



**GOAL
LU-8** **Ensure excellence in all development design.**

POLICIES

POLICY LU-8.1 Require all development to feature high quality design that enhances the visual character of San Carlos.

POLICY LU-8.2 Ensure that new development is sensitive to the character of adjacent structures and the immediate neighborhood.

POLICY LU-8.3 Encourage design features and amenities in new development and redevelopment, including, but not limited to:





- a. Interconnected street layout.
- b. Clustering of buildings.


- c. Landscaping on each lot.
- d. Visual buffers.
- e. Facilitation of pedestrian activity.
- f. Distinctiveness and variety in architectural design.

POLICY LU-8.4 Promote pedestrian-scaled design through site planning, building design, finish details and landscaping for all types of development by requiring height and locational transitions between buildings of varied levels that are sensitive to the interrelationships of surrounding uses and structures, especially residential.

POLICY LU-8.5 Optimize architectural quality by encouraging the use of quality materials, particularly as accents and authentic detailing, such as balconies and window trims.

POLICY LU-8.6  Encourage new commercial development to provide outdoor areas and landscaping and tree canopy to enhance the surroundings.

POLICY LU-8.7  Require new residential development to provide outdoor areas and landscaping or native vegetation, or tree canopy to enhance the surroundings.

POLICY LU-8.8  Encourage design of convenient pedestrian walkways with shade and minimal tripping hazards, preferably with landscape buffers between roadways and walkways.


POLICY LU-8.9 Encourage the design of attractive outdoor pedestrian spaces that encourage impromptu public gathering places with features such as plazas, interior walkways and paseos, ornamental gates, trellises, lighting, trees, and landscaping, seating, and fountains.

POLICY LU-8.10 On all sides of buildings, require the incorporation of quality architectural design elements for all building façades and stepping back upper floors in order to reduce bulk and mass and to break up monotonous wall lines.

POLICY LU-8.11 Discourage abrupt changes in building scale. A gradual transition between low-rise to mid-rise buildings should be achieved by using the low-rise buildings at the edge of the project site. Consider the relationship of buildings to the street, to one another and to adjacent structures and land uses, especially single-family residential.

POLICY LU-8.12 Require residential building entrances to be related to the street.


POLICY LU-8.13 Require parking areas associated with development to be located and designed to minimize visual impact to the greatest extent feasible. This may include locating parking behind buildings street frontage, below grade, or screening through the use of natural landscaping.

POLICY LU-8.14  Encourage construction of parking areas with permeable materials where appropriate.

POLICY LU-8.15 Require the undergrounding of all utilities, or a deferred improvement agreement, in conjunction with new construction and encourage the undergrounding of existing utilities where feasible.

POLICY LU-8.16 Require high quality signage through design, use of materials and colors compatible with and complementary to the architectural character of the building(s) and surrounding.

POLICY LU-8.17 Require telecommunications and utility facilities to be sensitively placed, shielded, screened or lessened from view to the greatest extent possible through design review.

POLICY LU-8.18  Encourage “green building” practices in new development and redevelopment, such as those that make a building more energy efficient and reduces its effect on human health and the environment through better siting, design, construction, maintenance, and operation.

POLICY LU-8.19 Residential structures shall be designed to be compatible with existing structures in the vicinity, avoid obstructing views from adjacent structures or views of community importance, avoid interference with the right or ability to use solar energy and be consistent with the community design principles.

POLICY LU-8.20 Require all new residential multi-family residential, commercial, and industrial projects subject to design review by the appropriate decision-making body for compliance with site planning, architecture, signing, and landscaping criteria prior to approval.

POLICY LU-8.21 Maintain railroad corridor development and design guidelines¹ unless an action conflicts with other parts of the General Plan.

ACTIONS

ACTION LU-8.1 Adopt a form-based zoning code to emphasize building placement, the framing of public space and promoting a pedestrian-oriented environment.

ACTION LU-8.2 Review and amend existing residential design guidelines and create commercial design guidelines as needed.

ACTION LU-8.3 Amend the Zoning Ordinance to limit the height of building walls at the street-facing property line to two stories on the 600, 700, and 800 blocks of Laurel Street. Additional stories may be permitted if they are stepped back a minimum distance from the ground-level building wall.

ACTION LU-8.4 Review and amend the Sign Ordinance as needed.

ACTION LU-8.5 Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Planning Department application submittal checklist to require information and materials that accurately and sufficiently demonstrate a project's compliance with architectural facade and design policies.

¹ In accordance with Sections 4.800-4,933 of Resolution Number 2003-79.



**GOAL
LU-9** **Protect and enhance all residential neighborhoods.**

POLICIES

- POLICY LU-9.1** Maintain and enhance neighborhoods to be safe and attractive.
- POLICY LU-9.2** Support resident-driven neighborhood efforts that strengthen identity and protect and/or enhance neighborhood character and complement the principles, goals, policies, and actions of the General Plan.
- POLICY LU-9.3** Assure that redevelopment, public or private, mitigates any negative traffic and parking impacts on or adjacent to residential neighborhoods.

- POLICY LU-9.4** Mitigation measures shall be utilized to the greatest extent feasible for neighborhoods surrounding new proposed development.
- POLICY LU-9.5** Require buffering, screening, setbacks, or other measures for new and expanded multi-family residential and/or commercial/industrial developments adjacent to single-family residential neighborhoods to minimize impacts and compatibility conflicts.
- POLICY LU-9.6** Encourage the location of support facilities such as schools, parks, and churches within or near residential neighborhoods.
- POLICY LU-9.7** Encourage the development of community gardens to provide opportunity for interactions and increase residents' access to healthy foods.
- POLICY LU-9.8** Encourage developers of new or expanded multi-family residential projects to include gardening spaces for

residents of the development as part of the landscaping requirement.

POLICY LU-9.9 Encourage the design of development to minimize the obstruction of significant views of the San Francisco Bay, the western hills, or other significant natural vistas to the greatest extent possible.

POLICY LU-9.10 In the event of closure of a school, the primary planned use of these sites remains for school and associated recreation purposes. The school site should be considered for acquisition by the City.

POLICY LU-9.11 Require and monitor adequate parking and/or parking alternatives for new schools, parks, and other public uses within residential neighborhoods.

POLICY LU-9.12 Ensure that development in residential areas is compatible with neighborhood character.

POLICY LU-9.13 Require appropriate transitions of building scale, massing, and height to adjacent single-family homes.


POLICY LU-9.14 Legally nonconforming multi-family residential structures located within multi-family residential zoning districts may be replaced, restored, rebuilt, or repaired and used consistent with the Zoning Ordinance in effect at the time the structure was originally constructed only upon issuance of a conditional use permit approved by the Planning Commission.

POLICY LU-9.15 In prioritizing uses for in-kind benefits or bonuses offered by a project developer, uses benefiting the neighborhood in which the development is occurring shall be considered.

POLICY LU-9.16 Require a contribution of parkland and/or fees in-lieu of land dedication as a condition of approval of all new residential subdivisions.

POLICY LU-9.17 Require exterior building materials to be non-combustible in areas of potential high fire hazard.

POLICY LU-9.18 Continue the City's program of joint use of school recreation facilities as a means of providing adequate recreation space for San Carlos citizens.

POLICY LU-9.19  As lands are subdivided, encourage dedication of trail and path easements where appropriate to expand the City and County's trail and path system.

POLICY LU-9.20 **Conversion of existing rental housing stock to condominiums shall be permitted only when it can be shown that:**

- **The vacancy rate in rental units in the City is in excess of 5 percent.**
- **Adequate provisions are made for the protection of tenants including relocation assistance.**

Bold denotes new policies.

ACTIONS

ACTION LU-9.1 Update development standards and use regulations in the Zoning Ordinance for consistency with the General Plan.

ACTION LU-9.2 Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include transition design standards for multi-family residential buildings and commercial uses adjacent to single-family homes. Standards may include height limitations, increased setbacks, landscaping requirements, and density limitations.

ACTION LU-9.3 Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to require courtesy notification of nearby residents for any multi-family residential use or commercial use proposed in immediate proximity to a single-family residential neighborhood.



POLICIES

- POLICY LU-10.1** Require minimum lot size in hillside areas considered for subdivision or annexation to be larger than lots on flat areas to minimize slope instability, erosion and drainage impacts.
- POLICY LU-10.2** Require development in hillside areas to be designed into the natural features of the hillside including topography, trees, vegetation, landforms, and drainage channels.
- POLICY LU-10.3** In hillside areas, encourage houses be oriented to the natural topography of the site.

POLICY LU-10.4 Design and locate roads, utilities, and other infrastructure to reasonably minimize impacts on the hillside environment. Design should respect the natural topography, produce the least visual impact and require the least grading while remaining consistent with public health and safety standards.

POLICY LU-10.5 Minimize grading and removal of earth material in hillside areas to the greatest extent possible.

ACTIONS


ACTION LU-10.1 Consider the development of Hillside Development Guidelines, including the development of lot size and cross slope standards.



**GOAL
LU-11** Provide for attractive and functional gateways.

POLICIES

- POLICY LU-11.1** Require high quality design for buildings at visually significant locations in gateway areas.
- POLICY LU-11.2** Encourage design features, such as landscaping, art, and displays in gateway areas that are welcoming, attractive, and contribute to a unique sense of place.
- POLICY LU-11.3** Encourage distinctive architectural features, such as tower elements or a plaza at building entry, for buildings located at visually significant locations within gateway areas.

- POLICY LU-11.4**  Ensure that building placement, frontage treatments, and landscaping enhance the pedestrian experience and increase accessibility within gateway areas.
- POLICY LU-11.5** Limit the visibility of surface parking within gateway areas through landscaping and architectural treatments such as low decorative walls or trellises.
- POLICY LU-11.6** Discourage the use of sound walls within gateway areas. If sound walls cannot be avoided, ensure that soundwalls are designed to be attractive and well landscaped.
- POLICY LU-11.7** Require roadway improvements in gateway areas that enhance automotive, bicycle and pedestrian circulation.
- POLICY LU-11.8** Place a special emphasis on the preservation of architecturally significant buildings within gateway areas.

POLICY LU-11.9 Ensure that new development on the landmark sites at the northeast and southeast corners of Holly Street and Industrial Road function as the primary gateway features for the Holly Street Gateway area. Site planning, building treatments, pedestrian improvements, and landscape features shall exhibit exceptional design and respect integrity of adjacent uses including nearby residential properties.

POLICY LU-11.10 Consider placing street enhancements, such as welcome signage, at major entrances to the city and residential areas as shown on the Gateway Map in Figure 3-5.

POLICY LU-11.11 Ensure that new development or redevelopment on the northwest and southwest corners of Holly Street and Industrial Road complies with the policies set forth in Land Use Goal 5.

POLICY LU-11.12 Develop welcoming gateway areas that emphasize the unique qualities of San Carlos.

POLICY LU-11.13 Study and evaluate options for improving circulation on Holly Street between Industrial Road and El Camino Real, working with the public, in particular the residents of Holly Street.

ACTIONS

ACTION LU-11.1 Develop design guidelines for development and improvements within gateway areas to enhance community character. These guidelines should promote architectural styles, landscape, street furniture, public art, and signage that are in keeping with the aesthetic values of San Carlos.

Cultural and Historical Resources Existing Conditions

The City of San Carlos has a rich historical legacy dating back to prehistoric times. Remnants of the early inhabitants are limited as there are only a few known archaeological sites in the city located primarily near the banks of Cordilleras and Pulgas Creeks. San Carlos' existing historic character is defined by its more recent cultural resources. The city has many fine examples of early 20th century architecture. These buildings, the majority of which are single-family homes, are documented in the city's 1991 Historic Resources Inventory. Two of the City's historic resources are listed in the National Register of Historic Places as noted below.

Archaeological Resources

Archaeological data for San Carlos and San Mateo County is largely missing due to urbanization. There are documented prehistoric archaeological deposits near the banks of Cordilleras and Pulgas Creeks where such items as burned mammal bone and chert flakes were found. There is more information known about the Ohlone Indians who inhabited the area beginning

around 500 AD. Their territory extended from Monterey Bay to San Francisco Bay. However, due to Spanish settlement in the 18th century, much of the information known about the various Ohlone tribes is from a European perspective. There is little physical evidence of their settlement in San Carlos.

Historically Noteworthy Properties

San Carlos has two listings in the National Register of Historic Places, the nation's cultural resource inventory. The Southern Pacific Depot at 559 El Camino Real is one listing on the National Register. Leland Stanford assisted with construction of the train depot by providing materials, Italian stonemasons and members from his architectural staff to design and build the structure. Built in the unique Richardson Romanesque style, the depot is one of San Carlos' most prominent architectural landmarks. The other listing, located at 125 Dale Avenue, was built by Nathaniel Brittan, son of John Brittan, in 1872. Nathaniel was a member of the San Francisco Bohemian Club and often hosted club members at this three story octagonal "folly" Victorian home.

Museum of San Carlos History and the San Carlos Villagers

The Museum of San Carlos History, located at 533 Laurel Street, has a collection of artifacts, photographs, and documents relating to the history of the City. The collection includes Native American artifacts such as a grinding stone, photos of early San Carlos life, information on the city and memorabilia from San Carlos High School and past Chickens' Ball events. The Museum also serves as a source of information for research on local families and historic properties in the city.

The San Carlos Villagers serve as Museum docents and handle the day-to-day affairs of the Museum. The San Carlos Villagers were formed in April 1949 to preserve the history of San Carlos and were appointed as Museum docents by the City Council in 1981. Villagers collect documents, photos and memorabilia that reflected San Carlos' rich background and safeguard it for future generations. The Villagers are composed of volunteers from the community, and any resident of San Carlos is invited to become a Villager.

Existing Preservation Plans and Policies

In 1990, a group of volunteers identified and researched the historic resources in San Carlos. The volunteers' efforts led to the creation of the 1991 Historic Resources Inventory. The inventory contains 52 listings which include residential and commercial structures and one public park. For descriptive purposes, the inventory also identifies two Historic districts - the Hacienda Gardens Apartments at 1315 San Carlos Avenue and the 1000 Block of Elm Street between Morse Boulevard and Brittan Avenue. Hacienda Gardens, constructed in 1931, was the first apartment complex in the city. Built in the Spanish Eclectic style, the apartments were well suited for the suburban commuter and are an indicator of development trends during the Great Depression. The 1000 block of Elm Street, which consists of structures mainly built between 1926 and 1929, represents a mixture of architectural styles including Spanish Eclectic and Tudor Revival. A noteworthy characteristic of the houses on the street is the general intactness. It is also a symbol of a major period of development in the city.


3 LAND USE ELEMENT

Although these resources are highly valued by the City, San Carlos has no historic preservation ordinance, nor formal designation. Protection of historic resources is provided through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which requires that any potential impacts to historical properties be sufficiently evaluated, but does not necessarily prohibit demolition of or damage to a potentially historically significant property.



Residential street in Laureola Neighborhood

Goals, Policies and Actions



GOAL LU-12 Protect San Carlos' historic and cultural resources to maintain and enhance a unique sense of place.

POLICIES

- POLICY LU-12.1** Evaluate historical and cultural resources early in the development review process through consultation with interested parties.
- POLICY LU-12.2** Foster the preservation, restoration, and compatible reuse of architecturally and/or historically significant structures and sites.

POLICY LU-12.3 Ensure that modifications to identified historic resources are consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

POLICY LU-12.4 Encourage continued use and adaptive reuse of designated historic resources through application of the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for rehabilitation, reconstruction and restoration.

POLICY LU-12.5 Treat with respect and dignity any human remains discovered during implementation of public and private projects within the city and fully comply with the California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and other appropriate laws.

POLICY LU-12.6 Promote the maintenance, restoration and rehabilitation of historical resources through but not limited to the use of Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits, State incentives including the Mills

Act and the California Cultural and Historical Endowment and the California State Historical Building Code.

POLICY LU-12.7 Use public art to enliven and beautify the public realm at appropriate locations.

POLICY LU-12.8 Retain the exterior architectural character and setting of the Historical San Carlos Depot and San Carlos Museum (former San Carlos Fire House).

ACTIONS

ACTION LU-12.1 Ensure thorough compliance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) relating to potential impacts to cultural and historical resources.

ACTION LU-12.2 Apply for Certified Local Government status to become eligible for participation in federal and State historic preservation programs.

3 LAND USE ELEMENT

- ACTION LU-12.3** Update the city's inventory and map of historic and architecturally significant properties and landmarks every five years.
- ACTION LU-12.4** Develop a cultural landmarks and historic preservation plan and supporting ordinances.
- ACTION LU-12.5** Develop and implement a Public Arts Action Plan.



El Camino Real and San Carlos Avenue