Chapter 5

Downtown Public Urban Design Guidelines

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The urban design guidelines for Downtown Santa Ana (roughly bounded by the Civic Center to the north, First Street to the south, Mortimer Street to the east, and Ross Street to the west) focus on improvements to public spaces which include streets, sidewalks, and public open spaces. The intent is to create a unified, safe and visually striking downtown environment. The appearance of the public right-of-way contributes to community identity. Visual improvements can act as a catalyst for investment, for property owners and prospective developers.

5.2 PURPOSE

This Chapter is intended to be used as a planning tool for public projects and for developer conditions of approval. These guidelines contain concepts, graphic material, recommendations and design guidance, which can aid in the implementation of public area improvements.

This section identifies streetscape design elements, landscaping, intersection enhancements, entry treatment, public open space, right-of-way detail, and other unique public features within Downtown Santa Ana.

5.3 GENERAL DESIGN OBJECTIVES

A basic goal of the Downtown Public Urban Design Guidelines is to enhance the livability and pedestrian friendly character of the streets in the Downtown area. The major objectives of the Downtown Public Urban Design Guidelines are to:

- Provide high quality design and construction;
- Provide identity to the Downtown;
- Provide for physical comfort;
- Strengthen the spatial definition of the street through landscaping and streetscaping;
- Maintain and enhance the downtown pedestrian environment; and to
Facilitate alternative modes of travel, including, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, light rail, and automobile.

### 5.4 Public Improvements

#### 5.4.1 Public Parking Structures

Downtown Santa Ana is the most intensely developed portion of the City. To augment this urban environment, the City should aim to intensify surface parking lots wherever possible, replacing them with mixed-use development that incorporates parking compatible with upcoming projects. General guidelines to achieve these desirable traits are as follows:

- **a.** Adequate lighting is necessary for the safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians and for the security of patrons and parked vehicles. Garage lighting should concentrate light on aisles and ramps, with spillover lighting often being adequate to illuminate parking stalls. Interiors should be painted with a light color to transmit light throughout the space.

- **b.** Care should be given to prevent the casting of glare and spillover lighting outside of the parking structure.

- **c.** Entrance and exiting areas of parking lots and structures should be long enough to minimize vehicle backup onto surrounding streets or within the garage. A minimum of two vehicle lengths should be provided between the street and the garage, but more is desirable.
d. Emergency buzzers and telephones should be installed in easily accessible places on each level, in elevators and in stairwells.

e. Directional arrows and signage indicating exits, elevators, and emergency buzzers/telephones should be clearly displayed (painted) on walls.

f. To promote safety, stairs and glass-cab elevators should be located on the perimeter of parking structures to allow for visibility (Refer to Figure 5-1).

g. Parking structures should have landscaping along blank walls on side streets and upper levels.

h. Land uses such as retail, office or other commercial space conducive to an urban Downtown environment should be incorporated along the ground level of structured parking street frontage (Refer to Figure 5-2).

5.4.2 Plazas

Plazas can be a vital component of a city’s downtown. Plazas can promote community activity by accommodating public events or they can simply function as passive open space. Plazas are envisioned to play an important role in the vitality of Santa Ana’s Downtown.

a. A plaza should have an articulated edge (buildings, benches, landscaping, etc.) where feasible, to provide visual interest and additional seating along the edges of the plaza where people may linger out of the traffic flow (Refer to Figure 5-3).

b. Plaza edges that open to pedestrian through-traffic should be defined without impeding traffic flow, with a planter or low seating wall, pergola with vines, water feature or sculpture.
c. Pedestrian amenities should be provided such as seating, lighting, planters, drinking fountains, distinctive paving, art work, and bicycle racks. They should also incorporate focal points such as sculptures or water features (Refer to Figure 5-3).

d. Soft- as well as hard-surfaced areas should be incorporated into the overall plaza design. Color, form, and texture are an integral part of this.

e. Paving should be unit pavers or concrete with special texture, color, pattern and/or decorative features (Refer to Figure 5-4).

f. Any decorative paving used in the plaza areas should complement the paving pattern and color of the pavers used in the public right-of-way.

g. Furniture and fixtures used in the plaza areas should complement those in the public right-of-way.

h. Some covered area along the perimeter of the plaza (i.e., vine-covered pergola) is strongly encouraged to provide protection from rain and/or sun (Refer to Figure 5-5).

i. Separation of active and passive uses is encouraged through placement of planters, street furniture, landscaping, different paving textures and subtle changes in ground plane.

j. Lighting height should be at a pedestrian scale. Plazas should be fully illuminated from dusk until dawn. The overall lighting in the plaza should average two footcandles, and incorporate other pedestrian-oriented lights, such as lighted bollards. Uplighting of trees and other architectural features is strongly encouraged.
5.5 PARKS/PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Public parks and open space including parks, play areas, and sculpture gardens, are an integral part of Santa Ana’s Downtown, humanizing the urban core and fostering community interaction. Public parks and open space in Downtown Santa Ana should adhere to the following guidelines:

Pocket park in Downtown Santa Ana
a. Public spaces should be designed, spatially defined and located to accommodate a range of desired activities, and contribute to real and perceived public safety.

b. A well-designed public space should provide ongoing opportunities for human activities that create an interactive physical environment, builds a sense of community, and contributes to livability (Refer to Figure 5-6).

5.6 GATEWAYS AND SIGNAGE

5.6.1 Gateways

Gateways provide a sense of arrival and provide a sense of the character of the community. Gateways, along with signage, can help guide motorists to their destinations. The visual design of gateways should be attractive as well as functional, conveying a ceremonial sense of entry that reflects the area’s desired image and identity. Physical elements of the entry, including roadway geometry, traffic islands, signs, archways, paving materials, and landscape planting materials, should function together to physically define the entry and establish a positive first impression. Figure 5-7 shows two downtown gateway concepts for Santa Ana.
d. The design of entry and wayfinding signs should be unique to Downtown Santa Ana and should incorporate a distinctive identity.

5.6.2 Directional Street Signage

The type and purpose of signage varies throughout Downtown Santa Ana. Traffic signage is generally regulated by the traffic manual of the State Department of Transportation. Size, color, and format are standardized for warning and regulatory signs. No variation for these signs is permitted, although they should be consolidated wherever possible to minimize clutter.

Flexibility can be exercised by the City in the design of entry and guide signs since these are not regulated by the State. Entry signs should be integrated into the design of each gateway announcing arrival to Downtown Santa Ana. Guide signs include those that announce major attractions such as a museum, arts district, public parking, or any other Downtown venue. (Refer to Figure 5-8)

a. Directional street signs should be incorporated as an integral part of the Downtown. The design should compliment surrounding street furnishings to help reinforce the downtown identity and character.
b. Directional street signs located within Downtown Santa Ana should be of sufficient size to be seen by motorists passing by at average speeds of 25 miles per hour.

Figure 5-8: Example of a downtown directional street sign
5.7 INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS

Intersections in Downtown Santa Ana are where the paths of people and vehicles come together. They can be the most challenging part of negotiating a pedestrian network. If pedestrians cannot cross streets easily and safely, then mobility is severely limited, access is denied, and walking as a mode of travel is discouraged. Intersections in Downtown should aim to achieve the following primary functions:

- Make pedestrians as visible as possible;
- Make pedestrian and motorist actions as predictable as possible;
- Minimize the width of roadway that pedestrians must cross; and
- Slow vehicular traffic.

Selected intersections within Downtown Santa Ana have been identified as enhanced intersections. These intersections have been classified into two categories: Nodal Intersections and Creative Intersections. These distinctions were based on the Downtown Santa Ana Vision Plan.

The Nodal Intersections listed below are intersections that play a major role in the circulation and operation of Downtown Santa Ana.

- Along the Fourth Street retail corridor from Birch Street to French Street - These intersections set the tone for active pedestrian use, along a thriving retail corridor (Refer to Figures 5-9 and 5-10).

![Conceptual sketch of the enhanced intersection at Fourth Street and French Street](image1)

![Conceptual sketch of the enhanced intersection at Fourth Street and Main Street](image2)

- Civic Center Drive and Main Street - This intersection serves as one of the main entries to the Downtown core area.
- Third Street and Main Street - This intersection is a focal point with excellent development potential.
The Creative Intersections listed below are intersections that should infuse creativity and variety into the Downtown Core. These intersections play a major role in the circulation and operation of Downtown Santa Ana.

- **Ross Street and Santa Ana Boulevard** - This intersection is an important component of the pedestrian-scaled link between the Civic Center and the Downtown retail development.

- **Along the Sycamore Street Artists Village corridor from 2nd Street to 3rd Street** - This corridor will require special consideration and creative design treatment in order to encourage pedestrian traffic within the Downtown core and Artists Village District. These intersections encompass the District and create a linkage between Artist lofts and commercial/retail development (Refer to Figure 5-11).

The following guidelines are recommended for intersection enhancements in Santa Ana’s Downtown:

a. Where traffic signals are provided at enhanced intersection pedestrian crossings, audible signals should be incorporated for the visually impaired.

b. Curb-cut ramps for wheelchair access should be provided at each intersection crossing. Texture or finishes should be applied to the ramp to provide a visual or auditory indication of impending vehicle traffic.

c. Bricks or other unit paving material set in mortar can also be used in high-traffic areas. However, the additional expense in material and labor may limit use of these surfaces to accent areas, such as the entries to buildings.
d. Enhanced intersections should be made similar by the use of common materials and should incorporate the City’s proposed paving pattern.

e. Adequate high mast (35’-50’) street lighting should be installed at each intersection crosswalk to provide for clear nighttime visibility for both pedestrians and drivers.

f. Adequate sight lines should be maintained to give both pedestrians and drivers an unobstructed view at intersection crosswalks.

g. Creative Intersections should visually communicate connectivity and should be indicative of special areas or districts (Refer to Figure 5-12).

h. Creative Intersections will require special consideration and creative design treatment (Refer to Figure 5-13) in order to encourage pedestrian traffic within the Downtown core and special districts such as the Civic Island or Artists Village.

Figure 5-12: Interesting paving patterns and colors contribute to creative intersections

5.8 MEDIANS AND PEDESTRIAN REFUGE ISLANDS

This Section focuses on the importance of the street median and the different roles that the median serves. The median’s functional and aesthetic value is discussed.

5.8.1 Functional Elements

Medians and pedestrian refuge islands provide a visual separation between driving lanes and help direct traffic. Their primary function is safety. In order to function as safely as possible, it is important that the medians and traffic islands visually contrast with the driving lanes (as seen in Figure 5-14) particularly at night. Visual contrast may be achieved by manipulating color and
The following guidelines can be used to assist in color and material selection.

a. Select materials that have a strong color contrast with the pavement. Warm earth tones provide an excellent contrast to black asphalt. These colors are common in clay and concrete paving units. Avoid pavers in the gray range with blue or violet tones.

b. Choose materials and colors that can best withstand staining and fading.

c. Where medians approach pedestrian crosswalks, the medians should stop short of pedestrian crosswalk (Refer to Figure 5-15).

Figure 5-14: Median that effectively uses both hardscaping and landscaping for visual contrast
d. Safety islands should be even with the crossing surface and have a crosswalk surface different in color and texture to surrounding surfaces.

e. At intersections, the median width should be wide enough to accommodate a left-turn lane, while retaining enough space (approximately 4 feet) for pedestrian refuge, traffic signal infrastructure and signs.

f. With the exception of plaza areas, raised curbed medians should be constructed as opposed to mountable medians which are prone to uneven settling and can be expensive to maintain.

g. Select landscape materials for medians according to the landscape palette in Section 5.18.3 – Street Trees and Landscaping, and have particular regard for survivability and the need for consistency with landscaping on the road edge and on adjacent lands.

### 5.8.2 Aesthetic Elements

Medians and pedestrian refuge islands also provide an opportunity to add aesthetic quality to Downtown Santa Ana. Because they are located within the driver’s primary cone of vision they have a greater influence on the overall perception of the community. Designers should take advantage of this and seek to add architectural details that will enhance the overall appearance. This section deals specifically with the aesthetic considerations of median and traffic island design.

a. Medians can be an instrument to better define the core area of the Downtown. Medians can accommodate decorative community banners and entry signs (Refer to Figure 5-16).
b. The narrow areas of median turn lanes usually make maintenance difficult. These areas are best paved with a material that will require little maintenance and provide a sharp color contrast with the pavement.

5.9 PAVING

a. The texture and color of ground level areas is an essential visual element of the urban streetscape.

b. Special paving treatment should be used in the Artists Village District’s street intersections and medians to unify and strengthen the District’s identity.

c. The enhanced paving used in these areas should be a removable modular type “Unit Pavers” (Refer to Figure 5-17).

d. Unit pavers should have various color patterns that range from warm earth tone hues to shades of gray.

e. Paving patterns should be kept as simple as possible. Too many colors can detract from storefronts.

f. A concrete band should be used as a line of demarcation between the public right-of-way and private property. A concrete band can also be used as a transition between unit pavers and asphalt within the designated street intersections.

g. In areas where decorative unit pavers are not appropriate or too expensive, concrete surfaces may be enhanced by aggregate, scoring, broom finish or sand finish.
h. The design, materials, and colors of pedestrian areas should complement the architectural style of the primary buildings and should make a positive contribution to the aesthetic and function of the site.

i. The use of stamped concrete, exposed aggregate, or colored concrete can and should be used to serve as a traffic calming function to promote pedestrian safety and to minimize the negative impact of large expanses of black asphalt pavement on large parking lots.

j. The function and location of a walkway will dictate the most appropriate type of paving material.

k. A consistent treatment for similar types of walkways in terms of their material and finish is important in visually defining the function of each walkway segment and the continuity of the walkway network (Refer to Figure 5-18).

5.10 STREET FURNITURE

Street furnishings can enliven and provide variety to outdoor spaces used by the public. They serve an aesthetic and utilitarian function. Street furniture includes all items placed within the public right-of-way such as benches, bus shelters, trash receptacles, plant containers, tree grates and guards, bicycle racks, bollards, kiosks and fountains. Proper design and placement of such amenities can reinforce the historic nature of Downtown and create a lively and festive atmosphere throughout Downtown Santa Ana. The following general guidelines should be considered when selecting and siting these amenities:

a. A unified “look” is encouraged. The color and appearance of street furniture products should be selected to complement other Furnishings such as seating areas and kiosks can make public places and streetscapes visually interesting as well as practical.

Figure 5-18: A distinctive and creative paving pattern can visually reinforce Santa Ana’s Downtown area
design elements (Refer to Figure 5-19). Items should be securely anchored to the sidewalk and a graffiti-resistant coating should be applied to street furniture surfaces.

b. The design and selection of street furniture should include considerations for the security, safety, comfort and convenience of the user.

c. Street furniture should be placed to conserve existing sidewalk width and ensure free pedestrian flow (Refer to Figure 5-20).

d. The location and layout of the different elements of street furniture should ensure that each article or structure is designed and situated to be in harmony with both the surrounding furnishings and the area as a whole.

e. Where possible, furnishings should be grouped together. A greater number and type of furnishings should be provided in higher-use pedestrian traffic areas.

f. Provisions to accommodate the physically challenged should be incorporated into the design and siting of furnishings. This includes a provision for space adjacent to walkways for wheelchair and/or stroller parking.
5.11 Lighting

Street lighting can add an aesthetic value and provide safety for Downtown Santa Ana. The following guidelines encourage lighting for Downtown which:

- contributes to the safe and efficient use of each development site;
- enhances site security;
- complements and reinforces the character of the architecture and site design;
- has consistent light fixtures and illumination levels throughout Downtown;
- prevents any lighting from casting glare onto adjacent streets in such a manner as to decrease the safety of vehicular movement;
- enhances and encourages evening activities; and
- provides distinctive character and adds drama to evening experiences of Santa Ana’s vibrant core.

a. Pedestrian streetlights should be compatible in style with the other street furniture. It is recommended that the pedestrian streetlights used should be those suggested by the Santa Ana Main Street Enhancements Study.

b. Streetlight poles are one of the most important elements that establish the look and character of the street (Refer to Figure 5-21). Proper spacing of pole lamps provides an adequate level of nighttime lighting and increases safety. Pedestrian-scaled sidewalk poles are recommended for the Downtown.

Figure 5-21: Example of Downtown pedestrian light which reflects historic character
c. Figure 5-22 illustrates the recommended overhead streetlight. The streetlight is a taller, auto-scale pole recommended for use in Downtown’s medians.

d. The type and location of parking area lighting should preclude direct glare onto adjoining property, streets, or skyward.

e. The architectural style of lighting standards in a public parking lot should relate to the overall architectural design of the adjacent development.

f. Uplighting on trees and provisions for seasonal lighting are encouraged.

g. All efforts to reduce glare from street and parking area lights should be undertaken.

h. Accent lighting on architectural and landscape features are encouraged to add interest and focal points.

i. Pedestrian-scaled lighting should be required along all streets and in all public plazas and courts.

j. Pedestrian-scaled lighting fixtures should average between 16’ and 22’ in height and should have a character which complements local historic architecture.

k. Public parking area lighting should not exceed 25’ in height and should be baffled to minimize glare and spillage into the surrounding community.

Figure 5-22: Appropriate style of Downtown overhead light

5.12 Benches

a. Benches on sidewalks and other right-of-ways should be made of a durable material such as concrete, painted iron, or hardwood and be designed to minimize the effects from vandalism and skateboarding.

b. Benches should be located in areas on the sidewalk and within public areas where they do not interrupt pedestrian flow (Minimum 4 feet of sidewalk space).

c. Benches should be located in areas of high pedestrian activity such as plazas, fountains, transit
stops, monuments, and public art displays.

5.13 Bollards

a. Bollards should be used in areas where there may not be a clear distinction between the street and the sidewalk, such as open plazas adjacent to streets.

b. Internally illuminated bollards (Refer to Figure 5-23) are encouraged to be located in areas that will have pedestrian activity in the evening.

c. Removable bollards should be placed in certain areas where emergency access is identified.

Figure 5-23: Example of an internally illuminated bollard
5.14 Bus Shelters

a. New bus shelters should be installed at Downtown transit stops where no benches are currently provided. Older bus benches or shelters should be replaced with models of a uniform design and color.

b. In combination with monument markers and street poles, bus stops should be one of the major identities for the street.

c. Bus shelters should be well lit and placed to the rear of the sidewalk to enhance the security of patrons.

d. Bus stops should be as transparent as possible to increase unobstructed visibility for safety purposes. It is advisable that advertisements on the sides of bus shelters should be minimized to one side (Refer to Figure 5-24).

[Figure 5-24: An example of an “open” bus shelter, providing patrons with security and protection from sun and rain]
5.15 Trash Receptacles

a. Trash receptacles should be provided near each corner of every major intersection and located along streets at mid-block.

b. Trash receptacles should be located in high-activity areas, such as plazas and other public open spaces.

c. The style and color of trash receptacles should be compatible with the desired style of other street furnishings in the Downtown area (Refer to Figure 5-25).

d. Freestanding trash receptacles should be bolted into the ground, have a plastic liner and removable cover.
5.16 BIKE RACKS

a. Bike racks should be provided at key activity locations, attractions, and other points of interest.

b. The recommended bicycle rack should have a stainless steel finish (Refer to Figure 5-26) to minimize maintenance and wear over time.

Figure 5-26: Examples of stainless steel bike racks

5.17 BANNERS

a. Banners are an effective way of advertising special events, (as shown in Figures 5-27 and 5-28), focusing attention on community activities and groups, and establishing downtown identity. Streetlight poles along major streets should be fitted with new hardware to accommodate banners each time banners are replaced.

b. Banners should be used at entryways, medians, and major streets throughout the Downtown to reinforce its identity.

c. The bottom edge of the banner should be at least 14 feet above the sidewalk to minimize vandalism.
5.18 STREET TREES AND LANDSCAPING

5.18.1 General Guidelines

a. Appropriate street trees should be planted with tree grates on both sides of all commercial streets in the “curb zone” areas.

b. Individual planting beds, trees, and other plant materials are encouraged.

c. Tree grates are recommended for all street trees.

d. Use of trees and other plantings with special qualities (e.g., spring flowers and/or bright fall color) is strongly encouraged to unify the Downtown area with a unique character.

e. Street trees should not be placed in a manner that obstructs pedestrian movements or visually blocks storefront signage and entries (Refer to Figure 5-29).

f. Avoid planting street trees where existing/planned overhead power lines, utility lines, support structures, poles and easements exist.

Figure 5-27: Banners can effectively enhance the appearance of the Downtown

Figure 5-28: Banners announcing upcoming events

5.18 STREET TREES AND LANDSCAPING
Figure 5-29: Street trees that do not obstruct the view of the storefronts

g. The Fourth Street Retail Corridor has been identified by the City as a distinct character street (Refer to Figure 5-30). A special planting concept was created for Fourth Street and its intersections from Broadway to French Street. It is recommended that this planting concept should be utilized.

5.18.2 Tree Grates and Guards

a. Tree grates and tree guards should be made of cast iron, aluminum, or other metal per City standard.

b. The style and color of the tree grates and guards should be compatible to the style of other Downtown street furnishings.

c. Grate sizes should be a minimum of four feet in diameter. The grates should have an adjustable inner diameter to accommodate the trunk girth as the tree grows.

Figure 5-30: Typical plan view intersection of Fourth Street planting concept

Figure 5-27: Example of metal tree
grates and guards
### 5.18.3 Landscape Palette/ Location Matrix

The following table is a list of suggested vegetation for Santa Ana’s Downtown. The list includes various trees for street tree applications as well as varieties of shrubs and groundcover for medians and other landscaped areas. All selected species are drought-tolerant and hold up well in urban environments. Sources: City of Santa Ana Public Works Downtown Streetscape Model (2002) and Santa Ana Main Street Enhancement Study (1997).

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### PLANT PALETTE/LOCATION MATRIX

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Spacing: 25’-40’ O.C. |
| ![Image](Image_Scientific) | *Dietes vegeta* Fortnight lily | Fortnight lily | Location: Use in medians  
Spacing: 5 gal @18” O.C. |
| ![Image](Image_Scientific) | *Agave victoriae-reginae* Century Plant | Century Plant | Location: Use in medians |
| ![Image](Image_Scientific) | *Lavandula angustifolia* English Lavender | English Lavender | Location: Use in medians and large planters |
### Plant Palette/Location Matrix

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