

MODEL *for*
DESIGN
MANUAL

LIVING STREETS

Los Angeles County



2011



ATTRIBUTION STATEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Streets provide access to buildings and land uses of every kind. As discussed in Chapter 12, “Re-Placing Streets,” placemaking is the practice of first designing streets and other public spaces as an interconnected network of human-scale “public living rooms” in which the safety and comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists is not subordinated to the requirements of access by automobile, and then coordinating the character and design of the adjoining properties to create a specific type of living environment, or place.

All successful and sustainable communities include a range of distinct and different types of places, or environments, from quiet, shady residential streets to busy neighborhood centers, from noisier mixed-use “bright lights” downtowns to larger, single-purpose industrial and employment centers. While the type of land use is one important characteristic of private property design in these places, site and building design are critically important in ensuring that coherent, safe, functional, and valuable places result.

This chapter provides a discussion of the ways in which the planning and design of properties contribute to coherent placemaking. The discussion includes placemaking principles that are applicable to places of all types and to distinct types of places, design techniques for applying the basic placemaking principles, and implementation strategies for embedding these principles and techniques in local policies and regulations.



Complementary land-use and street design (Credit: Dan Burden)

ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES FOR BALANCED STREET ENVIRONMENTS

*Neighborhood public square
integration: Buenos Aires, Argentina
(Credit: Ryan Snyder)*



The following design principles inform the recommendations made in this chapter and should be incorporated into all street environment design:

- Urban patterns in livable, sustainable places of enduring value are generally based on compactness, connectivity, completeness, and continuity. This describes the opposite of sprawling, disconnected, or single-use development.
- Streets are the outdoor rooms of their neighborhoods, and should be designed for and scaled for people. They are also the structural framework that organizes those places, making them legible and navigable.
- The purpose of streets is to let people move about, and every street should provide safety, convenience, and comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Streets, parks, plazas, squares, and other public places make up the public space network in which all members of the community may encounter one another in the course of their daily lives, regardless of their age, income, or other individual status.
- Street networks designed with pedestrians in mind, as described in Chapter 3, “Street Networks and Classifications,” naturally form small to medium-sized blocks that allow pedestrians to

comfortably walk to a range of amenities as a pleasant and practical alternative to driving. In existing environments where such a network exists it should be preserved, and in areas where large parcels are being redeveloped, such a network should be inserted.

- The distribution of land uses should be designed to allow everyday destinations (e.g., schools, parks, and retail shops) to be located within a comfortable walking distance of most residences.
- All buildings should contribute to the character of the streetscape, face the street with attractive entrances that welcome pedestrians, and have windows that overlook the street to create a sense of security.
- On-street parking reinforces a pattern in which visitors enter buildings from the street, and can provide an important buffer between pedestrians and moving traffic.
- The setback between buildings and the sidewalk should be designed to enhance the pedestrian experience, whether setbacks are attractive landscaped yards that provide privacy for building occupants or shopfronts at the sidewalk that display merchandise to passing pedestrians. In no cases should cars, parked or moving, be placed between the sidewalk and the buildings.
- Off-street parking and service access and their driveways should be designed to disrupt the pedestrian experience as little as possible. Whenever possible, access should be from an alley or shared driveway off a side street and parking and garages should be located behind or beside buildings, not between the sidewalk and the building. When a driveway to the front of the lot cannot be avoided, it should be as narrow as possible.
- Off-street parking, especially surface parking, is a non-productive use, and the amount required should be reduced to the extent possible by utilizing on-street parking and by sharing off-street parking among adjacent uses. Off-street parking requires about twice the surface area per parked car of on-street parking, due to the driveways required to access the lot and aisles needed for maneuvering within the lot. This non-productive space creates dead zones and increases the distances between destinations, further reducing the attractiveness of walking.

- The mix and intensity of land uses should be designed to support and be supported by efficient transit systems whenever possible.



*Good building setback
(Credit: Ryan Snyder)*

STREETSCAPE ENVIRONMENT TYPES

Every city, town, neighborhood and district is unique. This uniqueness creates a sense of place. However, there are a few general types of places that repeat from community to community, within which the idealized relationship of street to adjacent land uses follows certain general guidelines. The following descriptions of archetypical environments detail concepts and strategies, not finite design solutions. Designs should be based on the best of the local and regional architectural and landscape heritage. Communities may want to establish their own typologies for local environments and streets.

Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are the main component of all cities, the places where almost everyone lives. Many of the concepts below are part of California's best loved and most valuable neighborhoods, and some of the best new neighborhoods now being built are based on these simple concepts:

- Residences of various types are the predominant land use of neighborhoods, with other uses such as neighborhood-

serving retail, small businesses, elementary schools, parks, and playgrounds within a pleasant walk.

- Neighborhoods can be composed primarily or even exclusively of single family homes, or can include a range of multifamily housing types that are designed and scaled for their compatibility with houses. The basic design principles listed here are the same for both.
- Neighborhood streets are the living rooms and play rooms of the neighborhood, and should be designed mainly for the safety and enjoyment of pedestrians, particularly children and the elderly, the most vulnerable pedestrians among us.
- The streetscape environment of neighborhoods is the most heavily landscaped type, with sidewalks flanked by street trees and landscaped parkway strips on the public side and landscaped front yards on the private. This creates a distinctive streetscape character different from that in neighborhood centers and other mixed-use environments.
- On-street parking serves visitors and residents, and provides a valuable buffer between pedestrians, children at play, and passing traffic.
- Buildings should front the street with gracious front doors and overlook the street with windows to provide eyes on the street and a sense of security for the street.
- Front yard design should create spaces through which residents and visitors come and go in their daily routines, in which neighbors interact and children play, and where food can be grown.
- The front door of houses and active uses within them should be closer to the street than the garage to emphasize the home over car storage and to bring eyes closer to the street.
- Automobiles should disrupt the pedestrian environment (primarily sidewalks) as little as possible. This can be accomplished by providing access to parking and garages via alleys and driveways from side streets, or when necessary via driveways from the fronts of lots (as few and as narrow as possible) to access garages located behind or beside, not in front of, the residences.



*Neighborhood center: Glendale, CA.
(Credit: Ryan Snyder)*



Streets and buildings working together create attractive neighborhoods. (Credit: Ryan Snyder)

Neighborhood Centers

Neighborhood centers take many forms and occur at all scales, from a country store at a key intersection in a rural neighborhood to a busy little “Main Street” environment in a larger town or city to a high intensity, transit-oriented center at a neighborhood edge along a major urban corridor. Regardless of the scale and character of the neighborhood center, the following set of basic design concepts can define centers that are convenient to pedestrians from adjoining neighborhoods:

- Neighborhood centers, the name notwithstanding, are generally at the edges or corners of neighborhoods, facing a major street or streets that carry traffic volumes capable of supporting the businesses. An ideal arrangement is a “Main Street” that is located at the conjunction of two or more neighborhoods, making the edges of the neighborhoods into the center of the larger community, and providing a range of amenities and resources within easy walking and biking distance of the residents.
- Neighborhood centers are ideally mixed-use, providing an array of goods, services, employment, and residential options that can function both as an extension of the adjoining neighborhoods and as a convenient destination for people passing through.

- The buildings of these centers should face the primary street, creating a busy pedestrian environment that causes drivers to slow down and see what the center has to offer.
- The ground floor uses in neighborhood centers are generally commercial, providing convenient goods and services to customers; the upper floors can be residential, office, or a mix of both.
- The streetscape in neighborhood centers is usually quite formal: street trees are normally located in small planters within the sidewalk, surrounded by tree grates or very small landscaped areas, providing space for pedestrians to comfortably stroll, and for people to get in and out of cars parked curbside.
- There are many options for the design of setback areas in neighborhood centers, including forecourts with sidewalk dining, narrow landscape zones that soften the streetscape while allowing views of the shops, and simple shopfronts built right to the sidewalk.
- Neighborhood centers can also include purely residential buildings, as long as the design of the ground floor street interface provides a degree of privacy for the residents, either by setting the building back behind a landscaped yard or raising the ground floor above the sidewalk level, or both.
- Except for the smallest centers, which might just be one corner store, neighborhood centers generally require off-street parking, which should be located behind or alongside the buildings whenever possible, not between the sidewalk and the buildings.
- In larger neighborhood centers that require large off-street parking lots, the size of the lots can be reduced if they are shared by uses whose peak parking demand is in the daytime (offices) and uses whose peak use is at night (e.g., dinner restaurants and residences). Reducing parking saves cost, improves environmental performance, and improves the urban environment for people.
- Plazas can create vibrant urban centers. Their design should focus on proper size and scale, active uses, doors and windows fronting the plaza, trees, landscaping, public art, fountains, etc. Stages, bandstands, play fountains, and other features liven plazas.



*Public plaza: Barcelona, Spain
(Credit: Ryan Snyder)*

Corridors

This section focuses on major street corridors that connect across an urban area. Corridors can have many different characters and occur at all scales, from a rural main street stop along a highway to a main avenue within a town or a high intensity urban corridor in a large city. Many planning and design concepts are common to corridors at all these scales.

Many major street corridors began as rural roads, evolved into automobile thoroughfares lined with a range of commercial uses, and have lately been losing much of their commercial value, as retail and office uses have migrated to larger-format retail centers and business parks. Many such corridors now present a significant opportunity for communities to provide infill housing mixed with modest amounts of commercial uses within walking distance of adjoining neighborhoods. The repositioning of these often blighted “commercial strips” as more valuable mixed-use places requires a coordinated redesign of the streets and careful planning of the infill development along the corridor.

The street design principles and practices described in this manual will help create streets that do more than move cars. Using these principles and practices, undifferentiated miles of corridors can be restructured to provide the types of neighborhood centers described above, interspersed with residential or office uses along the street. The core placemaking strategies found in this manual (slowing cars, planning for people, landscaping streets, providing on-street parking, and designing property setbacks to modulate privacy for residences



*Mixed-use building: Los Angeles, CA
(Credit: Ryan Snyder)*

and visibility for businesses) can transform miles of sameness into a sequence of useful places.

Below are some core design concepts and principles that can help to integrate land uses with such streets to make coherent, human-scale places:

- The entire length of a corridor should be lined with active uses. These can include the neighborhood centers described above at appropriate nodes, multifamily housing of various types, and even single-family housing if appropriately buffered with landscaped setbacks or a multi-way boulevard. Sound walls, berms, and other forms of “pure buffer” are an admission of urban design failure, disconnecting the city rather than connecting it, and should be employed as a last resort.
- Through a community visioning process integrated with transit planning processes and retail capacity studies, the location and size of neighborhood centers (active, mixed-use, and often transit-oriented nodes) should be determined.
- Long corridors should be analyzed to define the existing or emerging character by segment, then potential nodes, centers or destinations with more focused pedestrian activity can be identified.
- A mix of land uses can be provided to encourage people to make trips by means other than cars in those locations, and a network of streets to assure connections between uses should be available.
- Design standards or guidelines for development within the segments that will remain auto-oriented should be created so these segments can be made as pedestrian and bicycle-friendly as possible (e.g., minimizing the number of curb cut locations and widths that interrupt the sidewalk, buffering street-frontage parking so the sidewalk environment is not compromised, providing setbacks for landscaping and transit amenities wherever possible to encourage transit use).
- In close consultation with the residents of adjoining neighborhoods, the vision and standards for the design and massing of buildings in each segment of the corridor should be developed.



Blank walls and inactive uses on the ground floor make for poor pedestrian environments. (Credit: Ryan Snyder)

Urban Centers

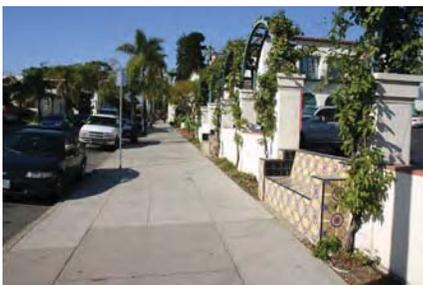
Urban centers are typically the economic and social hearts of cities or towns. They can be village-scale centers in small towns, low to mid-rise downtowns in most cities, or high intensity urban centers with high-rise buildings in larger cities, where unique regional destinations are often located. Ideally, the urban center environment is a very compact mix of a wide range of land uses, creating high land values as well as a high potential for transportation congestion. Accordingly, it is vitally important that in addition to a balanced street network for pedestrians, bikes, and cars, such places be provided with high levels of transit service. Important design concepts for urban centers include the following:

- Urban centers are usually organized around an established network of major boulevards and urban streets that support the businesses and major public institutions. Because networks that are scaled and designed for pedestrians are finite in their traffic carrying capacity, it is critical that transit plays a major role in moving people.
- Urban centers are mixed in use, providing an array of goods, services, employment, and residential options along with important public and cultural institutions.
- Buildings in urban centers should face the primary street (which can often be more than one side of a block), and support an active pedestrian environment.



*Urban center: Vancouver, BC
(Credit: Dan Burden)*

- Buildings in large urban centers should form a consistent street wall (following a consistent pattern of setback and height); the street wall is typically at the back of a wide sidewalk and appropriate to the character of the street it fronts.
- Along streets with purely residential buildings, the design of the ground floor-street interface should provide a degree of privacy for the residents, with residences normally set back from and raised above the sidewalk.
- Commercial uses generally front the sidewalk with large, transparent shopfronts, but some institutional and office uses commonly connect to the sidewalk environment with lobbies and foyers instead. In such cases, it is important that windows from the offices and other interior spaces overlook the street to support an environment that feels safe.
- For hotels and office buildings that require porte-cochere or drop-off areas for residents or guests, these should ideally be designed to occur at the street edge along the curb zone, and should not impose large curb cuts and circular driveways that interrupt the sidewalk. When such off-street vehicular access must be provided, it should be integrated into a forecourt or entry plaza that is designed first as a public space for people, and incidentally allows vehicular access that does not disrupt the pedestrian environment. The width of the pedestrian zone should be maintained throughout; the furniture and/or frontage zones can be reduced.
- Parking in urban centers should include
 - On-street parking to buffer pedestrians from faster moving traffic
 - Shared, aggregated parking that is located underground wherever possible
- Above-grade structured parking should be lined with ground floor active uses that front the streets, not exposed or hidden with blank walls. This also applies to upper floors, where stacking exposed parking levels above the street-level commercial uses should be avoided.
- Where surface parking lots are unavoidable, they should be behind a building that fronts the sidewalk and public street, or at a minimum screened with attractive landscape or public art



Well screened surface parking: Santa Barbara, CA (Credit: Paul Zykovsky)

to provide a comfortable street edge for passing pedestrians. Vendor kiosks or “slim stores” can also be used for this purpose.

- The key to district parking strategies is creating a supply of available parking that is shared by many uses, whose peak parking demands will be at different times of the day and the week. This, together with a strong transit component and an attractive walking and biking environment, will reduce the required amounts of parking, which in turn will save cost, increase real estate utilization, improve environmental performance, and improve the urban environment for people.

Special Use Districts

Special use districts are areas dominated by a single type of land use. One example of this is industrial districts, where manufacturing, production, and distribution of goods are the primary activities. Other examples are employment centers that primarily provide high concentrations of commercial offices, medical centers, and large education campuses. Such districts benefit from a location that provides easy access to regional roads and highways, and the sizes of their buildings, the volumes of truck traffic, and the hours of operation make them generally unsuitable for residential uses.

It is important to note that even within special use districts, there are many opportunities to mix in useful amenities and strong reasons to ensure that all the streets are walkable, bikeable, and served by transit. In industrial, office-dominated, educational, or medical campus districts, this enables restaurants, copy centers, and other support businesses to do well while reducing workers’ need to drive out of the district for



*Outdoor seating livens the street: Culver City, CA
(Credit: Sky Yim)*

basic services. These local-serving commercial uses can thrive if the environment supports their patronage, and housing can be integrated as well. Some key principles for the design of such districts include the following:

Districts can foster a critical mass of related businesses that function well in close proximity to each other (like industrial suppliers and manufacturers, or medical offices and a hospital).

It is important that special use districts be organized around a balanced street network, with development standards to ensure that the urban design does not exclude pedestrians and bicyclists. Many employees and visitors arrive to their jobs by transit or bicycle, so accommodating pedestrians should be as important as moving goods and vehicles between businesses. Many employees who drive or take transit to work walk or bike to local destinations during their lunch breaks.

- Where other uses (e.g., restaurants, cafes, and small convenience stores) are interspersed within the dominant land use, they should provide a pedestrian-friendly street frontage to encourage employees or visitors to arrive from nearby businesses on foot.
- Major corridors entering special use districts typically carry heavier traffic and trucks, but also need to safely accommodate bicycles and pedestrians.
- The street network should assure that truck freight traffic has clear paths of travel that do not encroach on sidewalks.
- Buildings in special use districts should provide a good public face along the streets, with noxious or unattractive uses behind buildings or attractive fences and landscaping.
- For special use districts like medical centers, the building frontage and entrances onto the campus and its individual buildings from the sidewalk should be pedestrian friendly and accommodate the mobility impaired. Services open to the public, such as cafés and gift shops, should face the street.

- Campuses, which are generally composed of larger areas without public streets, should have a clear network of pedestrian paths and streets that encourage walking and biking, not driving, and allow neighboring pedestrians and bicyclists to cut through the campus.
- Setbacks in special use districts will vary based on the street and sidewalk character the buildings front; landscaping should be provided along public sidewalks and shade trees should be provided to reduce the effects of urban heat islands, which are common in highly paved industrial districts.
- Parking in special use districts could include on-street parking to buffer pedestrians from faster moving traffic, and where provided onsite should be connected to clear, safe pedestrian pathways.
- Loading docks and service functions should be designed to not conflict with pedestrian entrances from sidewalks into the facility.



UCLA Campus (Credit: Ryan Snyder)



The “public room of the street” is an important public space primarily shaped by the land uses and buildings that enclose it (Credit: Cityworks Design and Michele Weisbart)

Urban Design

Urban design is the design of urban environments, whether in small villages, neighborhoods, town centers, or major urban districts. While sometimes used to describe just the selection of sidewalk patterns, benches, and streetlights, the term “urban design” is used here in its broadest and simplest sense: the design of environments in which people live, work, shop, and play.

“Land use” is commonly used as a rough synonym for urban design, and often as a substitute for words such as “building,” “business,” “parking lot,” or anything else that is located on a parcel of private property. In this manual, the term is used to refer to the “use” of the “land” in question. Urban design encompasses site design and street design along with the allowed uses within a certain block or district of a city, and defines the nature of people’s experience of that place. The design and use of private development—collectively the “private realm” of the city—work in tandem with and shape the public realm of the city, defining the overall character of the place. When the design of the private and public realm work well together, the places they make are often experienced as “great streets” or “great places,” and desirable destinations.

Once the community decides on the desired character of the urban environment and the range of allowed land uses is determined, zoning regulations and development standards are prepared to support the desired type of place and street, so that the buildings that are

developed (or are redeveloped) on each parcel play the appropriate supporting role in “completing the street.”

Creating great streets with good private realm design starts at the initial phase of laying out a project on a site, including the location and design of the building(s) and the design of the access, parking, and landscape. The following principles are general and are written based on practices that support livable and healthy communities through (i) thoughtful site design, (ii) appropriate building forms, and (iii) good relationships between the building and the sidewalk and street that it fronts.

*Urban design considers the relationship of site and building to the street, creates spaces for people, and can define the overall streetscape character: West Hollywood, CA
(Credit: Lisa Padilla)*



Thoughtful Site Design

The orientation of every building affects that building’s relationship to people on the street. Each component of building demands careful site design. The following provide site design guidance:

- New projects or buildings developed on large parcels should form new blocks and streets that create a comfortable and walkable block size to help complete the network of streets (see Chapter 3, “Street Networks and Classifications”).
- Buildings should be sited to support good connectivity to the center or neighborhood destinations that are nearby.
- Buildings should be oriented to the street to promote sidewalk activity and provide eyes on the street for the safety and comfort of pedestrians.

- The design of the site should minimize disruptions of pedestrian ways, whether sidewalks or mid-block passageways (typically by limiting the number and width of driveways).
- All buildings should be sited with their primary entries and fronts along the sidewalk, to encourage access from the sidewalk and on-street parking on foot.
- The number of driveways should be limited and consolidated. They should be no wider than necessary and designed to allow motorists to see pedestrians on the sidewalk.
- Parking lots and service entrances should be located toward the rear of the lot, accommodating automobiles but making it comfortable for people to access the buildings on foot.
- Wherever buildings are not built immediately adjacent to the public sidewalk, a coherent network of pedestrian routes should extend into the property so that pedestrians approaching from the street can access each building without walking through vehicular drives and parking lots.
- In all cases, the building pattern within a block should be designed to form comfortable, habitable outdoor spaces that promote a “sense of place” and a unique local character. Each building belongs to an individual or a business—the “community” is what happens between the buildings.
- The impacts of building form and site design on the larger neighborhood or district environment should be taken into consideration. For example, storm water can be managed on private property to reduce demands on the street infrastructure (collection and percolation), poorly functioning irrigation systems can be corrected (to minimize water waste and unnecessary run-off to the street), and building forms can be designed to provide access to fresh air and sunlight to their occupants and passersby on the sidewalk.

Buildings' Relationship to Sidewalk

Each building directly interacts with the adjacent sidewalk on a micro level. The following provide guidance for designing buildings with sidewalks in mind:

- Buildings contribute to the overall character of the street by providing well-designed frontages and clear entry points from the sidewalk.
- For active mixed-use and commercial streets, building frontages should be mostly transparent with “active storefronts” that allow pedestrians to see into shops, restaurants, and public spaces.
- Along residential streets, building frontages should include windows overlooking the street with a layering of landscape, porch, patio, or semi-public space that buffers appropriately (setbacks will vary based on street typology and scale of the buildings).
- The primary building face should be located on the most active street frontage with an attractive and welcoming facade that includes entry doors, windows, signs, and other character-defining elements.
- The secondary building face that exists along a mid-block passage or side street should also include openings overlooking the public space.
- The tertiary (back) side of the building is located along a back alley or service drive where pedestrian movement is secondary to service, with loading docks, service entries, trash storage, and other unattractive functions accommodated here.
- Blank walls should be limited to the rear, and very limited along the secondary face.
- Lighting should be integrated into the building design to indirectly illuminate the sidewalk at night through (i) light filtering through storefront windows, and (ii) architectural lighting that features the building itself and enriches the street environment at night.

Appropriate Building Forms

Every building interacts with the street, so the details of key aspects of its form need careful consideration. The following provide building form design guidance:

- Building height, density, and setbacks are planned and designed to create a specific type of place that has a certain scale and character closely coordinated with the street typology.
- Building design standards should be developed to support a healthy street environment for pedestrians: for example, designing buildings to take into account how they interact with strong winds to create wind tunnels or unnecessarily restrict flows of natural light and air.
- On active mixed-use and commercial streets the design of the lower 3 to 4 floors should have an appropriate level of transparency and detail to support a great sidewalk environment for pedestrians.

Walkable Streets



Everything from the block size to the design of buildings and open spaces contributes to making walkable streets
(Credit: Cityworks Design)

- Buildings of 1 to 3 stories should be designed entirely at a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood scale, with features that can be appreciated by people walking or bicycling.
- Mid-height buildings of 4 to 6 stories should be designed at a pedestrian-oriented scale at the lower 2 to 3 floors and integrate windows, balconies, and other features that provide opportunities for occupants to overlook the street from upper floors.
- Taller buildings (over 6 stories) should generally have a base of lower floors designed similarly to those of mid-height buildings, and may benefit by stepping back from the frontage above this level to provide a street character that is not overwhelming to the pedestrian.
- In most mixed-use districts and neighborhood centers, it is more important to provide a relatively steady “street wall” to define a simple “street as an outdoor room” than to provide varied setback and stepbacks to “break up the mass” (see preceding section on streetscape environment types). In suburban environments where buildings stand free in the landscape, the desire to articulate the building form is understandable. But in urban districts and centers the primary placemaking role of buildings is to calmly define the space of the place rather than to “express themselves” as unique objects.
- Towers in very dense districts (like an urban center) should be slender and mostly transparent, with a low to mid-rise base that provides pedestrian-oriented features. Towers should be designed to appear attractive and approachable from the street and sidewalk, not just to be an icon in the skyline.
- Parking should be integrated into the site and building design; ideally parking would be (i) underground, or (ii) tucked behind the building fronting the sidewalk and accessible from an alley or side street, or (iii) sited internally to the project or block so buildings “wrap it” to the greatest degree possible
- Buildings should be designed applying universal access principles (like locating stairs in prominent locations to encourage people to use them) making naturally legible paths through good design and an integrated site and building design approach.



*Active ground floor uses
(Credit: Ryan Snyder)*

POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Tools available to help implement good urban and architectural design that support the creation of good streets and great places include the following:

- Community-based vision plans, which are critical agreements or road maps that articulate how communities see their streets, neighborhoods, districts, and future growth
- Zoning standards that allow, encourage, and require a diverse mix of land uses that support the creation of sustainable, valuable places
- Standards and guidelines associated with this type of zoning that shape and coordinate development with street design to ultimately deliver residents and stakeholders a fully realized vision that is authentic and unique to their community, and that supports a healthy, pedestrian-centered lifestyle



*Outdoor sidewalk social environment with activities for all ages: Venice, CA
(Credit: Dan Burden)*

HEALTH AND LAND USE

Good land use planning and urban design can help create healthy neighborhoods with great streets and innovative and sustainable buildings. Some planning principles that should be considered include the following:

- Create a variety of places where people choose to walk and feel safe doing so—walking is an important form of daily exercise than can easily be integrated into the design of communities

- Provide opportunities and incentives to create social environments in which all generations mix. These could include public or private facilities that accommodate both youth and senior activities, or planning development where adjacent uses allow different generations of the community to interact on a regular basis. By contrast, environments in which one must drive from one daily activity to the next systematically exclude the very young and the very old, who cannot drive and become “involuntary pedestrians” in environments designed for cars.
- Assure access to healthy foods and grocery stores; limit fast food establishments and allow drive-through service only in places where it is in the community’s best interests to have passersby shopping without turning off their engines
- Capture opportunities for farmers’ markets – ideally on streets or within public spaces that are central and part of the local neighborhood street network
- Look for underutilized public space to provide community gardens within neighborhoods, which will encourage gardening and social interaction and provide access to fresh produce
- Integrate exercise routes and equipment into the network of streets, or even within underutilized roadway space (for instance, expanding neighborhood parkways where parking can be sacrificed, or a striped section of roadway that isn’t being used by cars but could be adopted for use by people)
- Promote sustainable planning practices and building design that help to preserve the environment through energy efficient design. Allowing residents and visitors to access the buildings without driving is the foundation of energy efficient design
- Ensure complete bicycle networks and provide amenities within new projects to promote bicycling as appropriate to the scale of the project (bike racks, bike lockers, showers, or even a bicycle station)

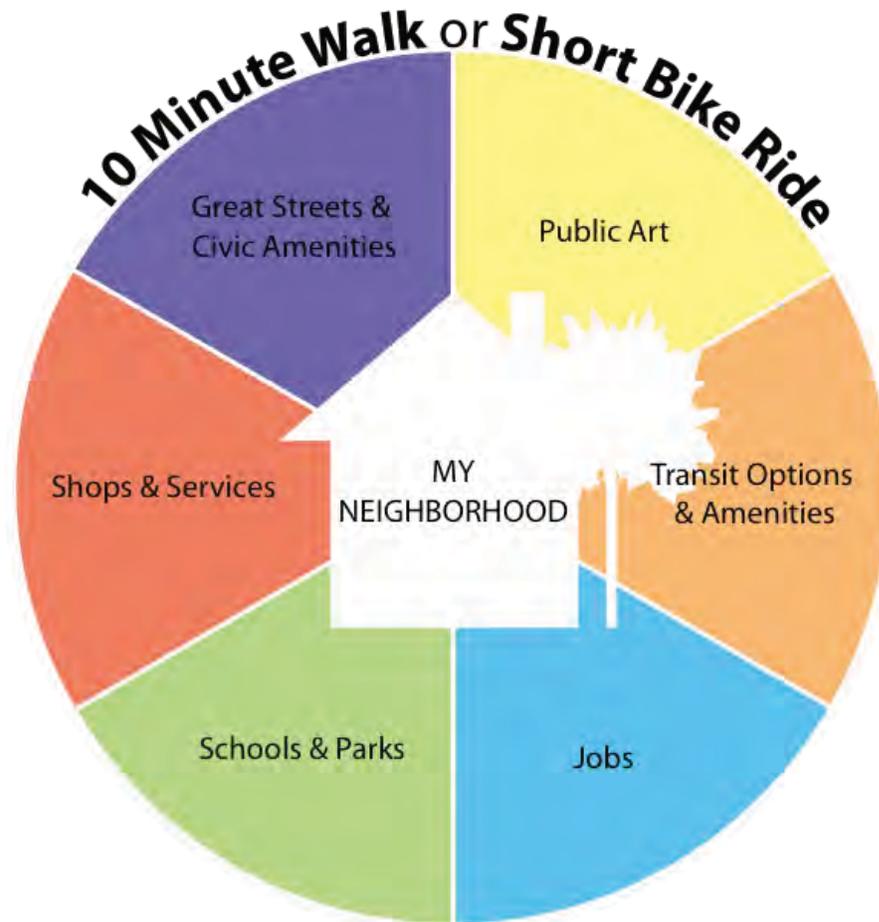


*New development should be planned to promote sustainable design and integrate gardens and open spaces that can be enjoyed by residents, or by pedestrians walking by
(Credit: Bridge Housing, David Baker Architects)*

BENCHMARKS

Good land use planning and urban and architectural design are best measured by how they complete the community's vision for the specific place, and how they enhance the daily lives of their residents and users. Other qualitative and quantitative metrics that could be used to evaluate their effectiveness include the following:

- Jobs within a 15-minute commute by public transportation, bicycle, or walking
- Convenience shopping within comfortable walking or biking distance
- A school or park that a child can walk to/from home
- Useful transit within a 10-minute walk from home and/or work
- Clear zoning standards or design guidelines that help assure planning and design will be implemented as envisioned by the community
- Increased land values coming from the effective melding of transit, land use, and design
- The creation of great streets or places that people want to spend time in or live near



Proximity of amenities in walkable neighborhood (Credit: Cityworks Design)