## 2.3 Urban Design Element

*Goal:*

*Promote land uses, infrastructure, buildings and landscaping, both in the public and private realms, that create a distinct urban image and establish a unique sense of identity for East Otay Mesa.*

### 2.3.1 Introduction

*The intent of the Urban Design Element is to create an industrial and business district, with distinct Activity Nodes and well-designed infrastructure, buildings and landscaping. This section establishes urban design principles to guide the appearance and organization of buildings, infrastructure, site layouts, and landscaping.*

The intent of the Urban Design Element of the Specific Plan is to create an industrial and business district, consisting of a technology business park and mixed industrial community, with distinct Activity Nodes and well-designed infrastructure, buildings and landscaping. Features of the area-wide design concept include: the preservation of prominent natural features, site planning appropriate to the landforms and land uses, a functional circulation system with a unified public streetscape, and guidelines and standards for private sites, buildings, and landscape elements. These elements combine to create an area-wide image for East Otay Mesa that will help attract potential investment, tenants and employees to the area.

This section establishes urban design principles to guide the appearance and spatial organization of buildings, infrastructure, site layouts, and landscaping. These design principles are qualitative and intended to guide development, but not mandate style or specific design. Guidelines that will implement these principles through individual projects are contained in Section 3.2, Development Standards.

### 2.3.2 Development Areas and Activity Nodes

The main development portion of East Otay Mesa is planned to include distinct development areas defined by circulation element roads. Several of these areas are planned to encourage centralized mixed use Activity Nodes where pedestrian-oriented design is promoted and higher intensities are encouraged. The Activity Nodes are intended to:

- Create a "village center" and sense of place;
- Provide a unifying, central plaza open space;
- Create a sense of community in the work place environment;
- Provide for a pedestrian environment and encourage greater pedestrian activity;
- Provide a visual focus and consistent streetscape; and
- Intensify land uses to promote social interaction.

The placement of Activity Nodes shall be based on distances from major circulation roads and intersections, District Commercial within SubArea 2, on lines-of-sight and view corridors, and on creating walkable distances to and from transit stations and anticipated major employee areas. The following criteria are applicable to determining Activity Node locations:

- An Activity Node's core shall be centrally located;
- A Node's outer boundaries shall be a minimum 300 feet from a four-lane Major Road and a minimum 300 feet from a Prime Arterial Road;
- Activity Nodes shall be separated from each other and District Commercial by a minimum of 1,250 feet (measured from edge to edge), and
- The maximum acreage of an Activity Node shall be 10 acres unless a higher amount is approved per Section 3.3.2 of this plan.

*The purpose of Activity Nodes is to create a focus for surrounding office and industrial areas and to provide opportunities for employees to meet daily shopping, dining and office support needs.*

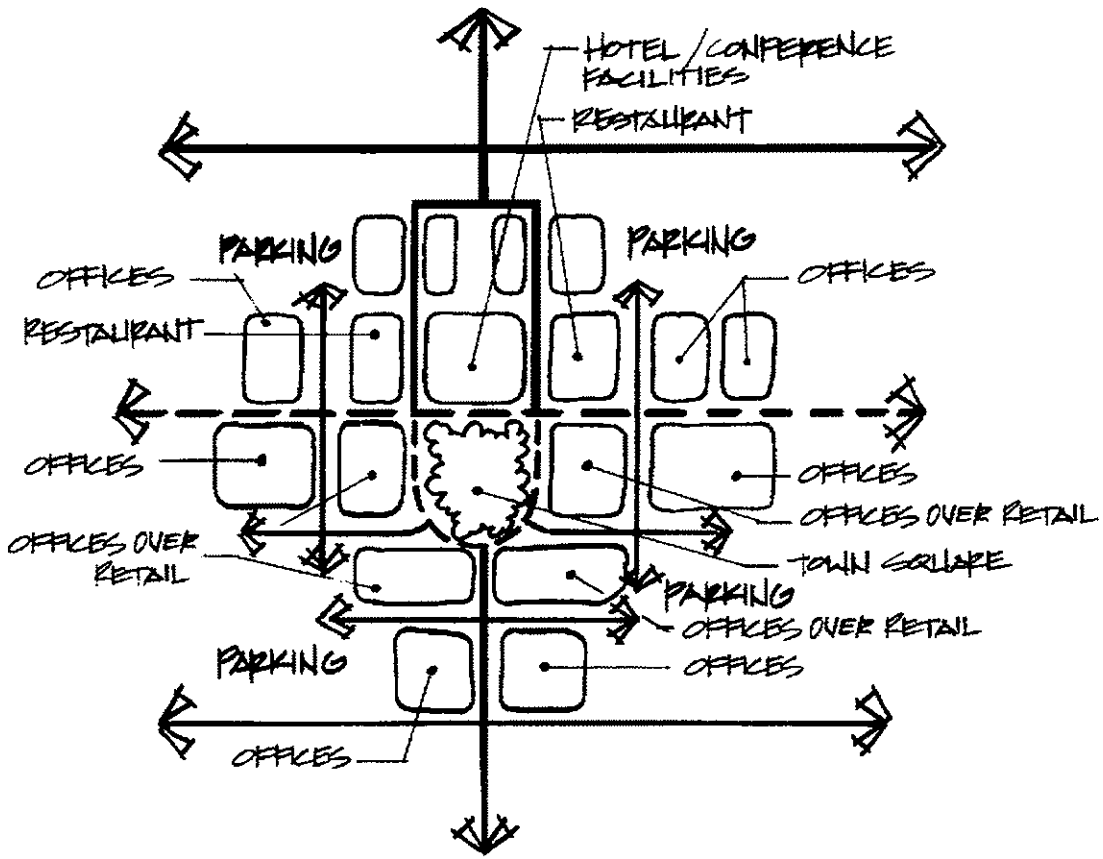
The following criteria are also applicable to Activity Node development and operation:

- An increased floor area ratio is permitted in the Activity Node core areas; and
- Through truck traffic is not permitted to traverse the Activity Node core areas.

As described in Section 2.1, Land Use Element, the purpose of Activity Nodes is to create a focus for surrounding office and industrial areas and to provide opportunities for employees to meet daily shopping, dining and office support needs. These commercial uses shall be clustered around a central core to avoid the creation of strip commercial style development. Site design shall allow for street-oriented parking in addition to side and rear parking. Pedestrian connections to adjacent industrial development are required. Extensive landscaping shall screen utilitarian areas, minimize expanses of parking areas, and integrate individual projects with the streetscape. The usable common open space area such as a park, plaza or public square in each Activity Node may also serve the dual purpose of a post construction

stormwater retention and pollution prevention area. In addition, a Collector Road shall connect Activity Nodes to each other, allowing pedestrian and standard occupancy vehicle access to cores without traveling on Prime Arterials or Major Roads. Figure 2.3-1 illustrates land use and site design concepts in a conceptual Activity Node diagram.

Figure 2.3-1 Activity Node Functional Diagram




EAST OTAY MESA

*ACTIVITY NODE FUNCTIONAL DIAGRAM - EXAMPLE*
*Figure 2.4-3*

### 2.3.3 Industrial Districts

East Otay Mesa is planned to provide distinct districts with complementary functions. As described in Section 2.1, Land Use Element, the Technology Business Park District will accommodate businesses that combine office, research and development, and manufacturing components in a campus setting, while the more utilitarian Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial Districts will accommodate manufacturing, industrial uses and warehouses in a traditional industrial park design. The character of each district is described below.

**Technology Business Park District**

*The Technology Business Park District identity will be achieved through campus-style site design; formal and informal open space, and architecture design.*

The Technology Business Park District identity will be achieved through campus-style site design, formal and informal open space, and architecture design (See Development Standards in Section 3.2). The multi-functional operations of businesses in this district provide an opportunity for distinct architectural styles with multiple components. Building exteriors shall be well articulated to promote corporate images.

A typical campus-style Site Plan provides open spaces between buildings and along roadways. Pedestrian facilities within the developments and linkages to Activity Nodes, planned light rail and bus transfer stations are particularly important. Pedestrian facilities shall incorporate landscaping, periodic shade and rest areas, and lighting. Parking lots shall be appropriately distributed within the development and visually minimized with landscaping, walls or berming.

**Light Industrial District**

*In contrast to the Technology Business Park District, development in the Light Industrial District will be more utilitarian.*

In contrast to the Technology Business Park District, development in the Light Industrial District will be more utilitarian. Land usage shall be optimized, with buildings located in proximity to one another and to the street. Site design shall provide for vehicle circulation and building access, screened storage, and similar functions of industrial and manufacturing operations. Industrial building architecture is typically low-maintenance with minimal windows and pedestrian entries.

The utilitarian aspects of this district require sensitive site planning and appropriate architectural and landscape enhancements to avoid creating a stark, negative image. Outdoor seating and lunch areas shall be provided in protected spaces in proximity to the buildings. Architectural enhancements shall be oriented towards public view areas and streets. Business signs shall be coordinated with the building architecture and be located to facilitate project identity. Extensive perimeter landscaping is required to provide screening of undesirable views from adjacent parcels and roadways and to soften the architecture of mostly blank lengthy walls associated with large industrial buildings and warehouses.

**Heavy Industrial**

The Heavy Industrial District will have the same feel as the Light Industrial District. Screening, architectural design and landscaping will play an important role in this district due to the potential heavy industries and the need for appropriate buffering.

## 2.3.4 Commercial Center

*Typical uses may include "big-box" retailers, office support services, gasoline service stations and associated commercial development.*

The Commercial Center overlay will allow for development of large-scale retail operations to serve the industrial and office land uses in the area as well as the possibility to serve regional shopping needs. Typical uses may include "big-box" retailers, office support services, gasoline service stations and associated commercial development. One location has been identified for the Commercial Center at the western side of the Specific Plan. Due to traffic circulation and road capacity issues, the center shall not exceed 40 acres.

## 2.3.5 Public Landscaping

**Streetscape Concept**

A unifying design feature of the East Otay Mesa Specific Plan is the Master Streetscape Plan. Figure 2.3-2 depicts the overall design theme for the public streetscape, which includes landscaping, medians, sidewalks/trails, and a street tree program for each of the roadway classifications.

*A unifying design feature of the East Otay Specific Plan is the Master Streetscape Plan.*

- *Gateway Roads (Prime Arterial):* Lone Star Road (Piper Ranch Road to Sunroad Boulevard) and Otay Mesa Road (Piper Ranch Road to Enrico Fermi Drive) are classified as the "Gateway". These roads shall have increased visibility and screening with a tree-lined median, a 10-foot wide landscaped parkway, and a 25-foot wide landscaped building setback. Within the 10-foot wide landscaped parkway a 3-foot wide planter shall separate the roadway from the 4-foot wide sidewalks with palm trees planted 7½ feet from the face of the curb at 25 feet on center with shrubs spaced every 3 feet. Spacing of trees shall be adjusted accordingly with intersections, utilities, and median layouts. Required landscaping in the building setbacks will supplement the parkway planting. Medium-sized evergreen trees spaced every 25 feet in the median will help separate traffic moving in opposite directions. The median shall be paved with Sandstone colored concrete and stamped with a Dry Creek Bed pattern. Five-foot x five-foot (5' x 5') tree grates shall be set flush with concrete (per San Diego Regional Standard Drawing L-4) around each tree located down the center of the median.

- *Gateway Roads (Major):* Lone Star Road (Sunroad Boulevard to Siempre Viva Road), Siempre Viva Road, and Otay Mesa Road east of Enrico Fermi Drive. These roads shall also have increased visibility and screening with a tree-lined median, a 10-foot wide landscaped parkway, and a 20-foot wide landscaped building setback. Within the 10-foot wide landscaped parkway, a 3-foot wide planter shall separate the roadway from the 4-foot wide sidewalks with palm trees planted 7½ feet from the face of the curb at 25 feet on center with shrubs spaced every 3 feet. Spacing of trees shall be adjusted accordingly with intersections, utilities, and median layout. Required landscaping in the building setbacks will supplement the parkway planting. Medium-sized evergreen trees spaced every 25 feet in the median will help separate traffic moving in opposite directions. The median shall be paved with Sandstone colored concrete and stamped with a Dry Creek Bed pattern. Five-foot by five-foot (5' x 5') tree grates shall be set flush with concrete (per San Diego Regional Standard Drawing L-4) around each tree located down the center of the median.

- *Major Roads (non-Gateway)* shall be planted with large-sized evergreen/or deciduous trees spaced every 30 feet and located 7½ feet from the face of the curb. A 3-foot wide planter shall separate the roadway from the 4-foot wide sidewalks with shrubs spaced every 3 feet on center and maintained at a height

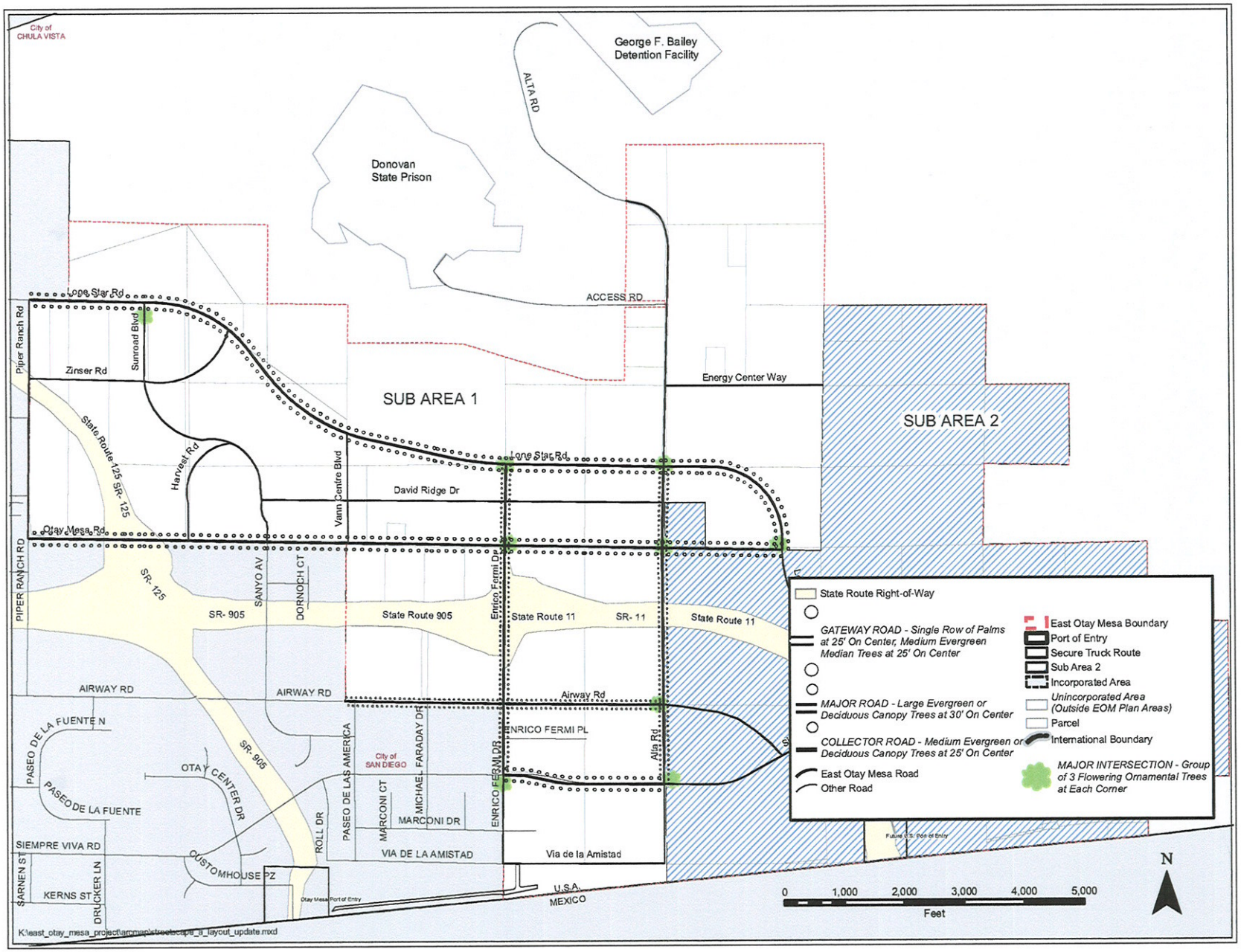
of 36 inches maximum (Appendix 3, Streetscape Plant List). A 20-foot landscaped building setback will help add depth to the streetscape along these roads.

- *Industrial/Commercial Collector Roads* shall be planted with medium-sized evergreen or deciduous canopy trees spaced every 25 feet and located 7½ feet from the face of the curb. A 3-foot wide planter shall separate the roadway from the 4-foot wide sidewalks with shrubs spaced every 3 feet on center and maintained at a height of 36 inches maximum (Appendix 3, Streetscape Plant List). A 10-foot landscaped setback for two-lane Collectors and a 20-foot landscaped setback for four-lane Collectors shall supplement the 10-foot parkway planting.

- *Activity Node Streets* shall be planted with flowering canopy trees spaced every 25 feet in sidewalk cutout areas. The trees shall be located 7½ feet from the curb and shall utilize a root barrier system. Cutout areas shall be covered with tree grates. The 4' x 4' tree grates shall set flush with the concrete cutout areas.

- *Major Intersections* shall be planted with three flowering trees at each street corner. Additional landscaping such as shrubs and groundcover shall be required and sight lines will be preserved for vehicular safety (see County Road Standards for Corner Sight Distance at Intersections). Flowering groundcovers and shrubs shall supplement the trees. No turf is allowed with the intersection plantings. Shrubs shall not exceed 30 inches in height within this area.

Figure 2.3-2 Master Streetscape Plan



**Plant Materials**

To minimize maintenance and irrigation costs as well as create a "signature" landscape for the East Otay Mesa Specific Plan SubArea 1, self-sustaining plant material is required on all roads. The Streetscape Plant List is located in Appendix 3. Self-sustaining plant material shall meet two requirements:

- It shall be drought tolerant; and
- It shall require little or no maintenance.

Mowed turf shall be allowed only within the Activity Nodes and strongly recommended only for active and passive public use areas. Consistent with County requirements for other areas, mowed turf shall be restricted to 15 percent of the landscaped area unless it is being designed for active public use.

## 2.3.6 Usable Open Space

All plans shall designate a location(s) on-site for employee passive or recreational activity. This area shall be screened from parking and traffic and shall be improved with benches and shade structures. For purposes of satisfying this requirement, outdoor passive or recreational areas of not less than 2,000 square feet in area shall be provided for each 10 acres of development area. The outdoor areas may occur as one large area serving lots as identified on the Site Plan or subdivision map. Within an Activity Node, a plaza may satisfy this requirement.

Where more than one building is located on a site, buildings shall be organized around or designed to create courtyards or outdoor spaces, unless this is precluded by the primary use of the facility, such as truck loading docks.

Spaces between buildings shall include entry courts, defined plazas, lunchtime retreats, or formal and informal gardens, unless this is precluded by the primary use facility, such as truck loading docks.

Plantings, low walls and fences shall enclose one or more sides of an outdoor space. Off-street parking and loading areas, driveways, and service areas shall not be counted as usable open space.

### 2.3.7 Clearance Zones

Trees and shrubs shall be located and maintained to preserve a clear zone of at least ten feet from fire hydrants, utility poles, overhead utility wires, streetlight luminaries, and above ground utility structures such as transformer enclosures.

### 2.3.8 Root Barriers

All trees planted five feet or closer to hardscape shall be accompanied by a root barrier installed parallel and adjacent to the pavement centered at tree (not wrapped around the rootball). Root barriers shall be two feet deep and 10 feet long.

### 2.3.9 Edge Conditions

At the time of Site Plan review, special attention shall be given to areas of the Specific Plan where land uses abut open space, differing land uses, SR-11, SR-125, or other circulation element roads.