

SAN DIEGO



a downtown denver peer city analysis

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INTRODUCTION

This report is an analysis of Downtown San Diego, and is broken up into several sections. First, the boundaries and characteristics of downtown will be provided. The downtown neighborhoods in San Diego are well defined and their characteristics and zoning classifications will be discussed in detail. A population profile is included to further analyze the residential and workforce population. Who makes up this downtown area, is answered in this section, along with projections regarding further population and demographic changes. Development, a major component of planning practice, is evaluated. San Diego has experienced tremendous growth in the past decade and is anticipating continuing growth in the next couple of decades. The types of development corresponding to the growth will be discussed. Retail development will also be specifically addressed. Horton Plaza, downtown San Diego's premier shopping destination, will be evaluated. Parking in downtowns is historically an issue, and this paper will research the options available in San Diego and how they have helped in this problem. The political climate and policies of any downtown are important to consider when evaluating a city. The major policy initiatives and programs will be investigated in this paper. Finally, a comparison to Denver will be made. San Diego is considered to be a peer city to Denver. What can Denver learn from San Diego? What is different or similar about the cities? This paper is a detailed look at San Diego and is intended to help Denver evaluate all possible avenues for improving our downtown.





DOWNTOWN DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS

Location

Downtown San Diego is located on San Diego Bay with the rest of the city expanding North, South and East. Suburban communities lay beyond the city limits to the North and East with the Eastern communities ending at the mountains. The Southern city limits end at the Mexico border. The downtown area is easily accessed from the rest of the city by a number of highways.

Most of the areas in the region surrounding downtown San Diego are already developed and the suburban communities have run out of room to expand. There are many residential projects underway downtown to accommodate growth in the city and the region. San Diego is a more affordable alternative to living in Los Angeles without giving up the weather and the beaches. Downtown is also the hub of government, legal and banking industries within the city¹.

Boundaries

The boundaries of downtown San Diego are clearly defined by Interstate 5 to the North and East and San Diego Bay on the West. To the North, downtown is also bounded by Laurel St. and the San Diego International Airport. The Southern boundary is Beardsley Avenue. These boundaries are major edges and barriers. The highway and the water are the most prominent barriers. Just past the Southern boundary is the bridge to Coronado, which is also a highway².

¹ www.sandiegodowntown.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/bus.home

² www.ccdc.com/resources/resource_files/Downtown_Jurisdictional_Boundaries_Fig_2-1.pdf



Characteristics

Downtown San Diego is comprised of eight distinct neighborhoods. Each neighborhood is important to the downtown area. The characteristics of each of these neighborhoods are discussed below.

Columbia is one of the neighborhoods located on the waterfront. This neighborhood is mainly commercial but also includes some residential. Currently Columbia has 1,800 residential units. There are more residential and commercial projects that will be completed over the next few years including new high-rise office towers and a few hotels. The main street running through downtown, Broadway, starts in this neighborhood near the cruise ship terminal. The San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art is located in this neighborhood. There are big plans for new park space and public uses along the waterfront in Columbia that are all a part of the North Embarcadero Visionary Plan. The plan includes the addition of new piers and the revitalization of old ones; new trees; trails for walking and jogging and opportunities for public art. This plan will link downtown to the bay³.

The Core neighborhood is one of the central neighborhoods in downtown San Diego. This area is the center of government, finance and business and has many office high-rises. Many of the old buildings are being renovated to house residential and commercial uses. There are a number of live/work lofts and apartment buildings located here. The Core is the location of City Hall, the World Trade Center, the central jail, as well as the Civic Center and many other arts-related venues.

Cortez Hill is located north of the Core and is one of San Diego's oldest residential neighborhoods. This neighborhood is about 111 acres in size and has two areas. The Eastern part of the neighborhood is the highest landmass in downtown and gives Cortez Hill its name. The Western part is known as Cortez West. The hill gives this neighborhood a more intimate feeling rising above the rest of downtown. The most famous residence is the former El Cortez Hotel, and has been converted into condominiums. Other condos, apartment buildings and Victorian-style homes are found in this neighborhood. Cortez Hill is the site of the future Tweet Street development. This development is a park and trail system along Date Street between 7th

³ www.portofsandiego.org/projects/nevp/#overview

and 9th Avenues and is designed to make downtown more livable for birds as well as people. The main attraction will be several handcrafted birdhouses located throughout the park ⁴.

East Village is the largest of the eight neighborhoods and the last to be developed. The development of this area was sparked by the new PETCO Park baseball stadium that was completed in 2004, and is the most rapidly growing residential area of San Diego County ⁵. There are a growing number of hotels and parking spaces as well as an increase in retail and commercial space. The Redevelopment Agency in San Diego would like to provide the residents of East Village “an enviable quality of life” by providing employment opportunities, beautification, rehabilitation and by making East Village an arts and entertainment center⁶. The East Village neighborhood also contains two high schools and downtown’s only colleges: The New School of Architecture and San Diego City College. Future development projects include a new main library and the Park to Bay Link that will connect Balboa Park to San Diego Bay along a tree-lined street. The link will enhance the pedestrian and trolley flow from the park to the bay and the plan has been in the making for around 100 years. Similar projects were planned for other areas of downtown but the projects fell through. The reason the project was approved for East Village is because this was the last area to be developed and the Park to Bay Link could be included in the development plan of the entire neighborhood. It would be more difficult to widen and re-align a street in a neighborhood that was already developed ⁷.

The Gaslamp Quarter is downtown San Diego’s historic district. The entire neighborhood (16.5 blocks) is on the National Register of Historic Places. Preservation efforts for the Gaslamp Quarter began in 1976 after years of decline. Redevelopment efforts were aided by the opening of Horton Plaza in 1985 ⁸. The Gaslamp Quarter is a trendy place to live, much like LoDo in downtown Denver. Previous residential development consisted of warehouse conversions into lofts and the construction of new live/work lofts. New retail and hotel rooms are also planned for the Gaslamp Quarter. This neighborhood is home to many bars, nightclubs, restaurants and

⁴ dtsd.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/living.lvn_parks

⁵ www.willisallen.com/downtown-san-diego-real-estate.htm

⁶ www.sandiegodowntown.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/res.neighborhood/districtName/East_Village/DistrictID/3

⁷ www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20060125/news_1m25park.html

⁸ www.sandiegodowntown.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/res.neighborhood/districtName/Gaslamp_Quarter/DistrictID/4

hotels. There is a small district located in Gaslamp called the Asian Pacific Thematic District where there are many old Asian-style buildings. This area was home to the Chinese Mission School and was a social center for Chinese and Japanese immigrants. The Gaslamp Quarter has its own newsletter and web page ⁹.

Horton Plaza is the least residential of all the downtown neighborhoods. It features hotels, offices, theaters, the federal courthouse, with some condos and apartments. This is also the smallest of the downtown neighborhoods taking up only 15 blocks. Horton Plaza has seven open-air split-levels and 140 shops and restaurants. The neighborhood was the first in downtown to be redeveloped beginning in 1972. This led to redevelopment of the entire downtown area from the center out ¹⁰. Plans for this neighborhood include a new 460-room hotel and the restoration of the Balboa Theatre.

The redevelopment of Little Italy began in the early 1990's after the neighborhood had experienced depreciation as a result of the construction of Interstate 5, which borders the neighborhood to the East. The neighborhood got its name from the Italian families living in the area that worked in the tuna fishing industry. The Little Italy neighborhood has some single-family homes as well as apartments and condominiums. The neighborhood also has an elementary school. The revitalization of India Street has sparked new retail and residential development and the addition of new parking spaces. Future projects include more residential development and a County Waterfront Park that will be part of the North Embarcadero Visionary Plan. Little Italy also has its own newsletter and web page ¹¹.

In the Marina District, redevelopment began in the early 1980's. This neighborhood was once comprised of mainly warehouses and vacant lots and has improved greatly over the years. The Marina District is now home to many high-rise and mid-rise condominium buildings, apartments, lofts, townhouses, parks and attractions. Part of the Asian Pacific Thematic District is located near the boundary with the Gaslamp Quarter. The proximity of the Marina District to the San Diego Convention Center was an opportunity for many hotels to be developed in the area.

⁹ www.gaslamp.org/

¹⁰ www.sandiegodowntown.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/res.neighborhood/districtName/Horton_Plaza/District/D/10

¹¹ www.littleitalysd.com

Waterfront shopping and dining is provided at Seaport Village, a collection of stores and eateries designed in three distinct plazas that capture the character of Old Monterey, Victorian San Francisco and traditional Mexico ¹². Over the next few years Seaport Village will expand and the construction of the new Children's Museum and Children's Park will begin. There will also be additions to residential units, hotels, and retail space.

East Village has faced the most challenges in recent years. Before the implementation of the Centre City Community Plan in 1992, East Village suffered from crime, deterioration and homelessness. The reason for the success of this area has been the completion of the San Diego Padres new ballpark, PETCO Park; it helped many developers secure funding to build new projects in the neighborhood. The land in the periphery of San Diego is mostly developed suburbs, and infill has become a very important part of the continuing development of downtown, specifically in East Village. This is the most rapidly developing area of downtown and of San Diego County. Over the last 20 years the opening of Horton Plaza, the revitalization of the Gaslamp Quarter, the San Diego Convention Center and the opening of PETCO Park have all had significant impacts on the revitalization of downtown San Diego.

Updating the infrastructure of downtown is an important part of redevelopment in all eight neighborhoods. However, this results in a large number of construction projects occurring at the same time in downtown San Diego. Getting around downtown during the construction can be a hassle, so the Paradise In Progress program was created to keep residents and workers up to date on current projects and how traffic patterns might change. Workshops are held to gather information on the public impacts of the construction projects and special events ¹³. The funding for this program comes from donations from the organizations involved and sponsorship by the development teams doing the construction.

¹² www.spvillage.com/index.php

¹³ www.downtownsandiego.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/about.abt_pp#paradise

Zoning

The information below corresponds to the color zoning map that follows this section and will explain each of the different zone districts. The information can be found in the Centre City Development Corporation's (CCDC) Zoning Information Package ¹⁴.

The Core (C) district is a high intensity office and employment district. There are fewer restrictions on building bulk and tower separation. A minimum of 40% of the ground floor street frontage needs to have active commercial uses. Mixed-use projects are of high importance. Permitted uses are retail, cultural, educational, entertainment, residential, civic and governmental.

The Neighborhood Mixed-Use Center (MC) district ensures development of distinctive centers that provide a focus to the neighborhood by supporting mixed-use projects that have commercial uses on the ground floor. There are building volume restrictions to allow sunlight to reach streets and public spaces. There are design standards that seek to establish pedestrian oriented development. A minimum of 40% of the ground floor frontage needs to have active commercial uses and a minimum of 80% of the ground floor street frontage along Main Streets needs to have active commercial uses. Permitted uses in this district are: retail; eating and drinking establishments; residential; office; cultural; educational and indoor recreation.

Employment/Residential Mixed-Use (ER) is a district that provides synergies between educational institutions and residential neighborhoods or a transition between the Core District and residential neighborhoods. Permitted uses are: office; residential; hotel; research and development; and educational and medical facilities.

The Ballpark Mixed-Use (BP) district accommodates mixed-use developments that support major sporting facilities and visitor attractions. A minimum of 40% and a maximum of 100% of the ground floor street frontage must contain active commercial uses. Permitted uses in this district are: eating and drinking establishments; hotels; office; research and development facilities; cultural facilities and residential uses; live/work spaces and parking facilities.

¹⁴ www.ccdc.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/planning.zoning_information

Much of the Waterfront/Marine (WM) district is under the jurisdiction of the Port of San Diego. A minimum of 20% and a maximum of 50% of the ground floor street frontage must have active commercial uses. Permitted uses in this district include: ocean related industry; major tourist and local visitor attractions; trade; office; eating and drinking establishments; retail; parking; museum and cultural facilities and hotels.

In the Mixed Commercial (MC) district no more than 100% of the ground floor street frontage may be active commercial uses. In this district, permitted uses are: residential; artist studios; live/work spaces; hotels; offices; research and development facilities and retail. Other uses such as commercial and service uses including light industrial and repair, warehousing and distributions and transportation and communication services are seen as essential for the livelihood of businesses and residents of the downtown area and are also permitted.

The Residential Emphasis (R) district is primarily for residential development. At least 80% of the GFA must be occupied by residential uses. Non-residential land cannot be more than 20% of the GFS and active commercial uses may not be located more than 50 feet from the property line at any street corner. Other permitted uses are: small-scale businesses; offices and services and small-scale ground floor active commercial such as cafes and retail stores. These uses are subject to size and area limitations.

In the Industrial (I) district a range of industrial uses are permitted such as light manufacturing, transportation services, repair and storage and energy generation facilities. No more than 20% of the ground floor street frontage can be active commercial uses.

The Transportation (IT) district accommodates uses related to the trolley, passenger and freight rail, maintenance and repair and associated activities. No more than 20% of the ground floor street frontage may be active commercial uses.

The Convention Center/Visitor (CC) district is under the jurisdiction of public agencies other than the City and CCDC. A minimum of 20% and a maximum of 40% of the ground floor street frontage can contain active commercial uses. Permitted uses in this district are: convention centers; hotels and parks and open spaces for visitor uses.

In the Public/Civic (P) district a minimum of 40% of the ground floor street frontage can contain active commercial uses. Permitted uses in this district are: government; civic; cultural; educational; residential and other public and support services.

The Park/Open Space (OS) district provides areas for public parks and open spaces. Other permitted uses are: below ground parking facilities; eating and drinking establishments; arts and cultural uses and community centers. Enclosed arts and cultural spaces should be located underground.

Downtown San Diego also has many overlay districts that will be briefly described below and can be seen on a map following the color zoning map. More information can be found in the Zoning Package at the web address given above.

The Airport Environs Overlay Zone (-AEOZ) was established to provide supplemental regulations surrounding San Diego International Airport consistent with the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan that was adopted by the San Diego Regional Airport Authority.

The Airport Approach Overlay Zone (-AAOZ) is intended to provide supplemental regulations for the properties surrounding the approach path for the airport. The heights of buildings are regulated.

The Coastal Zone Overlay (-CZ) applies to lands near San Diego Bay to protect and enhance the quality of public access and coastal resources. Development in this area requires a Process Two review.

In the Commercial Street Overlay (-CS) a minimum of 60% of the ground floor street frontage must contain active commercial uses on designated streets.

The County Administration Center Design Zone Overlay (-CAC) ensures that new development surrounding the historic center is sympathetic in scale, character and height. New developments have to conform to design guidelines that have been adopted by the City Council.

The Employment Required Overlay (-EO) district ensures that there are adequate opportunities for employment based commercial uses. At least 50% of the GFA for each project in this area should contain floor area dedicated to employment uses. Residential uses cannot exceed more than 50% of GFA. It is prohibited to convert existing floor area in employment uses to any other non-employment use.

The Fine Grain Development Overlay (-FG) requires that projects incorporate design standards that exhibit architectural form and variety to ensure a pedestrian scale and diversity of building design.

The Large Floor Plate Overlay (-LFO) allows for larger floor plates and bulkier buildings at upper levels to accommodate employment –oriented uses.

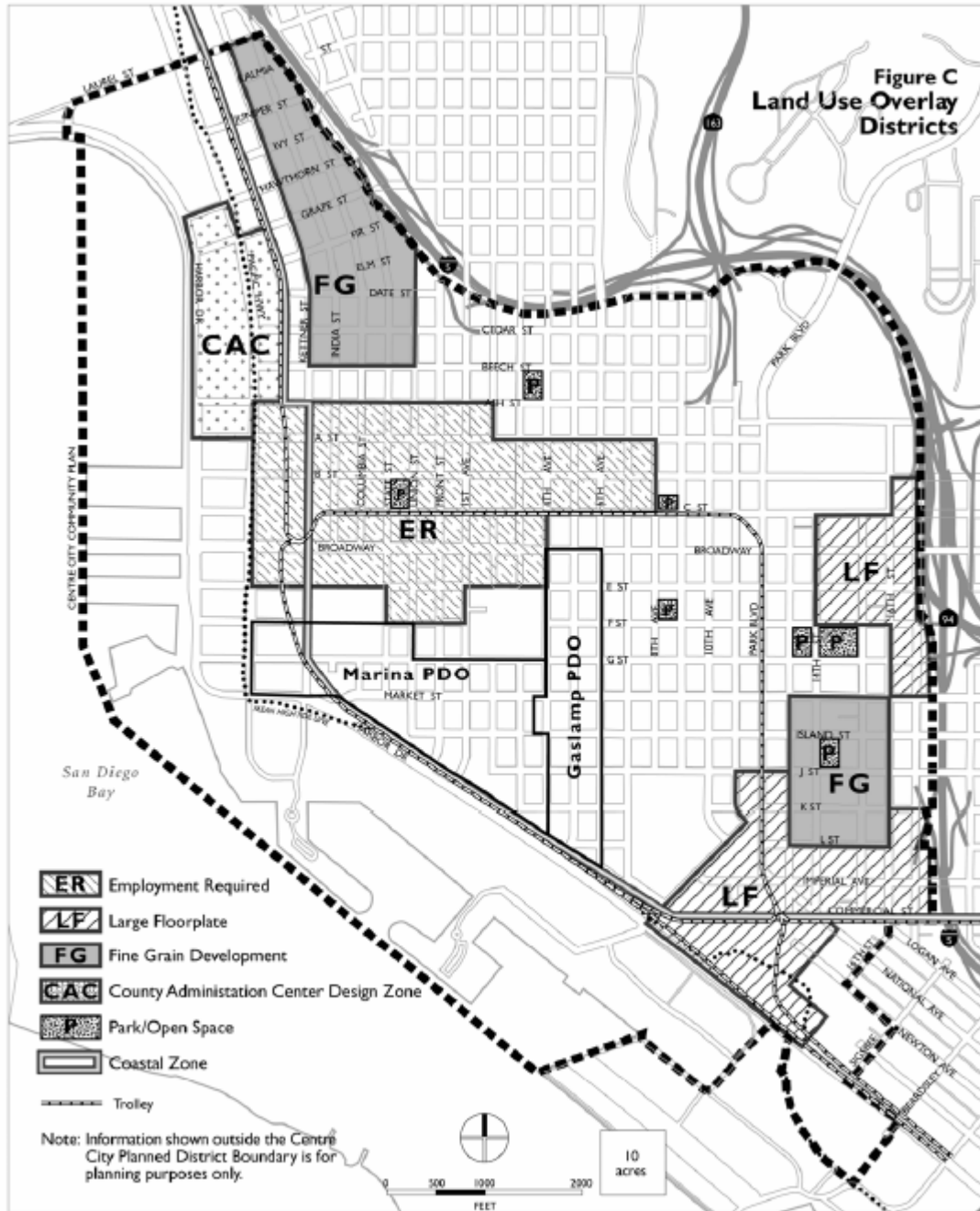
The Little Italy Sun Access Overlay (-LISA) district is intended to maintain adequate sunlight and air to sidewalks and residential areas in the Little Italy neighborhood during the winter solstice between 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

In the Main Street Overlay (-MS) district, designated Main Streets must have a minimum of 80% of active commercial uses on the ground floor street frontage. On the West side of Park Boulevard, a minimum of 40% is required.

The Park/Open Space Overlay (-P) is intended to identify locations of future park sites designated in the Downtown Community Plan. Development sites to the West and South of the designated park sites are subject to specific design criteria to ensure adequate sun access.

The Park Sun Access Overlay (-PSA) district is intended to ensure adequate sunlight to future park sites by controlling the height of new development to the West and South.





POPULATION

The population for Downtown San Diego according to the 2000 Census was 25,862. The 2005 population, as estimated by SANDAG, San Diego Association of governments, is 42,682. The population projection for 2010 is 50, 117, and for 2020 is 60,073. This is a numeric change of 34,211 and a percent change of 140%. The daytime population for downtown San Diego, persons in the area at 11:00 a.m. on an average weekday, in 1995 was 98,760, currently is at 131,841 and expected to increase to 143,092 by 2010 and 156,875 by 2020. This is a numeric change of 58,115 and a percent change of 59%.¹⁵

Demographics

The ethnicity composition of the downtown San Diego population is undergoing significant changes. The Black and Asian segments of the population remain steady at 13% and 5%. However, the Hispanic population dramatically increases corresponding with the major decline of the White population.¹⁶

Population by Ethnicity					
	1995	2000	2005	2010	2020
Hispanic	29%	33%	39%	46%	55%
White	53%	49%	43%	37%	28%

The median household income has increased from 1995 to the present and is expected to increase significantly in the future as well.

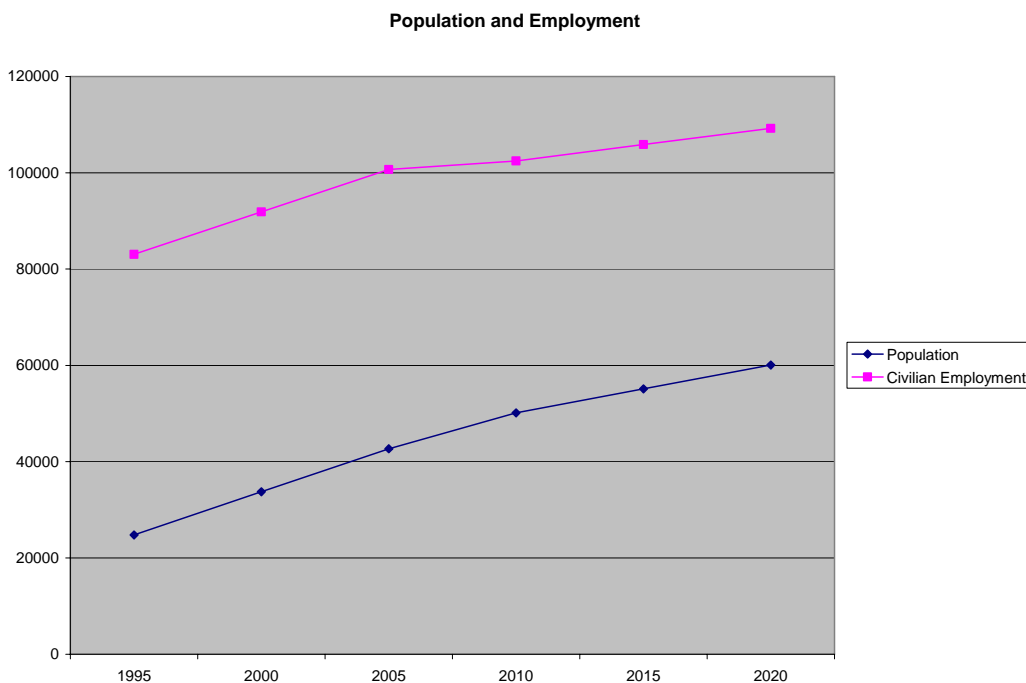
¹⁵ www.sandiegodowntown.org/pdfs/sip92303_2020forecaast.pdf.
www.sandiegodowntown.org/pdfs/zip92101_current_estimates.pdf Source for Census, Estimates and Forecast Files: San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)

¹⁶ www.sandiegodowntown.org/pdfs/sip92303_2020forecaast.pdf.
www.sandiegodowntown.org/pdfs/zip92101_current_estimates.pdf

Median Household Income						
	1995	2005	2010	2020	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Current Dollars	\$18,621	\$36,318	\$50,903	\$106,285	\$87,664	471%
Constant (1995) Dollars	\$18,621	\$25,391	\$29,984	\$41,614	\$22,993	123%

Employment

Downtown San Diego’s employment, the number of jobs within the downtown boundary, has been steadily increasing since 1995. In 1995 there were 87,639 people working downtown by 2005 the number of jobs significantly increased to 104, 581 and is projected to increase to 106,388 by 2010 and 113,122 by 2020. This is an added 25,483 jobs, or a 29%increase.¹⁷ The population and employment have kept in sync with each other, both increasing most dramatically from 1995-2005, and then more moderately increasing until 2020.



¹⁷ www.sandiegodowntown.org/pdfs/sip92303_2020forecaast.pdf.
www.sandiegodowntown.org/pdfs/zip92101_current_estimates.pdf

Downtown is the hub of San Diego's government, legal and banking industries. Downtown San Diego's industry clusters, concentrations of companies operating in the same or complementary sectors within a relatively small area, include: legal services, banking and financial services, architecture and engineering, creative services, information technology, and defense and space technologies. The creative services include advertising, marketing, graphic design, multimedia and public relation firms. In recent years, San Diego has become the nation's center for the wireless industry. Downtown San Diego has been very successful in enticing new industries to move there. This is in part due to the many policies and incentives the downtown offers, and will be discussed in the policies section of this paper.

Military

In 1995 the military population was 3,254; currently (2005) it is 5,251 and expected to remain at 5,251 through 2020. The military employs 3,919 people and expects to do so through 2020.¹⁸

Tourists

San Diego attracts nearly 16 million visitors each year.¹⁹ Cruise ships dock in the downtown area and tourists frequent the Gaslamp district as well as surrounding attractions such as the zoo, wild animal park, Balboa Park, and Coronado. Downtown San Diego provides amenities for these year round tourists. Although the tourists are not residents of downtown, their constant presence helps in creating a 24-7 downtown.

¹⁸ www.sandiegodowntown.org/pdfs/sip92303_2020forecaast.pdf.
www.sandiegodowntown.org/pdfs/zip92101_current_estimates.pdf Source for Census, Estimates and Forecast Files: San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)

¹⁹ www.sandiegodowntown.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/cont.takeTour

DEVELOPMENT

Like many American cities, San Diego's downtown experienced a slump in development and investment during the mid-20th century. However, unlike other American cities, San Diego actually identified and attempted to remediate this slump by the 1970s. "In 1975, with goals of eliminating blight, reversing San Diego's stagnant economy, building homes and creating jobs, [Mayor Pete] Wilson established the Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC),²⁰". CCDC was established to bring investment back to downtown San Diego. This involved the creation of Horton Plaza, the preservation and revitalization of the Gaslamp District, the development of the San Diego Trolley, and the establishment of the Convention Center.²¹ Where other cities saw their downtowns dwindle, San Diego's was thriving due to the investment made by the local government and the establishment of the CCDC.

Downtown San Diego's development focuses on a variety of projects. Currently, public and institutional uses occupy 308 acres, dominating 22% of downtown land.²² This includes government and education. Commercial and office activities are next, occupying 195 acres of 13% of all downtown land²³. Residential uses occupy 135 acres, or 9% of downtown land.²⁴ As far as development goes, residential projects dominate projects under construction²⁵ with a proposed addition of 9,200 units. Historic development, however, has been diverse.

Over the past 30 years, projects such as Horton Plaza, the Gaslamp Quarter revitalization, the San Diego Convention Center and PETCO Park have changed the face of downtown. They have become anchors attracting residents, businesses and visitors. In this time, downtown has realized \$7.5 billion in private investment and nearly \$900 million in public investment, creating about 60,000 jobs, 7,000 new hotel rooms, 6.6 million square feet of commercial space and more than 12,600 new homes, market-rate and affordable.²⁶

Downtown's development has centered around making it a place people want to be. They have focused on the residential aspect by defining and embracing their different neighborhoods. They have brought people downtown for sports, but have built a community around the arena rather than building a parking lot.

²⁰ CCDC, "Downtown Legends, Then & Now," Downtown Today (CCDC, 2002) 5.

²¹ CCDC, "Downtown Legends, Then & Now," Downtown Today (CCDC, 2002) 5.

²² CCDC, Downtown San Diego Community Plan (CCDC 2006) 3-6.

²³ CCDC, Downtown San Diego Community Plan (CCDC 2006) 3-6.

²⁴ CCDC, Downtown San Diego Community Plan (CCDC 2006) 3-6.

²⁵ CCDC, Downtown San Diego Community Plan (CCDC 2006) 3-6.

²⁶ CCDC, "Downtown Legends, Then & Now," Downtown Today (CCDC, 2002) 2.

Over the past ten years, downtown has seen a major shift in vacancy. In 1995, approximately 21% of vacant developable acres were residential, 42% were commercial, and 34% were office/industrial.²⁷ By 2005 those numbers changed to 20%, 13%, and 23%, respectively.²⁸ It is projected that by 2020, there will no longer be any vacant residential or commercial land, and only 18 total acres of vacant office/industrial space.²⁹ Additionally, San Diego has fairly low vacancy rates. Housing rates dropped from 6.8% in 1995³⁰ to 4.4% in 2005.³¹ Office space rates were 10.44% in 2005.³²

Rental square footage rates varied by the age of a building. Offices built in the 2000's had a rate of \$3.75 whereas offices built in the 1960's had a rate of \$2.29 in 2006.³³ The average rental square footage rate is \$2.73. Residential rates could only be found as a total rate, rather than per square foot. The average apartment rent in 2003 was \$912/month, and the median home cost was \$490,000³⁴. Retail rates could not be found at all.

Land use development regulations are defined by four kinds of incentives/exemptions that "promote desirable civic benefits."³⁵ These include retail along active streets, maintaining historical resources, establishing affordable housing, and creating specific amenities and improvements such as urban open spaces, green roofs, and employment uses.³⁶

Of these four specific attention is paid toward affordable housing. San Diego requires that a "minimum of 15% of new housing developed in a redevelopment project area must be affordable to low- and moderate-income households (at or below 120% area median income); and of those affordable units, 40% must be affordable to very-low-income persons (at or below

²⁷ San Diego Association of Governments, 2020 Cities/County Forecast (SANDAG 1999) 5.

²⁸ San Diego Association of Governments, 2020 Cities/County Forecast (SANDAG 1999) 5.

²⁹ San Diego Association of Governments, 2020 Cities/County Forecast (SANDAG 1999) 5.

³⁰ San Diego Association of Governments, 2020 Cities/County Forecast (SANDAG 1999) 1.

³¹ CBRE, Existing High Rise Buildings in Downtown San Diego (CBRE 2006).

³² CBRE, Existing High Rise Buildings in Downtown San Diego (CBRE 2006).

³³ www.sandiegodowntown.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/res.allneighborhoods

³⁴ www.sandiegodowntown.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/res.allneighborhoods

³⁵ CCDC, Downtown San Diego Community Plan (CCDC 2006) 3-17.

³⁶ CCDC, Downtown San Diego Community Plan (CCDC 2006) 3-17

50% area median income).³⁷ Affordable Housing is encouraged through Tax Increment Financing, Site Assembly and Acquisition, Gap Financing, Homebuyer Assistance, and Notice of Funding Availability.³⁸

As Downtown San Diego grows, it has become more densely populated. CCDC states that, “creating a dense yet livable environment is the key to success.”³⁹ Employment Density has grown from 44.6 in 1995 to 53.7 in 2005, and is expected to be 58.5 in 2020.⁴⁰ Residential Density rates have grown from 79.4 in 1995 to 110.7 in 2005, and are expected to be 140.1 in 2020.⁴¹

San Diego’s downtown development is successful because it is so tailored to its own needs. It has created an establishment, CCDC, specifically to oversee and promote its own redevelopment. As CCDC states,

Downtown’s redevelopment program doesn’t seek to mimic other cities, but to create a city highlighting San Diego’s unique characteristics. It is extremely important to retain and develop the city’s distinct character, including the beautiful weather, waterfront destinations, small-block walkability, stunning bay views, heritage sites and a unique mix of businesses, residents and growing cultural amenities.⁴²

It is due to this attention to San Diego’s unique characteristics that Downtown’s development has succeeded so greatly.

³⁷ CCDC, Downtown San Diego Community Plan (CCDC 2006) 3-30.

³⁸ CCDC, Downtown San Diego Community Plan (CCDC 2006) 3-33.

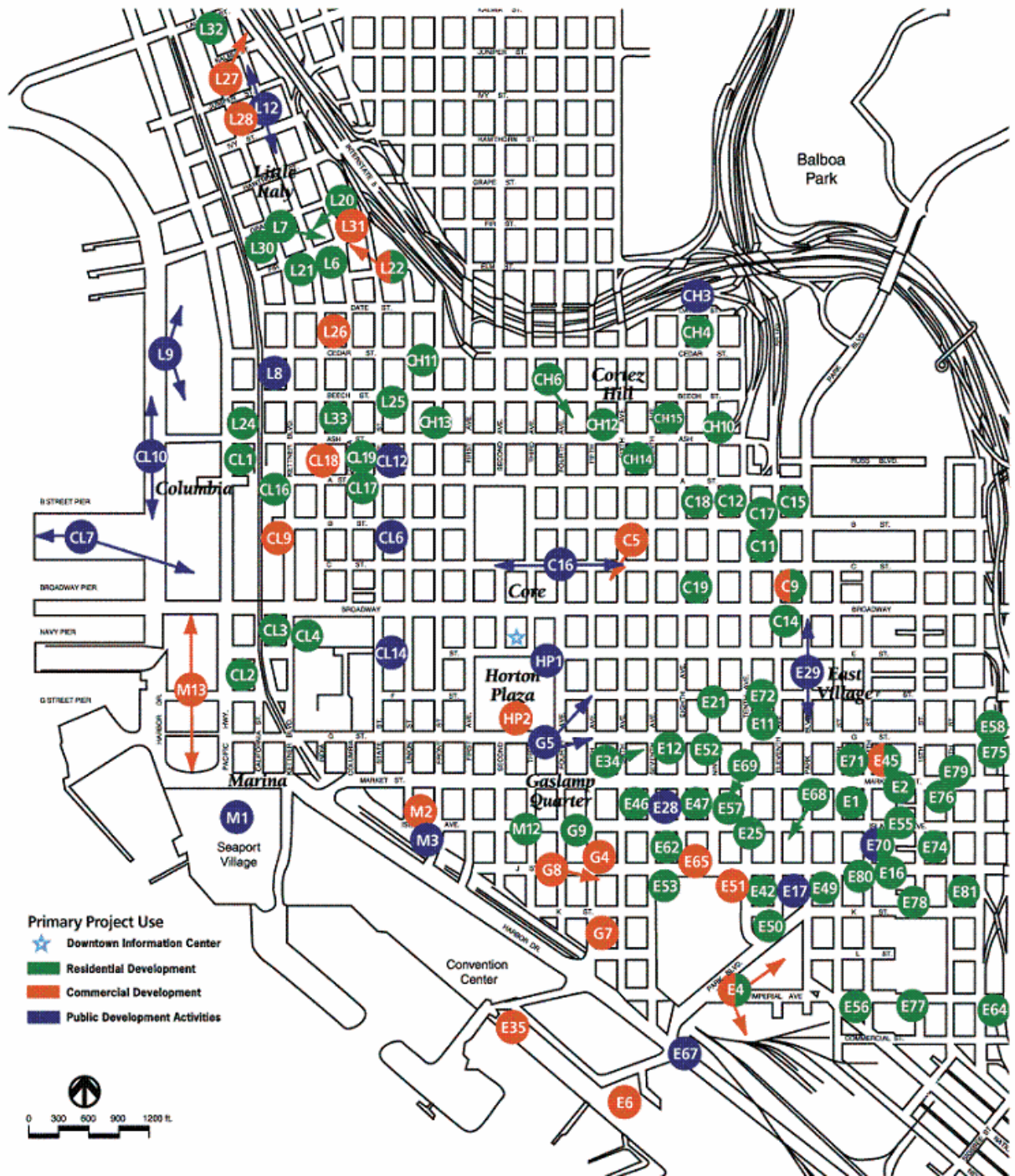
³⁹ CCDC, “Realizing a Renaissance: 2007,” Downtown Today (CCDC, 2006) 9.

⁴⁰ San Diego Association of Governments, 2020 Cities/County Forecast (SANDAG 1999) 5.

⁴¹ San Diego Association of Governments, 2020 Cities/County Forecast (SANDAG 1999) 5.

⁴² CCDC, “Realizing a Renaissance: 2007,” Downtown Today (CCDC, 2006) 10.

Current Downtown Development Projects



RETAIL

Over the past ten years, Downtown San Diego has experienced a general growth in retail. However, San Diego's retail redevelopment did not begin within the last ten years, but in the 1980's. One of CCDC's first major projects is what jumpstarted Downtown San Diego's retail and redevelopment. This was the opening of Horton Plaza in 1985. "Today, Horton Plaza is considered the major factor in the City's successful downtown redevelopment program."⁴³ Horton Plaza is an outdoor mall that lies at the core of the Horton Plaza neighborhood. It is important to note, however that retail is not the complete focus of Horton Plaza. San Diego encourages mixed uses, and as such, includes the historic Balboa Theatre in this neighborhood as a focus of the Plaza itself.

Much like Horton Plaza lies at the core of the neighborhood under the same name; a retail hub is associated with the core of each of Downtown San Diego's distinct neighborhoods. "The centers will be bustling nodes of activities... and will be active at street level, lined with buildings that engage the pedestrian."⁴⁴ These hubs are so important to the character definition of each neighborhood that retail development is discouraged in adjacent areas. Retail here is used to further the identities of each individual neighborhood.

What Downtown San Diego has done is use retail to its advantage. Rather than merely focus on simply increasing retail Downtown, San Diego has centralized it to make each neighborhood unique. While there is no entity that manages all the downtown properties, the CCDC and the Downtown San Diego Community Plan encourage retail in certain areas. This overall direction provided by these two entities has established a cohesive and successful downtown retail situation.

⁴³ CCDC, "Downtown Legends, Then & Now," Downtown Today (CCDC, 2002) 6.

⁴⁴ CCDC, Downtown San Diego Community Plan (CCDC 2006) 5-6.

Neighborhood Centers Locator and Descriptions		
Location	Neighborhood	Description/Key Features
India St.	Little Italy	Mixed shops and services catering to traditional neighborhood; with restaurants, cafes, and boutiques drawing visitors.
Harbor Dr.	Columbia & Marina	Waterfront retail/restaurant district, serving workers, residents, and visitors.
Market St.	Marina	Stretching along the re-landscaped boulevard, incorporating current site of Ralph's supermarket. Reinforce retail and pedestrian character along G and Market Streets.
6th Ave.	Cortez	Active frontages lining two-way connecting street. Linking Balboa Park/freeway lids and Core, stitching West Cortez and Cortez Hill together.
7th, 9th Ave., C & F St.	East Village - Northwest	Cultural focus and retail along main street. Half-block park providing backdrop to historic Post Office building. Center also includes plaza facing C street transit corridor.
Park-at-the-Park, J St.	East Village - Ballpark	Focusing on Park-at-the-Park and along J Street. Incorporating historic buildings, ballpark-centered activities.
13th St.	East Village - Northeast	Parallel parks along fault lines where feasible. Active frontages lining parks and street.
14th, 15th, Island, and J St.	East Village - Southeast	Large plaza lined with retail uses on surrounding streets and adjacent buildings, and providing recreational opportunities, linked via linear park to East Village green. Combined with active frontages along 15th St.

Source: San Diego Community Update Plan, 2006

PARKING

The parking situation in downtown San Diego is great and getting better. There are currently about 60,000 parking spaces in downtown with more to come. There are nine companies that manage the public parking lots and structures downtown. Ace Parking manages the largest number of parking lots. Other companies include Central, Five Star Parking, PCA, Diamond, Prava, Ampco Garage, SD Valet and Sunset. The table below shows the current number of each type of parking space in downtown San Diego.

Downtown San Diego Parking

Type of Space	Number of Spaces
Metered	3,100
Street	4,000
Public Surface Lot	9,800
Public Garage	29,500
Private Surface Lot	5,900
Private Garage	9,800

Source: www.ccdc.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/planning.parking_transportation

A portion of the revenue collected by parking meters goes to the construction of new parking garages, street and sidewalk improvements to increase the availability of parking, and way finding signs to help people find off-street parking ⁴⁵. The goal of CCDC as the planning agency for downtown is to provide parking that is affordable. Many of the new parking garages have parking rates as low as \$1 per hour from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the rates for green-top parking meters range from \$0.50 to \$1.25 per hour for a range of 4 to 9 hours at a time. The green-top parking meters are meters that accept pre-paid parking meter debit cards or coins. The number of hours permitted and the cost per hour are located on the meter so there is no second-guessing and less of a chance for a parking ticket. The curbs downtown are also color coded to let drivers know the rules before they park. Red curbs mean no parking is allowed, white is for passenger loading and unloading, yellow curbs are for commercial loading zones, blue is parking for the disabled and green curbs identify short parking zones that range from 15 to 30

⁴⁵ www.sandiego.gov/economic-development/pdf/park101.pdf

minutes⁴⁶. Pre-paid meters are located at least twice on each block face in order to avoid the clutter of individual parking meters. These meters will print receipts and accept coins, bills, credit cards and the rechargeable pre-paid debit cards. The benefit of using the pre-paid cards is one can insert the card and get money back if time is left when one returns to their vehicle. These are pilot parking programs and are expected to be evaluated within the next year⁴⁷.

Parking for PETCO Park is in six designated areas, all with different prices. There is at least one Trolley stop in each of these zones. The most expensive parking closest to the ballpark is \$17 and the least expensive parking is located in the Columbia neighborhood at \$3⁴⁸. The parking is managed by the San Diego Padres in partnership with Ace Parking. Other popular alternatives to getting to the ballpark include the bus, Trolley and Coaster. In 2006, 16% of the total ballpark attendance for the year got to the game using the Trolley or Coaster. The seating capacity of PETCO Park is 42,445 and the City has successfully found a place for everyone to park without the use of expansive surface lots.

Downtown San Diego is expected to continue to grow and will add another 60,000 over the next 25 years. This trend will lead to higher density development and surface parking lots will be phased out due to their inefficient use of space. The City is leaning toward building parking structures that are wrapped in neighborhood-serving retail in the coming years⁴⁹. The main reason for the parking wrapped in retail is to keep downtown pedestrian friendly and walkable. There are many different types of transportation that come together downtown to provide an alternative to automobiles and the City is finding ways to make walking and public transportation more attractive. Some key principles to making downtown more walkable are connectivity and street types. Downtown San Diego is organized on a predictable grid system with small blocks that provide multiple routes for walkers. All street types in downtown accommodate pedestrians and almost all of them accommodate vehicles.

Even though the parking in downtown San Diego is adequate, there is still an emphasis on not depending on the automobile to get around. There are 50 miles of Trolley lines and 43 miles of

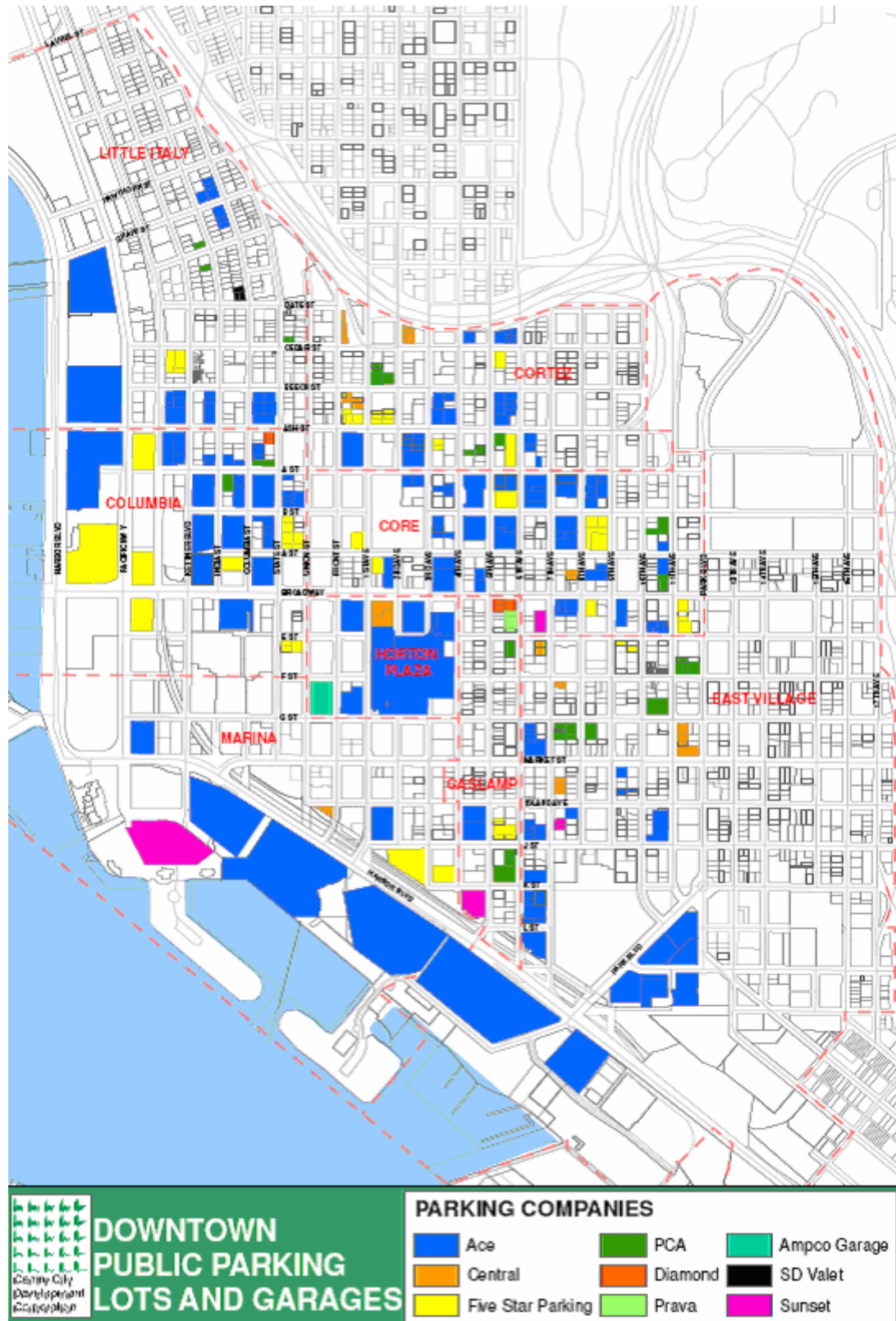
⁴⁶ www.sandiego.gov/economic-development/pdf/park101.pdf

⁴⁷ www.ccdc.com/resources/resource_files/Downtown_Today_2006_Summer.pdf

⁴⁸ sandiego.padres.mlb.com/NASApp/mlb/sd/ballpark/parking_2006.jsp

⁴⁹ www.ccdc.com/resources/resource_files/Downtown_Today_2006_Summer.pdf

Coaster commuter rail in downtown. There are also 30 bus routes, bike paths, taxis and pedicabs. Other types of transportation in or around downtown are airplane, Amtrak and the ferry and water taxi. All these types of transportation make it easy to get into, out of and around downtown. Downtown is also easily accessed by many freeways and state highways.



POLICIES AND POLITICS

The programs and incentives that Downtown San Diego offers are extensive, easily accessible, and successful. Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC), a public, non-profit corporation created by the City of San Diego to staff and implement Downtown redevelopment projects and programs, has been an effective agency for redevelopment. The City of San Diego also is an active promoter of downtown, offering troubleshooting advice and incentives. Some of the most important issues of the past decade include affordable housing, attracting business, and parks and open space.

Centre City Development Corporation, CCDC

CCDC serves on behalf of the San Diego Redevelopment Agency as the catalyst for public-private partnerships to facilitate redevelopment projects adopted pursuant to California Redevelopment Law.⁵⁰ Each of the CCDC's seven-member board of directors is appointed by the mayor and City Council to three-year terms. There is a 48-member staff. The San Diego Redevelopment Agency has the authority to create project areas, issue tax allocation bonds, and acquire property through eminent domain when necessary to meet adopted redevelopment objectives. The elected members of the San Diego City Council also serve as members of the San Diego Redevelopment Agency.

CCDC, the organization responsible for downtown's redevelopment, plans and executes residential and commercial development in addition to cultural, educational and public improvement projects.

Affordable Housing

One of CCDC's first goals when redevelopment began 30 years ago was to create a residential community. San Diegans had fled the urban core for the suburbs and created a 9 to 5 center city. Since 1975 the housing objective has been to substantially increase living opportunities downtown with a variety of housing types to meet the needs of an economically and socially balanced population.

California law assures housing affordability in redevelopment projects. No less than 20% of the growth in property taxes in a redevelopment project area (tax increment funds) received

⁵⁰ www.ccdc.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/aboutCCDC.home

annually for redevelopment purposes must be used for “increasing, improving, and preserving the community’s supply of low and moderate income housing.”⁵¹ California’s Community Redevelopment Law also requires that 15% of the housing units developed or rehabilitated in a project area must be affordable to low and moderate income persons and households. In addition, 40% of these low/mid units must specifically address the very low-income population.⁵² This unique form of inclusionary housing has worked well to balance housing prices in downtown San Diego. CCDC efforts have produced workforce and low-income housing in greater numbers than required by State law. Of the 5,500 units developed in the past 25 years, close to 2,000 fell within the categories of low and moderate income housing, around 36%. More than 55% of those low and moderate units address the needs of very-low-income individuals and families.⁵³

To meet its objectives, CCDC works with property owners and developers to create new housing or rehabilitate existing units. CCDC has expanded efforts to encourage the preservation of existing and construction of new Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units, studios and efficiency units, which are the least expensive housing option. CCDC is assisting developers to identify sites and secure funding for the construction of new senior housing with on-site services. CCDC has gained commitments in several market-rate apartment developments for affordable units. Other projects are being developed by nonprofit entities and will provide new apartments exclusively for low-income individuals. Also, several sites owned by the Redevelopment Agency present opportunities to develop more affordable for-sale condominiums in downtown neighborhoods.

⁵¹ www.ccdc.com/resources/resource_files/Downtown_Today_2001_Spring.pdf “Making a Difference in the Housing Market”.

⁵² www.ccdc.com/resources/resource_files/Downtown_Today_2004_Summer.pdf “Mixed-Income Housing in a Mixed-Use Community”

⁵³ www.ccdc.com/resources/resource_files/Downtown_Today_2001_Spring.pdf “Making a Difference in the Housing Market”.

Downtown First-Time Homebuyer Program

In addition, CCDC has developed an innovative loan program to assist first-time buyers to move into lower-priced condominiums. It assists in addressing the gap between home prices and what homebuyers can afford. The program provides financing, in the form of a second trust deed loan, to enable moderate-income, first-time homebuyers to purchase their primary residence downtown. Qualified buyers can obtain a maximum \$75,000, 30year, zero-interest loan, with no payments for the first five years. The program is intended for the purchase of downtown homes with prices up to the mid-\$200,000s.⁵⁴

Commercial Incentives

Downtown San Diego has been successful in enticing businesses to relocate there. The loan programs, incentives, and other financial assistance are prolific. The city works closely with the banking community under the auspices of the federal Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 and encourages banks to develop and commit to San-Diego specific programs that provide expanded credit and banking services access for low-income communities and small and minority-owned businesses.⁵⁵

The City's Business Cooperation Program lowers the cost of doing business in San Diego; these financial incentives are based on the amount of tax revenue allocated to the City of San Diego.⁵⁶ The City of San Diego offers permit and regulatory assistance, problem solving, regulatory reform, and project troubleshooting for large companies interested in expanding in downtown San Diego. Most of these companies must be creating or retaining 200 or more jobs, generating \$500,000 in annual revenue to the City, or be located in one of the City's two Enterprise Zones.⁵⁷ There is a Downtown Alliance which actively assists businesses locating downtown and can help with financing. Another noteworthy local program is the Renewal Community Program. The 2000 Community Renewal Tax Relief Act established San Diego as a "Renewal Community". Downtown businesses located in the East Village and Little Italy are eligible for Federal Income tax savings. Other Business Financing which may apply to companies considering locating in downtown San Diego include: Tax-exempt Industrial

⁵⁴ www.ccdc.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/projects.loan/#first

⁵⁵ www.sandiegodowntown.org/index.dcm/fuseaction/bus.financing

⁵⁶ www.sandiegodowntown.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/bus.salesusetax

⁵⁷ www.sandiegodowntown.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/bus.permitting

Development Bonds, Small Business Loan Guarantee, SBA 504 loans, California Capital Access Program, CA Technology Investment partnership Program, CA Export Finance Loan Guarantees, and Public Infrastructure Financing.⁵⁸ In addition there is an Enterprise Zone located downtown where even more income tax and benefits are extended. The easy access of this financial information along with the number of agencies listed to help a business with the options is truly amazing.

CalReUSE program

Another very noteworthy loan program is the CalReUSE program, assisting property owners and developers by providing low interest loans up to \$125,000 to finance the cost of performing assessments of contamination and the steps required to clean it up. CCDC will be administering this program on behalf of the State of California. It is a \$10 million program of the California Pollution Control Financing Authority focusing on the challenge of brownfields, and aims to help localities reduce environmental degradation, revitalize neighborhoods and support sustainable growth patterns.⁵⁹

Clean and Safe

With a desire to improve the business climate, competitiveness and quality of life in Downtown, property owners and the Downtown San Diego Partnership launched the Downtown Property-based Business Improvement District (PBID) in July of 2000. The PBID established the Clean and Safe Program to improve the appearance of Downtown's streets and enhance public safety for residents, employees and visitors. The Clean and Safe Program is comprised of two components: Maintenance Ambassadors and Safety Ambassadors.⁶⁰

Parks and Open Space

The public plazas and parks that provide relief from the high-intensity development have come to forefront this past year. Downtown San Diego will accommodate a large portion of the region's growth in coming years by allowing more density than any other area of the city. CCDC

⁵⁸ www.sandiegodowntown.org/index.cfm.fuseactions/bus.otherincentives

⁵⁹ www.ccdc.com/index.cfm/fuseaction.projects.loans#first

⁶⁰ www.sandiegodowntown.org/index.cfm.fuseaction/bus.bServices

is preparing for this growth with an aggressive plan to add eight new urban parks in the next 10 years. The 2006 San Diego Downtown Community Plan calls for adding more than 50 acres of new open space to the existing 79 acres, from pocket parks tucked around high-rises to full block greenbelts for all kinds of recreational activities. The goal is to put every downtown resident within a five- to- ten-minute walk of public open space. The Downtown Community Plan has several tools to implement these policy goals. In 2005, CCDC worked with the building community to create a Development Impact Fee (DIF) schedule that would assess a fee on new development to help pay for new parks. The program will raise more than \$200 million for land acquisition and development costs. CCDC also authorized a \$79 million bond issuance, a portion of which will be used for park acquisition and development. The Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program allows developers whose sites have been earmarked for parks to sell their development rights. As a result, the landowner receives the ability to realize the financial potential of the land without having the Redevelopment Agency purchase it outright.⁶¹

COMPARE/CONTRAST TO DOWNTOWN DENVER

Downtown San Diego and downtown Denver have a lot of similarities. One similarity is the large number of neighborhoods that make up the downtown area. San Diego has 8 and they are all very important to downtown as a whole. Denver has 12 or 13 depending if you count the Auraria Campus as a neighborhood. However, all of San Diego's downtown neighborhoods are well defined and have distinct identities. The neighborhoods in downtown San Diego have had these identities for decades now, only East Village is new. Each of the neighborhoods in downtown San Diego has its own "downtown" within the neighborhood. Downtown Denver has a few neighborhoods that are still developing along the Platte River and near the ballpark. The neighborhoods in downtown Denver struggle with differentiating themselves, and many of them do not have central gathering places. Denver has some great neighborhoods that don't seem like they are a part of downtown. The intersection of Interstate 25 makes it difficult to include the Highland and Jefferson Park neighborhoods as part of downtown. In San Diego all of downtown is located inside the boundaries of an interstate highway and the neighborhoods have good connectivity.

⁶¹ www.ccdc.com/resources/resource_files/Downtown_Today_2006_Winter.pdf "What's in the Mix for 2006?"

Both downtowns are increasing jobs and commercial space, but San Diego has been extremely successful in attracting jobs and businesses in addition to residents. Downtown Denver is starting the process of building more office space. However, San Diego's business incentives and troubleshooting have made downtown San Diego very enticing.

San Diego's downtown has been thriving for decades. This can primarily be attributed to the fact it had established the Centre City Development Corporation, or CCDC. The CCDC's primary function is encouraging and overseeing the development of downtown. Denver has no such organization. While it does have a downtown partnership, as does San Diego, downtown Denver does not have an overseeing entity whose sole purpose is to redevelop downtown.

Much of the land surrounding downtown San Diego is already developed where as some of the communities around the city of Denver are among the fastest growing in the country. Both cities see a number of empty nesters and former commuters moving into downtown for convenience and ease of getting around. Many residents of both cities are fed up with traffic congestion on the highways and would rather live close to their jobs.

Downtown San Diego employs around 75,000 workers and downtown Denver employs around 110,000 workers. Denver is a regional city being the largest city within 600 miles, while San Diego is not a regional center, it is one of several cities in Southern California.

There are more opportunities for residents to find an affordable place to live in San Diego. This allows residents with low income jobs downtown to live near their work. While downtown Denver does have some affordable units they are mostly affordable to the middle class. Affordable housing always seems to bring up controversy, but downtown Denver could learn from San Diego how to bring affordable housing to the area by requiring a certain percentage of all new developments to be affordable, and requiring that a certain amount of property tax dollars goes to securing more affordable housing.

San Diego has 16 million visitors each year. For many of these tourists San Diego is their only destination. Many of the tourists in Denver are passing through on their way to the mountains.

Other similarities between the downtowns include: a clean and safe program, parks, downtown festivals, expanding light rail and commuter rail, a downtown convention center and sports venues, an open-air mall, a zoo in a nearby park, bike paths and mountain views.

Overall, downtown Denver is a great place but there are a few lessons to be learned from San Diego. The elimination of surface parking lots will allow for more development opportunities and a more efficient use of space in downtown. Another lesson for downtown Denver, is to sell each individual neighborhood and promote the distinct districts. The affordable housing program implemented in San Diego is effective in ensuring low and moderately priced housing units. Denver's affordable housing is primarily only affordable to middle income or higher individuals. In addition, Denver could learn how to encourage more business development within the downtown district. Downtown San Diego does a very good job of selling itself. Offering incentives, troubleshooting, and agencies are available to help a business relocate and determine which incentives may apply.

Like many downtowns across the country, San Diego and Denver have had to make comebacks from years of deterioration and decline. Both cities are doing a good job revitalizing downtown and bringing in residents. If Denver can bring more business and jobs to downtown, the residents will follow.

CONCLUSION

San Diego's redevelopment efforts began in the 1970's. CCDC was created in 1975 to revitalize downtown San Diego. At that time, downtown was plagued by economic, social and physical blight. People were leaving for the suburbs, taking the big name retail and department stores with them. The city has spent the last 30 years implementing redevelopment initiatives. In the past three decades, downtown has realized more than \$5 billion in private and public investment, created more than 50,000 jobs, 8,000 hotel rooms, 6 million ft. of commercial space, and more than 10,000 new homes.⁶² Horton Plaza, the Convention Center and PETCO park served as major catalysts. Another important resource is downtown's accessibility, due to an efficient and ambitious transportation system including trolleys, buses, and commuter

⁶² www.ccdc.com

trains. “The seduction of a balanced lifestyle not marred by long commutes or distant neighbors also helps improve employee retention and establish connected, distinctive neighborhoods.”⁶³

The most important lessons learned from San Diego are the importance of distinct neighborhoods, each with its own gathering center. This enables residents to feel a sense of connectedness and also helps the city promote living downtown. The affordable housing program, allowing an economically diverse population to live downtown, is commendable. The creation of the Centre City Development Corporation has unified San Diego’s downtown revitalization efforts. In addition, the business initiatives readily available are enticing. Denver could use a bit more identity, diversity, and a unified effort to make it happen.

⁶³ www.ccdc.ocm

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