

CHAPTER  
**7**

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND COMMUNITY DESIGN

## A. OVERVIEW

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

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

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

## B. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

### Historic and Archaeological Resources

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

There are also few remaining traces of the first 100 years of European settlement in San Leandro. A variety of Early California architectural styles existed in the town during the 1850s and 1860s, but virtually all of these structures were lost as a result of

*Little Brown Church, rear of 384 Estudillo, 1880*

earthquakes, fires, or demolition. The only structure still standing in San Leandro confirmed to pre-date the City's 1872 incorporation is the Alta Mira Club, constructed in 1860 and located at 561 Lafayette Avenue. That building, originally the home of Ignacio Peralta, has been a designated California Historical Landmark since 1937 and has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978.

There are several dozen structures in the City built between 1870 and 1900 that are still standing. Most are residential buildings built in the vernacular or Victorian styles that were popular at the time. The Daniel Best Home, an Italianate Victorian built in the late 1870s at Clarke and Estudillo, is probably the best example. Elsewhere in the City, there are a few examples of Queen Anne, Second Empire, and Italianate homes, generally scattered to the southeast of Downtown. Another concentration of turn-of-the-century vernacular homes can be found along Orchard Avenue between Davis and Williams Street. These homes are notable for the community of Portuguese settlers that once resided there.

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

The City has several hundred structures dating from the early 20th century, but only a few have been officially recognized as historically significant. The best known—the Casa Peralta at 384 West Estudillo Avenue—was built in 1901 by one of Ignacio Peralta’s daughters. The Casa was originally built as a Victorian residence but was remodeled as a Moorish villa in 1926. The building was donated to the City in 1971 and has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1982.

There are also a number of distinctive commercial structures from the early 1900s, including the neo-classical Daniel Best Building (1909) at East 14th and Estudillo. Its distinctive white terra cotta façade and prominent clock make this building the symbolic “heart” of San Leandro. Unfortunately, many of the nearby buildings of this era were lost during the last half of the 20th century to make way for parking or more modern structures.

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

Structures built between 1940 and 1960 represent about half of San Leandro’s housing stock and much of its non-residential building stock. Some of these structures are approaching the point where they too may be recognized for their historic value. This is particularly true for large commercial structures such as the Bal Theater and the Pelton Center, both built in the late 1940s and both good examples of the architectural conventions that were in vogue at that time. Some of the signage from this era also contributes to architectural character and provides a nostalgic connection to the City’s past.

Many of the historic resources in the City are less obvious than the structures described above. For instance, the City contains several heritage trees that have been recognized as significant. There are also important resources just outside the City limits, such as the San Lorenzo and Cavalry Cemeteries, old San Lorenzo Village, and the Lake Chabot Dam.

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

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

### **Developing a More Effective Preservation Program**

San Leandro has yet to attain the full range of benefits that are possible with an effective historic

preservation program. Some of the City's most important resources remain at risk and are vulnerable to unsympathetic additions, alterations, and even demolition. The policies and actions in this General Plan ensure that future development decisions are more sensitive to historic resources. The intent is to create a preservation strategy that conserves neighborhoods and revitalizes shopping districts while maintaining flexibility for property owners.

As the Mission Statement on page 291 suggests, a more systematic and comprehensive approach to preservation is needed. An essential first step is to undertake a comprehensive inventory of local historic resources. Such an inventory has not been conducted in San Leandro since 1974, when a local registry of two dozen historic buildings and four heritage trees was created (see Table 7-1 and Figure 7-1). Structures built after 1910 were largely excluded from the registry, as they were still considered too recent at the time. Today, a much larger portion of the City's building stock could be called historic and/or worthy of preservation. In

fact, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) stipulates that all properties 50 years or older should be evaluated for their historic value when projects affecting their character are proposed.

Part of this initial step is to develop clear, consistent criteria for identifying historic buildings. The National Register and the Secretary of the Interior Standards provide a good starting point. Compliance with these standards also assures the legal adequacy of the City's program and can improve the City's eligibility for grants.



**LEGEND**

 Structures recognized on Local Register

- |                                |                              |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Alta Mira Clubhouse         | 12. 857 Estudillo            |
| 2. Casa Peralta                | 13. 678 Juana                |
| 3. Daniel Best House           | 14. 397 Maud                 |
| 4. Little Brown Church         | 15. 310-12 Warren            |
| 5. Manuel Garcia Home          | 16. 291 Joaquin              |
| 6. Southern Pacific Depot      | 17. 659 Estudillo            |
| 7. Little Shul                 | 18. Orchard St. Neighborhood |
| 8. Holy Ghost Chapel/IDES Hall | 19. 28 Dabner                |
| 9. Best Building               | 20. 444 Harlan               |
| 10. 308 W. Joaquin             | 21. 383 Preda                |
| 11. 1363 Hays                  |                              |

 Sites (no building) recognized as California Points of Historical Interest

- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. Rancho San Antonio Marker   | G. Methodist Church              |
| B. Jose Joaquin Estudillo Home | H. Best Tractor                  |
| C. San Leandro Town Hall       | I. Alameda County Gazette        |
| D. Alameda County Courthouse   | J. Thrasher Park                 |
| E. San Leandro Ball Park       | K. Portugese Union of California |
| F. San Leandro Plaza           |                                  |

 Historic Trees

\* Additional historic sites exist outside the Central area. See Table 7-1.

**HISTORIC RESOURCES**

FIGURE 7-1



The City's preservation program should identify the following types of local historic resources:

- **Historic Sites and Structures.** This would include individual buildings or sites determined to have special historic, cultural, educational, archaeological, or aesthetic value. The City's existing registry—containing 22 buildings and three trees—should be expanded to include important structures such as City Hall and the Veterans Memorial Building. A comprehensive survey would identify additional structures to be considered for listing.
- **Historic Districts.** Historic districts are geographic areas with large concentrations of historic structures. The General Plan proposes an "Old San Leandro" Historic District in the vicinity of the Casa Peralta and Daniel Best House. A second district could be considered in the "Kanaka Row" area along Orchard Avenue. The City already has provisions in its zoning code to accommodate such districts ("L-Landmark Overlay" zone). The "L" zone could be mapped in appropriate areas to protect historically significant structures and ensure that infill development is compatible with the area's historic character.

- **Neighborhood Conservation Districts (or Heritage Neighborhoods).** These are areas characterized by older (pre-1940) housing stock, along with historic street furniture, signs, and landscape design elements. Although the individual structures in such areas may not be historically significant, collectively they are an important reminder of the City's architectural heritage. Design guidelines and zoning standards in such areas should ensure that future changes respect the character of the neighborhood.

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

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

## Historic Preservation Mission Statement

The GPAC's Historic Preservation and Community Design Subcommittee believed an overarching mission statement was an important first step to an effective preservation program for the City. Accordingly, the following statement has been developed:

"The mission of San Leandro's Historic Preservation program is:

- To preserve and maintain sites and structures that serve as significant, visible reminders of San Leandro's social and architectural history.

- To integrate historic preservation more fully into San Leandro's comprehensive planning process.
- To increase public awareness of local history.
- To contribute to the economic development and vitality of the City.
- To preserve the character and livability of San Leandro's neighborhoods and strengthen civic pride through neighborhood conservation."

**Table 7-1 Documented Historic Structures in San Leandro, 2001<sup>1</sup>**

| Name   | Listings          | Year Built    | Status   |
|--|-------------------|---------------|--|
| <b>HISTORIC BUILDINGS</b>                            |                   |               |  |
| Alta Mira Clubhouse                                  | NR, LR, CHL, CPHI | 1860          | Community Facility   |
| Casa Peralta   | NR, LR, CPHI      | 1901          | Community Facility   |
| Daniel Best House                                    | LR, CPHI          | 1870s         | Group home   |
| Little Brown Church                                  | LR, CPHI          | 1880          | Relocated to rear of Casa Peralta                                  |
| Manuel Garcia Home                                   | LR, CPHI          | 1875          | Private residence  |
| Captain Roberts Home                                 | LR, CPHI          | 1878          | Private residence  |
| Southern Pacific RR Depot                            | LR, CPHI          | 1898          | Relocated to Thrasher Park   |
| Little Shul  | LR, CPHI          | 1889          | Relocated, in use as Synagogue annex                               |
| Holy Ghost Chapel/IDES Hall                          | LR, CPHI          | 1889          | Community Facility   |
| Best Building  | LR                | 1911          | Office building and bank   |
| 308 W. Joaquin                                       | LR                | 1896          | Private residence  |
| 1363 Hays (blacksmith shop)                          | LR                | Est 1900      | Garage (for 308 W. Joaquin)  |
| 857 Estudillo  | LR                | Est 1890      | Private residence  |
| 678 Juana  | LR                | 1890          | Private residence  |
| 397 Maud   | LR                | 1880s         | Private residence  |
| 310-312 Warren                                       | LR                | Est 1900      | Private residence  |
| 291 Joaquin  | LR                | 1885          | Private residence  |
| 659 Estudillo  | LR                | 1900-1910     | Private residence  |
| Orchard Avenue Neighborhood<br>(Kanaka Lane)         | LR                | Est 1880-1900 | Approximately 20 private residences                                |
| 28 Dabner  | LR, CPHI          | 1872          | Private residence  |
| 444 Harlan   | LR                | Unk.          | Water tank house   |
| 383 Preda  | LR                | Unk.          | Water tank house   |
| <b>HISTORIC SITES (building no longer present)</b>   |                   |               |  |
| DeAnza Expedition Site/<br>Rancho San Antonio marker | CHL               | Est. 1775     | Plaque at Hays/E. 14th (Root Park)                                 |
| Jose Joaquin Estudillo Home                          | CHL               | 1850          | Plaque only; site now St. Leanders Rectory                         |
| Roberts Landing                                      | CPHI              | Est. 1850     | Plaque along shoreline trail; no structure                         |
| San Leandro Town Hall site                           | CPHI              | 1876          | Site at 250 Davis; no plaque observed                              |
| Alameda County Courthouse                            | CPHI              | 1857          | Plaque at Davis at Clarke, site now St. Leanders Elementary School |

*(table continued on next page)*

<sup>1</sup> Two structures which are on the City's local register and which are noted in the 1989 General Plan appear to have been demolished. These are the residence at 525 Estudillo and the water tank house at 254 Callan.



**Table 7-1 Documented Historic Structures in San Leandro, 2001<sup>1</sup>**

| Name  | Listings | Year Built | Status  |
|---|----------|------------|---|
| <b>HISTORIC SITES (building no longer present), continued</b> |          |            |   |
| San Leandro Ball Park   | CPHI     | NA         | San Leandro Blvd at Parrott, site now BART Parking. No plaque.                                      |
| San Leandro Plaza   | CPHI     | 1872       | Plaque at East 14th and Washington  |
| Methodist Church  | CPHI     | 1856       | Was at 1349 Hays Street, site now Odd Fellows Building  |
| Best Tractor  | CPHI     | 1886       | Was at 800 Davis Street, site now apartment complex. Plaque and remnant doorway arch at 1000 Davis. |
| Alameda County Gazette  | CPHI     | 1856       | Was at NE Corner Davis at Clarke, site now office building  |
| San Leandro Reporter  | CPHI     | 1878       | Was near Davis and Clarke Street  |
| Mulford Clubhouse   | CPHI     | Unk.       | Located at 13075 Aurora Drive   |
| Thrasher Park   | CPHI     | 1917       | Davis at Orchard  |
| Portuguese Union of California                                | CPHI     | 1889/1909  | Was at 1120 East 14th Street, site now Long's Drug Store  |
| <b>HISTORIC LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS</b>                            |          |            |   |
| Oyster Beds   | CHL      | Est. 1890  | Plaque at San Leandro Marina  |
| Lake Chabot   | CPHI     | 1909       | Plaque at Upper Lake Chabot Rd  |
| Cavalry Cemetery  | CPHI     | 1874       | Hills SE of Bay-O-Vista (outside City)  |
| Tree at Juana and Bancroft                                    | LR       | NA         | NA  |
| Redwood Trees at 647 Juana                                    | LR       | NA         | NA  |
| Redwood Trees at 651 Juana                                    | LR       | NA         | NA  |

**KEY**

*NR = National Register of Historic Places*

*CHL = California Historical Landmark*

*CPHI = California Place of Historical Interest*

*LR = Local Register (Protected by Ordinance 74-12)*

*Sources: Library-Historical Commission, 1986. State Office of Historic Preservation, 2000. City of San Leandro and Barry J Miller, 2000.*

## Defining the City's Role

Once the City has inventoried its resources, the task remains to establish a more proactive local preservation program. San Leandro has yet to be designated as a "Certified Local Government" (CLG), a federal program which enables cities to apply for state and federal grants, receive technical training and assistance, and implement key preservation initiatives. Preparation of a Historic Preservation Action Plan is recommended as a follow-up to the General Plan to obtain CLG status and establish a more detailed strategy for implementation.

Presently, the major implementing tool for preservation in San Leandro is the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance. The Ordinance requires that permits for demolition, removal, or substantial alterations to documented historic structures or trees

be referred to the City's Library-Historical Commission for a recommendation. It provides for demolition delay in the event that buildings of potential historic importance are threatened. The Ordinance applies only to the structures and trees listed on the City's historic registry. An update of the Ordinance, now more than 25 years old, is recommended so that it reflects current practices in the preservation field.

The General Plan also proposes an expanded role for the San Leandro Library-Historical Commission. The Commission will take responsibility for implementing many of the program recommendations related to historic preservation. It will also work in partnership with local preservation groups to advocate for new preservation programs, grants, and projects. Other activities planned to strengthen the City's commitment to preservation include better record keeping and data base management, staff training in preservation standards and procedures, and the commitment of staffing to implement preservation programs.

The City can also improve preservation efforts by acting as liaison between the many groups in San Leandro that undertake preservation activities. There are several organizations in the City that promote preservation directly and others that play a secondary role by supporting the appreciation of local heritage and culture. By coordinating the work of these organizations, the City can contribute to more widespread appreciation of San Leandro's cultural and historic resources.

## Public Awareness of Local History

The loss of many local historic buildings during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s has resulted in a diminished awareness of San Leandro history among many residents. In fact, surveys conducted over the course of the General Plan found that one in five residents perceived that the City had no historic buildings at all.<sup>2</sup>

This General Plan proposes a multi-faceted strategy to raise awareness of San Leandro's history and historic resources. Such awareness can build broader community support for preservation, while increasing civic pride and a sense of community. Policies and actions under Goal 40 propose the use of books, videos, brochures, and other media to inform the public about San Leandro's history and the significance of various places and buildings in

*Lamplighter's Home, 28 Dabner Street, 1872*

the City. Continuation of existing programs, including walking tours, awards programs, plaques and markers, cultural fairs, and school curricula on San Leandro history, also is recommended.

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

<sup>2</sup> Poll conducted in January 2001. Of 758 responses to the question, "What historic building in the City is most important to you, 87 responded "don't know" and 56 replied "none."

## The Economics of Preservation

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

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

## C. COMMUNITY DESIGN

### Overview

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

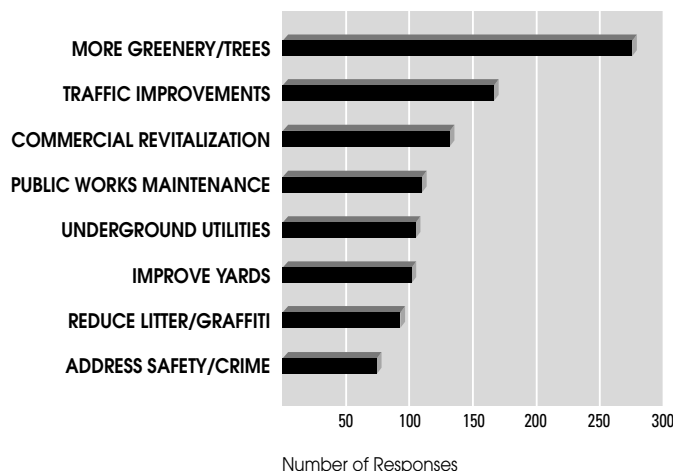
One of the challenges facing San Leandro in the new millennium is to establish a stronger identity for itself—to more clearly distinguish itself from other cities in the East Bay and be a place that people remember and want to return to. Because the City is adjacent to other urban areas on the north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

On the other hand, the individual neighborhoods that make up the City—and many of the shopping and business districts—are well kept and attractive. Older neighborhoods in the City have an ambiance that is highly prized, and newer neighborhoods have attractively designed housing and community spaces. Even the post-war era subdivision tracts have matured gracefully and come into their own as comfortable neighborhoods.

The Focus Area Strategies in the General Plan's Land Use Element create an opportunity to create a stronger and more positive image of the City. But image building will take more than simply refurbishing individual buildings and redeveloping individual sites. A concerted

CHART 7-1 Survey Findings—City Beautification

Q. What specific improvements would make your neighborhood (or business area) a more beautiful place to live (or work)? (1,140 responses)



Source: General Plan Citywide Survey, 2001

effort must be made to improve gateways, thoroughfares, public buildings, parks, and the other public spaces that define impressions of San Leandro. Policies in the Community Design Element not only seek to create a stronger identity for the City, they strive for a more engaging and memorable visual image.

Chart 7-1 provides some indication of San Leandro's aesthetic priorities today. The Chart suggests strong support for additional street trees and landscaping. Many San Leandro neighborhoods lack a mature tree canopy and some of the commercial and industrial areas have a stark or barren quality. Throughout the General Plan update, there was consistent and vocal support for additional tree

*857 Estudillo Avenue, approx. 1890*

planting on public property and greater attention to the landscaping of medians and roadsides.

Other aesthetic improvements also rank high on the priority list. These include the revitalization of commercial strips and shopping centers, higher quality architecture and design, well maintained public facilities (including streets), high standards for the maintenance of homes and yards, and clean-up of litter and graffiti. All of these improvements would leave a more positive imprint of the City on residents and visitors, and present a more favorable impression of San Leandro to the rest of the region.

## Building a Sense of Place

Communities with a strong “sense of place” usually share several qualities, such as interesting or historic architecture, unique shops or businesses, and lively public spaces. Some of these qualities existed in San Leandro prior to World War II but were compromised as the City grew and adapted to modern times. There are opportunities for restoration, however, and opportunities to create these qualities anew in redeveloping areas.

San Leandro has many places with the potential to become more unique destinations. Each of these areas also should help create a more distinct image for the City as a whole.

The key factors that contribute to San Leandro’s sense of place are described below. Each is addressed in the policies and actions under Goal 42.

### Gateways

One of the most effective ways to distinguish San Leandro from its neighbors is to enhance the gateways into the City (see Figure 7-2). Gateways can incorporate monuments, welcome signs, landscaped esplanades, pavement changes, and other features that create a sense of arrival and visual interest. Gateways can also serve this function for individual neighborhoods, while contributing to neighborhood identity and pride.

Over the years, the City has invested in significant gateway improvements at the following locations:

- **Davis Street east of I-880.** Davis Street is one of the main points of entry into the City and is the main access route between the Nimitz Freeway and Downtown. Landscaping, decorative sound walls, and road widening were all completed in the early 1990s. The task is not finished, however. Some of the street frontage remains vacant, and there are opportunities for attractively landscaped and designed buildings on both sides of the street between Pierce Avenue and San Leandro Boulevard.

- **North Area Gateway Streets** (San Leandro Boulevard, East 14th Street, Bancroft, and MacArthur Boulevard). These four streets serve as the main entries into San Leandro from East Oakland. The most significant change has been made on East 14th Street, where a gateway monument in the center of the street clearly marks the entrance into San Leandro. Lower-profile entry markers have been placed along the other three streets.

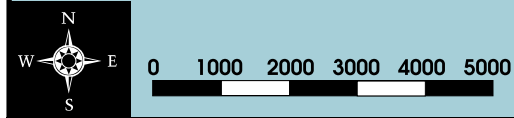
- **Marina Boulevard east of I-880.** Like Davis Street, Marina Boulevard is one of the major points of entry into the City from the freeway. Much of the frontage between the Nimitz Freeway and San Leandro Boulevard has been redeveloped over the past decade and the street’s character has changed from industrial to auto-oriented commercial. There are opportunities for a more positive statement here, particularly at the east end of the corridor, between Alvarado Street and San Leandro Boulevard. Landscaping, tree planting, and other design improvements on both public and private property are strongly supported.

- **Joaquin Avenue at Grand.** An entry marker has been placed at this location, providing a clear gateway for persons entering the City from Interstate 580. Similar markers could be placed on Dutton and Estudillo, since these roads carry the majority of traffic between I-580 and central San Leandro.






The City has also developed neighborhood gateways for major residential areas, such as Halcyon-Foothill, Davis West, and Broadmoor. Some neighborhoods presently lack gateway features and would benefit from such improvements in the future.

Several areas have been identified as priorities for future gateways. These include:

- **Doolittle Drive from Oakland to Davis Street.** Doolittle Drive is the major gateway into San Leandro from Oakland International Airport. Planned improvements were identified in the 1999 Airport Gateway Plan, prepared jointly by San Leandro and the City of Oakland. Tree planting, landscaping, and frontage improvements are planned to beautify this corridor, as well as the 98th Avenue and Hegenberger corridors in Oakland.



**LEGEND**

-  Significant Views
-  Major Gateways
-  Key Gateway Streets
-  Well-defined edges
-  Major Activity Areas

**COMMUNITY  
DESIGN FEATURES**

FIGURE 7-2

San Leandro General Plan Update, 2002





- **East 14th Street at**

**Bayfair.** This is the major entry into the City from the south. A stronger gateway feature is particularly important here, as there are no obvious physical features that separate San Leandro from unincorporated Ashland. Alameda County's East 14th Street Urban Design Plan proposes a significant investment in tree planting, street lighting, sidewalk widening, and utility undergrounding in this vicinity.

- **Washington Manor Area**

**gateways.** A number of gateways into the City exist along its southern boundary, including Hesperian Boulevard, Lewelling Boulevard, and Washington Avenue. Again, a stronger sense of arrival into San Leandro could be created through more prominent signage and landscaping at these locations.

- **Downtown Area gateways.** The Focus Area text for Downtown and the Downtown BART area (Chapter 3) identifies planned improvements to Downtown gateways, including San Leandro Boulevard, West Estudillo Avenue and West Joaquin Avenue. Changes to roadways, sidewalks, and planting areas are planned to provide safer, more inviting pedestrian connections between BART and Downtown San Leandro.

- **Marina Boulevard west of I-880.** The City is moving forward with the construction of a landscaped San Leandro Marina gateway at Marina Boulevard and Neptune Drive. Additional improvements should be explored along Marina Boulevard between this area and the Freeway.

## Activity Centers

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

The Land Use Element sets forth a strategy to more clearly define activity centers in San Leandro, particularly Downtown and along East 14th Street. Adding amenities such as street trees and wider sidewalks can make these areas more attractive to visit. Placing parking lots to the rear of buildings instead of along the street frontage also can improve visual quality. Meanwhile, encouraging particular uses or promoting unique architectural themes can lend character and help these areas stand out from other parts of the City and region.

## Views and Vistas

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

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

## Visual Landmarks

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

There are opportunities to create new landmarks in developing parts of the City. Buildings in these areas can become points of visual interest by including architectural features (such as bell towers or spires) that can be appreciated from nearby areas.

## Quality Construction and Design

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

San Leandro's design review program may be expanded during the coming years to place a greater emphasis on corridor streets, City gateways, and older residential neighborhoods. The objective in such areas is not to require new buildings to mimic or copy adjacent structures. Rather, it is to encourage new buildings and additions that respect their surroundings. The general emphasis should be on the overall scale and mass of new structures rather than detailed or prescriptive standards.

In older areas with a strong sense of architectural character, neighborhood fabric can be easily disrupted by projects that are insensitive to neighbors, block views, or are excessively large or bulky. New construction in such areas should be compatible with prevailing building styles, heights, dimensions, and setbacks. In newer areas that lack defining characteristics, design guidelines should encourage architectural innovation and diversity. Such areas provide opportunities to create a stronger identity and set a higher standard for new development.

The quality of construction is also an important part of community design. The most highly regarded buildings in San Leandro tend to be those that are built of quality materials, with attention to detail and excellent craftsmanship. The City's plan checking and building inspection programs assure that new construction will meet a basic standard of quality and safety. An annual design awards program has been instituted by the City to recognize those who exceed this standard and demonstrate exemplary design and construction quality.

The City can be a role model for private property owners in the design and appearance of public facilities and properties. New community facilities, fire stations, libraries, and other public buildings should set an example by being attractively designed. Likewise, the School Districts and other public agencies should strive for architectural excellence and a high level of craftsmanship in new facilities and major remodeling projects.

## **Toward a More Visually Attractive City**

Perhaps the most deeply ingrained impressions of San Leandro are formed by its thoroughfares and public spaces. In fact, many Bay Area residents may know San Leandro only as the "next three exits" on the freeway. Others know the City only from traveling through on BART or along East 14th Street. Although the opportunities to influence perceptions from these vantage points may be limited, the sheer volume of people passing through the City in this manner each day make it imperative to do whatever can be done to impart a positive impression.

The policies and actions under Goal 44 represent a citywide strategy to beautify the City's streets and public spaces. Components of this strategy include scenic highway designations, street trees, public art, utility undergrounding, sign control, lighting, and the inclusion of urban open spaces in new development areas. The City's Redevelopment Project Areas provide an important vehicle for implementing this strategy. One of the central goals of redevelopment in San Leandro is to remove blight and improve the visual quality of the City's commercial and industrial districts.

### **Scenic Highways**

The 1989 San Leandro General Plan designated both the Nimitz and MacArthur Freeways as scenic highways. Although the designation was largely symbolic, it was intended to encourage Caltrans to invest in landscaping and decorative sound walls and sustain a high level of maintenance on both roads. The City continues to have a strong interest in participating in the design of any proposed changes to the freeways to ensure that they convey a favorable impression of San Leandro.

The 1989 General Plan also designated Davis Street, Marina Boulevard, Doolittle Drive (north of Davis), Fairmont Drive, Neptune Drive, and Estudillo Avenue/Lake Chabot Road as scenic highways. The designation does not necessarily mean that the roads are picturesque. Rather, it notes their importance in defining first impressions of the City. Thus, similar designations should be placed on Washington Avenue, East 14th Street, Hesperian Boulevard, Dutton Avenue, and San Leandro Boulevard (see Figure 7-2). The designation of these streets as scenic roadways effectively establishes them as priority areas for streetscape beautification projects.

Because most San Leandro streets have been in place for decades and have privately developed frontage, achieving an attractive appearance is not always easy. Typically, streets feel more “comfortable” when they create a sense of enclosure and are designed for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as vehicles. This may not be practical on streets like Marina Boulevard and Doolittle Drive but landscaping and lighting can still beautify the street environment. The extent of planting area, width and condition of the pavement, amount and speed of traffic, location of parking, and heights and setbacks of abutting buildings and signs, all determine whether the street is perceived as a comfortable civic space or merely a conduit for cars.

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

## Street Trees

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

Street trees are currently required in new subdivisions and are a key component of most commercial improvement programs in the City. For instance, tree planting was a major feature in the recent redesign of East 14th Street in the North Area. While these efforts have helped in the “greening” of several neighborhoods and shopping areas, a large number of trees continue to be removed in the City because of disease, age, hazards to nearby structures, and homeowner preferences. A more formalized citywide tree program is needed to guide tree selection, promote proper maintenance and care, and establish priorities for City tree planting efforts. There is also a need for better public education on the City’s street tree installation and removal requirements.

Although San Leandro does not require tree removal permits on private property, the preservation and care of trees is strongly encouraged. There are several large “heritage” trees in the City which might be afforded a higher level protection due to their unique qualities or historic importance. Such trees should be conserved as long as they remain healthy and do not pose a hazard to nearby properties.

## Public Art

Public art can include sculpture, statues, monuments, murals, fountains, and other forms of art which beautify public and private spaces in the City. Good public art can enrich civic spaces and celebrate local culture and history. It can enliven the imagination and spirit of the City.

San Leandro does not have a public art requirement for private development but encourages outdoor sculpture and public gathering places in major projects. The City itself has developed or funded a number of notable art pieces, such as the memorial

to the Portuguese immigrant in Root Park. Notable opportunities for additional public art exist Downtown, in the BART Station areas, along the shoreline, and in the major activity centers along East 14th Street and at Bayfair.

### **Utility Undergrounding**

One of the most widespread sources of visual blight along San Leandro's thoroughfares and in its neighborhoods is overhead utility wires. The City has worked with local utility companies for more than 30 years to place these wires underground, but the costs are very high and progress has been slow. An Undergrounding Master Plan, including a project priority list, has been developed by the City. East 14th Street has been identified as the City's top priority for undergrounding. However, this project and some of the others may be delayed by PG&E's recent financial insolvency.

### **Sign Control**

Signs in San Leandro are regulated by the Zoning Code. During the past decade, enforcement of the Code has reduced visual clutter along the City's thoroughfares and encouraged more attractive and tasteful signage. It is important to regularly update the sign regulations to keep pace with changes in the types of signs and methods of advertising that are being used. Moreover, there is ongoing interest in upgrading aesthetic standards and developing more high quality signage, particularly for retail businesses and shopping centers. Design guidelines for major shopping streets should include provisions for signage which consider both business needs and aesthetic objectives.

### **Lighting**

The lighting of streets and buildings should serve an aesthetic purpose as well as functional and safety purposes. Vintage lighting fixtures are an important part of the ambiance of older San Leandro neighborhoods such as Broadmoor. In commercial areas, lighting can define the mood along the street by night and enhance its appearance during the day.

The lighting of buildings is similarly important. Lighting should be an integral part of a building's architecture, particularly in pedestrian-oriented commercial districts. Uplighting of noteworthy

structures and landscaping can showcase some of the City's best visual qualities. The way that signage is illuminated also can define an area's character and affect its overall appeal.

### **Urban Open Space**

San Leandro should promote urban open spaces such as plazas and courtyards wherever the opportunities present themselves. Fountains, waterfalls, trees, sculpture, seating areas, and other amenities should be included in large development areas and in major public projects to enhance their appeal and visual interest. Where the spaces are large enough, street vendors, special events, art fairs, farmers markets, and similar events should be encouraged to create active street life and places where the public can gather. The areas around the Downtown BART station, the Downtown Plaza, and the streets between BART and Downtown provide the most immediate opportunities for these types of spaces. Opportunities for special paving, sidewalks, street furniture, and landscaping can enhance such spaces, while reinforcing the image of Downtown as the City center.

## D. GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

### Goal: **Historic Preservation Program**

**38**

Identify, preserve, and maintain San Leandro's historic resources and recognize these resources as an essential part of the City's character and heritage.

#### POLICIES AND ACTIONS

#### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

##### 38.01 BROAD APPROACH TO PRESERVATION

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

- Preservation Program

##### 38.02 ENHANCING LOCAL IDENTITY

Recognize the potential for publicly sponsored historic preservation programs and privately initiated historic preservation efforts to enhance San Leandro's identity as an attractive and distinct community.

- Preservation Program
- Public/Private Partnerships

##### 38.03 PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Develop and maintain programs that recognize and protect historic sites, structures, trees, and other landscape features.

###### ***Action 38.03-A: Downtown Plaza Revitalization***

*In accordance with the recently adopted Downtown Plan, pursue the revitalization of the historic Downtown San Leandro Plaza at Washington Avenue and East 14th Street.*

- Capital Improvement Program
- Downtown Plan/Urban Design Guidelines
- Preservation Program

##### 38.04 HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Encourage the formation of local historic districts in areas where historic sites and structures are concentrated. Such districts should provide for the preservation, restoration, and public recognition of the resources contained therein.

- Historic Districts
- Preservation Program
- Zoning Code

**Action 38.04-A: Old San Leandro Historic District**

*Create an “Old San Leandro” Historic District in the vicinity of the Casa Peralta and Daniel Best House. An immediate follow-up effort to the General Plan should identify the boundaries of the District, along with specific programs for improvement and restoration. Development and design standards for the District should ensure that the area’s historic ambiance and pedestrian scale is maintained as future development takes place. An Orchard Avenue Historic District (“Kanaka Row”) also should be considered.*

**38.05**

**HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS**

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

- Design Guidelines
- Preservation Program
- Street Tree and Beautification Programs

**Action 38.05-A: Neighborhood Conservation Districts (or Heritage Neighborhoods)**

*Establish neighborhood conservation districts (or “Heritage Neighborhoods”) in parts of San Leandro characterized by pre-1940s era housing stock. Establish design guidelines for such areas that reflect prevailing architectural styles and scale, and promote compatible alterations and infill development.*

**38.06**

**HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEYS**

Update, expand, and maintain inventories of San Leandro’s historic resources, using criteria and survey methods that are consistent with state and federal guidelines.

**Action 38.06-A: Criteria for Identifying Historic Resources**

*Develop and adopt criteria for identifying local historic resources, such as architectural characteristics, the age of the structure, aesthetic values, and association with historic events or individuals. Such criteria should be consistent with state and federal standards and should be incorporated in the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance.*

**Action 38.06-B: Expansion of the Historic Registry**

*Using the adopted criteria, update the City’s historic resource inventory, create a digital photographic record of each resource, and establish a mechanism for maintaining and expanding the historic register in the future. At a minimum, buildings to be added to the register should include the Veterans Memorial Auditorium, McKinley and Washington Elementary Schools, and San Leandro City Hall.*

- Preservation Program

**38.07**

**PROTECTING RESOURCE INTEGRITY**

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

- Design Guidelines
- Historic Districts
- Landmarks Commission
- Zoning Code (L overlay)

**38.08**

**RELOCATION OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES**

Encourage the relocation of older structures into designated historic districts as an alternative to demolition and an incentive for restoration.

- Preservation Program

**38.09**

**MAINTENANCE AND REHABILITATION**

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

- Code Enforcement
- Historic Pres. Ordinance
- Preservation Program



**POLICIES AND ACTIONS** *(Historic Preservation Program continued)*

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

**38.10**

**SEISMIC UPGRADES**

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

- Design Guidelines
- Development Review
- Preservation Program

**38.11**

**POST-DISASTER REPLACEMENT**

In the event that a historic structure is damaged by fire or earthquake to the point where demolition is necessary, encourage the new structure to respect the historic architectural character and form of the building it replaces.

- Design Guidelines
- Development Review

**38.12**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Recognize the potential for prehistoric and historic archaeological resources and ensure that future development takes the measures necessary to identify and preserve such resources.

- CEQA
- Development Review

**Action 38.12-A: Archaeological Site Inventory**

*Maintain a data base on potential archaeological sites in the City and use this information when reviewing future development applications. Proximity to archaeological resources should be included as a criteria in the site plan review process.*

**38.13****PROTECTING THE RECENT PAST**

Ensure that local preservation programs include structures from the recent past (after 1945) that represent unique or noteworthy examples of the architectural styles and trends of the time.

- Preservation Program

# Goal: Defining the City's Role

39

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

## POLICIES AND ACTIONS

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

39.01

### PRESERVATION AND CITY PLANNING

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

#### **Action 39.01-A: Preservation Action Plan**

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

#### **Action 39.01-B: Certified Local Government Designation**

*Take the steps necessary to have San Leandro designated as a Certified Local Government (CLG) for historic preservation purposes, thereby making the City eligible for State historic preservation fund grants. These steps include an updated survey of historic buildings, as described in Action 38.06-B.*

- City Operating Procedures
- Preservation Program

39.02

### PLANNING AND BUILDING DECISIONS

Ensure that day-to-day planning and building activities, including the issuance of building permits, demolition permits, zoning approvals, site plan approvals, and use permits, are consistent with and further the achievement of local historic preservation goals.

#### **Action 39.02-A: Historic Preservation Staff**

*Explore the feasibility of creating a part-time staff position, or dedicating a portion of an existing staff member's time, to address historic preservation issues and research grant funding for preservation activities.*

#### **Action 39.02-B: Training Program**

*Establish an on-going training program for City Staff on local historic preservation standards and procedures.*

#### **Action 39.02-C: Amendments to Project Review Criteria**

*Amend the review criteria for site plans and other discretionary approvals to assess the sensitivity of a proposed project to historic resources.*

- CEQA
- City Operating Procedures
- Development Review
- Zoning Code

**Action 39.02-D: CEQA Compliance**

*Ensure that California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for assessing potential impacts to historic resources are consistently followed when projects are proposed.*

**39.03**

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE**

Maintain a City Historic Preservation Ordinance that provides for the protection of historic resources within the City of San Leandro.

- Historic Pres. Ordinance

**Action 39.03-A: Preservation Ordinance Update**

*Undertake a comprehensive review of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance (Municipal Code Chapter 4-26) and make the revisions necessary to ensure that the policies in the General Plan can be effectively carried out.*

**39.04**

**REVIEW BOARD AUTHORITY**

Ensure that the City commissions and departments assigned to implement historic preservation programs are given the resources, tools, and authority needed to carry out these programs.

- Library-Historical Commission
- Historic Pres. Ordinance

**Action 39.04-A: Expanded Role for Library-Historical Commission**

*Expand City support for the Library-Historical Commission so that they may effectively implement the General Plan's historic preservation policies and actions. The Commission shall be provided with the necessary resources, as determined by the City Council, to make historic preservation a major focus of their efforts.*

**39.05**

**IMPROVED RECORD KEEPING**

Improve City building permit and property records to ensure that historic properties can be readily identified when applications for these properties are submitted.

- Annual Budget
- City Operating Procedures

**Action 39.05-A: GIS Data on Historic Resources**

*Incorporate information on historic properties into the City's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and permit tracking systems.*

**39.06**

**HISTORIC PUBLIC BUILDINGS**

Take a leadership role in historic preservation by maintaining and reinvesting in older public buildings, and by working with the local school districts to maintain and enhance historic school buildings.

- Annual Budget
- Capital Improvement Program
- Intergovernmental Coordination

**39.07**

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

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

- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Preservation Program
- Public/Private Partnerships

**39.08**

**CITIZEN-LED PRESERVATION EFFORTS**

Encourage and support grass-roots preservation efforts initiated by neighborhoods and community organizations. Provide technical support to such groups and encourage their participation in City-sponsored preservation surveys and activities.

- Library-Historical Commission
- Preservation Program

# Goal: **Public Awareness of Local History**

**40**

Heighten public awareness of San Leandro's history and historic resources, both locally and throughout the Bay Area.

## POLICIES AND ACTIONS

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

**40.01**

### **MEDIA DEVELOPMENT**

Encourage the development of books, videos, pamphlets, exhibits, displays, and other media that commemorate San Leandro history and historic resources.

- Annual Budget
- Preservation Program
- Public Education and Outreach

#### **Action 40.01-A: A Garden Grows in Eden**

*Update "A Garden Grows in Eden," the 1972 book on San Leandro's history, so that it adequately covers the second half of the 20th century. Update the centennial film that was produced to accompany the book.*

#### **Action 40.01-B: Local History Internet Site**

*Expand internet coverage of San Leandro history and historic resources, including a link from the City's web page to new sites on these topics (containing lists of historic sites, photos of historic structures, information on citizens who contributed to San Leandro history, etc.).*

#### **Action 40.01-C: Preservation Pamphlet**

*Prepare an informational pamphlet on the City's preservation program. The pamphlet should assist property owners in determining if their property is potentially historic, provide guidelines for the nomination and listing of historic properties, describe the benefits of listing, and outline the procedures for making alterations to listed structures.*

**40.02**

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Promote festivals, walking tours, and special events that celebrate San Leandro history and culture.

- Public Education and Outreach

#### **Action 40.02-A: Volunteer Docent Program**

*Continue the volunteer docent program on San Leandro history, including speakers and walking tour leaders.*

#### **Action 40.02-B: Heritage Festivals**

*Continue the annual "Day at the Casa" and other special events commemorating San Leandro history. Explore the feasibility of an annual San Leandro Heritage Fair or integrating such an event into the annual Cherry Festival.*

**Action 40.02-C: Self-Guided Tour**

*Prepare an updated informational pamphlet or booklet on the local register of historic places, including a description of each site and a self-guided walking tour highlighting major landmarks.*

**40.03**

**SITE PLAQUES**

Encourage the identification of historic resources with plaques and markers.

- Annual Budget
- Preservation Program

**Action 40.03-A: Marker and Plaque Program**

*Expand the City's historic marker and plaque program, and develop a priority list for marking additional sites and structures.*

**40.04**

**COMMEMORATIVE ART**

Promote murals, monuments, statues, and other forms of public art that commemorate San Leandro history and culture. Such projects should be incorporated in public buildings and major public works projects wherever feasible.

- Annual Budget
- Library-Historical Commission
- Preservation Program

**40.05**

**COORDINATION OF PRESERVATION GROUPS**

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

- Library-Historical Commission
- Preservation Program

**Action 40.05-A: Preservation Design Awards**

*Continue to incorporate historic preservation (e.g., restoration projects) into local design awards programs.*

**Action 40.05-B: Expansion of Archives**

*Support the continued efforts of local historic preservation groups to collect photos and other archival materials on the City's history. A collection drive for the period since 1930 should be undertaken to augment the existing archives and cover this important period in local history.*

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|--------------|--|---|
| <b>40.06</b> | <p><b>SCHOOL CURRICULA</b></p> <p>Continue collaborative efforts by the City, the school districts, the State of California, and local historic preservation groups to integrate San Leandro history lessons and field trips into local teacher training and educational curricula.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Intergovernmental Coordination</li> <li>● Preservation Program</li> <li>● Public Education and Outreach</li> </ul> |
| <b>40.07</b> | <p><b>CULTURAL INCLUSIVENESS</b></p> <p>Ensure that San Leandro’s historic preservation efforts are culturally inclusive and recognize the contributions of the City’s many ethnic groups to its development. Programs that trace the roots and celebrate the history of different ethnic groups should be strongly encouraged, along with outreach to minorities, youth and under-represented groups.</p> <p><b>Action 40.07-A: Ethnic Histories</b></p> <p><i>Work with local churches and community organizations to develop an outreach program focused on the cultural and social histories of various ethnic groups in the City.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Library-Historical Commission</li> <li>● Preservation Program</li> <li>● Public Education and Outreach</li> </ul>  |
| <b>40.08</b> | <p><b>USE OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS</b></p> <p>Encourage the use of historic buildings for community events and the acquisition of important historic buildings for public use as a means of increasing awareness of local history.</p> <p><b>Action 40.08-A: San Leandro History Room</b></p> <p><i>Maintain the San Leandro History Room in the Main Library as a central repository for historic books, photos, records, and other materials associated with the City’s history and expand these archives. Consider developing similar areas at branch libraries in the event the branches are rebuilt or remodeled.</i></p>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Capital Improvement Program</li> <li>● City Operating Procedures</li> </ul>  |
| <b>40.09</b> | <p><b>FAMOUS “SONS” AND “DAUGHTERS”</b></p> <p>Encourage programs that honor San Leandro residents who have made significant contributions to local history.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Library-Historical Commission</li> <li>● Preservation Program</li> </ul>   |
| <b>40.10</b> | <p><b>HISTORIC INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE</b></p> <p>Expand awareness and recognition of the history of industry and commerce in San Leandro, and ensure that the local business community is fully engaged in discussions about preservation.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Preservation Program</li> <li>● Public/Private Partnerships</li> </ul>   |



678 Juana Avenue, approx. 1890

# Goal: **The Economics of Preservation**

**41**

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

| POLICIES AND ACTIONS | IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
|----------------------|---------------------------|

41.01

**FUNDING SOURCES**

Pursue a wide variety of grants and funds for future preservation efforts. Local benefactor programs, including corporate sponsorship, should be encouraged as a means of raising funds for preservation activities.

**Action 41.01-A: Local Revolving Funds**

*Explore the feasibility of a local revolving fund offering low-interest loans to property owners for rehabilitation and preservation activities.*

**Action 41.01-B: State and Federal Funds**

*Apply for state and federal funding to implement local historic preservation programs, including the California Heritage Fund and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program Fund.*

- Annual Budget
- Grants
- Public/Private Partnerships
- Redevelopment Project Funding

|              |   |   |
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| <b>41.02</b> | <b>TAX CREDITS AND INCENTIVES</b><br>Encourage the use of federal and state historic preservation financial incentives, including historic preservation tax credit and tax relief programs.<br><br><b>Action 41.02-A: Mills Act</b><br><i>Seek opportunities to use the California Mills Act and federal rehabilitation tax credit programs as financial incentives for historic building owners.</i>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Business Development Programs</li><li>● Program Development</li></ul>           |
| <b>41.03</b> | <b>ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE</b><br>Promote local economic incentives and assistance programs for preservation. Explore the feasibility of other local programs that provide financial, technical, or legal assistance to those undertaking preservation activities in the City.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Business Development Programs</li><li>● Redevelopment Project Funding</li></ul> |
| <b>41.04</b> | <b>PLANNING AND BUILDING CODES</b><br>Ensure that local planning and building codes and procedures facilitate historic preservation.<br><br><b>Action 41.04-A: Removal of Regulatory Obstacles</b><br><i>Review San Leandro's zoning and building codes and procedures to identify potential obstacles to the reuse of historic buildings. Develop a strategy to remove or reduce such obstacles if they exist.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Building Code</li><li>● Zoning Code</li></ul>                                   |
| <b>41.05</b> | <b>PRESERVATION AND TOURISM</b><br>Promote San Leandro's history and historic buildings in the City's business development efforts, and pursue opportunities for additional historic visitor attractions in the City.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Business Development Programs</li><li>● Preservation Program</li></ul>          |

# Goal:

42

## Sense of Place

Promote a stronger “sense of place” in San Leandro.

### POLICIES AND ACTIONS

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

42.01

#### GATEWAYS

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

**Action 42.01-A: Gateway Improvement Program**

*Develop additional City gateway features along major thoroughfares and around the BART Stations. Add the following locations to the City’s existing list of gateways to be enhanced: Lewelling Boulevard and Hesperian Boulevard (from Ashland) and Bancroft Avenue (from Oakland).*

**Action 42.01-B: Neighborhood Gateways**

*Expand the neighborhood gateway sign program and explore funding sources, potential sites, and potential designs for additional gateway signs.*

- Annual Budget
- Capital Improvement Program
- Street Tree and Beautification Programs

42.02

#### GRAPHICS AND SIGNAGE

Establish citywide graphics and signage standards that help provide a better sense of municipal boundaries. An example might be the consistent use of the City logo (or the use of distinctive lettering and color schemes) on City street and directional signs.

**Action 42.02-A: Citywide Directional Sign Program**

*Develop a citywide directional sign program with coordinated graphic design elements and place such signs along major thoroughfares throughout San Leandro. Directional signs should be used not only to orient travelers but also to provide a sense of continuity within the City.*

- Capital Improvement Program
- Engineering Development Standards

42.03

#### URBAN DESIGN IMPROVEMENTS

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

- Capital Improvement Program
- Design Guidelines
- Redevelopment Project Funding
- Street Tree and Beautification Programs

**42.04****ARCHITECTURAL CONSISTENCY**

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

- Design Guidelines
- Development Review

**Action 42.04-A: Design Guidelines for Infill Housing**

*Create residential design guidelines and/or development standards for infill development. These guidelines and/or standards should ensure that new homes and subdivisions are compatible with the various architectural styles and character of different San Leandro neighborhoods.*

**Action 42.04-B: Small Lot Single Family and Multi-Family Design Guidelines**

*Prepare design guidelines for small lot single family home and multi-family developments which ensure that such developments do not appear overly dense and require that ample amounts of useable open space are required.*

**Action 42.04-C: Neighborhood and Business Profiles**

*Develop neighborhood pamphlets, service directories, historical profiles, and other public information materials that reinforce the sense of San Leandro as a City of distinct neighborhoods. Support the Chamber of Commerce's efforts to develop similar directories for merchants and local shopping districts.*

**42.05**

**SHOPPING DISTRICTS**

Encourage the development of well-defined shopping districts along the City’s commercial streets. Development within each district should meld together existing uses, establish greater design continuity, and improve the connections to nearby neighborhoods.

**Action 42.05-A: District Streetscape Improvements**

*Expand the use of banners and other streetscape improvements to define shopping districts on San Leandro’s major thoroughfares.*

- Design Guidelines
- Development Review
- Street Tree and Beautification Programs

**42.06**

**PROGRAMMED ACTIVITIES**

Encourage programmed activities, such as farmers markets and outdoor performances, within commercial centers and civic areas.

- City Operating Procedures

**42.07**

**VISUAL LANDMARKS**

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

- Design Guidelines
- Development Review

**42.08**

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Encourage the involvement of the community in the development of urban design plans and improvement programs.

- Public Education and Outreach

*(see also Goal 5 on Citizen Participation)*

# Goal: **43** Quality Construction and Design

Ensure that new construction and renovation contributes to the quality and overall image of the community.

## POLICIES AND ACTIONS

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

43.01

### PROMOTING QUALITY DESIGN

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

#### **Action 43.01-A: Planning Code Review**

*Review the City's zoning, building, and subdivision standards to ensure that they support and contribute to the urban design principles set forth in the updated General Plan.*

#### **Action 43.01-B: Incentives for Design Amenities**

*Develop zoning incentives (such as floor area bonuses) for projects that incorporate special architectural design features, such as landscaped courtyards or plazas.*

- Design Guidelines
- Development Review
- Zoning Code

43.02

### ARCHITECTURAL DIVERSITY

In newly developing neighborhoods, promote architectural diversity and variety. Encourage variations in lot sizes, setbacks, orientation of homes, and other site features to avoid monotony and maintain visual interest.

- Design Guidelines
- Design Review

43.03

### MULTI-FAMILY DESIGN

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

#### **Action 43.03-A: Review of Multi-Family Zoning Standards**

*Review open space requirements, setback standards, and other design and development standards for multi-family housing to ensure that such housing is attractively designed and is compatible with the surrounding community.*

- Design Guidelines
- Development Review
- Zoning Code

**43.04**

**PERMITTING AND INSPECTION**

Maintain building inspection and code enforcement procedures that ensure that all construction is properly permitted, and that construction is completed as approved.

- City Operating Procedures
- Code Enforcement
- Development Review

**43.05**

**CRAFTSMANSHIP**

Encourage a high level of craftsmanship in new construction, and the use of exterior materials and façade designs that enhance the appearance of the City.

- Building Code
- Design Guidelines
- Development Review

**43.06**

**ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST**

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

- Design Guidelines
- Development Review

**43.07**

**COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL STANDARDS**

Improve the visual appearance of the City's commercial and industrial areas by applying high standards of architectural design and landscaping for new commercial and industrial development and the re-use or remodeling of existing commercial and industrial buildings.

- Conditional Use Permits
- Design Guidelines
- Development Review
- Zoning Code

*(see also Action 10.01-B regarding the preparation of commercial and industrial design guidelines)*

**POLICIES AND ACTIONS** *(Quality Construction and Design continued)* **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

**43.08**

**SIGNAGE**

Encourage commercial signage that is compatible with the building and streetscape, enhances the character of the surrounding area, and is not intrusive to nearby residential areas.

- Conditional Use Permits
- Design Guidelines
- Development Review
- Zoning Code

**43.09**

**COMMERCIAL REINVESTMENT**

Provide incentive programs that encourage reinvestment in the City's commercial properties, especially older shopping centers, vacant businesses, and outdated or blighted structures.

- Business Development Programs
- Redevelopment Project Funding

**Action 43.09-A: Design Assistance Program**

*Continue programs to assist business owners with exterior upgrades to commercial buildings, including design assistance, awning improvement, landscaping, and painting.*

**Action 43.09-B: Shopping Center Rehabilitation**

*Initiate a pilot program to rehabilitate one or more of the City's 1950s-era neighborhood shopping centers with a "fifties retro" design theme. Work with neighborhood shopping center owners to explore funding sources and design.*

*(See also Action 7.06-A on renovation assistance)*



43.10

**BUSINESS OUTREACH**

Encourage communication and outreach to the business community in the development of strategies to upgrade commercial and industrial properties.

**Action 43.10-A: Annual Design Awards**

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

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public/Private Partnerships

**Goal: A More Visually Attractive City**

**44**

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

44.01

**GREENING SAN LEANDRO**

Promote landscaping, tree planting, and tree preservation along San Leandro streets as a means of improving aesthetics, making neighborhoods more pedestrian-friendly, providing environmental benefits, and creating or maintaining a parklike setting.

**Action 44.01-A: Street Tree Master Plan**

*Develop, adopt, and implement a Street Tree Master Plan that includes planting guidelines and palettes and a program to increase the number of trees along San Leandro streets. Once the Master Plan is adopted, establish a citywide neighborhood beautification strategy in which specific areas are targeted each year for street tree planting, landscaping, and other public improvements.*

**Action 44.01-B: Funding for Tree Planting and Care**

*Regularly apply for grants, low interest loans, and other funding sources for landscaping, street tree planting, urban forestry, and neighborhood beautification.*

- Annual Budget
- Grants
- Public Works Services
- Redevelopment Project Funding
- Street Tree and Beautification Programs

**44.02**

**TREE MAINTENANCE**

Encourage tree maintenance practices that contribute to the long-term health and appearance of the City's urban forest.

**Action 44.02-A: Public Education on Tree Issues**

*Promote public education and awareness of tree planting, removal and care issues.*

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Works Services

**44.03**

**TREE REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT**

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

**Action 44.03-A: Tree Preservation**

*Investigate methods to: (a) encourage the protection of historic, landmark, and heritage trees; (b) provide incentives for property owners to maintain significant trees and reduce the burden of maintenance; (c) provide greater protection for public trees located within the street rights-of-way; and (d) require preservation of large, mature or significant trees on new development sites.*

- Development Review
- Municipal Code and Ordinances

**44.04**

**URBAN OPEN SPACE**

Encourage the incorporation of landscaped open spaces, such as plazas, courtyards and pocket parks, within new development and redevelopment projects.

- Design Guidelines
- Development Review
- Zoning Code

**Action 44.04-A: Paving of Planter Strips**

*Develop an ordinance or zoning amendment to prohibit the paving of planter strips along City streets, except where these strips are narrow and such a prohibition would be impractical. Initiate a program wherein, at the request of the homeowner, the City will remove existing concrete planter strips so that they may be replaced with landscaping and street trees.*

**44.05**

**STREET BEAUTIFICATION**

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

- Annual Budget
- Capital Improvement Program
- Code Enforcement
- Public Works Maintenance
- Redevelopment Project Funding

**Action 44.05-A: Sign Control**

*Revise the City’s sign ordinance to address a variety of design quality and aesthetic issues. Particular attention should be placed on the use of pennants, banners, inflatables, free-standing shopping center signs, and shopping center tenant signage.*

**Action 44.05-B: Billboard Removal**

*Develop strategies for accelerating the removal of billboards along San Leandro streets.*

**Action 44.05-C: Industrial Landscape Standards**

*Develop landscape standards and beautification programs to improve streets in industrial areas. Such programs should address pedestrian and bicycle improvements, streetscape improvements, undergrounding of utility lines, signage, and façade improvements.*

**Action 44.05-D: East 14th Street Utility****Undergrounding**

*Establish the undergrounding of utilities along East 14th Street as the City's highest priority for the expenditure of Rule 20A (undergrounding) funds.*

44.06

**PUBLIC ART**

Encourage the siting of public art in civic open spaces, around public buildings, and within new development areas. Public art should reflect and express the diversity of the City.

- Annual Budget
- Design Guidelines

44.07

**LIGHTING**

Encourage street and parking lot lighting that creates a sense of security, complements building and landscape design, is energy-efficient, and avoids conflicts with nearby residential uses.

- Building Code
- Design Guidelines
- Engineering Development Standards

44.08

**NEIGHBORHOOD CLEAN-UPS**

Support and encourage neighborhood clean-up and beautification projects.

- City Operating Procedures
- Public Education and Outreach

**Action 44.08-A: Penalties for Dumping**

*Strengthen local ordinances, fines, and penalties for illegal dumping and littering.*

44.09

**PERIMETER AREAS**

Encourage cooperative efforts with Alameda County and the City of Oakland to beautify nearby areas outside the San Leandro City limits.

- Intergovernmental Coordination