

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Community identity is the visual image of the community that is held in the minds of residents and visitors. Cerritos' identity includes the many visual images that people associate with the community, including the City's physical form, activity nodes, landmarks, street corridors, buildings, signs, and other similar physical features.

A City's physical identity is clear if people can readily perceive the community in images that differentiate it from surrounding communities. When communities run together in undifferentiated masses they lack a distinct identity. Cerritos has always aimed to differentiate itself as a unique place. Through successful efforts such as the Cerritos Towne Center, community public art program and citywide landscaped medians, the City stands out as a unique community that is easily differentiated from its surroundings.

To maintain and strengthen the harmony among the City's urban design components, Cerritos will continue to place major emphasis on design solutions that contribute to the City's high-quality image. The Community Design Element contains goals, policies and design concepts aimed at strengthening Cerritos' physical identity and high-quality image.

2.0 AUTHORITY FOR THE ELEMENT

Authority for the Community Design Element is found in Section 65303 of the State Government Code. That section allows cities and counties to add optional elements beyond the State-mandated elements. This element focuses on all areas within Cerritos' City limits.

The Community Design Element establishes goals and policies to enhance the livability of the City and encourage and protect investment in the City by ensuring the highest level of quality in the design and re-design of the City's physical form. This commitment has and will continue to set Cerritos above the majority of communities in Southern California. The Community Design Element illustrates those design concepts that are applicable to the

enhancement of Cerritos' physical identity. The majority of these design concepts apply to generalized situations. Thus, in addition to setting goals and policies, the Community Design Element can also be utilized as a source book of possible solutions for design problems as the opportunity for implementation arises.

This element aims to recognize the many positive design features of Cerritos, preserve and enhance those features, improve the livability of the community through physical design considerations in public areas that need improvement, and encourage quality private development through appropriate development policies. The result is a livable community defined by quality, cohesiveness and human needs.

3.0 SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

3.1 COMMUNITY IMAGE

The perceived "image" of a community is made up of a complex array of physical elements and the relationships between them. The community's visual image is not static; it changes over time and from location to location within the community. Unique districts and neighborhoods often have their own images apart from the greater community image.

Ideally, a City's visual image matches the values and aspirations of its citizens. Through the implementation of these values and goals, physical development takes place resulting in an image that residents can identify with and visitors can understand.

Cerritos is a built out community. The major physical features that define it as a place (e.g., boundaries, circulation routes, San Gabriel River, etc.) have existed for a long time. Yet, while these major features are in place, there is an ongoing process of refining and improving elements of the built environment in a positive way that continues to reinforce Cerritos' image as a progressive community and a quality place to live.

To help understand existing conditions in Cerritos, it is necessary to first understand the components of the City's urban design framework. The following is a discussion of the elements that contribute to the City of Cerritos' urban form and character.

3.1.1 LANDMARKS

Landmarks are well-remembered places, structures, or natural features that provide orientation and identity within a City. Cerritos contains a significant number of objects and places that provide visual and functional points of reference (refer to [Exhibit CD-1, Landmarks](#)). Among these are:

- Cerritos City Hall
- Cerritos Library
- Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts
- Cerritos Towne Center
- Los Cerritos Center
- Cerritos Auto Square
- Fountain at Cerritos Towne Center and the SR-91 Freeway (Gore Project)
- Cerritos Senior Center at Pat Nixon Park

3.1.2 GATEWAYS

Gateways are significant points of entry into a community – the community’s doorstep. They help shape the identity and provide a clear sense of a community’s boundaries. Because they often provide the first impression of a community, gateways represent an important opportunity to convey a positive and lasting image. Currently, Cerritos has 16 existing entry monument signs at gateways throughout the City. Other community entry identifiers include street signs with the City name and seal included on the face. Major gateways in Cerritos are shown in Exhibit CD-2, *Districts, Paths, Edges, and Gateways*.

3.1.3 FREEWAY CORRIDORS AND INTERCHANGES

Freeway interchanges are highly visible areas along transportation corridors, which require special attention. Interchanges can be perceived as gateways to the community and should offer a “sense of arrival” to freeway users. The City of Cerritos has several interchanges along the I-605 and SR-91 freeway corridors that offer good opportunities for enhancement.

Views from the freeways contribute a great deal to the City’s image. Special controls on freeway frontage property (particularly commercial and industrial) have been instituted to require outdoor storage and maintenance areas to be screened from view. Roofscape areas are also a major feature, particularly from elevated sections of the freeways, and aesthetic treatment of ventilators and other mechanical equipment on rooftops are required. Signing controls should also be rigorously enforced.

3.1.4 PUBLIC SPACES

Public places are special areas where people can share a sense of belonging with the City. They are essential to the social cohesion of a community and provide a context where people of all ages can participate together. In Cerritos, outdoor public places are found in City parks, plazas and courtyards around public buildings and pedestrian enclaves. These

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[Link to Exhibit CD-1, Landmarks](#)

[Link to Exhibit CD-2, *Districts, Paths, Edges, and Gateways*](#)

spaces give the residents a sense of ownership and create a shared sense of responsibility and appreciation between Cerritos residents and their City government. These spaces include:

- Public Spaces
- Cerritos Towne Center
- Cerritos Civic Center
- Los Cerritos Center
- South Street Cerritos
- 17 Community Parks
- 1 Regional Park

3.1.5 PUBLIC ART

Public art can capture the aspirations of the community and express the City's cultural and social heritage in a widely understood universal language. Because of this, artworks can contribute significantly to the public identity of a place. Public art can stimulate creativity and imagination while adding a unique human dimension to the outdoor environment.

The City of Cerritos has installed figurative and abstract public art sculptures at the Civic Center, Cerritos Library, the Cerritos Senior Center at Pat Nixon Park, Heritage Park, Pioneer Villas, Emerald Villas, Avalon at Cerritos, and the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts. Cerritos developers with projects valued at more than \$350,000 are also required to devote one-half of one percent of the building permit valuation to the City's Art in Public Places Program. In addition, a number of art pieces were installed on private properties as required by the City. In 2000, the City Council formally recognized the importance of public art in the community and adopted the Arts In Public Places Program, Section 22.94 of the Cerritos Municipal Code, which requires developers of privately-owned projects with a building permit valuation of more than \$350,000 to contribute one-half of one percent of the value to the Art in Public Places Trust Fund, or install artwork, as approved by the City, of an equal value. To allow the general public to participate in and express their support for public art, individuals may also contribute to the program.

The City has also provided a municipal art collection that is located within the Cerritos Public Library and the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts. The collection is composed of pieces of various medium and styles to further enhance the art experience for our residents and visitors to these facilities. The public art collection not only adds beauty and distinction to the community environment, it also contributes to the economic growth and promotes educational opportunities for the community. The location of existing art pieces is shown in Exhibit CD-3, *Public Art*.

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3.1.6 PATHS

A path can be defined as those corridors (streets, sidewalks, etc.) along which people move to get from one place to another. A “path” provides the means of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the community. There are two types of paths: “Primary corridors” are the principal corridors carrying larger volumes of traffic and typically crossing through community boundaries, and “Secondary corridors” carrying less traffic and often originating or terminating within the City’s boundaries. The key paths within the City of Cerritos are classified accordingly below.

Primary Corridors

- Alondra Boulevard
- Artesia Boulevard
- Bloomfield Avenue
- Carmenita Road
- Del Amo Boulevard
- Pioneer Boulevard
- South Street
- Studebaker Road
- Valley View Avenue

Secondary Corridors

- Allington Street
- Gridley Road
- Shoemaker Avenue
- 166th Street
- 183rd Street
- 195th Street
- Industrial

Multi-Use Trails

- Southern California Edison Right-of-Way
- San Gabriel River Channel Trail
- Coyote Creek Channel Trail

3.1.7 DISTRICTS

A “district” is defined as a part of a larger urban area that has common distinguishing characteristics and function. It is identifiable as a place distinct from other areas of the community. Distinguishing features may include building type, use, activity, inhabitants and/or topography. The City’s principal districts are described in the following paragraphs.

Civic Center District. The Civic Center District is generally defined as the portion of Bloomfield Avenue between Artesia Boulevard and South Street. Within this district is the Cerritos City Hall, the Cerritos Sheriff Station, the Cerritos Library, Cerritos High School, Heritage Park, the Cerritos Towne Center, Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts and site for a potential Museum. Functionally this district serves all civic purposes for the community, and also includes cultural, commercial, recreational and educational services. The District also serves as a hub for Cerritos on Wheels (COW), the local City transportation system.

Auto Square District. This district primarily encompasses the Cerritos Auto Square, which is located on the western edge of the City. Bounded by Interstate 605, South Street, 183rd Street and the San Gabriel River Channel, the Auto Square is at the crossroads of several predominant paths of Cerritos. The Auto Square draws consumers from throughout the Southern California region. The district also encompasses land north of the existing Auto Square, between 183rd Street and Artesia Boulevard. This area is included in this district to acknowledge the potential for future expansion of the Auto Square.

Regional Commercial District. The Regional Commercial District encompasses a variety of regional-serving commercial uses generally located east of I-605 and bordering three major streets in the City: South Street, 183rd Street and Gridley Road. The commercial centers within this district include Los Cerritos Center, Best Plaza, South Street Cerritos, Cerritos South and Babies "R" Us Center.

Industrial Park District. This district encompasses ADP-1 Industrial Park, which is located in the northern part of the City, bounded on the north by Alondra Boulevard, on the south by 166th Street, on the west by Bloomfield Avenue, and on the east by Carmenita Road. The industrial park offers sites for office and light industrial uses in a well designed high-quality environment.

3.1.8 EDGES AND BARRIERS

Edges are linear elements that serve as a visual or physical boundary, barrier or transition between districts defining the boundaries of a place. Elements such as freeways, railroad tracks, flood control channels and natural features may be considered as edges. The prominent edges within the City of Cerritos are:

- Coyote Creek Channel
- San Gabriel River Channel
- SR-91 and I-605 Freeway Corridors

3.2 STREETScape - THE PUBLIC REALM

The City's "streetscape" – the view from the road – is a powerful and immediate indicator of the community's image. The view from the road consists of many elements, including trees, landscaping in parkways and medians, street furniture (benches, trash receptacles, etc.) lighting, walls and utilities. Also included is private development in the form of buildings, landscaping and signs. The elements of "private" development are discussed in Section 3.3.

This section looks at the City's streetscape image from the public realm – what people see from the street and sidewalk that is located in the public right-of-way. For many people who pass through Cerritos, but are not residents, the view from the road is often their only impression of the City. For residents, the quality of the street environment has a more direct impact on their daily lives. Roads are a valuable open space asset and should be treated as such. They affect the daily lives of residents running shopping errands, children walking to school, recreational walkers and joggers and residents driving to work. People are touched daily by the quality, or lack thereof, that the streetscape presents.

The public realm of the street environment can also be viewed as an extension of private yards. Whether in residential neighborhoods or in commercial districts, the visual connection between the private realm and the public realm can be enhanced through effective streetscape treatments. Additionally, the quality of the street environment affects property values throughout the City.

All physical features within the public right-of-way are controlled by the City, including their design, installation and maintenance. This is an important responsibility considering how the quality of the street environment affects the City's image. Cerritos has made a concerted effort to create and maintain a park-like environment in the City, particularly along major thoroughfares, with generously landscaped parkways and medians within the public right-of-way. Great care should be exercised in the evaluation of streetscape elements in terms of their aesthetic appeal and contribution to a positive community image.

The following provides a description of the various elements that make up the public street environment. Elements that establish the private street environment (e.g., buildings, signs, etc.) are discussed in the next section.

3.2.1 STREET TREES

Tree-lined streets are a very humanizing element in the otherwise hard edge of the urban street environment. Cerritos prides itself in its excellent street

tree planting and maintenance program, and has been named a Tree City USA by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

Street trees help unify and identify an area. Trees enhance the public environment by creating comfortable outdoor spaces, serene settings and pleasant fragrances. Trees have a soothing visual impact. They provide a habitat for wildlife, shade for pedestrians and motorists, contribute to fresher air and reduce reflected heat from buildings and pavement.

The purpose of the street tree program is to beautify the City's roadways by planting and maintaining trees along major public rights-of-way. Trees are selected by the City from a list of approved varieties rather than private property owners to ensure continuity in the streetscape and that the trees selected are appropriate to the surrounding area and climate.

The visual characteristics of street trees are important in their selection. Trees can be effective in strengthening the City's form by emphasizing major roadways and important districts, and by identifying neighborhoods and gateways. Street trees should be chosen based on the scale and importance of the roadway. Generally, larger trees are used for major roadways and smaller, pedestrian scale trees are used within neighborhoods. Trees are also chosen for their water conserving and maintenance qualities.

In neighborhoods, broad spreading, deciduous trees are preferable. These trees create an attractive canopy and provide shade in the summer while admitting sun in the winter. In commercial districts, it is important that street trees be both deciduous and evergreen, and provide a canopy that does not obscure business signage. Industrial districts are the most flexible in terms of compatible varieties.

3.2.2 MEDIANS

Landscaped medians serve many different functions. Medians help distinguish the City's most significant circulation routes and gateways and contribute to the City's image. Overall, medians can make streets more attractive and motorists more comfortable by reducing the perceived road width. Medians increase safety by separating oncoming cars.

Presently, there are 13 arterial streets, or portions of streets that incorporate median landscaping. The arterials with landscaped medians include: 1) Studebaker Road from Del Amo Boulevard to Alondra Boulevard, 2) Gridley Road from South Street to 183rd Street, 3) Pioneer Boulevard from Del Amo Boulevard to north of 195th Street (northerly city limit), 4) Norwalk Boulevard from Del Amo Boulevard to north of 195th Street (railroad crossing), 5) Bloomfield Avenue from Del Amo Boulevard to Alondra Boulevard, 6) Carmenita Road from South Street to Alondra Boulevard, 7) Valley View

Avenue from the southerly to northerly City limits, 8) 166th Street from Norwalk Boulevard to Carmenita Road, 9) Artesia Boulevard from Palo Verde Avenue to Valley View Avenue, 10) 183rd Street from Palo Verde Avenue to Marquadt Avenue, 11) South Street from the westerly to easterly City limits, 12) 195th Street from Studebaker Road to Pioneer Boulevard, and 13) Del Amo Boulevard from Studebaker Road to Bloomfield Avenue. Collectively, these landscaped arterial medians, along with other landscaped roadway medians, encompass approximately 969,615 square feet of landscaping. The City's Capital Improvement Program identifies the location of median improvements that require City maintenance and funding.

3.2.3 PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS

It is important to keep in mind that not everyone gets to their destination by automobile. Sidewalks and other pedestrian pathways are important for providing connections to schools, parks, shopping, jobs and between neighborhoods. Additionally, all developments intended for use by the general public should provide direct public access to the adjacent public sidewalk.

Since Cerritos is a relatively new City, it has been developed to contemporary standards of street cross section design with sidewalks primarily adjacent to the curb in residential areas and with a planting strip and curvilinear sidewalk along major non-residential thoroughfares. Handicapped ramps have been provided throughout the City in compliance with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

3.2.4 STREET FURNITURE

Street "furniture" consists of the hardware items typically found along sidewalks for the convenience of the pedestrian and transit user. Items of street furniture include benches, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, bus shelters, shade structures, newspaper racks, information kiosks and similar items aimed at creating a friendly, functional and aesthetically pleasing environment for pedestrians. The selection and appropriate placement of street furniture plays an important role in establishing a quality street environment.

Currently, the City maintains a coordinated palette of street furniture at Cerritos Towne Center and Cerritos Auto Square. As the City continues to improve the pedestrian friendliness of its streets and public open spaces, a comprehensive and uniform palette of street furniture should also be developed for the entire City.

While not currently provided by the City, newspaper racks are usually placed within the public right-of-way and become a significant part of the

street environment, especially when a variety of dissimilar racks are placed in an uncoordinated manner. This not only creates a negative visual impact, but can also be a safety hazard if they interfere with pedestrian movement. The City should consider adopting a standard newspaper rack design.

3.2.5 UTILITIES

Other forms of street hardware include utility cabinets, transformers, cable television boxes, standpipes, utility poles and overhead lines. When considered all together, these utilitarian items comprise a significant number of physical elements within the street environment. However, unlike street furniture that is provided for the convenience of the pedestrian, utility hardware often creates clutter, interferes with pedestrian movement and has a negative visual impact on the street environment.

While the necessity of utility hardware is recognized for safety reasons and for the provision of utility services, it should also be recognized that the City has some control over the location of these items within or adjacent to the public right-of-way. The City should play a proactive role in reviewing and evaluating the appropriate locations for utility hardware items.

3.2.6 PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL WALLS

Private perimeter walls of neighborhoods often adjoin the public right-of-way and affect the view from the road. Major thoroughfares are often bordered by a continuous wall of rear yard fencing. In residential areas, fencing provides privacy, blocks the view of traffic and can provide some noise reduction. It is the responsibility of private property owners to maintain the walls, although the City has implemented a graffiti removal program.

In single-family neighborhoods, wall materials, design and maintenance can vary with each tract or development. When maintenance of these walls is neglected or the materials are incompatible with adjacent walls, this detracts from the street environment. As these walls continue to age, the City should evaluate programs to ensure that replacement wall designs and materials are consistent along individual street frontages.

Residential perimeter walls along the public streets can also create a monotonous flat surface devoid of landscaping or interesting features identifying the neighborhood. Additional landscaping, tree pockets, street furniture and unique entryways identifying each neighborhood would reduce the monotony of long flat walls and would help discourage graffiti.

3.3 PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

Private development is as important as public improvements in creating a vital, enjoyable and comfortable environment for residents and visitors. Cerritos has long recognized that the design of private development has a strong impact on residents and the City's image. As a result, the City has a history of encouraging and maintaining a high level of design quality for all types of development.

Cerritos' zoning regulations and standards coupled with the development review process have had a positive effect in ensuring that new development is attractive and compatible with conditions on surrounding properties. Area development plans have been used as a means of encouraging quality development by allowing flexibility in the strict application of zoning regulations.

To have a positive impact on the City's image, projects should function well on the site, be compatible with surrounding properties and have architectural merit. Generally, there are two parts to development that determine how successfully a project meets these criteria: the site design and the building design. With good design, these two elements are fully integrated and complimentary to each other and at the same time are compatible with surrounding environments.

3.3.1 BUILDING DESIGN

Architectural forms are dominant visual elements in the urban environment, and as such, play a major role in establishing the image and identity of the City. Retaining a level of high aesthetic architectural quality and cohesion is essential to creating a well-designed, visually superior environment.

Cerritos is a built out City. For the most part, new projects will be what can be termed "infill." That is, they "fill in" between other existing structures. For that reason, it is important that buildings be designed in a manner appropriate to their "context" – taking into account their surroundings and not trying to vie for exclusive attention by trying to stand out to the detriment of other buildings. Buildings that are intentionally designed to draw exclusive attention are appropriate only in a very limited number of circumstances, such as gateways or major activity nodes, and for a limited number of uses, such as the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts.

In addition to being in context with their surroundings, buildings should possess a high degree of design "quality." The quality quotient can be expressed in a number of ways, including the use of appropriate materials and colors, building walls that include variations in the depth of the building plane which breaks up monotonous flat walls with patterns of light and shadow, and variations in roof height and pitch to create interesting forms.

Buildings that are well designed to create interesting forms and that are in context with their surroundings will strengthen Cerritos' image as a very livable community.

3.3.2 SITE PLANNING

A site is generally defined by the boundaries of ownership. Site planning or design is how buildings, parking, pedestrian and automobile circulation, landscaping and open space are arranged on the ground. A good site design organizes and integrates all of these elements. It creates a functional and visually attractive environment. Site plans can be reviewed based on how well the functional elements accommodate the intended use and how well the design is refined to create an attractive and compatible environment.

All site designs start with functional elements determined by the intended use. The functional elements of a site plan are the building location, driveways, parking, auxiliary structures, exterior mechanical equipment, lighting and service access. The design of these functional elements is often determined by practical constraints resulting from the nature of the use. For example, uses that generate a high degree of pedestrian traffic should incorporate design elements that accommodate pedestrian circulation in a convenient and safe manner and provide amenities that cater to pedestrian comfort.

Functional elements need to be refined to create an environment that is engaging and attractive. In order for a site design to be experienced positively, it must have an appropriate relationship with the surrounding environment and produce an attractive internal environment.

A site plan that is well integrated with the external environment will be experienced positively if: (1) the natural features of the site are enhanced, (2) the design is sympathetic with the surrounding features of the built environment, (3) there is a smooth transition from the public roadway to private properties and between properties and (4) the building setbacks and lot coverage are consistent with the surrounding area.

3.4 SIGNS

Commercial signage is a highly visible part of the City's environment. Signs affect the visual quality of the roadways and the impression visitors have when passing through. Because signs are intended to communicate visually, they have the potential to conflict with achievement of goals for achieving visual and aesthetic quality in the environment.

Cerritos has adopted effective sign regulations to ensure that signs are attractive, easy to read, compatible with the district in which they are

located and not distracting to motorists. The premise of the Sign Ordinance is that signs should identify businesses, not advertise them. This principle is one reason why pole signs and billboards are not allowed in Cerritos.

Active enforcement of the Sign Ordinance is the key to keeping visual blight under control, especially regarding temporary signage that is inexpensive and easily placed in windows or on sides of buildings.

Establishing neighborhood identity is another purpose signage serves. The City effectively uses low-profile monument signs at neighborhood entryways to serve as both a gateway and landmark for local residents. The community should continue this effort and add new signs where needed.

And last, as the City continues to mature and older commercial centers are redeveloped, the establishment of comprehensive sign programs for the center will be important. The intent of the sign programs should be to promote creative design, but also to develop a uniform design theme for the particular center.

3.5 VACANT PARCELS

Throughout the community there are a number of small vacant parcels, mostly former service station sites, located on corner lots. The vacant, unused nature of these parcels has a negative effect on surrounding properties and the community as a whole due to their unkempt nature, including the accumulation of trash and the overgrowth of weeds.

On an interim basis, the negative effects of these vacant parcels could partially be mitigated by restoring the subject site to its original condition and through the provision of perimeter landscaping to screen the parcels. The City should consider acquiring landscape easements over these parcels for the purpose of providing decorative landscaping and berming to achieve continuity of landscaping at the street's edge and to partially screen the parcels (refer to Exhibit CD-4, *Conceptual Site Plan for Vacant Parcels*).

Also, refer to the discussion on vacant and underutilized parcels in the Land Use Element, Section 3.1.6.

[Link to Exhibit CD-4, Conceptual Site Plan for Vacant Parcels](#)

4.0 PLANNING FACTORS, GOALS AND POLICIES

COMMUNITY IMAGE

Planning Factor

In the maze of Southern California development it is important for Cerritos to stand out as a discrete, individual, unique community.

Goal *CD-1* *Strengthen and maintain Cerritos' image as a unique place by maintaining, enhancing and creating physical features that distinguish Cerritos from surrounding communities and distinguish it as a livable community.*

- Policies**
- CD-1.1 Develop a comprehensive gateway improvement program to select significant gateways along major arterials for improvements including monument-type "City of Cerritos" identification signs, special enhanced landscaping and paving, public art and unique private development standards.
 - CD-1.2 Cooperate with Caltrans to improve freeway landscaping, especially at the on- and off-ramps and at the I-605/SR-91 interchange.
 - CD-1.3 Work with Caltrans to implement and maintain a unique City feature within the freeway right-of-way at the I-605/SR-91 interchange.
 - CD-1.4 Continue the Art in Public Places Program with an emphasis on attaining a variety of artistic pieces located in both exterior and interior spaces.
 - CD-1.5 Develop a Master Plan for art work in public places. The Master Plan should address art pieces (i.e., sculptures, paintings), but should expand the Art in Public Places Program to allow for the creation of landscape environments as usable and functional art, and to establish appropriate settings for the display of art, including within public rights-of-way and landscape medians.

- CD-1.6 Support measures that will enhance the identity of special districts and neighborhoods to create variety and interest in the built environment.

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STREETScape

Planning Factor

The “view from the road” is a powerful indicator of the City’s image. While Cerritos has done a good job of creating a positive image along its major streets, opportunities still exist to improve the City’s street environment.

Goal CD-2 *Create an attractive street environment that will complement private and public properties, create beauty within the public right-of-way, and be comfortable for residents and visitors.*

Policies CD-2.1 Continue to implement the City’s street tree program through an established street tree palette.

CD-2.2 Review the list of street trees to phase out trees that do not adapt well to the requirements of an urban environment and introduce new trees that are more suitable.

CD-2.3 Continue to provide planted medians to distinguish major thoroughfares in the City. The City should prepare a study to determine which streets could accommodate landscape medians and then implement the plan through the capital improvement budget.

CD-2.4 Create unique landscape designs and standards for medians for each major thoroughfare to distinguish each from the other and to provide a special identity to adjacent districts and neighborhoods.

CD-2.5 Promote pedestrian circulation throughout the community through the provision of sidewalks and other pedestrian paths that connect neighborhoods, parks, schools, shopping, employment centers and other major activity centers.

- CD-2.6 Provide sidewalks and landscaping with an average 50-foot right-of-way, whenever feasible adjacent to non-residential development.
- CD-2.7 Create consistent entry/water features for select intersections throughout the City (e.g., at the Cerritos Auto Square and the Cerritos Civic Center intersections).
- CD-2.8 Develop a coordinated street furniture palette including waste containers and benches, to be implemented throughout the community at appropriate locations.
- CD-2.9 Provide a standard newspaper rack design for newspaper racks located in the public right-of-way.
- CD-2.10 Provide a well-designed, comfortable bus stop at all MTA, COW or other transportation stops in the City, including waste containers and benches, etc.
- CD-2.11 Continue to require undergrounding of utilities on private property.
- CD-2.12 Develop a priority-based program of utility undergrounding along public rights-of-way.
- CD-2.13 Study the locational requirements of utility, traffic control and other cabinets and hardware located in the public right-of-way to determine alternative locations for these items in less obtrusive areas of the street environment.
- CD-2.14 Continue to require that public rights-of-way be landscaped with softscape materials to allow for City and/or service utility company access to utility lines.
- CD-2.15 Work with utility providing agencies to coordinate the design of utility facilities (e.g., substations, pump stations, switching buildings, etc.) to ensure that the facilities fit within the context of their surroundings and do not cause negative visual impacts.
- CD-2.16 Ensure the coordinated design of walls on residential lots that back onto highways to achieve a uniform appearance from the street. Walls should be uniform in height, use of materials and color.

- CD-2.17 Study opportunities to provide landscape pockets with automatic irrigation systems along arterial streets that do not currently have landscaping to soften the visual effect of the block wall.
- CD-2.18 Ensure that focal points in the public right-of way and on publicly and privately owned property (i.e., Public Art, new and/or renovated developments) are appropriately accented and illuminated by requiring the preparation and implementation of lighting plans.

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PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

Planning Factor

Cerritos places a strong emphasis on high-quality design. Private development is expected to be well designed, to contribute to the City's image in a positive manner and to be properly maintained to ensure lasting quality.

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| Goal | <i>CD-3</i> | <i>Ensure that buildings and related site improvements for private development are well designed and compatible with surrounding properties and districts.</i> |
| Policies | CD-3.1 | Continue to place a high priority on quality architecture, landscape, and site design to enhance the image of Cerritos, and create a vital and attractive environment for businesses, residents and visitors. |
| | CD-3.2 | Continue to use precise plans for all developments, (which should include architectural design, site plans, landscaping and signing) to review and evaluate projects prior to issuance of building permits to determine their compliance with the objectives and specific requirements of the Development Code, General Plan and appropriate zone or Area Development Plans. |
| | CD-3.3 | Require the preparation of specific plans for various sections of the City identified as Area Development Plans, in order to coordinate land use, the location and design of buildings and open spaces and the arrangement of traffic circulation, parking and landscaping. |

- CD-3.4 Ensure that good project landscape and site design creates places that are well organized, attractive, efficient, safe and pedestrian friendly.
- CD-3.5 Provide pedestrian circulation within commercial centers through the provision of sidewalks and other pedestrian paths that connect shops, parking lots and other major activity uses within the center.
- CD-3.6 Encourage quality architectural design to maintain and enhance the City's identity and inspire creativity.
- CD-3.7 Ensure that buildings are appropriate to their context and designed to be compatible with surrounding uses and special districts.
- CD-3.8 Consider obtaining temporary landscape easements over identified vacant parcels to enhance continuity of landscaping with adjacent parcels and screen the negative visual effects of the parcels.
- CD-3.9 Ensure that vacant parcels, including former service station sites, are appropriately screened from the street to reduce the negative visual effects of the parcel. The screening shall include, but is not limited to, wood fences, ground cover or turf, shrubs, trees and a maintenance access, as illustrated in Exhibit CD-4. The screening is intended as an interim measure until the site is developed and/or redeveloped.

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SIGNS

Planning Factor

Sign structures and their graphic messages are highly visible elements within the street environment. The quality of business signage has a great influence on the perceived image of the City. The visual image of the City can be further enhanced by promoting the use of sign programs for new or redeveloping commercial centers.

Goal *CD-4 Ensure that commercial signs do not detract from the City's high-quality image, while recognizing the need for effective business identification.*

- Policies**
- CD-4.1 Continue to regulate the use of signs based on the premise that good design is an asset to the City and that signs should identify businesses, not advertise them.
 - CD-4.2 Vigorously enforce provisions of the Sign Ordinance to ensure that all businesses have an equal opportunity to identify their location and that unsafe or hazardous conditions are avoided.
 - CD-4.3 Maintain citywide sign design guidelines that promote creativity and high-quality design.
 - CD-4.4 Encourage the use of common design elements in signs for multi-tenant commercial and industrial centers. Use planned sign programs to improve center identity and appearance.
 - CD-4.5 Encourage homeowners' associations and neighborhoods to maintain existing housing tract entrance signs in an attractive manner and encourage the placement of new signs at the entrance of developments that do not have identification.
 - CD-4.6 Allow for the provision of comprehensive sign programs for multi-tenant centers to allow flexibility in the application of sign regulations in order to encourage creativity and promote a unified appearance within commercial centers. The development of sign programs is appropriate for new or redeveloping commercial centers.
 - CD-4.7 Encourage the use of common design elements in signs for redeveloping commercial centers through the development of planned sign programs to improve center identity and image by publicizing the benefits of such programs to developers and local business operators.
 - CD-4.8 Discourage the use of internally illuminated cabinet/can signs in favor of signs composed of individual letters on opaque backgrounds.



DESIGN FOR SAFE SPACES

Planning Factor

The physical design of a project can have a profound effect on the overall safety of the project from the aspect of criminal activity. Projects should demonstrate concern for users safety by being appropriately designed to reduce opportunities for criminal activity.

Goal *CD-5* *Create a safe place to live, work and play by incorporating public safety considerations into community design.*

Policies *CD-5.1* Decrease the opportunity for criminal activity by addressing high-risk circumstances (i.e., a dark alley, an enclosed stairwell, dark entrances). Involve the Police and Fire Department in reviewing and making design recommendations during the project review period.

CD-5.2 Implement and refine development standards and/or guidelines based on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) for new development and redevelopment with emphasis on site and building design to minimize vulnerability to criminal activity.

CD-5.3 Provide CPTED training to City staff to ensure implementation of public safety strategies through better community design.

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WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Planning Factor

Wireless telecommunications facilities consist of towers, antennae, and other associated equipment, which because of their necessary height and utilitarian design, have the potential to negatively impact the aesthetic quality of the community. The design of telecommunications projects should demonstrate concern for aesthetic impacts by following siting and design criteria that eliminates or significantly reduces potential impacts.

