A. OVERVIEW

The Historic Preservation and Community Design Element seeks to preserve San Leandro’s legacy of historic resources, enhance the aesthetic character of the City, and maintain the features that make San Leandro unique. Although the Element is not explicitly required by State law, its goals are among the highest of City priorities.

Historic Preservation is defined as the sensitive maintenance, continued use, and restoration of older buildings and sites having historic, architectural, aesthetic, or cultural value. As one of the oldest communities in the East Bay, San Leandro has a rich history, presenting opportunities for a more vital preservation program. Such a program can provide economic and tourism benefits, engender civic pride, and create a stronger “sense of place” in the City. Many historic buildings in San Leandro have been lost to demolition over the past century—the General Plan seeks to avoid further unnecessary losses so that living reminders of the City’s heritage may be preserved for future generations.

Community Design addresses all aspects of the City’s visual appearance—from the design of its buildings to the character of its gateways, streets and public spaces. Architecture, construction materials, and landscaping play a major role in how San Leandro looks and feels. Policies and actions in this Element ensure that new construction and rehabilitation projects will be sensitive to their surroundings and contribute positively to the character of the City. The Element places particular emphasis on the “greening” of San Leandro through additional tree planting and landscaping. Ultimately, a greener and more attractive City can provide economic and property value benefits as well as ecological and aesthetic benefits.
Historic and Archaeological Resources

The San Leandro area was home to Native Americans for more than 3,000 years before the first European settlers arrived. The city occupies territory that was once inhabited by the Ohlone Indians. Very few traces of the native inhabitants remain today, but evidence from nearby sites and early records provides a picture of what life was like in the area prior to the arrival of Spanish explorers and missionaries. At least 10 archaeological sites have been identified between San Leandro Creek and San Lorenzo Creek, most consisting of remnant shell mounds near the shoreline and along the banks of the creeks.

There are also few remaining traces of the first 100 years of European settlement in San Leandro. A variety of Early California architectural styles existed in the town during the 1850s and 1860s, but virtually all of these structures were lost as a result of earthquakes, fires, or demolition. The only structure still standing in San Leandro confirmed to pre-date the City’s 1872 incorporation is the Alta Mira Club, constructed in 1860 and located at 561 Lafayette Avenue. That building, originally the home of Ignacio Peralta, has been a designated California Historical Landmark since 1937 and has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978.
There are several dozen structures in the City built between 1870 and 1900 that are still standing. Most are residential buildings built in the vernacular or Victorian styles that were popular at the time. The Daniel Best Home, an Italianate Victorian built in the late 1870s at Clarke and Estudillo, is probably the best example. Elsewhere in the City, there are a few examples of Queen Anne, Second Empire, and Italianate homes, generally scattered to the southeast of Downtown. Another concentration of turn-of-the-century vernacular homes can be found along Orchard Avenue between Davis and Williams Street. These homes are also notable for the community of Portuguese settlers that once resided there.

San Leandro has a handful of non-residential buildings dating from the late 1800s. These are generally small wood frame structures, such as the Little Brown Church, the Little Shul synagogue, and the former Southern Pacific Railroad Depot. Some of these buildings have been moved from their original locations but they are still important cultural landmarks.

The City has several hundred structures dating from the early 20th century, but only a few have been officially recognized as historically significant. The best known—the Casa Peralta at 384 West Estudillo Avenue—was built in 1901 by one of Ignacio Peralta’s daughters. The Casa was originally built as a Victorian residence but was remodeled as a Moorish villa in 1926. The building was donated to the City in 1971 and has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1982.
There are also a number of distinctive commercial structures from the early 1900s, including the neoclassical Daniel Best Building (1909) at East 14th and Estudillo Avenue. Its distinctive white terra cotta façade and prominent clock make this building the symbolic “heart” of San Leandro. Many of the nearby buildings of this era were lost during the second half of the 20th century to make way for parking or more modern structures.

There are many examples of early 20th century residential architecture in San Leandro, especially in the northeast part of the City. Some 3,700 homes in San Leandro pre-date World War II. Neighborhoods such as Broadmoor, Estudillo Estates, Peralta, Best Manor, and Farrell Pond are characterized by well-maintained California bungalows, Craftsman and Prairie-style homes, and Mediterranean-style cottages. Some of these neighborhoods include design elements typical of the City Beautiful movement of the early 1900s, including winding streets, manicured open spaces (such as Victoria Circle), gracious street trees, and large front lawns.

Structures built between 1940 and 1960 represent about half of San Leandro’s housing stock and much of its commercial, industrial, and public building stock. These structures are old enough to qualify as potentially “historic” under federal and State preservation laws, but would be unlikely to be designated as landmarks unless they displayed certain distinctive features. A 60 or 70 year old structure would be most likely to be considered “historic” if it exemplified the distinctive characteristics of an architectural style or period, a particular method of construction, or the work of a well-known architect. Buildings may also be deemed historically important if they are associated with notable individuals or historic events.

Some of San Leandro’s mid-century buildings exemplify the architectural conventions that were in vogue at the time of their construction. Structures such as the Bal Theatre and the Pelton Shopping Center are reminders of an important period not only in San Leandro’s history but in the history of California and the Bay Area. The City has a particularly large inventory of vintage signs from the 1940s and 1950s. These contribute to architectural character and provide a nostalgic
connection to the City’s past. In some instances, signage has been saved or restored even where the buildings themselves have been remodeled using more contemporary materials and architecture.

Some of the historic resources in the City are landscapes rather than structures. For instance, the City contains several heritage redwood trees that have been recognized as warranting protection. There are also important resources just outside the City limits, such as the San Lorenzo and Calvary Cemeteries, old San Lorenzo Village, and the Lake Chabot Dam.

San Leandro also has numerous sites where important buildings (such as the Alameda County Courthouse) once stood. Even though the buildings themselves are gone, there is an opportunity to increase public awareness of the past through plaques and markers. There may also be places in the City yet to be recognized for their historic significance, such as the first of the thousands of homes in the Washington Manor tract, or some of the early industrial buildings in West San Leandro.

A pro-active approach to preservation would help preserve these resources, while supporting other General Plan goals related to neighborhood character, community spirit, and the overall quality of life in San Leandro.

Developing a More Effective Preservation Program

The first modern-day inventory of historic buildings in San Leandro was conducted in 1974, shortly after the city’s 100th anniversary. An outcome of this process was a local register of about two dozen historic buildings and four heritage trees. Structures built after 1920 were largely excluded from the registry, as they were still considered too recent to be historic.

When the San Leandro General Plan was updated in 1999-2002, it included a priority recommendation to update the 1974 inventory. This important step was completed within a few years of Plan adoption. The City also created a History Room at the San Leandro Library, amended its Historic Preservation Ordinance, and supported development of the San Leandro History Museum and Art Gallery at 320 West Estudillo Avenue. However, some of the other initiatives called for in 2002 remain to be carried out and are being carried forward through the 2014-2016 General Plan Update.
Some of the City’s most important resources remain at risk and are vulnerable to unsympathetic additions, alterations, and demolition. The policies and actions in the 2035 Plan ensure that future development decisions are sensitive to historic resources. The intent is to create a preservation strategy that enhances neighborhoods and revitalizes shopping districts while maintaining flexibility for property owners. Plan policies emphasize that such strategies must not be overly intrusive, costly, or burdensome. They should preserve and create economic opportunity at the same time they preserve the city’s heritage.

Figure 8-1 identifies the location of listed historic resources in San Leandro. This information is further detailed in Table 8-1. The table identifies three types of resources:

- **Historic Structures**, which are primarily homes, commercial buildings, and public buildings that have been deemed historically important. The list includes two buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, eight buildings listed as California Places of Historic Interest, and more than 20 buildings listed on San Leandro’s local register (the City’s Register includes the state and nationally listed structures).

- **Historic Sites**, which are the locations where important buildings once stood, or where notable events took place. Such sites are principally marked with historic plaques since the structures themselves no longer exist. Most of the historic sites are California Places of Historic Interest; sites are generally not included on San Leandro’s local register.
Figure 8-1

Historic Resources

Source: City of San Leandro, 2014; Alameda County, 2013; PlaceWorks, 2014.
**TABLE 8-1 DOCUMENTED HISTORIC RESOURCES IN SAN LEANDRO, 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Listings</th>
<th>Map Key</th>
<th>Year Built</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alta Mira Clubhouse (Peralta House)</td>
<td>NR, CHL, LR</td>
<td>2, 4, 43</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>Community Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casa Peralta</td>
<td>NR, CPHI, LR</td>
<td>1, 11, 33</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Community Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Best House</td>
<td>CPHI, LR</td>
<td>12, 35</td>
<td>1870s</td>
<td>1315 Clarke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Brown Church (384 W Estudillo)</td>
<td>CPHI, LR</td>
<td>14, 38</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>Moved to location behind Casa Peralta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual Garcia Home (1206 Hyde)</td>
<td>CPHI, LR</td>
<td>15, 40</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Roberts Home (526 Lewelling)</td>
<td>CPHI, LR</td>
<td>20, 32</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Office/residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Pacific RR Depot (801 Davis)</td>
<td>CPHI, LR</td>
<td>27, 47</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Relocated to Thrasher Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Shul (642 Dolores)</td>
<td>CPHI, LR</td>
<td>13, 39</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Moved to this site, still in use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Lamplighter’s Home (28 Dabner)</td>
<td>CPHI, LR</td>
<td>16, 41</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Building (1300 E. 14th)</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Office building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>308 W. Joaquin</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1363 Hays (blacksmith shop)</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Est 1900</td>
<td>Garage (for 308 Joaquin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>857 Estudillo</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Est 1890</td>
<td>Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>678 Juana</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>291 Joaquin (not mapped)</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td></td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>Residence/office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>397 Maud</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1880s</td>
<td>Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>310-312 Warren</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Est 1900</td>
<td>Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchard Avenue Homes (“Kanaka Ln”)</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1880-1900</td>
<td>+/- 20 private homes on Orchard Av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>659 Estudillo</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1900-1910</td>
<td>Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Tank House (444 Harlan)</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Tank House (254 Callan)</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Tank House (383 Preda)</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Listings</td>
<td>Map Key</td>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HISTORIC SITES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose Joaquin Estudillo Home site</td>
<td>CHL</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plaque only (550 Estudillo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rancho San Antonio/ Peralta Grant/DeAnza Exhibition site</td>
<td>CHL</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plaque at Hays and East 14th (Root Park)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alameda County Courthouse site</td>
<td>CPHI</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plaque at Davis and Clarke—now St. Leander’s School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alameda County Gazette site/ San Leandro Reporter sites</td>
<td>CPHI</td>
<td>8, 25</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plaques at Davis and Clarke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Tractor/ Caterpillar site</td>
<td>CPHI</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plaque at 800 Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Leandro Town Hall site</td>
<td>CPHI</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plaque at 250 Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberts Landing</td>
<td>CPHI</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bay Trail Plaque near mouth of San Lorenzo Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Leandro Ball Park site</td>
<td>CPHI</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>San Leandro Blvd at the BART Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Leandro Methodist Church site</td>
<td>CPHI</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>1349 Hays, replaced by Odd Fellows Bldg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Leandro Plaza</td>
<td>CPHI</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plaque at E. 14th and Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulford Clubhouse site</td>
<td>CPHI</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>13075 Aurora Dr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese Union of California site</td>
<td>CPHI</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>1120 E 14th (now CVS site at Davis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrasher Park</td>
<td>CPHI</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plaque on Davis St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HISTORIC LANDSCAPE FEATURES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Leandro Oyster Beds</td>
<td>CHL</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>North Dike Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvary Cemetery (uninc.)</td>
<td>CPHI</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Near Fairmount Dr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Lorenzo Cemetery (uninc.)</td>
<td>CPHI</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>College and Hesperian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Chabot (1892) (uninc.)</td>
<td>CPHI</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lake Chabot Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redwoods (Juana/Bancroft)</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redwood Trees (647 Juana)</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redwood Trees (651 Juana)</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Historic Landscape Features, including two historic cemeteries (both a few blocks outside the city limits but in San Leandro’s sphere of influence), the historic Oyster beds (at the San Leandro Shoreline), and several redwood trees along Juana Street east of Downtown.

The local register of historic buildings has remained virtually unchanged for the last 15 years, despite the aging of the city’s building stock. Given the potential for development in and around Downtown during the horizon of this General Plan, there may be compelling reasons to expand the register in the near future. Particular attention should be given to adding public buildings such as City Hall, the Veterans Memorial Building, and McKinley and Washington Schools.

Additional consideration should also be given to the creation of a small local historic district in the vicinity of the Casa Peralta and the Daniel Best Home. This area already contains several state and national register landmarks, the City’s History Museum, and the sites of long-vanished landmarks marked with plaques and connected by a “history walk.” The Old San Leandro Historic District, if created, should be relatively small, with boundaries drawn to contain only the most important resources. Designation of such a district could draw visitors, increase awareness of local history, and create opportunities for new activities such as restaurants, shopping, and public art.

Elsewhere in San Leandro, design guidelines should be used to protect the historic elements of the City’s “pre-war” (e.g., 1900-1940) neighborhoods and business districts. Many of these neighborhoods also have historic street furniture, signs, and landscape design elements. Conserving and restoring these elements can increase property values, create neighborhood pride, and enhance the distinct identity of these areas. While individual homes in such neighborhoods may not warrant designation as “historic,” their characteristic design features (front porches, large front setbacks, Craftsman-style rooflines, etc.) may warrant protection. Collectively,
such features define the ambiance of the neighborhood and create value. As such homes are improved and remodeled in the future, care should be taken to avoid the “teardown” of structurally sound homes, as well as additions that appear to be “tacked on” or out of scale with the neighborhood. Design guidelines and zoning standards for older neighborhoods should ensure that future changes reflect the valued features of the neighborhood.

A critical part of a successful preservation program is working with the owners of older properties to ensure that the City’s guidelines and processes do not create a financial or administrative burden. The City’s intent is not to discourage alterations or dictate narrow standards for building colors or materials. Rather, the objective is to maintain the overall character of historic areas, and promote the sensitive maintenance and continued use of older buildings.

Preservation is as much about shaping the future as it is about saving the past. The General Plan advocates bringing back some of the historic elements that have been lost in San Leandro, such as the Downtown Plaza and street grid. It also advocates a comprehensive approach to preservation, looking not only at the built environment, but at the people, events, and cultures that have shaped local history.

**Defining the City’s Role**

Presently, the major implementing tool for preservation in San Leandro is the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 4-26 of the Municipal Code). The Ordinance requires that permits for demolition, removal, or substantial alterations to documented historic structures or trees be referred to the City’s Library-Historical Commission for a recommendation. It provides for demolition delay in the event that buildings of potential historic importance are threatened. The Ordinance applies only to the structures and trees listed on the City’s historic registry. Periodic updates to the Ordinance should be considered as additional buildings are added to the registry.
San Leandro has yet to be designated as a “Certified Local Government” (CLG), a federal program which enables cities to apply for state and federal grants, receive technical training and assistance, and implement key preservation initiatives. As in the last General Plan, preparation of a Historic Preservation Action Plan continues to be a recommended follow-up action to obtain CLG status and establish a more detailed strategy for implementation.

The General Plan presumes that the San Leandro Library-Historical Commission will continue to take responsibility for implementing some of the program recommendations related to historic preservation. However, it also envisions a greater focus on partnerships with preservation advocacy groups. While the City fully supports preservation initiatives, staff capacity is limited. The City will continue to expand staff training in preservation standards and procedures, use the Historic Building Code for the review of alterations to historic buildings, and improve record keeping and inventories of historic structures and sites. It will also use its design review and zoning authority to establish appropriate standards not only for historic buildings, but for construction on adjacent properties that create the context for such buildings.

Another important City role is to protect archaeological resources associated with the period before European settlement. This includes following specific procedures in the event that ancient human remains or other tribal cultural resources are uncovered during excavation or
construction. It also includes engaging the local Native American community in planning processes and decisions relating to land use and cultural resources. San Leandro’s City Code identifies the steps to be followed to identify, designate, protect, enhance, and perpetuate any archaeological resources encountered as construction and grading take place.

Public Awareness of Local History

The loss of many local historic buildings during the mid-20th Century has resulted in a diminished awareness of San Leandro history among many residents. The General Plan proposes a multi-faceted strategy to raise awareness of the city’s history and historic resources. Such awareness can build broader community support for preservation, while increasing civic pride and a sense of community. Policies and actions under Goal CD-3 propose the use of books, websites, other media, and special events to inform the public about San Leandro’s history and the significance of various places and buildings in the city. Continuation of existing programs, including walking tours, awards programs, plaques and markers, cultural fairs, and school curricula on San Leandro history, is also recommended.

It is particularly important that outreach and educational efforts are culturally inclusive. As San Leandro becomes more diverse, programs that honor the history of different ethnic groups in the city and the contributions of individual residents become a more fundamental part of building “community.” Appreciation of cultural and ethnic history in San Leandro can provide inspiration for today’s youth and help people of all backgrounds understand important events in the city’s past.
The Economics of Preservation

The economic benefits of historic preservation are well documented. Direct benefits include the tax credits or property tax breaks that may be granted for officially designated buildings. A more subtle benefit is the economic development boost that comes with the unique ambiance of a historic area. In business districts, the special atmosphere of restored older buildings can attract customers and act as a catalyst for investment in neighboring properties. In residential areas, preservation efforts can lead to higher property values and enhance the desirability of a neighborhood. Preservation itself may generate jobs, particularly for skilled craftspersons. Preservation can also spur the growth of tourism, especially where districts of historic buildings have been restored and converted to contemporary uses such as cafes and galleries.

The General Plan also calls for programs which ensure that historic preservation makes economic sense for property owners. These programs include financial incentives such as loans and reduced fees, development incentives such as zoning bonuses and the use of the State Historic Building Code, and direct financial aid through the Redevelopment Agency. The use of the California Mills Act is also recommended, allowing reductions of property taxes for owners who agree to preserve and maintain a historic property for at least 10 years.
C. COMMUNITY DESIGN

Overview

San Leandro is set in a physically beautiful location, with picturesque hills, a scenic shoreline, and superb views and vistas. These natural features have shaped the City’s development and define many of its present-day visual qualities. The primary visual impression of the City, however, is that of a mature suburban community. Features like sound walls, buildings, and signs define much of the City’s character and image, particularly for travelers passing through on the freeways or on BART.

One of the challenges facing San Leandro is to establish a stronger identity for itself—to more clearly distinguish itself from other cities in the East Bay and be a place that people remember and want to return to. Because the City is adjacent to other urban areas on the north and south, it is difficult to distinguish where San Leandro “begins” and “ends.” The City is relatively flat and open, and there are few strong visual landmarks. Moreover, many of the City’s major thoroughfares are not particularly memorable, and some present an outdated impression.

On the other hand, the individual neighborhoods that make up the City—and many of the shopping and business districts—are well kept and attractive. Older neighborhoods in the City have an ambiance that is highly prized, and newer neighborhoods have attractively designed housing and community spaces. Even the post-war era subdivision tracts have matured gracefully and come into their own as comfortable neighborhoods. The City has also invested heavily in streetscape improvements, tree planting, gateway signage, and landscaping, transforming some of its major thoroughfares.
The Focus Area Strategies in the General Plan’s Land Use Element describe ways to create a stronger and more positive image of the City. But image building will take more than simply refurbishing buildings and redeveloping individual sites. A concerted effort must be made to improve gateways, thoroughfares, public buildings, parks, and the other public spaces that define impressions of San Leandro. Policies in the Community Design Element not only seek to create a stronger identity for the City, they also strive for a more engaging and memorable visual image.

Much of the attention is on the “public realm,” defined as all areas of the city in public ownership. Such lands, which include parks, public buildings, freeways, and all streets, sidewalks, medians, and rights of way, comprise 45 percent of San Leandro’s total land area. The visual quality of these areas defines how people experience San Leandro, perhaps to an even greater extent than the landscapes and buildings on private property. During the next 20 years, continued efforts will be made to beautify these areas and maintain them to a standard that communicates a positive image. New challenges such as drought and climate change will become more critical considerations as the next generation of public realm improvements is carried out.

While the City’s focus is on the public realm, it will also be essential to strive for higher aesthetic standards on private property. The City strongly encourages the revitalization of commercial strips and shopping
centers, higher quality architecture and design, high standards for the maintenance of homes and yards, and cleanup of litter and graffiti. Code enforcement and compliance is a major component of this focus. At the same time, the City must be sensitive to the new aesthetic paradigms that come with a more international population and a growing number of large, multi-generational households. The City will expand education and outreach on its codes and standards at the same time it seeks to learn from its residents and be responsive to the needs of a culturally diverse population. Strategies for public and private property should work together to create a more positive image of the City for residents and visitors and to present a favorable impression of San Leandro to the rest of the region.

Building a Sense of Place

Communities with a strong “sense of place” usually share several qualities, such as interesting or historic architecture, unique shops or businesses, and lively public spaces. Some of these qualities existed in San Leandro prior to World War II but were compromised as the City grew and adapted to modern times. The City is taking steps to create such spaces in several locations, including Downtown, the BART Station areas, and its industrial districts. San Leandro has many places with the potential to become more unique destinations. Each of these areas also should help create a more distinct image for the City as a whole. The key factors that contribute to San Leandro’s sense of place are described below. Each is addressed in the policies and actions under Goal CD-5.

Gateways

One of the most effective ways to distinguish San Leandro from its neighbors is to enhance the gateways into the City (see Figure 8-2). Gateways can incorporate monuments, welcome signs, landscaped medians, pavement changes, and other features that create a sense of arrival and visual interest. Gateways can also serve this function for individual neighborhoods, while contributing to neighborhood identity and pride. Over the years, the City has invested in significant gateway improvements on East 14th Street, Davis Street, and Marina Boulevard.
Some of these gateways serve to formally mark the entrance to the city (e.g., the East 14th Street monument at Durant Avenue) while others are intended to create a positive first impression and beautify adjacent neighborhoods (Davis Street landscaping east of I-880).

The City has also developed neighborhood gateways for major residential areas, such as Halcyon-Foothill, Washington Manor, and Broadmoor. Gateways between the Downtown BART station and Downtown San Leandro also have been enhanced, restoring portions of the street grid to pedestrian circulation in the vicinity of San Leandro Plaza. Some neighborhoods presently lack gateway features and would benefit from such improvements in the future.
Community Design Features

Source: City of San Leandro, General Plan 2002.

Figure 8-2
Several areas have been identified as priorities for future gateway improvements. These include:

- Marina Boulevard west of I-880. The segment of Marina Boulevard between I-880 and Doolittle Drive is characterized by commercial uses around the Merced Street intersection, heavy industrial uses westward to the railroad tracks, and a mix of commercial and residential uses extending to Doolittle Drive. As the gateway to the San Leandro Shoreline and much of the city’s west side, the street should be attractive and well maintained. This is also the gateway to the new Kaiser Permanente Hospital and a future retail center on the parcel to its north. Investment in streetscape improvements, landscaping, and signage is recommended for this area.

- East 14th Street/150th Avenue/Hesperian. This gateway includes the “five points” intersection just north of Bayfair Center. As the City’s southern entrance (and a gateway to the Bay Fair district), the vacant triangle at the center of the intersection presents an opportunity for a bold gateway statement including public art.

- Downtown BART Station gateways. The Focus Area text for the Downtown BART area (Chapter 3) identifies planned improvements to Downtown gateways, including San Leandro Boulevard and Alvarado Street. Gateways in this area should be designed as much for arriving transit passengers as for motorists, and should facilitate pedestrian movement between the station, the emerging business district on the west, and the established business district four blocks to the east.

- Southern San Leandro gateways. A number of gateways into the City exist along its southern boundary, including Hesperian Boulevard, Lewelling Boulevard, and Washington Avenue. A stronger sense of arrival into San Leandro could be created through more prominent signage and landscaping at these locations. Washington Avenue is particularly important, as it is the primary spine connecting southern San Leandro neighborhoods with Downtown.
Activity Centers

Activity centers are the places in a community where people gather. They can include shopping centers, transit stations, parks, civic buildings, office buildings, and other places that provide a focus for the day-to-day activities that go on in a city. The most successful and memorable activity centers usually serve multiple functions and are designed with pedestrians in mind. At one time, the Downtown Plaza was the major activity center in San Leandro. Although the Plaza’s appearance has changed substantially during the last 50 years, there are ongoing efforts to restore some of its original design elements and function as a civic gathering place.

The Land Use Element sets forth a strategy to more clearly define activity centers in San Leandro, particularly Downtown and along East 14th Street. Adding amenities such as street trees and wider sidewalks can make these areas more attractive to visit. Placing parking lots to the rear of buildings instead of along the street frontage also can improve visual quality. Meanwhile, encouraging particular uses or promoting unique architectural themes can lend character and help these areas stand out from other parts of the City and region.
The Land Use and Economic Development Elements also discuss the need for activity centers in San Leandro’s industrial districts. The Next Generation Workplace Districts Study commissioned by the City in 2013 concluded that the city’s other older industrial areas had a dearth of employee-oriented amenities such as restaurants, hotels, and health clubs. The Study recommended creating a central location where dining, lodging, and professional and personal service businesses could cluster. The logical location for such a center is the area around Merced Street near Marina Boulevard, including adjacent segments of each street. Focusing employee-oriented commercial activities in this area can create a stronger sense of place, enhance real estate values, and make West San Leandro more attractive to existing and prospective employers.

Views and Vistas

Views are also an important part of San Leandro’s character. The hill neighborhoods feature dramatic and panoramic views across the City and surrounding region. Many shoreline areas also feature sweeping views, taking in the open waters of the Bay and landmarks on the western horizon. Elsewhere in the City, the San Leandro Hills form an attractive backdrop for many residential areas.

The City has taken steps to preserve panoramic views within the San Leandro Hills by limiting the height of new homes and additions and soliciting public input when new homes and major additions are proposed. Such measures should help preserve the defining qualities of Bay-O-Vista and other hillside neighborhoods. Elsewhere in the City, discretionary review is typically required for large homes and additions, creating an opportunity to protect privacy and preserve important views.
Visual Landmarks

One way to maintain civic identity is to preserve the structures or landscape features that provide orientation in the City. Visual landmarks need not be historic structures. For instance, the tallest building in San Leandro is the Kraft plant—a structure not particularly renowned for its architectural beauty. The factory is nonetheless a quickly recognized focal point and hallmark of the San Leandro cityscape. The same might be said of the Bal Theatre, St. Leander’s Church, some of the vintage signs along East 14th Street, and even the row of eucalyptus trees that follow San Leandro Creek.

There are opportunities to create new landmarks in developing parts of the city. Buildings in these areas can become points of visual interest by including architectural features (such as clock towers or spires) that can be appreciated from nearby areas. On a smaller scale, visual landmarks can be created through accentuated building corners and the use of elements such as distinctive color, lighting, and outdoor spaces at key intersections and on key sites. The design of public buildings is particularly important, and should signal to passers-by that such places are gathering places and centers of civic life.

Quality Construction and Design

The appearance of local buildings is probably the most obvious aspect of community design. Design guidelines have been prepared for a number of areas, such as Downtown San Leandro and East 14th Street. These guidelines ensure that new development fits with the surrounding
context and enhances the area’s overall appearance. In each case, the guidelines reflect the City’s aspirations for how each area should look, noting the qualities to be preserved or created as development takes place.

San Leandro’s design review program may be expanded during the coming years to place a greater emphasis on older residential neighborhoods, corridor streets, city gateways, and employment districts. The objective of design review may vary from area to area. In older areas with a strong sense of architectural character, neighborhood fabric can be easily disrupted by projects that are insensitive to neighbors, block views, or are excessively large or bulky. New construction in such areas should be compatible with prevailing building styles, heights, dimensions, and setbacks. Contemporary architecture is not necessarily inappropriate in such areas, but must not diminish the architectural integrity of nearby buildings.

On the other hand, design guidelines should support General Plan policies to “reinvent” such areas as Bayfair Center and West San Leandro. These areas provide opportunities to define a new, more positive identity and set a higher standard for new development. Innovative architecture is particularly encouraged in workplace districts, and in areas where there is no cohesive architectural theme at this time. Building design in such areas can advance the image of the city as bold, creative, and forward-thinking. Design guidelines would still need to address compatibility with nearby uses, including the need to “step down” building heights or establish buffers on parcels abutting residential areas.
The quality of construction is also an important part of community design. The most highly regarded buildings in San Leandro tend to be those that are built of quality materials, with attention to detail and excellent craftsmanship. The City’s plan checking and building inspection programs assure that new construction will meet a basic standard of quality and safety. The City should continue to sponsor an annual design awards program to recognize those who exceed this standard and demonstrate exemplary design and construction quality. At the same time, the City’s zoning regulations and design standards should recognize the imperative need for housing in the Bay Area, and the needs of multi-generational families and lower income households.

The City can be a role model for private property owners in the design and appearance of public facilities and properties. New community facilities, fire stations, libraries, and other public buildings should set an example by being attractively designed. Likewise, the school districts and other public agencies should strive for architectural excellence and a high level of craftsmanship in new facilities and major remodeling projects. Some of the most important buildings constructed in San Leandro during the past decade have been public facilities, including the Senior Community Center, the Manor Library, and the 9th Grade SLHS Campus.

**Toward a More Visually Attractive City**

Perhaps the most deeply ingrained impressions of San Leandro are formed by those passing through the city on the freeway and its major thoroughfares. Many Bay Area residents may know San Leandro only as the “next three exits” on the freeway. Others know the city only from traveling through on BART or along East 14th Street. Although the opportunities to influence perceptions from these vantage points may be limited, the sheer volume of people passing through the city in this manner each day make it imperative to do whatever can be done to impart a positive impression. The policies and actions under Goal CD-7 represent a citywide strategy to beautify the city’s streets and public spaces. Components of this strategy include scenic highway designations, street trees, public art, utility undergrounding, sign control, lighting, and the inclusion of urban open spaces in new development areas.
**Scenic Highways**

Nearly 30 years ago, the San Leandro General Plan designated both the Nimitz (I-880) and MacArthur (I-580) Freeways as scenic highways. Neither of these freeways is formally recognized by the state as such, although I-580 has been deemed “eligible” by Caltrans and is formally designated a scenic highway north of 98th Avenue in Oakland. The City’s designation of its freeways as “scenic” was largely symbolic and was intended to encourage Caltrans to invest in landscaping and decorative sound walls along both facilities. Although this work has largely been completed, the City continues to have a strong interest in participating in the design of any changes to the freeways. This includes the design of open spaces at the interchanges, state-owned land along the freeway edges, and freeway underpasses and overpasses.

Other San Leandro streets, such as Davis Street, Marina Boulevard, and East 14th Street, are not formally designated as “scenic” but remain priorities for streetscape improvements due to their high volumes and function as gateways. One of the objectives of the “complete streets” policies in the Transportation Element of the General Plan is to make such streets safer and more comfortable for transit users, pedestrians, bicyclists. This sometimes involves reducing or narrowing travel lanes, and adding landscaping, street trees, street furniture, and other measures that also enhance the street’s scenic value.

Typically, streets feel more “comfortable” when they create a sense of enclosure and are designed with pedestrians and bicyclists in mind. Even on high-volume streets like Marina Boulevard and Doolittle Drive, landscaping and lighting can beautify the street environment. The extent of planting area, width and condition of the pavement, amount and speed of traffic, location of parking, and heights and setbacks of abutting buildings and signs, all determine whether the street is perceived as a comfortable civic space or merely a conduit for cars.

*Please consult the Transportation Element (Chapter 4) for additional guidelines on improving the visual quality of City streets and making San Leandro more pedestrian friendly. In addition, the Focus Area discussions in Chapter 3 identify ways to improve the appearance of specific thoroughfares in the city.*
Street Trees

Street trees positively affect the character of many San Leandro neighborhoods. They provide a source of natural beauty and an immediate connection to nature. Properly selected and maintained, street trees can turn a barren street into a park-like environment. Street trees also provide ecological benefits, such as habitat for wildlife, buffering of noise, and absorption of runoff and air pollutants.

Street trees are currently required in new subdivisions and are a key component of most commercial improvement programs in the city. Trees have helped transform the character of East 14th Street in Downtown San Leandro, adding value to adjoining properties and making the street environment more pleasant. At the same time, a number of street trees are removed each year because of disease, age, hazards to nearby structures, and homeowner requests. Replacement of such trees with new specimens is a high priority, as is increasing the overall number of trees in the city. Presently, the San Leandro Public Works Department maintains 20,000 trees on City property, including trees along streets and in City parks.

Residents may request to have City trees planted or replaced in the right-of-way in front of their home or business. The City offers a variety of species to choose from, and emphasizes trees that grow well in San Leandro, are appropriate for the planting space available, avoid sidewalk damage, and do not require frequent pruning or excessive water. Property owners are responsible for watering such trees and maintaining
the area beneath the canopy. Tree trimming is conducted according to a regular schedule and in response to individual requests. More specific direction on tree species and planting guidelines may be included in improvement plans for particular areas of the city.

At the time of General Plan adoption, the City did not regulate the removal of trees on private property. However, a number of options are being studied and a draft ordinance applying to large native trees is under consideration. In the event such an ordinance is adopted, removal of certain large trees would require City approval. Regardless of the outcome, the City will continue to support expansion of San Leandro’s “urban forest” and continued public education on the benefits and proper care of trees.

**Public Art**

Public art can include sculpture, statues, monuments, murals, fountains, and other forms of art which beautify public and private spaces in the City. Good public art can enrich civic spaces and celebrate local culture and history. It can capture the imagination of the City, express its creative energy and cultural diversity, and showcase the work of local artists. San Leandro does not have a public art requirement for private development but encourages outdoor sculpture and public gathering places in major projects. It may also require public art through development agreements, as it did for the San Leandro Tech Campus. The City itself has developed or funded a number of notable art pieces and recognizes the power of art to connect people and place.
Recent years have seen significant investment in public art, including a butterfly mural at St. Leander’s Gymnasium, the 350-foot long *Pulse of Nature* mural at Preferred Freezer, and painted utility boxes throughout the city. Planned investments include transformative pieces such as *Truth is Beauty* adjacent to the San Leandro Tech Campus. The 55-foot tall metal sculpture will not only enliven an important public space in the heart of the city, it will symbolize San Leandro’s emergence as a place where technology and art intersect. Technology and art are also coming together at the Living Innovation Zone on Joaquin Avenue at East 14th Street and at the Interactive Urban Lighting project on West Estudillo Avenue.

Many more opportunities exist for public art in San Leandro, particularly Downtown, in the BART Station areas, along the shoreline, and in the major activity centers along East 14th Street. Art would also be a welcome addition in the city’s industrial areas, particularly where the city’s industrial heritage, emerging innovation businesses, and local artistic talent can be showcased. The City is in the process of preparing a Public Arts Master Plan that will provide strategic direction for the expansion of the public arts program, including financing strategies and new initiatives. These initiatives could include a development fee for art and programs for temporary as well as permanent installations. The Master Plan should also address selection criteria for art, and potential sites or priority areas for new installations.
Utility Undergrounding

One of the most widespread sources of visual blight along San Leandro’s thoroughfares and in its neighborhoods is overhead utility wires. The City has worked with local utility companies for more than 45 years to place these wires underground, but the costs are very high and progress has been slow. An Undergrounding Master Plan, including a project priority list, has been developed by the City. East 14th Street has been identified as the top priority for undergrounding for more than 15 years. A Utility Assessment District has been created for the portion of the corridor between Thornton and 150th Avenue and undergrounding of conduits is projected to take place in late 2016.

Sign Control

Signs in San Leandro are regulated by Article 18 of the Zoning Code. Administration of these regulations helps to avoid visual clutter along the City’s thoroughfares and encourages more attractive and tasteful signage. It is important to regularly update the sign regulations to keep pace with changes in the types of signs and methods of advertising that are being used. Moreover, there is ongoing interest in developing more high quality signage, particularly for retail businesses and shopping centers. At the same time, there is interest in maintaining exemptions for vintage signs that contribute to community character. Design guidelines for major shopping streets and business districts should include provisions for signage which consider both business needs and aesthetic objectives.

Wireless Facilities

Wireless Facilities such as cell phone towers can have visual impacts and become a source of blight if not carefully regulated. At the same time, the federal government limits the City’s land use authority over such facilities. San Leandro has adopted a Wireless Telecommunications Ordinance that establishes guidelines for wireless facilities while recognizing the limits of local control. The ordinance seeks to direct towers to non-residential areas, limit their total extent and reduce their visual...
impacts, and encourage the co-location of equipment on existing towers wherever possible.

**Lighting**

The lighting of streets and buildings should serve an aesthetic purpose as well as functional and safety purposes. Vintage lighting fixtures are an important part of the ambiance of older San Leandro neighborhoods such as Broadmoor. In commercial areas, lighting can define the mood along the street by night and enhance its appearance during the day. The lighting of buildings is similarly important. Lighting should be an integral part of a building’s architecture, particularly in pedestrian-oriented commercial districts. Uplighting of noteworthy structures and landscaping can showcase some of the City’s best visual qualities. The way that signage is illuminated also can define an area’s character and affect its overall appeal. In pursuing appropriate lighting for streets and public spaces, the City must balance aesthetic and design considerations with issues such as security, traffic safety, energy conservation, and maintenance costs.

**Urban Open Space**

San Leandro should promote urban open spaces such as plazas and courtyards wherever the opportunities present themselves. Fountains, trees, sculpture, seating areas, parklets, and other amenities should be included in large development areas and in major public projects to enhance their appeal and visual interest. Where the spaces are large enough, street vendors, special events, art fairs, farmers markets, and similar events should be encouraged to create active street life and places where the public can gather. For larger buildings and structures such as parking garages, opportunities for rooftop open space should be explored. The areas around the Downtown BART station, the Downtown Plaza, and the streets between BART and Downtown provide the most immediate opportunities for new urban open spaces. Opportunities for special paving, exhibit space, vendors and food carts, street furniture, and landscaping can enhance such spaces, while reinforcing the image of Downtown as the city center.
D. GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

GOAL CD-1 Identify, preserve, and maintain San Leandro’s historic resources and recognize these resources as an essential part of the City’s character and heritage.

Policy CD-11 Broad Approach to Preservation. Take a broad and comprehensive approach to historic preservation in San Leandro. Preservation efforts should recognize the City’s cultural history as well as its architectural history, its neighborhoods as well as individual buildings, its natural landscape as well as its built environment, and its archaeology as well as its living history.

Policy CD-12 Enhancing Local Identity. Recognize the potential for publicly sponsored historic preservation programs and privately initiated historic preservation efforts to enhance San Leandro’s identity as an attractive and distinct community.

Policy CD-13 Program Development. Develop and maintain programs that recognize and protect historic sites, structures, trees, and other landscape features.

Action CD-13A Downtown Plaza Revitalization
Continue efforts to restore elements of historic Downtown San Leandro, such as the Plaza at Washington and East 14th Street and the original street grid in the vicinity of the Downtown (Safeway) shopping plaza.

Policy CD-14 Historic Districts. Encourage the formation of local historic districts in areas where historic sites and structures are concentrated. Such districts should provide for the preservation, restoration, and public recognition of the resources contained therein. Historic districts should be structured to minimize costs and administrative burdens for property owners. Historic designations should include incentives to adaptively
reuse older structures and avoid the demolition of historically important buildings.

**Action CD-14A: Old San Leandro Historic District**

Create an “Old San Leandro” Historic District in the vicinity of the Casa Peralta and Daniel Best House, and consider the eligibility of this district to be listed at the state or national levels. The boundaries of the district should be established through an evaluation process that is based on the significance and historic integrity of the sites, structures, buildings, and objects making up the district. Following establishment of the historic district, programs should be implemented for improvement and restoration of historic structures. Development and design standards for the District should ensure that the area’s historic ambiance and pedestrian scale is maintained as future development takes place in the surrounding transit-oriented development area.

**Policy CD-15**

**Historic Neighborhoods.** Promote the conservation of historic neighborhoods and the restoration of historic features in such neighborhoods, including structures, street lamps, signage, landscaping, and architectural elements.

**Action CD-15A: Design Guidelines for Older Neighborhoods**

Adopt residential design guidelines and incorporate those guidelines in the review of proposed infill development, additions, and major alterations. The guidelines should recognize the characteristic scale and architectural styles of San Leandro’s older neighborhoods, and help to preserve those features in the future.

**Policy CD-16**

**Historic Resource Surveys.** Update, expand, and maintain inventories of San Leandro’s historic resources, using criteria and survey methods that are consistent with state and federal guidelines.
Action CD-16A: Expansion of the Historic Registry
Support efforts by local historic organizations to maintain and update inventories of local historic resources, and present proposals to the City for additions to the local register. The City should consider the addition of Veterans Memorial Auditorium, McKinley and Washington Elementary Schools, and San Leandro City Hall to its current register.

Policy CD-17 Protecting Resource Integrity. Ensure that new development, alterations, and remodeling projects on or adjacent to historic properties are sensitive to historic resources and are compatible with the surrounding historic context. Ensure that the San Leandro Zoning Ordinance and any future design guidelines include the necessary standards and guidelines to implement this policy.

Policy CD-18 Relocation of Historic Structures. Encourage the relocation of older structures into designated historic districts as an alternative to demolition and an incentive for restoration.

Policy CD-19 Maintenance and Rehabilitation. Strongly encourage the maintenance and upkeep of historic properties to avoid the need for costly rehabilitation and demolition. Demolition should only be allowed if the City determines that it is necessary to protect health, safety, and welfare, and that the structure has no reasonable economic use.

Policy CD-10 Seismic Upgrades. Promote the upgrading and restoration of historic structures to meet current seismic safety codes, thereby reducing the potential for damage in an earthquake. Seismic rehabilitation projects should be sympathetic to the architectural character of the structure.

Policy CD-11 Post-Disaster Replacement. In the event that a historic structure is damaged by fire, earthquake, or other natural disaster or catastrophic event to the point where demolition is necessary, encourage the new structure to respect the historic architectural character and form of the building it replaces.
Policy CD-1.12 Archaeological Resources. Recognize the potential for paleontological, prehistoric, historic, archaeological, and tribal cultural resources and ensure that future development takes the measures necessary to identify and preserve such resources.

Action CD-1.12.A Archaeological Site Inventory
Maintain standard conditions of approval for new development which require consultation with a professional archaeologist in the event that any subsurface paleontological, prehistoric, archaeological, or tribal cultural resource remains are discovered during any construction or preconstruction activities on a development site. This includes consultation with Native American organizations prior to continued site work in the event such remains are discovered.

Action CD-1.12.B AB 52 Compliance
Implement the provisions of AB 52 regarding tribal consultation. The City will provide opportunities for meaningful input regarding the protection of tribal resources from Native American representatives in the planning and development review processes.

Policy CD-1.13 Protecting the Recent Past. Ensure that local preservation programs include structures from the recent past (after 1945) that represent unique or noteworthy examples of the architectural styles and trends of the time.

See Goals OSC-7 and -8 for policies on green building and sustainable design.
DEFINING THE CITY’S ROLE

GOAL CD-2 Make protection of historic resources a high City priority, to be implemented through improved record keeping, adequately funded programs, and more effective regulatory measures.

Policy CD-2.1 Preservation and City Planning. Recognize the importance of local historic and cultural resources in the City’s long-range planning activities, including the General Plan, specific plans, and neighborhood or area plans. Maintain a historic preservation component in the General Plan, with periodic updates to reflect changing conditions, additional listings, and new preservation programs.

Action CD-2.1.A Preservation Action Plan
Prepare a Historic Preservation Action Plan, which outlines in greater detail how General Plan historic preservation programs will be implemented and funded.

Action CD-2.1.B Certified Local Government Designation
Take the steps necessary to have San Leandro designated as a Certified Local Government (CLG) for historic preservation purposes, thereby making the City eligible for State historic preservation fund grants. These steps include an updated survey of historic buildings, as described in Action CD-1.6.A.

Policy CD-2.2 Planning and Building Decisions. Ensure that day-to-day planning and building activities, including the issuance of building permits, demolition permits, zoning approvals, site plan approvals, and use permits, are consistent with and further the achievement of local historic preservation goals. The City’s zoning and building codes should support the reuse and restoration of historic buildings.

Action CD-2.2.A Historic Preservation Staff
Create and maintain a part-time staff or volunteer position through the San Leandro Library to implement the Mills Act, research grant funding for preservation activities, and implement other historic preservation initiatives.
**Action CD-22.B: Training Program**
Establish an on-going training program for City Staff on local historic preservation standards and procedures.

**Policy CD-23**  
**Historic Preservation Ordinance.** Maintain a City Historic Preservation Ordinance that provides for the protection of historic resources within the City of San Leandro.

**Action CD-23.A: Preservation Ordinance Update**
Periodically review, and if necessary update, the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance (Municipal Code Chapter 4-26) to ensure that the policies in the General Plan are being effectively implemented.

**Action CD-23.B: Downtown Design Guidelines**
Expand the Downtown Design Guidelines to more effectively address the preservation of historic buildings. Such guidelines should continue to address features such as lighting, signage, windows, awnings, and building materials, but with a greater emphasis on preservation and restoration when they are applied to historic structures.

**Policy CD-24**  
**Review Board Authority.** Ensure that the City commissions and departments assigned to implement historic preservation programs are given the resources, tools, and authority needed to carry out these programs.

Continue to provide City support for the Library-Historical Commission so that it may effectively implement the General Plan’s historic preservation policies and actions. The Commission shall be provided with the necessary resources, as determined by the City Council, to make historic preservation a major focus of their efforts.
**Policy CD-25**  
**Improved Record Keeping.** Continue to update and expand GIS data on historic resources as such resources are identified. Such data should be linked to property records such that historic properties can be readily identified when planning and building permit applications for these properties are submitted.

**Policy CD-26**  
**Historic Public Buildings.** Take a leadership role in historic preservation by maintaining and reinvesting in older public buildings, and by working with the local school districts to maintain and enhance historic school buildings.

**Policy CD-27**  
**Community Partnerships.** Promote partnerships between the City of San Leandro, Alameda County, community groups, non-profits, and the private sector to advance historic preservation activities in the City and its sphere of influence.

**Policy CD-28**  
**Citizen-Led Preservation Efforts.** Encourage and support grass roots preservation efforts initiated by neighborhoods and community organizations. Provide technical support to such groups and encourage their participation in City-sponsored preservation surveys and activities.
PUBLIC AWARENESS OF LOCAL HISTORY

GOAL CD-3  Heighten public awareness of San Leandro’s history and historic resources, both locally and throughout the Bay Area.

Policy CD-31  Media Development. Encourage the development of websites, books, videos, pamphlets, exhibits, displays, and other media that commemorate San Leandro history and historic resources.

Action CD-31.A  A Garden Grows in Eden
Support the update of “A Garden Grows in Eden,” the 1972 book on San Leandro’s history, so that it adequately covers the second half of the 20th century. Pursue funding to update the centennial film that was produced to accompany the book prior to the 2022 sesquicentennial.

Action CD-31.B  History Education and Outreach
Collaborate with the San Leandro Historical Society in expanding education, outreach, and awareness of San Leandro History. New means of outreach, such as YouTube videos and social media pages or user groups, should be utilized.

Policy CD-32  Special Events. Promote festivals, walking tours, and special events that celebrate San Leandro history and culture.

Action CD-32.A  Volunteer Docent Program
Continue the volunteer docent program on San Leandro history, including speakers and walking tour leaders.

Action CD-32.B  Heritage Festivals
Support special events sponsored by the San Leandro Historical Society, and other local organizations involved in commemorating San Leandro history.

Action CD-32.C  Self-Guided Tour
Expand web-based information on San Leandro history and historic buildings and sites, including a self-guided walking tour highlighting major landmarks.
**Policy CD-33**  
_Site Plaques._ Encourage the identification of historic resources with plaques and markers.

**Action CD-33A: Marker and Plaque Program**  
Expand the City’s historic marker and plaque program, and develop a priority list for marking additional sites and structures.

**Policy CD-34**  
_Commemorative Art._ Promote murals, monuments, statues, and other forms of public art that commemorate San Leandro history and culture. Such projects should be incorporated in public buildings and major public works projects wherever feasible.

**Policy CD-35**  
_Coordination of Preservation Groups._ Encourage communication and collaboration among the different groups and organizations in the City that promote historic preservation, and among those groups that have an institutional knowledge of the City’s history or historic resources. Support efforts by the San Leandro Historical Society and other preservation groups to play a greater role in public education and advocacy regarding the City’s historic resources.

**Action CD-35A: Preservation Design Awards**  
Encourage local design awards programs to include design categories for preservation-related activities such as rehabilitation and adaptive reuse.

**Action CD-35B: Expansion of Archives**  
Support the continued efforts of local historic preservation groups to collect photos and other archival materials on the City’s history. Such efforts should consider not only the City’s early history, but also events, sites, and structures through the Mid-20th Century.

**Policy CD-36**  
_School Curricula._ Continue collaborative efforts by the City, the school districts, the State of California, and local historic preservation groups to integrate San Leandro history lessons and field trips into local teacher training and educational curricula.
**Policy CD-37**  
**Cultural Inclusiveness.** Ensure that San Leandro’s historic preservation efforts are culturally inclusive and recognize the contributions of the City’s many racial and ethnic groups to its development. Programs that trace the roots and celebrate the history of different ethnic groups should be strongly encouraged, along with outreach to minorities, youth and under-represented groups.

**Policy CD-38**  
**Use of Historic Buildings.** Encourage the use of historic buildings for community events and the acquisition of important historic buildings for public use as a means of increasing awareness of local history.

**Action CD-38A: San Leandro History Room**  
*Maintain the San Leandro History Room in the Main Library as a central repository for historic books, photos, records, and other materials associated with the City’s history and expand these archives.*

**Action CD-38B: San Leandro Historic Museum**  
*Maintain the San Leandro Historic Museum and Art Gallery as a cultural and educational resource and space for sharing San Leandro’s historic legacy with residents, especially students.*

**Policy CD-39**  
**Famous Sons and Daughters.** Encourage programs that honor San Leandro residents who have made significant contributions to local history.

**Policy CD-310**  
**Historic Industry and Commerce.** Expand awareness and recognition of the history of industry and commerce in San Leandro, and ensure that the local business community is fully engaged in discussions about preservation.
ECONOMICS OF PRESERVATION

**GOAL CD-4**
Recognize historic preservation as an economic development tool, while ensuring that preservation activities make economic sense for residents and businesses.

**Policy CD-4.1**
**Funding Sources.** Pursue a wide variety of grants and funds for future preservation efforts. Local benefactor programs, including corporate sponsorship, should be encouraged as a means of raising funds for preservation activities.

**Action CD-4.1A: State and Federal Funds**
Apply for state and federal funding to implement local historic preservation programs, including the California Heritage Fund and the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street Program Fund.

**Policy CD-4.2**
**Tax Credits and Incentives.** Encourage the use of federal and state historic preservation financial incentives, including historic preservation tax credit and tax relief programs.

**Action CD-4.2A: Mills Act**
Seek opportunities to use the California Mills Act and federal rehabilitation tax credit programs as financial incentives for historic building owners. Provide sufficient staffing to administer the Mills Act program at the local level.

**Policy CD-4.3**
**Economic Assistance.** Promote local economic incentives and assistance programs for preservation. Explore the feasibility of other local programs that provide financial, technical, or legal assistance to those undertaking preservation activities in the City.

**Policy CD-4.4**
**Planning and Building Codes.** Ensure that local planning and building codes and procedures facilitate historic preservation.
Policy CD 4.5  Preservation and Tourism. Promote San Leandro’s history and historic buildings in the City’s business development efforts, and pursue opportunities for additional historic visitor attractions in the City.

SENSE OF PLACE

Goal CD-5  Promote a stronger “sense of place” in San Leandro.

Policy CD 5.1  Gateways. Develop landscaped gateway features to identify neighborhoods, business districts, and major city entryways. Gateways should incorporate design and graphic themes that help define a unique identity for each neighborhood and district.

Action CD 5.1A: Gateway Improvement Program
Develop additional City gateway features along major thoroughfares and around the BART Stations. A particular emphasis should be put on improving the East 14th Street, MacArthur Boulevard and Doolittle Drive as gateways, and the Marina Boulevard corridor as the gateway to the shoreline area.

Action CD 5.1B: 150th Hesperian Triangle
Undertake a public improvement project for the “triangle” at Hesperian/Bancroft, 150th Avenue, and East 14th Street. This should include public art and landscaping on the triangle itself, so it serves as a memorable and attractive southern gateway to San Leandro.

Action CD 5.1C Neighborhood Gateway Signs
Expand neighborhood gateway signage and explore funding sources, potential sites, and potential designs for additional gateway signs.

Policy CD 5.2  Graphics and Signage. Use citywide graphics and signage standards that help provide a better sense of municipal boundaries. An example might be the consistent use of the City logo (or the use of distinctive lettering and color schemes) on City street and directional signs.
Action CD-52A: Wayfinding Programs
Provide coordinated wayfinding signage in subareas of the city such as Downtown, Bayfair Center, and the Shoreline. Directional signs should be used not only to orient travelers but also to provide a sense of continuity within the City.

Policy CD-53 Urban Design Improvements. Use urban design elements such as bollards, pavers, fountains, signage, tree lighting, and street furniture (newspaper racks, benches, bus stops, planters, trash receptacles, bike racks, etc.) to establish a stronger design identity for San Leandro’s commercial areas and make the street environment more inviting for pedestrians.

Action CD-53A: Industrial Area Urban Design Improvements
Develop and implement urban design improvements for the Marina corridor between Doolittle Drive and the Shoreline, and the Merced Corridor between Williams Street and Fairway Drive, consistent with the recommendations of the Next Generation Workplace Districts Study. The intent of these improvements is to improve aesthetics, create a stronger sense of place, and facilitate walking, bicycling, and transit use in this area.

See the Land Use and Economic Development Elements for additional policies on this topic.

Policy CD-54 Architectural Consistency. In established neighborhoods, protect architectural integrity by requiring infill housing, replacement housing, and major additions or remodels to be sensitive to and compatible with the prevailing scale and appearance of adjacent development.

Action CD-54A: Design Guidelines for Infill Housing
Create residential design guidelines for infill development. These guidelines should ensure that new homes and multi-family developments are compatible with neighborhood character and address issues such as privacy, shade, and compatibility with surrounding properties. Design guidelines should avoid excessively prescriptive standards and focus on respecting the prevailing scale of development and avoiding
the use of inappropriate exterior materials or improvements that could adversely affect nearby properties.

**Action CD-54.B: Neighborhood and Business Profiles**
Develop web-based profiles, maps, and informational materials that reinforce the sense of San Leandro as a City of distinct neighborhoods. Support Chamber of Commerce efforts to develop directories for merchants and local shopping districts.

**Policy CD-55: Shopping Districts.** Encourage the development of well-defined shopping districts along the City’s commercial streets. Development within each district should meld together existing uses, establish greater design continuity, and improve the connections to nearby neighborhoods. Shopping centers should help define the character of the neighborhoods they serve, and be an important element of place-making and walkability in the city.

**Action CD-55.A: District Streetscape Improvements**
Expand the use of banners and other streetscape improvements to define shopping districts on San Leandro’s major thoroughfares.

**Policy CD-56: Visual Arts and Placemaking.** Use the visual arts (such as painted utility boxes and murals) as a way of creating a stronger sense of place in San Leandro, and means of connecting residents to their community while showcasing the work of local artists.

See the Economic Development Element for additional actions on visual arts and placemaking.

**Policy CD-57: Streetscape Improvements.** Where appropriate, require new development to implement streetscape improvements that promote the use of the street by pedestrians and bicyclists and support the use of street spaces for public uses such as outdoor seating and “parklets.”
Action CD-5.7A: Redesign of Commercial Streets
Explore the redesign of select streets in commercial districts (including Downtown) to reduce the number of travel lanes and create amenities such as wider sidewalks, crosswalk pavers, landscaped medians, and street trees within parking lanes.

See also Transportation Element Goal T-1 on Complete Streets.

Policy CD-5.8 Programmed Activities. Encourage programmed activities, such as farmers markets and outdoor performances, within commercial centers and civic areas.

Policy CD-5.9 Visual Landmarks. Promote the development of “signature” buildings and monuments that provide visual landmarks and create a more distinctive and positive impression of San Leandro within the greater Bay Area. Local design guidelines should ensure that such buildings and monuments respect the character, scale, and context of the surrounding area.

Policy CD-5.10 Community Involvement. Encourage the involvement of the community in the development of urban design plans and improvement programs.

see also Goal LU-5 on Citizen Participation
QUALITY CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN

GOAL CD-6 Ensure that new construction and renovation contributes to the quality and overall image of the community.

Policy CD-6.1 Promoting Quality Design. Use the development review, zoning, and permitting processes to promote high quality architecture and site design. Design review guidelines and zoning standards should ensure that the mass and scale of new structures are compatible with adjacent structures.

Action CD-6.1A: Design Guidance in Area Plans
Include design guidelines or form-based zoning regulations as a component of future area plans, specific plans, or other sub-area plans guiding change in specific parts of the city.

Action CD-6.1B: Incentives for Design Amenities
Develop zoning incentives (such as floor area bonuses) for projects that incorporate special architectural design features, such as landscaped courtyards or plazas.

Policy CD-6.2 Recognizing Architectural Context. In areas without a well-established architectural aesthetic or consistent design palette, encourage contemporary and cutting edge design. In areas which have an established or more traditional design theme or rhythm, encourage infill development that increases architectural cohesion and reinforces the prevalent style or styles.

Policy CD-6.3 Multi-Family Design. Establish high standards of architectural and landscape design for multi-family housing development. Boxy or massive building designs should be avoided, ample open space and landscaping should be provided, and high quality construction materials should be used.

Action CD-6.3A: Daylight Plane Regulations
Maintain daylight plane regulations in the Zoning Code, or equivalent provisions, to ensure that development along transit corridors and in transit oriented development areas is
required to “step down” in height as it approaches zoning boundaries associated with lower density development, especially single family homes.

**Policy CD-6.4** Permitting and Inspection. Maintain building inspection and code enforcement procedures that ensure that all construction is properly permitted, and that construction is completed as approved.

**Policy CD-6.5** Craftsmanship. Encourage a high level of craftsmanship in new construction, and the use of exterior materials and façade designs that enhance the appearance of the City.

**Policy CD-6.6** Garage Door Visibility. Minimize the visibility of garage doors in new single family and multi-family residential construction.

**Policy CD-6.7** Architectural Interest. Encourage new structures to incorporate architectural elements that create visual interest such as trellises, awnings, overhangs, patios, and window bays. Avoid solid or blank street-facing walls.

**Policy CD-6.8** Commercial and Industrial Standards. Improve the visual appearance of the City’s commercial and industrial areas by applying high standards of architectural design and landscaping for new commercial and industrial development and the re-use or remodeling of existing commercial and industrial buildings.

*See also Action LU-### regarding commercial and industrial design guidelines*

**Policy CD-6.9** Siting of Parking Lots. Encourage the placement of parking lots to the rear of businesses rather than along the street frontage so that they become a secondary feature of commercial development rather than the dominant feature. Where large surface parking lots must be provided, require screening and landscaping to improve and soften their appearance.
**Action CD-6.9.A: Parking Lot Design**
Develop design standards and code enforcement procedures for parking lots which ensure that parking is attractively landscaped, well maintained, and contributes positively to the overall character of the street and neighborhood.

**Policy CD-6.10: Signage.** Encourage commercial signage that is compatible with the building and streetscape, enhances the character of the surrounding area, and is not intrusive to nearby residential areas.

**Policy CD-6.11: Commercial Reinvestment.** Provide incentive programs that encourage reinvestment in the City’s commercial properties, especially older shopping centers, vacant businesses, and outdated or blighted structures.

**Action CD-6.11.A: Design Assistance Program**
Continue programs to assist business owners with exterior upgrades to commercial buildings, including design assistance, awning improvement, façade improvements, landscaping, and painting.

**Policy CD-6.12: Business Outreach.** Encourage communication and outreach to the business community in the development of strategies to upgrade commercial and industrial properties.

Continue annual awards programs and other forms of public recognition for projects of merit in architecture, landscape architecture, and planning. Ensure that these programs are well publicized and covered by the media.

**Action CD-6.12.B: San Leandro By Design**
Support a robust dialogue among local business groups, neighborhood associations, and interest groups on community design, including events such as San Leandro by Design.
A More Visually Attractive City

**GOAL CD-7** Create a more visually attractive City, with well-landscaped and maintained streets, open spaces, and gathering places.

**Policy CD-7.1** Greening San Leandro. Promote drought-tolerant landscaping, tree planting, and tree preservation along San Leandro streets as a means of improving aesthetics, making neighborhoods more pedestrian-friendly, providing environmental benefits, and creating or maintaining a park-like setting.

**Action CD-7.1.A: Street Tree Master Plan**
Seek grant opportunities to create a Street Tree Master Plan that includes planting guidelines and palettes and a program to increase the number of trees along San Leandro streets. Once the Master Plan is adopted, establish a citywide neighborhood beautification strategy in which specific areas are targeted each year for street tree planting, landscaping, and other public improvements.

**Action CD-7.1.B: Funding for Tree Planting and Care**
Regularly apply for grants, low interest loans, and other funding sources for landscaping, street tree planting, urban forestry, and neighborhood beautification.

**Policy CD-7.2** Tree Maintenance. Encourage tree maintenance practices that contribute to the long-term health and appearance of the City’s urban forest.

**Action CD-7.2.A: Public Education on Tree Issues**
Promote public education and awareness of tree planting, removal and care issues.

**Policy CD-7.3** Tree Removal and Replacement. Discourage the removal of healthy trees and require replacements for any trees that are removed from street rights-of-way. Where healthy trees must be removed, consider their relocation to other suitable sites instead of their disposal. Encourage the preservation and proper care of mature trees throughout the City, particularly those which may
have historic importance or contribute substantially to neighborhood character.

**Action CD-7.3.A: Tree Preservation**
Investigate alternatives for the protection of heritage trees and other large specimen trees on public and private property.

**Policy CD-7.4 Urban Open Space.** Encourage the incorporation of drought-tolerant landscaped open spaces, such as plazas, courtyards and pocket parks, within new development and redevelopment projects.

**Action CD-7.4.A: Paving of Planter Strips**
Consider an ordinance or zoning amendment to prohibit the paving of planter strips along City streets, except where these strips are narrow and such a prohibition would be impractical or conflict with the City’s water conservation goals.

**Action CD-7.4.B: Bio-Swales in Planter Strips**
Consider a program wherein, at the request of the homeowner, the City would remove existing planter strips so that they may be replaced with Bay-friendly landscaping, or converted to bioswales that support the City’s stormwater management and green infrastructure plans. If initiated, such a program would need to be grant-funded or funded by property owners, with ongoing maintenance provided by property owners rather than the City.

**Policy CD-7.5 Street Beautification.** Upgrade the City’s commercial thoroughfares by building upon their existing strengths and improving their aesthetic qualities. The City should implement programs to underground utilities, abate weeds and graffiti, eliminate litter, improve facades, improve buffers to adjacent residential uses, prohibit excessive or out-of-scale signage, remove billboards, and provide streetscape amenities and landscaping along these thoroughfares.

**Action CD-7.5.A: Sign Ordinance Updates**
Periodically update the City’s sign ordinance to address design issues, changing priorities, trends in sign regulation, and current case law.
Action CD-7.5.B: Billboard Removal
Reduce the visual and aesthetic impact of billboards, and allow no net gain in the number of billboards in areas subject to the City’s land use authority.

Action CD-7.5.C: Landscaping in Industrial Zones
Consistent with the Next Generation Workplace Districts Study, develop drought-tolerant landscaping and streetscape improvements in the City’s industrial areas, particularly in high visibility locations such as the Marina corridor, Doolittle Drive, and Merced Street. Such programs should address pedestrian and bicycle improvements, undergrounding of utility lines, signage, façade improvements, public art, and projects which enhance and humanize public spaces.

Action CD-7.5.D: Undergrounding of Utility Wires
Continue programs to underground overhead utility wires, especially along East 14th Street. Seek additional funding for such projects as it becomes available.

Action CD-7.5.E: East 14th Streetscape Improvements
Evaluate potential funding sources and other methods to accelerate streetscape improvement and capital investments in the East 14th Street corridor, particularly in the South Area between Sybil and 150th Avenue.

Policy CD-7.6. Public Art
Encourage the siting of public art in civic open spaces, around public buildings, and within new development areas. Public art should be recognized as an economic development tool and should reflect and express the diversity of the City.

See the Community Services and Facilities Element for actions to undertake a cultural arts master plan, including public art.

Action CD-7.6.A: Utility Box Painting
Support community beautification activities such as the painting of utility boxes and murals by local artists.
**Policy CD-7.7** Lighting. Encourage street and parking lot lighting that creates a sense of security, complements building and landscape design, is energy-efficient, considers night sky visibility impacts (e.g., “dark skies”), and avoids conflicts with nearby residential uses.

**Policy CD-7.8** Neighborhood Clean-ups. Support and encourage neighborhood clean-up and beautification projects.

**Action CD-7.8.A: Penalties for Dumping**
Strengthen local ordinances, fines, and penalties for illegal dumping and littering. Sufficient funds should be allocated for enforcement of such ordinances.

**Policy CD-7.9** Perimeter Areas. Encourage cooperative efforts with Alameda County and the City of Oakland to beautify nearby areas outside the San Leandro City limits.

**Action CD-7.9.A: East Bay Corridors**
Participate in ABAG’s East Bay Corridors Planning effort, and recognize opportunities to enhance San Leandro’s image along regional corridors (such as East 14th Street) through such efforts.