

Chapter 2.

Existing Conditions and Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

What is Downtown Monterey Park like today?

- *Diverse and family-oriented*
- *Known for Asian restaurants*
- *Competition from neighboring cities*
- *5 major supermarkets*
- *Over 8,000 housing units in walking distance of the corridors*
- *Many small shops with independent owners*
- *Not much recent development*
- *Small lots difficult to develop*
- *Older development lacks parking*
- *More than half the City's population lives Downtown*
- *High transit-use in the population*
- *2 to 4 million square feet of development potential, including mixed-use opportunities*
- *A City population of approximately 60,000, a 3 mile trade area population of over 204,000 and a 5 mile trade area population of over 386,000*
- *68% of the City's population earns \$75,000 to \$250,000 per year*
- *Nearly twice the national average of Generation Y (median age of 16), whose spending pattern is 3 times their number*

At the outset of the Mixed-Use and Pedestrian Linkages project, an Existing Conditions Memorandum was compiled on December 10, 2003 based on meetings with stakeholders and City staff, site reconnaissance and inventories, analysis of relevant census and parcel data, traffic/pedestrian/bicycle counts and analysis, land use and urban design analysis, and review of existing plans. The Memorandum serves as the baseline for the recommendations, standards, and guidelines recommended in this Plan. This chapter summarizes the findings of the memorandum, with an emphasis on the issues, opportunities, and constraints detailed at the end of the document. The full Existing Conditions Memorandum is available for review from the City of Monterey Park.

2.1 Elements of the Existing Conditions Analysis

Existing conditions in Downtown were catalogued in terms of both the public and private realms, including its regional setting, current socio-economic data and a review of relevant policies of existing plans which have jurisdiction within the study area.

2.1.1 Public Realm

The public realm includes those features of the built environment which are primarily within the publicly owned rights-of-way, such as:

- Pedestrian circulation along the sidewalks
- Pedestrian street crossings

- Bicycle circulation
- Transit service and stops
- Parking
- Vehicular traffic
- Signage/wayfinding
- Urban design features
- Streetscape improvements

2.1.2 Private Realm

Features of the private realm which effect future development potential include:

- Existing land uses
- Character of existing development
- Lot and building size
- Proposed projects

2.1.3 Relevant Plans

Plans which are relevant to the study area include:

- *City of Monterey Park General Plan*
- *Garvey/Garfield and North Atlantic Specific Plans*
- *Monterey Park Zoning Ordinance*
- *Downtown Parking Management Program*

By drawing on the above information as well as input provided in interviews with local stakeholders, including business owners, property owners, and community members, issues, opportunities, and constraints for future development and investment in Downtown Monterey Park were developed.

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2.2 Regional, Socio-Economic, and Market Setting

The City of Monterey Park is located in the western San Gabriel Valley in Los Angeles County. Although situated in the northern part of the City, the Downtown study area is the City's civic heart and a major commercial destination. Also, Downtown is bounded on the north by the San Bernardino (I-10) Freeway, putting it within reach of major population centers, the regional target markets for Downtown Monterey Park.

A review of socio-economic data shows that the Downtown study area is unique within the City of Monterey Park in several ways (see Table 2-1). For example, a substantial percentage of households do not own a car in the study area when compared to the City as a whole. Almost two-thirds of housing units in the study area are rental units, compared to less than half in the City as a whole. In addition, average income in the study area is substantially lower than in the City as a whole.

The City of Monterey Park retained a consultant to determine the buying power of the City. Some of the results of this study include:

- Monterey Park is a diverse city of 60,051 with 19,564 households, centered within a 3-mile trade area of 204,816 with 63,224 households and a 5-mile trade area of 386,324 with 109,614 households.

Table 2-1: Key Demographic Characteristics of the Downtown Study Area, Compared to the City of Monterey Park and Los Angeles County

	Study Area ¹	City of Monterey Park	Los Angeles County
2000 Population (Census)	25,300	60,000	9,519,300
2025 Projected Increase (SCAG) ²	27%	28%	23%
2025 Estimated Population ^{2,3}	32,100	76,600	11,708,700
2000 Employment (SCAG) ²	9,100	13,800	3,951,800
2025 Projected Increase (SCAG) ²	11%	13%	18%
2025 Est. Employment (SCAG) ²	10,100	15,500	4,663,100
Total Housing Units (Census)	8,167	19,500	3,133,800
% Zero-Vehicle Housing (Census)	18%	12%	13%
% Using Transit, Walking, or Working at Home (Census 2000)	11%	9%	13%
% Rental Units of Total (Census)	66%	45%	52%
Median Income (Census)	\$33,300	\$43,900	\$48,300
% Age Under 21 (Census)	27% ⁴	26%	32%
% Age 21 to 49 (Census)	44% ⁴	41%	45%
% Age 50 and Over (Census)	30% ⁴	33%	23%

Source: 1997 SCAG Regional Transportation Plan Projections and 2000 Census Data

1 – The study area is illustrated in Figure 1-1. Some demographic information was available only in block groups or census tracts. Where these spatial units overlapped the boundaries of the study area, the entire population of the spatial unit was used. Census data used from 5% sample long-form census which may vary slightly from 100% census results.

2 – Based on 1997 data which part of the current SCAG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

3 – Estimated 2025 population and employment developed from Census 2000 base numbers multiplied by SCAG projection factors.

4 – Reflects 2000 Census data which would not include the effect of senior housing occupied in the study area since 2000.

- Within the community is a core 68% of the City's population occupying 66% of the households, the majority working in management, the professional fields, and related occupations. These households earn \$75,000 to \$250,000 yearly with a net household worth of \$250,000 to \$500,000.
- The City has nearly twice the nation average of Generation Y. This young group makes up 7 percent of the national consumers but they are spending 21% or 3 times of the number of total national spending.
- Compared to national average spending, Monterey Park residents are shopping at

national tenants not currently represented in Monterey Park, from 51% to 280% more – a huge trade-area leakage.

2.3 Public Realm Inventory

The inventory of existing conditions in the public realm examines those elements of public property and infrastructure that influence the livability of Downtown Monterey Park (see Figure 2-1). Both functions of the public realm – transportation and urban design – are critical to the success of Downtown as a vibrant, inviting livable community. The pedestrian environment is the core of a livable community because pedestrian linkages knit together the other aspects of an urban area. Pedestrian circulation is the primary means of access to most aspects of the community’s daily functions, including shopping, housing, parking, transit, and open space. Figure 2-1 and Table 2-2 provide visual and textual descriptions of the existing conditions of the public realm in Downtown Monterey Park.

Figure 2-1 illustrates the interconnectivity between each aspect of the public realm. Sidewalks form the core of a pedestrian-oriented public realm, as they include not just the concrete walkway itself but many of the other elements described in Table 2-2, including curb cuts, street trees, bus stops, lighting, street furniture, and signage.

In addition to a survey of existing physical conditions in the public realm, the inventory also included an analysis of existing pedestrian, bicycle, and auto traffic. The following are some of the results of that analysis:

- The most congested intersection in Downtown is Hellman / Atlantic.
- The Garvey / Atlantic intersection and Garfield at Garfield Hospital have the most pedestrian crossings.
- Garfield at Garfield Hospital and Garvey / McPherrin have the most bicycle traffic.
- Intercity bus service is every 10 minutes on Garvey and on Atlantic.
- Local Spirit bus service only runs every 40 minutes on each of its routes.

Additional details of the public realm inventory are provided in Chapter 2 of the Existing Conditions Memorandum, available by request from the City of Monterey Park.

2.4 Private Realm Inventory

The inventory of existing conditions in the private realm examines aspects of private property in Downtown Monterey Park that would influence the type and scale of future development in the area, as well as the livability of Downtown.

Table 2-3 on the following pages summarizes the critical aspects of existing private development in Downtown Monterey Park. In addition to a general description of existing land

uses, the table provides summaries of the scale of development in each “subarea” of Downtown along the major corridors of Garvey, Atlantic, and Garfield (subareas, derived from the City’s General Plan, are described explained further in Section 2.5). Much of the data is described in terms of floor-to-area ratio (FAR). FAR can be understood as the square footage of development divided by lot size in square feet. For example, a two-story building which completely filled its lot would have an FAR of 2.0.

The FAR data in Table 2-3 gives the reader an idea of the relative intensities of existing development and allows a comparison between existing development intensity and that allowed by the General Plan. Parcel-by-parcel data collected to compile Table 2-3 in the Existing Conditions Memorandum.

Based on the data summarized in Table 2-3, Figure 2-2 illustrates different lots which mostly likely could support new development in the Downtown project area. The parcels highlighted are vacant parcels, residential parcels in commercial zones, parcels with an FAR below 0.25, and City-owned parcels. Also shown are locations which are being currently being considered by developers for potential development. While these factors do indicate that a property *may* be available for new development, the likelihood of new development is also dependent on other factors such as land value, age of the current development, parcel size, and inclination of the owner.

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Table 2-2. Public Realm Existing Conditions

Street Segments		Garvey			Atlantic	Garfield	
		Atlantic Blvd. to McPherrin Ave.	McPherrin Av. to Nicholson Ave.	Nicholson Ave. to New Ave.	Hellman Ave. to Garvey Ave.	Hellman Ave. to Garvey Ave.	Garvey Ave. to Newmark Ave.
		0.4 miles (2020')	0.5 miles (2640')	0.6 miles (3240')	0.5 miles (2640')	0.5 miles (2640')	0.2 miles (990')
General Description		This portion of Garvey Avenue links Atlantic Blvd. with the Downtown core. A mix of low-rise (1-2 story) retail and office development is generally built up to the sidewalk, although a few shopping centers do have off-street parking along the sidewalk. This area has not received streetscape enhancements like the Business Improvement District, but it does have ficus street trees and medians landscaped with trees. Cross-streets along this street of Garvey are generally lined with multi-family housing and some commercial close to Garvey.	This portion of Garvey is generally conterminous with the boundaries of the Downtown Business Improvement District. Therefore, substantial streetscape improvements have been recently installed, including Queen Palms to replace the ficus in the sidewalk, new benches, trash cans, brick sidewalk paving details, decorative crosswalks, and welcome signage in the median. This area is the most "bustling" part of downtown, with a fairly diverse mix of businesses generally built right up to the sidewalk.	Garvey east of the Business Improvement District is less dense and busy than the remainder of its length through Monterey Park. While there is some development built up to the sidewalk, a significant proportion of development is auto-serving, and some parcels are vacant. However, the sidewalks in this section are some of the widest in Monterey Park. Existing streetscape is minimal, generally ficus trees in the sidewalks and landscaped medians in the road.	Atlantic Boulevard is a busy, wide street as it extends south from the I-10 Freeway to Garvey. Sidewalks are 8-10' wide, and there are street trees intermittently along the road. Existing development is generally auto-oriented, particularly on the east side of the road, with many curb cuts and parking lots up to the sidewalk. However, existing development between Garvey and Emerson on the west side of the street is built right up to the street, with some outdoor seating at Starbucks. A proposed mixed-use project on the east side of the road north of Emerson could increase pedestrian-orientation.	This busy stretch of Garfield brings traffic from the I-10 Freeway into the City. The predominant use is medical, focused on Garfield Hospital on the west side of the road. The pedestrian environment is impacted by narrow sidewalks, as narrow at 4.5' in some locations. Generally, development is built right up to the sidewalk, with medical offices often reaching 3-5 stories in height. A number of parcels still have older residential development out of character with the busy medical services predominant along the street.	Garfield south of Garvey is a less active portion of the downtown core. Critically, the sidewalks are typically only 4.5' wide. Some trees have been preserved from the 1970's widening of the pavement by creating tree bump-outs along the curb into the parking lane. In a few locations, businesses have been set back from the sidewalk in anticipation of an overall widening of the sidewalk. Most businesses, however, are housed in older one-story commercial buildings, some converted from houses. One the east side of the road, frequent driveways cut into the narrow sidewalk.
Right-of-Way Width		100'	100'	100' (105' Orange-Alhambra)	100'	70' to 85'	70' typical
Sidewalk	Width	N: 10' S: 12'	N: 10' S: 12'	N: 10' (15' Orange-Alhambra) S: 12' (10' Orange-Alhambra)	8' typical	4.5' to 7.5'	4.5' typical
	Condition	The sidewalk is in relatively good condition. In a few locations, parkway turf existing along curb.	In this portion of Garvey, the sidewalk has received decorative treatments, with green brick pavers patterned between the concrete sidewalk slabs and framing the curb and tree wells.	In many locations, the sidewalk is still split into half-parkway / half-sidewalk, a holdover from when development was largely residential along East Garvey. The turf in existing parkways is largely dead.	The sidewalk is in relatively good condition. Sidewalk right-of-way includes some parkway along curb in area of Atlantic Times Square project.	Wider sidewalks are in relatively good condition, but the narrow sidewalks in front of older properties do show some decay.	The narrow sidewalks of this stretch show some decay. In limited locations, beige brick pavers comprise the sidewalk near the tree bump-outs.
Crosswalks			Decorative textured asphalt crosswalks throughout	2 unsignalized crossing at Sefton and Rural	1 signalized midblock crosswalk (s/o Emerson)	1 signalized midblock crosswalk (at Garfield Hospital) 1 unsignalized crossing at Garcelon	
Average Block Size		510' long	530' long	430' long	1320' long	W: 440' long E: 1320' long	600' long
Average Signal Spacing		Every 670'	Every 660'	Every 810'	Every 880'	Every 530'	Every 990'
Curb Cuts	Frequency	1 driveway per 210'	1 driveway per 590'	1 driveway per 380'	1 driveway per 220'	1 driveway per 180'	1 driveway per 150'
	Description	Curb cuts are particularly clustered near Atlantic Boulevard at gas stations and 99 Ranch shopping center.	Curb cuts are very infrequent in this area. Half are between Ramona and Garfield on south side of street.	Curb cuts are relatively infrequent. Cluster of curb cuts between Florence and Elizabeth on north side of street.	Curb cuts throughout except between Garvey and Emerson on west side of street (Harbor Village and Mar Center).	Curb cuts are very frequent, other than in vicinity of Garfield Hospital on west side of street.	Curb cuts are extremely frequent, particularly on east side of street.

Downtown Monterey Park Mixed-Use and Pedestrian Linkages Plan

Table 2-2. Public Realm Existing Conditions, cont.

Street Segments		Garvey			Atlantic	Garfield	
		Atlantic Blvd. to McPherrin Ave.	McPherrin Av. to Nicholson Ave.	Nicholson Ave. to New Ave.	Hellman Ave. to Garvey Ave.	Hellman Ave. to Garvey Ave.	Garvey Ave. to Newmark Ave.
		0.4 miles (2020')	0.5 miles (2640')	0.6 miles (3240')	0.5 miles (2640')	0.5 miles (2640')	0.2 miles (990')
Street Trees	Species	Ficus typical	Queen Palm typical	Ficus typical	Ficus typical	Ficus and other varied species	Eucalyptus typical
	Description	Spacing 50' OC typical with occasional gaps in planting pattern.	Newly planted pairs of Queen Palms typically spaced 50' OC.	Spacing 50' OC typical with occasional gaps in planting pattern.	Trees approximately 30' OC. However, major gap in planting in front development along west side btw. Garvey and Emerson and along east side near Garvey.	Trees planted infrequently along street, generally in front of more recent development. 4.5' sidewalks do not accommodate street trees.	Only trees located in infrequent tree "bump-outs" in the parking lane. Trees have died in some bump-outs.
	Tree Wells	4' square gaps in sidewalk, no planting or grate	New metal tree grates installed.	4' square gaps in sidewalk, no planting or grate	4' square gaps in sidewalk, no planting or grate	Irregular gaps in sidewalk, no planting or grate	Groundcover around trees in the bump-outs.
Raised Medians		Landscaped median intermittent with left turn lane. Median includes large established trees and low groundcover.	Landscaped median intermittent with left turn lane includes turf and large, established trees. Median at McPherrin and Nicholson includes "Welcome to Downtown Monterey Park" gateway artwork.	Landscaped median intermittent with left turn lane. Median includes large established trees and low groundcover.	Only raised median is immediately south of Hellman with turf, a single tree, and "Welcome to Monterey Park" signage.	Only raised median is small median immediately south of Hellman with landscaping, a single tree, and "Welcome to Monterey Park" signage.	No raised medians.
Alleys		None.	- North side from Lincoln east to halfway through block. - South side from Lincoln to Nicholson.	- North side from Alhambra east to halfway through block. - South side from Nicholson to Orange.	None.	None.	None.
Bus Stops	Routes	Spirit 2 (40 min. peak) Spirit 4 (40 min. peak) MTA 70/370 (8 min. peak)	Spirit 3 (40 min. peak) Spirit 4 (40 min. peak) MTA 70/370 (8 min. peak)	Spirit 3 (40 min. peak) MTA 70/370 (8 min. peak)	Spirit 1 (40 min. peak) Spirit 4 (40 min. peak) MTA 260/361 (8 min. peak)	Spirit 1 (40 min. peak) Spirit 4 (40 min. peak) Montebello 30 (45 min. peak)	Spirit 1 (40 min. peak) Montebello 30 (45 min. peak)
	Spacing	1 bus stop per 670'	1 bus stop per 750'	1 bus stop per 930'	1 bus stop per 750'	1 bus stop per 1060'	1 bus stop per 660'
	Amenities	All stops have seating (concrete benches) and trash receptacles. Four of the six stops have shelters.	All stops have seating and trash receptacles. Seating and trash receptacles are part of Business Improvement District (BID) streetscape project. Only one stop has a shelter.	All stops have concrete bench seating and trash receptacles. Only two stops have shelters.	All stops have concrete bench seating and trash receptacles. Only the stops at Garvey have shelters.	All stops have seating and trash receptacles. Stops between Garvey and Avondale have special benches and trash receptacles from the BID streetscape project. There are no shelters.	All stops have seating and trash receptacles from the BID streetscape project. There are no shelters.
Lighting		Standard cobra lighting.	Unique historicist lighting fixtures as a part of BID streetscape project.	Standard cobra lighting.	Standard cobra lighting.	Standard cobra lighting.	Standard cobra lighting.
Street Furniture	Bicycle Racks	None noted.	None noted.	None noted.	None noted.	None noted.	None noted.
	News racks	None noted.	None noted.	None noted.	None noted.	None noted.	None noted.
	Trash receptacles	Typically located at bus stops.	In addition to bus stops, special trash receptacles have been located on most blocks as a part of BID streetscape project.	Typically located at bus stops.	Typically located at bus stops.	Within the BID, special trash receptacles have been located on most blocks as a part of BID streetscape project.	In addition to bus stops, special trash receptacles have been located on most blocks as a part of BID streetscape project.
Signage		NA	Attractive street signs in BID	NA	NA	Attractive street signs in BID	Attractive street signs in BID
Prominent Views		View of hills and housing to west from Chandler.	None noted.	None noted.	View of hills and housing to south.	View of hills and housing to south.	View of hills and housing to south.

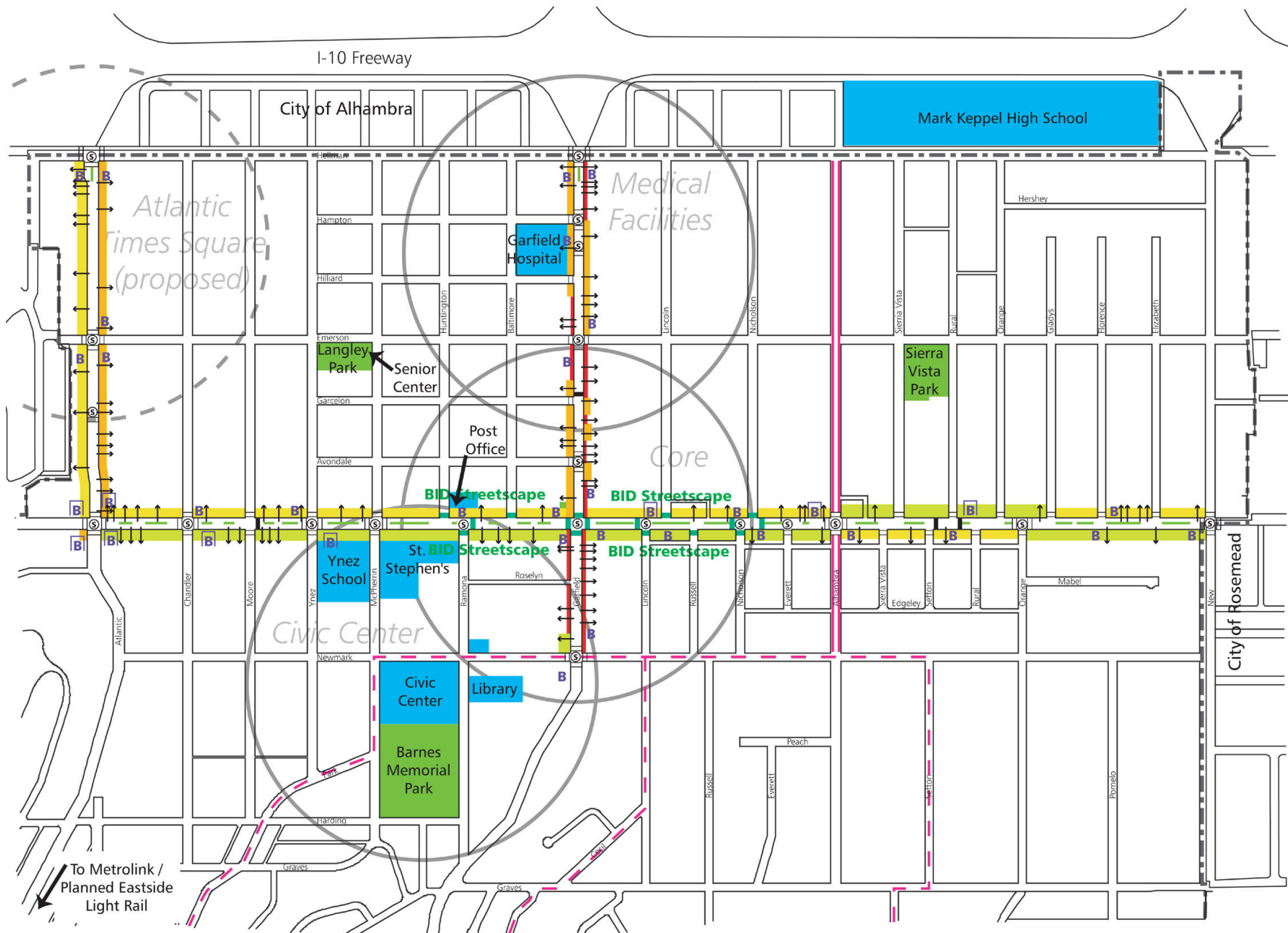


Figure 2-1. Public Realm Inventory

LEGEND

Sidewalks

-  Under 5' Wide
-  7-8' Wide
-  10' Wide
-  12- 15' Wide
-  Curb Cut (Driveway)
-  Bus Stop
-  Bus Stop with Shelter

Crosswalks

-  Typical Crosswalk
-  Decorative Crosswalk
-  Unsignalized Crossing of Arterial Street

Bicycle Facilities

-  Class II Bike Lane
-  Class III Bike Route
(Note: General Plan indicates a Class III Bike Route on Garfield Avenue.)

Other Street Features

-  Signalized Intersection
-  Landscaped Median

Public Facilities

-  Community Facility
-  Open Space
-  Quarter Mile Walking Radius
-  City Boundary

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Table 2-3: Private Realm Existing Conditions¹

Subareas (per General Plan)	North Atlantic	North Garfield	"West Garvey"	Downtown		East Garvey	Project Area Total
				Core	Perimeter		
Existing Land Use Summary	- Large shopping center developments anchored by major restaurants / supermarkets 3 large supermarkets (99 Ranch, Ralphs, Shun Fat) 2 gas stations, 2 auto-service, 1 car wash 3 drive through banks 1 motel 1 mobile home park - Several vacant lots on east side of street south of Hellman (proposed Atlantic Times Square Project.)	- Garfield Hospital - Many multi-story medical offices – often "condo-ized" so multiple owners for each building 2 Convalescent homes 1 Church 2 gas stations at Hellman 3 street retail centers 3 older residential developments	- Mostly street retail: restaurants, salons, travel agencies 7 office buildings - United Continental Bank - Ynez Elementary School	- Mostly street retail: restaurants, salons, travel agencies - Two city-owned surface parking lots - Bank of America - Hong Kong Supermarket	- Substantial street retail: restaurants, salons, travel agencies - CitiBank - Post Office - St. Stephen's Church and School	- Substantial street retail: restaurants, salons, travel agencies - Quong Hoa Supermarket 16 auto-serving businesses - Small parcels	NA
Relationship of development to the pedestrian environment	- In general, development along Atlantic Boulevard is auto-oriented, with large parking lots coming up to the sidewalk without a landscaped edge. - However, the multi-story commercial centers on the west side of the street between Garvey and Emerson have parking garages located in the rear of the development, and retail shops face the street with pedestrian entries. - At the Mar Center, a Starbucks utilizes a small plaza between the street and the parking lot to provide outdoor seating to patrons.	- Development along Garvey is generally built right up to the street. However, sidewalk width varies significantly in front of buildings, with older development having only 4.5' sidewalk in front. - Many of the major medical buildings, particularly those built in the last 30 years, have landscaped setbacks between the sidewalk and the building.	- Development in this area between the North Atlantic and Downtown subareas is generally similar to the Downtown area, with most development built up to the sidewalk and limited parking in the rear. - The Ynez School is enclosed with a chain-link fence. - Restaurants in this area do not have outdoor seating.	- The Downtown Core is almost entirely comprised of buildings built up to the sidewalk with primary entries from the sidewalk. - Restaurants generally do not have outdoor seating. - However, the building at the northwest corner of Garvey and Garfield provides a small pedestrian plaza with benches, tables and landscaping, right at the corner. This plaza is used by a tea shop in the building.	- The Downtown Perimeter is similar to development in the core. - However, along Garfield, south of Garvey, development is less pedestrian-friendly, with many driveways and narrow parking areas directly adjacent to the sidewalk.	- The East Garvey subarea, like the rest of Garvey, does have substantial development built up to the sidewalk. - However, development in this area is punctuated frequently by small shopping centers with parking between the sidewalk and shops, as well as auto-service businesses with storage lots built right up to the sidewalk.	NA

¹ – Private realm analysis includes only those parcels within each subarea which have frontage along the three main corridors – Garvey, Atlantic, and Garfield.

Downtown Monterey Park Mixed-Use and Pedestrian Linkages Plan

Table 2-3: Private Realm Existing Conditions, cont.

Subareas (per General Plan)		North Atlantic	North Garfield	"West Garvey"	Downtown		East Garvey	Project Area Total
					Core	Perimeter		
Typical Building Height		- Development 1-story typical - Shopping centers on west side between Emerson and Garvey 2-3 stories typical	- Medical buildings typically 3-4 stories. - Other development typically 1 story.	Development 1-2 stories, typical.	Development 1-2 stories, typical.	Development 1-2 stories, typical.	Development 1-2 stories, typical.	NA
Year of Lot Development	Average for Subarea	1971	1971	1957	1956	1962	1957	1960
	Range (Min.–Max.)	1945 – 1991	1929 – 2002	1924 – 2001	1929 – 1997	1930 – 2002	1922 – 1999	1922 – 2002
Total Number of Lots		33	24	31	36	29	98	251
Existing Lot Square Footage	Total for Subarea	1,411,000	877,000	408,000	718,000	539,000	804,000	4,590,000
	Average per Lot	42,800	36,500	13,200	19,900	18,600	8,200	18,400
Existing Building Square Footage	Total for Subarea	474,000	536,000	148,000	317,000	240,000	312,000	1,975,000
	Average per Lot	14,400	22,300	4,800	8,800	8,300	3,200	7,900
Average Existing FAR		0.26	0.47	0.45	0.56	0.49	0.48	0.46
Maximum Permitted FAR according to General Plan ²		2.0 (2.25)	1.0	1.0 ³	1.0 (1.25)	0.65 (0.90)	0.5 (0.75)	NA
Maximum Permitted FAR according to Specific Plans (where applicable)		N. Atlantic Specific Plan Lot Size – Base FAR / FAR If Certain Criteria Met: - Less than 20,000 SF – 0.25 / 0.50 - Lots 20,000 – 30,000 SF – 0.33 / 0.65 - Lots over 30,000 SF – 1.5 w/ CUP	NA	NA	Garvey/Garfield Specific Plan Lot Size – Base FAR / FAR If Certain Criteria Met: - Lots under 10,000 SF – 0.25 / 0.50 - Lots 10,000 – 30,000 SF – 0.33 / 0.65 - Lots over 30,000 SF – 0.4 / 0.8 (2.0 w/ CUP)		NA	NA
Total Potential Development Sq. Footage (according to General Plan) ²		2,348,000 (2,700,000)	340,000	263,000	410,000 (583,000)	95,000 (174,000)	146,000 (313,000)	3,602,000 (4,373,000)

2 – General Plan gives an addition 0.25 FAR bonus for mixed use development (shown in parenthesis).

3 – Maximum permitted FAR for "West Garvey" taken from Zoning Ordinance (maximum permitted for C-S, C-P, or O-P with CUP).



Figure 2-2. Potential Parcels for Development

LEGEND

Parcel Categories

-  Vacant
-  Residential
-  City-Owned
-  FAR less than 0.25
-  Developments under
Consideration /
Initial Interest
-  General Plan Subarea

2.5 Current Plans**2.5.1 City of Monterey Park General Plan**

The City of Monterey Park General Plan was adopted in July 18, 2001. The General Plan is required by state law and sets forth overall goals and objectives and policies to guide development in a city. The General Plan provides a framework for future development and all development must be consistent with this plan. Figure 2-3 illustrates the General Plan Land Uses in the Study area. The designations along the main streets of Downtown are mixed-use or commercial. Superimposed are the General Plan Focus Areas and FAR subareas.

For clarity, General Plan subareas have also been used in this planning effort: North Atlantic, North Garfield, Downtown Core, Downtown Perimeter, and East Garvey. However, an additional “subarea” called “West Garvey” has been added to those included in the General Plan, in order to define the portion of Garvey Avenue between North Atlantic Boulevard and the Downtown Perimeter.

2.5.2 Specific Plans

Two Specific Plans were adopted in October 1987 for portions of the Central Commercial Redevelopment Area. The Garvey/Garfield Specific Plan is focused on properties adjacent to the intersection of Garvey Avenue and Garfield Avenue from Emerson Avenue to south of Newmark Avenue along Garfield Avenue and from Huntington Avenue to Lincoln Avenue on

Garvey Avenue (Figure 2-4). The North Atlantic Boulevard Specific Plan includes an area on both sides of Atlantic Boulevard from Hellman Avenue to just south of Garvey Avenue (Figure 2-5). Specific Plans and/or zoning ordinances provide for the implementation of the General Plan policies. It should be noted that the General Plan is the guiding land use policy document of the City. In Monterey Park, the General Plan has been adopted more recently than the Specific Plans, and the Specific Plans will need to be updated, revised, or deleted in order to reflect the policies of the General Plan.

2.5.3 Zoning Ordinance

In addition to the General and Specific Plans, the downtown area is governed by the City’s Zoning Ordinance. The zoning ordinance contains standards for development including the type of uses permitted, lot sizes, FARs, property setbacks, building height, and parking requirements. The zoning standards for the three corridors are generally commercial in nature. Segments of each corridor fall within various zones. Note that most lots within the project area other than along Garfield between Hellman and Emerson fall under a PD overlay zone. This “Planned Development” overlay is currently the means for implementation of mixed-use developments in commercial zones.

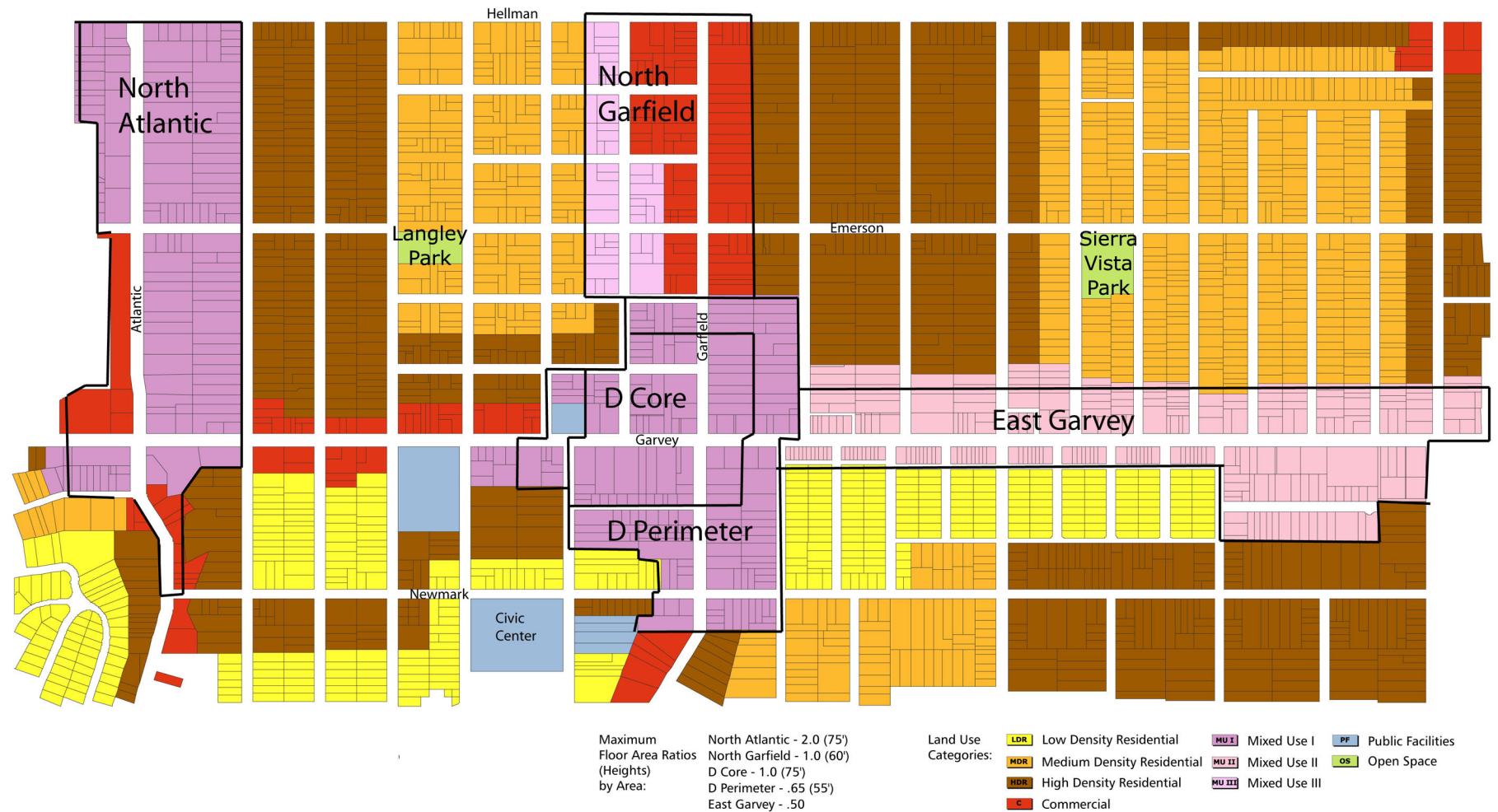


Figure 2-3. General Plan Land Uses

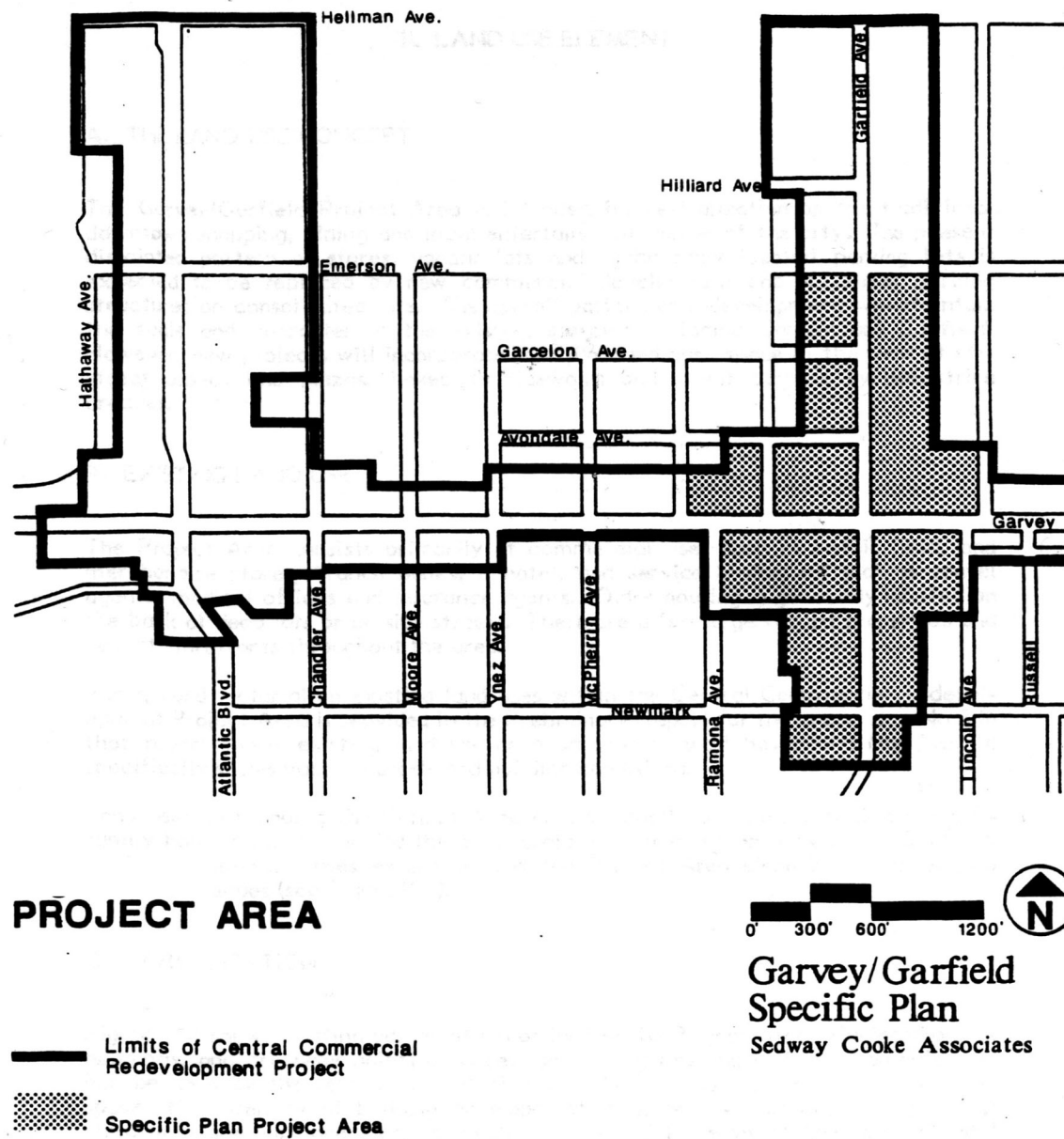
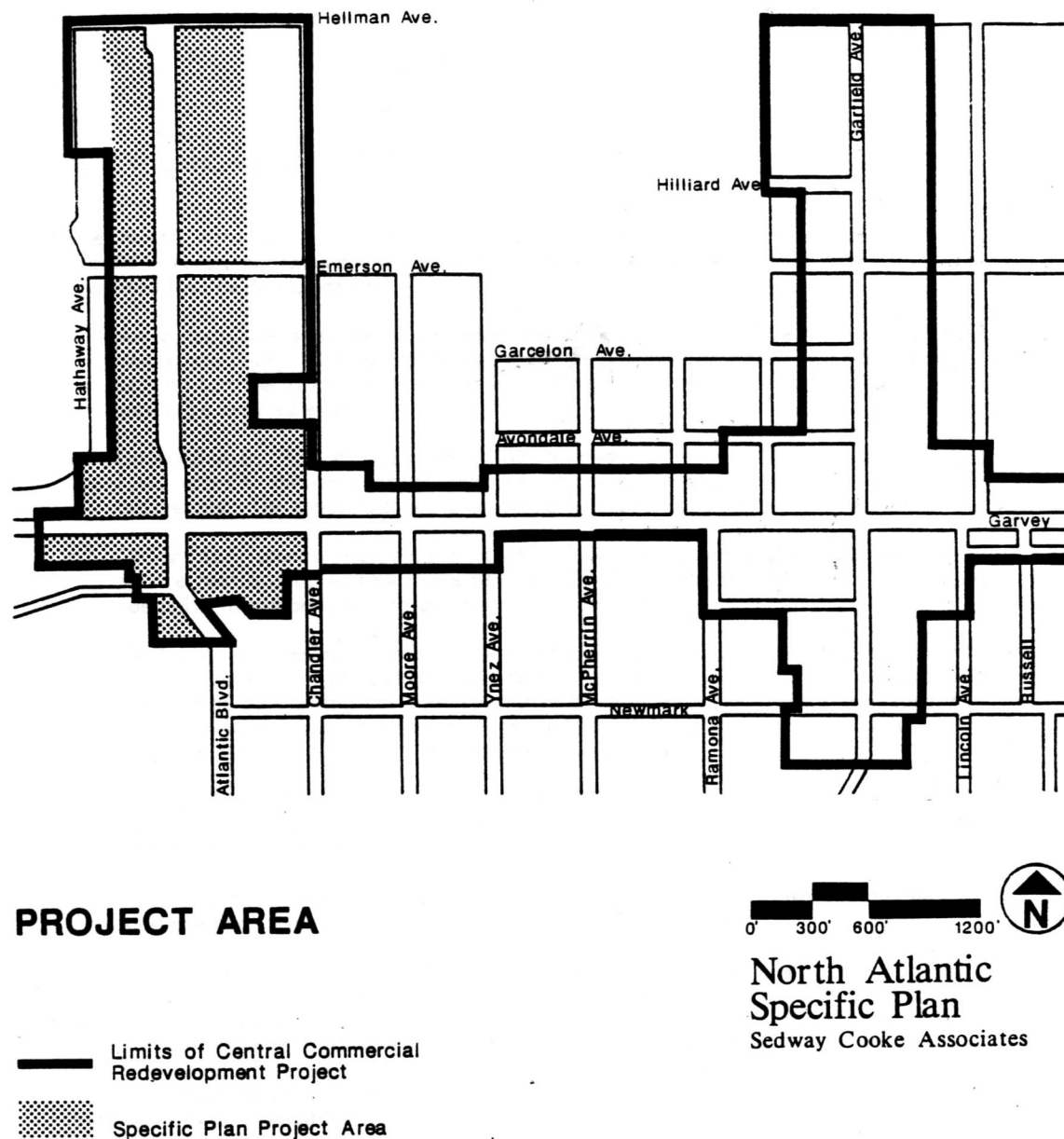


Figure 2-4. Garvey/Garfield Specific Plan Area



2.5.4 Downtown Parking Management Program

The Downtown Parking Management Program approved by the City in 2000 provides parking strategies for commercial businesses. This parking study tabulates the parking supply in the Downtown area for individual businesses and on-street. A toolbox of options is provided to address parking issues. A few of the parking options as summarized in the General Plan include:

- *Joint use.* A parking arrangement that serves two or more land uses.
- *Clustered parking.* Combines several parking uses in a facility to better use parking spaces, maximize land use, and to reduce overall development costs.
- *In-lieu of parking fees.* Offers the developer the option of building the required parking or contributing funds for future parking or transportation improvements.
- *Demand-based parking requirements.* Bases parking requirements on actual local demand levels. Requires current and future parking demand study.
- *Preferential parking for rideshare vehicles.* Reserve conveniently located parking spaces for carpools and vanpools.

Figure 2-5. North Atlantic Specific Plan Area

2.6 Stakeholder Comments

In addition to the inventories of existing conditions, community members provide additional information based on their personal knowledge of Downtown Monterey Park. These comments contributed significantly to an understanding of the issues, opportunities, and constraints for establishing a pedestrian-oriented livable community in downtown. Some of the topics which stakeholders commented on include:

- Existing mix of businesses Downtown,
- Business climate,
- Possible new businesses for Downtown,
- Mixed-use development,
- Lot size
- Identity of Downtown Monterey Park,
- Competition with neighboring cities,
- Tour buses,
- Pedestrian movement,
- Cycling,
- Transit,
- Traffic,
- Parking, and
- Streetscape / Open Space

Specific stakeholder comments are reflected in Section 2.7. However, for a more detailed listing of stakeholder comments, refer to Chapter 5 of the Existing Conditions Memorandum, available by request from the City of Monterey Park.

2.7 Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

This section explores how the information gleaned from the existing conditions inventory has affected the development of the vision and recommendations for Downtown Monterey Park. Each subsection contains descriptions of specific issues, opportunities, and constraints which affect the nature of improvements that are needed and feasible in Downtown Monterey Park.

2.7.1 Mix of Uses

Historically, the downtown area of Monterey Park is known for its excellent Asian restaurants. However, today other areas are competing for downtown Monterey Park's business including Alhambra, San Gabriel, and Rowland Heights. Today, downtown Monterey Park still has many excellent restaurants. However, according to the BID management, extensive price competition between restaurants is making many of these restaurants poor investments. In the Downtown area, most of the restaurants are concentrated along Garvey but with some major restaurants along Atlantic. In addition, the area has a considerable number of beauty shops, travel agencies and more recently tutoring facilities. There are five major supermarkets in the area (see Figures 2-6 to 2-8).

Some of the missing uses in downtown found in pedestrian-friendly areas include outdoor cafes, bookstores, retail clothing catering to a more



Figure 2-6. Commercial center with large "seafood palace" restaurant.



Figure 2-7. Hong Kong Supermarket.



Figure 2-8. Small shops on Garvey Avenue.

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diverse population, home improvement stores and nighttime uses such as a movie theater and night clubs. Also missing are new residential uses to create a 24/7 environment, extending the time period when downtown is used. Members of the community have mentioned that national retail chains are absent and should be represented in the area.

In the last two decades, there has been little development. The General Plan adopted in 2001 recommends a mix of uses including mixed-use projects in the downtown area. This opportunity has stimulated developer interest in several mixed-use projects with both residential and retail combined with new parking. The challenge will be to capitalize on this opportunity to diversity the mix of uses downtown and at the same time to design new projects to include an environment with adequate parking and walkable amenities such as wider sidewalks, outdoor dining and other pedestrian amenities within the pedestrian realm.



Figure 2-9. Atlantic Boulevard at Garvey Avenue showing wide street with few pedestrian amenities

2.7.2 Market Potential

Market studies of Monterey Park have shown that the potential exists to increase commercial activity in the Downtown area, with an opportunity to increase the number of national chain tenants. Factors which highlight the potential for growth in downtown include a large number of high-spending “Generation Y” residents, many professional families earning more than \$75,000 per year, and a current underrepresentation of national tenants when compared to other communities with similar spending traits.

2.7.3 Residential Uses along the Corridors

The General Plan recommends mixed-use projects in the Downtown study area. Mixed-use includes a combination of commercial uses with residential uses. Along the project area corridors, there is very little residential today, and the residential that exists is old and typically run-down. However, within the study area itself



Figure 2-10. Poor parking lot edge treatment along sidewalk on Garvey Avenue.

there are over 8,000 residential units within walking distance of the corridors. By 2020, substantially more housing units are projected for the Downtown study area. However, several key issues must be addressed to create an environment along these corridors more conducive to residential development.

Key issues and constraints to developing residential uses as a part of mixed-use project along the corridors include:

- Shallow and small parcels along the corridor, especially along Garvey, making development difficult
- Wide streets carrying a substantial amount of traffic with few pedestrian and streetscape amenities except in the BID area along Garvey (Figure 2-9)
- Long blocks with a lack of parallel accessways such as alleys, requiring that access to individual parcels be directly from the major streets
- Relatively high land values and few vacant buildings or parcels making projects difficult to pencil out
- Absence today of development standards for mixed-use projects addressing issues such as setbacks, parking, façade treatment, mix of uses, open space, height, and parking (see Figure 2-10)

With appropriate mixed-use standards, many of the above issues and constraints may be

overcome. Potential development standards and guidelines to explore include:

- Concepts for improving the pedestrian realm of each major corridor, making the area more conducive to residential uses
- Reflecting proximity to transit, more flexible parking standards for residential to incorporate potential for live-work units
- More flexible requirements for amount and type of open space
- Requirements for sound insulation and air conditioning to address potential noise intrusion from major corridors
- Requirements for window placement and building height transition when adjacent to low-density residential development
- Guidelines for building articulation and design of ground floor uses
- Guidelines for size and type of units (live-work, lofts, flats) and separation of entires
- Guidelines and standards requiring buildings to be located along the sidewalk with parking underground or behind
- Guidelines for signage
- Some relief from lot consolidation standards for mixed-use development

2.7.4 Diversity of the City

Over time, Monterey Park has become a more diverse population, which could be a selling point for locating businesses, shopping, and residents in downtown. Members of the community have expressed that the opportunity exists for capitalizing on Monterey Park's image

for excellent food. This could include marketing the area not only for Chinese food but also other International foods such as Thai food, Mexican food, etc. Perhaps an international marketplace, farmers-market project combined with mixed use with a strong pedestrian orientation would be an excellent opportunity to appeal to the Los Angeles regional market. Placing Monterey Park food venues together in appropriate regional and national food guides, plus kiosks or signage to guide patrons in the downtown area might encourage others to come for the food and shop after that for other goods and services.

2.7.5 Parking

Parking was mentioned by most local Monterey Park residents as a problem in Downtown. A recent Downtown Parking Management Program prepared 1998-2000 indicates that substantial parking is available in downtown but not always where parking is needed. In front of the busiest proprietors, parking is often fully utilized (see Figure 2-11), especially on the weekends. The plan indicated a series of tool box parking options to better utilize existing parking such as joint use, clustered parking, in lieu of parking fees, and demand based parking requirements.

Another issue is that parking requirements for multiple residential in the City are quite high. Requirements are per bedroom. For example, 3½ spaces are required for a 3 bedroom unit. These requirements may not be appropriate for mixed use which assumes that many trips will be



Figure 2-11. City-owned parking lot north of Garvey on Garfield is often fully-utilized.

satisfied by walking and transit. In the mixed-use ordinances from other cities in the area, the City found that most required 2 spaces per unit or fewer. In Santa Monica, only one space per unit is being considered. There is an opportunity for reducing the amount of parking required in Monterey Park, particularly if combined with many of the pedestrian-oriented recommendations and toolbox parking options mentioned in the Parking Management Program.

The Garvey / Garfield Specific Plan recommended downtown parking structures be developed to create a sufficient amount of public parking in large structures so that patrons will clearly know where to park when shopping in downtown. This is a technique that has been utilized in revitalizing downtown Santa Monica and Pasadena; however, both these cities already had the structured parking available from previous failed retail complexes. Monterey



Figure 2-12. Corner plaza developed at Garvey / Garfield intersection as a part of Specific Plan.



Figure 2-13. Narrow sidewalk on Garfield.

Park, however, would need to finance these structures in today's dollars, which will be a challenge. Construction of a new parking structure could be investigated by the City in the City-owned lots near Garvey/Garfield, or as a part of private development in areas where small businesses have no parking today.

2.7.6 Specific Plans

The two Downtown Specific Plans, *North Atlantic* and *Garvey/Garfield*, both prepared in 1987, are complicated and are not entirely consistent with the updated General Plan. They need to be modified or eliminated and replaced with new mixed-use standards. However, certain portions of these Specific Plans are valuable, such as:

- Circulation concepts that require consolidation of driveways and key access points such as a new intersection along Atlantic between Hellman and Emerson.
- Many of the pedestrian-friendly development standards (see Figure 2-12).

2.7.7 Development Potential / FARs

In order to encourage mixed-use development in the corridors, the City's General Plan provides a 0.25 FAR bonus for mixed-use development. However, a bonus of 0.25 FAR may not be enough to encourage mixed-use development, particularly in subareas where the base FAR is already fairly low, such as East Garvey and the Downtown Perimeter. In these locations, even with the 0.25 bonus allowable FAR would still be less than 1.0. This FAR may not be enough

to allow financially feasible developments that combine commercial and residential.

2.7.8 Vehicular Traffic Dominates the Pedestrian and Transit Environment along the Corridors

Pedestrians use sidewalks to gain access to private development and to move through the community. When provided with additional amenities, sidewalks become social spaces where individuals can gather, relax, shop, and dine. For a street to be walkable with room for pedestrians, street trees for shade, and other pedestrian amenities, a 10' sidewalk is the absolute minimum and 12'-15' is more comfortable.

However, the major streets (Atlantic and Garfield) leading to Downtown from the freeway are dominated by vehicular traffic. These streets have been widened to carry vehicular traffic at the expense of the pedestrian and transit users. Sidewalks on Atlantic are adjacent to the curb and in some cases only 8' wide, inhospitable to the pedestrian and making it difficult to locate transit shelters and amenities. On Garfield, the sidewalks are even less, 4.5' to 7.5' wide (see Figure 2-13) with tall Eucalyptus trees in curb bump outs, too small in size to have a positive impact on the sidewalk.

Garvey, in the Business Improvement District, has a more pedestrian-friendly development with new streetscape amenities including new palm trees, a landscaped median with gateway,

making crossing distances less, new historically inspired lighting, new benches, new trash receptacles, transit shelters, and sidewalks at least 10' wide. Also, most businesses are located with building entrances adjacent to the sidewalk, which fosters pedestrian activity. The City of Monterey Park General Plan calls for even wider sidewalks of 17' to 20' wide, which were not built when the streetscape plan was implemented. The Garvey/Garfield Specific Plan calls for a five-foot setback on private property adjacent to the sidewalk, a policy which should be continued and would result in a 15' to 20' sidewalk.

This study needs to investigate opportunities to expand the pedestrian environment along all corridors by such mechanisms as setbacks on private property and/or expand the sidewalks into on-street parking areas when parking may be provided in private or city parking structures.

2.7.9 Pedestrian Crossings

Pedestrian crossings are made more difficult because of enhancements to the street for automobiles. Curb queuing areas are quite small in some places, making waiting to cross the street uncomfortable. It should be noted, however, that the Garvey/Garfield Specific Plan calls for pedestrian plazas at the corners of the Garvey/Garfield intersection that would assist with pedestrian queuing. So far, only one plaza has been constructed, at the northwest corner of the intersection. Potential developments being considered at the other corners of this

intersection should continue this pattern of establishing pedestrian plazas at the corners.

The intersection of Garvey/Atlantic is possibly the most difficult intersection for pedestrian crossings in the study area for several reasons (see Figure 2-14). The roadway is particularly wide, separate left (and right) turn signals make judging traffic flows difficult, and curb cuts near the intersection (for the gas stations) compound the difficulty of navigating the area. However, this intersection is a critical pedestrian node because it links two of the project corridors, and it is the transfer point for two major MTA bus lines. In fact, pedestrian counts of major intersections showed this intersection to have the highest level of pedestrian activity in Downtown Monterey Park. Improvements to this intersection should be a focus of later phases of this project.

In the past, the City has also had a policy of removing striping from unsignalized pedestrian crossings of major streets because cars did not observe pedestrians, creating dangerous situations. While removal of the striping may cause pedestrians to be more cautious, it also discourages movement across the street. Few pedestrian signals have been installed to enable safe pedestrian street crossings, but this is an opportunity to be considered. Along Garvey, the installation of decorative asphalt crosswalks has not only added to the attractiveness of the area, but has increased the visibility of crosswalks, enhancing their safety.

Several stakeholders also commented that “scramble”-phase crossings of intersections, where all vehicular traffic is stopped and pedestrians are able to cross in any direction through an intersection, would be beneficial. These scramble-phase crossings provide pedestrians with a clear window of opportunity to move through the intersection in any direction. While current pedestrian levels in Downtown do not warrant their installation, as pedestrian traffic increases due to new pedestrian-oriented development, scramble crossings could be implemented at intersections in Downtown. In addition, there are opportunities to install other crossing improvements, including “count down”

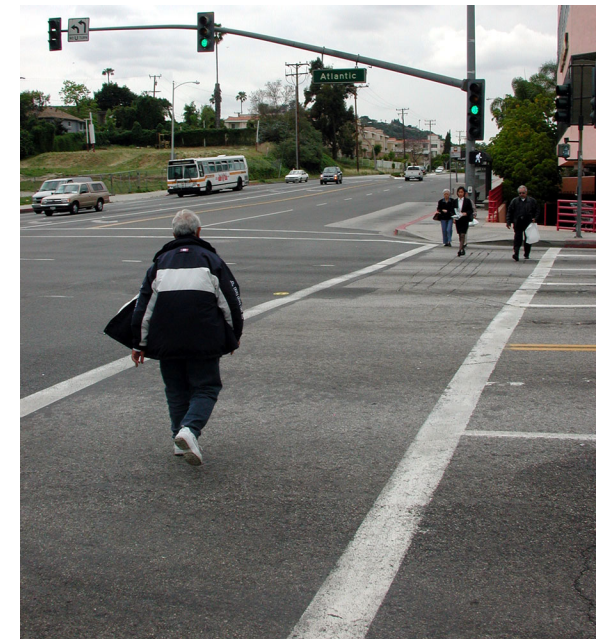


Figure 2-14. Long crossing of Atlantic Boulevard at Garvey Avenue.

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pedestrian signals at intersections that let pedestrians know how many seconds they have until the light turns red.

2.7.10 Other Downtown Linkages

Issues and opportunities for linkages in Downtown Monterey Park are described here in terms of pedestrians, transit, and bicycles:

■ *Pedestrian*

As the inventory of the public realm discussed, there already exist several nodes in the Downtown project area that support substantial amounts of walking (illustrated with the quarter-mile radii in Figure 2). In these areas, people may be willing to walk between destinations. However, Figure 2 also shows that in the context of the project area as a whole, the walking radii either barely overlap or do not overlap at all. There is a particularly large gap between the pedestrian nodes centered around Garfield / Garvey and the pedestrian nodes (existing and proposed) centered around Atlantic. It will be critical to find ways to either

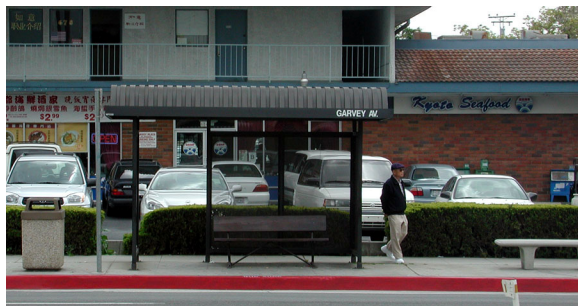


Figure 2-15. Existing bus shelter on Garvey Avenue.

encourage pedestrian movement between the Garfield and Atlantic activity areas, or to provide alternative means (most likely transit) of getting between the two areas.

■ *Transit*

Transit, both into the Downtown area from the surrounding region and circulator service around the Downtown area, should be better integrated into the pedestrian environment. While there are sufficient bus stops along the project corridors, transit has not yet been a major consideration in design of public infrastructure. For example, new bus shelters were not included in the BID streetscape program (see Figure 2-15). In fact, few bus stops have shelters. Curb bump-outs at the bus stops could also be considered to provide additional space on the sidewalk where riders are waiting for service. The intersection of Atlantic/Garvey is a major transfer point between two MTA bus lines, both of which run at least every ten minutes during weekdays. Future phases of this project should focus on that intersection.

Because the project corridors are too long to be comfortably walkable by the average pedestrian, circulator transit service should be provided through the Downtown area. Existing Spirit bus service does provide some circulator service, but headways are too large (every 40 minutes). Increasing headways or developing more focused

routing could enhance this service. In addition, there is an opportunity for a shuttle service to the Eastside light rail project, which with a stop at Atlantic Boulevard and Pomona. The Eastside light rail project is scheduled for completion in 2007.

■ *Bicycle*

Bicycle circulation is currently fairly minimal through the Downtown study area. Some locations do show increased levels of cycling however, particularly near Garfield Hospital and the intersection of McPherrin / Garvey (near Ynez and St. Stephen's Schools). However, cycling would provide a beneficial alternative means of access to the project corridors from the surrounding area, increasing the area from which the project corridors could draw visitors and workers without bringing additional vehicles into the area.

The only Class II bike lanes in the City are along Alhambra Avenue. Parallel Class II bike lanes on other north-south streets, possibly McPherrin Avenue, could provide additional access to Garvey. (Class II bike lanes are striped on the street, providing an exclusive space for cyclists. They are preferable to Class III bike routes which do not provide an exclusive lane for cyclists.) Currently, both Emerson and Newmark bear significant vehicular traffic, particularly during peak hours. However, with traffic calming improvements, it may be possible to

make these streets more comfortable for Class III east-west bicycle movement.

2.7.11 Traffic

The following are some of the vehicular traffic issues which should be addressed in this project:

- *Hellman / Atlantic*
The existing level of service is very poor with additional complexity due to the freeway ramps. Investigate possible alternatives for vehicular and pedestrian circulation, especially when the proposed Atlantic Times Square project is developed.
- *McPherrin / Garvey*
The existing level of service is poor. There are many bicycles in this area, potentially because of the proximity of the two elementary schools (Ynez and St. Stephen's). Consider enhancements which protect bicycle and pedestrian movement in this area.

In addition, the General Plan includes a program of street widening for both Atlantic Boulevard and Garfield Avenue. As new development occurs, there will be opportunities to implement this widening program. However, if the livability of Downtown is to be improved, this widening should occur in conjunction with pedestrian-oriented improvements to the streets.

