

# NORTHRIDGE

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# Community Plan

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ACTIVITY LOG

### COMMUNITY MAPS

### COMMUNITY PLAN

- I. Introduction
- II. Function of the Community Plan
- III. Land Use Policies and Programs
- IV. Coordination Opportunities for Public Agencies
- V. Urban Design



# NORTHRIDGE

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# Community Plan

## Chapter I INTRODUCTION

### COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

#### PLAN AREA

The Northridge Community Planning Area, contains approximately 6,350 acres or 10 square miles of land area. The community is generally bounded by the Ronald Reagan (formerly Simi Valley) Freeway and Devonshire Street on the north, the Los Angeles County Flood Control Channel (Bull Creek) on the east, Roscoe Boulevard on the south, and Tampa Avenue on the west. Northridge is situated about 22 miles northwest of Downtown Los Angeles. It is the site of the Northridge Campus of California State University. Communities lying adjacent include Chatsworth-Porter Ranch, Granada Hills-Knollwood, Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills, and Reseda-West Van Nuys.

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, the Northridge community had a population of 58,867 and a housing stock of 17,749 dwelling units.

During the 1980's multi-family units increased from 36% of total housing units in 1980 to 42% in 1990. Despite this increase in multi-family units, Northridge in 1990 still had 58% of all dwelling units being single-family.

The main industries that provide jobs in the community are in the service and manufacturing and educational sectors. The California State University is a major employer in the community. The median income of households in 1989 was \$62,703, well above the Citywide median income.

#### COMMUNITY HISTORY

By the middle 1870s the northern San Fernando Valley became a vast wheat farm and in 1887 H.C. Hubbard and F. M. Wright successfully farmed the 1100 acre tract they called Hawk Ranch, the first incarnation of Northridge. In 1910 it was sold for subdivision and renamed Zelzah, a biblical name signifying an oasis.

When Southern Pacific first built the Chatsworth Tunnel to connect Los Angeles to Ventura and Santa Barbara in 1906, Zelzah was the only Valley stop. The location was at a well beneath the current intersection of Reseda Boulevard and Parthenia Street. By the 1920s the town was a shipping center for producers of hazelnuts, citrus, olives, tomatoes, beans, asparagus, and cabbage. Northridge continued to be a rural community for many years, once known as the "horse capitol of the west." Devonshire Downs was built for horse races in the 1940s and became home to the San Fernando Valley fair until it

relocated in 1989. The name Zelzah was changed in 1929 to North Los Angeles for a short while, but residents preferred Northridge Village, shortened to Northridge in 1938.

The Northridge community began to change and develop rapidly after World War II when many orchards disappeared and became suburban-type housing tracts to meet the demand for single-family homes by returning servicemen and their families. Also, commercial development took place as well, beginning in the 1950's. In 1956, San Fernando Valley State College (later CSUN) was opened. Light industry moved into the area and a building boom began. In the early 1960's, land use patterns had already developed in much of the community, but there were still large areas of vacant or sparsely developed land.

Today, Northridge continues its development into a low-density and moderate-density urban community.

## **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

The State of California requires citizen participation in the preparation of the General Plan. Government Code Section 65351 reads "During the preparation or amendment of the General Plan, the planning agency shall provide opportunities for involvement of citizens, public agencies, public utility companies, and civic, education, and other community groups, through public hearings and any other means the city or county deems appropriate."

Community participation occurs through an open house and public hearing process to assist in identifying community issues and formulating the land use policies and objectives contained in the Northridge Community Plan.

## **COMMUNITY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The following summarizes the most significant planning and land use issues and opportunities facing the Northridge community.

### **RESIDENTIAL**

#### **Issues**

- Need to preserve single family neighborhoods.
- Adequate infrastructure and public facilities and services for new residential development.
- Scarcity of affordable and senior housing.
- Lack of Open Space in apartment projects.
- Deterioration of the streetscape.
- Location of University-related housing.

#### **Opportunities**

- Citizen awareness and active participation in community affairs.

- An attractive environmental setting.
- Need for University-related housing.
- Potential for establishing design guidelines for new residential development.
- Potential for mixed use development along commercial corridors.

## **COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL**

### **Issues**

- Need to support and maintain the existing central business district along Reseda Boulevard as the community's focal point.
- Need to preserve the existing highway-oriented and neighborhood-oriented commercial uses along major arterials because they provide necessary services to the community.
- Lack of adequate design standards and code enforcement along commercial corridors.
- Lack of overall parking and access within commercial strips.
- Unsightliness of new construction due to the lack of landscaping, architectural character and scale.
- Inadequate transition between commercial and residential uses.
- Need to preserve the existing industrial base as a major economic asset.

### **Opportunities**

- Upgrading the existing Central Business District on Reseda Boulevard.
- Potential to establish design guidelines for new commercial and industrial development.
- Establish appropriate transitions between commercial/industrial uses and adjoining uses, especially residential.
- Create pedestrian-friendly shopping areas by incorporating street trees, benches, convenient parking/access, and maintaining retail frontage at ground level.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Issues**

- Need for a coordinated local circulation/ transportation service to connect the main business, service, employment, educational, medical and recreational centers within the community.
- Need for the preservation, maintenance, and management of a streets, highways, and freeways network in the community.

- Need to provide adequate funding for transportation management and for the efficient operation of the transportation network.

**Opportunities**

- Pedestrian-oriented uses as integral to a central business district, mixed-use development projects, and decreased single-occupant vehicle trips.
- Increase in transportation management program funds for Northridge as a result of implementing a congestion management program.
- Increase in the use of public transit and other alternative means of transportation through the implementation of transportation demand management programs.

**FUTURE OPPORTUNITY SITES**

**Issues**

- The future development of the North Campus area (Devonshire Downs) on the California State University Campus.
- Visual improvement and economic enhancement of the commercial core area along Reseda Boulevard.

**Opportunities**

- The development of the North Campus site will be reviewed under the project discretionary review process which will include public input from the community. The proposal to develop the northernmost 20 acres of the former Devonshire Downs site (65 acres), includes 225,000 square feet of retail space and a parking lot for 900 cars.
- The Reseda Boulevard commercial core could be emphasized as a pedestrian-oriented area combined with mixed residential and commercial uses, due to the proximity of California State University. A Business Improvement District is also a possibility for enhancement of the area.

**COMMUNITY PROFILE**

The Community Profile provides an overview of population, housing and socio/demographics for the Northridge Community Plan Area and compares it to the rest of the City. The following tables contain the statistical data for previous census dates and rates of growth.

# Chapter II

## FUNCTION OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

Chapter 2 of the Plan Text contains the statutory requirements for the Community Plan outlining the mandatory elements that must be addressed. The Chapter contains the explanations of the Role, Purpose, and Organization of the Community Plan. Chapter 2 shows the relationship to other General Plan elements and provides for Plan Monitoring and Consistency.

### STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

California State law (Government Code Section 65300) requires that each City prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for its development. It must contain seven mandatory elements including land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. In the City of Los Angeles, thirty-five (35) Community Plans comprise the City's Land Use Element.

State of California law requires that the Land Use Element be prepared as part of the City's General Plan, and that the Land Use Element be correlated with the Circulation Element.

The Land Use Element has the broadest scope of the General Plan Elements required by the State. Since it regulates how land is to be utilized, many of the issues and policies contained in all other Plan elements are impacted and/or impact this element.

Government Code Section 65302(a) requires a land use element which designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses of land. The Land Use Element shall include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the Plan.

The Northridge Community Plan consists of this text and the accompanying map. The Community Plan text states the goals, objectives, policies, and programs. The Community Plan map outlines the arrangement and intensities of land uses, the street system, and the locations and characteristics of public service facilities.

## ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

The General Plan is the fundamental land use policy document of the City of Los Angeles. It defines the framework by which the City's physical and economic resources are to be managed and utilized over time. Decisions by the City with regard to the use of land, design and character of buildings and open spaces, conservation of existing housing and provision of new housing, provision of supporting infrastructure and public and human services, protection of environmental resources, protection of residents from natural and man-made hazards, and allocation of fiscal resources are guided by the Plan.

The Community Plans are intended to promote an arrangement of land uses, streets, and services which will encourage and contribute to the economic, social and physical health, safety, welfare, and convenience of the people who live and work in the community. The Plans are also intended to guide development in order to create a healthful and pleasant environment. Goals, Objectives, and Policies are created to meet the existing and future needs and desires of the Northridge community through the year 2010. The Plans are intended to coordinate development among the various parts of the City of Los Angeles and adjacent municipalities in a fashion both beneficial and desirable to the residents of the community.

The Community Plan clarifies and articulates the City's intentions with respect to the rights and expectations of the general public, property owners, and prospective investors and business interests. Through the Community Plan, the City can inform these groups of its goals, policies, and development standards, thereby communicating what is expected of City government and the private sector in order to meet its objectives.

The Community Plan ensures that sufficient land is designated which provides for the housing, commercial, employment, educational, cultural, social and aesthetic needs of the residents. The Plan identifies and provides for the maintenance of any significant environmental resources within the community. The Plan also seeks to enhance community identity and recognizes unique areas within the community.

## PURPOSE OF THE NORTHRIDGE COMMUNITY PLAN

The last comprehensive update of the Northridge Community Plan was completed in 1975. Since that time, changes have occurred, new issues have emerged, and new community objectives regarding the management of new development and community preservation have evolved. Consequently, it is necessary to update the Community Plan to not only reflect current conditions, but to accurately reflect the prevailing visions and objectives of the area's residents and property and business owners. The Plan sets forth objectives, policies, programs, and designates a potential population capacity of approximately 66,350.

This Community Plan sets forth goals to maintain the community's individuality by:

- Preserving and enhancing the positive characteristics of existing residential neighborhoods while providing a variety of housing opportunities with compatible new housing.
- Improving the function, design and economic vitality of the commercial corridors.
- Preserving and enhancing the positive characteristics of existing uses which provide the foundation for community identity, such as scale, height, bulk, setbacks and appearance.
- Maximizing the development opportunities of any future rail transit system while minimizing any adverse impacts.
- Planning the remaining commercial and industrial opportunity sites for needed job producing uses that improve the economic and physical condition of the Northridge area.

## ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

This Plan sets forth goals, objectives, policies, and implementation programs that pertain to the Northridge Community Plan area. Broader issues, goals, objectives and policies are provided by the Citywide General Plan Framework.

The Plan is organized and formatted to facilitate periodic updates. The State recommends that the entire plan be comprehensively reviewed every five years to reflect new conditions, local attitudes, and technological advances.

The principal method for the implementation of the Land Use map is the Zoning Ordinance. The City's Zoning Map must be updated to remain consistent with the adopted Land Use map. Together, the Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map specify the intensity of use and development standards applicable to specific areas and to parcels of land within the community.

## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The City of Los Angeles has the responsibility to revise and implement the City's General Plan. Since State law requires that the General Plan Elements have internal consistency, the Northridge Community Plan (which is a portion of the City's Land Use Element) must be consistent with the other Elements and components of the General Plan.

The Citywide General Plan Framework is the umbrella concept of the General Plan which will provide the overall guiding vision for Los Angeles into the 21st century. It is based on a directed growth strategy which targets residential and commercial growth along boulevards and corridors and clustered development around community focal points and high activity centers. The directed growth strategy expands the Centers concept which

was adopted by the City Council in 1974 as the City's long-range development strategy.

Because it is citywide, the Framework cannot anticipate every detail. Therefore, the community plans must be looked to for final determinations as to boundaries, land use categories, intensities and heights that fall within the ranges described by the Framework.

The Citywide General Plan Framework Element neither overrides nor supersedes the Community plans. The Framework is flexible, suggesting a range of uses within its land use definitions. Precise determinations are made in the Community Plans.

The General Plan Framework forecasts the following population, housing and employment levels for the Northridge Community Plan for the year 2010:

<i>Population (2010) Projection</i>	76,306
<i>Employment (2010) Projection</i>	24,518
<i>Housing (2010) Projection</i>	27,178

The above population, employment and housing numbers are provided as reference during the Community Plan Update. It needs to be recognized, however, that these figures are only best estimates and are derived from regional data which are desegregated to the City and then to the community plan area level. Population, jobs and housing could grow more quickly, or slowly, than anticipated depending on economic trends.

Regional forecasts do not always reflect the adopted community plan land use capacity or buildout estimated from planned land use. Plan capacity or buildout is also an imprecise estimate and depends on specific assumptions about future density or development and household size, which may be more, or less, than actually occur. It should also be noted that the Community Plan capacity does not include housing in commercial districts nor the current residential vacancy rate.

In addition to the seven State mandated elements, the City's General Plan includes a service system element, a cultural element, and a major public facilities areas element, and an air quality element. All the provisions and requirements of the General Plan elements apply to the Northridge Community Plan.

Neighborhood plans involve the preparation of Specific Plans which blend both policy and implementation functions for unique neighborhoods within a community plan area. In addition to Specific Plans, Overlay Zones also combine policy and implementation functions to address unique features of a specific neighborhood.

## **PLAN CONSISTENCY**

Each plan land use category indicates the corresponding zones permitted by the Plan unless further restricted by the Plan text, footnotes, adopted Specific Plans or other specific limitations on discretionary approvals. The

Plan recognizes that the residential densities, commercial intensities and industrial intensities depicted on the Plan Map are theoretical and will not occur due to plan and zone regulations, economic conditions, and design limitations.

For each plan category, the Plan permits all identified corresponding zones, as well as those zones which are more restrictive, as referenced in Section 12.23 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC). Any subsequent action that modifies the Plan or any monitoring review that results in changes to the Plan must make new Plan consistency findings at the time of the decision.

City actions on most discretionary projects require a finding that the action is consistent or in conformance with the General Plan. In addition to the required general finding, decision-makers acting on certain projects in the Northridge Community Plan Area shall refer to each of the applicable additional findings that the Plan identifies as programs, policies or objectives in Chapter III of the Plan which are underlined for ease of reference. To further substantiate the consistency findings decision makers may site other programs, policies, or objectives which would be furthered by the proposed project. In addition, Chapter V of the Plan requires a decision maker to make a finding of conformance with applicable design standards for discretionary projects.

## **PLAN MONITORING**

The Plan has a land use capacity greater than the projected development likely to occur during the Plan period. During the life of the Plan, growth will be monitored and reported in the City's Annual Report on Growth and Infrastructure which will be submitted to the City Planning Commission, Mayor, and City Council. In the fifth year following Plan adoption (and every five years thereafter), the Director shall report to the Commission on the relationship between population, employment, and housing growth and plan capacities. If growth has occurred faster than projected, a revised environmental analysis will be prepared and appropriate changes recommended to the Community Plan and zoning. These Plan and zoning changes and any related moratorium or interim control ordinance, shall be submitted to the Planning Commission, Mayor, and City Council as specified in the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

# Chapter III

## LAND USE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

This chapter contains Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs for all appropriate land use issues, such as residential, commercial, and industrial, as well as public and institutional service system categories. The Planning Department has responsibility for the goals, objectives, policies, and the initiation and direct implementation of programs contained in the chapter.

### RESIDENTIAL

Residential land use patterns vary greatly according to local conditions in the areas which comprise the Northridge Community Plan. Topography, population characteristics, housing markets, age of housing and degree of existing development have a great influence on the density of development throughout the community. Much of the existing density in the community was established by natural controls such as topography, large amounts of existing available land and infrastructure.

Over the past twenty years, there has been varying degrees of pressure for development. Some of this new development was inconsistent with existing development. Some areas have experienced development pressure for higher density housing.

In a few areas, vacant land has been left undeveloped or underdeveloped, creating opportunity areas that require sensitive consideration so that their development becomes an asset to the community. Such new development has to consider the existing land use patterns, infrastructure, street systems, urban design, architectural features, and historical resources. Other areas of Northridge have experienced a slow decline and offer opportunities to rehabilitate the housing stock and create additional, livable units.

Historically, the majority of the community was planned for residential purposes. The 1975 Plan designated a little more than three fourths of the total land area for residential use (76.7%). Therefore, plan policies provide for the preservation of the existing residential neighborhoods throughout the community, retaining existing single family areas and multi-family corridors.

The Plan designates residential land use densities as indicated in the following table. The table depicts the reasonable expected population and dwelling units count for the year 2010, using the midpoint of the range for the dwelling units per net acre category. The midpoint represents a reasonable factor to use, as new development within each category is not likely to occur at one or the other extreme of the range, but rather throughout the entire range.

## PLAN POPULATION AND DWELLING UNIT CAPACITY

Residential Land Use Category	Dwelling Units Per Net Acre Midpoint	Number of Dwelling Units	Net Acres	Persons Per Dwelling Unit (2010)	Reasonable Exp. Population (2010)
Very Low I	2.0	3,030	1,515	3.13	9,484
Very Low II	3.5	3,174	907	3.13	9,935
Low	6.5	7,748	1,192	3.01	23,321
Low Medium I	13.5	999	74	2.44	2,437
Low Medium II	23.5	1,034	44	2.44	2,523
Medium	42.0	7,644	182	2.44	18,651
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4,630</b>	<b>23,627</b>	<b>3,914</b>		<b>66,351</b>

### GOAL 1

***A SAFE, SECURE, AND HIGH QUALITY RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL ECONOMIC, AGE, AND ETHNIC SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY.***

### Objective 1-1

To provide for the preservation of existing and the development of new housing to meet the diverse economic and physical needs of the existing residents and projected population of the Plan area to the year 2010.

#### Policies

1-1.1 Designate lands for single and multi-family residential development. Maintain single family residential to the maximum extent possible. Commercial development should not intrude into residential areas.

***Program:*** The Plan Map identifies specific areas where single family and multi-family residential development is permitted.

1-1.2 Protect existing single family residential neighborhoods from encroachment by higher density residential and other incompatible uses.

***Program:*** The Plan Map identifies areas where only single-family residential development is permitted. It protects these areas from encroachment by designating, where appropriate, transitional residential densities which serve as buffers.

1-1.3 New single and multi-family residential development should be designed in accordance with the Urban Design Chapter.

**Program:** The Plan includes an Urban Design Chapter which outlines Design Standards for residential development that are to be observed.

- 1-1.4 The City should promote neighborhood preservation, both in existing single family neighborhoods, as well as existing multiple-family areas.

**Program:** With the implementation of the Community Plan, single family residential land use categories, all zone changes, subdivisions, parcel maps, variances, conditional uses, specific plans, community and neighborhood revitalization programs for residential projects should provide for Plan consistency.

## Objective 1-2

To locate new housing appropriately in a manner which reduces vehicular trips and which increases accessibility to services and facilities.

### Policies

- 1-2.1 Locate higher residential densities near commercial centers, commuter rail stations, and bus routes where public service facilities, utilities, and topography will accommodate this development.

**Program:** The Plan designates lands for higher residential densities within and adjacent to transit intensive locations.

- 1-2.2 Locate senior citizen housing projects in neighborhoods within reasonable walking distance of health and community facilities, services, and public transportation.

**Program:** The Plan designates lands for higher residential densities which could accommodate senior citizen housing within transit intensive locations and pedestrian-oriented areas.

- 1-2.3 Provide for an adequate supply of housing to meet the needs of students attending California State University at Northridge, without creating adverse impacts on adjacent permanent residential neighborhoods. Fraternity and sorority housing should not be scattered throughout the community.

**Program:** Medium Density Housing is designated by the Plan Map along the east side of Zelzah Avenue north of Plummer Street and is intended to provide the opportunity for development of University-related housing including fraternity and sorority houses on a portion of the area. Fraternity and sorority houses should be restricted to this designated portion so that they will be properly buffered from adjacent single-family residential areas.

**Program:** New conditional use permits for fraternities and sororities shall not be approved east of a line approximately 240 feet east of Zelzah Avenue. It is the intent of this Plan to permit parking, landscape buffering, and/or other amenities on an approximately 120-foot strip adjacent to, and east of, the area designated Medium Density between Superior and Fullerfarm

Streets only where such use is found to mitigate the impact of Medium Density development on adjacent properties. This 120-foot wide area may be included in the change approval. Other conditions also should be considered to mitigate the impacts associated with University-related housing such as noise and traffic.

### Objective 1-3

To preserve and enhance the varied and distinct residential character and integrity of existing single and multi-family neighborhoods.

#### Policies

1-3.1 Maintain and preserve the character of existing neighborhoods and encourage participation in self-help preventive maintenance to promote neighborhood conservation, beautification and rehabilitation.

**Program:** The Neighborhood Preservation Program, administered by the City's Housing Department provides financial resources to rehabilitate single-family homes and multi-family rental housing.

1-3.2 Consider factors such as neighborhood character and identity, compatibility of land uses, impacts on livability, impacts on services and public facilities, and impacts on traffic levels, and environmental impacts when changes in residential densities are proposed.

**Program:** A decision maker should adopt a finding which addresses these factors as part of any decision relating to changes in planned residential densities.

1-3.3 Seek a high degree of architectural compatibility and landscaping for new infill development to protect the character and scale of existing residential neighborhoods.

**Program:** The Plan includes Design Guidelines which establish design standards for residential development to implement this policy.

### Objective 1-4

To preserve and enhance structures that have a distinctive and significant historical character.

#### Policies

1-4.1 Protect and encourage reuse of the area's historic resources.

**Program:** Protect the City's Historical/Cultural Monuments in the community and seek future designation for appropriate additional sites.

### Objective 1-5

To promote and insure the provision of adequate housing for all persons regardless of income, age or ethnic background.

#### Policies

1-5.1 Promote greater individual choice in type, quality, and location of housing.

**Program:** Promote greater individual choice through the establishment of residential design standards, allocation of lands for a variety of residential densities, and the promotion of housing in mixed-use projects.

**Program:** Homeowners' Encouragement Loan Program (HELP), administered by the Housing Department, provides rehabilitation loans to owners of small residential buildings (one to four units) to correct code violations and assist handicapped homeowners.

**Program:** Develop incentives for the construction of residential projects in conjunction with new commercial projects to encourage mixed-use development.

- 1-5.2 Provide for the development of townhomes and other similar condominium type housing units to increase home ownership options, without expanding into single-family designated neighborhoods.

**Program:** The Plan encourages this type of development by designating specific areas for Low Medium residential land use where townhouse development can be sited.

- 1-5.3 Promote housing in mixed use projects in pedestrian-oriented and transit intensive locations.

**Program:** Consider providing bonuses in floor area and height for such projects.

## Objective 1-6

To limit residential density in hillside areas. A limited portion of the Northridge Community is located within the City's Designated Hillside Areas Map. This land is generally located between White Oak Avenue and Bull Creek and between Devonshire Street and Nordhoff Street.

### Policies

- 1-6.1 Ensure the availability of adequate sewers, drainage facilities, fire protection services and facilities and other public utilities to support development within the hillside areas.

**Program:** A decision maker should adopt a finding which addresses the availability of these services and utilities as part of any decision relating to hillside residential development.

- 1-6.2 Consider the steepness of the topography and the suitability of the geology in any proposal for development within the Plan area.

**Program:** The Plan retains hillside areas in Low and Very Low General Plan land use designations and corresponding zones.

- 1-6.3 Require that any development minimize grading to reduce the effects on any environmentally sensitive areas.

**Program:** Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that local and state governmental agencies consider and disclose potential environmental effects of a project before rendering a decision, and methods to mitigate those impacts.

## COMMERCIAL

The commercial land use pattern is mainly strip commercial along major arterials, with nodes of varying sizes at specific intersections. The traditional strip commercial development with limited parking to the rear and with buildings which have been built up to the sidewalk has given way to newer mini-malls with parking in front of the buildings, adjacent to the street. This has created conflicts between these and other forms of commercial uses.

The area along Reseda Boulevard between Halsted Street on the north and Gresham Street on the south should be encouraged to develop as the primary Community Center for Northridge. This area has potential as a mixed use area that offers unique opportunities for residential development located near California State University, and it is recommended that a future study be undertaken to determine the possible location, extent, and intensity of such a district. Mixed-use structures would normally, incorporate retail, office, and/or parking on the lower floors and residential units on the upper floors. The intent is to provide housing in close proximity to jobs and shopping, to reduce vehicular trips, to reduce congestion and air pollution, to assure adequate sites for housing, and to stimulate pedestrian-oriented areas to enhance the quality of life in the Plan area. However, the three story building height should not be exceeded.

Smaller Community Centers serving several neighborhoods are developing and should be encouraged to continue along these lines. These include commercial areas at the intersections of Reseda Boulevard and Devonshire Street and Balboa Boulevard and Devonshire Street. These smaller centers should also maintain the 3 story height limit. There is also a need to focus attention on rehabilitation and rejuvenation of abandoned business areas, and restoration of formerly vibrant commercial uses. Opportunity exists for the upgrading of the area bounded by Tampa Avenue, Aliso Wash, Parthenia Street, and the railroad tracks with professional offices and retail businesses. This area should be studied as a potential commercial asset to the community.

## GOAL 2

***A STRONG AND COMPETITIVE COMMERCIAL SECTOR WHICH BEST SERVES THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY THROUGH MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY AND ACCESSIBILITY WHILE PRESERVING THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY.***

### Objective 2-1

To maintain the viability and vitality of the existing Northridge Central Community Business District as a community focal point.

#### Policies

2-1.1 Encourage retail and service commercial uses, including professional services and restaurants on both sides of Reseda Boulevard. Fast food restaurants and mini-malls should be discouraged.

**Program:** The Community Plan provides for commercial land use to support community needs.

- 2-1.2 Conserve and strengthen viable commercial development throughout the community.

**Program:** The Northridge central commercial area focusing on Reseda Boulevard serves as the focal point for shopping, civic and social activities in the community. This area contains professional offices, shopping and variety stores, restaurants and entertainment facilities. Medium and Low-Medium density apartments are proposed to be located nearby. A Business Improvement District (BID) should be strongly considered for the purpose of improving and upgrading Reseda Boulevard generally between Roscoe Boulevard and Lassen Street. The BID should take advantage of the proximity to Cal State Northridge and coordinate the efforts of business and property owners. Improvements resulting from a successful BID may include landscaping, signage, street sweeping, additional parking, security patrols, new building facades, sidewalk cafes and pedestrian activity, and undergrounding of utilities.

- 2-1.3 New commercial uses should be located in existing commercial areas or shopping centers, and should not encroach into residential areas. There should be no increase in existing building height limitations.

**Program:** The Community Plan retains the commercial land use designations to conform with existing commercial centers.

- 2-1.4 Require that projects be designed and developed to achieve a high level of quality, distinctive character, and compatibility with existing uses and developed in accordance with design standards.

**Program:** The Plan includes an Urban Design chapter which establishes Design Standards for commercial development which addresses this policy.

**Program:** Consider establishment of Business Improvement Districts.

## Objective 2-2

To enhance the community identity in distinctive commercial districts.

### Policies

- 2-2.1 Improve security and parking standards in commercial areas. Where new development occurs, parking should be located in the rear of buildings.

**Program:** The Plan includes an Urban Design component which establishes Design Standards for commercial development to implement this policy.

2-2.2 Require that mixed-use projects be designed with commercial uses on the ground floor and developed to achieve a high level of quality, distinctive character, and compatibility with existing uses.

**Program:** The Plan includes an Urban Design component which implements this policy in its Design Standards for mixed use projects and pedestrian oriented areas.

2-2.3 Encourage pedestrian activity on both sides of Reseda Boulevard, particularly between Nordhoff Street and Halsted Street near the University.

**Program:** The Municipal Code provides for the establishment of Pedestrian Oriented Districts in appropriate locations to preserve and enhance existing areas, stimulate pedestrian activity and achieve development consistent with pedestrian use.

### Objective 2-3

To enhance the appearance of commercial districts.

#### Policies

2-3.1 Improve the landscaping of commercial properties.

**Program:** Implementation of the Design Policies established in the Urban Design Chapter.

2-3.2 Landscaped corridors should be created and enhanced through the planting of street trees.

**Program:** The Urban Design standards include a section which establishes guidelines for community design and landscaping. These guidelines are intended to serve as a reference to other City Departments and public agencies and any private entities who participate in projects which involve improvements to public spaces and rights-of-ways, including streetscape and landscaping.

2-3.3 Any proposed development should be designed to enhance and be compatible with adjacent development.

**Program:** Implement conformance with applicable design standards identified in the Design Guidelines of the Plan.

2-3.4 Preserve community character, scale and architectural diversity.

**Program:** Design standards for commercial areas are included in the Design Guidelines of the Plan implement this policy.

2-3.5 Improve safety and aesthetics of parking areas in commercial areas.

**Program:** Design standards for parking areas are established in the Design Guidelines implement this policy.

2-3.6 Improve the visual appearance of commercial districts through better control of signage, including billboard proliferation. Large bill-boards are not in keeping with the desired appearance of Reseda Boulevard and all commercial districts and are strongly discouraged.

**Program:** Increased enforcement of the Citywide sign ordinance.

**Program:** Implement conformance with applicable design standards identified in the Design Guidelines of the Plan.

## INDUSTRIAL

The geographic position of the Northridge Community and its location in relation to the historic development of the San Fernando Valley has resulted in the location of industrial parcels that are generally situated along the Southern Pacific Railroad corridor in the southern portion of the community. Industrial uses provide needed employment opportunities and economic benefits and should be encouraged when impacts to surrounding land uses can be mitigated.

### GOAL 3

**SUFFICIENT LAND FOR A VARIETY OF INDUSTRIAL USES WITH MAXIMUM EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY'S WORKFORCE WHICH ARE SAFE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND WHICH HAVE MINIMAL ADVERSE IMPACT ON ADJACENT USES.**

#### Objective 3-1

To provide for the retention of existing industrial uses and promote future industrial development which contribute to job opportunities and minimize environmental and visual impacts.

##### Policies

3-1.1 The City should utilize land use, zoning, and financial incentives to preserve the economic viability of Northridge's existing industries.

**Program:** The Community Plan provides for the retention of existing industrial development.

3-1.2 Require that projects be designed and developed to achieve a high level of quality, distinctive character, and compatibility with existing uses in accordance with design standards. The Parthenia industrial corridor between Tampa and Lindley is particularly unsightly and in need of visual upgrading.

**Program:** The Plan includes an Urban Design component which establishes Design Standards for industrial development to implement this policy.

3-1.3 Adequate mitigation should be achieved through design treatments and compliance with environmental protection standards, for industrial uses where they adjoin residential neighborhoods and commercial uses. Future industrial development should be limited to existing industrial areas, and replacement industry should be light manufacturing or high technology, research and development.

**Program:** The Plan establishes design standards for industrial development, and designates locations for industrial development. Environmental protection standards and health and safety requirements are enforced by other public agencies.

### Objective 3-2

To encourage the conservation and strengthening of viable industrial development throughout the plan area.

#### Policies

3-2.1 Industrially planned parcels located in predominantly industrial areas should be protected from development by other uses which do not support the industrial economic base of the City and the community.

**Program:** The Community Plan and City's Planning and Zoning Code administered by the Department of City Planning and the Department of Building and Safety contain provisions to maintain industrially designated areas for industrial uses.

## PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE

Public facilities such as fire stations, libraries, schools, parks, flood control channels, power transmission lines, a commuter rail station, shown on the Northridge Community Plan map are to be developed in substantial conformance with the standards of need, site area, design and general locations identified in the Service Systems Element and the Safety Element of the General Plan. Such development should be sequenced and timed to provide an efficient and adequate balance between land use and public services.

As part of a separate program but complimenting the Plan update, Open Space (OS) and Public Facilities (PF) Zones have been enacted to reflect both current and future public uses in the Northridge Community Plan area.

There is a continued need for modernizing of public facilities in order to improve services and accommodate changes in the Northridge community. However, the amenities and environmental quality of the community must be adequately protected. Cost and equitable distribution are major issues in the provision of public facilities. It is essential that priorities be established and new and different sources of revenue be found. Furthermore, public and private development must be fully coordinated, in order to avoid expensive duplication and to assure a balance among needs, services and costs.

The Plan attempts to utilize the location, characteristics, and timing of public facility and utility development as a tool in achieving planned land use patterns. Further, the intent is to achieve economy and efficiency in the provision of services and facilities consistent with standards for environmental quality.

## RECREATIONAL AND PARK FACILITIES

In the Northridge Community Plan area, public parks and recreation areas are managed by the City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department. The City classifies parks according to three types: Regional, Community, and Neighborhood. There are no regional parks in Northridge.

Existing parks in the Community include Northridge Recreation Center (24 acres), a Community Park; and, two Neighborhood Parks, Dearborn Park (9 acres) and Vanalden Park (10 acres). The Little League fields on Devonshire Street east of Wilbur Avenue are designated as Open Space and a future Neighborhood Park.

### GOAL 4

#### ***ADEQUATE RECREATION AND PARK FACILITIES WHICH MEET THE NEEDS OF THE RESIDENTS IN THE COMMUNITY.***

#### Objective 4-1

To conserve, maintain and better utilize existing recreation and park facilities which promote the recreational experience.

##### **Policies**

4-1.1 Preserve and improve the existing recreational facilities and park space.

***Program:*** Recreation facilities and park space are designated in the Open Space (OS) Zone, which provides such protection.

4-1.2 Better utilization and development of recreational facilities at existing parks.

***Program:*** The Los Angeles Unified School District, and City's Department of Recreation and Parks should develop programs to fully utilize each of their respective sites.

#### Objective 4-2

To provide facilities for specialized recreational needs within the community, with consideration given to utilizing existing public lands such as flood control channels, utility easements, or Department of Water and Power property.

##### **Policies**

4-2.1 Flood control channels and other appropriate public lands should be considered for open space purposes. Hiking, bicycle and equestrian trails in Northridge should connect these facilities with the local and regional system.

***Program:*** Implement the proposed hiking, bicycle, and equestrian trails shown on the Community Plan Map.

***Program:*** Determine the feasibility of a Community Park in the L.A. County Flood Control Debris Basin near Wilbur Avenue.

### Objective 4-3

To acquire and develop properties as mini-parks where it is not possible to acquire sufficient acreage for neighborhood parks.

#### Policies

4-3.1 A mini-park should be approximately one-half acre in size and be located on street corners and cul-de-sacs, where possible.

**Program:** Park site development is the responsibility of the Department of Recreation and Parks.

4-3.2 Mini-parks should be designed to meet the particular needs of the residents in the area they serve.

**Program:** Park site development is the responsibility of the Department of Recreation and Parks, utilizing community input and available funds.

4-3.3 Mini-parks should be designed to prevent potential negative impacts on adjacent residents, and provide high visibility to prevent criminal activity.

**Program:** Park site development is the responsibility of the Department of Recreation and Parks, utilizing community input and available funds.

### Objective 4-4

To expand and improve local parks throughout the Plan area, as funds and land become available.

#### Policies

4-4.1 Develop new neighborhood parks and new community parks for the current 1990 population and projected year 2010 population.

**Program:** Park site development is the responsibility of the Department of Recreation and Parks, utilizing community input and available funds.

4-4.2 The City should encourage continuous efforts by Federal, State, and County agencies to acquire vacant land for publicly owned open space.

**Program:** The open space and parkland purchase programs of Federal, State, and County agencies.

4-4.3 All park and recreation facilities should be designed, landscaped, and maintained to promote a high quality recreational experience.

**Program:** Park site development is the responsibility of the Department of Recreation and Parks, utilizing community input and available funds such as Grants, Quimby Funds, and State and Local Park Bond Funds.

4-4.4 The expansion of existing facilities on sites and the acquisition of new sites should be planned and designed to minimize the displacement of housing and the relocation of residents.

**Program:** Park site development is the responsibility of the Department of Recreation and Parks, utilizing community input and available funds.

**Objective 4-5**

To ensure the accessibility, security, and safety of parks by their users, particularly families with children and senior citizens.

**Policies**

4-5.1 Ensure that parks are adequately illuminated for safe use at night.

**Program:** Park design, construction, and maintenance is the responsibility of the Department of Recreation and Parks; utilizing advice from the Police Department.

**OPEN SPACE**

In the Northridge Community Plan area, open space areas exist which are not part of the City's Department of Recreation and Parks land inventory. Open space is important due to its role in both physical and environmental land use protection. In addition to park areas, open space locations in the community include Wilbur Wash, Aliso Canyon Wash and Bull Creek.

Open Space is generally defined as land which is essentially free of structures and buildings or is natural in character and which functions in one or more of the following ways:

1. Recreational and educational opportunities.
2. Scenic, cultural and historic values.
3. Public health and safety.
4. Preservation and creation of community identity.
5. Rights-of-way for utilities and transportation facilities.
6. Preservation of natural resources or ecologically important areas.

**GOAL 5**

***A COMMUNITY WITH SUFFICIENT OPEN SPACE IN BALANCE WITH NEW DEVELOPMENT TO SERVE THE RECREATIONAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY AND TO PROTECT ENVIRONMENTAL AND AESTHETIC RESOURCES.***

**Objective 5-1**

To preserve existing open space resources and where possible develop new open space.

**Policies**

5-1.1 Encourage the retention of passive and visual open space which provides a balance to the urban development of the community.

**Program:** The Plan Map designates areas to be preserved for open space.

5-1.2 Protect significant environmental resources from environmental hazards.

**Program:** The Plan Map designates areas for open space.

**Program:** Implementation of State and Federal environmental laws and regulations such as The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), the Clean Air Quality Act, and the Clean Water Quality Act.

**Program:** Implementation of SCAG's and SCAQMD's Regional Air Quality Management Plan, and SCAG's Growth Management Plan.

**Program:** Implement the State mandated Congestion Management Program designed to reduce traffic congestion and to improve air quality.

5-1.3 Accommodate active park lands, and other open space uses in areas designated and zoned as Open Space.

**Program:** The Plan Map designates lands for open space as appropriate.

**SCHOOLS**

In the Northridge Community Plan area, there are ten (10) elementary schools and three (3) middle schools. Higher education in Northridge is provided by California State University at Northridge (CSUN), a major university in the region.

The Plan encourages shared use of existing school facilities for the general public after hours and on weekends. School grounds should be made available so as to facilitate after-hours recreational uses.

**GOAL 6**

**APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS AND ADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR SCHOOLS TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE EXISTING AND FUTURE POPULATION.**

**Objective 6-1**

To site schools in locations complimentary to existing land uses, recreational opportunities and community identity.

**Policies**

6-1.1 Encourage compatibility in school locations, site layout and architectural design with adjacent land uses and community

character and, as appropriate, use schools to create a logical transition and buffer between differing uses.

**Program:** The decision-maker involved in discretionary review of proposed schools should adopt a finding which supports the application of this policy.

6-1.2 If new school sites are proposed, site schools in a manner which complements the existing single-family and multiple-family residential neighborhoods.

**Program:** The decision-maker involved in discretionary review of proposed schools should adopt a finding which supports the application of this policy.

6-1.3 Proximity to noise sources should be avoided whenever possible or the school design should buffer classrooms from such noise.

**Program:** Implement appropriate provisions of the City's Noise Element.

**Program:** Incorporate noise mitigation measures to reduce adverse environmental impacts in order to comply with CEQA.

6-1.4 Expansion of existing schools should be preferred over the acquisition of new sites.

**Program:** The Los Angeles Unified School District is the responsible agency for providing adequate school facilities.

6-1.5 Elementary schools should be located along collector streets.

**Program:** The Los Angeles Unified School District is the agency responsible for the siting, design, and construction of public elementary schools.

6-1.6 Encourage cooperation to provide recreation facilities for the community.

**Program:** The Los Angeles Unified School District and the City's Department of Recreation and Parks should develop programs to fully utilize each of their respective sites.

## LIBRARIES

Northridge is currently served by the Northridge Branch Library. The library contains a collection of books, periodicals, and audio-visual materials. The new Mid- Valley Regional Library is located close to Northridge and supplements the Northridge Library. In addition, the community is served by the Cal State Northridge Library.

## GOAL 7

**ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE LIBRARY FACILITIES ARE PROVIDED FOR THE COMMUNITY'S RESIDENTS.**

**Objective 7-1**

To encourage the City's Library Department to provide adequate library service which responds to the needs of the community. A new public library has been constructed in the adjacent Community of Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills. This is located close to the Northridge community and is available for use by Northridge residents.

**Policies**

7-1.1 Support construction of new libraries and the rehabilitation and expansion of the existing library as required to meet the changing needs of the community.

**Program:** The existing library site should be designated as a public facility and zoned accordingly. This designation would give the library additional protection to retain its existing use and allow a greater certainty in obtaining the necessary City approvals when rehabilitating or expanding.

7-1.2 Encourage flexibility in siting libraries in mixed-use projects, shopping malls, pedestrian-oriented areas, office buildings, and similarly accessible facilities.

**Program:** Through the inclusion of this policy the Plan supports such utilization when the Library Department and decision-makers review and approve sites for new libraries.

**POLICE PROTECTION**

The City of Los Angeles Police Department's Devonshire Division Station provides police protection services for Northridge's residents. To maintain this current level of service to the North Valley's anticipated population in the year 2010, an additional number of police officers may need to be deployed.

**GOAL 8**

***A COMMUNITY WITH ADEQUATE POLICE FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO PROTECT THE COMMUNITY'S RESIDENTS FROM CRIMINAL ACTIVITY, REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF CRIME AND PROVIDE OTHER NECESSARY LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES.***

**Objective 8-1**

To provide adequate police facilities and personnel to correspond with population and service demands in order to provide adequate police protection.

**Policies**

8-1.1 Consult with the Police Department as part of the review of new development projects and proposed land use changes to determine law enforcement needs and demands.

**Program:** The decision-maker should include a finding as to the impact on police protection service demands of the proposed project or land use change. Currently, the Police Department is consulted with regard to the impacts of plan amendments on law enforcement needs and demands by the plan amendment review process of the

General Plan Advisory Board, of which the Police Department is a member.

**Objective 8-2**

To increase the community's and the Police Department's ability to minimize crime and provide security for all residents, buildings, sites, and open spaces.

**Policies**

8-2.1 Support and encourage community-based crime prevention efforts (such as Neighborhood Watch), through regular interaction and coordination with existing community-based policing, foot and bicycle patrols, watch programs, and regular communication with neighborhood and civic organizations.

**Program:** Community-oriented law enforcement programs administered by the Los Angeles Police Department.

8-2.2 Insure that landscaping around buildings be placed so as not to impede visibility.

**Program:** Discretionary land use reviews and approvals by the Department of City Planning in consultation with the Los Angeles Police Department.

8-2.3 Insure adequate lighting around residential, commercial, and industrial buildings in order to improve security.

**Program:** Discretionary land use reviews and approvals by the Department of City Planning in consultation with the Los Angeles Police Department.

8-2.4 Insure that recreational facilities in multiple-family residential complexes are designed to provide adequate visibility security.

**Program:** Discretionary land use reviews and approvals by the Department of City Planning in consultation with the Los Angeles Police Department.

**FIRE PROTECTION**

Fire protection services for Northridge are provided by the Los Angeles City Fire Department. There are three fire stations located in the community. These include Station No. 70 at Reseda Boulevard and Lassen Street, No. 87 at Balboa Boulevard and Devonshire Street, and No. 103 at Lindley Avenue and Parthenia Street.

**GOAL 9**

**PROTECT THE COMMUNITY THROUGH A COMPREHENSIVE FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY PROGRAM.**

**Objective 9-1**

Ensure that fire facilities and fire protection services are sufficient for existing and future population and land uses.

## Policies

- 9-1.1 Coordinate with the Fire Department as part of the review of significant development projects and General Plan Amendments affecting land use to determine the impact on service demands.

**Program:** A decision maker should include a finding as to the impact on fire service for all Plan amendments within 5 years of Plan adoption.

This coordination with the Fire Department is currently in effect for projects which are subject to the subdivision process and for plan amendments which must be reviewed by the General Plan Advisory Board which includes representation from the Fire Department.

- 9-1.2 Encourage the Fire Department to locate fire services facilities in appropriate locations throughout the community in order to maintain safety.

**Program:** The Plan Map identifies existing locations of fire services facilities in the community.

## TRANSPORTATION

### TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT AND MITIGATION PROGRAM (TIMP)

The Transportation Improvement and Mitigation Program [TIMP], was prepared for the Northridge Community Plan through an analysis of the land use impacts on transportation. The TIMP establishes a program of specific measures which are recommended to be undertaken during the anticipated life of the Community Plan.

The TIMP document provides an implementation program for the circulation needs of the Plan area: roadway improvements, roadway redesignation, bus service improvements, Metrolink service improvements and the creation of community transit centers. Additional transportation improvement recommendations are rail transit improvements, paratransit or shuttle bus service, and transportation system management improvements such as the Automated Traffic Surveillance and Control (ATSAC) system. Other proposals can include peak hour parking restrictions, the creation of neighborhood traffic control plans, and a transportation demand management program which includes creating bikeways, forming transportation management associations, a trip reduction ordinance, and continued participation by the City in regional transportation management programs.

The Transportation Improvement and Mitigation Plan establishes a program of specific measures which are recommended to be undertaken during the life of the Community Plan. Due consideration should be given to individual recommendations regarding any potential adverse impacts on existing commercial activities in the immediate area. Any proposed Capital Improvements, specifically street widenings, signing and striping improvements and prohibitions on peak hour parking should be weighed against the preservation of the commercial viability of the immediate areas impacted by the proposed mitigation measures.

**PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION**

While it is anticipated that the private automobile will remain a primary mode of transportation within the Northridge Community (to the year 2010), Metrolink, bus service and the shuttle systems or paratransit will be the primary public transportation modes through the year 2010.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) operates 13 regularly scheduled bus transit lines serving the Northridge area. Additional bus transit service is provided by the Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) which operates express service between the Northridge area and the Lancaster/Palmdale area.

The City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) operates "CityRide", a city-wide demand responsive paratransit program for senior citizens and persons with mobility impairments. A community-based shuttle is planned between the Metrolink Station and CSUN along and in the vicinity of Reseda Boulevard, to provide direct service from homes to business and shopping areas. CSUN operates two shuttle services, one around the perimeter of the campus and one to the Metrolink Station.

The Metrolink Station on Wilbur Avenue is operated by LADOT and is a temporary facility. A new station is planned that would be comprised of permanent structures and improvements.

**GOAL 10**

***DEVELOP A PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM THAT IMPROVES MOBILITY WITH CONVENIENT ALTERNATIVES TO AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL.***

**Objective 10-1**

To encourage improved local and express bus service throughout the Northridge community, and encourage park-and-ride facilities to interface with freeways, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) facilities, and rail facilities.

**Policies**

10-1.1 Coordinate with the Metropolitan Transportation (MTA) and LADOT to improve local bus service to and within the Northridge area, including shuttle links between Northridge Fashion Center and CSUN.

***Program:*** Transit improvements [TIMP]

Recommended bus transit improvements [TIMP]:

- II MTA bus routes 152, 154, and 166 should be revised to provide service to the Metrolink Station.
- II MTA bus schedules should be extended later into the evening that provide service to CSUN. This would make transit a viable option for more students and faculty attending night classes.

***Program:*** The MTA has pro-posed a Bus Signal Priority Pilot Project to improve bus transit travel times in the San Fernando Valley, including Reseda Boulevard and Roscoe Boulevard. This project consists of implementing traffic engineering improvements. The City should coordinate with the MTA with respect to system technology, equipment and communication development.

**Program:** Utilization of a community-based shuttle along Reseda Boulevard to serve the business area and adjacent residents, CSUN, and the Northridge Fashion Center.

- 10-1.2 Encourage the provision of safe, attractive and clearly identifiable transit stops with user friendly design amenities.

**Program:** The Plan includes an Urban Design chapter that out-lines design guidelines for transit stops.

- 10-1.3 Encourage the expansion, wherever feasible, of programs aimed at enhancing the mobility of senior citizens, disabled persons, and the transit-dependent population.

**Program:** Use of a community-based shuttle along Reseda Boulevard to serve the business area and adjacent residential neighborhoods.

## Objective 10-2

To increase the work trips and non-work trips made on public transit.

### Policies

- 10-2.1 Develop an intermodal mass transportation plan to implement linkages to future rail service.

**Program:** Rail transit improvements [TIMP]:

The permanent Northridge Metrolink Station should be designed as a multi-modal center including bicycle parking facilities, a passenger drop-off area and a parking lot that accommodates the circulation of transit vehicles. The development of an additional park-and-ride lot north of the station should be considered in the event that the existing park-and-ride lot is unable to meet the future demand.

## TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM)

It is the City's objective that the traffic level of service (LOS) on the street system in the community not exceed LOS D. The level of trips generated by future development in Northridge and in the surrounding North San Fernando Valley areas require the implementation of a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program to sustain the current level of service on the street system. TDM is a program designed to encourage people to change their mode of travel from single occupancy vehicles to other transportation modes. People are given incentives to utilize TDM measures such as public transit, ridesharing, modified work schedules, van pools, telecommuting, and non-motorized transportation modes such as the bicycle.

### A TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM) PROGRAM

1. The City should implement a bikeways development program as part of an overall transportation demand management.
2. Transportation Management Association Formation/Coordination.

The City should encourage the formation of Transportation Management Associations (TMA's) in order to assist employers in creating and managing trip reduction programs.

3. Participation in Regional Transportation Management Programs. The City will continue to participate in local and regional TDM programs being implemented by other agencies and adjacent jurisdictions and coordinate its TDM program with those of other communities, agencies and jurisdictions.
4. TDM Ordinance. The Citywide Ordinance on TDM and trip reduction measures will continue to be implemented for the Northridge area. This ordinance calls for several measures to be taken in developments to achieve trip reduction targets.
5. Monitoring. LADOT is responsible for monitoring the current Citywide TDM Ordinance.

## GOAL 11

### ***ENCOURAGE ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION TO THE USE OF SINGLE OCCUPANT VEHICLES (SOV) IN ORDER TO REDUCE VEHICULAR TRIPS.***

#### Objective 11-1

To pursue transportation management strategies that can maximize vehicle occupancy, minimize average trip length, and reduce the number of vehicle trips.

#### **Policies**

- 11-1.1 Encourage non-residential development to provide employee incentives for utilizing alternatives to the automobile (i.e., carpools, vanpools, buses, flex time, bicycles, telecommuting, and walking).

***Program:*** The Citywide Ordinance on TDM and trip reduction measures will continue to be implemented and monitored by LADOT.

- 11-1.2 Encourage the use of multiple-occupancy vehicle programs for shopping and other activities to reduce midday traffic.

***Program:*** The Citywide Ordinance on TDM and trip reduction measures will continue to be implemented and monitored by LADOT.

***Program:*** Use of a community-based shuttle along Reseda Boulevard.

- 11-1.3 Require that proposals for major new non-residential development projects include submission of a TDM Plan to the City.

***Program:*** Require the decision-maker to include this in approval of projects.

**TRANSPORTATION  
SYSTEM  
MANAGEMENT (TSM)**

Transportation System Management (TSM) is the optimization of the transportation system by improving traffic flow with low cost capital projects and minor construction that can be implemented in a short time frame. TSM incorporates features such as computer based traffic signal timing facilities, intersection improvements, preferential parking areas for high occupancy vehicles, park and ride facilities, anti-gridlock measures, and parking management programs.

**GOAL 12**

***A WELL MAINTAINED, SAFE, EFFICIENT FREEWAY, HIGHWAY, AND STREET NETWORK.***

**Objective 12-1**

That Northridge's signalized intersections are integrated with the City's ATSAC system by the year 2010.

**Policies**

12-1.1 Install ATSAC equipment when funding becomes available. ATSAC is a computerized system that directs traffic control operations based on the data collected at each signalized intersection.

***Program:*** Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Strategies [TIMP]

1. Automated Traffic Surveillance and Control (ATSAC) [TIMP]:

ATSAC is recommended to be installed by the year 2010 at all traffic signals, existing and new.

12-1.2 Provide restricted turning lanes where necessary.

***Program:*** The Plan supports the City Department of Transportation's programs for providing separate right turn and/or left turn lanes on all arterials.

12-1.3 Accelerate controller replacement to upgrade and improve signal efficiency.

***Program:*** Implement as funding becomes available.

12-1.4 Minimize pedestrian-vehicular conflicts at railroad crossing areas.

***Program:*** Remove abandoned railroad crossings at Roscoe Boulevard and Reseda Boulevard through the TSM project titled Bottleneck Intersection Improvements in the San Fernando Valley.

## **HIGHWAYS AND STREETS**

The Northridge Community Plan area is served by the Ronald Reagan (formerly Simi Valley) Freeway (SR-118) which runs east-west and forms the northwestern boundary of the community.

Arterials that are designated as Major Highways on the Plan include Tampa Avenue, Reseda Boulevard, Zelzah Avenue, Balboa Boulevard, Devonshire Street, Nordhoff Street, and Roscoe Boulevard. The Secondary Highways are Chatsworth Street, Lassen Street, Plummer Street, Parthenia Street, Wilbur Avenue, Louise Avenue, Havenhurst Avenue, Lindley Avenue, and San Fernando Mission Boulevard. The Plan also designates Collector and Local streets.

Streets and highways shall be developed in accordance with standards and criteria contained in the Highways and Freeways Element of the General Plan and the City's Standard Street Dimensions, except where environmental issues and planning practices warrant alternate standards consistent with street capacity requirements.

## GOAL 13

***A SYSTEM OF HIGHWAYS, FREE-WAYS, AND STREETS THAT PROVIDES A CIRCULATION SYSTEM WHICH SUPPORTS EXISTING, APPROVED, AND PLANNED LAND USES WHILE MAINTAINING A DESIRED LEVEL OF SERVICE AT ALL INTER-SECTIONS.***

### Objective 13-1

To comply with Citywide performance standards for acceptable levels of service (LOS) and insure that necessary road access and street improvements are provided to accommodate traffic generated by all new development.

#### Policies

13-1.1 Maintain a satisfactory LOS for streets and highways that should not exceed LOS "D" for Major Highways, Secondary Highways, and Collector Streets. If existing levels of service are LOS "E" or LOS F on a portion of a highway or collector street, then the level of service for future growth should be maintained at LOS "E", if possible.

***Program:*** Improve, to their designated standard specifications, substandard segments of those major and secondary highways which are expected to experience heavy traffic congestion by the year 2010.

***Program:*** The use of Residential Neighborhood Protection Plans to relieve congestion on collector streets that are expected to experience traffic congestion by the year 2010.

***Program:*** Any additional improvements to White Oak Avenue between Devonshire Street and Roscoe Boulevard should be limited to 44 feet in width between curbs. Therefore, White Oak Avenue should be considered for classification as a collector street rather than a major highway. Many segments lack the necessary right-of-way to provide an 80 to 84 foot roadway. Other segments are not only extremely narrow, with as little as 30 feet right-of-way, but are also unpaved. Few intersections with major arterials are signalized. The discontinuities along the street appear to make a designation as major highway unsuitable.

In conjunction with the reclassification of White Oak Avenue, there is a need to connect other major streets across the railroad tracks

to provide adequate north-south access in the Northridge area. If consideration is given to the reclassification of White Oak, it should be done in conjunction with the extension of Wilbur Avenue and Louise Avenue due to a real concern regarding needed gap completions and through-access for these roadways.

**Program:** The future extension of Plummer Street though the University should be completed. This project is needed to relieve local traffic in the vicinity and to provide an important alternative route in and through the area. It is the City's intent that the present agreement with the State College Board of Trustees be maintained so that an adequate potential right-of-way can be preserved and that no structures will be developed by the University that would preclude a street extension.

**Program:** Capital Improvements [TIMP]

1. Proposed street widenings [TIMP]:

Devonshire Street is classified as a major highway with two travel lanes in each direction. The current right-of-right is 100 feet with an 80-foot roadway through most of Northridge. However, the portion between Lindley Avenue and Zelzah Avenue currently provides a 67-foot roadway which does not meet standard street dimensions. This substandard segment should be improved to standard street dimensions at or before the time that the Devonshire Downs/North Campus development takes place. A bottleneck now exists at this location and increased capacity will be needed if the area is further developed.

Wilbur Avenue is classified as a secondary highway. It should be extended over the railroad tracks and improved as a four-lane secondary highway south of Nordhoff Street to provide additional roadway capacity for north-south traffic and an alternate route for traffic now using Tampa Avenue and Reseda Boulevard.

Louise Avenue is classified as a secondary highway. It should be extended over the railroad tracks and improved to four-lane secondary highway standards between Nordhoff Street and Roscoe Boulevard. This would provide continuity with the four-lane section currently existing north of Nordhoff and south of Roscoe and would provide needed additional capacity for north-south traffic, serving as an alternate route for traffic now using Balboa Boulevard.

2. Proposed street extensions [TIMP]:

Connection of Plummer Street across the CSUN campus to secondary highway standards.

The following gap completions are recommended where disconnections occur due to the railroad tracks.

- a. Wilbur Avenue
  - b. Louise Avenue
3. The following streets are recommended to be restriped with peak hour parking prohibited to provide an additional travel lane in the peak direction during the peak hour [TIMP].
- a. Devonshire Street (west-bound between Amestoy and Balboa; east and westbound between Amestoy and Tampa).
  - b. Reseda Boulevard (south-bound between Parthenia and Roscoe).
  - c. Balboa Boulevard (south-bound between Plummer and Roscoe).
4. Roadway redesignation [TIMP].

Downgrade White Oak Avenue between Devonshire Street and Roscoe Boulevard to a collector street.

- 13-1.2 Highways and street dedications shall be developed in accordance with standards and criteria contained in the Highways and Freeways Element of the General Plan and the City's Standard Street Dimensions, except where environmental issues and planning practices warrant alternate standards consistent with capacity requirements.

**Program:** Implementation of the Highways and Freeways Element supports this policy.

- 13-1.3 Discourage non-residential traffic flow for streets designed to serve residential areas only by the use of traffic control measures. One problem area is Wilbur Avenue which is a street with excessive traffic speeds through a residential neighborhood. Another area is that surrounding CSUN, where residents have noted the intrusion of traffic and parked cars.

**Program:** The use of Residential Neighborhood Protection Plans and traffic calming techniques to relieve congestion on collector streets that are expected to experience traffic congestion by the year 2010. For Wilbur Avenue, techniques can include the narrowing of travel lanes, chokers or sidewalk bulges with landscaping at minor inter-sections, and increased enforcement of posted speed limits. Speeding problems along Wilbur Avenue should first be referred to the Police Department. If the problem is not solved through enforcement, the LADOT should initiate a traffic study to determine the extent of the problem and propose appropriate measures to remedy the situation.

At CSUN student parking lots are widely dispersed with some not

fully utilized. It is recommended that the adjustment of the price structure of the lots be considered to encourage students to park on campus more regularly.

13-1.4 New development projects should be designed to minimize disturbance to existing flow with proper ingress and egress to parking.

**Program:** New development projects should incorporate adequate driveway access to prevent auto queuing.

## Objective 13-2

To ensure that the location, intensity and timing of development is consistent with the provision of adequate transportation infrastructure utilizing the City's streets and highways standards.

### Policies

13-2.1 No increase in density and intensity should be effectuated by zone change, variance, conditional use, parcel map or subdivision unless it is determined that the transportation system can accommodate the increased traffic generated by the project.

**Program:** The decision-maker should adopt a finding which addresses this factor as part of any decision.

**Program:** New development projects should incorporate TSM and/or TDM programs and/or transit improvements consistent with Citywide Land Use-Transportation Policy.

13-2.2 Driveway access points onto major and secondary highways, arterials, and collector streets should be limited in number and be located to insure the smooth and safe flow of vehicles and bicycles.

**Program:** New development projects should incorporate such considerations.

## NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

The Plan provides for various modes of non-motorized transportation such as walking, horseback riding and bicycle riding. The Citywide Bikeway Plan identifies a backbone bicycle route and support routes through Northridge. These routes are indicated on the Plan map. The Community Plan establishes policies and standards to facilitate the development of a bicycle route system which is intended to compliment other transportation modes.

The Citywide Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan identifies proposed equestrian trails in the community.

## GOAL 14

**A SYSTEM OF SAFE, EFFICIENT AND ATTRACTIVE BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN AND EQUESTRIAN ROUTES.**

## Objective 14-1

To promote an adequate system of safe bikeways for commuter, school and recreational use.

### Policies

- 14-1.1 Plan for and encourage funding and construction of bicycle routes connecting residential neighborhoods to schools, open space areas and employment centers.

**Program:** The Plan map identifies existing and proposed bicycle routes. The Citywide Bikeway Plan addresses concerns regarding bicycle use issues.

- 14-1.2 Identify bicycle routes along major and secondary arterials in the community, and open space rights-of-way.

**Program:** The City should implement the Citywide Bikeway Plan for the Northridge area, which includes proposed bike-ways recommended in the TIMP study.

- 14-1.3 Assure that local bicycle routes are linked with the routes of neighboring areas of the City, and consider use of flood control channel rights-of-way, where feasible.

**Program:** The Plan map identifies bicycle routes which link with the bicycle routes in adjacent communities.

- 14-1.4 Encourage the provision of changing rooms, showers, and bicycle storage at new and existing non-residential developments and public places.

**Program:** The provision of bicycle facilities particularly in pedestrian-oriented areas. This policy is to be considered by decision makers when reviewing projects requiring discretionary action.

## Objective 14-2

To promote pedestrian-oriented mobility for commuter, school, recreational use, economic activity, and access to transit facilities.

### Policies

- 14-2.1 Encourage the safe utilization of easements and/or rights-of-way along flood control channels, public utilities, railroad rights-of-way and streets wherever feasible for the use of pedestrians.

**Program:** Implementation of the Citywide Land Use/Transportation Policy and the City's discretionary project approval process.

- 14-2.2 The installation of sidewalks should be required with all new roadway construction and significant reconstruction of existing roadways.

**Program:** The City's Capital Improvement Program, public works construction projects, and the City's discretionary project approval process.

**Objective 14-3**

Provide for the development of equestrian trails for recreational use.

**Policies**

14-3.1 Designate equestrian trails on the Plan Map as the community's trails system to connect with the trails leading into adjacent communities.

**Program:** The Plan Map depicts these trails.

**PARKING**

The Plan supports the City's continuing efforts to develop City-owned (off-street) parking facilities in Northridge so that an adequate supply of parking can be provided to meet the demand. City-owned parking lots should be located in or near commercial areas. The reduction of on-street parking spaces to improve circulation should be considered in limited areas, if these areas are provided with a sufficient amount of off-street parking.

**GOAL 15**

***A SUFFICIENT SYSTEM OF WELL-DESIGNED AND CONVENIENT ON-STREET PARKING AND OFF-STREET PARKING FACILITIES THROUGHOUT THE PLAN AREA.***

**Objective 15-1**

To provide parking in appropriate locations in accord with Citywide standards and community needs.

**Policies**

15-1.1 Consolidate parking, where appropriate, to eliminate the number of ingress and egress points onto arterials.

**Program:** The Plan contains an Urban Design chapter which outlines guidelines for parking facilities.

15-1.2 Encourage shared parking for mixed-use projects.

**Program:** The decision-maker should consider shared parking as a condition of approval for mixed-use projects.

15-1.3 New parking lots and garages should be developed in accordance with design standards.

**Program:** The Plan contains an Urban Design Chapter which outlines guidelines for parking facilities.

**HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

This section provides a basis to preserve, enhance, and maintain sites and structures which have been deemed architecturally and/or historically significant. The City has designated two sites in the Community as Historic-

Cultural Monuments. These are the Faith Bible Church (presently the Korean Senior Center) and the Oakridge Home, which are identified on the Plan map. Additional sites for consideration include the Orange Grove at CSUN, Pepper

Tree at Reseda and Devonshire, historic houses near the Reseda Boulevard underpass, craftsman houses near Parthenia Street, the Devonshire House near Etiwanda and Lemarsh, the Rancho Cordellero del Norte, the CSUN building mosaics, the original Well Site, and the Walnut Packing House.

Northridge is an area with a number of existing cultural resources, many of which want to expand their outreach to community members. A broad array of programs exist at CSUN including the Art Gallery, the Readers Theater Program, KCSN radio station, English Honor Society, Deaf Studies Department's Deafestival, and the programs of the Music Department and Youth Orchestra. Many of these were shut down following the 1994 earthquake, and are in the process of reopening. Diverse activities occur at the Northridge Recreation Center and the Wilkinson Center. Other organizations providing cultural amenities and activities include the Teatro Por La Gente, Big Valley Music, Multicultural Music and Arts Foundation, Chinese Cultural Association, Islamic Center, Hawaiian Club, Police Athletic League, Northridge Cultural Arts, and Northridge Chamber of Commerce.

**GOAL 16**

***PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND LANDMARKS WHICH HAVE HISTORICAL AND/OR CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE.***

**Objective 16-1**

To ensure that the community's historically significant resources are protected, preserved, and/or enhanced.

**Policies**

16-1.1 Encourage the preservation, maintenance, enhancement, and reuse of existing historically significant buildings and the restoration of original facades.

***Program:*** Continued identification of appropriate City designated historic and cultural monuments and preservation of those existing.

**Objective 16-2**

To encourage private owners of historic properties/resources to conserve the integrity of such resources.

**Policies**

16-2.1 Assist private owners of existing and future historic resources to maintain and/or enhance their properties in a manner that will preserve the integrity of such resources in the best possible condition.

***Program:*** Adherence to the City's historic properties preservation ordinances and Cultural Heritage Board requirements for preservation and design.

***Program:*** Utilize City historic properties restoration programs which provide funding for renovating and/or reusing historic structures. To enhance and capitalize on the contribution of existing cultural programs and resources in the community.

## Objective 16-3

To enhance and capitalize on the contribution of existing cultural programs and resources in the community.

### Policies

16-3.1 Support CSUN and all other cultural programs and encourage new programs as appropriate.

**Program:** The Plan lists some of these offerings and encourages their continuance.

## CHAPTER IV

# COORDINATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC AGENCIES

This chapter identifies actions which are recommended to be promoted by the City through appropriate City departments and through other agencies including Federal, State and private sector entities to further the goals of the Plan. These are objectives or goals that the Planning Department does not have control over, but which involve issues that should be identified in the community plan and which help to reinforce the intent of goals and objectives found in Chapter 3.

### RECREATION AND PARK FACILITIES

1. The City Department of Recreation and Parks should work with the Los Angeles Unified School District to develop a program for shared use of school sites for both educational and recreational and park opportunities.
2. Encourage continuing efforts by County, State, and Federal agencies to acquire vacant land for publicly-owned open space.
3. Ensure that parks are adequately illuminated and secured for safe use at night, as appropriate.
4. Coordination with the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Police Department to insure adequate police patrols and the utilization of "defensible space", where feasible, in the design of recreation and park facilities.
5. Promote the supervision of park activities and enforcement of codes restricting illegal activity.
6. Improve the utilization and development of recreational facilities at existing parks, as needed, and as funds become available.
7. Coordinate between City Departments, and County, State, and Federal agencies to utilize existing public lands such as flood control channels, utility easements, and Department of Water and Power properties for such recreational uses as hiking, biking, and horseback riding, where possible.
8. Plan and design the expansion of existing facilities and the acquisition of new sites to minimize the displacement of housing and the relocation of residents.
9. Target the provision of park and recreation facilities in areas with the greatest deficiencies.

10. Pursue resources to activate land that could be used for public recreation.

## **SCHOOLS**

Consider large vacant parcels as a first alternative to accommodate the demand for new schools, if they are needed, prior to the displacement of existing uses.

## **LIBRARIES**

1. Support the efforts of the Library Department and the Northridge community to expand the current Northridge Branch Library commensurate with the standard-size library appropriate to a community with Northridge's population.
2. Seek additional resources to maintain and expand library services to satisfy service demands to the Year 2010.
3. Develop a Citywide policy for locating non-English language permanent collections.

## **POLICE PROTECTION**

Support and encourage community-based crime prevention efforts such as Neighborhood Watch Programs, regular interaction and coordination with existing community based policing, foot and bicycle patrols, and regular communication with neighborhood and civic organizations.

## **FIRE PROTECTION**

Ensure that an adequate number and type of fire station and fire service personnel are maintained by periodically evaluating population growth, level of service (response time and staffing) and fire hazards in the City.

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Assist private owners of historic properties/resources to maintain and/or enhance their properties in a manner that will conserve the integrity of such resources in the best possible condition.

## **HOUSING**

1. Locate senior citizen housing projects in neighborhoods within reasonable walking distance of health and community facilities, services, and public transportation.
2. Maintain and preserve the character and integrity of existing neighborhoods and encourage participation in self-help preventive maintenance to promote neighborhood conservation, beautification, and rehabilitation.
3. Improve the coordination of public services to support neighborhood conservation activities.
4. Ensure that the location of low and moderate income housing in the Plan area is predicated on a fair share basis in relationship to all other planning areas.

5. Encourage new and alternative housing concepts, as well as alternative materials and methods of construction, which are found to be compatible with City codes.
6. Allow for the assembly and trade of public land in order to encourage the construction of housing in appropriate locations within the Plan area.
7. Ensure that the proposed development of transitional housing units and emergency shelters are appropriately located.
8. Encourage the development of housing types intended to meet the special needs of senior citizens and the physically challenged.

**INDUSTRIAL**

1. Encourage and assist economic revitalization and reuse of older industrial properties for industrial uses through City, State, and Federal programs.
2. Assist in the aggregation of smaller, older sites to facilitate revitalization or reuse, where appropriate.

**UTILITIES**

Install utilities underground through assessment districts or other funding, when feasible.

**EMPLOYMENT**

1. Encourage businesses to participate in job training programs for local residents.
2. Develop employment opportunities for a wide range of jobs, skills, and wages.
3. Encourage and assist economic revitalization and the reuse of older industrial properties for industrial uses through City, State and Federal programs.

**PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION**

1. Coordinate with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to improve local bus service to and within the Northridge Plan area.
2. Encourage the expansion of transit programs, wherever feasible, aimed at enhancing the mobility of senior citizens, disabled persons, and the transit-dependent population.
3. Encourage the MTA and the LADOT to establish local bus service to connect public and private schools to the community's major focal points, and to the existing MTA bus routes which serve Northridge and the surrounding communities.
4. Develop an intermodal mass transportation plan to promote the linkage of transportation facilities, routes, and services with the Metrolink line.

**NON-MOTORIZED  
TRANSPORTATION**

Encourage funding and construction of bicycle routes connecting residential neighborhoods to schools, open space areas and employment centers.

**NATURAL DISASTERS**

Natural disasters such as the 1971 Sylmar-San Fernando and the 1994 Northridge earthquakes, floods and fires have and will continue to impact the Northridge community. Parts of Northridge could become isolated in the aftermath of a natural disaster. City government, other governmental agencies, the private sector, disaster relief agencies, and the citizens of Northridge should be encouraged to work together to minimize the impacts of a disaster in terms of land development practices, providing essential services, preventing transportation and communication blockages and to ensure that recovery will proceed as expeditiously as possible.

**EARTHQUAKE  
PREPAREDNESS**

The 1994 Northridge earthquake devastated portions of the Northridge area. The magnitude 6.8 (Richter Scale) earthquake caused extensive and widespread property damage to residences, businesses, nonprofit organizations, public facilities, and infrastructure including freeways, water lines, power lines, and natural gas lines. Recovery and rebuilding efforts are taking place following the Northridge earthquake and will continue over the next several years.

The City's Building and Safety Department regulates the demolition of buildings damaged by the earthquake that have been abandoned by property owners, and determined to be a public nuisance.

The Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA), as directed by the City Council in July 1994, established an Earthquake Disaster Assistance Program redevelopment plan. The five-year Plan provides disaster and recovery assistance in helping the community to rehabilitate from the effects of the January 1994 earthquake. The Plan facilitates the redevelopment of properties; develops and implements job revitalization through job creation, retention, and training; and encourages business attraction, retention, and expansion. The Plan requires that these redevelopment activities be consistent with the existing community plan but does not modify or broaden in any way existing City development and land use controls.

# CHAPTER V

## URBAN DESIGN

The Northridge Community Plan is made up of neighborhoods with distinctive characteristics. The purpose of this chapter is to lay out policies and standards for multiple residential, commercial and industrial projects, and for community design. This chapter identifies general Design Standards that can be utilized by the decision-maker when reviewing discretionary projects. In addition, there is a Community Design and Landscaping section which is directed at the community's use of streetscape improvements and landscaping in public spaces and rights-of-way.

The Design Policies in this chapter establish the minimum level of design that should be observed in multiple-residential, commercial and industrial projects within the entire Plan area. They also address design issues for parking and landscaping.

The administration of the policies and standards found in this Chapter can be accomplished with the establishment of Community Design Overlay Districts (CDO's), or Pedestrian-Oriented Districts (POD's), per the Supplemental Use District Section of the Zoning Code LAMC (Section 13.00).

### GOALS AND PURPOSES

These design policies and standards are to ensure that residential, commercial and industrial projects and public spaces and rights-of-way incorporate specific elements of good design. The intent is to promote a stable and pleasant environment. In commercial concentrations and corridors, the emphasis is on the provision and maintenance of the visual continuity of streetscapes and the creation of an environment that encourages pedestrian and economic activity. In multiple-family residential areas, the emphasis is on the promotion of architectural design that enhances the quality-of-life, living conditions and neighborhood pride.

### DESIGN POLICIES FOR INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

#### COMMERCIAL

#### Site Planning

Structures should be oriented toward the main commercial street where a parcel is located and shall avoid pedestrian/ vehicular conflicts by:

1. Locating surface parking in the rear of structures.
2. Minimizing the number of driveways providing access from major or secondary highways.
3. Maximizing retail and commercial service uses along street level frontages of commercial developments.

4. Providing front pedestrian entrances for businesses fronting on main commercial streets.
5. Providing through-arcades from the front of buildings to rear parking for projects within wide frontages.
6. Providing landscaping strips between driveways and walkways which access the rear of properties.
7. Providing speed bumps for driveways paralleling walkways for more than 50 linear feet.
8. Requiring site plans which include ancillary structures, service areas, pedestrian walkways, vehicular paths, loading areas, drop off and landscaped areas.
9. Providing, where feasible, the undergrounding of new utility service.

### **Height and Building Design**

The mass, proportion and scale of all new buildings and remodels should be at a pedestrian scale. The design of all proposed projects should be articulated to provide variation and visual interest, and enhance the streetscape by providing continuity and avoiding opportunities for graffiti.

Building materials should be employed to provide relief to untreated portions of exterior building facades. The purpose of these provisions is to ensure that a project does not result in large sterile expanses of building walls, is designed in harmony with the surrounding neighborhood, and creates a stable environment with a pleasant and desirable character. Accordingly, the following policies are proposed:

2. No structures should exceed 30 feet in height within 15 feet and 30 feet of front and rear property lines, respectively.
3. Requiring the use of articulations, recesses, surface perforations, or porticoes to break up long, flat building facades and free standing walls.
4. Providing accenting, complementary building materials to building facades.
5. Maximizing the applications of architectural features or articulations to building facades.
6. Designating architecturally untreated facades for tasteful signage.
7. Screening of mechanical and electrical equipment from public view.
8. Screening of all roof top equipment and non-architectural building appurtenances from public view.
9. Requiring the enclosure of trash areas for all projects.

**MULTIPLE  
RESIDENTIAL**

**Parking Structures**

Parking structures should be integrated with the design of the buildings they serve through:

1. Designing parking structure exteriors to match the style, materials and color of the main building.
2. Landscaping to screen parking structures not architecturally integrated with the main building(s).
3. Utilizing decorative walls and landscaping to buffer residential uses from parking structures.

**Surface Parking Landscaping**

1. Devoting at least 7% of total area of surface parking lots to landscaping.
2. Providing a landscaped buffer along public streets and/or adjoining residential uses.

**Light and Glare**

1. Installing on-site lighting along all pedestrian walkways and vehicular access ways.
2. Shielding and directing on-site lighting onto driveways and walkways, directed away from adjacent residential uses.

**Mixed Use**

Maximize commercial uses on the ground floor by requiring at least 10% of commercial development to serve needs of the residential portion of the building.

**Site Planning**

All multiple residential projects of five or more units should be designed around a landscaped focal point or courtyard to serve as an amenity for residents. Toward that goal the following policies are proposed:

1. Providing a pedestrian entrance at the front of each project.
2. Requiring useable open space for outdoor activities, especially for children.

**Design**

The design of all buildings should be of a quality and character that improves community appearances by avoiding excessive variety or monotonous repetition. Achievement of this can be accomplished through:

1. Requiring the use of articulations, recesses, surface perforations and/or porticoes to break up long, flat building facades.
2. Utilizing complementary building materials on building facades.
3. Incorporating varying design to provide definition for each floor.
4. Integrating building fixtures, awnings, or security gates, into the design of building(s).
5. Screening of all rooftop equipment and building appurtenances from adjacent properties.
6. Requiring decorative, masonry walls to enclose trash areas.

#### **Parking Structures**

Parking structures should be integrated with the design of the buildings they serve through:

1. Designing parking structure exteriors to match the style, materials and color of the main building.
2. Landscaping to screen parking structures not architecturally integrated with the main building.
3. Utilizing decorative walls and/or landscaping to buffer residential uses from parking structures.

## **INDUSTRIAL**

#### **Structures**

1. Designing the site and building(s) to convey visual interest and to be visually compatible with adjacent uses.
2. Treating large expanses of blank walls and tilt-up concrete walls visible from the public right-of-way with contrasting complementary colors, building plane variation, murals, planters and/or other landscape elements to create visual interest.
3. Screening of mechanical and electrical equipment from public view.
4. Screening of all rooftop equipment and building appurtenances from public view.
5. Requiring the enclosure of trash areas for all projects.
6. Requiring freestanding walls to conform to the requirements of Section A.2.b above.

## Lighting

Directing exterior lighting onto the project site and locating flood lighting so as not to impact any surrounding residential uses.

## COMMUNITY DESIGN AND LANDSCAPING STANDARDS

In addition to the establishment of Design Policies for individual projects, a community's identity can be enhanced through improvements to the streetscape and landscaping in public spaces and rights-of-way. It is the intent of this section to establish a set of guidelines that will serve to improve the environment, both aesthetically and physically, as opportunities in the Northridge Community Plan area occur which involve public improvements or other public and/or private projects that affect public spaces and rights-of-way.

A sense of entry should be created for the Northridge Community from adjacent communities that serves to define boundaries and edges and the unique attributes of the community. Public spaces and rights-of-way should capitalize on existing physical access to differentiate the community as a unique place in the City.

The presence or absence of street trees is an important ingredient in the aesthetic quality of an area. Consistent use of appropriate street trees provides shade during hot summer months, emphasizes sidewalk activity by separating vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and creates an area-wide identity which distinguishes neighborhoods within Northridge from each other.

The following improvements are recommended:

### ENTRYWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Provide improvements along principal streets and at major identified intersections and edges which clearly distinguish these locations as major streetscapes and entries. Such improvements may include elements such as signage, landscaping, vertical pylons and/or other distinctive treatments.

### STREETSCAPE

1. Provide for a coordinated streetscape design at identified entries to the Plan area that includes street lighting, street furniture, and sidewalk/crosswalk improvements in the public right-of-way.
2. Establish a comprehensive streetscape and landscape improvement program for identified corridors and districts that will set standards and priorities for the selection and installation of the following:
  - a. Street trees
  - b. Street lighting
  - c. Streetscape elements (sidewalk/crosswalk paving, street furniture)

- d. Public signage
  - e. Trash containers.
3. Identify locations for, and develop landscaped median strips within commercial districts, provided that there is adequate space, traffic flow, site access, and the proper street cross-section to insert the medians.

## **STREET TREES**

1. Select species which:
- a. Enhance the pedestrian character, and convey a distinctive high quality visual image.
  - b. Are drought- and smog-tolerant, and fire-resistant.
  - c. Complement the existing street trees.
2. Establish a hierarchy for street trees which include:
- a. Major Accent Trees. These trees should be located at entry locations, intersections, and activity centers.
  - b. Street Trees. Select specific species to be the common tree for street frontages. A single flowering species may be selected for all residential neighborhoods and commercial districts or different species selected to distinguish one neighborhood, district, or street from another. In residential neighborhoods, the trees should be full, to provide shade and color. In commercial districts, the trees should provide shade, but be more transparent to promote views of store fronts and signs.
  - c. Ornamental or Special Plantings. At special areas along street frontages, such as linkages to pedestrian walkways and plazas and outdoor dining areas, ornamental trees providing shade and color should be utilized to emphasize and focus attention on those places.

## **STREET FURNITURE**

Install street furniture that encourages pedestrian activity or physical and visual access to buildings and which is aesthetically pleasing, functional and comfortable. Street furniture may include such elements as bus and pedestrian benches, bus shelters, kiosks, trash receptacles, newspaper racks, bicycle racks, public telephones, landscaped planters, drinking fountains, and bollards. Priority should be given to pedestrian-oriented areas.

## **STREET LIGHTING**

1. Install new street lights in commercial districts which are attractively designed, and compatible with facades and other street furniture, to provide adequate visibility, security, and a festive night time environment.

2. Establish a consistent street lighting type in the Central Business District utilizing a light standard that is compatible with the overall street furniture and graphics/ signage program.
3. Any new street lighting or pedestrian lighting system built in the public right-of-way must be designed to currently adopted City standards. Equipment must be tested and approved by the Bureau of Street Lighting.
4. New lighting systems will be designed to minimize glare and “light trespass”.
5. No new or replacement street tree shall be planted closer than 20 feet from an existing or proposed streetlight. Exceptions will be considered by the Bureau of Street Lighting after reviewing mature tree characteristics.
6. All new or replacement lighting systems require due process. Street lighting is installed through the formation of special assessment districts. Where any increase in special assessment is anticipated public hearings are required.
7. Ornamental or historic poles cannot be removed without the prior approval of the City’s Cultural Affairs Commission.

**SIDEWALKS/PAVING**

1. Repave existing sidewalks and crosswalks in commercial districts with brick pavers, concrete, or other safe, non-slip materials to create a distinctive pedestrian environment and, for crosswalks, to visually and physically differentiate these from vehicle travel lanes and promote continuity between pedestrian sidewalks.
2. Develop sidewalk “pull-outs” at intersections, where they do not adversely impact traffic flow or safety, by extending the sidewalk to the depth of a parking stall to accommodate landscaping and street furniture and reduce the crosswalk width.

**SIGNAGE**

1. Establish a consistent design for all public signage, including fixture type, lettering, colors, symbols, and logos designed for specific areas or pathways.
2. Provide for distinctive signage which identifies principal entries to unique neighborhoods, historic structures, and public buildings and parks.
3. Ensure that public signage complements and does not detract from adjacent commercial and residential uses.
4. Provide for signage which uniquely identifies principal commercial areas.
5. Discourage billboards and off-site advertising.

**PUBLIC OPEN SPACE  
AND PLAZAS**

Establish public open space standards that will guide the design of new public plazas and open spaces. These standards should include the following:

1. Consideration of the siting of open space to maximize pedestrian accessibility and circulation.
2. Solar exposure or protection.
3. Adjacency to pedestrian routes and other open spaces.
4. Appropriate plant and hardscape materials.

**RICHARD RIORDAN**, Mayor

James Kenneth Hahn, City Attorney

Rick Tuttle, Controller

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April 21, 2005

All Interested Parties:

**RAS INTERPRETATION TO COMMUNITY PLAN FOOTNOTES  
DIRECTOR'S INTERPRETATION**

Attached is a copy of the Department of City Planning's interpretation of Ordinance 174,999, effective January 15, 2003, which established the RAS Zones. This published interpretation becomes final and effective 20-days from the date of this communication unless an appeal to the City Planning Commission is filed within this time period. Appeals shall be filed in duplicate on forms provided at any of the following public offices of the Department of City Planning, along with the required filing fee:

Planning Department – Public Counter  
201 North Figueroa Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone: (213) 482-7077

San Fernando Valley Office  
6262 Van Nuys Boulevard  
Van Nuys, CA 91401  
Phone: (818) 374-5050

If you have any questions regarding this case, please contact Jane Blumenfeld at (213) 978-1372 of myself at (213) 978-1274.

Sincerely,

CON HOWE  
Director of Planning

ROBERT H. SUTTON  
Deputy Director

CH/RHS:hkt

Attachment

cc: Council Planning Deputies  
Ray Chan, Building and Safety Department  
David Kabashima, Department of City Planning  
Jane Blumenfeld, Department of City Planning



April 21, 2005

**RAS RELATIONSHIP TO COMMUNITY PLAN FOOTNOTES  
DIRECTOR'S INTERPRETATION**

All Interested Parties:

SUBJECT:

Inquiries have been made regarding potential conflicts between Footnotes on the Community Plans and the RAS 3 and RAS 4 (hereafter referred to as RAS) Zones.

BACKGROUND:

The Residential/Accessory Services Zones (RAS) allow a greater floor area than commercial zones and greater height than otherwise allowed in height district 1VL.

“An example is:

Where a traditional C2-1VL with a Commercial plan designation is limited to a 1.5:1 FAR and a 45 height limit, the RAS 3-1VL and RAS 4-1VL shall not exceed a 3:1 FAR and 50 feet in height in accordance with the LAMC 12.10.5, 12.11.5 and 12.21.1.”

The Community Plans as recommend by the City Planning Commission and adopted by City Council are a general guide to development for the community and city as a whole. Rarely do the Community Plans specify special planning rights or restrictions for particular parcels.

Some community plan maps contain footnotes regarding height and floor area. Footnotes appear on the map legend next to the commercial land use categories or in some cases on specific properties or areas. The footnotes that are attached to the commercial land use categories generally relate in a broad-brushed manner to all areas of the plan designated for that particular use. Typically such footnotes are not site specific, and as such, do not relate to specific locations, blocks, or parcels within the community plan area.

“An example of such a footnote which appears in most Community Plans reads:

Footnote 1: ‘Height District 1VL’

This means all properties within the commercial land use category that have this footnote are limited to an FAR of 1.5:1 with a 45-foot height limit.”

DISCUSSION:

When the City Council adopted the RAS Zones in 2002, their purpose was to promote mixed use development in the city's commercial zones, particularly in the commercial corridors which provide the greatest access to transit. In their adoption of the RAS Zones, the City Council recognized that

the additional floor area and height allowed by the RAS zones are necessary to make such primarily residential projects viable. However to protect the integrity of the Community Plans, the Council limited the residential density permitted in the RAS 3 and RAS 4 Zones to correspond to the residential densities permitted in the R3 and R4 Zones, respectively. Thus, they permitted RAS 3 and RAS 4 Zones in Plans that permit R4 and higher zoning but only permitted the RAS 3 Zone (and not RAS 4) in Plans that previously had R3 as the highest zoning category.

In one particular plan, the Plan Footnote on a Neighborhood Commercial area states:

“Floor Area Ratio 1:1.”

In this specific situation it cannot be the intent of Council to allow a 3:1 FAR since they knowingly restricted the property to a 1:1 FAR.

**INTERPRETATION:**

It is hereby interpreted that the RAS Zones can exceed a Community Plan Footnote when that footnote is general in nature and generally refers to all parcels under that plan category. Where there is a specific footnote that refers to (a) specific parcel(s) that is more restrictive, the RAS Zone would not be permitted without a corresponding Plan Amendment.