

2 Community Design Element

Introduction

Vision El Monte... a community of beauty, with greenways, stands of trees, and flowers; a sense of place, with distinct and well-designed neighborhoods and districts; a community defined by and linked to its rivers, schools, parks, and the downtown through attractive paths and streets—a destination.

CREATING GREAT PLACES

The Community Design Element is not a passive document, but rather a call to action to reinvent El Monte’s image and identity through tangible design improvements to its physical environment. El Monte’s goals are to:

- ***Create a distinct sense of place***—building and restoring places, districts, neighborhoods, and natural features that make El Monte a special and distinct community.
- ***Create a quality built environment***—ensuring architecture of lasting value and beauty in public, commercial, industrial, and residential areas throughout the community.
- ***Strengthen connections***—making and strengthening convenient, safe, and attractive links to El Monte’s schools, parks, neighborhoods, commercial areas, and rivers.
- ***Beautify the natural environment***—helping El Monte achieve its legacy of an attractive city of green spaces and trees while fostering better health with walkable streets, great parks, and accessible facilities.



Creating Great Places

El Monte is creating great places to work, relax, and live in the community.

PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

El Monte realizes that it must act now to affect its future identity. The City aspires to recapture its rich legacy through the built environment, and the Community Design Element is best suited to guide this goal. The Community Design Element reflects the importance placed on shaping community identity through carefully guided public and private development. Although not required by state law, the City believes a solid Community Design Element sets an important precedent and serves as a guide for how to improve the physical design and appearance of El Monte.

The Community Design Element's primary intent is to establish citywide policy guidance on how to improve the built and natural environment and, secondarily, to provide more specific policy guidance for districts. The Community Design Element serves as the policy foundation for the City's project review process and as a guidance document for all design-related planning efforts. It is meant as a reference for decision makers, planners, architects, builders, and residents to understand how the different parts of the City work together to achieve its overall image and identity.

RELATED PLANS AND PROGRAMS

The Community Design Element is closely related to other elements of the General Plan. For instance, the Community Design Element examines how the urban form policies in the Land Use Element, the circulation patterns established by the Circulation Element, and the parks and open space elements in the Park and Recreation Element fit together to create a unified image and design for El Monte. The Community Design Element provides a framework for understanding the different districts and parts of El Monte and linking them together into a coherent whole.

As the General Plan is a policy document, the Community Design Element is implemented through more detailed residential and nonresidential design guidelines and specifications—architectural standards, landscape palettes, urban forestry plans, and streetscape improvement plans that provide guidance for the preferred design of buildings, landscaping, streetscapes, and public spaces. These implementation measures must be consistent with the goals and policies in the Community Design Element and are included as key General Plan implementation programs.

EL MONTE SPEAKS

The City El Monte is a community of great pride, multiple identities, and diverse land uses. At the hub of the San Gabriel Valley and accessible from two major freeways, it is one of the area's most established communities. In the 1950s and 1960s the San Gabriel Valley, including El Monte, experienced significant housing, commercial, and industrial growth. The rapid growth experienced during this time replaced much of the City's rural and historical fabric (agriculture, barrios, historical structures, etc.).

Nevertheless, El Monte's community assets are many. The City boasts an Emerald Necklace of rivers, quality neighborhoods, a historic Downtown, burgeoning office and industrial parks, a vibrant cultural center, and other destinations. El Monte also has a rich culture and history unique to cities in the San Gabriel Valley. It is therefore essential to strengthen El Monte's design and acknowledge its heritage to help achieve the City's vision to be a ...

...vibrant and safe community that respects its historical and cultural diversity and strives to provide a high quality of life through well-designed neighborhoods...park and recreational amenities...and a healthy environment.

City outreach efforts helped identify what residents regard as the most important community design issues. Foremost among their ideas was a simple and powerful message—make El Monte a special place of beauty. These efforts, along with extensive interviews with City staff and officials, produced many community design goals, most notably:

- A beautiful City with extensive trees, open spaces, landscaping, and safe and well-maintained parks.
- Attractive commercial arterials with consistent landscaping, signage, and street furniture that add to the beauty of the community.
- Well-maintained residential neighborhoods with guidelines for compatible development and pedestrian amenities.
- Well-landscaped pedestrian connections to schools, parks, and retail centers that are safe for families and individuals of all ages and abilities.
- Detailed architecture that combines the best of the City's historical and contemporary design.
- A vibrant, attractive downtown with convenient access, comfortable amenities, and a variety of activities.



Statue of Liberty

The Statue of Liberty and the World War II Memorial stand proudly at City Hall.

Community Design Context

COMMUNITY DESIGN FEATURES

El Monte’s community design encompasses its total built environment—its buildings, public spaces, neighborhoods, and streetscapes—and how they relate to one another to create a distinctive identity. This section identifies key design elements in El Monte that provide a foundation for goals, policies, and programs to improve community design in El Monte.

Landmarks

Visually prominent buildings, special geographic features, architectural themes, historic structures, and important cultural centers establish a special sense of place in a community. Important design considerations for landmarks include preservation, views, and access. El Monte’s major landmarks include the Santa Fe Trail Park, the Statue of Liberty, the Community Center/Historical Society Museum, Gay’s Lion Farm Monuments, the El Monte Water Tower, and many others.

Post–World War II suburbanization erased much of the physical remnants of El Monte’s past. In a City where historical and cultural heritage lives more in the memories of its people than in its urban fabric, the City must assume a leadership role in cultural and historical resource preservation. The City has the unique privilege to acknowledge and embody important remnants of this legacy, preserving remaining historical features, and setting up a mechanism to ensure that future resources are preserved.

Corridors and Paths

El Monte’s corridors and paths are vital to the way its people view and interact with their environment. Traversed by major highways, El Monte’s identity has been profoundly influenced by infrastructure. The City’s main north and south corridors are Peck Road, Tyler Avenue, Santa Anita Avenue, and Durfee Road. Major east and west roads are Garvey Avenue, Ramona Boulevard, and Lower Azusa Road. With its many neighborhoods, districts, and commercial centers, connections are of great importance.

The Community Design Element seeks to establish, improve, or complete a well-defined series of connections in the City. Residents must be able to walk easily and safely to schools, parks, and other neighborhood amenities. There should be connections between residential areas, the Downtown, employment and recreation centers. The City’s Emerald Necklace is an important cornerstone of the City’s network of multi-use trails and paths.



Gay’s Lion Landmark

El Monte’s landmarks, such as the Gay’s lion pictured above, are a memorable reflection of its diverse and colorful past.

Employment Districts

El Monte contains different employment districts, each with its own special characteristics due to location, historical character, economic role, and other attributes. Whether they are historic districts, business parks, or downtowns, these employment districts serve specific purposes and add variety and identity to El Monte. El Monte’s major nonresidential districts are the Downtown, Auto District, Flair Park, Northwest Industrial Area, and major commercial anchors/centers throughout the community.

The Community Design Element intends to help enhance the identity, beauty, and access to these areas to achieve economic, aesthetic, recreation, and cultural goals of El Monte. In residential areas where neighborhood centers do not exist, the goal is to create centers built around joint-use park/school sites that offer education, recreation, and community services. In commercial and industrial areas, the goal is to utilize design principles to maximize economic activity, pedestrian access, and sustainability. This element also supports a revitalized and vibrant downtown.

Residential Neighborhoods

Residential neighborhoods are a fundamental part of the City and their condition defines residents’ quality of life and public perception of El Monte. Each neighborhood is differentiated by architecture, culture, history, development patterns, and housing types. Some contain historic features that harken to El Monte’s past. The Community Design Element identifies the City’s distinct neighborhoods as Downtown, Mountain View, Norwood-Cherrylee, Arden Village, Park El Monte, and River East.

Recognizing the importance of the City’s neighborhoods, the Community Design Element sets forth goals to address neighborhood design and enhance their identity. Policies are identified to address neighborhood scale, the creation of an activity center in each neighborhood, and improvement of streetscapes, parks, and open space. The element also focuses on general principles of single-family, multiple-family, and mixed-use residential projects from which design guidelines can be drafted.

Architecture

The City of El Monte has a range of architectural styles and influences. Several neighborhoods contain intact examples of early 1900s revival styles, such as Spanish Colonial and Craftsman bungalows. Its commercial areas feature a visually diverse range of post-World War II functional architecture with relatively few significant historic buildings. With this diverse architectural base, the City does not impose a particular style or design theme, nor is one particular style desired or practical.



Historical Museum

The Historical Museum, next to the community center in the cultural district, is a visual reminder of the area’s Spanish colonial era.

Residents have expressed the need for architectural guidelines emphasizing the principles of sustainability, durability, aesthetic quality, functionality, and context sensitivity. The application and weight of each principle differs depending on the type of development (residential, commercial, or industrial). The Community Design Element provides policy guidance for building designs that promotes architecture of lasting value and beauty in public, commercial, and residential areas.

Activity Nodes and Centers

Activity nodes and centers are concentrations of uses that provide vibrancy, convenience, and variety for residents, visitors, and businesses. The Downtown contains several activity centers, including the cultural center, Aquatic Center, governmental center, Main Street, auto dealers, Metrolink station, and transit station. Activity centers outside the Downtown include Five Points and other scattered areas in El Monte.

Each of these activity nodes and centers serves a variety of roles in the community: economic, recreational, social, transportation, and cultural. The City's overarching design goal is to make each of these activity centers and nodes more visible, accessible, attractive, and distinct and to give people a range of shopping, work, recreation, cultural, and other activities. This element will provide general policies to address these concerns, while other elements of this General Plan (e.g., Parks and Recreation and Economic Development) will focus on particular activity nodes.

Edges and Boundaries

The City of El Monte is framed by the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers—once prominent natural rivers that fed marshes and lush riparian woodland. These rivers have long ago been replaced by regional flood control channels by the Army Corps of Engineers. The City's response has been to soften these edges, re-creating the Emerald Necklace through landscaping, linear parks, and multi-use trails. The goal is to create network of parks of local, regional, and statewide significance in El Monte.

As the hub of San Gabriel Valley, El Monte is also defined by its roadways, freeways, and railroads. Interstate 605 frames the eastern end of El Monte, while Interstate 10 divides the city in half. The Southern Pacific Railroad also bisects the city into north and south. This Element contains policies for smoother transitions between land uses along freeways and railroads. The goal is to define city boundaries and transition areas, soften hard edges, and provide buffers between incompatible uses.

Figure CD-1 presents the City's policy plan for community design.



Aquatic Center

The City of El Monte Aquatic Center, in the cultural district, is a highly visited activity node for residents and visitors of all ages.



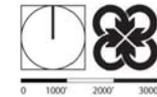
River Channels

El Monte will work to beautify its edges through the design and implementation of Emerald Necklace projects.



Figure CD-1 Community Design Policy Plan

-  Emerald Necklace
-  Primary City Gateway
-  Corridor Enhancement
-  Enhanced Intersection
-  Proposed Neighborhood Center
-  Airport
-  Civic Center
-  Transit Station
-  Activity Node



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Goals and Policies

This section sets forth community design goals at the city, district, and neighborhood level. The first five goals address how to set El Monte apart from neighboring cities by setting policies to promote community-wide design. The next three goals focus on improving key commercial districts in El Monte—the Downtown, Flair Park, and Northwest Industrial District. The final goal area addresses how to improve the design of neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Creating a distinct community identity is fundamental for El Monte. This can have many different meanings, each reflecting individual perceptions regarding neighborhoods, safety, aesthetics, parks, and other amenities. Although El Monte’s identity means different things to different people, it is shaped by common influences. Some of the more notable influences are its people, their history and cultures, the physical and natural environment, and the City’s collective vision of the future.

El Monte’s identity dates back to the Tongva, who were sustained by the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Rivers. Later Spanish settlements, pioneers, and a thriving agricultural industry defined its 19th and 20th century and was the impetus for its diverse population. Rapid industrialization and suburbanization, including the channeling of the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers and construction of its transportation infrastructure, has left its imprint on El Monte. Today, the City’s image is uniquely diverse.

To shape a new identity for El Monte, the General Plan Vision builds on the core strength of the community—its people and their commitment. The General Plan seeks, through the implementation of a wide variety of physical and governance improvements, to create a vibrant and safe city that respects its historical and cultural diversity and strives to provide a high quality of life through well-designed neighborhoods, parks and recreational amenities, and a healthy environment.

El Monte is forging a unified community identity by restoring key features of its past, revitalizing strategic areas, and positioning itself for the next twenty years. The City will draw upon its multiple strengths to enhance its image and identity—its indigenous roots, pioneer spirit, agricultural heritage, suburban growth, and environmental legacy. These efforts are intended to revive and improve El Monte’s unique identity and image to residents, visitors, and the business community.



El Monte Logo

The City logo represents the historical journey undertaken by pioneers and multicultural influences of people who settled in El Monte.

Goal CD-1

An attractive and unified community identity for El Monte that affirms its diverse heritage of multicultural influences, physical and natural environment, and collective vision for the future.

Policies

- CD-1.1 **Vision.** Incorporate El Monte’s vision in civic buildings, streetscapes, and public areas to provide clarity for policymakers, and communicate it to the broader public.
- CD-1.2 **Gateways and Signs.** Continue the City’s gateway monument and sign program at primary and secondary entrances to El Monte to heighten the sense of arrival to the community.
- CD-1.3 **City Logo.** Incorporate the City logo and symbolic references to El Monte’s historical and cultural resources on public buildings and in parks, bus stops, and community centers.
- CD-1.4 **Public Signage.** Update street signs and continue the banner program to capture the City’s image, provide visual interest and variety, beautify its streets, and denote the Emerald Necklace.
- CD-1.5 **Streetscapes.** Develop unifying streetscape plans for major corridors and subdistricts that include specialized streetlights, landscaping, a community forest, signage, and street furniture.
- CD-1.6 **Public Art.** Throughout the community, incorporate a diversity of public art in residential, commercial, and public areas that celebrates the multiple cultures and influences in El Monte.
- CD-1.7 **Identity.** Support the creation of highly differentiated identities for residential, commercial, and industrial areas that support the eclectic physical environment of the community.
- CD-1.8 **Emerald Necklace.** Recreate the Emerald Necklace of multi-use trails and parks along the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo rivers to provide parks, open space, and recreational amenities.
- CD-1.9 **Marketing.** Promote coherent and consistent identity, values, and ethics to City residents, businesses, visitors, and the larger region that defines El Monte’s unique role in San Gabriel Valley.



Street Trees

Consistently spaced trees along streets, such as pictured above, beautify City arterials and create a unified image.

COMMERCIAL STREETSCAPES

El Monte has often been referred to as “the end of the Santa Fe Trail.” The City has always been a place of passage and a destination and its landscape is defined by its transportation infrastructure. Commercial corridors are one of the most prominent features traversing the community. The condition of the streetscape—its signs, landscaping, lighting, and other aspects—define the image and identity of El Monte. What better way, then, to strengthen community identity than to beautify commercial roadways?

In creating a positive image of the city, El Monte must address:

- **Corridor Identity.** The City can enhance the identity of well-known arterials through a thematic approach recognizing its contemporary and historical role. Valley Boulevard is the historic spine of the City; Ramona Boulevard was a corridor for the Red-Line Cable Cars; Santa Anita Avenue affords some of the City’s best views; and Tyler Avenue links the Downtown to the cultural center.
- **Functional Needs.** Although the auto dominates many roads, many El Monte residents and workers walk to school, work, or shopping and desire a more pleasant street environment. Completing sidewalks and crosswalks, ensuring that walkways can accommodate people of all abilities, providing shade trees, installing quality street furniture, and other projects will create a more positive experience for users.
- **Public Landscaping.** Public landscaping and trees can soften the hardscape of commercial corridors and, if properly designed, invoke El Monte’s image and heritage as a wooded place. However, the majority of corridors lack consistency and quality of green infrastructure. Proper landscaping should take into account roadway function, its characteristics, desired visual image, and maintenance requirements.
- **Signage and Lighting.** El Monte’s streets are dotted with signs and lighting of varying shapes, sizes, and quality. While signage and lighting fulfills a vital informational role, unregulated signs clutter streetscapes and are a blighting influence. Moreover, signs and lighting should be sensitive to their intended use, with careful consideration of height, placement, materials, colors, and consistency.

This Element seeks to improve the image of its commercial corridors through a comprehensive streetscape program. The following goals and policies establish the framework to build on historical and contemporary qualities of each corridor and institute capital improvements necessary to transform the image of El Monte’s commercial corridors. In this way, major arterials will present an attractive and unified image of El Monte.



Commercial Streetscape

Sign regulation, street trees, street lights, and undergrounding of utilities would greatly improve the visual quality of many commercial corridors.

Goal CD-2

Attractive commercial corridors exemplified by consistency of hardscape, landscaping, signage, sidewalks, and other treatments appropriate to their context to foster a pleasant driving and pedestrian experience.

Policies

Corridor Identity

- CD-2.1 **Streetscape Intent.** Balance the achievement of the functional, design, pedestrian, and aesthetics goals and policies for commercial corridors as set forth in the Circulation and Parks and Recreation Elements.
- CD-2.2 **Streetscape Design.** Incorporate unifying and consistent elements for major arterials—landscaped parkways and medians, regularly spaced street trees, distinctive street lighting and furniture, and quality and appropriately scaled signage.
- CD-2.3 **Corridor Themes.** Cultivate a recognition and appreciation of the City’s history in its major commercial corridors named after founders and important individuals in the history of El Monte, through a public banner and sign program.

Functional Purposes

- CD-2.4 **Roadway Capacity.** Ensure that roadways are appropriately sized with adequate traffic management devices to allow for the smooth and safe flow of traffic consistent with the function and performance standards set forth by the Circulation Element.
- CD-2.5 **Corridor Driveways.** Consolidate driveways and access points, wherever feasible, along commercial corridors to improve traffic flow, and safety of user, and allow for coordinated improvements to the streetscape.
- CD-2.6 **Pedestrian Design.** Improve pedestrian safety and comfort along major corridors by incorporating wider sidewalks, appropriate landscape buffers and canopy trees, and other pedestrian amenities to facilitate a walkable street environment.
- CD-2.7 **Corridor Function.** Support the functional classification of roadways as identified in the Circulation Element by requiring appropriate design treatments for each classification.

Public Landscaping

- CD-2.8 **Landscaping.** Beautify corridors through specialized landscape palettes tailored to different roadway configurations. Require the incorporation of street trees of sufficient size, canopy, and diversity along roadways.
- CD-2.9 **Enhanced Intersections.** Provide appropriate landscaping coverage and other design enhancements at major intersections (e.g., Valley Boulevard and Santa Anita) to denote critical intersections or entry points into districts.
- CD-2.10 **Landscaped Medians.** Provide medians with landscaping where the right-of-way exists; where it does not exist, condition the improvement of projects on the provision of right-of-way.

Signage and Lighting

- CD-2.11 **Regulation.** Beautify corridors by regulating the appearance and placement of commercial signs, billboards, and utility lines, and removing or consolidating other distracting appurtenances wherever feasible to present a unified corridor image.
- CD-2.12 **Public Signage.** Establish a comprehensive signage plan that identifies City entries, street names, public facilities, parks, multi-use trails, transit stations, and key districts.
- CD-2.13 **Context Sensitivity.** Require appropriately scaled signs based on different uses—clean monument signage for commercial centers; informational signs for roadways; and smaller-scale, customized, pedestrian-oriented signs for districts.
- CD-2.14 **Sign Quality.** Prohibit signs that incorporate blinking or flashing elements, pole structures, roof signs, or temporary lettering or structures; require the use of high quality materials, complementary colors, and nondistracting lighting.
- CD-2.15 **Telecommunications.** Regulate the development, operation, and maintenance of wireless facilities to ensure such facilities promote aesthetically innovative designs, are appropriately located to protect visual character and viewsheds, and prevent the emergence and proliferation of visual blight within the City.



Rio Vista Park

Rock clusters at Rio Vista Park evoke the former natural state of the Rio Hondo River.

PUBLIC LANDSCAPING

El Monte's name derives from its legacy as a meadow and wooded place. The San Gabriel River and Rio Hondo River flowing from the mountains fed marshes and provided habitat for rich riparian woodland. However, today much of El Monte's greenery consists of nonnative species. Restoring some of this original natural environment and integrating it into the modern suburban landscape of El Monte is therefore a key goal.

Opportunities for public landscaping and greening El Monte are numerous. El Monte can beautify its public rights-of-way, parks, and streetscapes. The beauty of public landscaping lies in its diversity and potential for enhancing community design. It can be decorative, as in landscaped medians and gateways; functional, as in providing shady canopy trees; and symbolic, as in the choice of historical or indigenous species. El Monte is working actively to update and improve its landscaping program, and has developed various streetscape improvement programs along major arterials.

Highlighted in the Parks and Recreation Element, the City of El Monte will address the following components in recreating a green environment:

- **Greenways.** Develop green parkways and medians that line major corridors, offer potential for walking and bicycling, and link residences to parks, schools, and other community destinations.
- **Community Forest.** Create a lush community forest along public rights-of-way, within neighborhoods, and elsewhere to filter air pollutants, provide shade, and beautify the city.
- **Parks.** Create a network of community and neighborhood parks throughout each neighborhood to beautify neighborhoods and offer opportunities for recreation.
- **Community Garden.** Plant community gardens, where feasible, that offer opportunities to plant vegetables, fruits, and flowers and foster neighborhood interaction.
- **Linear Parks.** Create the Emerald Necklace of linear parks, open space, water resources, and recreational resources along the banks of the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers.

Within the above context, the following goal and policies are designed to encourage and require public landscaping, to the extent possible, to create a more livable, beautiful, and healthy environment for residents.

Goal CD-3

A green City with beautifully landscaped corridors, residential streets, commercial areas, developments, and public areas that are symbolically and physically encircled by an Emerald Necklace of parks and open space.

Policies

- CD-3.1 **Public Rights-of-Way.** Beautify major transportation corridors, freeway easements, utility easements, railroad rights-of-way, schools, parks, and public facilities with a forest of canopy trees.
- CD-3.2 **Trees.** Incorporate indigenous trees and native plants in selected areas, such as parks and along the Emerald Necklace, as visual reminders of the City's heritage and natural environment.
- CD-3.3 **Landscape Design.** Develop specialized landscape and design treatments for key entryways, intersections, parks, districts and neighborhoods, and public areas where feasible.
- CD-3.4 **Greenways.** Place greenways/medians, dotted with miniparks where feasible, and appropriate landscaping along major corridors and in commercial areas and residential neighborhoods.
- CD-3.5 **Corridor Themes.** Adopt landscape themes for major corridors that give special identity to the role, function, and history of each major corridor, soften hardscape, and reinforce the City's image.
- CD-3.6 **Emerald Necklace.** Create an Emerald Necklace of multi-use trails and parks along the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers that offer ample greenery, trees, and open space.
- CD-3.7 **Public Parks.** Develop a network of community and neighborhood parks within each residential neighborhood, with smaller green areas in commercial and industrial areas.
- CD-3.8 **Private Developments.** Require new residential developments, both single and multiple-family housing, to beautify properties with ample greenery and provide for continued maintenance.
- CD-3.9 **Public Agencies.** Encourage public agencies (e.g., schools, government, etc.) to beautify and green their landscape areas to set positive examples to residents and the business community and instill civic pride.

ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY

El Monte realizes that great buildings reflect lasting quality and design. Architectural quality helps define the perception of the community by residents, businesses, and visitors. Too often in the past, projects were approved without the guidance of agreed-upon design principles, resulting in projects that have not withstood the test of time. Because of this, residents, policymakers, and businesses have expressed a strong desire to establish architectural guidelines to ensure quality development.

For this reason, the City's goal is to encourage high-quality architecture through adherence to the following principles.

- ***Quality Materials.*** Building materials should be high quality and natural materials, such as stucco, plaster, stone, and wood surfaces. Housing should not have reflective glass, glossy surfaces, or poor imitation materials.
- ***Durability.*** Materials and design of structures should be highly durable (without sacrificing aesthetics) and be capable to withstand weather, use, and time.
- ***History.*** Building construction should consider thoughtful integration of historical elements that have shown durability and are positively acknowledged by the community.
- ***Aesthetics.*** Structural appearance should incorporate thoughtful, aesthetically pleasing design in rooflines, facades, entryways, building orientation, and site layout.
- ***Functionality.*** Buildings must be designed in a manner to fulfill functional needs, whether of housing, business, or industry, including size of units, parking needs, and other accommodations.
- ***Sustainability.*** Structures should be of a sustainable design, with attention to resource conservation or reuse, energy conservation, water efficiency, and other practices.

Quality architecture, by itself, does not create quality neighborhoods, commercial, or industrial districts. Site layout of individual properties, the street design and relationship of the building to the street, landscaping of properties, and other design considerations are important. Nonetheless, requiring quality architecture does set a precedent that the City is committed to improving the aesthetics of the community. The following goal and policies help define general principles of design. Subsequent sections address design issues for specific subareas of the community.

Goal CD-4

High-quality architectural design of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings evidenced by thoughtful attention and balance of quality materials, durability, aesthetics, functionality, and sustainability concepts.

Policies

- CD-4.1 **Building Materials.** Use high-quality, natural building materials, such as stucco, plaster, stone, and wood surfaces for residential structures, and clean, distinctive materials for nonresidential uses.
- CD-4.2 **Building Scale.** Reduce the bulk and perceived size of larger buildings by dividing their mass into smaller parts, stepping down to adjacent structures, and using pedestrian-scale features.
- CD-4.3 **Massing.** Discourage single-plane massing by incorporating a variety of rooflines, articulated wall planes, and multiple forward and recessed walls.
- CD-4.4 **Architectural Detail.** Ensure all sides of a building contain a high level of architectural detail and façade articulation, strong patterns of shade and shadow, and integrated architectural detail.
- CD-4.5 **Sustainability.** Encourage “green building” and environmentally sustainable design concepts with respect to energy conservation, water conservation, storm drainage, etc.
- CD-4.6 **Rooflines.** Require rooflines of varied elevations and finished and refined terminations (e.g., cornice, pediment, etc.) suited to the use of the building.
- CD-4.7 **Landscaping.** Require lush and well-maintained landscaping appropriate the structure and its use and context in a manner that meets community expectations for quality.
- CD-4.8 **Parking and Garages.** Parking and garages should be designed to fulfill their function without detracting from the aesthetic quality of the building face viewed by the public.
- CD-4.9 **Utilitarian Aspects.** Mechanical equipment, electrical boxes, fencing, and other utilitarian aspects should be shielded so as not to detract from the aesthetic quality of the building or site.

DOWNTOWN EL MONTE

El Monte’s Downtown has always been its heart and the gateway to the region. In the late 1800s, Valley Boulevard was the only road and served as the Butterfield Stagecoach stop between Los Angeles and San Bernardino. This early main street gradually evolved into an outdoor shopping district. Today, the Downtown encompasses an area of 200 acres, bordered by the Rio Hondo River, Interstate 10, and Valley Boulevard.

The El Monte Downtown today contains five subdistricts that serve distinct functions—civic, business, transit, residential, or other uses.

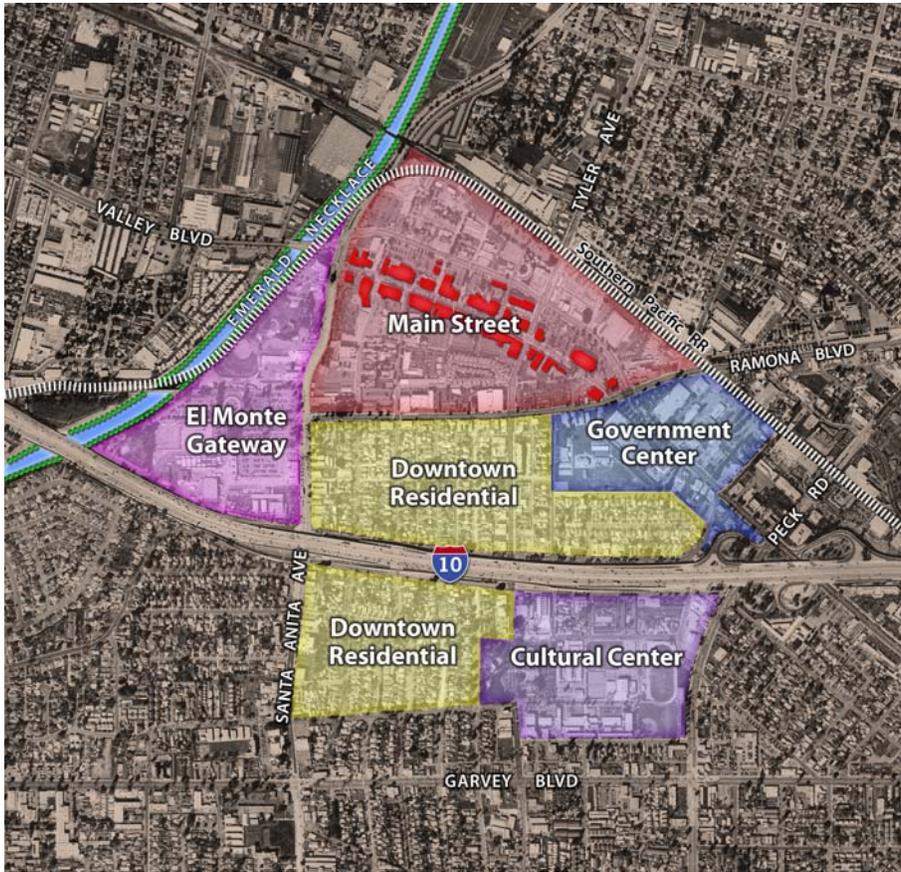


Downtown Amenities

The El Monte Downtown provides diverse park, recreational, transit, historic, and cultural amenities for residents.

- **Government Center.** The government center is the eastern gateway to the Downtown and serves as the governmental core of El Monte. This area is anchored by the El Monte City Hall offices, Los Angeles County Superior Court, educational uses, and police station. Other governmental and public uses also extend into other districts.
- **Main Street.** Main Street covers an area bounded by the railroad tracks, Santa Anita Boulevard, and Ramona Boulevard. The subdistrict is anchored by a traditional outdoor shopping street. With several blocks of street-facing frontage and tree-lined sidewalks, it connects the civic center to the transit station.
- **Cultural District.** The cultural district is the heart of the community and is home to the El Monte Community Center, Historic Society Museum, Jack Crippen Senior Center, Aquatic Center, Tony Arceo Memorial Park, and El Monte High School. It is a well-known place for street fairs, concerts, and community gatherings.
- **Neighborhoods.** The Downtown has an eclectic mix of housing projects and small distinct neighborhoods, south of Ramona Boulevard or along Tyler Avenue north of Downtown. The fabric of this area is well established, but could benefit from common design treatments, housing rehabilitation programs, and infrastructure improvements.
- **El Monte Gateway.** The El Monte Gateway Project is a groundbreaking effort to create a 60-acre, regionally significant, mixed-use community that integrates public transit, housing, parks and open space, retail, business, and entertainment. The El Monte Gateway will be a key activity center, linked with the Emerald Necklace.

What makes Downtown El Monte a special place to live, work, and play is its eclectic environment and unique subdistricts, each of which has a symbiotic relationship with the other subdistricts. Residential neighborhoods provide a customer and job base for the Downtown. The following graphic illustrates the location of each subdistrict.



As expressed in the Land Use Element, Downtown El Monte is to be the mixed-use, mixed-income, cultural heart of El Monte that epitomizes pride and opportunity. Its historical role is augmented by new housing, retail, office, parks, and cultural facilities. The Downtown takes advantage of transit-oriented development. The population is diverse, the architecture is human-scaled, and the character is authentic to El Monte.

Downtown El Monte needs a more unified design to reach its potential. The following goal and policies address tangible ways, from a design perspective, to enhance the vibrancy and character of the Downtown.

Goal CD-5

A vibrant Downtown that is an attractive, accessible and pedestrian friendly center noted for its wide range of quality shopping, entertainment, and cultural and recreational amenities.

Policies

District Identity

CD-5.1 **District Identity.** Distinguish the El Monte Downtown in its character, physical appearance, and role by considering edge and entry treatment, architecture, landscape, streetscape, and comparable elements.

CD-5.2 **Subdistrict Identity.** Recognize and affirm, through specialized design treatment as may be further defined by a Downtown Specific Plan, the following subdistricts:

- Governmental Center
- Main Street
- El Monte Gateway
- Residential District
- Cultural Center

CD-5.3 **Cultural Resources.** Incorporate the City's heritage in the Downtown design plans in many expressions. Use the cultural resources inventory to start identifying, recognizing, and celebrating El Monte's heritage. Examples include:

- Monuments
- Historic sites
- Infrastructure
- Natural features

CD-5.4 **Entry Statements.** Establish highly visible entry statements, specialized pavement colorings, and lush landscaping at key intersections and entries to the Downtown, such as Santa Anita Avenue/Valley Boulevard Tyler Avenue/Ramona Boulevard, and other locations to heighten the sense of arrival into Downtown.

CD-5.5 **Public Art.** Beautify the El Monte Downtown with public and private art (e.g., murals, statues, fountains, monuments, gateways) that reflects El Monte's heritage; involve public, private, and nonprofit organizations in a public art program.



Public Art

Public art, such as the mural above, can enhance the identity of a district by reflecting El Monte's heritage, beautifying public places, and creating visual interest.

Circulation

CD-5.6 **Linkages.** Establish a stronger link between the cultural center, Main Street, transit district, governmental center, and surrounding neighborhoods of the El Monte Downtown by incorporating unifying streetscape improvements along key roadways, an interconnected and coordinated system of walkways, and improvements to the Emerald Necklace of multi-use trails.

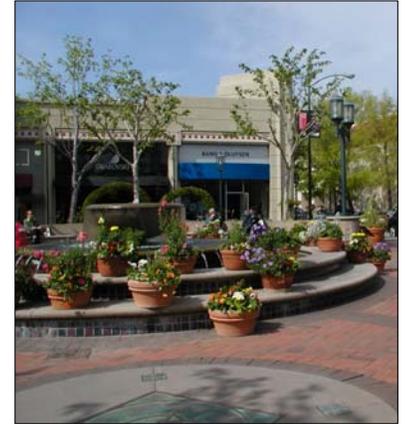
CD-5.7 **Streetscape.** Develop a comprehensive streetscape improvement plan that uniquely defines the Downtown El Monte experience, improves the pedestrian experience, and helps make it a special place. Incorporate:

- Street landscape—parkways and planters along sidewalk frontages, with the highest intensity in core pedestrian areas.
- Street trees—different street trees to denote the Downtown, provide shade for walking, and beautify the streetscape.
- Sidewalk and crosswalk improvements—distinctive paving materials or treatment and sidewalk pullouts at intersections.
- Street furniture—consistent use of well-designed benches, trash receptacles, newsracks, and other pedestrian amenities.
- Lighting—pedestrian-oriented lighting fixtures (low height and intensity) in primary pedestrian areas.
- Signage—common graphic design with a unique logo to identify the Downtown.
- Public art—installations (murals, ground paintings, sculptures, banners, etc.) throughout the Downtown.

CD-5.8 **Gathering Places.** Design plazas along Main Street and other gathering places in suitable locations throughout Downtown, considering:

- Ample seating space and outdoor dining.
- Proximity to and visibility to and from the street.
- Central focal point such as public art or a fountain.
- Combinations of sun and shade.
- Accessibility for all age groups and abilities.
- Public space framed by surrounding buildings.

CD-5.9 **Pedestrian Plan.** Create a Downtown pedestrian master plan, as specified in the Circulation Element, which is designed to improve the walking experience of pedestrians, shoppers, and residents. The plan should provide well-defined pathways with ample pedestrian amenities and wayfaring signage to encourage walking.



Gathering Places

Gathering places, oriented around public art, a fountain, or square, lend a domestic flavor to commercial areas.

Architecture

CD-5.10 Mixed-Use Projects. Pursuant to a Downtown Specific Plan, require that mixed-use projects convey a high level of architectural, design, and landscape quality as follows:

- Design and incorporation of elements to avoid conflicts among functions, such as noise and lighting.
- Visual and physical integration and coherency of the commercial and residential uses in the project.
- Architectural treatment of building elevations and visible sides of structures, and modulation of their massing.
- Incorporation of separate and well-defined entries for commercial uses and residential units.
- Design of parking areas and facilities to be placed behind the structures and integrated with the building use.
- Incorporation of extensive landscaping, where feasible, to soften hardscape and present a domestic living environment.
- Incorporate different architectural styles, variety of rooflines, wall articulation, balconies, window treatments, and varied colors and quality materials on all elevations.



Vertical Mixed/Multiuse

Vertical mixed/multiuse housing in downtown El Monte can improve retail sales, increase street activity, and contribute to a positive downtown environment.

FLAIR PARK

Flair Park has a storied past in El Monte, the original site of a World War II airfield and named after the cable address of Fletcher Aviation. The park originally was intended for industry and commerce. With its strategic location along Interstate 10, mountain views, and vast land assets, Flair Park has evolved into the City’s professional office district. Wells Fargo, Cathay Bank, East West Bank, Wells Fargo, Chinese Cultural Center, and Los Angeles County have all rediscovered the park.

Since its earliest beginnings, El Monte has served as a gateway into the Los Angeles region, where immigrants traveled long distances and settled at the end of the Santa Fe Trail. El Monte’s role as a gateway city and burgeoning influence in the region continues with the arrival of banking/finance, cultural, and institutional uses that span the Pacific Ocean.



Flair Park Today

Flair Park today contains a mixed of professional office, industrial, and commercial uses flanking the freeway.

Flair Park is to be El Monte’s professional and financial district. It will be identifiable by the agglomeration of mid- and high-rise office buildings fronting Interstate 10, adorned with the logos of the area’s most prominent corporate residents. Flanked with signature architecture and iconic skyline, Flair Park will be denoted by its modern architectural design, business amenities, and efficient access to transportation resources. The Flair Park Specific Plan will support the long-term development and design of El Monte’s professional and financial district center.

Pursuant to an adopted Specific Plan to guide the orderly development and highest and best use, Flair Park will have several key districts, described and illustrated below.

- ***Finance Row.*** The freeway frontage that spans the length of the park will be home to major financial institutions—Cathay Bank, Wells Fargo, East West Bank, etc. This frontage will present a striking iconic skyline to Interstate 10.
- ***Gateway District.*** At the convergence of Rosemead Boulevard and the Rio Hondo River, the gateway district will signal entry into Flair Park, with low- to mid-rise buildings transitioning to the high-rise frontage and soaring view of the mountains.
- ***Riverfront District.*** Flanking the southern edge of the park will be the riverfront district, an area occupied by smaller-scale land uses that provide a transition from the residential areas south of the river to the more intense office uses within Flair Park.
- ***Hospitality District.*** The hospitality district will anchor the eastern edge of the district, providing rooms for corporate visitors to have short or extended stays, supporting international business activity and conferences, and further denoting Flair’s skyline.



Flair Park Concept

Flair Park's four districts are finance row (colored red), gateway (orange), riverfront blue), and hospitality row (yellow). The placement of buildings and parks within the park do not denote a preferred land use plan.

Goal CD-6

The international finance district of the San Gabriel Valley, denoted by its iconic skyline, parks and natural amenities, and highly-amenitized working and living environment that builds on its strengths in finance, banking, government, and institutional uses.

Policies

District Identity

CD-6.1 **District Identity.** Distinguish Flair Park in its character, physical appearance, and role by considering their physical and visual separation from adjacent areas, edge and entry treatment, architecture, landscape, streetscape, and comparable elements.

CD-6.2 **Subdistrict Identity.** Recognize and affirm, through specialized design treatment as may be further defined by a Flair Park Specific Plan, the following subdistricts:

- Finance Row
- Gateway District
- The Riverfront
- Hospitality Row

CD-6.3 **Cultural Resources.** Incorporate the City's history in the design plans of Flair Park. Utilize the Cultural Resources Inventory as a starting point for identifying, recognizing, and celebrating El Monte's heritage. Examples include:

- Key businesses
- Infrastructure
- Culture
- Natural features

CD-6.4 **Entry Statements.** Establish highly-visible entry statements, specialized pavement, and landscaping at key District entries, such as Rosemead Boulevard and Telstar Avenue, Baldwin Avenue and Interstate 10, and other key locations to heighten the sense of arrival into Flair Park.

CD-6.5 **Public Art.** Beautify Flair Park with public and private art (e.g., murals, statues, fountains, monuments, gateways) reflecting El Monte's heritage; involve public, private, and nonprofit organizations in a public art program.



Public Squares

Public squares organized around fountains and public art can define Flair Park's image as an international finance district.

Architecture

CD-6.6 Signature Projects. The design of new construction and rehabilitation of buildings along the freeway frontage should establish landmark buildings and an iconic skyline. Buildings should be designed with the following principles:

- Placement of buildings to preserve views of the San Gabriel Mountains from all signature and landmark buildings.
- Architectural treatment of all building elevations and visible sides of structures, and modulation of their massing.
- Incorporation of separate and well-defined primary entrances with quality building materials that present a sense of grand entry into a building.
- Highest quality of materials on all building façades that avoid the perception of low-quality, imitation, or flimsy appearance but rather present a highly defined, clean appearance.
- High-rise towers should be relatively slender, with massing divided to reduce the overall bulk and gradual stepdown of building towards lower adjacent structures.
- Delineated rooflines that create a clear demarcation where the building silhouette reaches toward the skyline and its edge defines and complements existing mountain views.

CD-6.7 Professional Offices. Require that new development of office projects be designed to convey the following principles:

- Architectural treatment of all building elevations and visible sides of structures, and modulation of their massing.
- Incorporation of separate and well-defined primary entrances with quality building materials.
- Highest quality of materials on all building façades that avoid the perception of low-quality, imitation, or flimsy appearance but rather present a highly defined, clean appearance.
- Delineated rooflines that create a clear demarcation where the building silhouette reaches toward the skyline and its edge defines and complements existing mountain views.
- Parking areas that are placed to the rear of buildings and structures that are complementary in color, mass, design treatment, and style to the primary office building.
- Incorporation of lush landscaping that provides a tasteful accent to the office structure and its features.
- Well-defined plazas or open spaces in front of buildings, such as the entrance, and between adjacent buildings to provide a high quality experience for employees and visitors.



Iconic Skyline

Flair Park's image could be enhanced by mid-rise office towers that create an iconic skyline visible throughout the San Gabriel Valley.



Corporate Headquarters

Corporate headquarters can present street-facing architecture that is clean, distinctive, and reflective of a premium office park.

Focal Points

CD-6.8 **Gathering Places.** Require the creation of public and private plazas in central park areas, between buildings, and other gathering places that include ample seating space with quality furniture, central focal point such as a park, public space adorned with public art and fountains, and water features.



CD-6.9 **Emerald Necklace.** Improve the riverfront experience along the Rio Hondo River through the installation of Emerald Necklace Vision projects. Include the following improvements:

- Linear park and multi-use trails along the river
- Miniparks at key locations along the river
- Trees and native habitat planted along the way
- Cultural and historical references
- Bicycle paths and multi-use trails

CD-6.10 **Public Parks.** Create a series of interconnected public parks that encourage pedestrian interest and activity, equipped with plazas, public art, and fountains, statues, and other features; link the public parks across Telstar or major streets through a series of landscaped paths that allow for pedestrian movement.

CD-6.11 **Central Park.** Create signature central parks, equipped with fountains, landscaping, monuments, cultural and historical markers, public art, and pedestrian amenities as a focal point and landmark serving and symbolizing Flair Park's role.

Circulation

CD-6.12 **Linkages.** Establish a stronger link between the various districts within Flair Park by visually denoting Telstar Avenue as the major spine and incorporating unifying streetscape improvements along Flair Drive, Rio Hondo Avenue, Aerojet Avenue, and Fletcher Avenue.

CD-6.13 **Freeway On-Ramps.** Coordinate with Caltrans to beautify on-ramps and off-ramps to Interstate 10 with coordinated and thematic presentation, evidenced by lush landscaping, carefully placed trees, rock features, and other landscape amenities.

CD-6.14 **Streetscape Improvements.** Develop a comprehensive streetscape improvement plan that uniquely defines Flair Park, improves the pedestrian experience, and helps make it a special place. Include:

- Street trees—different street trees to denote Flair Park, provide shade for walking, and beautify streetscape.
- Sidewalk and crosswalk improvements—distinctive paving materials or treatment at key intersections.
- Lighting—pedestrian-oriented lighting fixtures (low height and intensity) in primary pedestrian areas.
- Signage—common graphic wayfaring designs with unique logos to differentiate Flair Park from other areas in the City.

CD-6.15 **Pedestrian Path System.** Create a coordinated system of paths that weave through each district and connect districts separated by internal streets according to the following principles:

- Line paths with public art, small seating areas, street furniture, and pedestrian-scaled lamps that lend an air of informality.
- Paths should be a combination of linear and nonlinear configurations, lending visual interest for the pedestrian.
- Paths should link to major plazas and gathering places; avoid creating paths that simply follow building property lines.
- Include pavement colorings, treatments, and detailed materials (not undifferentiated concrete) that lend a domestic quality while still clearly demarcating a Class A office park.
- Include pedestrian-scaled monument signage and wayfaring of quality materials and finish that withstand weather.



Freeway Ramps

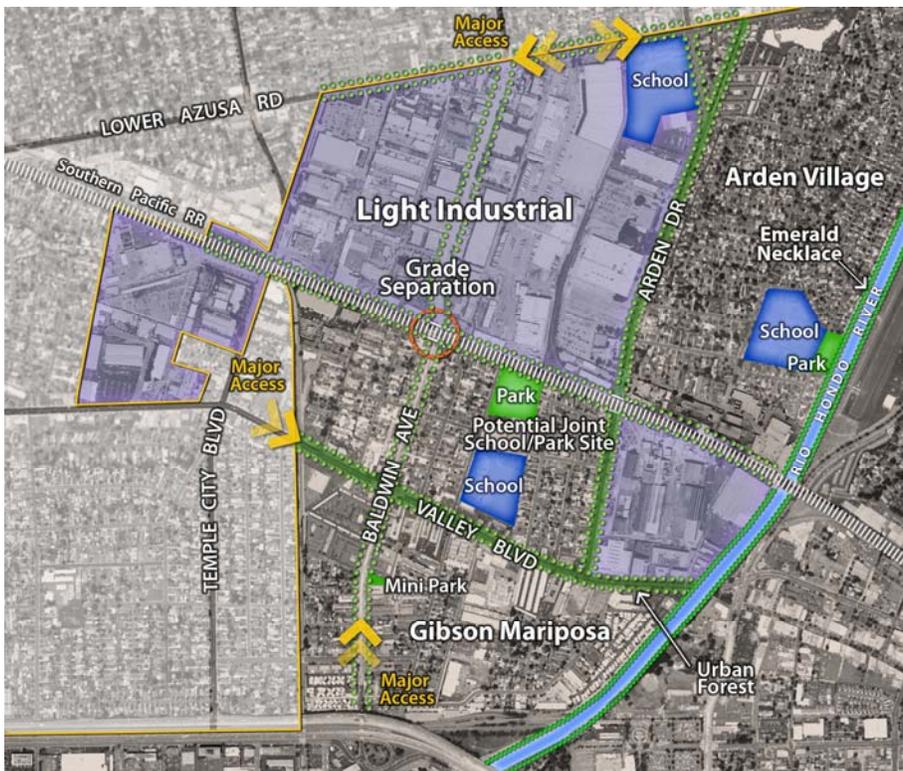
Careful attention to landscaping and detail on freeway ramps can reinforce a positive image of El Monte to visitors, residents, and workforce.

NORTHWEST INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

The Northwest Planning District has historically been the City's manufacturing district and job engine. With the transformation of manufacturing in the Los Angeles region, the majority of businesses in El Monte have relocated. Nonetheless, the district offers great investment potential due to its strategic location near Interstate 10, vast land resources, and redevelopment project area status. The Northwest Industrial District has the potential to become a first-class, modern industrial district.

The District's vision is to continue to attract a balance of sustainable light manufacturing, distribution, and technology-oriented businesses that are compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods. The key to this District's success is creating the environment of a modern industrial park. Industrial building and site design must balance functionality, aesthetics, and compatibility. Streetscapes should provide landscaping and trees to encourage pedestrian movement, not just truck and auto movement.

The following graphic highlights the park/recreational, urban forest, and other design improvements proposed for the Northwest El Monte. Goal #7 and supporting policies further that end.



Goal CD-7

A modern, clean industrial park that provides opportunity for investment and commerce and is denoted by its clean, attractive, and well-managed environment compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Policies

District Identity

- CD-7.1 **Design Treatment.** Strengthen the image of the Northwest Industrial District through entry monuments, distinctive landscaping and streetscape, wayfaring elements, and quality architecture.
- CD-7.2 **Gateways.** Improve access to and visibility of the Northwest Industrial District through clear entry statements and coordinated signage. Consider visual access from the adjoining Interstate 10.
- CD-7.3 **Branding.** Consider branding and developing a marketing campaign for the Northwest Industrial District that targets specific businesses seeking a modern industrial environment.

Streetscape Appearance and Design

- CD-7.4 **Streetscape Plan.** Create a streetscape plan for the Northwest Industrial District that balances and accommodates all users—automobiles, trucks, and pedestrians—in a manner that is safe, pleasant, visually attractive, and functional.
- CD-7.5 **Roadway Dedications.** Require dedications of private property to create ample sidewalks paths and a coherent streetscape where they do not exist that are sufficient to facilitate resident and employee use as a condition of any discretionary permit.
- CD-7.6 **Street Design and Use.** Consider creating separate routes for trucks and autos, and routes that allow autos only, with appropriate streetscapes tailored to each use to facilitate movement to neighborhoods, industrial areas, and the freeway.
- CD-7.7 **Trees and Landscaping.** Plant trees and landscaping along roadways within the district to beautify the streetscape, allow for walking, and create an image that improves property values and presents the image of a modern industrial park.



Pathways

Winding and landscaped paths connecting businesses within a district improve the attractiveness of the working environment.

Circulation

- CD-7.8 **Linkages.** Establish a stronger visual link between the Northwest District, the Downtown, and Flair Park by visually denoting and improving Baldwin Avenue, Valley Boulevard, and Lower Azusa Road with unifying streetscape elements.
- CD-7.9 **Buffering.** Plant buffers of lush deciduous trees along the railroad right-of-way, adjacent to neighborhoods and industries, and in parks and at schools to create a noise buffer, filter air pollutants, and beautify the district.
- CD-7.10 **Freeway On-Ramps.** Coordinate with Caltrans to beautify on-ramps and off-ramps to Interstate 10 with coordinated and thematic presentation, evidenced by lush landscaping, carefully placed trees, rock features, and other landscape amenities.

District Architecture

- CD-7.11 **Industrial Buildings.** Require that new and renovated industrial properties and structures be designed to achieve high-quality, distinctive architecture, and be compatible with adjoining uses in consideration of the following principles:
- Thoughtful modulation of building volumes and masses and façade articulation to create visual interest.
 - Architectural treatment of all building elevations and variation in quality materials and colors.
 - Inclusion of courtyards, plazas, and landscaped areas as amenities for employees.
 - Finished rooflines that clearly demarcate the building edge, with cornices.
 - Roofline drainage systems that prevent flow of runoff water from cascading over and staining the building façade.
 - Contemporary, clean, and distinctive industrial buildings with clearly visible entrances.
 - High-quality materials that are durable and attractive, and withstand weather and time.
 - Quality signage and careful placement to complement the building while meeting the purposes of signage.



Industrial Business Park

Industrial uses, pictured above, typify the type and scale of development, and floor area ratios desired in El Monte.

Site Design

CD-7.12 **Landscaping.** Require landscaping on industrial sites to present a refined image of a modern industrial park, reduce the perceived mass of structures, and provide buffers in consideration of:

- Landscaping of open spaces and frontage-facing streetscapes with greenery, trees, and flowers to create an inviting image for principal buildings.
- Landscaping to define entrances to buildings, parking lots, and the edges of various land uses, and to buffer the property from adjacent properties, neighborhoods, or thoroughfares.
- Landscaping of setbacks, berms, and other similar natural features to reduce the mass and scale of the industrial development and present a pedestrian-friendly image.

CD-7.13 **Loading.** Require site loading and service areas to be as far as possible from the streetfront and ensure that such uses are adequately screened with high-quality articulated walls, trees, and other landscaping to present a clean finish to passersby.

CD-7.14 **Parking.** Parking and paved areas should not be the dominant view of the industrial site; encourage employee and truck parking be placed to the side or behind the facility so that the dominant feature is the building architecture and landscaping frontage.

CD-7.15 **Operational Impacts.** Promote a clean industrial park image and reduce the impact of uses on neighboring properties or residences by adhering to the following considerations:

- Screen parking, storage, and service areas from public view with landscaped walls, berms, and appropriate landscaping.
- Underground or screen utilities and utility equipment or locate and size them to be as inconspicuous as possible.
- Reduce the impact of industrial uses on adjacent properties with walls and landscaping, locating service, delivery, and loading areas far from adjacent uses and public streets.
- Require mitigation of noise, odor, lighting, and other impacts from affecting adjacent residential neighborhoods.

CD-7.16 **Sustainability.** Require that industrial development minimize consumption of and sustain scarce environmental resources through site design, building orientation, landscaping, use of recycled water for irrigation, water efficiency, building design and materials, and best management practices for drainage.

COMMUNITY RETAIL CENTERS

Every community has a wide variety of community retail centers and El Monte is no exception. Community retail centers in El Monte provide an important service to residents, businesses, and visitors by providing a range of goods and services, including groceries, apparel, household items, and larger item purchases. Except for major commercial corridors, community retail centers present the first initial image of El Monte. Ensuring that commercial centers are well-designed is therefore a key goal of El Monte.

The City has a wide variety of community retail centers along major corridors, built at different times over the past decades. Presently, the City's major commercial centers are along Garvey Avenue, Valley Boulevard, Peck Road, and Lower Azusa Road. The General Plan will establish and regulate three general categories of retail centers in El Monte, each distinguished by their size, function, and location.

Each of El Monte's commercial centers is one of three types—community/regional, neighborhood, and mixed/multiuse nodes.

- ***Regional/Community Retail.*** These centers provide large-scale commercial uses that serve an area larger than the City. Auto dealers, home furnishings, building materials and hardware, and big-box retail are examples. Major regional/community commercial centers include the Sam's Club, Home Depot, Five Points, and Santa Fe Trail projects.
- ***Neighborhood Retail.*** Neighborhood commercial centers provide convenient and smaller-scale retail, such as grocers, drug stores, and services that serve the immediate needs of residents of surrounding residential neighborhoods. There are many examples of neighborhood shopping centers throughout El Monte.
- ***Mixed/Multiuse Centers.*** The Zoning Code provides an overlay zone for portions of Garvey Avenue, Durfee Road, Valley Boulevard, and Peck Road to encourage a mix of residential and commercial uses. This includes limited retail sales and services that serve surrounding neighborhoods (minor node) and, in certain locations, limited retail sales and services that serve the community (major node).

The El Monte General Plan contains an implementation program to guide the development, improvement, and rehabilitation of these types of centers. In the meantime, the following goal and policies (in conjunction with the overlay zone) provide the mechanism to approve and condition such projects to achieve the overall goals set forth in the General Plan.

Goal CD-8

Attractive, vibrant, and convenient commercial centers that convey a quality shopping experience through the careful application of land use, site design, design policies, and architectural standards.

Policies

Commercial Center Identity

- CD-8.1 **Themes.** Develop unifying designs for commercial centers and add visual interest through rich architectural detailing, varied massing and rooflines, accent lighting, and landscaping to give each commercial center a distinct identity.
- CD-8.2 **Entrances.** Design highly visible entrances to larger retail activity centers or freestanding commercial big-box centers through accent landscaping and lighting, enhanced intersection features, monument signs, and other design amenities.
- CD-8.3 **Pedestrian Features.** Encourage pedestrian-scale features in commercial centers, such as shaded sitting areas, fountains, arcades, canopies, and awnings, customized signage, and strategically located secondary entrances.

Streets and Parking

- CD-8.4 **Parking.** For internal parking areas, provide ample landscaping using landscaped bays, shade trees, and clearly delineated pedestrian routes with shade trees and landscaping along walkways that allow easy and safe passage to retail uses.
- CD-8.5 **Access.** Encourage internal adjoining and shared access points between adjacent commercial properties in order to minimize the number of curb cuts along major thoroughfares and numerous unnecessary entry points along streets.
- CD-8.6 **Streetscape.** Require improvements to streetscape fronting commercial centers; condition approval of projects on the provision of streetscape improvements consistent with adjoining development and/or adopted streetscape improvement plans.
- CD-8.7 **Landscaping.** Require landscaping to define building entrances, key activity hubs, focal points, and the street edge; provide screening for unattractive/unsightly service areas; and serve as buffers between neighboring uses.



Parking and Walkways

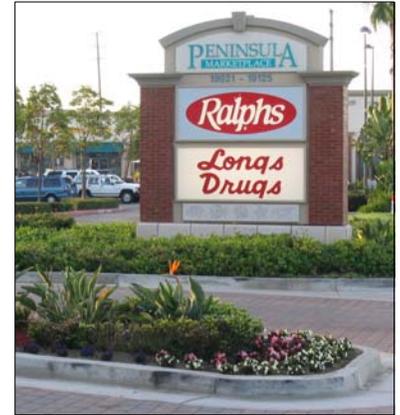
Separate landscape walkways and bays to retail areas provide safe and convenient paths for visitors, families, and children.

Signage, Lighting, and Walls

- CD-8.8 **Signage.** Within commercial centers, encourage high-quality signage (e.g., wall signs, raised letter signs, projecting double-faced signs, customized logos) and distinct styles that complement building architecture; signage should not be uncoordinated or present a cluttered image.
- CD-8.9 **Lighting.** Lighting fixtures should be compatible with the building architectural design. Accent lighting of buildings and landscape is encouraged, such as the use of shaded gooseneck lights, indirect lighting, cove lighting or "wall washing," rim lighting or eaves, and overhead down lighting.
- CD-8.10 **Walls and Fencing.** Require only high-quality fencing and preferably articulated walls with quality natural looking materials that demarcate buildings; prohibit chain-link fencing, solid unarticulated block walls, and other low-quality materials that may sacrifice aesthetics for functionality.

Property Maintenance

- CD-8.11 **Condominium Associations.** Require developers/owners that wish to subdivide commercial centers into individually-owned properties to create condominium associations that can address common land use and operational issues and allow the City to negotiate with a single entity.
- CD-8.12 **Conditions for Operation.** Enforce, through development agreements or other discretionary approval process, requirements for property maintenance and a legal and financial means for enforcing compliance with City codes and regulations.
- CD-8.13 **Code Enforcement.** Vigorously implement a proactive code enforcement program that identifies problem areas or complexes, dedicates sufficient financial resources to address problems, and, if issues are not promptly and fully resolved, refers cases to nuisance abatement, including fines and court action.
- CD-8.14 **Nuisance Abatement.** Vigorously enforce an aggressive program to abate nuisances in community commercial centers, including dilapidated or abandoned buildings, incompatible land uses and activities, prohibited signage and billboards, and other uses that detract from the center and violate city codes and regulations.



Gateways and Signage

Quality gateways and entry signage, pictured above, present an inviting image to shoppers and beautify adjacent arterial streetscape.

Architecture

CD-8.15 **Commercial Projects.** Require that multitenant commercial and office projects be designed to convey a unified and high-quality character in consideration of the following principles:

- Avoid visual perception of single-building volume and mass through modulation, articulation, setbacks, and other techniques.
- Design treatments that create a sense of individualized and personalized storefronts yet still link adjacent storefronts with a consistent theme.
- Articulate exterior façades of buildings to create visual interest on all sides, and consistent architectural design vocabulary with materials and colors that are complementary.
- Link individual storefronts and structures with pedestrian walkways and plazas that provide customer amenities.
- Variation of building heights and rooflines articulated with high-quality materials and façades to avoid uninterrupted planes and promote visual interest.
- Architectural treatment of parking structures consistent and integrated with commercial and business buildings.
- Proper enclosure of trash receptacles to hide trash areas, surrounding with landscaping or other attractive screening.



Commercial Architecture

Breaking up façades of commercial buildings with varying rooflines, wall articulation, and massing are important aesthetic principles.

CD-8.16 **Mixed/Multiuse Projects.** Require all new residential, commercial, and mixed-use projects proposed in minor and major nodes to conform in project design to mixed/multiuse overlay zone or subsequent corridor implementation plan when drafted.



Corridor Mixed/Multiuse

Mixed multiuse development projects can be suited to different types of corridors or suited to different types of commercial nodes.

NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN FEATURES

El Monte is a collection of neighborhoods representative of its varied past. Each neighborhood varies depending on its location, architecture, housing types, and history. Because much of the city's original development fabric has been erased over time, the preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of residential neighborhoods is of critical importance.

El Monte's neighborhoods are.

- **Norwood-Cherrylee.** The Norwood-Cherrylee neighborhood contains a mix of single-family homes anchored by Lambert Park. It contains the Rurban Homesteads and Wye Street, built during the 1920s as part of an experimental federal housing program. With its rural ambience, the area is distinguished by its equestrian and agricultural heritage.
- **Arden Village.** Arden Village is bordered by the Rio Hondo River, El Monte Airport, and nonresidential uses in northwest El Monte. Historically the site of labor camps for the agricultural industries, Arden Village is distinguished by small uniform lots, traditional single-family homes, and a distinctive classic identity.
- **Mountain View.** The Mountain View neighborhood, anchored by the Mountain View Park and elementary school, is bordered by the San Gabriel River. This neighborhood has one of the most diverse types and ranges of housing prices for single-family, multiple-family, mobile homes, and other housing. With its rural ambience, the area is distinguished by its equestrian and agricultural heritage.
- **Downtown.** Downtown El Monte is a diverse area of well-maintained homes, high density residential, and senior projects. Established small-lot single-family residential neighborhoods extend south of Ramona Boulevard. This area is denoted by its eclectic mix of housing, street configurations, proximity to historical resources, and shopping.
- **Park El Monte.** Park El Monte, southeast of Flair Park and the Rio Hondo River, is distinguished by curvilinear wide streets, lower scale, single-family homes, and quality housing. Due to the age of the housing, the area needs housing rehabilitation and improvements.
- **River East.** The River East neighborhood is bordered by the San Gabriel River to the east and Interstate 10 to the south. This neighborhood is made up primarily of residential uses, in particular, multiple-family planned residential developments. The neighborhood is continuing to complete the transition to planned residential uses.

El Monte prides itself on the quality of its residential neighborhoods. Some neighborhoods have a strong identity and tradition. Given the diversity of neighborhoods, the challenges are to: 1) recognize and highlight these distinct neighborhoods within the context of a modern city; 2) restore and enhance neighborhood identities through effective design policies; and 3) put in place policies that will maintain neighborhood character and fabric.

The following goal and policies, in concert with other General Plan Elements, are intended to achieve these objectives.

Goal CD-9

Quality neighborhoods evidenced by distinct identities; focal points that provide recreation and social opportunities; attractive streetscapes that accommodate autos, pedestrians, and cyclists; and attractive and well-designed residential projects that improve property values.

Neighborhood Identity

CD-9.1 **Neighborhood Design.** Distinguish neighborhoods and districts in their character and physical appearance by considering their physical and visual separation, edge and entry treatment, architecture, landscape, streetscape, and comparable elements.

CD-9.2 **Neighborhood Identity.** Establish neighborhood identities throughout the City, giving consideration to:

- Natural environment
- Historic significance
- Infrastructure, including transportation
- Urban fabric/traces
- Contemporary culture

CD-9.3 **Neighborhood Scale.** Apply different development and design standards based on community expectations and desires for different neighborhoods. Consider:

- In stable residential neighborhoods where single-family homes predominate, the existing scale of housing should be preserved.
- Follow policies to reduce the perceived scale and impact of two-story homes on adjoining one-story homes.
- In neighborhoods of mostly multifamily housing, encourage lot consolidation to foster more creative planning solutions.
- In areas with unique features (e.g., equestrian or historic areas), consider overlay zones to allow discretionary review.

Public Spaces

CD-9.4 **Neighborhood Center.** Physically organize and arrange residential neighborhoods around an identifiable neighborhood center that serves as a focal point for social activities, education, recreation, or shopping. Focal points can include:

- Parks and schools
- Civic facilities
- Retail centers or street malls
- Cultural or historical landmarks
- Other centers of activity

CD-9.5 **Streetscapes.** Connect residences, schools, parks, and activity centers with streets that accommodate autos, pedestrians, bicyclists, and, in appropriate areas, equestrian uses. Streetscapes should incorporate the following design features:

- Landscaped parkways or medians where adequate right-of-way exists for canopy street trees, grass landscape, and shrubs to provide shade and a pleasant walking experience.
- Continuous sidewalks of sufficient width to accommodate seniors, people with disabilities, and families with children.
- Pedestrian-level and human-scaled amenities, including benches, lighting, signage, etc.
- Consider traffic-calming measures such as the actual or visual narrowing of streets through widened parkways, canopy trees, and bulb-out curbs at key intersections.
- Bicycle lanes equipped with large enough right-of-way to provide a safety buffer for bicyclists.
- Equestrian amenities, where appropriate, such as alternative sidewalk design, rolled curb, and other equestrian amenities.

CD-9.6 **Parks and Open Space.** Consistent with policy direction set forth in the Parks and Recreation Element, provide adequate parks and open space within each neighborhood planning area, with an emphasis on placing parks near to residences through implementation of:

- Joint-use park and school facilities
- Greenways along key streets
- Emerald Necklace improvements
- Community forest along public rights-of-way
- Community gardens where possible



Streetscape

Continuous sidewalks and landscaped parkways improve the appearance of street, encourage a healthy lifestyle, and improve property values.



Multifamily Housing

Multiple massing, surface details, window treatments, and varied rooflines reduce the scale of multifamily housing.

Residential Design Principles

Scale and Massing.

New/remodeled homes should be consistent and compatible with the neighborhood.

Front Yard Coverage. *Front yard setbacks with a maximum amount of landscaping enhances aesthetics.*

Residential Entryways. *Visible, front-facing entryways improve neighborhood appearance and social interaction.*

Architectural Detailing. *Façades with rich detailing, varied rooflines, and consistent styles add character.*

Rooflines. *Rooflines compatible with surrounding properties enhance neighborhood identity and consistency.*

Sidewalks & Parkways. *Landscaped parkways and continuous sidewalks are important unifying elements.*

Garages, Driveways & Parking. *Recessed garages and side-loading driveways minimize the impact of cars on neighborhood streets.*

Walls & Fencing. *Low profile, transparent, and compatible styles and materials enhance the neighborhood.*

Materials, Colors & Texture. *Exterior treatments of houses should reflect a complementary mix of colors, tones, and textures.*

Architecture

CD-9.7 Single-Family Housing. Require that single-family detached and attached housing be well designed to assure a high level of neighborhood quality in consideration of the following:

- Avoidance of box-like structures through the articulation and modulation of building elevations, variation of rooflines, and features to create visual interest.
- Quality architectural design treatment of all elevations that are visible from public places and adjacent private residences.
- Minimize paving for driveways and parking areas in front yard setbacks; require well-designed front yards that provide an effective and beautiful transition from homes to the street.
- Encourage street-facing architecture by placing entries, porches, and windows at the front of the residence and connecting them to the sidewalk by a pathway.
- Consider small-lot developments with rear lanes that position the garage and driveway to the back of the site to avoid garage-dominated streetscapes.
- Encourage a blend of compatible architectural styles that contain rich façade detailing, varied rooflines, and quality materials incorporated on all four sides of the residence.

CD-9.8 Multiple-Family Housing. Require that new multifamily residential projects be designed to convey a high level of visual and physical quality and distinctive neighborhood character in consideration of the following principles:

- Architectural treatment of building elevations and modulation of mass to convey the character of separate units, avoiding the sense of a singular building mass and volume.
- Design of parking areas that blend with the architecture of residential structures style, materials, colors, and forms.
- Incorporation of usable and functional private open space for each unit and common open space that creates a pleasant living environment and attractive locations for recreation.
- Reduce the visual impact of parking through consolidated parking, shared driveways, lane-accessed designs, landscape buffers, and other techniques.
- Incorporation of substantial, lush landscaping that softens the hardscape, presents an attractive street image, and provides for a high-quality living experience.

CD-9.9 **Mixed-Use Projects.** Require that mixed-use projects convey a high level of visual and physical quality and distinctive neighborhood character in consideration of the following principles:

- Architectural treatment of building elevations and modulation of mass to convey the character of separate units, avoiding the sense of a singular building mass and volume.
- Design of parking areas that blend with residential portions of the structures style, materials, colors, and forms.
- Incorporation of usable and functional private open space for each unit and common open space that creates a pleasant living environment and attractive locations for recreation.
- Reduction of the visual impact of parking through consolidated parking, shared driveways, lane-accessed designs, landscapes buffers, and other techniques.
- Incorporation of substantial, lush landscaping that softens the hardscape, presents an attractive street image, and provides for a high-quality living experience.
- Design flexibility in mixed/multiuse development by allowing both vertical and horizontal uses at a variety of scales and heights.
- Shared parking for residential, commercial, office, and transit uses to facilitate greater flexibility in site planning.
- Ensure mixed/multiuse developments are compatible with adjacent uses through project design, scale, and appropriate buffers and transitions between uses. Taller projects should step down heights as they approach adjacent development.
- Where a vertical mix of uses occurs, site retail/office uses on the ground floor, with residential and/or office uses above, and require architectural detailing that differentiates uses.
- Minimize the visual impact of surface parking by providing berms and landscape buffering, and/or locating parking lots behind, to the side of, or below buildings.
- In multiuse development, locate retail and commercial development close to the street for higher visibility and residential uses behind for convenience and privacy.
- Incorporate different architectural styles, a variety of rooflines, wall articulation, balconies, window treatments, and varied colors and quality materials on all elevations.



Vertical Mixed Use

Ground floor retail, orientation to street, differentiated façade treatment for housing, and structured parking give this street a vibrant and pedestrian-oriented look.

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