

# Improvement Concepts

## Plan Concepts

The Plan Concepts for the 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood fall into three categories:

- Conservation and Development
- Circulation
- Public Environment.

This chapter of the *Neighborhood Improvement Plan* includes plans, policies and programs for each of these three elements. Chapter 5 Action Plan provides specific action items and improvement programs and priorities, to provide guidance for implementing the *Plan* concepts.

Each of the three elements touches on characteristics that are often overlapping and together contribute to the definition of community life within the 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood. The key components of each element are summarized below.

## Conservation and Development

This element focuses on the resources and assets of the individual property owners and residents within the neighborhood, their homes, businesses, and property resources. Two overall concepts emerged from the community in discussions:

- Strengthen neighborhood residential fabric
- Support new, compatible residential and commercial development in focused, but limited, areas

The goals identified by the community focused on the preservation of the existing resources in the neighborhood, both the diversity of its population and the character and historic quality of its residential resources. Conservation of these resources is a strong theme that is reflected in many of the *Plan's* provisions. Enhancement of deteriorating resources is a primary issue for the residents. This deterioration is particularly evident in multiple family structures but also affects housing stock that was originally designed as large, single family residences but has been converted to multiple occupancy over the years.

Where development is encouraged, the *Plan's* goals and strategies are aimed at reinforcing the character and scale of adjacent neighborhood development so that new structures respect the historic context of these neighborhoods.

Specific development opportunities are identified to reinforce the strengths and assets of existing neighborhoods while creating a focus for new development that can help transform those areas that do not currently contribute to the vitality and quality of the neighborhood.

## **Circulation**

This element focuses on movement along the public rights-of-way within the neighborhood and specifically looks at various modes of transportation including vehicles, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle. The two primary concepts of this element that emerged in the planning process were:

- Limit regional and inter-community vehicular trips through the neighborhood.
- Promote safe residential neighborhood streets.

High volumes of through traffic and the speed of vehicles rank at the top of neighborhood concerns. As a consequence, one of the strongest goals articulated by the 13<sup>th</sup> Street community is the desire to return the one-way couplets to two way streets and re-designate in the General Plan these residential arterials and collectors as local streets. In addition, the community advocates employing aggressive traffic calming measures to mitigate these traffic impacts. Traffic calming measures were proposed for many locations during the preparation of the *Plan*. Some of the trouble spots can be addressed almost immediately. However, the couplet conversions will likely substantially alter the distribution of traffic through the neighborhood. Consequently, the *Plan* recommends that traffic calming measures be identified after the conversions are complete as well. It is expected that at that time, the residents and City will be better able to identify specific locations where traffic calming measures need to be evaluated and implemented.

Other improvements to the overall circulation system, including the bicycle and pedestrian networks, transit stops and parking management were considered and are included in the plan.

## **Public Environment**

This element focuses on the design character and quality of the publicly owned facilities in the neighborhood, including the street environment (roadways and sidewalks), public facilities such as the parks, schools and library, and community services that are directed to managing these resources. It also addresses the community services with responsibilities for neighborhood safety and security.

While the community recognizes the generally good framework of parks, community facilities, and streets, they are very interested in supporting the pedestrian environment of the community, reinforcing the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood as a walkable downtown neighborhood with amenities and recreation within an easy walk for young and old alike. Many of these recommendations have to do with physical improvements; others relate to the ongoing maintenance of the public environment.

The key concepts regarding the Public Environment articulated by the NAC and the community at large, which are reflected in the plans that follow, include:

- Improve and redesign the public environment in key neighborhood centers
- Provide improved pedestrian connections throughout the neighborhood
- Create a unique physical identity for the area
- Improve parks, library and schools
- Maintain a full service hospital with a trauma center in the downtown area
- Increase neighborhood safety and security

## Conservation and Development

As noted in the preceding section, the key themes in the area of Conservation and Development articulated by the NAC and community were to strengthen neighborhood residential fabric, and to support focused and limited compatible new residential and commercial development. The specific improvements for the area are discussed below and fall into the following topic areas:

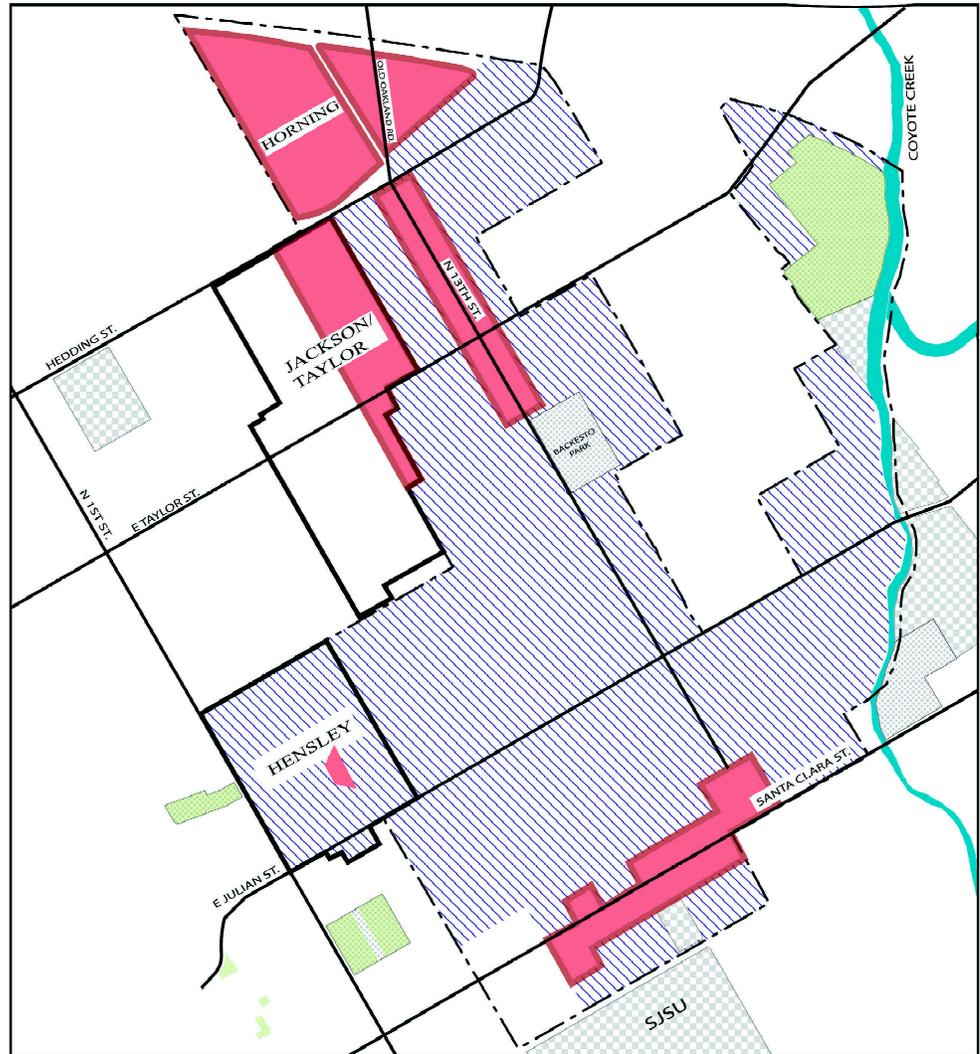
- Residential Protection, Support and Improvements
- New Residential Development Opportunities
- Mixed Use Development Focus Areas
- Neighborhood Commercial and Industrial Area Improvements

### Residential Protection, Support and Improvements

Residents of the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood are rightfully proud and protective of their community resources. The neighborhood ranks favorably in aesthetic and community value with many of the best San Jose neighborhoods.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood has many of the positive characteristics of a great downtown urban environment: tree lined streets, homes of historic and/or architectural merit, convenience services and amenities, good schools, a library, and parks. However, the neighborhood also has, in places, elements that are considered blighting and detrimental to community life: liquor stores and bars, poorly maintained streets and sidewalks, a disproportionate number of industrial uses such as auto repair in areas that are considered the “town center”, a high proportion of homeless and parolees, and problems with building and property maintenance.

Opportunities to upgrade and enhance the existing housing stock and improve the overall quality of housing in the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood are evident throughout the SNI area. The variety of plans, projects and programs that follow will help improve the condition of housing throughout residential areas identified in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1 Residential Conservation Areas**

-  Residential Conservation
-  Infill Opportunity Areas

## **Maintain Neighborhood Diversity and Affordability**

The diversity of the 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood is a point of considerable pride within the community. Concepts for retaining this economic diversity, and discouraging gentrification of the neighborhood include identifying opportunities for low and moderate income households and limiting the dislocation of low and very low income renters as a result of improvements in the housing stock that might drive up rents.

## **Protect Historic Neighborhood Resources**

Both the community and the NAC stressed the importance of utilizing the oversight of community groups and City agencies to maintain and preserve the neighborhood's late 19<sup>th</sup> early 20<sup>th</sup> century dwellings and historic structures that link these neighborhoods with the early history of San Jose and its Downtown and that add to the overall physical character of the area. The Hensley neighborhood has already been established as a registered Historic District which affords specific protections under the auspices of the City's Historic Preservation Office. Other structures of historic merit should be identified and protected over time.

## **Provide Home Ownership Support**

The *Plan* encourages more homeownership in the neighborhood. Presently a large proportion of the housing stock is multi-family and renters predominate, with an owner-occupancy of just 32 percent, compared with the average of 62 percent for the city as a whole. The increased transience of the rental population with fewer deep roots within the neighborhood contributes to a number of issues that were identified by the residents. Increased homeownership would contribute to the long-term stability of the community.



There is, however, concern regarding potential displacement of low income renters as a result of conversions of and improvements to residential properties. The community supports additional extremely low, very low, low and moderate income housing in the area, and programs to minimize displacement of renters and low income residents.

### **Expand Knowledge and Use of Existing Residential Property Improvement Programs**

The community supports efforts to provide renovation loans and grants for residential properties. As has been noted by the community, the physical condition of the buildings and other improvements in a neighborhood have a direct impact on how residents perceive their neighborhoods and how they perceive themselves; when property owners and residents see that a neighborhood is in decline, they tend to be less likely to invest in maintaining the buildings they own or in which they live. Numerous City housing rehabilitation and grant programs to improve the interior and exterior conditions of residential properties are available to neighborhood owners.

### **Increase Residential Maintenance and Code Enforcement**

The appearance and safety of the neighborhoods is a significant concern of this community. In general community members advocate greater enforcement of existing laws and codes that already address many of the issues noted above. In addition, the community desires the reduction of what is perceived as the inordinate impacts on this neighborhood of certain regional and citywide problems.

Aggressive, pro-active code enforcement on a wide variety of issues, including occupancy limits, building condition, vandalism, graffiti, trash, and parking, is a high priority for the community.

At the same time, code enforcement should be sensitive to and supportive of the preservation of historic buildings and to the ongoing investments, often in the form of “sweat equity” that characterize many new or younger residents of the neighborhood. The community supports ongoing identification of properties of historic value and consideration of that value when enforcing codes and monitoring improvements.

In addition, the City should initiate and/or expand education programs on code issues (such as shopping cart abandonment); neighborhood associations and their newsletters can also assist in this.

## New Residential Development Opportunities

There are certain opportunities within the project area for new residential development that will reinforce the character and quality of the community. Sites are noted in Figure 4.2.

### **Small Vacant Lot Residential Infill**

The infilling of vacant properties emerged as an important concept of the *Plan*. In order to reduce the visual blight that results from untended vacant parcels, the residents strongly favor appropriately-scaled infill development.

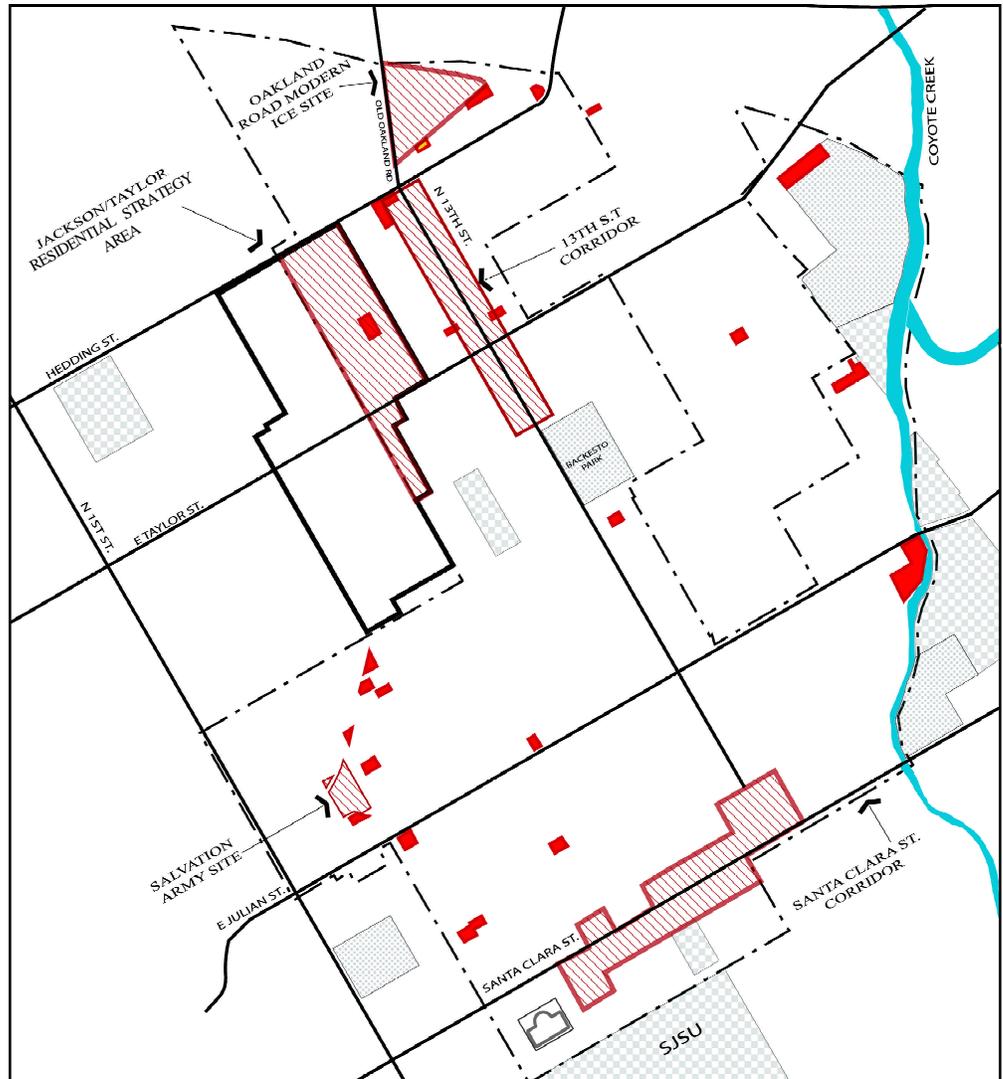
One infill strategy that meets the objectives for architectural compatibility and has widespread support is currently underway by the Redevelopment Agency. The Civic Plaza Historic House Moving Program has been developed to relocate existing structures to accommodate the new Civic Plaza Project between Fourth and Sixth Streets both north and south of Santa Clara Street.

### **Encourage and Monitor Major Residential Development Projects**

The community recognizes the need for the City to find new housing development sites in order to support the vitality of Downtown and that the health of the Downtown is critical to the quality of life in the surrounding neighborhoods. The community also recognizes that new housing development, if not carefully designed, may not be compatible with the historic character and scale of development in the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood and can exacerbate problems associated with traffic that results from an auto-dependent development pattern surrounding the downtown neighborhoods.

The community strongly encourages the City of San Jose and developers to solicit neighborhood input and support before pursuing development actions within the community.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood encourages new housing development within the neighborhood if it can be compatible with the existing character and quality of the neighborhood, and will not create significant negative impacts. No one particular architectural style is appropriate for the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood. For some areas, such as the Hensley neighborhood, the dominant architectural style is Victorian and Edwardian. For other neighborhoods, the architecture includes, in addition to Victorian styles, a wide range of revival styles such as Mission, or Arts and Crafts. This range of styles is the neighborhood's strength but the

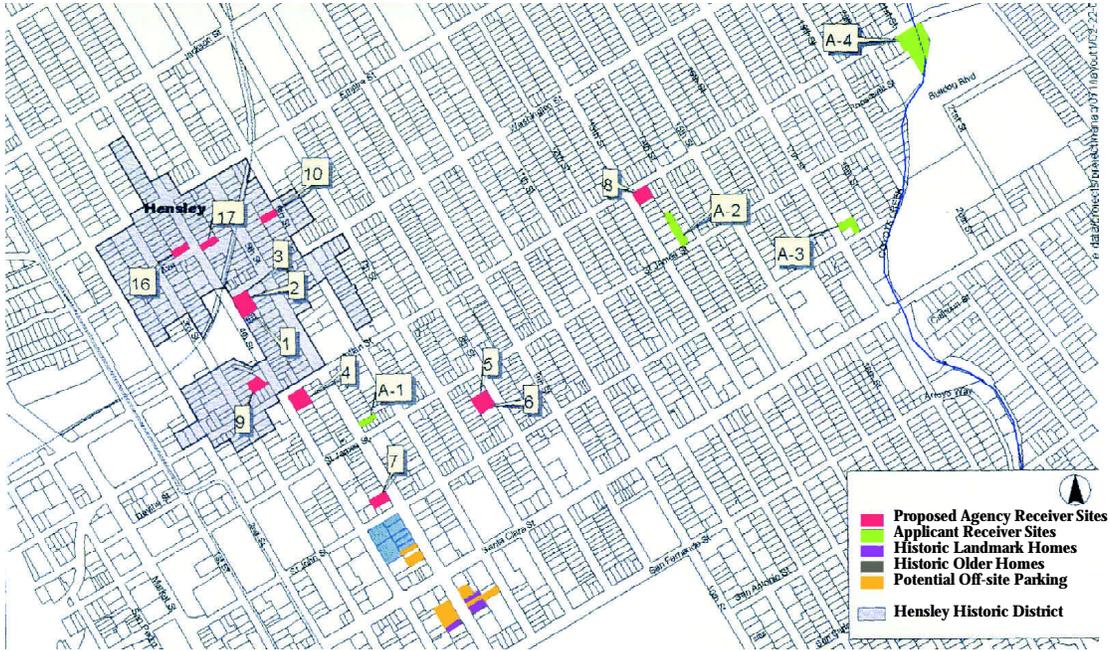


**Figure 4.2 Residential Infill and Development Opportunity Areas**

- 

 Development Opportunity Areas  
 - 13 Street Corridor  
 - Santa Clara Street Corridor  
 - Jackson Taylor Residential Strategy Area  
 - Oakland Road Modern Ice Site  
 - Salvation Army Site
- 

 Vacant Lot Infill Opportunities



**Figure 4.3 Civic Plaza Historic House Moving Program Sites**

integrity of the historic neighborhoods is at risk when an unsympathetic style or inappropriate scale or setback reduces the visual coherence of the entire neighborhood or adversely impacts the privacy or views from an adjacent structure.

Site-specific architectural review by the neighborhood is important in order to assure that the new development, even if it conforms to zoning, is also compatible with the integrity of the neighborhood.

A number of major residential project opportunity sites have been identified in the 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood and in areas immediately adjacent to it. These include:

- 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood Center – Hedding to Jackson (see Mixed Use Focus Areas section that follows)
- Santa Clara Street Commercial Corridor (see Mixed Use Focus Areas section)
- Oakland Road Gateway Area – “Modern Ice” Site
- Salvation Army Site
- Jackson Taylor Residential Strategy Area Sites



**Figure 4.4** Example of new residential infill (Naglee Park)

**Oakland Road/Modern Ice Site (at northeast corner of Old Oakland Road and Berryessa Road).**

The site of the “Modern Ice” food packing and distribution facility has been identified by the community as a housing development opportunity that would be a catalyst for redevelopment of the 13th Street corridor. The General Plan has recently been amended to change this site from an industrial designation to residential. Currently the property is in contract for sale for development as approximately 500 units of affordable housing in a high density (25-50 dwelling units per acre) configuration. This project has the strong support of the neighborhood. On this large and visible site, new development should be guided by the following considerations:

- Provide on-site open space for the project as well as for the neighborhood
- Acquire the railroad right-of-way spur and incorporate into the project area
- Building scale and massing should be compatible with the scale of the neighboring residences.
- Building heights can be varied to provide visual interest and decrease the apparent scale of the structures.
- The project should have a landscaped frontage on Oakland Road to contribute to the public right-of-way improvements that will create a gateway to the neighborhood. (Standards for landscape treatment should be coordinated with landscape plans for the new streetscape improvements on 13th Street to the south.)

**Salvation Army Site**

The Salvation Army owns and operates facilities between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets in the Hensley Neighborhood. During the preparation of the Revitalization Plan, the Salvation Army indicated its desire to move its men’s shelter. The NAC supports efforts to relocate the Salvation Army and to provide new housing on this site that is architecturally compatible with the predominantly Victorian historic district.



**Figure 4.5**      **Appropriately-scaled new residential development can create attractive streets and sidewalk.**

**Jackson/Taylor Redevelopment Project Area**

This existing redevelopment project area still has several sites that remain to be developed. These include:

- Mariani Brothers Site.
- City Corporation Yard.
- Industrial Catering Site.
- Triangular Site Opposite Maraido's.

Concepts that should generally guide development of all of these parcels include the following, many of which are included in the Jackson Taylor Residential Strategy:

- Reconnect the street grid wherever possible to enhance pedestrian access
- Promote a variety of housing plans, layouts and designs on large sites to fit in with the diversity of the residential neighborhood.
- Retain historic resources wherever feasible and appropriate
- Moderate building heights to be in scale with adjoining neighborhood
- Consider sites for relocation of historic homes from other parts of the city and for public parks. (In addition to the planned park sites, the Triangular Site could provide additional needed open space across the street from the Northside Community Center.)

## Mixed Use Development Focus Areas

There are several areas in the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood that provide neighborhood-serving businesses, including 13<sup>th</sup> Street near Backesto Park and Santa Clara Street. The community strongly feels that the quantity and types of amenities available in these areas should be increased and improved. While Santa Clara Street also serves a community-wide and even regional role as the “Main Street” of downtown San Jose, 13<sup>th</sup> Street between Jackson and Hedding has the potential to be a neighborhood “town center”. These two areas are shown on Figure 4.2.

Both streets suffer from a range of land use and streetscape problems. However, targeted investments in both streets offer opportunities to effect significant change.

### **13<sup>th</sup> Street Mixed Use Neighborhood Business Corridor Redevelopment**

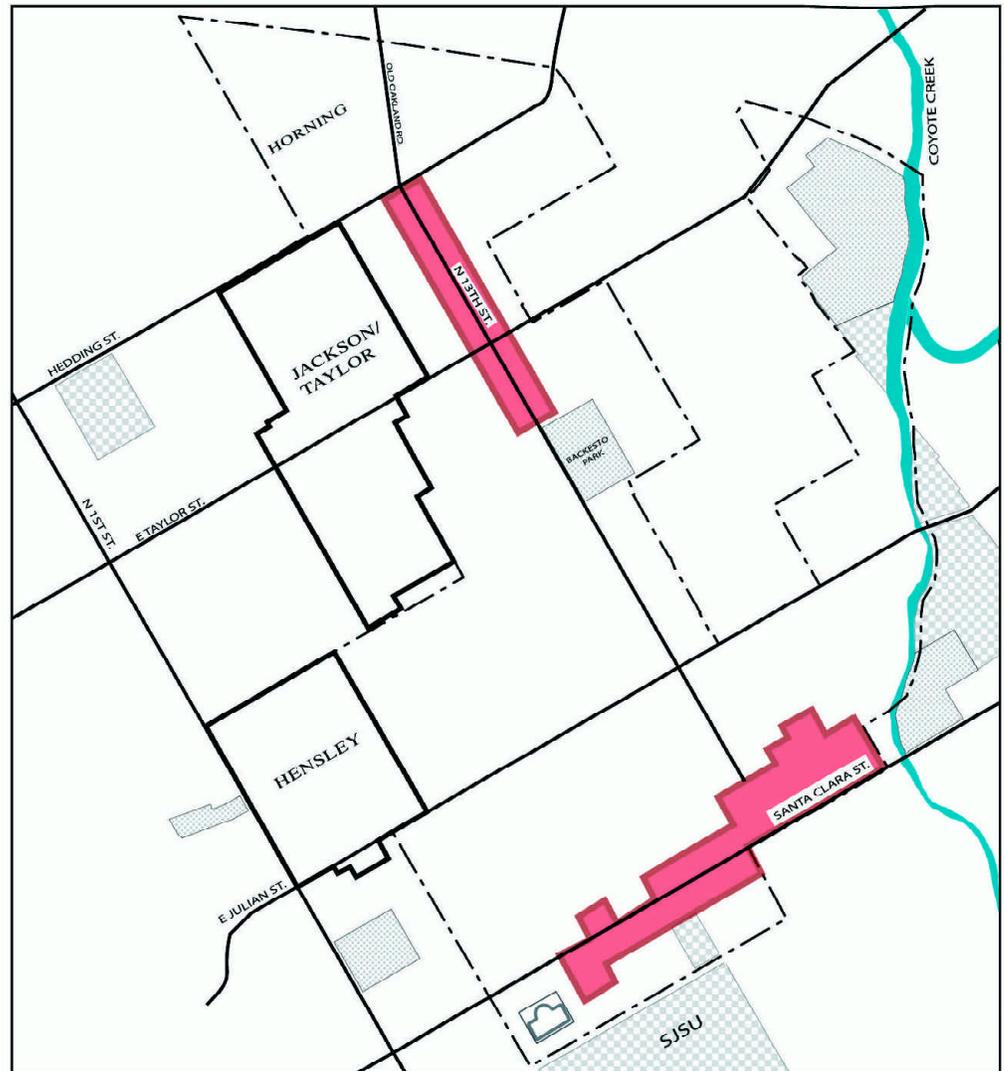
The residents of the neighborhood have identified 13<sup>th</sup> Street as a location where major changes are appropriate to create a new mixed-use neighborhood “town center”. The blocks between Hedding and Jackson Streets have been identified as appropriate for higher intensity residential development, combined with ground floor local-serving commercial retail uses.

Assets to be retained include a number of historic structures, some of which were originally built for commercial use and serve as neighborhood landmarks.

Redevelopment of this portion of 13<sup>th</sup> Street will allow blighted conditions to be corrected. These include a number of poorly maintained or visually unattractive non-local-serving auto service businesses that have parking storage areas that are open to the street and/or chain link fences that interrupt the pedestrian qualities necessary to support local retail and business services. In addition, the street presently has an abundance of liquor-serving or liquor-sales establishments, which residents feel discourage property investments, and contribute to neighborhood concerns about safety.

**Redevelopment Strategies.** A well-defined approach to revitalization of this corridor should include:

- Catalyst project(s) – identification of one or more key catalyst projects that will receive significant public support in its planning and implementation. One or more catalyst projects will demonstrate development opportunities and initiate significant improvements in a part of the street, likely spurring further private investment in redevelopment activities. Catalyst projects preferably would be located in the vicinity of 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Taylor, in order to complement existing commercial uses in the Jackson to Taylor block.
- Ownership patterns – contiguous parcels under single ownership represent the potential for parcel assembly/consolidation. Parcel assembly will likely be a prerequisite for creating a new, multi-tenant retail district.
- Oversaturated/underperforming businesses – certain business types seem to be over-represented in the North 13<sup>th</sup> Street commercial corridor. Identifying businesses that do not take full advantage of the high-profile location afforded by their 13<sup>th</sup> Street address and moving them to more appropriate sites elsewhere could free up desirable parcels for revitalization and redevelopment.
- Vacant parcels – consult with landowners to determine what constraints are preventing the development of vacant parcels.
- Odd-shaped parcels – Some parcels have configurations that hinder their marketability or development. These should be consolidated with adjoining parcels.
- Non-conforming uses – work to phase out non-conforming and nuisance uses along the North 13<sup>th</sup> Street commercial corridor, replacing them with more appropriate neighborhood-serving businesses.
- Phasing – begin development at southern end of corridor (Jackson and 13<sup>th</sup>) and move north
- Clustering – concentrate major retail development at the primary nodes/intersections
- Flexibility – focus on providing replacement housing and flexible commercial space that could accommodate a variety of users in the mid-block areas between primary nodes
- Opportunity – identify under-performing parcels that could be assembled to create more marketable development opportunity sites



**Figure 4.6** Mixed Use Development Focus Areas

-  Mixed Use Development Areas
- 13th Street Mixed Use Neighborhood Commercial Core
- Santa Clara Street Commercial Corridor

• Improvement Concepts •



**Figure 4.7**  
Vacant and underutilized sites and parking lots do not support street activity on 13th Street.



**Figure 4.9**  
Street lacks trees and other amenities.



**Figure 4.10**  
Sidewalks are in poor repair.



**Figure 4.11** Fine buildings exist on 13th Street, but utility poles and lack of amenities detract from street life.

**Major New Streetscape Improvements.** To achieve the neighborhood vision for 13<sup>th</sup> Street, redevelopment of properties should be accompanied by the implementation of a major new streetscape improvement project. This would transform the physical character of the street to support new private investment. (See Public Environment section for a description of streetscape opportunities.)

**Mixed Use Projects.** Mixed use projects along 13<sup>th</sup> Street, combining multi-family building types with ground floor retail, are appropriate and will support the emergence of a vital, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood-serving commercial district. Housing types can include apartments, stacked flats or lofts, and in limited locations townhouses. A cohesive street façade should be provided along 13<sup>th</sup> Street. Since demand for retail may lag, it is recommended that the building design for this corridor provide ground level spaces that can be easily converted into retail use, as demand warrants. Acceptable interim and/or alternative uses include, for example, live-work studios or other flexible ground floor space.



Upper level residential (or office).

Active pedestrian-oriented ground floor uses (retail, restaurants, art galleries.)

Public arcade provides additional pedestrian sidewalk space.

**Figure 4.12** Example of mixed-use residential or office over retail, as could be developed on 13<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Scale of New Development and Compatibility with Existing Neighborhood Features.** As with other areas of the plan, the community encourages new or infill development to fit into the existing neighborhood context and retain, where feasible, the character and qualities of existing architectural resources. New development along 13<sup>th</sup> Street should conform to the following:

- *Building Heights:* Building heights of 2, 3 or occasionally 4 stories are appropriate and would be compatible with the existing historic commercial structures that are one to two stories with high floor plates and roof structures. Building heights should step down towards the back property line to be consistent with the City’s residential design guidelines, as well as with adjoining neighbors.
- *Building Setbacks:* The 13<sup>th</sup> Street frontage and side yards should generally recognize a “build-to” line with little or no setback. Minor variations to the street-wall are acceptable when they provide usable sidewalk space. Rear setbacks should be consistent with adjoining homes and with the City’s residential design guidelines.
- *Architectural Style:* The existing street has a wide range of architectural resources spanning the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when most of the street was developed. Many architectural styles are compatible with this existing street character. New buildings, however, should be primarily conceived to knit together the existing fabric rather than insert a new architectural idiom. Buildings and/or building facades that contribute to the architectural heritage of the street should be identified and, where feasible, incorporated into the new projects to retain the historic context.
- *Pedestrian Amenities:* New projects should provide, wherever feasible, outdoor features, such as dining tables and seating to enliven the street.
- *Business Establishment Signs:* A coordinated business establishment sign program should be developed.
- *Billboard Signs:* Existing billboards located along 13<sup>th</sup> Street should be acquired and/or removed over time in order to enhance the visual quality of the neighborhood, consistent with existing state regulations.
- *Parking:* Adequate, convenient parking for the district is essential to the viability of the commercial district. If curbside parking proves insufficient, the City is encouraged to provide small, centralized parking lots. (See also Circulation and Public Environment.)

**Desirable Uses.** The community desires a wide range of retail and personal services along the 13<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, for example:

- *Food-Oriented:* such as grocery, coffee shop or breakfast services, café, diner, restaurant, delicatessen, ice cream shop, bakery or bagel shop;
- *Retail:* such as drug store, hardware store, book store, bike shop, arts/frame shop, family clothing store, nursery, or non-profits;
- *Medical Services:* such as family dentist, physician, or chiropractic offices;
- *Personal Services:* such as personal grooming, dry cleaning, children's center or day care center, etc
- *Education or Training:* such as dance studios, gymnastic or sports studios;
- *Entertainment:* such as small jazz bar, theater, or small movie house.



**Figure 4.13** Ground level retail uses in a mixed use district such as 13th Street.

**Improvements to Existing Businesses.** The community wants to retain the existing businesses that add to the viability of the vision as a neighborhood-serving commercial district. The City is encouraged to assist property owners and businesses in the upgrade of their premises and business practices.

Over time improvements to existing uses should be encouraged, so that they make a positive contribution to the street. A higher standard for appearance and maintenance of buildings and businesses will be required in order to achieve the transformation desired. Façade improvements, property fencing that screens open car storage from view, and landscaping that enhances the streetscape and pedestrian qualities of the street should be encouraged. Appropriate outdoor/sidewalk uses, such as sidewalk cafe dining, are also encouraged and will contribute to an interesting street environment. If appropriate, business relocation assistance can also be offered as part of the redevelopment efforts.

- *Building Improvements:* Building improvement programs such as the Façade Improvement Program are strongly encouraged for existing businesses. Efforts should be made to tailor these programs for both owner-occupied businesses as well as rental properties.
- *Business Association Activities:* The City is strongly encouraged to continue the efforts to organize a business association for the neighborhood businesses on 13<sup>th</sup> Street.
- *Business Attraction/Retention Activities:* The City is encouraged to utilize its resources to direct and facilitate the relocation of suitable businesses to 13<sup>th</sup> Street that are displaced by redevelopment activities elsewhere.

## Santa Clara Street Mixed Use Commercial Corridor

The community recognizes the many roles of Santa Clara Street: a regional circulation corridor, and a commercial street with local, citywide and regional destinations. This *Neighborhood Improvement Plan* supports the City's General Plan designation of Santa Clara Street as a Transit-Oriented Development Corridor allowing for high-intensity new residential development with ground floor retail. Such high-density residential development will add new housing to the downtown neighborhoods compatible with the current public transit investments such as the Downtown/East Valley Light Rail Project and the proposed extension of BART to downtown. However, the community also strongly supports local serving businesses along the street, and good parking and access to the existing and new retail.

**Existing Public Projects.** As part of the public initiatives to revitalize Santa Clara Street, several major public projects will begin to transform the street. The 13<sup>th</sup> Street community supports these projects but wants to be consulted and involved in key decisions with implications for the neighborhood. Planned projects include:

- *Civic Plaza:* Civic Plaza is a complex of projects that are in joint planning by the City and several educational and cultural institutions. These projects include: the new City Hall and Civic Plaza, major parking structures, the Joint Library Project with San Jose State University, multi-family residential projects, and Symphony Hall.
- *Horace Mann School:* Actually part of the Civic Center Plaza Project Area, Horace Mann School is currently under reconstruction. This project incorporates an entire block between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Street and fronts on Santa Clara. The new elementary school will be one of the first in the city to be developed with multi-story classroom buildings in response to its constrained urban site and need to increase its student population from 312 to the planned 750 students. The school is expected to open in the fall of 2002.

- *Downtown/East Valley Transit Improvement Plan:* While alignment alternatives west of 10<sup>th</sup> Street are in the planning stage, the Major Investment Study (MIS) conducted by VTA, and the subsequent investment decisions, have identified Santa Clara Street as a future light-rail corridor and VTA is currently preparing more detailed plans for specific project design. (See also Circulation.)
- *Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor:* A joint project of VTA and BART, this project will extend BART from Warm Springs to downtown San Jose at the Diridon Station, west of the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood. Subsequent detailed planning will determine the appropriate route design and implementation measures. (See also Circulation.)



**Figure 4.14** Inconsistent building facades and a mix of low and tall buildings do not contribute to a visually unified street.



**Figure 4.15** Santa Clara Street lacks a sense of activity and density consistent with being San Jose’s “Main Street.”

**Streetscape Improvements.** Streetscape improvements associated with the light rail and BART projects should be designed in a manner that promotes the viability of neighborhood-serving businesses as it transforms the physical character of the street. In particular, every effort should be made to retain parking on both sides of the street. (See Public Environment.)

**Mixed Use Projects.** Where development opportunities arise, the community supports higher density mixed use residential projects along the street, combining multi-family building types with ground floor retail and service uses.

**Supporting Existing Businesses.** As with 13<sup>th</sup> Street, the community strongly supports retaining the existing businesses that add to the viability of Santa Clara Street as a neighborhood-serving commercial district in addition to its larger citywide or regional role. Among strategies that can be used are:

- *Building Improvements:* Building improvement programs such as the Façade Improvement Program are strongly encouraged for existing businesses. Efforts should be made to tailor these programs for both owner-occupied businesses as well as others.
- *Business Association Activities:* The City should continue the efforts to work with the East Santa Clara Street Business Association.
- *Business Attraction/Retention Activities:* The community supports the relocation of suitable businesses to Santa Clara Street that are displaced by redevelopment activities elsewhere.



**Figure 4.16** Redevelopment with higher density mixed use with ground level retail and sidewalk improvements will create a more interesting pedestrian environment.

## Neighborhood Commercial and Industrial Area Improvements

The community appreciates the variety of commercial retail opportunities already existing in the neighborhood but would like to see significant improvements to the quality, condition, and types of uses in the area.

### **Expand Commercial Property Improvement Program**

Although some commercial properties are particularly well-kept and attractive, numerous properties and businesses are in need of improvements. City commercial rehabilitation loan and grant programs to improve the interior and exterior conditions of these properties are available to neighborhood owners. Building improvement programs such as the Façade Improvement Program are strongly encouraged for existing businesses. Efforts should be made to tailor these programs for both owner-occupied businesses as well as others.

## **Improve Commercial Code Enforcement and Property Maintenance**

As with residential properties, the community would like to see a higher standard of property maintenance and more aggressive code enforcement directed to commercial properties.

Commercial properties in the neighborhood suffer from a variety of maintenance issues, including litter, excessive trash, and graffiti. Many of these can be addressed through code enforcement and through other City programs such as graffiti removal. In some cases there are concerns regarding operations of businesses, and attendant noise and nuisance, which may require other enforcement procedures.

Historic buildings, however, are of great value to the community and should therefore receive particular care in their treatment, both in terms of enforcement and actual improvements required.

## Neighborhood Commercial Node Improvements

While new neighborhood-serving businesses are encouraged in areas such as 13<sup>th</sup> Street and along Santa Clara Street, the community also desires to strengthen existing, well-distributed commercial retail nodes, which are shown in Figure 4.17.

The existing pattern of small-scale retail nodes, with businesses such as Casa Vicky Restaurant and Mi Pueblo Grocery Market, is very convenient and enhances the pedestrian qualities of the district.

However, several of the businesses are marginal and struggling, some occupy run-down buildings, or have uncontrolled signage and unattractive facades. There are also undesirable uses such as bars and bail bonds.

### General Retail Node Improvements

The community would like to see a variety of improvements bundled for application to the commercial nodes. These would include plans and programs to assure compatibility, such as:

- Minimize incompatible uses, such as bail bonds or liquor stores.
- Encourage and enforce sign design or control to improve the appearance of unattractive buildings and visual clutter.
- Façade improvements to buildings, including increasing window size, new paint, awnings, outdoor seating, site landscaping and other improvements that can significantly improve the appearance of many businesses.
- Streetscape improvements, such as lighting and street furniture that will also improve the attractiveness of these retail nodes.
- Enforce nuisance ordinances, pertaining to noise, odors and litter.
- Small business support, programming (Office of Economic Development, etc.)

### Examples of Specific Retail Node Improvements

- *Mi Pueblo Market*: This business can be improved by 1) landscaping the perimeter of the parking lot surrounding the market, and 2) enforcing the recently passed shopping cart ordinance to manage the leakage of carts into the surrounding neighborhood.
- *The Cluster of Restaurants at Julian and 17 including Casa Vicky*. The north east corner of the intersection, with the closed, former gasoline station, should be redeveloped with a retail and/or residential project improved to better complement the existing cluster of food services. Improvements to the streetscape such as lighting and street furniture are also desirable. (See Public Environment Framework.)



### **Increase Business Attraction and Retention Programs**

The City is strongly encouraged to continue efforts to organize a business association for the neighborhood businesses, to utilize its resources to direct and facilitate the relocation of suitable businesses to 13<sup>th</sup> Street that are displaced by redevelopment activities elsewhere.

### **Improve Horning Street Industrial Area**

The Horning Street area (shown in Figure 4.17) is recognized as one in which the existing mix of uses and parcelization pattern is not optimal, leading to an image that is unsafe and unattractive. The area is designated for light industrial use in the City's General Plan, though it presently includes both light industrial and residential uses. The community supports the current General Plan designation and recognizes that the area may redevelop with new industrial uses over the long term. Particular care should be taken that new or upgraded development along 13th Street frontages contribute fully to the renaissance of the 13th Street commercial corridor. The residents, however, have also identified the area as a suitable location in the long term for high density residential development that would help anchor the north end of the 13th Street commercial corridor. A General Plan amendment would be required to establish new residential or mixed uses on these parcels. The City is concerned, however, about any additional loss of light industrial land especially for industrial service and supplier uses.

A master plan for the redevelopment of this area should be prepared.

## **Circulation**

The 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood experiences severe impacts associated with vehicle trips destined for the downtown and elsewhere. These impacts affect safety and quality of life in the area. Circulation plans are therefore directed toward minimizing the volume and speed of vehicular traffic through the neighborhood. In addition, the community is very interested in improving pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the neighborhood, particularly to facilitate movement by children and the elderly. Managing on street and off street parking is also a high priority of the community.

Specific circulation improvement plans and programs fall into the following component areas:

- Vehicular Circulation Management
- Transit-Related Improvements
- Pedestrian Corridor Enhancements
- Bicycle Route Extensions
- Parking Management

### **Vehicular Circulation Management**

The residents, business owners and tenants of the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood repeatedly expressed their concerns about the amount of traffic within the neighborhood and the threats to safety that occur daily. In every venue and at every meeting, the NAC and the members of the broader community focused their attention on vehicular circulation concerns. Many streets were identified as having speeding problems with cars reaching fifty miles per hour between intersections on the long, north-south blocks

#### **City Plans and Studies**

##### *Downtown Access Study*

The City is currently preparing a traffic study to analyze the circulation system required to support downtown San Jose. As part of this study, the City will analyze the feasibility of converting four pairs of one-way streets back to two-way operation, including: 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, Julian and St James and Almaden and Vine. The study is expected to be completed in 2002.

*City Traffic Calming Policy*

The City recently adopted changes to the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program that includes a new Traffic Calming Policy, which defines the procedures the City will follow to prepare specific Traffic Calming Plans. The process includes establishing the appropriate level of response and the resulting consideration of “Base Level,” “Level I,” and Level II” measures.

<b>Potential Traffic Calming Measures</b>		
<b>Base Level</b>	<b>Level I</b>	<b>Level II</b>
Safety Education	Traffic Circles	Diverters
High Visibility Cross Walks	Road Bumps	Corner Bulbs (Major)
Corner Bulbs (Minor)	Medians and Chokers	Partial Closure
NASCOP Enforcement	Chicanes	Full Closure
Radar Trailer		
Striping		
Warning Signs		
Curb Markings		
Stop Signs		
Police Dept Enforcement		
Gateway Signs		
Truck Restriction		
Larger (ex) Signs		
Signed Turn Restrictions		
Additional Stops		

Figure 4.18 Source: City of San Jose, Department of Transportation, 2000.

**Existing Vehicular Circulation Framework**

Regional vehicular circulation corridors include Highway 101 on the north and the Highway 87/Guadalupe Parkway on the west. These major regional facilities, because of their proximity, give the San Jose Downtown neighborhoods a high degree of regional accessibility. There are two multi-modal corridors that also provide regional accessibility for the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood. The existing light-rail lines along North First Street and transit plans for Santa Clara Street will supplement regional circulation.

The one-way couplets – 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, and Julian and St. James – serve as citywide arterials, bringing commuting traffic through the neighborhood. At peak hours traffic volumes are high, and at all hours traffic speeds can be high.

Other streets throughout the neighborhood, while serving primarily as local streets, in some cases also carry occasionally heavy or speeding through traffic.

## **Implement Proposed Neighborhood Circulation Framework**

Figure 4.19 illustrates the overall circulation and street classification concept supported by the community.

**Regional Corridors.** Regional traffic should be routed to regional corridors for through traffic to the extent possible. Where necessary, improvements to freeway interchanges should be made to encourage traffic to utilize designated corridors rather than neighborhood streets.

**Inter-neighborhood Circulation Corridors.** The community feels that a minimum number of these corridors should be designated and supports designation of the following for this role:

- Hedding
- Taylor
- 13<sup>th</sup>

However, traffic calming on these streets should be implemented wherever possible to slow traffic.

**Local Access Neighborhood Streets.** The community feels strongly that the remaining streets in the neighborhood should be treated as local access residential streets. The community would like to see traffic calming, pedestrian improvements and streetscape improvements used to clearly identify these streets as neighborhood serving so that they are compatible with the daily lives of the residents and neighborhood businesses, rather than primarily serving as conduits of through traffic.

## **Convert One-Way Streets to Two Way Residential Streets**

The neighborhood is unanimous regarding the need to convert the three sets of one-way streets back to two-way residential streets. These include 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> and Julian and St. James Streets. The one-way operation of these streets raises safety concerns in the neighborhood, particularly for children, seniors and the disabled.

As noted above, the feasibility of converting the one-way pairs is being studied as part of the Downtown Access Study. The 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood strongly endorses this change to these streets in this neighborhood.

## **Implement Area-wide Traffic Calming and Enforcement**

The NAC has identified specific locations where traffic calming should be implemented immediately (See Appendix). The Department of Transportation should work closely with the NAC and community to evaluate these situations and implement immediate improvements. Specific traffic calming measures also should be pursued throughout the neighborhood following conversion of the one-way streets in order to tailor solutions to the new traffic patterns that will result.

Enhanced traffic patrolling is also desired, including continuing use of the Neighborhood Automated Speed Compliance Program (NASCOB).

## **Implement Truck Route Modifications**

Nearby industrial areas and the proximity of regional freeways result in considerable truck traffic in the neighborhood. The Department of Transportation, as part of the Downtown Access Study, should investigate the feasibility of designating specific truck routes and limiting access in other areas, but particularly on residential streets. Enforcement of these designations and prohibitions will likely need to be stepped up as well.

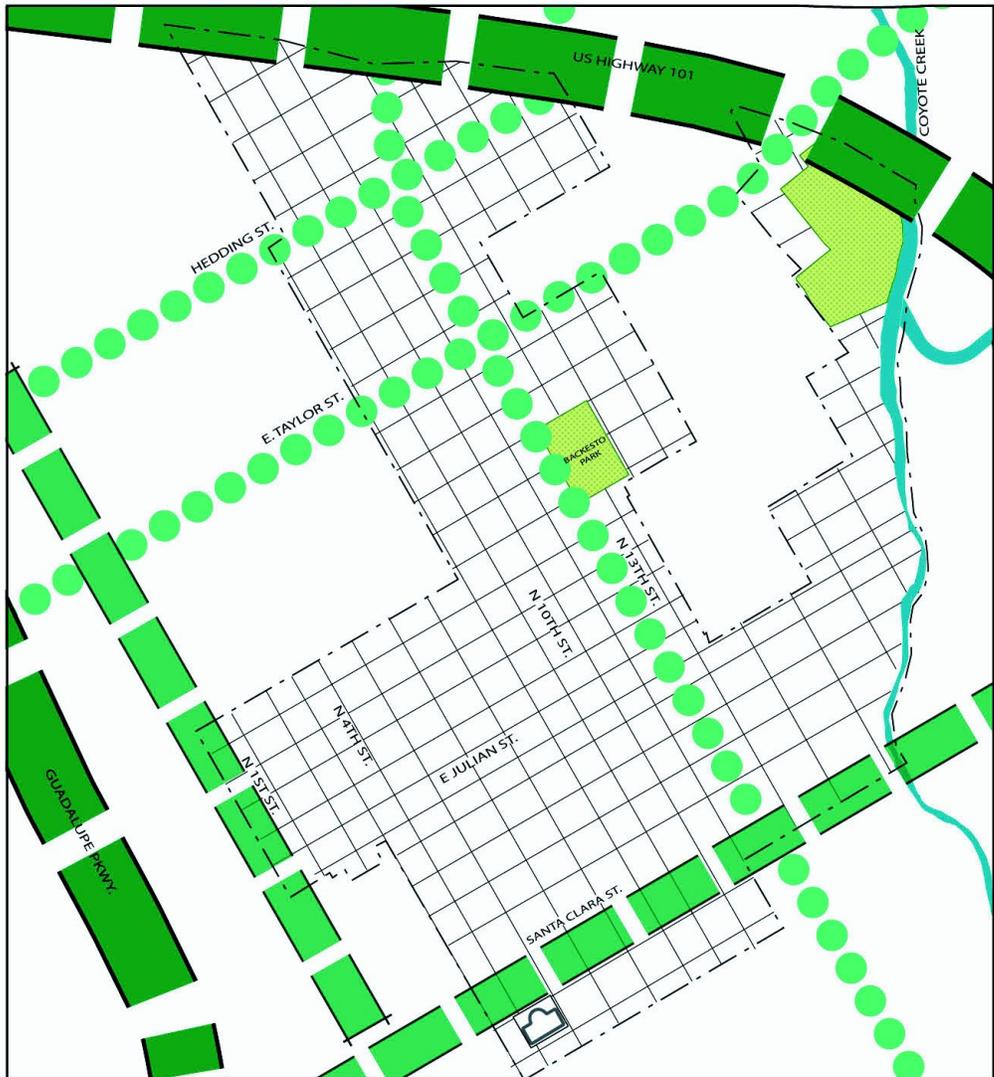


Figure 4.19 Proposed Circulation Framework

-  Regional Vehicular Circulation Corridors
-  Regional Multimodal Circulation Corridors
-  Inter-Neighborhood Circulation Corridors
-  Local Access Streets



## **Transit-Related Improvements**

Transit plays an important role in the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood providing convenient regional and local access. As noted earlier, VTA is currently preparing a Downtown/East Valley Transit Improvement Plan in the Santa Clara/ Alum Rock corridor including light rail transit from Downtown San Jose to the future Capitol LRT Line, generally along Santa Clara Street and Alum Rock Avenue. In addition, BART will be extended from Warm Springs to the Diridon Station in downtown San Jose.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood is also served by several VTA bus lines. Routes are currently located on both east-west and north-south corridors.

- East-West Bus Corridors: Hedding, Taylor, Julian, St. James, Santa Clara and San Fernando Streets.
- North-South Bus Corridors: 1<sup>st</sup> , 10<sup>th</sup> , 13<sup>th</sup> , 17<sup>th</sup> Streets and Oakland Road.

## **Continue to Monitor BART and LRT Plans for Santa Clara Street and/or San Fernando Street**

The community supports regional transit improvements in the VTA corridor. The following concepts have been identified as important to consider:

- *Off-Street Parking:* The residents strongly discourage the location of major parking reservoirs at the transit stations along the light-rail corridor in the downtown neighborhoods since these will become attractions for traffic through the neighborhood.
- *Street Parking:* Retaining street parking to serve the retail businesses along Santa Clara Street is vital to their success. The *Plan* recommends that the final street section approved for Santa Clara Street should retain parking on both sides of the street. (See also Public Environment section.)
- *Streetscape Improvements:* Implementation of surface light rail improvements offer an opportunity to also implement new sidewalk paving and pedestrian-scaled lighting to enhance the pedestrian environment and support the economic revitalization of the street. (See also Public Environment section.)

## **Upgrade and Maintain Area-wide Bus Route Facilities**

**13<sup>th</sup> Street Bus Corridor Enhancements.** Enhance transit facilities in the 13<sup>th</sup> Street corridor with suitable bus stop landings and shelters coordinated with the conceptual streetscape improvements recommended for the street in the Public Environment section of this report.

**Area-Wide Bus Stop Furnishings.** VTA is encouraged to improve the maintenance of the bus stops throughout the neighborhood and to initiate a program to add benches and shelters at high volume stops throughout the neighborhood.

(See Figure 4.20)

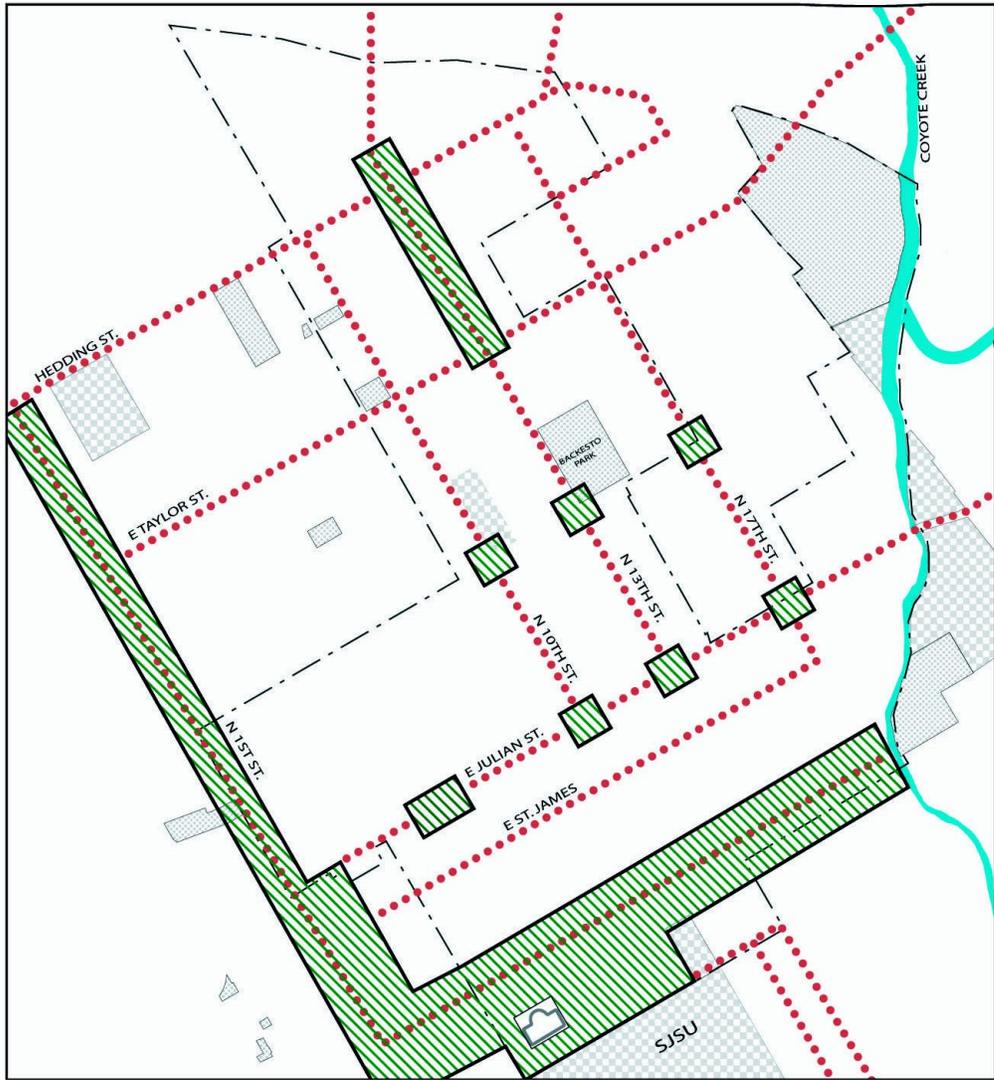


Figure 4.20 Transit Facilities Improvement Areas

-  Areas of Potential Transit Related Improvements
-  Existing Transit Routes

## **Bicycle Circulation Improvements**

The flat topography and wide streets within the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood and other downtown destinations contribute to making bicycle circulation easy and convenient. Major concerns expressed by the residents about bicycle circulation involve safety conflicts with vehicular traffic.

Most of the existing or funded bicycle routes are located on major north-south thoroughfares including: 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> Streets. Proposed bike facilities reflected in current City policy, augment the north-south movement with facilities on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets and add east-west movement with corridors on Hedding and Taylor Streets.

### **Improve Bicycle Route and Trails**

Additional desirable bicycle links are illustrated in Figure 4.21:

**Coyote Creek Bike Trail.** Incorporate bike circulation facilities and improvements into the future planning for the multipurpose trail corridor along Coyote Creek. As part of these improvements, provide safe, convenient, and well-posted access to the Creek from the 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood.

**New East-West Bicycle Corridor.** Coordinate with citywide bicycle circulation planning efforts to identify and implement an additional east-west bicycle link to connect the Guadalupe Park Corridor with the planned Coyote Creek Corridor.

**North-South Bicycle Corridors.** When changes to the one-way pairs are accomplished, as recommended in this *Plan*, there may be a need to reconsider future north-south bicycle circulation corridors to bring the bicycle planning into consistency with the overall street system.

**13<sup>th</sup> Street Bike Route.** The planned 13<sup>th</sup> Street Bike Route between Hedding and Taylor Streets should be coordinated with the design for streetscape improvements to the commercial core of 13<sup>th</sup> Street. (See Public Environment).

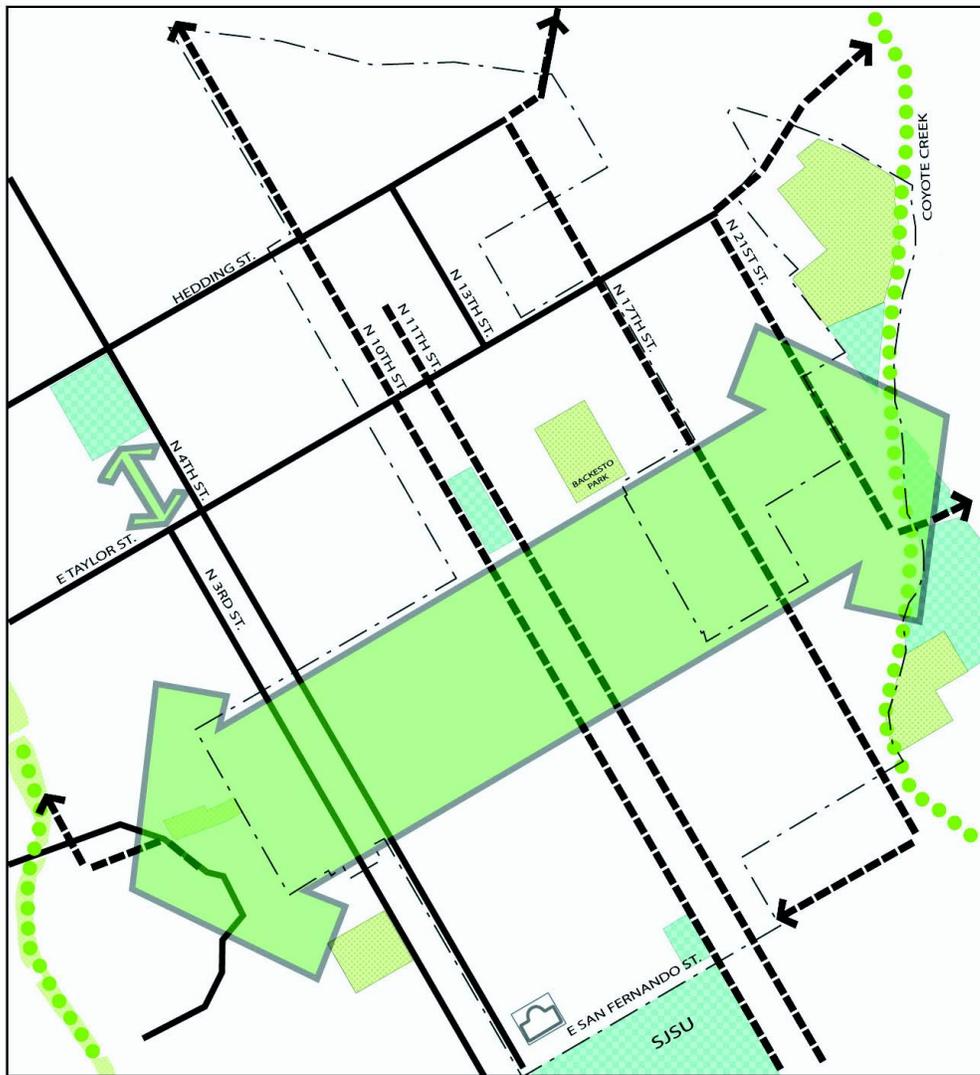


Figure 4.21 Bicycle Circulation Improvements

-  Existing or Funded Bike Lanes, Routes
-  Proposed Bike Facilities (Current City Policy)
-  Planned Multipurpose Trail
-  Additional Linkages Required

## **Parking Management**

On-street parking concerns in the 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood are significant and will require more aggressive management, focused on key areas shown in Figure 4.22.

Off-street parking concerns also exist. There is inadequate off-street parking for both the Grant Academy School and Empire Branch Library that share the campus site as both public facilities have on-going program and facility needs. (See also Public Environment.)

The 13<sup>th</sup> Street retail businesses, between Hedding and Jackson Streets lose convenient, on street parking for their customers to the overflow from the adjacent residential neighborhoods. As redevelopment of this portion of 13<sup>th</sup> Street proceeds, it will become increasingly important to provide convenient parking to promote the viability of local-serving businesses.

Parking along 13<sup>th</sup> Street between Hedding and Jackson should also be managed to support the vision for a vibrant 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood commercial district. Approaches would include metering parking and designating adequate loading and short term parking areas. If demand warrants, consider small-scale public parking lots in the commercial district as a strategy for increasing parking supply and directing redevelopment and reinvestment initiatives. A long term parking strategy should be developed for the district as part of the overall planning for the area.

In areas near Santa Clara Street, street parking can be tight in many locations, and is exacerbated by the additional impacts from major traffic generators, including the Civic Plaza Project, San Jose State University, and the downtown retail and commercial core. A Neighborhood Permit Parking Area is being created for the area between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets. The first phase, between Santa Clara and St. James Streets, is scheduled for Council approval in April 2002.

## **Area-Wide Parking Enforcement and Management**

On- street parking should be managed through means such as metering, time limitations, and resident sticker programs, throughout the neighborhood as needed, particularly in the southern portion of the neighborhood .



Figure 4.22 Parking Management

-  Parking Management District
  - Facilities Locations
  - Neighborhood Permits
  - Key Enforcement Areas
-  Parking Enforcement

## **Public Environment**

The public environment includes neighborhood amenities and facilities such as the parks, schools and library that are essential to community life as well as the community services that enrich these physical assets. The public environment also includes linkages among these elements: the sidewalks, streetscapes, furnishings, lights, street trees, and other features that contribute to a positive image of the community. Finally the Public Environment includes the sense of security that is created by responsive safety, social and medical services within the neighborhood.

Plans and programs for improving the Public Environment fall into the following areas:

- Redesigning the Street Environment.
- Street Maintenance Improvements.
- Upgrading Parks, Open Space and Recreation.
- Improving Library, Schools and Other Facilities and Services.
- Enhanced Neighborhood Safety and Security.

## **Redesigning the Street Environment**

The *Neighborhood Improvement Plan* recognizes the role that streets play in the quality of the neighborhood environment. A special character and quality is essential for many streets to sustain the vision the community has for the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood.

## **13<sup>th</sup> Street and Old Oakland Road Mixed Use District Streetscape Improvements**

The *Plan* recommends that the City pursue a major Redevelopment Agency Project to upgrade the streetscape for the section of 13<sup>th</sup> Street from Hedding to Jackson, and at the corner of Empire and 13<sup>th</sup> Street. Improvements to the pedestrian environment – sidewalk, street trees, lighting, street furniture, bus stops, and art projects – can have a catalyst effect on adjacent properties and may help spur redevelopment of this area into a local-serving retail “town center”. The following conceptual design elements are community-recommended efforts and shown in illustrated Figures 4.24 - 4.27. Final improvement elements will require further City and community review and decisions.

*Sidewalks and Tree Plantings.* The existing sidewalks should be upgraded. A regular spacing of new street trees with tree guards and grates should be established to provide shade and create a unique identity to define the neighborhood retail district.

*Undergrounding Utilities.* Utility poles are unsightly along much of 13<sup>th</sup> Street and are particularly visible between Hedding and Jackson where there are few street trees to screen them. The utility lines should be undergrounded as part of the overall streetscape and sidewalk improvements for this portion of 13<sup>th</sup> Street.

*Reduced Travel Lane Width and Medians and/or Sidewalk Widening.*

The existing street right-of-way is sufficiently wide to accommodate traffic needs and maintain curbside parking, while significantly improving streetscape quality. Narrowing the very wide travel lanes will help to slow traffic and would permit the addition, where feasible of a planted median, left turn lanes, and widened sidewalks. A median located at the Jackson and Hedding ends of the street would, beautify the street, provide a sanctuary for pedestrian crossings, and delineate gateways announcing the special retail district. It appears that the improvements generally could be accommodated without incurring the expense of moving the curbs and changing the drainage system.

*Mid-Block Pedestrian Crossings.* Mid-block crossings are not commonly used and can be unanticipated by motorists. However there are good reasons to consider them for 13<sup>th</sup> Street. The blocks are over 800 feet long, in comparison with typical urban blocks that average 300 to 400 feet in length. Providing mid-block crossings will add to the convenience of the curbside parking, making it possible for people to frequent businesses on both sides of the street. Shortening the walk between businesses will significantly help to increase the convenience for the pedestrian and increase the viability of the individual businesses.



Figure 4.23 Widened sidewalks allow sidewalk dining and similar activities while still providing ample room for shoppers.



Figure 4.24 Street furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, tree grates) provide pedestrian amenities.

*Corner Sidewalk Treatment.* The concept plans illustrate two different corner treatments.

- **Typical Bulb-outs.** By enlarging the sidewalks with “bulb-outs” at the corners, the pedestrian crossing distance is shortened adding to pedestrian safety and convenience. The bulb-out treatment can include features such as traffic bollards and locations for street furnishings such as trash receptacles.
- **Longer Bulb-out/Bus Stop.** The longer bulb-out can also provide a transit plaza with a shelter at the boarding zone for buses, as well as locations for kiosks and newspaper racks. The bulb-outs increase the sidewalk area and provide opportunities for cafes to place tables and chairs. The Taylor Street intersection with both Jackson and Empire, is particularly suited to the longer bulb-out treatment.

*Mid-Block Crossing Treatment.* A mid-block bulb-out can greatly facilitate pedestrian crossings without blocking traffic and with the loss of only a few parking spaces. The additional crossing area provides opportunities to incorporate seating and special lighting to enhance the street environment. The breaks in the median provide for wheel chair access.

*Left Turn Section and Bike Route.* The illustration with the left turn lane illustrates a potential design solution at 13<sup>th</sup> and Taylor. In addition to a left turn pocket, the Right of Way accommodates a 16-ft wide travel lane that would accommodate one lane of traffic and bicyclists in a non-striped, but signed, bike route.

• IMPROVEMENT CONCEPTS • PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT •



Figure 4.25 Sidewalk extensions (bulbouts) can accommodate sidewalk cafes.



Figure 4.26 Bulbouts provide locations for additional street trees and seating.

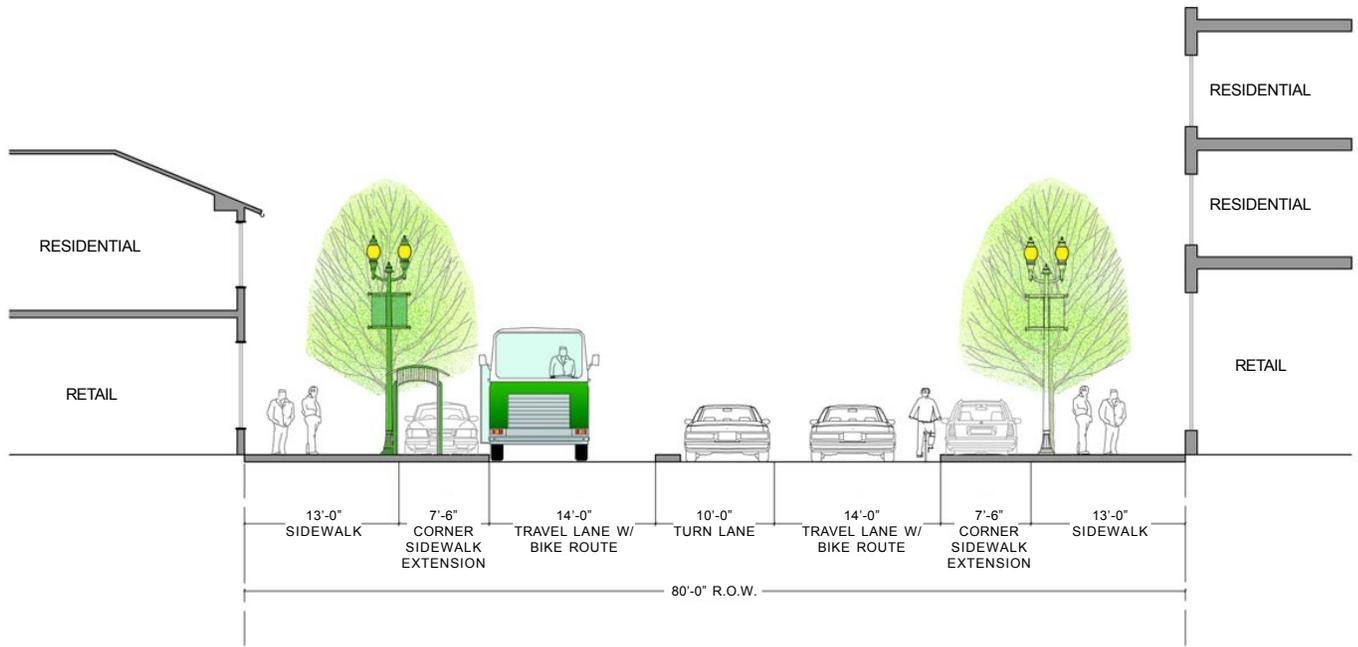


Figure 4.27 Illustrative 13th Street Streetscape Improvements

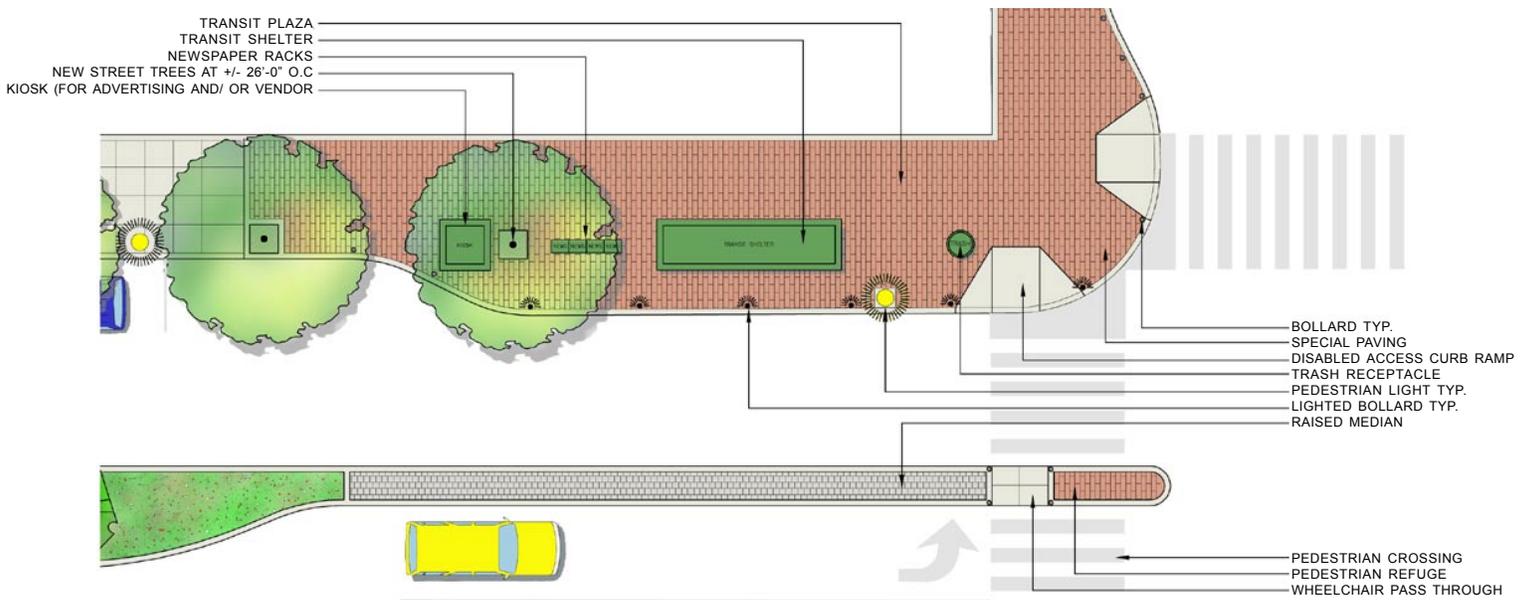


Figure 4.28 13th Street Prototypical Large Corner Sidewalk Extension with Optional Median

• IMPROVEMENT CONCEPTS • PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT •

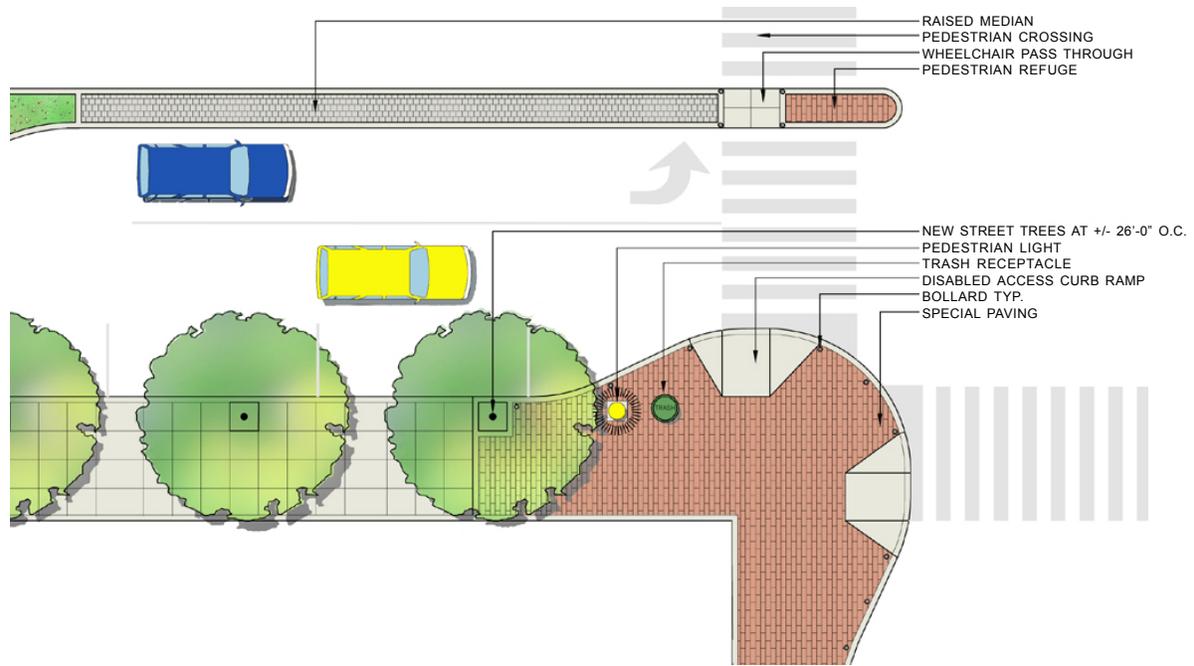


Figure 4.29 13th Street Prototypical Smaller Corner Sidewalk Extension (shown with optional median)

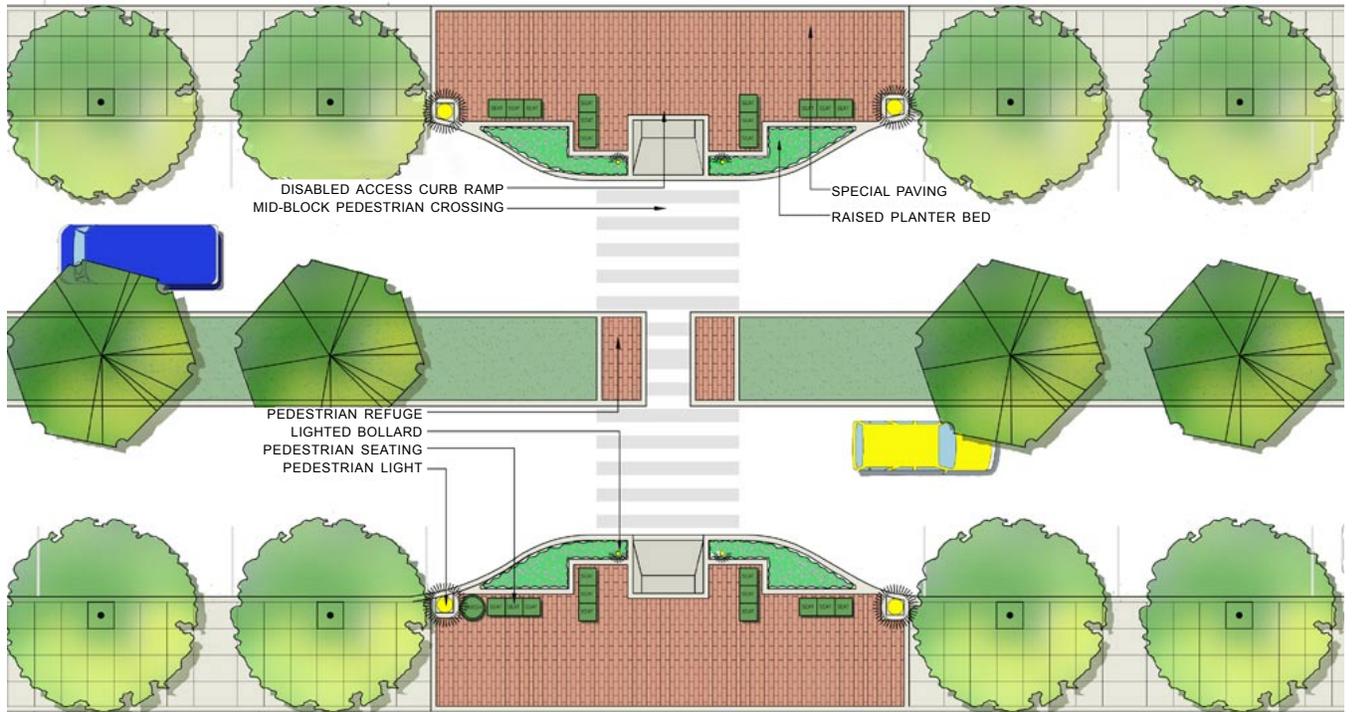


Figure 4.30 13th Street Prototypical Mid-Block Sidewalk Extension and Street Crossing (shown with optional median)

## **Streetscape Improvements on Santa Clara Street**

Although it is important to the feasibility of the transportation projects to keep costs to a minimum, there are enormous opportunities to significantly improve the appearance of Santa Clara Street and thereby assist in its revitalization, a major goal of the Downtown Strategy Plan and other city initiatives.

*VTA Initial Street Section Concept.* As illustrated in Figure 4.28, the initial design for Santa Clara Street provides a 13.5-ft median that will accommodate a center platform. The LRT track is located in a mixed-flow lane (shared with automobile traffic) on either side of the median. The existing curbs and sidewalk would remain with sidewalks of approximately 16 feet on each side of the street. To accommodate the LRT, parking would need to be removed from at least one side of the street.

*Illustrative Retail-oriented Street Section Concept.* This alternative section (Figure 4.29) illustrates the same LRT operation with median platform. In order to maintain curbside parking on both sides of the street to serve the local-serving retail businesses, the sidewalks would need to be reduced to approximately 13 feet, leaving 11 feet for the travel lane and 7.5 feet for curb-side parking. However, corner bulb-outs could be used at intersections to enhance pedestrian crossing of Santa Clara Street and to sidewalk width while sacrificing only a few parking spaces. This cross-section, while more expensive to construct, retains an adequate sidewalk width to support a high level of pedestrian activity plus sidewalk cafes, store displays and other pedestrian amenities, while preserving curb-side parking on both sides of the street, a major component of the success of the retail environment.

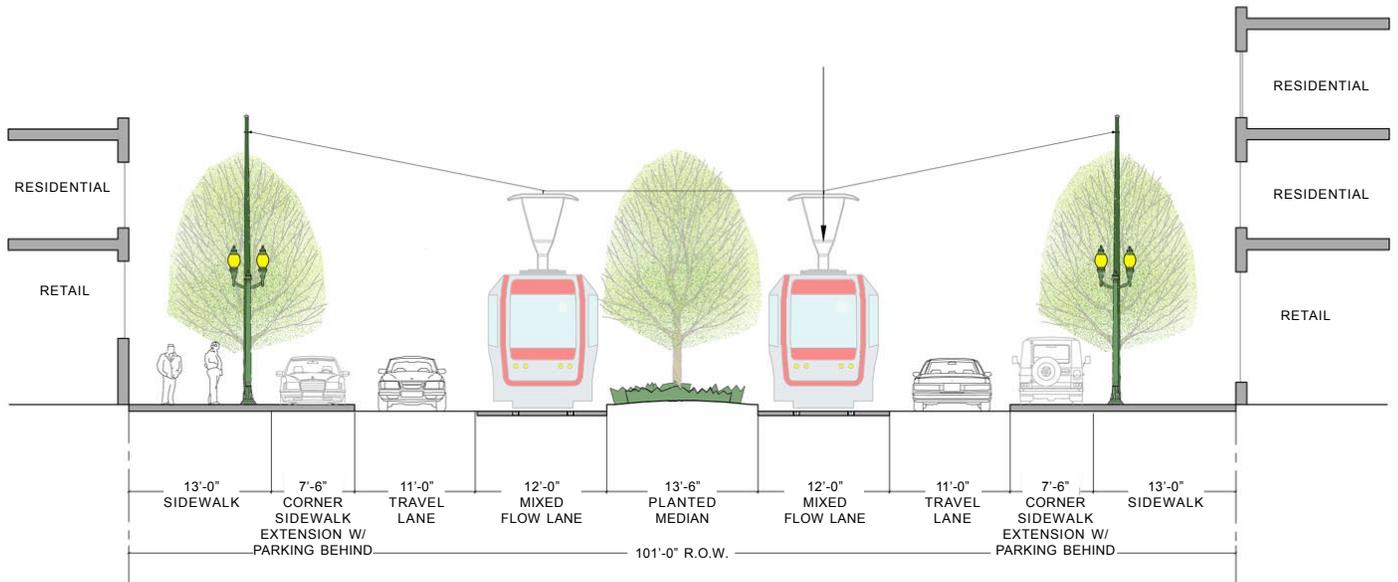


Figure 4.31 Santa Clara Street with LRT and Parking on Both Sides

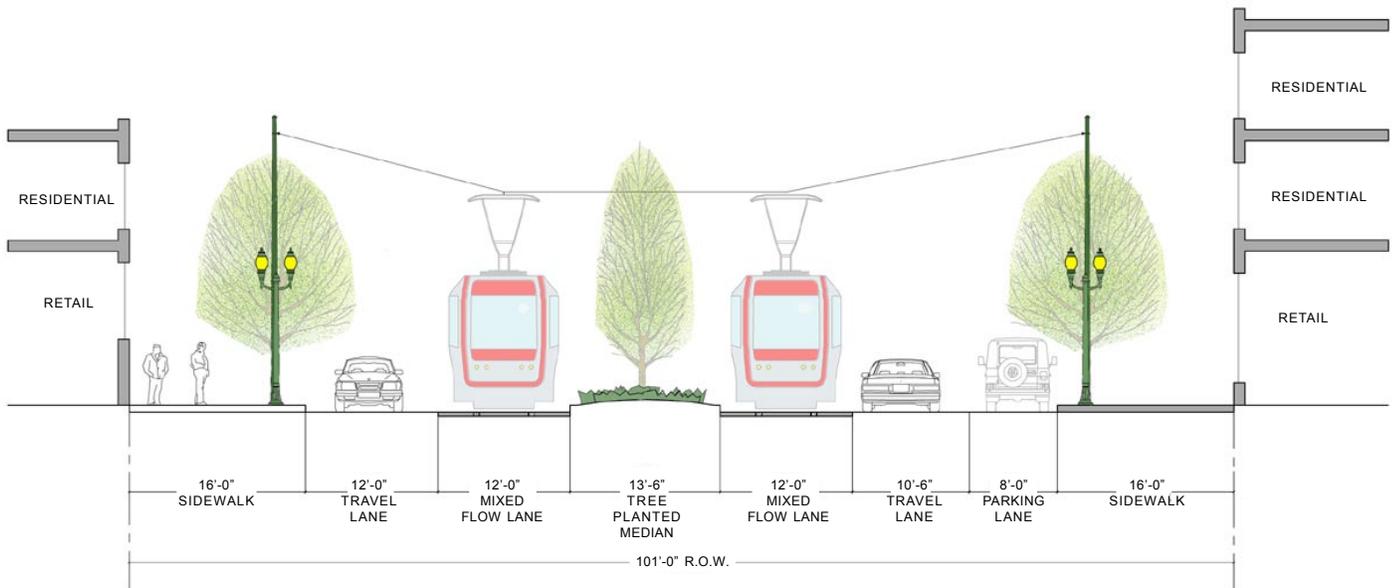


Figure 4.32 Santa Clara Street with Parking on One Side

## **Pedestrian Corridor Enhancements**

Current citywide initiatives promote pedestrian circulation as a means of tying together the residents of the City and linking each one with the diversity of its cultural, educational and physical resources. *Walk San Jose* has promoted these concepts and recently the *Downtown Neighborhoods Leadership Forum* (DNLFF) has identified pedestrian routes for inclusion in San Jose's General Plan. These corridors are intended to provide neighborhood links to Coyote Creek and Guadalupe River trails, improve pedestrian circulation in the greater downtown and become part of a citywide bicycle and pedestrian network.

The residents of the 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood have distinguished primary and secondary pedestrian links that take into account the citywide objectives together with specific neighborhood objectives to reinforce these critical links.

Economic revitalization goals and objectives, particularly for 13<sup>th</sup> Street and for the local neighborhood commercial nodes, are also intimately tied to the character of the streets and ease of pedestrian movement. Residents enjoy the pedestrian qualities of their historic neighborhood, but consider enhanced pedestrian safety to be key to the success of their vision for vital neighborhood business districts.

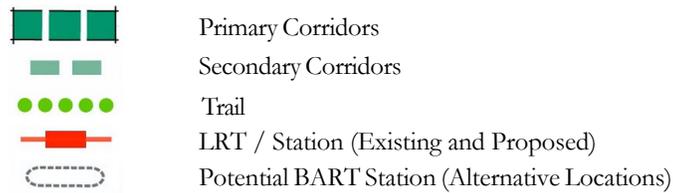
These pedestrian corridors require systematic improvements to the pedestrian environment. Those related to traffic calming are discussed in the Circulation section. Sidewalk maintenance, including paving and ramps are discussed in a following section

As illustrated in Figure 4.33, this *Plan* recommends that the City adopt a long-range implementation strategy to enhance primary pedestrian corridors including:

- E. Jackson Street (including trail access through Watson Park to the Coyote Creek Trail)
- E. Julian Street
- E. St John Street (including a bridge over Coyote Creek and trail access through Watson Park to the Coyote Creek Trail.)
- E. Empire Street
- 13<sup>th</sup> Street
- N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street
- Mission Street



Figure 4.33 Pedestrian Corridors



These improvements should be closely coordinated with those involving street operations, safety and traffic calming. Among the improvements that should be considered in greater detail are those illustrated in Figures 4.34 and 4.35:

*Corner Bulb-Outs and Crosswalks.* The plans illustrate a bulb-out and crosswalk at the corner to enhance the pedestrian crossing at the intersection. The bulb-out can help increase safety by identifying for both the vehicle operator and the pedestrian the safe locations for pedestrian street crossings. The bulb-outs also serve to define the boundaries of curbside parking locations and keep parked cars from encroaching into the intersection.

*Pedestrian-Scaled Lighting.* Pedestrian-scaled lighting with an ornamental pole and fixture can enhance the safety and the neighborhood character. Although high pressure sodium lights are the City standard metal halide should be considered for its superior color rendition.

*Tree Planting.* Planting street trees will reinforce the identity of the pedestrian connector streets. An expansive tree canopy will also reduce the apparent scale of the street and moderate the environment for the pedestrian.

*Medians and Median Landings.* A median landing is possible at the intersections as an alternative to the bulb-outs and may be desirable in certain locations. Medians can be planted and maintained by the neighborhood through an “adopt-a-street” program.

*Street Furniture.* Additional street furniture, including benches, trash receptacles and newsracks should be provided in particularly high volume pedestrian locations. In many cases these will fall either at bus stops or in the mixed use commercial corridor on 13<sup>th</sup> Street or Santa Clara Street, where coordinated streetscape improvements should be pursued and are discussed in preceding sections.

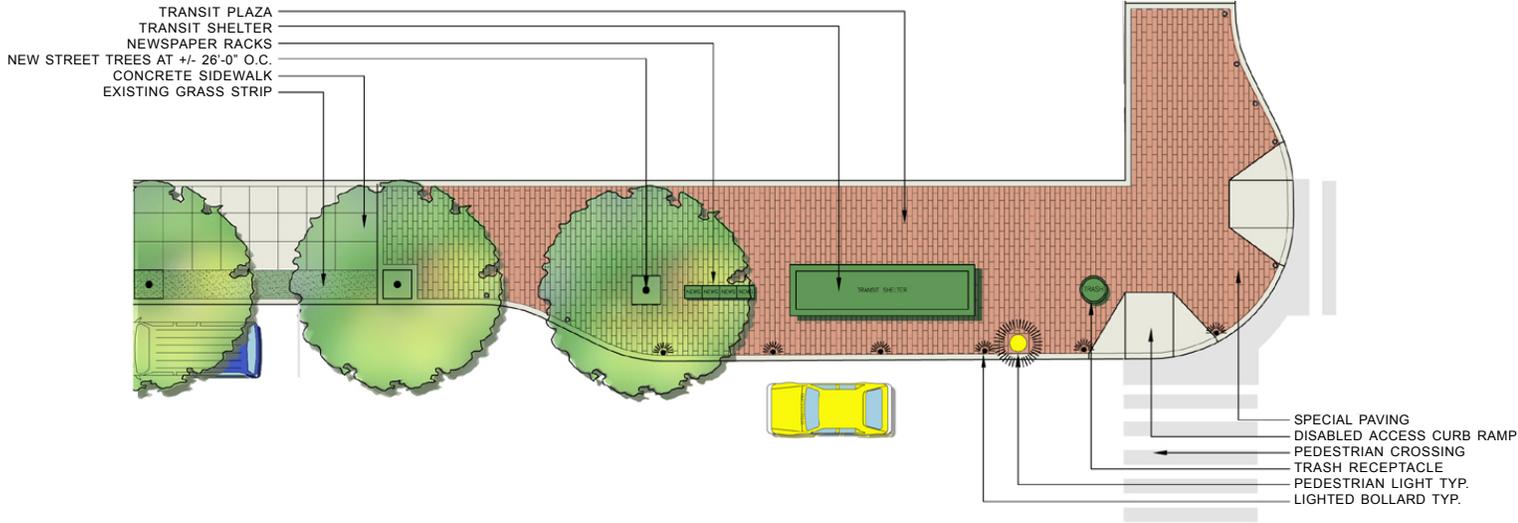


Figure 4.34 Pedestrian Corridor Improvements - Corner Sidewalk Extension

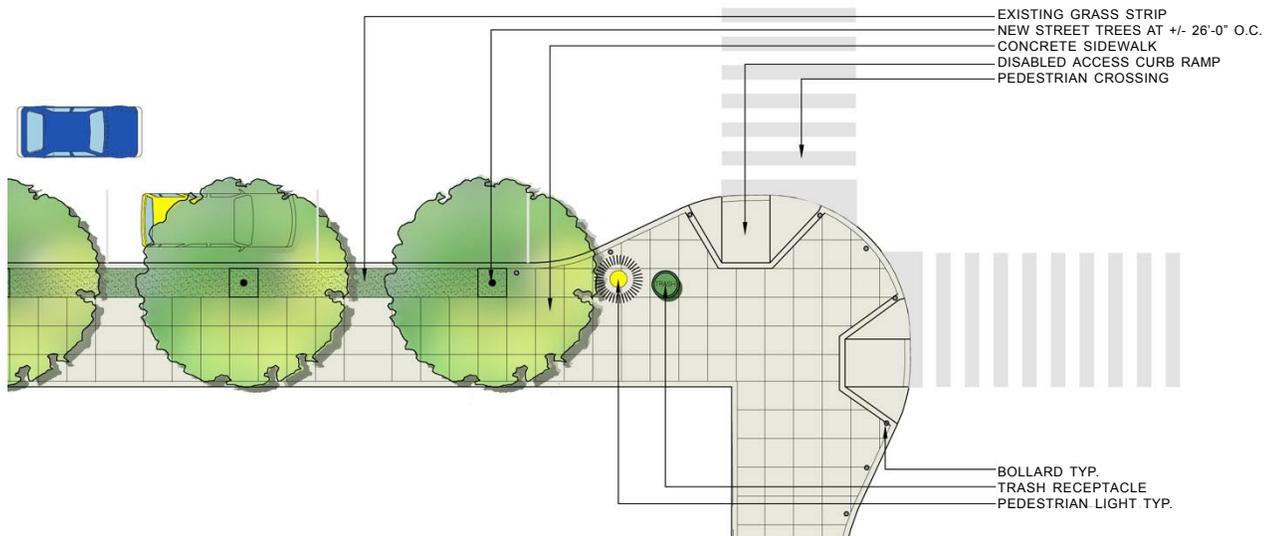


Figure 4.35 Pedestrian Corridor Improvements - Corner Sidewalk Extension

## Oakland Road Gateway Enhancements

Oakland Road from Hwy 101 to Hedding Street is part of an existing roadway improvement project that includes widening the street to three travel lanes in each direction. The existing project has no budget for sidewalk improvements and landscaping. This portion of the project is in preliminary design. As shown in Figure 4.36, planned roadway modifications should be augmented with significant gateway streetscape improvements to enhance the gateway role of Oakland Road as a primary portal to the revitalized 13<sup>th</sup> Street mixed use retail district.

*Median Planting/Signage.* The existing planned median should be planted with major landscaping to mark the gateway. The median also provides an opportunity for gateway signage for the 13<sup>th</sup> Street retail district. Landscaping should provide a dramatic entry to the neighborhood but also be low maintenance and drought-tolerant.

*Side and Setback Treatment.* The sides of the roadway along Oakland Road leading into the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood should also receive significant landscape treatment to contribute to the gateway image of this zone. Sidewalks should be set behind a planted strip to buffer pedestrians from automobile traffic. Buildings on either side of the street should be set back an adequate distance from the property line to contribute to the gateway treatment in the public right-of-way.

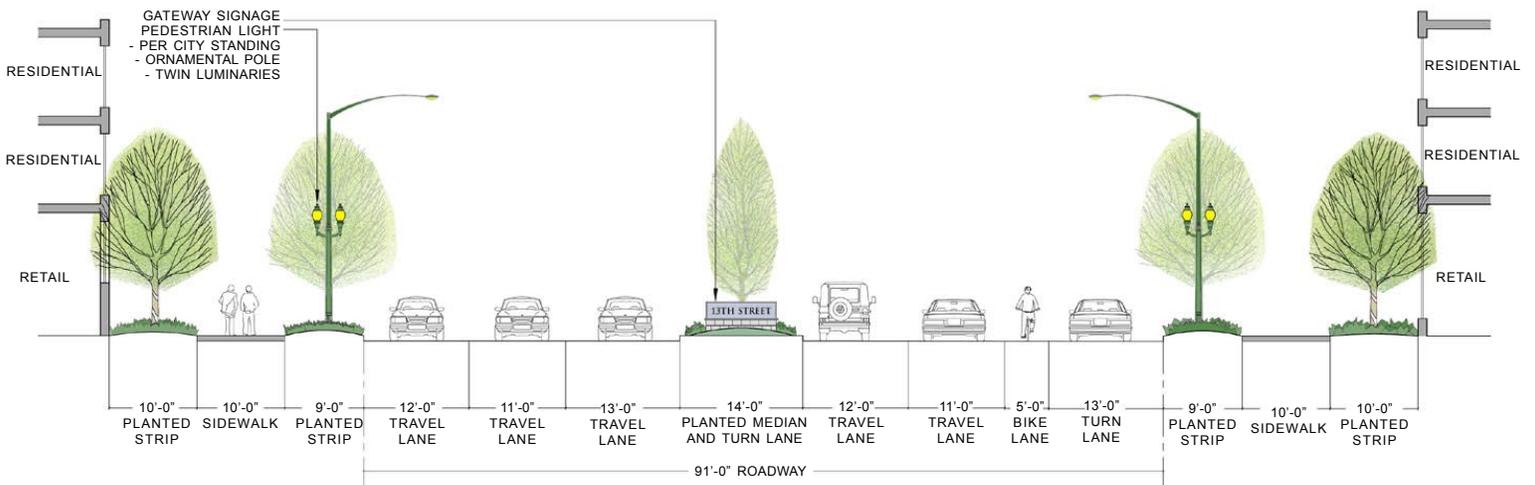


Figure 4.36 Oakland Road Gateway Enhancements

## **Street Maintenance and Repair**

### **Repair and Maintain Neighborhood Sidewalks**

**Area-wide Curb, Gutter, and Sidewalk Repair.** Initiating repair of curbs, gutters and sidewalks has been the responsibility of property owners adjacent to the area needing repair. However, the City reimburses 100% of these costs for single family properties through the Sidewalk and Curb Repair Program.

Coordination between qualifying property owners with damaged curbs, gutters and sidewalks and the Department of Transportation should be facilitated, to plan, finance and install the necessary improvements. Since resources for this type of repair are likely to be limited, this *Plan* recommends:

- **Prioritization:** Repair activities should be focused first on the priority pedestrian circulation routes identified in the Circulation Framework.
- **Coordination with Major Streetscape Improvement Projects:** Repairs on streets planned for major rehabilitation, such as 13<sup>th</sup> Street, should be properly phased to avoid unnecessary duplication.

**Curb-Cut Ramping.** The City's current policy will annually fund 140 wheel-chair ramps throughout the city. Given the limited funding, the Department of Transportation gives priority to those ramp requests that come from individuals who use mobile devices (wheelchairs). Requests for the sake of improved convenience (using baby carriages, shopping carts, etc.) would receive low priority under the existing funding constraints. To implement these ramps, this *Plan* specifically recommends:

- **Prioritize:** The Neighborhood Associations should identify priority intersections for these improvements.
- **Funding mechanics:** The City should identify funding mechanisms to augment the existing Department of Transportation program.

The overall condition of the street rights-of-way can substantially affect the quality of life in the neighborhood and will contribute to area-wide blight if inadequately maintained. While funds for citywide programs are limited, there are a number of programs that can contribute to the upgrading of the City streets. Active involvement by interested residents and business owners can leverage these various programs to improve the character of the neighborhood.

**Utility Under-Grounding.** The City maintains a list of street segments that qualify for PG&E Rule 20A funds. Under-grounding proposals compete with other under-grounding projects for priority under a Five-Year Plan, which is considered and approved by the City Council.

Under-grounding of utility lines should be pursued as a part of all major public environment improvements in the neighborhood. In particular, utility undergrounding should be a very high priority to be implemented as part of the overall redesign of 13<sup>th</sup> Street between Hedding and Jackson. Where undergrounding is unlikely or likely to be far in the future, the community would like to explore moving utility lines to rear property lines and/or obscuring utility lines with additional street tree plantings.

### **Area-wide Upgraded Street Cleaning**

Street cleaning is currently scheduled once a month on residential streets. Commercial streets, including Santa Clara and 13<sup>th</sup> Street are scheduled to be cleaned on a weekly or twice-monthly basis. Starting in July, 2002 all residential street sweeping will increase from once to twice monthly.

A more aggressive strategy is needed to increase the effectiveness of the regular street cleaning. Components might include:

- Signs: “No Parking” signs can be installed on streets that experience poor street sweeping results and enforced to ensure that parked cars do not interfere with regularly scheduled street sweeping. Signs should clearly post street-cleaning schedules and fines.
- Citations: Ticketing of parking violators should be rigorous.
- Towing: As a last resort, consideration should be given to the installation and enforcement of “Tow Away” signs to ensure that streets are kept clear of parked cars during scheduled street sweeping.

**Street Paving Repairs.** The City pursues three programs to preserve and repair street paving: preventive maintenance, resurfacing, and emergency repairs. The community would like a more systematic and timely approach to repairing streets in the neighborhood, and to the repair and reconstruction of driveways, curbs and drainage.

**Continued Neighborhood Cleanup Event.** Support continuation of neighborhood cleanup events. The neighborhood already has organized neighborhood cleanup events to dispose of larger items that might otherwise clutter

public and private properties. The events are organized by Neighborhood Associations and use large trash bins provided by the City.

- *Semi-annual Cleanup Days:* This *Plan* recommends that the City determine the feasibility of regularly conducting semi-annual cleanup days.
- *Ad hoc Cleanup events:* The *Plan* recommends that, if regular cleanup days are inadequate or infeasible, that *Ad hoc* clean-up events be scheduled in conjunction with other neighborhood events by the Neighborhood Associations.

### **Improve Street Tree Maintenance Program**

Current City policy is for existing street trees to be “structurally pruned” and trimmed 13 feet above the street on a 10-year cycle. All other street tree maintenance is the responsibility of the property owner. This *Plan* recommends a program be developed with the cooperation of the Neighborhood Associations, the City’s Arborist and the Department of Transportation to increase the frequency of tree trimming and improve the overall health of the street tree forest.

## Upgrading Parks, Open Space and Recreation

The parks and open space resources of the neighborhood represent some of the most important and visible amenities for the residents of the 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood. The facilities and the programs that are offered at the facilities are highly valued.

### Backesto Park Renovation

Backesto Park is considered the “jewel” of the City parks in the 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood and is identified as a center of community life. The 13-acre park encompasses two city blocks. The trees are full-grown and majestic and provide shelter for multiple activities. The 8 tennis courts are in great demand. The Bocce courts in the center of the park will be improved shortly. Many of the facilities and improvements at the park, however, are in disrepair. Renovation of the bathrooms and tot lot are included as projects in the last successful bond election, Measure P. Overall, lighting is inadequate, and pedestrian access at each of the corners of the park would benefit from enhanced traffic controls. The historic fountain on 13<sup>th</sup> Street, another potential amenity of the park, is not in working order.

A Master Plan should be prepared for a major renovation of the Backesto Park facilities to assure its preservation and continued improvement.

- *Coordination with funded projects:* Plans for the renovation of the bathrooms and tot lot should be reviewed to confirm compatibility with likely long term improvements to the park.
- *After School and Summer Programs:* This *Plan* recommends continuation of neighborhood-serving programs such as the after-school and summer programs that are currently operating. These programs should be coordinated to optimize their distribution and effectiveness among the parks, schools, and library locations.
- *Bocce Ball Courts:* This *Plan* recommends that the renovation and reopening of the Bocce courts be monitored to ensure wide public access and to evaluate the long term viability of this use in the park. City will work with the neighborhood to initiate activities at the courts.
- *Increased Security:* This *Plan* recommends that improvements are made to park security, including better pedestrian lighting and secured play areas.
- *Improved Access:* This *Plan* recommends that pedestrian access at the four corners be improved to minimize conflicts with traffic.
- *Historic Fountain:* This *Plan* recommends that the historic fountain be restored to operating condition, and that it be highlighted with special night time lighting, to become a feature in the park Master Plan.

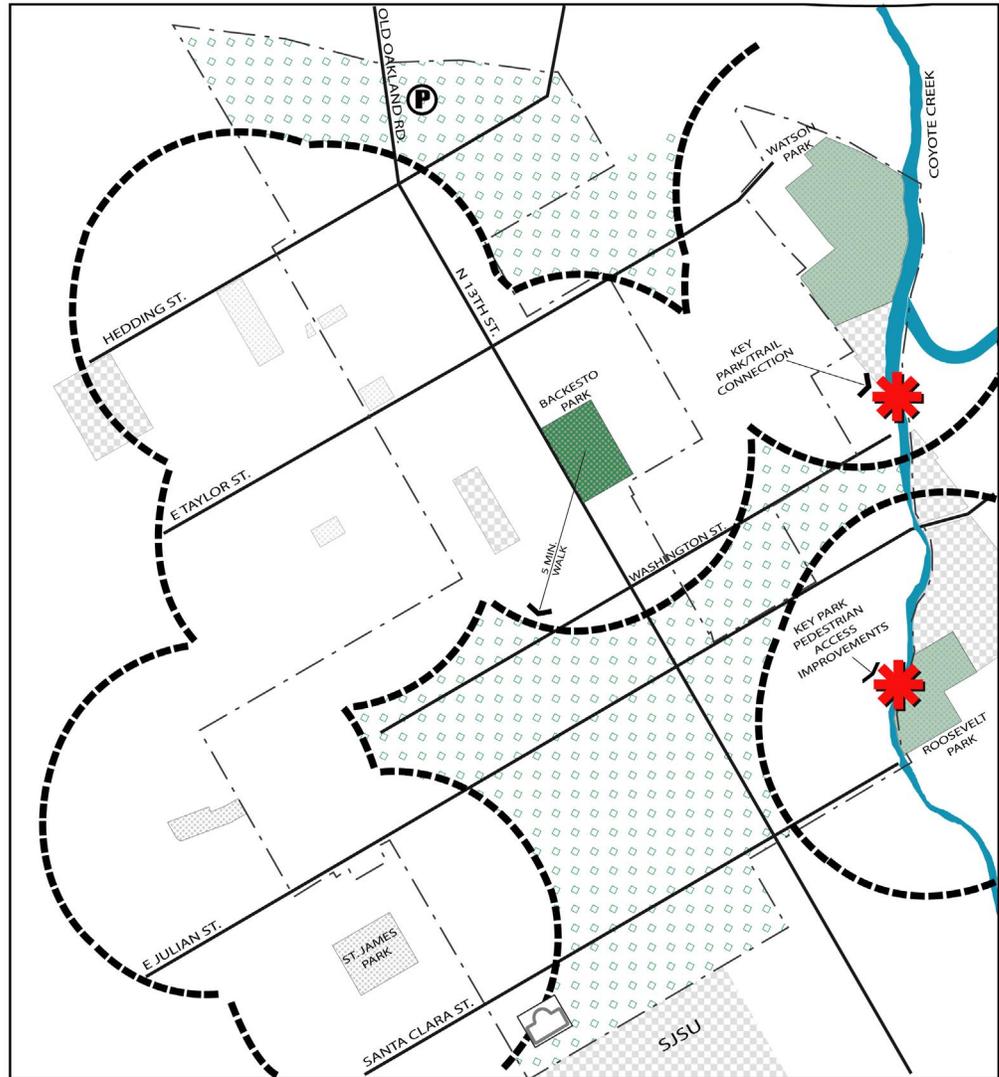


Figure 4.37 Parks, Open Space and Recreation Improvements

- Areas within 5 minute walk of Existing Parks
- ▭ Areas Beyond 5 Minute Walk of Existing Parks
- Ⓟ Special Park Opportunities (associated with development sites)
- ✱ Key Projects

• IMPROVEMENT CONCEPTS •



Figure 4.38 Backesto Park with its large trees and recreation facilities is a neighborhood jewel.



Figure 4.39 Backesto Park fountain needs repair to function again.

## **Watson Park Improvements**

The 26.3-acre Watson Park is the largest in the 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood and includes the Watson Neighborhood Community Center, the Watson Soccer Bowl, and the Watson/Las Milpas Community Gardens. The park is well used by the neighborhood and draws residents from a wide area. Currently planned improvements to Watson Park include a dog walk.

**Watson Park Skate Board Facility.** Encourage designation of this location for a major skateboard facility. The residents of the neighborhood identified a skateboard facility as desirable to provide the neighborhood youth with an alternative to skate-boarding on the streets.

## **Coyote Creek Trail Improvements**

The Coyote Creek multi-purpose trail provides pedestrian and bicycle access along the creek open space. As part of this improvement package, the community desires a connection to and across the creek from St. John Street through Watson Park to the trail.

## **Roosevelt Park Improvements**

Roosevelt Park is not within but adjacent to the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood, separated by the Coyote Creek. Access is available to neighborhood residents via the bridges at Julian and on Santa Clara Street. The 10.8-acre park includes basketball courts and picnic areas. The City is currently planning a major renovation and expansion of the existing community center located at the Park increasing the facility by 23,000 SF to a total of 40,300 SF. The expansion includes development of a roller hockey rink and multi-service center. These improvements, plus those planned for Watson Park, will result in significant neighborhood amenities that can be shared among neighborhoods, and for which access should be a high priority.

## **New Community Parks**

As shown in Figure 4.37, the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood is generally underserved with parks and recreation facilities.

**Special Park Opportunities.** The community would like to include publicly accessible open space in the overall project programming for long term redevelopment of the Modern Ice property to help meet the park and recreational needs of the adjacent neighborhoods.

**Mini-parks and Tot-Lots.** The feasibility of developing mini-parks and tot-lots in the neighborhood should be explored, since large new neighborhood parks are unlikely. Throughout the 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood, mini-parks and tot-lots could help meet the shortfall of recreation and open space.

## **Improving Library, Schools and other Community Facilities and Services**

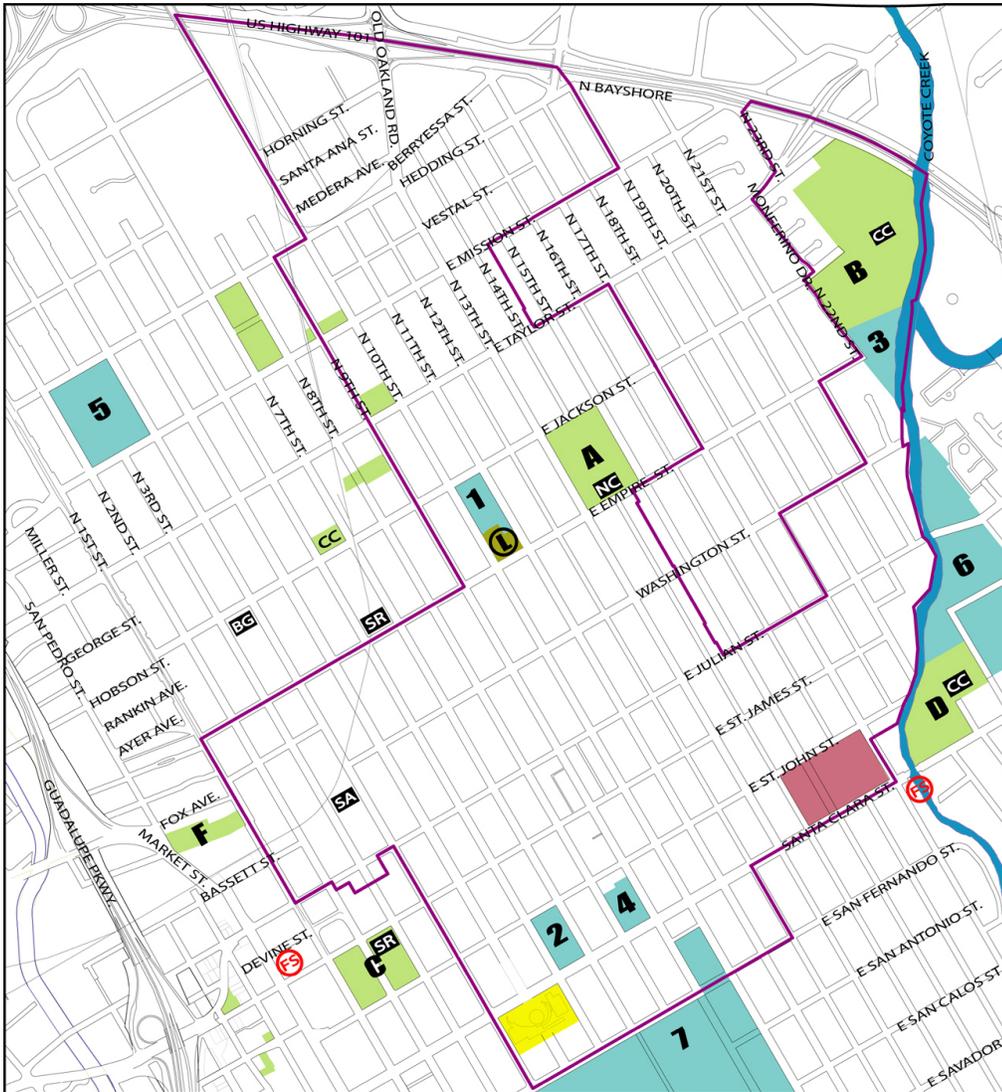
The Joyce Ellington Branch Library is a major public facility and amenity for the 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood. Despite its small size, it is one of the few branch libraries with a community room and is cherished by the residents for its convenience and history in the community. There are four neighborhood elementary schools in the 13<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood. San Jose Unified School District operates three; the fourth is a small but historic parochial school. The school and the parish both have strong ties to the Vietnamese community.

The San Jose Medical Center is located on the north side of Santa Clara Street between North 14th and North 17th Streets and is the only fully equipped hospital in the central portion of San Jose. The medical center also provides the only trauma care facilities immediately available to downtown residents and neighborhoods.

The Salvation Army operates several service programs on a strategic parcel located between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets and subdivided by the Railroad right-of-way. This former industrial site is in the middle of the Hensley Historic District.

The safety and security of the neighborhoods is a concern of the community. The heavy concentration of service providers and attendant homeless and/or vagrants, concentrations of liquor stores and bars, the railroad rights-of-way which are difficult to patrol and consequently invite vandalism, graffiti, trash, and the speed and volume of through traffic, are all of concern.

The community advocates greater enforcement of existing laws and codes that address many of the issues noted above. In addition, however, the community desires investigation of reducing the inordinate impacts on this neighborhood of certain regional and citywide problems, as noted in other sections of this report.



**Figure 4.40 Existing Community Facilities**

<b>A</b>	Backesto Park	<b>1</b>	Grant Academy Elementary School
<b>B</b>	Watson Park	<b>2</b>	Horace Mann Elementary School
<b>C</b>	St. James Park	<b>3</b>	Empire Gardens Elementary School
<b>D</b>	Roosevelt Park	<b>4</b>	St. Patrick Elementary School (Private)
<b>E</b>	Bernal Park	<b>5</b>	Peter Burnett Middle School
<b>F</b>	Ryland Park	<b>6</b>	San Jose Academy High School
		<b>7</b>	CSU San Jose
<b>CC</b>	Community Center	<b>FS</b>	Fire Stations
<b>CC</b>	Future Community Center	<b>L</b>	Joyce Ellington Library
<b>NC</b>	Neighborhood Center		New San Jose Civic Center
<b>BG</b>	Boys / Girls Club		San Jose Medical Center
<b>SA</b>	Salvation Army		
<b>SR</b>	Senior Citizen Center		

## **Monitor and Ensure Community Involvement in the Joyce Ellington Branch Library Expansion**

The current Joyce Ellington Branch Library is 6,912 SF, only a third of the size projected to be needed, as determined by the Library Department's "Branch Facilities Master Plan," approved September 2000. The Department is committed to increasing the capacity of the branch to a proposed 17,000 SF and providing supporting parking places. The current branch site is adjacent to Grant Academy Elementary School on a site leased from the San Jose Unified School District. Increasing the capacity of the Joyce Ellington Branch is part of a larger staged improvement program that takes into account all of the needs of the branches. Joyce Ellington Branch is scheduled as part of Phase II, with improvements to be completed in 2007.

Maintaining the branch at its current central location emerged as a very high neighborhood priority.

**Coordination of Library Project Design.** The NAC and neighborhood associations desire ongoing involvement with improvement plans for the Library and Grant Academy. Site planning objectives include:

- *Pedestrian Circulation:* Improve the connections with the school to provide more direct access for children arriving from the school.
- *Parking:* Encourage the Library Department and School District to provide and operate shared or joint parking facilities in order to minimize the size and circulation requirements of on-site lots.
- *2<sup>nd</sup> Story:* Encourage the Library Department to consider a two-story building to better fit the facility onto a constrained site.
- *Safe Pedestrian Access:* Improve safe pedestrian crossings at the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Street intersections with Empire Street.
- *After-School Programs:* Encourage the Library Department to coordinate with the School District and PRNS to coordinate locations for the popular after-school and summer-time programs.

## **Enhancing Neighborhood Safety and Security**

### **Increase Police Surveillance with the Neighborhood**

Increased police surveillance is desired by the community to help combat the periodic illegal behaviors found in the neighborhood. The concentration of service providers, as well as the prevalence of bars and liquor stores has resulted in activities that seriously detract from the sense of security and safety in the neighborhood.

Information should be made available on a regular basis to the neighborhood and business associations and other groups to ensure that residents, tenants and business owners alert law enforcement professionals about problems or crimes. As part of the SNI planning effort, the police have indicated their eagerness to meet with neighborhood groups and to be as responsive as possible to community concerns.

### **Monitor and Provide Input on Regional and Citywide Policies on Parolees, Sex Offenders and Service Agency Locations**

Neighborhood residents and businesses are aware that the 13<sup>th</sup> Street area of downtown San Jose receives a disproportionate number of parolees from state and federal prisons. Although means exist for identifying placement of certain kinds of parolees, such as sex offenders, the community nonetheless feels that further protections are needed to ensure community safety.

The community would like ongoing attention to the need for redirecting the placement of parolees in the downtown neighborhoods so that they are not disproportionately concentrated in this area. This is obviously not merely a local issue, but will require regional cooperation.

In addition, the community wants to encourage residents and business owners to become knowledgeable about the available sources of information at the local police departments concerning paroled sex offenders in the neighborhood. Coordination with law enforcement officials, as noted in the preceding section, can be a part of this effort as well.

### **Ensure the Continued Availability of Hospital Services, Particularly Trauma Services, for Downtown Neighborhoods**

Although the San Jose Medical Center has withdrawn its prior announcement that it was planning to close, it is perhaps still considering a closure. The 13th Street neighborhoods as well as other Downtown neighborhoods are extremely concerned about and opposed to the closure of this facility. The Medical Center is the only hospital serving San Jose's Downtown and central city neighborhoods. The 13th Street NAC feels strongly that closure of the Medical Center would leave current and future central city residents, employees and visitors significantly at risk due to the absence of any conveniently located hospital services, particularly trauma services. In the community's opinion, the central part of the City, with its expectations of substantial growth and intensification over the next 20 years, is exactly the kind of location where adequate medical services are most needed.

The community does, however, recognize that the City of San Jose has no means of requiring the present hospital administration to keep the facility open and that efforts to keep it open may have to be indirect. If the Medical Center does choose to close, other solutions need to be found, among them: another operator for the present facility; a new hospital at another central city location; only a partial closure of the Medical Center; or a relocation of the most critically needed services to a new central city site. The service loss that most concerns the 13th Street community is the Trauma Center. Community members feel that the many minutes, or more, that would be lost in transporting Downtown patients to Alexian Hospital, otherwise the probable nearest trauma services, could make a critical difference for many patients. In addition to travel time lost, there is a concern about the quality of the care that could be provided if a single trauma services facility is expected to handle all of the emergencies generated by the greater part of San Jose's population and geographic area.

The potential closure of the Medical center is a complex issue that will require the City's and the communities' attention and, particularly, may require some very creative solutions.