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II. Introduction and Background

A. What is a Specific Plan?

The Urban Core Specific Plan (“Specific Plan”) is established pursuant to the authority granted in the Chula Vista Municipal Code Section 19.07, Specific Plans, and the California Government Code, Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 3, Article 8, Sections 65450 through 65457 and contains all the mandatory elements identified in Government Code Section 65451.

Specific Plans must be consistent with the policies contained within the General Plan and may be adopted by resolution or by ordinance. This differentiation allows cities to choose whether their specific plans, or portions thereof, will be policy driven (adopted by resolution), or regulatory (adopted by ordinance). This Specific Plan is adopted by ordinance. All zoning related portions of this Specific Plan (i.e. land use matrix, permitted uses and development regulations) are prepared to serve as regulatory provisions and supersede other regulations and ordinances of the City for the control of land use and development within the Urban Core Specific Plan subdistrict boundaries. Other portions, such as the development design guidelines and public realm design guidelines are provided as City policies aimed at providing direction for future planning and public improvement efforts. Future development projects, subdivisions, public improvement projects and other implementing programs should be consistent with the adopted Specific Plan.

B. Consistency with the General Plan

Over the last several years the City of Chula Vista has been in the process of updating the City’s General Plan, which was last comprehensively updated in 1989. The main focus during the 1989 update was on the newly annexed and developing eastern portions of the City. Although comprehensive, the recent General Plan (2005) has instead been primarily focused on the currently developed areas of the City, in particular the western portions. As such, the planning effort was confronted with balancing “how” the City should grow over the next 25 years given the continued growth projections with “where” the growth should occur, given the numerous established stable neighborhoods. This challenge was seen as an opportunity to utilize the key principles found in smart growth strategies relative to urban revitalization and apply them to areas that have experienced recent decline or underutilization.

The General Plan is based on many of the common elements and concepts of smart growth such as:

- Provide a mix of compatible land uses
- Take advantage of compact building design
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- Provide a variety of transportation choices

In order to realize the vision for the Urban Core established by the updated General Plan, it was recognized that existing zoning for the Urban Core needed “re-tooling”. The 30+ year-old zoning regulations either precluded or created a cumbersome entitlement process Projected Buildout to achieve

Land Use			
Multi-Family Residential (dwelling units)	3,700	7,100	10,800
Commercial Retail (square feet)	3,000,000	1,000,000	4,000,000
Commercial Office (square feet)	2,400,000	1,300,000	3,700,000
Commercial - Visitor Serving (square feet)		1,300,000	1,300,000

Projected buildout of the Specific Plan area

Fig. 2.1

the variety of living, Existing Net Increase Total employment and service choices envisioned by General Plan and quite commonplace in the 21st the century. Therefore, the Urban Core Specific Plan was prepared to provide a set of contemporary implementing tools to allow new development and redevelopment to occur over the next 20-25 years. To that end, the Specific Plan anticipates the following projected buildout consistent with the General Plan. (Refer to Figure 2.1)

Due to the length of time that buildout of the Urban Core Specific Plan is expected to take 20+ years, as well as the nature of urban revitalization, the exact extent, timing and sequencing of development is difficult to predict. However, the Specific Plan is not a static document and as such will be revisited on an on-going basis to evaluate progress towards buildout projections, priority ranking of important public improvements and other issues that may arise. A series of checks and balances will be part of that process and may include review under the City's Growth Management Ordinance, the biannual budgetary and Capital Improvements Program (CIP) cycle, and five-year progress check of the Specific Plan.

C. Plan Purpose and Intent

First and foremost, the purpose of the Urban Core Specific Plan is to revitalize and enhance the economic, social, cultural, and recreational fabric of the City's Urban Core. An overall goal is to develop the Urban Core with a mix of retail, office, and residential uses that are supported by a variety of options for moving from one place to another, often referred to as "mobility". The Specific Plan is a tool to facilitate and prioritize community improvement projects, evaluate development proposals and new land uses, and enhance existing uses. To do this, the Specific Plan provides a structure to implement the vision over time. Implementation measures include development standards, design guidelines, land use regulations, and a series of specific actions that may be undertaken by both the City, and private sector to make progress toward the Specific Plan goals. Existing City zoning is not adequate to realize the desired vision for the Specific Plan area and must be updated and retooled. As the existing zoning dates back to the last century, revisions are necessary to modernize, and allow for living and lifestyle choices appropriate for current needs.

The Specific Plan provides detailed development scenarios and regulations for the Urban Core. It features focused design guidelines tailored to individual neighborhoods.

The Specific Plan focuses on increasing the economic viability of the downtown and surrounding areas in order to meet City, business, and community needs. Many of the stable residential areas within the Specific Plan area will be maintained with as few changes as possible, though all neighborhoods, including those outside the Specific Plan boundaries, benefit from the improved services and amenities (e.g. bikeways, parks, etc.) resulting from the revitalization efforts.

The Specific Plan seeks to establish a direct connection between the City of Chula Vista General Plan and revitalization and enhancement opportunities within the City's Urban Core. An overall goal is the orderly development of Chula Vista's Urban Core in a method consistent with the City's General Plan and, more specifically, with the vision as developed through the Specific Plan public outreach process.

The intent is to produce a realistic, market-based action plan that will bring about programs, policies, and partnerships that will facilitate a major increase in the quality and quantity of retail, and other commercial activity and provide additional housing opportunities in the Urban Core. The future Urban Core will contain a diversity of public, commercial, civic, financial, cultural, and residential uses that will emphasize its role as the central focal point of the City.

D. Boundaries and Setting

1. Background

The Urban Core Specific Plan area represents the traditional downtown heart of the City. This northwestern corner of the City was the nucleus of Colonel William Dickinson's town plan for Chula Vista from the late nineteenth century (see Figure 4.1 - Chula Vista Plat Map). Originally a thriving agricultural community known for lemon orchards, the City's main economic focus shifted to industrial production during the time of World War II, due to the opening of Rohr Aircraft Corporation, a major manufacturing company supplying the US military forces. Due to the proximity to the San Diego metropolitan area, the City of Chula Vista has since acted as a commuting suburb of the larger city. Over the last 30 years, large tracts of land have been annexed in the City's eastern area and subsequently developed as master planned communities. One major annexation was that of the Montgomery community, a 3.5 square mile area considered the largest annexation of an inhabited area in state history. Over the last century, especially the latter decades, significant annexation, and subsequent population growth led to a decentralization of the City center. The Specific Plan will revitalize the fabric of the City's Urban Core and reestablish the focus on the traditional center of the community.

2. Regional Context

The City of Chula Vista covers approximately 52 square miles of southern San Diego County and is the second largest city in the County. The City is bounded by the South San Diego Bay to the west, the Sweetwater River to the north, mountains and the Otay Lakes to the east, and the Otay River to the south. (see Figures 2.2 - Regional Context Map and 2.3 - City Context Map).

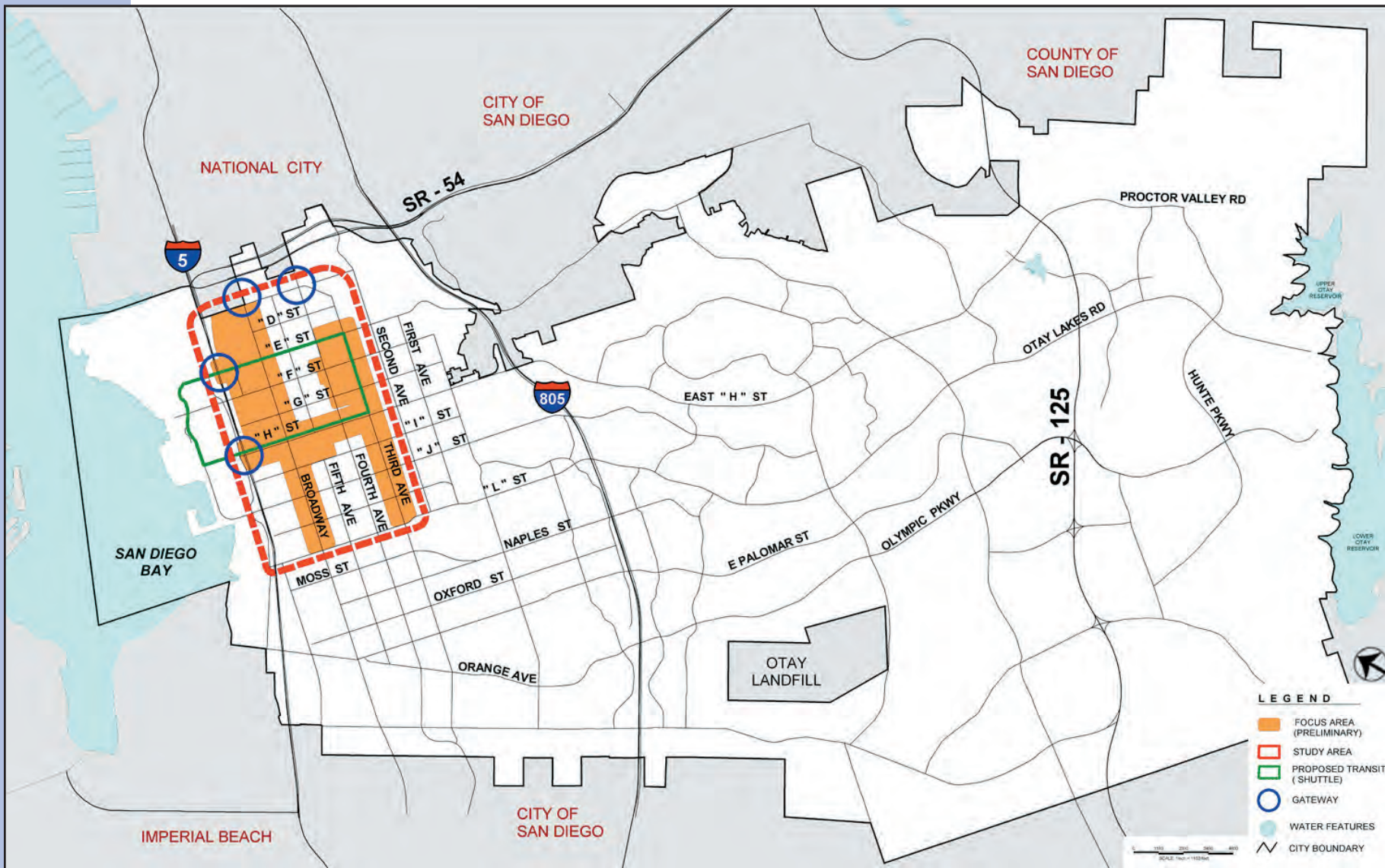
In 2004, the City had an estimated population of approximately 210,000.

Based on the General Plan Update population projections, the population in Chula Vista will continue to rise, reaching approximately 300,000 by 2030.



Regional context map (Source: City of Chula Vista)

Fig. 2.2



City Context Map (Source: City of Chula Vista)

Fig. 2.3

Though for many years Chula Vista was largely a residential suburban community, the City is evolving into a regional economic center. Located just south of downtown San Diego and a few miles north of the United States-Mexican border, the City is well-situated to take advantage of two very different economic markets. Regional transportation routes, such as the I-5, I-805, and SR-125 corridors as well as links to the San Diego Trolley system, are contiguous to the Urban Core boundary and provide convenient connections to the surrounding region. The traditional downtown area along Third Avenue, as well as the Chula Vista Center and other retail facilities along H Street, have been regional shopping attractions for decades. However, expansion of the City to the east, as well as growth in other parts of the County, have led to a decline in the Urban Core's market share of consumers.

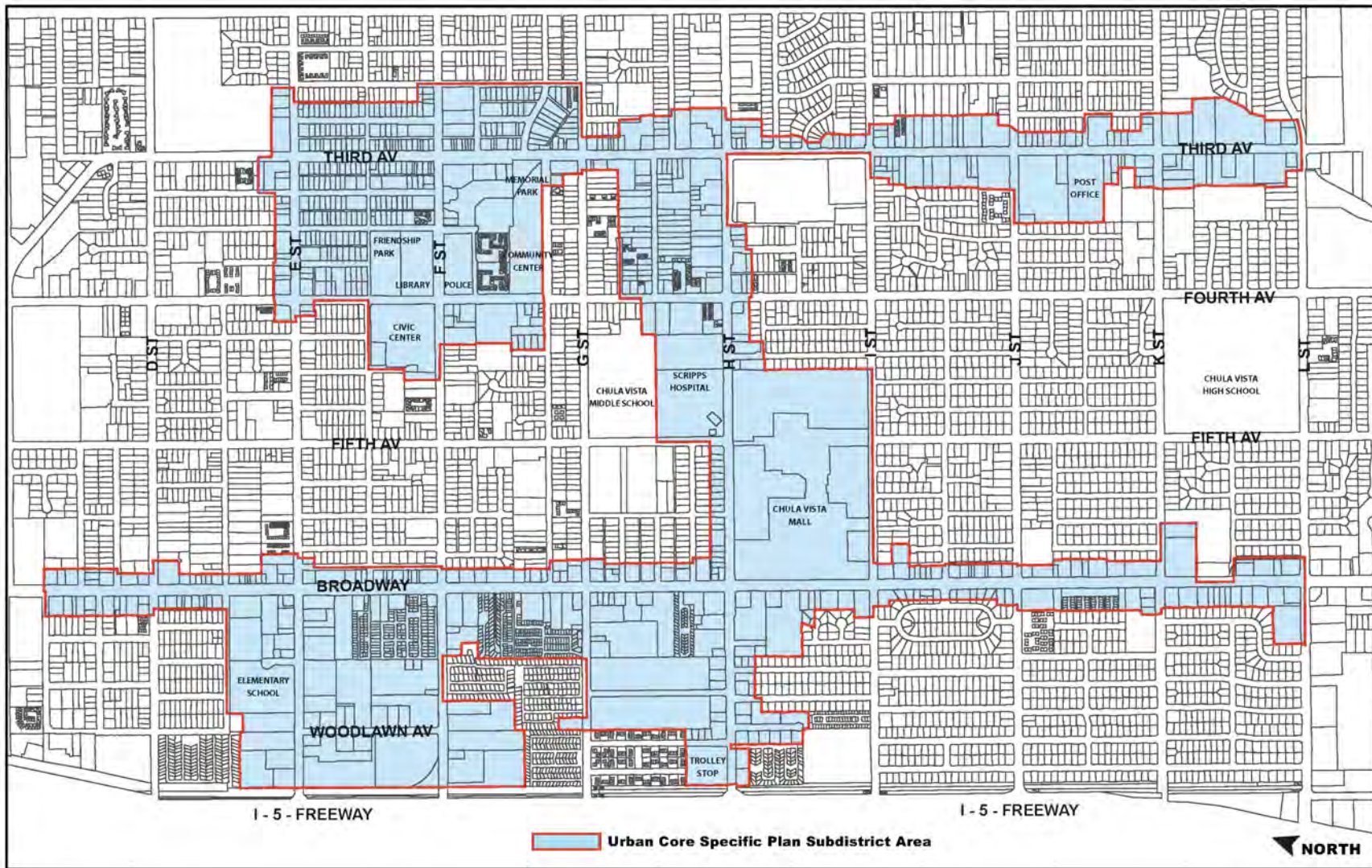
3. Urban Core Specific Plan Boundary

The Urban Core Specific Plan Study Area covers approximately 1,700 acres within the northwestern portion of the City of Chula Vista. It is generally bordered by the San Diego Freeway (I-5) to the west, C Street to the north, Second Avenue to the east, and L Street to the south. While there are 1,700 acres within the Specific Plan Study Area, it was determined that changes should be focused on areas more in need of redevelopment. Therefore, the Specific Plan focuses new development zoning regulations and design guidelines for approximately 690 gross acres within the larger Specific Plan Study Area, denoted as the Specific Plan Subdistricts Area; existing zoning outside of the Specific Plan Subdistrict Areas is not modified by this Specific Plan. Future development outside of the Specific Plan Subdistrict Areas will be processed using the existing zoning ordinance. The Specific Plan's final form takes into consideration areas of unique urban design challenges, areas of particular economic interest, and areas in need of character retention or redefinition. (Refer to Figure 2.4 for a map of the Specific Plan area.)

4. Setting

The Urban Core area is flanked by the proposed Bayfront project to the west and the almost built-out territory east of the I-805. Residents from the east and west will primarily access the Urban Core by automobile; however, alternative transportation modes are encouraged. In addition, walking and bicycling between the Urban Core and the proposed Bayfront will be feasible as the distance from Third Avenue to Lagoon Drive is approximately two miles. E Street, F Street and H Street provide linkages over the I-5 between the Urban Core and Bayfront.

The Specific Plan area is characterized by urbanized development on relatively flat topography. The built environment largely consists of one to three-story buildings with a few exceptions. Streets are generally laid out in a traditional grid pattern while some portions of the grid system have been substantially interrupted over time. Freeway access is predominantly provided at E Street, H Street, J Street, Broadway, and Fourth Avenue.



Urban Core Specific Plan Area

Fig. 2.4

E. Relevant City Documents

The following documents provided the basis for many of the goals, policies, standards, guidelines and approaches developed for the Urban Core Specific Plan. In some cases the Specific Plan provides the implementing regulations or further refinements to existing policies contained in these documents, and in other cases the Specific Plan replaces the relevant documents. Future development proposals must be found consistent with the Specific Plan, therefore, where inconsistencies arise in implementation documents, the provisions of the Specific Plan will take precedence.

1. City of Chula Vista General Plan

The City's General Plan is intended to guide the physical development of the City over a 20-30 year time frame. It establishes a vision for the City's future. The plan provides guidelines for making decisions concerning development of the City. Though largely focused on land use decisions, the plan addresses a range of elements, such as housing, open space and conservation, and public facilities and services that contribute to the City's well-being.

State law requires that the General Plan cover the following areas: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open-Space, Noise, and Safety. In addition, cities may choose to address subjects of particular interest to that jurisdiction; Chula Vista's plan includes elements on Public Facilities and Services, Growth Management and Child Care.

The Urban Core Specific Plan is consistent with, and furthers the objectives of the City of Chula Vista's General Plan by providing detailed criteria for development of specific sites and public streetscape improvements.

The update to the General Plan built upon the City's 1989 General Plan and provides a vision for the next 25 years of Chula Vista's future. Goals, objectives, and policies are presented that will guide the development of Chula Vista through the year 2030. Reference to the General Plan throughout this Specific Plan refers to the updated General Plan (2005) unless specifically referenced to previous versions (e.g. 1989).

The General Plan (2005) includes a new Economic Development Element and Environmental Element. It also features a combined Land Use and Transportation element that reinforces the link between land use planning and circulation throughout the City. An Implementation Chapter facilitates the ease of using the Specific Plan and makes the Specific Plan more beneficial for the citizens of Chula Vista. In the northwest area of the City, the General Plan recommended land use changes to "Focus Areas" primarily consisting of existing commercial corridors and residential areas close to transit facilities.

The Urban Core Specific Plan’s vision, goals, and implementation measures are based on direction given in the City’s General Plan. There are many goals, objectives, and policies within the General Plan that are relevant to this Specific Plan; the most representative objectives have been selected and are listed below. These objectives may apply to the entire City or only to the specific district noted in the policy.

a. Vision and Themes

Each Vision and Theme established in the General Plan will be implemented in the Urban Core, and are reflected in the subsequent pages and chapters of the Specific Plan. For example, General Plan Theme 4 - Improved Mobility is addressed through Chapter V - Mobility and Chapter VIII - Public Realm Design Guidelines. The following theme is of particular importance to the Urban Core:

- Theme 8 - Shaping the Future Through the Present and Past: Chula Vista values its unique heritage and sense of place and manages change in a way that complements the important qualities and features that shape its identity.

To this end, it is important to recognize the specific components of the Specific Plan that implement this theme.

1. Regulate new development and other physical alterations to be completed in a manner that respects the character, scale, and historical value of the City:

Chapter IV - Existing Conditions

Chapter V - Mobility

Chapter VI - Land Use Development Regulations

Chapter VII - Development Design Guidelines

Chapter VIII - Public Realm Design Guidelines

Chapter IX - Infrastructure and Public Facilities

Chapter X - Plan Implementation and Community Benefits Program

2. Harmonizing changes to blend in with and enhance the positive aspects of what is already there, see:

Chapter IV - Existing Conditions

Chapter VI - Land Use Development Regulations

Chapter VII - Development Design Guidelines

Chapter VIII - Public Realm Design Guidelines

3. Shaping established Chula Vista’s future through policies that focus on preserving and enhancing stable residential neighborhoods, see:
 - Chapter VI - Land Use Development Regulations
 - Chapter VII - Development Design Guidelines
 - Chapter VIII - Public Realm Design Guidelines
 - Chapter IX - Infrastructure and Public Facilities
 - Chapter X - Plan Implementation and Community Benefits Program
4. Enhancing community image, see:
 - Chapter VII - Development Design Guidelines
 - Chapter VIII - Public Realm Design Guidelines
 - Chapter IX - Infrastructure and Public Facilities
 - Chapter X - Plan Implementation and Community Benefits Program
5. Protecting cultural and historical resources, see:
 - Chapter IV - Existing Conditions
 - Chapter V - Mobility
 - Chapter VI - Land Use Development Regulations
 - Chapter VII - Development Design Guidelines
 - Chapter VIII - Public Realm Design Guidelines
6. Implementing compatible land uses and edge transition, see:
 - Chapter VI - Land Use Development Regulations
 - Chapter VII - Development Design Guidelines
 - Chapter VIII - Public Realm Design Guidelines

b. Land Use and Transportation (LUT) Objectives

- Objective LUT-1: Provide a balance of residential and non-residential development throughout the City that achieves a vibrant development pattern, enhances the character of the City, and meets the present and future needs of all residents and businesses.
- Objective LUT-2: Limit locations for the highest development intensities and densities, and the tallest building forms, to key urban activity centers that are well served by transit.

- Objective LUT-3: Direct urban design and form of new development, and redevelopment in a manner that blends with and enhances Chula Vista's character and qualities, both physical and social.
- Objective LUT-4: Establish policies, standards, and procedures to minimize blighting influences and maintain the integrity of stable residential neighborhoods.
- Objective LUT-5: Designate opportunities for mixed use areas with higher density housing that is near shopping, jobs, and transit in appropriate locations throughout the City.
- Objective LUT-6: Ensure adjacent land uses are compatible with one another.
- Objective LUT-7: Appropriate transitions should be provided between land uses.
- Objective LUT-8: Strengthen and sustain Chula Vista's image as a unique place by maintaining, enhancing and creating physical features that distinguish Chula Vista's neighborhoods, communities, and public spaces, and enhance its image as a pedestrian-oriented and livable community.
- Objective LUT-9: Create enhanced gateway features for City entry points and other important areas, such as special districts.
- Objective LUT-10: Create attractive street environments that complement private and public properties, create attractive public rights-of-way, and provide visual interest for residents and visitors.
- Objective LUT-11: Ensure that buildings and related site improvements for public and private development are well designed and compatible with surrounding properties and districts.
- Objective LUT-12: Protect Chula Vista's important historic resources.
- Objective LUT-15: Improve transportation connections within Chula Vista and between eastern and western Chula Vista, particularly transit connections between major activity centers.
- Objective LUT-16: Integrate land use and transportation planning and related facilities.
- Objective LUT-17: Plan and coordinate development to be compatible and supportive of planned transit.

- Objective LUT-18: Reduce traffic demand through Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies, increased use of transit, bicycles, walking, and other trip reduction measures.
- Objective LUT-20: Make transit-friendly roads a top consideration in land use and development design.
- Objective LUT-21: Continue efforts to develop and maintain a safe and efficient transportation system with adequate roadway capacity to serve future residents, while preserving the unique character and integrity of recognized communities within the City.
- Objective LUT-23: Promote the use of non-polluting and renewable alternatives for mobility through a system of bicycle and pedestrian paths and trails that are safe, attractive and convenient forms of transportation.
- Objective LUT-26: Establish an Urban Core Improvements Program for the Urban Core Subarea.
- Objective LUT-27: Establish a program for development to provide public amenities and/or community services necessary to support urban development and implement the following policies. (Refer to General Plan for list of policies.)
- Objective LUT-28: Consider use of lot consolidation, where appropriate, so that projects meeting the objectives of this General Plan can be achieved, and a high level of community amenities can be provided.
- Objective LUT-29: Allow for the clustering of residential development to respond to site constraints, and improve amenities for project residents.
- Objective LUT-30: Use parking management to better utilize parking facilities and implement policies to reduce parking demand before considering public expenditures for additional parking facilities.
- Objective LUT-31: Provide parking facilities that are appropriately integrated with land uses; maximize efficiency; accommodate alternative vehicles; and reduce parking impacts.
- Objective LUT-32: Evaluate the use and applicability of various strategies to provide parking.
- Objective LUT-33: Ensure that parking facilities are appropriately sited and well-designed in order to minimize adverse effects on the pedestrian-oriented environment, and to enhance aesthetic qualities.

The following objectives are provided in the General Plan for the Northwest Area Plan, which includes the Specific Plan area and contains “area specific” policies for the Urban Core.

- Objective LUT-46: Establish linkages between the Urban Core Subarea and the Bayfront Planning Area for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit.
- Objective LUT-47: Establish roadway classifications in the Urban Core Subarea that respond to the special operating characteristics of roadways within a more urbanized environment, accommodate slower speeds in pedestrian-oriented areas, and facilitate multi-modal design elements and amenities.
- Objective LUT-48: Increase mobility for residents and visitors in the Urban Core Subarea.
- Objective LUT-49: Encourage redevelopment, infill, and new development activities within the Urban Core Subarea that will provide a balance of land uses, reinforce its identity as Chula Vista’s central core, and complement land uses in other planning areas, including the Bayfront and East Planning Areas
- Objective LUT-50: Provide for the redevelopment and enhancement of the Downtown Third Avenue District as a lively, higher density, mixed use area, while preserving the important elements that contribute to the charm and character of traditional Third Avenue.
- Objective LUT-51: Maintain downtown Third Avenue as a focal point for the City so that it continues to express the City’s history, provide a venue for cultural vitality, and retain its role as a center for social, political, and other civic functions.
- Objective LUT-52: Encourage redevelopment of the Chula Vista Center, as well as properties north of H Street, with a mix of land uses that will reinforce H Street as a future planned transit boulevard and gateway corridor, and establish the area as a significant public gathering space and vibrant mixed use area.
- Objective LUT-53: Encourage redevelopment to be mixed use along the H Street Corridor, between Third Avenue and Fourth Avenue, within walking distance of a planned future transit station near Third Avenue and H Street.
- Objective LUT-54: Encourage redevelopment activities within the North Broadway Focus Area that will result in the establishment of a pedestrian-oriented commercial corridor providing housing opportunities and local-serving compatible commercial uses.

- Objective LUT-55: Encourage redevelopment of E Street between Interstate 5 and Broadway with mixed use, especially near the E Street Trolley Station, and an emphasis on visitor-serving uses, with some offices and multi-family residential.
- Objective LUT-56: Encourage redevelopment of the area between Interstate 5 and Broadway, bounded on the north by F Street and on the south by G Street, with predominantly high density residential, supported by mixed use along Broadway.
- Objective LUT-57: Encourage redevelopment of the area between Interstate 5 and Broadway, between G Street and H Street, emphasizing transit-oriented mixed use near the H Street Trolley Station and reinforcing H Street as a major gateway and transit boulevard.
- Objective LUT-58: Encourage redevelopment of the area between Interstate 5 and Broadway, between H Street and I Street, as a regional shopping center or transit focus mixed use area that will complement redevelopment of the existing Chula Vista Center, and reinforce H Street as a major gateway and transit boulevard.
- Objective LUT-59: Encourage redevelopment activities within the Mid-Broadway District that will establish a pedestrian oriented commercial corridor providing housing opportunities and compatible neighborhood-serving commercial uses.
- Objective LUT-60: Reinforce the existing land use pattern of predominantly retail uses on the west side of Third Avenue, and office uses on the east side of Third Avenue between J Street and L Street.

c. Public Facilities and Services Objectives

- Objective PFS-14: Provide parks and recreation facilities and programs citywide that are well maintained, safe, accessible to all residents and that offer opportunities for personal development, health and fitness in addition to recreation.

The Urban Core Specific Plan provides for more precise implementation of the General Plan's goals, objectives, and policies. The Specific Plan has been prepared to reinforce all elements of the General Plan relative to the Urban Core.

2. Chula Vista General Plan Update Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

The General Plan Update EIR provides an assessment of the existing conditions within the City and the suitability of those conditions for meeting the goals for the City's future. The EIR evaluates potential impacts relating to the General Plan Update and presents feasible mitigation measures where significant environmental impacts are identified. Environmental concerns identified through the General Plan Update EIR were taken into consideration in the development of the Urban Core Specific Plan.

3. Chula Vista Municipal Code – Title 19 Zoning

The City of Chula Vista's Municipal Code, Title 19 Zoning, sets standards and regulations to protect and promote the public health, safety, welfare, and quality of life within Chula Vista and to implement the goals set forth in the General Plan. The Zoning Code provides site specific development and land use regulations that govern the size, shape, and intensity of development in the City, and uses to which new development may be committed. The Zoning Code divides the City into districts, each of which establishes a set of regulations controlling such issues as the uses of land, uses and locations of structures, height and bulk of and open spaces around structures, signs, and parking. The traditional Euclidean zoning classifications found within the Urban Core include: Central Commercial (CC), Administrative and Professional Office (CO), Commercial Thoroughfare (CT), Visitor Commercial (CV), Limited Industrial (IL), Mobilehome Park (MHP), Public/Quasi-public (PQ), One- and Two-Family Residential (R1, R2), and Apartment Residential (R3). These classifications commonly allow only a single land use type; mixed-use areas are implemented through rezonings, conditional use permits, and General Plan changes. The Specific Plan customizes the standards and regulations found in the City Zoning Code in order to achieve the Urban Core vision. The Specific Plan sets more detailed zoning standards and regulations for the sub-districts within the Specific Plan and replaces the zoning regulations provided in 19.24 - 19.40 and 19.44. The provisions of the City Zoning Code apply to the properties within the Specific Plan area; in such cases where the Specific Plan and Zoning Code conflict, the Specific Plan regulations and development standards shall apply. Where the Specific Plan is silent, provisions of the zoning code shall apply.

4. Third Avenue Village District Market Opportunity Study and Recruitment Strategy

An analysis of the marketing strengths and challenges of the Urban Core area allows for development of a recruitment strategy that assists property owners in improving their sites while attracting new tenants to vacant commercial spaces. Identified opportunities include the potential to support a “fine limited local commercial district,” establishing a Third Avenue Village as a “unique or niche” destination within the larger economic community, the creation of a Third Avenue Village identity that sets it apart from other cities and districts, and the potential to intensify development near transit nodes, areas of greater pedestrian frequency, and civic uses. Major strategies include strengthening existing locations, providing transit linkages, developing an improved sign program and offering a variety of development incentives. These strategies are further developed through the Specific Plan. Implementation of the Specific Plan document will help Third Avenue overcome the existing economic challenges and foster a successful revitalization program for the area.

5. Broadway Revitalization Strategy

The focus area of this document is on Broadway from H Street to L Street, with particular attention to the H Street entryway into the City. The plan strives to reverse deteriorating conditions along the auto-oriented strip and reform the area into a commercially viable and visually pleasing environment. The document outlines proposed broad economic, aesthetic, and circulation improvements along Broadway. The Urban Core Specific Plan will implement many of the changes and improvements suggested in the Broadway Revitalization Strategy.

6. Bayfront Master Plan

The purpose of the Bayfront Master Plan is to create a world-class bayfront in Chula Vista. Goals of the Bayfront Master Plan include creating one unified Bayfront area from the three existing districts, finding a balance between being sensitive to both environmental and community recreational needs, creating an active boating waterfront in the deep water area, developing a sense of place at the Bayfront, and extending the City to the Bayfront. The Urban Core Specific Plan strives especially toward the latter goal of connecting the City's downtown to the Bayfront. Design suggestions in the Specific Plan seek to restore and reinforce connectivity between the Urban Core and the Bayfront.

7. MTBD/South Bay Transit First Study

The Transit First Study evaluates potential future transit options for the City. The study identifies transit priority treatment options, alternate transit alignments, and potential transit station locations and types, such as mixed flow transit lanes, dedicated transit lanes, freeway HOV/transit lanes, guideways, queue jumpers, and transit priority signals. Based on ridership potential and the ability to best serve the established travel patterns of the region, alternative transit routes were divided into Tier One and Tier Two options. The Specific Plan supports increased public transit usage. Many of the recommendations made in the Specific Plan will benefit from the implementation of successful transit projects. Strategies from this report were considered in the Specific Plan Transportation Impact Analysis and also provide support for the transit intensive Urban Core.

8. Chula Vista Economic Development Strategy

The Economic Development Strategy was prepared in 2003 and serves as a blueprint for development of fiscal sustainability for the community. The Strategy has been updated and incorporated into the General Plan to serve as a blueprint for development to ensure short and long-term fiscal sustainability. The Strategy establishes 12 goals, supported by objectives and action items,

which will facilitate Chula Vista's economic prosperity through the year 2020. Goals that support increasing investment in western Chula Vista, providing the necessary physical infrastructure to support economic prosperity, and becoming the south county hub for leisure, recreational, shopping, and entertainment activities are directly reflected in the Specific Plan.

9. Historic Preservation Strategic Plan

The Historic Preservation Strategic Plan resulted from an effort by the Ad Hoc Historic Preservation Committee to evaluate the City's current historic preservation program and to make recommendations for the future of the City's historic resources. The Committee developed an action plan that could develop Chula Vista's Historic Preservation Program as a method for preserving the important historic resources of the City. Recommendations include becoming a Certified Local Government, establishing a predictable and consistent historic review process, establishing an historic preservation review board, and providing incentives for historic preservation. The Urban Core Strategic Plan encourages preservation of historic resources within the Urban Core area.

F. Community Outreach Process

An important component of the Urban Core Specific Plan is the public participation process. The community outreach effort was designed to involve the various citizens and interest groups of Chula Vista in the Specific Plan process. Initial steps were taken to involve the citizens of Chula Vista. The following is a brief summary of the outreach efforts included in the public participation process that helped to shape the Specific Plan.

1. Key Person Interviews

A series of interviews were conducted in March of 2004 with various individuals, agencies, and organizations with strong interests in the Urban Core area. The purpose of these meetings was to listen to the issues and observations from key persons about the planning area. The interviews were quite informative for laying a foundation of background information and identifying many issues as well as visions for the Urban Core area.

Overall, most of the stakeholders voiced consistent feedback. Some of the most frequent comments included the following:

- Third Avenue currently has the wrong tenant mix.
- Third Avenue should have more pedestrian-oriented uses and mixed-use projects.
- Broadway is an “eyesore” and is in need of aesthetic improvements.
- H Street is the major thoroughfare in Chula Vista.
- Uses such as liquor stores, pawn shops, dentist labs, adult stores, social service/employment agencies, and check cashing, etc. should be prohibited from the Urban Core.
- Single-family neighborhoods should be protected.
- The key project in the City is the Gateway project.
- The predominant architectural style should be Historic Spanish Mediterranean.
- Chula Vista should be connected to downtown San Diego via the trolley.
- A “small loop” trolley should circulate through Chula Vista and connect to the San Diego Trolley system.
- Connections to the Bayfront are needed.

Stakeholders also voiced the top things they would change about Chula Vista. The most prominent ideas were:

- Increase the density and building height of the Urban Core.
- Add open space to the Urban Core.
- Create a different tenant mix on Third Avenue.
- Make H Street more pedestrian-oriented through a variety of streetscape improvements.

2. Advisory Committee Meetings

Beginning in August 2004, the Chula Vista Urban Core Advisory Committee met monthly in sessions open to the public. The Advisory Committee meetings allowed opportunities for the consultant team to present and refine ideas and concepts with substantial input from Advisory Committee members as well as the public at each stage of the planning process. The Advisory Committee was composed of 18 members representative of many community sectors, that provided a broad variety of perspectives. The Advisory Committee members were essential to keeping the project on track for the benefit of the citizens of Chula Vista.

Topics discussed in the Advisory Committee meetings included:

- Issue Identification
- Key Person Interviews
- Photo Tour and Visual Preference Survey
- Goals and Objectives for Vision Plan Areas
- Draft Vision Plan Review and Exercise
- Presentation of Vision Plans, Vision Statements, and Ten Key Principles
- Design Guidelines
- “At-A-Glance” Zoning Sheets and Land Use Matrix for quick reference
- Gateways and Streetscapes Concepts
- Urban Amenities and Incentives

Frequent updates on the traffic analyses and market conditions studies were also provided by the consultant team.



Advisory Committee meetings helped guide the Urban Core Specific Plan

Fig. 2.5

The Advisory Committee meetings provided substantial feedback for the consultant team, and were essential to the refining of the draft critical components of the Specific Plan.

3. Advisory Committee Charrette

In August 2004, the City Council appointed an 18-member Advisory Committee, chaired by Mayor Padilla and composed of various stakeholders, to help guide the Urban Core planning effort. The first meeting of the committee was a two-day visioning charrette, held on August 12-13, 2004. After participating in a bus tour of the Specific Plan area, an introduction was provided to the Urban Core visioning effort and an invitation was extended to the community to urge citizens to participate in the development of the Urban Core Specific Plan.



Advisory Committee members and members of the public develop ideas

Fig. 2.6

The workshop meeting continued with a presentation on the importance of the work effort and its relationship to the General Plan

Update and the Bayfront Master Plan project. A description of the Specific Plan effort and purpose was also provided. Following these presentations, a roundtable exercise solicited preliminary thoughts and issues for the Urban Core.

After a preliminary review of the Land Use Concepts, Urban Core Focus Districts, Urban Design Themes, and Opportunities and Constraints of the site, the Advisory Committee members were asked to identify potential “big ideas” for the Urban Core.

The second day of the charrette kicked off with presentations from subconsultants regarding marketing and economics research as well as traffic and transportation research. A summary of the urban core market context and the regional economy and an overview of urban mobility concepts and transportation opportunities, respectively, were provided.

The next portion of the meeting provided a visual overview of each of the nine original focus districts with a number of images ranging in height and massing. The images that were shown also included a variety of streetscape scenarios.



An Advisory Committee Charrette was held on August 12-13, 2004

Fig. 2.7

Committee members then participated in a Visual Preference Survey and were asked to rank the images as appropriate, neutral, or inappropriate.

Finally, both Advisory Committee members and the public were invited to write issues, concerns, and “big ideas” on six banners provided. Banner headings included Circulation/Transit, Land Use, Community Design, Parks & Services, Implementation, and Other Key Issues.



Issues, concerns, and “big ideas” were solicited at the Charrette

Fig. 2.8

4. First Community Workshop

The first community workshop was held on September 13, 2004 at the Chula Vista Public Library (Civic Center Branch). Approximately 85 members of the public attended. The meeting began with an introduction to the project and process. A discussion on opportunities for public participation, anticipated timelines, and related projects followed. The consultant team then presented the basics of a Specific Plan, the boundaries of the study area, and a description of the existing conditions for each of the nine Focus Area Districts.

A Visual Preference Survey was conducted enabling members of the public to vote on various images with regard to building massing and scale. Participants were able to rate images for each of the nine Focus Area Districts as being appropriate, neutral, or inappropriate for that particular district.

In summary, participants consistently voted pedestrian-oriented streetscapes with the buildings located at the street edge as their preference. Buildings with interesting architectural details, such as well articulated windows, entries, rooflines, and buildings bases, were clearly preferred over large, box-like structures. In most districts, a building height of two to three stories seemed to be most acceptable, with higher buildings preferred near the freeway interchange districts.



Participants voted on images in terms of appropriateness of massing and scale

Fig. 2.9

Public comments and questions were solicited. Comments received included:

- A Website is needed as well as access for non-Internet users, such as a hotline.
- Focus on streetscape – shade trees.
- Consider free shuttle buses to connect to Bay area, Third Avenue, Broadway.



About 85 people attended the First Community Workshop

Fig. 2.10

- Encourage public art.
- Create unified features to connect pedestrian paths.
- Consider allowing 2nd floor residences over commercial uses.
- Use “walkable communities” principles.
- Encourage adaptive reuse of existing historic buildings.

- Decide what is desirable about Chula Vista and reinforce that character.

The workshop was very informative in setting a clear direction for how the community visualized the short and long-term future of Chula Vista’s Urban Core. The feedback obtained helped the consultant team to further develop vision and design plans and ultimately this Specific Plan.

5. High School Presentations

Visual Preference Surveys were conducted at two local high schools on September 29, 2004. 64 students at Castle Park High School and 53 students at Hilltop High School rated images for each of the nine Urban Core Focus Area Districts as being appropriate, neutral, or inappropriate for

that particular district with regard to building massing and scale.



Students at Hilltop High School participate in a Visual Preference Survey

Fig. 2.11

The students were enthusiastic about being involved in the planning process and having a chance to have their opinions heard. Both groups of students presented similar results. The students’ preferences were comparable to those of the community at large; though the students often rated larger developments as more appropriate than did members of the

community participating in other visual preference surveys. In general, the students' preferences showed a greater affinity for higher intensity development and taller buildings as well as more contemporary architectural styles.

6. Planning Commission and City Council Workshop

The information and ideas generated from the initial committee meetings, community workshops, and high school surveys were used to create a series of "vision plans" for the Urban Core. The vision plans were intended to evoke an image of what the Urban Core could look like over the next 20 to 25 years and to set the frame work for the preparation of the Specific Plan. A workshop was then held on November 17, 2004 for members of the Chula Vista Planning Commission and City Council to review the draft Vision Plans and Ten Key Principles.

After some discussion on the differences between vision plans, which are representative of broad ideals, versus master plans, which are more literal representations of changes to an area, the Planning Commission and City Council were very supportive of the Vision Plans. Only minor revisions were suggested, such as the relocation of certain parking areas and structures and the addition of more commercial development along H Street.

7. Second Community Workshop

On December 1, 2004 citizens were invited to participate in a second community workshop. Results were presented from four visual preference surveys, conducted at an Advisory Committee meeting, the first community workshop, and two presentations at local high schools. The draft Vision Plans were also presented, including the Ten Key Principles for future Urban Core development. Public comments and questions were solicited using an interactive round-table discussion focused on the three key visioning areas.

In summary, participants were supportive and enthusiastic of the concepts and visions presented. Comments included concern over visitor parking, affordability of housing, and the need to develop the Broadway corridor as a retail, hospitality, and housing district that would serve the needs of existing Chula Vista residents. Participants were encouraged by the opportunity to provide feedback.



The Draft Vision Plans were presented at the Second Community Workshop

Fig. 2.12

8. Other Outreach Efforts

Frequently updated information was made available to the public on the City's website regarding the progress of the Specific Plan effort. The website explained the Specific Plan project and process and kept citizens up to date on the latest work projects. Information and exhibits presented at Advisory Committee meetings were presented on the website, and upcoming meeting dates were posted. The website acted as a convenient source of information for interested citizens.

9. Urban Core Newsletter

The City published an Urban Core Newsletter that informed residents of the purpose and progress of the Specific Plan. The Newsletter provided a summary of the initial planning effort culminating in the Vision Plans, which were completed in December 2004. The newsletter allowed citizens of Chula Vista to be more knowledgeable about the Specific Plan effort and afforded them an opportunity to be more involved in the overall Specific Plan process.

Volume 1 • Issue 1 • Winter 2005

Urban Core Specific Plan News

A plan to revitalize and shape the future of Chula Vista's urban core is underway and shifting into high gear.

WHERE is the Urban Core?
It is the western part of the city (between I-5 and Del Mar Avenue and between C Street and L Street) that is commonly known as the historical downtown of Chula Vista. This area now has the potential to become a more dynamic and vibrant center for the surrounding neighborhoods and the community. The City has been developing an Urban Core Specific Plan (UCSP), a blueprint to guide development in "focus areas" within the larger urban core.

WHAT is a Specific Plan?
A specific plan is a regulatory tool local governments use to implement their general plan and to guide development in a specially designated area. While the general plan is the framework for growth and development in a community, a specific plan tailors the planning process and land use regulations to accommodate the unique characteristics of a particular area.

In early 2004, the City hired a consultant, RRM Design Group of San Juan Capistrano to assist the City in preparing the urban core specific plan. RRM conducted a series of interviews with local business and civic leaders who have a strong interest in the project. The stakeholder interviews were followed by a series of technical studies that addressed land use, design, circulation, and infrastructure.

PROGRESS to Date
The Chula Vista Urban Core Specific Plan work effort officially kicked off in August 2004. A 19-member Advisory Committee was appointed by the City Council to oversee the preparation of the UCSP. At the committee's first workshop in August, Mayor Stephen C. Padilla welcomed Chula Vista residents and pledged that extensive public outreach would envelop the planning process and help define the look, character and lifestyles of the urban core.

In September 2004, residents and property owners were given an opportunity to get involved in the process. Approximately 70 residents and property owners attended the first public workshop. They were asked to participate in a visual preference survey, which asked them to rank images of buildings in terms of appropriateness for different areas of the urban core. Local high school students and the advisory committee completed the same survey.

With the results of those surveys in hand, RRM drafted a vision plan for the urban core that includes: the Downtown Village, which roughly covers the existing downtown area; the Grand Boulevard, which extends along H Street; and the Promenade, which covers the gateway area closest to the I-5 Freeway.

CALENDAR
Urban Core Specific Plan Advisory Committee Meetings:
January 26
February 16
March 16
April 13
6 - 8 pm
Community Meeting Room, Police Dept. Headquarters
Everyone is welcome!
For more information, visit the City's website at www.chulavista.ca.gov

Get involved!
Anyone interested in the future of Chula Vista is encouraged to get involved!
For more information contact:
Mary Ladiana
Planning Manager
City of Chula Vista
Community Development
276 Fourth Avenue
Chula Vista, CA 91910
(619) 409-5432
mladiana@ci.chula-vista.ca.us

Stay connected!

CITY OF CHULA VISTA

The City provided the Urban Core Specific Plan Newsletter as an update for residents

Fig. 2.13