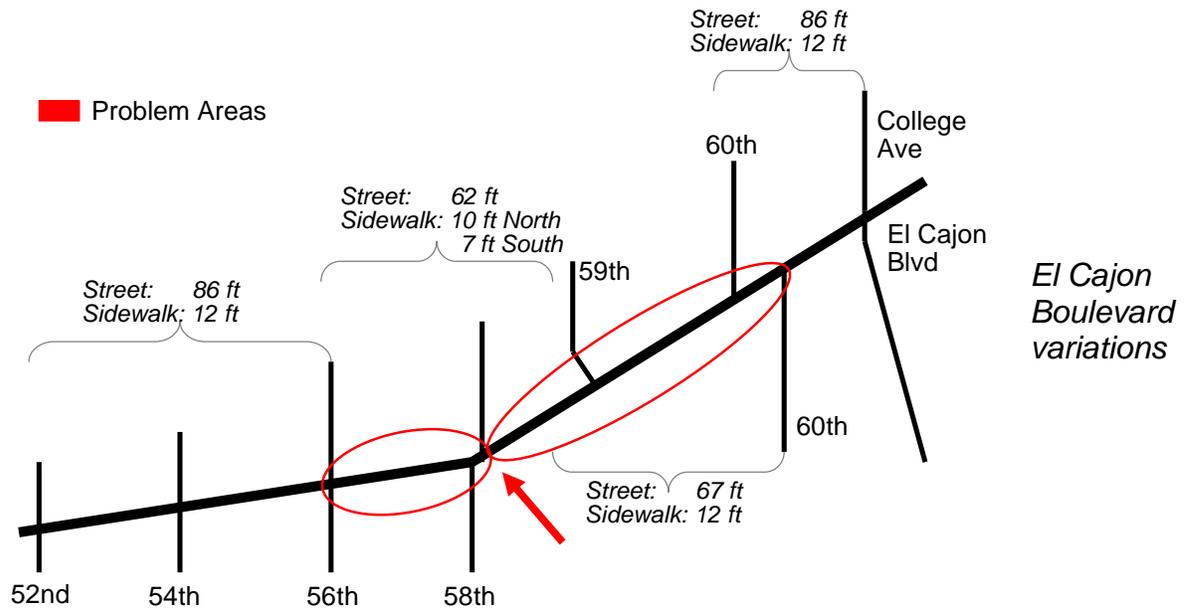
Increase parking space requirements on El Cajon Boulevard via code requirements, especially with multi-family housing, to mitigate excessive side street parking along residential streets immediately off El Cajon Boulevard.

At least a portion, if not all, of the parking area should be enclosed by garages, carports, or trellises. These areas should relate in design and scale to the residential units and should not significantly block views from the street into the development.

Tandem parking spaces (8.5 feet by 35 feet) may be considered in residential projects to reduce the size of paved parking areas and increase open space.

TRAFFIC

El Cajon Boulevard between 54th Street and College Avenue is too narrow to support a center median, and left or right turn lanes, in its current configuration with four lanes of traffic. Plain and simple, El Cajon is too busy, too fast, unsafe, and unattractive within the El Cerrito area. A request of the City to conduct a traffic study was submitted in October 2005 to provide more data on how the potential realignment of El Cajon Boulevard could be incorporated into the overall redevelopment plan.



Redevelopment along the boulevard should include measures to accommodate heavier traffic that will come with increased population, and address outstanding safety issues associated with lack of turn lanes and the problematic grade and curve at 58th Street. Traffic studies are required to assess the impact on widening or narrowing the street in order to accommodate greater capacity, optimize flow and calm traffic in order to support a more walkable community. Additional planning should be considered that evaluates actions to increase sewer and water capacity and to place power and communication cables underground.

Traffic calming designs include such things as traffic circles, medians, wider sidewalks, and trees to slow traffic and support the revitalization efforts along El Cajon Boulevard. Sidewalks are required to be fourteen feet wide consistently along both sides of El Cajon Boulevard.

Traffic Study Requested

On December 15, 2005, the El Cerrito Community Council requested a study of potential improvements to El Cajon Boulevard in the El Cerrito area, between 54th Street and College Avenue, to calm traffic and make the Boulevard more pedestrian and business friendly.

During this process we determined that El Cajon Blvd as it now exists in El Cerrito needs to be changed. The Boulevard and the sidewalks here are the narrowest of all of El Cajon Boulevard (see figure). In this narrow stretch there are four lanes of traffic and street parking. There is no room for turn lanes or medians. The boulevard has a grade from the West with a dangerous curve at the narrowest portion (58th Street). It is level and straight as it widens back out before College Avenue. We anticipate that housing included in the redevelopment along El Cajon Boulevard will add significantly to the traffic on this busy, narrow road that divides, rather than unites our community.

We requested that the City of San Diego and the Crossroads Redevelopment Agency undertake a study of El Cajon Boulevard in the El Cerrito area, particularly in light of the anticipated redevelopment activities. The evaluation should consider criteria such as traffic flow, pedestrian safety, business and residential parking, beautification, and other elements which would make the area more community friendly. The study should also involve the community to determine what options are available and to evaluate the cost, feasibility, and practicality of each.

APPENDIX and NOTES

- Traffic Analysis Request

The El Cerrito Community Council has been working with the College Area Business Improvement District (BID) to prepare design guidelines and revitalization plans for the redevelopment of El Cajon Boulevard in the El Cerrito area. The ECCC request for a traffic study was submitted December 2005 to City Councilman Jim Madaffer, and forwarded to the City of San Diego in February 2006.