

The illustrative version of the Uptown Whittier Specific Plan indicates the possible future of development based on existing conditions and available opportunities. The illustrative plan is a 20-year view of what could be built in Uptown, lot by lot, building by building. This overall vision of the total build out enables a study of the consequences for parking, street layout and traffic flow, retail opportunities, infrastructure requirements, housing choices, and investments in the public realm. The incremental introduction of projects over time will likely change many of the specific details of this illustration, but its fundamental objectives, qualities, and overall character will remain intact. This is because the bedrock of the plan will remain the fundamental principles of great town center design described in detail in Chapter 1:

- Pedestrian orientation
- Mix of land uses
- Infill development
- Interconnected street system
- Quality of public realm
- Distinct character
- Housing choice
- Smart transportation and parking

The Specific Plan incorporates these principles into the particular needs and context of Uptown Whittier through six catalytic strategies that will help transform Uptown into the jewel of Whittier:

- Retail Development: An urban design and economic development strategy to strengthen local retail and attract national-level retail to Uptown
- Park Once System: An approach to consolidate parking, share it amongst different land uses, and generate revenue for improving and maintaining Uptown
- · Housing Development: An aggressive policy-based strategy to attract a wide range of housing types, especially ownership models, that will create the vibrancy of a town center and a customer base for retail in Uptown
- Churches as Catalysts: As property-owners, anchors in the community, and non-profit organizations, churches can leverage their assets to develop affordable housing and mixed-use projects, including community services and facilities in Uptown
- College as Stakeholder: Whittier College can bring to bear its significance as a civic institution with a long history and major presence on the eastern edge of the plan area to create a mutually beneficial economic and social relationship with Uptown
- · Sense of Identity: A series of small-scale interventions to mark Uptown as a distinct destination that is memorable to residents and visitors alike

The subsequent sections in this chapter describe these strategies in greater detail.



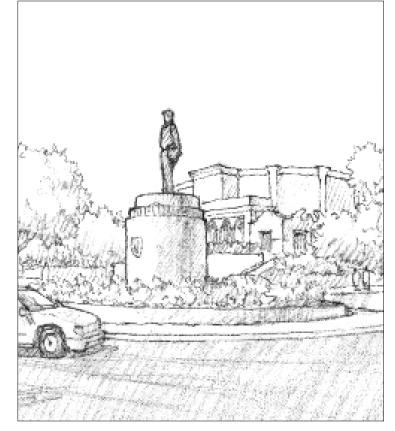
Introduction of new retail on Philadelphia Street



Church properties converted into campus like settings with housing



Proposed parking structure lined with retail and residential uses



Landmark serves as a marker for the college and for Uptown



New courtyard housing integrated into existing residential areas



Mixed use projects interject economic and social vitality

#### 2.1.1 Retail Development

The retail industry has recently discovered that outdoor retail in an urban setting better fits the lifestyle of consumers, often yielding more regular trips and higher sales volumes than standard shopping centers or malls. Retailers are therefore encouraged to facilitate pedestrian storefront shopping. The retail core of town centers is typically located around a pattern of streets accommodating cars and on-street parking. Off-street parking is located in shared, Park-Once lots and/or structures, convenient but compatible to the scale of a Main Street. The retail core typically includes at least one anchor tenant, and a mix of national and local vendors to broaden its appeal and success over the long-term while capturing vehicle trips that would otherwise generate more vehicle miles. What makes this type of retail appealing to consumers is that it is part of an overall pedestrian-friendly, lively urban experience.

In this regard, Uptown is a rare asset with its historic urban fabric, human scale buildings, and tree-lined streets. Furthermore, retail cores with the historic and pedestrian-friendly character of Uptown are scarce—which is one of the reasons why retail developers are trying desperately to recreate these qualities in newer centers such as Victoria Gardens in Rancho Cucamonga or The Grove in Los Angeles. Another characteristic which makes retail attractive in Uptown is the availability of relatively large lots of land and buildings within a historic core. The introduction of new residential and office development and new residents and workers in Uptown will strengthen existing businesses and attract new businesses especially national chains—to fill up vacant storefronts, including responding to market demand for a new boutique grocery store and a new bookstore to serve both Whittier College and the Uptown area. In addition, existing small businesses--especially independent retailers--will benefit from practicing more competitive management practices. The retail core will focus on Greenleaf Avenue and the area around its intersection with Philadelphia Street, within the proposed Uptown Core (U-CO) zone.

A retail analysis found that Uptown has pent-up market demand to attract another 40,000 to 50,000 square feet of retail and restaurant development by the year 2011. During the public outreach process for this Plan, many residents, workers, and visitors indicated that they would increase spending in the area if the quantity and mix of retail were to be expanded. The potential trade area has a reach of about 5 miles to the east, south, and west, and includes around 70,000 households. The Whittier market has sales leakage of apparel, art, books, cinema, electronics, garden home furnishings, jewelry, restaurants, and sporting goods.

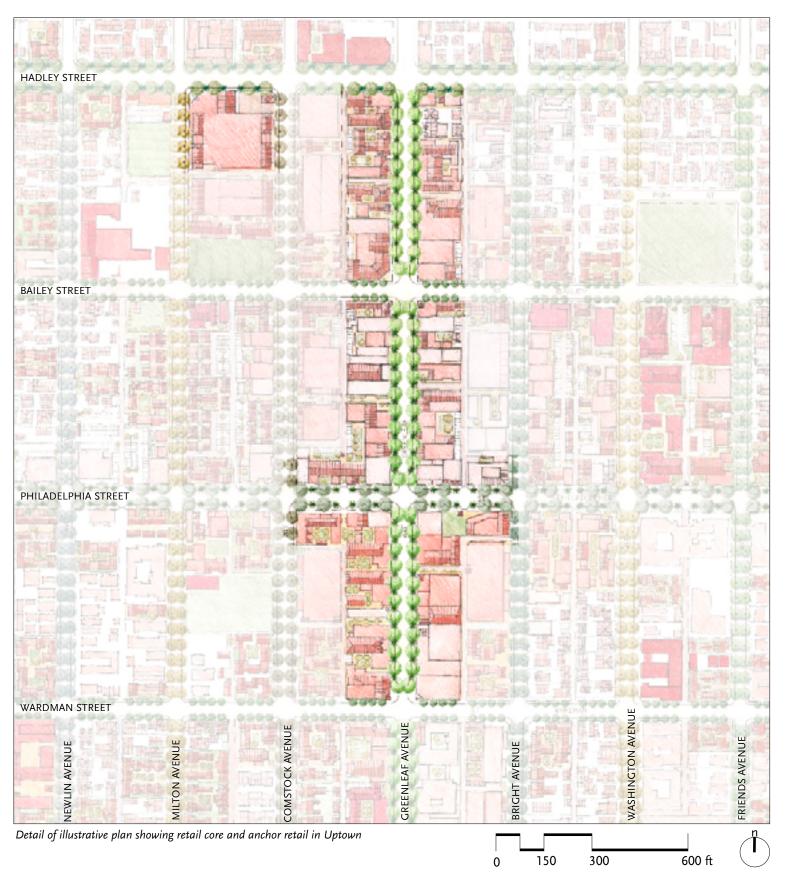
If current conditions are allowed to continue, Uptown could face a downturn due to a number of factors. Older shopping centers will continue to redevelop to attract more popular retailers that may saturate the market. Whittier Boulevard has several vacant or under-utilized properties that could accommodate major new retail development. The greater Whittier market is also large enough to appeal to a major new multi-screen cinema complex, and should this new complex locate close to Uptown, it is likely to have a profoundly negative effect not only on Uptown's existing cinema, but also its restaurants.

In light of these conditions, recommended initiatives for strengthening existing local retail and attracting national retail include:

- Urgent improvements: Re-paint storefronts and street furniture, wash store windows and sidewalks, and create more consistent, predictable and longer store hours
- Short term improvements: Upgrade streets, sidewalks, and storefronts, install electronic payment machines for parking in core retail area, establish a signage program directing visitors to and within Uptown, improve landscaping, and establish better street lighting as well as leaving lights on the exteriors
- Long term improvements: Establish a business recruitment and retention program, and introduce more residential development to increase the customer base for retail



Key plan highlighting core retail area around Greenleaf and anchor retail off







Example of awnings that provide shade and signage for retail on Greenleaf



Example of elegant and well-designed retail frontage on Greenleaf Avenue

### A. Immediate Term Retail Improvements: 1 month - 1 year

- Clean graffiti, and repaint all public signs, planter fences, utility boxes, light poles, etc. to freshen their appearance
- Coordinate a program to repaint the first level store fronts of all Uptown retailers in the core four block area
- Coordinate program for greater consistency in store hours.
- Wash all storefront windows
- Coordinate a program for all Uptown businesses to turn their storefront window lights on until 10:00 pm every night
- Begin strict enforcement of on-street parking regulations, especially the short-term parking zones
- Remove all damaged Uptown gateway signs
- Power wash all Uptown sidewalks and alleys on a weekly basis, and work with appropriate environmental agencies

#### B. Short Term Retail Improvements: 1 - 5 years

- Install way-finding signage system to direct vehicular traffic into the Uptown area and Park Once structures from surrounding region including Whittier Boulevard and the interstate high-
- Implement storefront improvement program to assist existing small business and property owners to upgrade building facades and signage
- Implement Park Once strategy with regular parking enforcement, new parking payment machines in the retail core, and the D. Long Term Retail Improvements: 10 - 20 years introduction of new Park Once structures
- Expand public safety patrols in Uptown
- Entice national-level bookstore along Philadelphia, a few blocks west of the College
- Begin strict enforcement of existing regulations on permitted business types
- Establish regulations to permit outdoor seating areas for cafes and restaurants, in conjunction with remove or modify existing planters as necessary to enhance pedestrian walkability
- Encourage integration of artists throughout Uptown via live/ work housing, art galleries, and public art programs
- · Offer a business merchandising program to assist small business owners to understand and adapt modern best retail practices as is practical for their individual issues
- Expand an existing or implement new retail marketing campaign to expand market awareness and market share for the Uptown businesses
- Install additional pedestrian lighting in Uptown
- Implement a plan to allow for existing local businesses to remain, expand or relocate within the Uptown area
- Establish a business retainment plan to maintain the existing Uptown businesses, including methods for property ownership and expansion or relocation services if necessary
- Implement a new business recruitment plan to identify and attract appropriate new--especially national brand--businesses

• Improve sidewalks in conjunction with street tree replacement programs

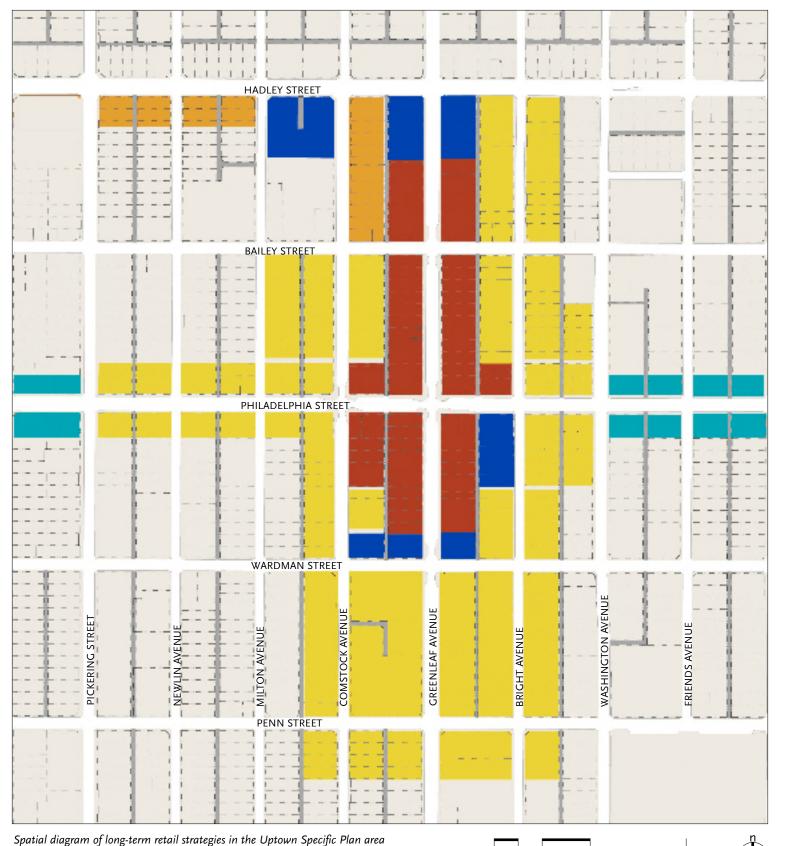
### C. Medium Term Retail Improvements: 5 - 10 years

- Implement new building and storefront building standards per the Specific Plan.
- Continue to aggressively cultivate new medium to high density residential construction in Uptown as per the Specific Plan
- Establish new retail and restaurant anchors as regional magnets, including:
- Arts and Crafts
- Book Sellers
- Department Stores
- Discount Department Stores
- Electronics and Appliances

Junior Department Stores

- Hardware
- Home Furnishings
- Office Supply
- Organic / Specialty Grocery Stores Pet Supply
- Restaurants Clusters Sporting Goods
- Unisex Apparel Stores
- Assess status of retail in Uptown, and revisit city objectives and retail strategies as per community desires and market realities
- Continue to aggressively cultivate new medium to high density residential construction in Uptown as per the Specific Plan
- Ensure fully functioning Business Improvement District and Park Once District with revenues invested in regular cleaning, extra safety patrols, improved lighting and landscape, events, and continuing education for small businesses to remain com-





Right, top: National chains, especially clothing stores, serve as destination points and generate foot traffic for the rest of the retail area. National chains are also increasingly aware of the uniqueness of urban contexts and are learning to respect the scale and character of historic districts.

Right, bottom: Uptown possesses a number of unique destinations, such as a movie theater, which need to be strengthened through interventions on the building scale (e.g. updating interiors, refurbishing exteriors) and on the urban scale (e.g. widening sidewalks by removing excessively large planters and planting trees in the triangular spaces formed by diagonal parking, improved lighting in on the exterior of the buildings).







2:5 UPTOWN WHITTIER SPECIFIC PLAN, City of Whittier, California Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists: July 10, 2014 2:6

### CHAPTER 2: FORM AND CHARACTER 2.1 THE PLAN FOR UPTOWN WHITTIER

### 2.1.2 Park Once System

A Park Once District consists of several well-designed parking structures integrated into a town center that serve to significantly reduce the number of vehicular trips for a given amount of economic activity. In the conventional sprawl development pattern, the disconnected nature of destinations for work, live, shop, and play requires that every visit require a separate trip. In the Park Once District trips are combined or replaced by walking trips to multiple stores or multiple destinations for living and shopping in the same area. Similarly the quantity of parking required is reduced or shared amongst different uses, rather than devoted to each separate destination. Finally, parking spaces are used more efficiently in shared parking structures—for shopping and working during the day, for cultural and leisure activities in the evening, and for residents of Uptown at night.

In a Park Once District, parking is dispersed into a number of parking structures and visible parking entrances and signs that assure drivers of available parking within easy walking distance to multiple destinations. A critical element of the Park Once District is concealing the actual parking structures by locating them in the interior of the blocks, by designing the exterior to disguise their interiors, and most significantly by fronting the structure with other uses such as retail or residential, as seen in the Liner building type described in Chapter 4.

The transformation of drivers into walkers is the immediate generator of pedestrian life: crowds of people that animate public life in the streets and generate the patrons of street-friendly retail businesses. It is this "scene" created by pedestrians in appropriate numbers, that provides the energy and attraction to sustain a thriving town center. In Uptown, this transformation begins with the design of parking structures which are neighborly towards residential, retail, and civic buildings, and are built on existing parking lots, vacant properties, and city-owned land.

Recommended initiatives towards a revenue-generating Park Once strategy:

- Establish Park Once District stretching from the northern properties fronting Hadley, to mid-block between Friends and Washington, Penn on the south, and mid-block between Milton and Newlin on the west
- Establish short-term parking fees for on-street parking to encourage long-term parking in structures rather than on
- Eliminate parking requirements for each site
- Maintain parking exemptions for new retail and commercial development, and require in-lieu fees to help fund the new

- parking structures
- Require new residential development to either provide parking underground, as a podium garage or in small lots behind
- Install electronic parking payment machines on both sides of Greenleaf Avenue on the blocks between Pickering Street and Painter Avenue, and on both sides of Philadelphia Street on the blocks between Hadley Street and Penn Street
- Re-furbish the façade and uses on the existing Bright Avenue parking structure, and upgrade street furniture and new landscape, including street trees on Bright
- Design parking structures as Liner building types; that is, parking garages lined with retail and commercial uses that are also architecturally sensitive to neighboring buildings
- Construct Park Once structures on vacant lots, existing parking lots, and city-owned property
- Projects beyond the Park Once boundary can be annexed into the system by application to the Planning Commission and City Council.



Key plan highlighting Park Once district, in red dotted line, around core retail area, stretching from the northern properties fronting Hadley, to midblock between Friends and Washington, Penn on the south, and mid-block between Milton and Newlin on the west.







Above: Parking structure integrated with retail and commercial uses in a Liner building type with pedestrian scale facades and clearly marked parking signage and entrance.



Below: A Park Once structure with retail on the first floor and an architecture that is sensitive in scale and materials to the surrounding urban fabric.

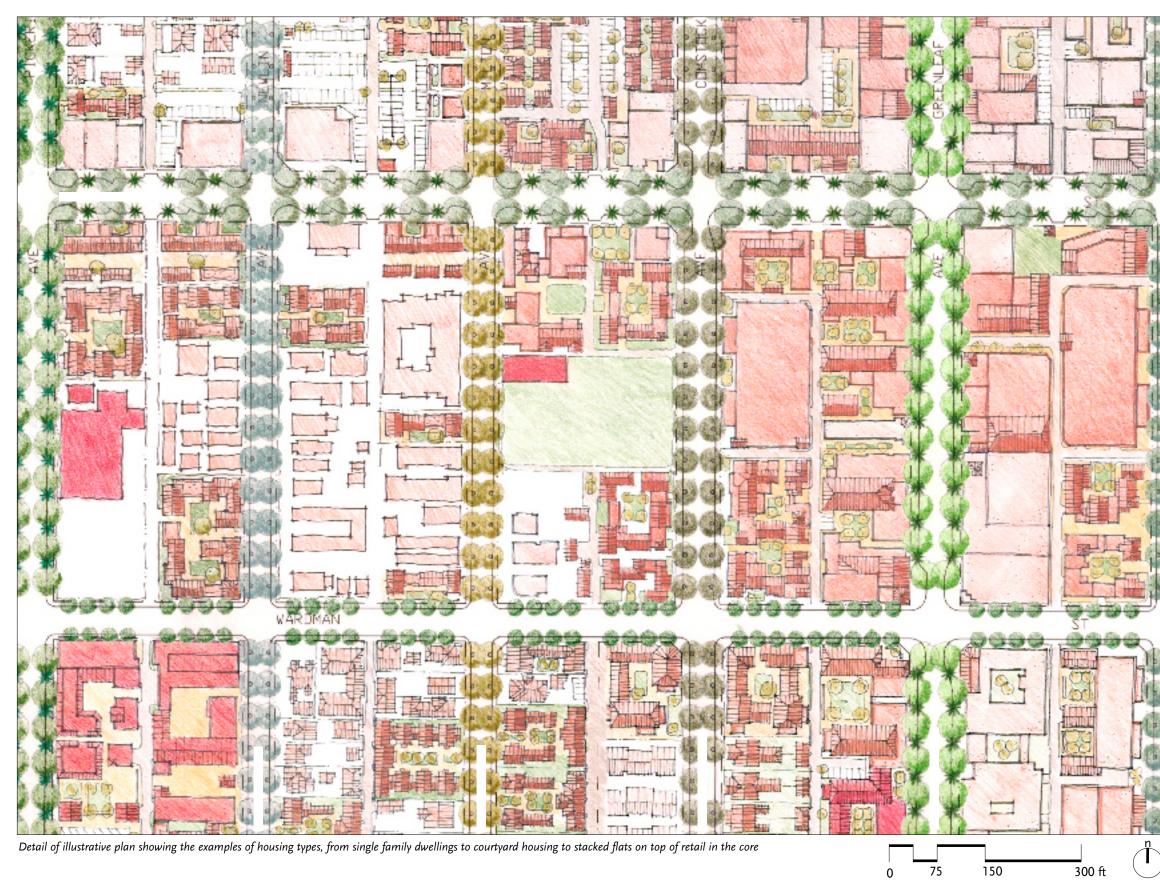
## 2.1.3 Housing Development

As a town center matures and its livability and economic value increase, a more diverse set of housing choices attract an increasingly varied and prosperous resident population. It is not unusual to encounter lofts, live/work buildings, courtyard housing, row housing, and even duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes in nearly completely developed districts. All of these dwelling types are also typically provided in rental or ownership configurations. The variety is necessary for vitality over the long-term and is enabled by the various building types and blocks in the Specific Plan.

In addition to strong market demand for housing in the southern California region, Uptown Whittier possesses a number of characteristics that make it attractive as a location for introducing an increased variety of housing choices. Whittier has the advantage of being located in close proximity to employment-rich centers such as Los Angeles, Long Beach, and the Inland Empire. Nearby Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital, which serves more than 800,000 residents in 11 cities within southeastern Los Angeles County and portions of the San Gabriel Valley and Orange County, is expanding and will attract a large number of doctors, nurses, and other health care workers looking for a wide range of housing locally, from entry-level units to large condominiums and houses. Furthermore, Whittier College has expressed an interest in more affordable housing for recruiting new faculty. There is available land in Uptown to accommodate a greater variety of housing than currently exists, including more ownership units, more upscale housing, as well as more affordable units for young professionals and families, and empty-nesters.



Key plan highlighting a number of examples of blocks with housing



Recommended initiatives to increase the quantity, variety, and quality of housing in Uptown:

- Use vacant lots, city-owned lots, and parking lots to develop a
  wide range of housing types, including single-family, carriage
  houses, duplex/triplex/quadplex, bungalow court, rosewalk,
  row house, live-work, courtyard housing, commercial block
  and liner (see chapter 4 for detailed descriptions)
- Introduce residential development into mixed-use developments, in conjunction with retail and commercial development
- Intensity and type of development depending upon regulating zone, from the most intense (such as stacked flats and lofts on top of retail and commercial in the Uptown Core zone) to the least (single family homes in the Uptown Edge zone)
- Make sure mix of residential types responds to both regional market demand (e.g. upscale condominiums) and City of Whittier public policy (e.g. rental and ownership for moderate income families)



Above: Courtyard housing of about 20 - 35 units per acre, designed with live/work spaces around a series of courtyards and gardens within an urban context.



Conceptual perspective view of possible new courtyard housing interspersed with existing single family housing on the eastern side of Newlin Avenue, north of Philadelphia Street

### 2.1.4 Churches as Catalysts

Spiritual life has been a founding principle since Whittier's formal incorporation in 1887, and religious institutions have been a significant land use in Uptown. The Baileys held the first Friends services in their ranch house in 1887. The second building erected in Whittier was the first Friends Church at the corner of Comstock Avenue and College (now Wardman Street). In 1893 a small St. Mary's Catholic church was erected, followed by St. Mathias Episcopal Church (1896), Christian Church (1898), First Church of Christ Scientist (1904), Federated Presbyterian (1906), and Church of the Nazarene (1907). Many other religious congregations were established in Whittier, and by 1924 the town boasted twenty-seven religious organizations, many with their own houses for worship.

Once a piece of land was developed for a house of worship, this became a constant over time for Uptown's religious institutions. For example, after a decade the Friends congregation outgrew its space and a new Friends Church was erected at the corner of Philadelphia Street and Washington Avenue in 1905. A structure continues as the site of this congregation as new structures have been erected over the decades. Another example is the First United Methodist Episcopal Church, which was established two years after the town's founding. Its house of worship was erected at the corner of Friends Avenue and Bailey Street in 1904, and replaced in 1952. The corner of Bright Avenue and Bailey Street boasts a First Baptist Church that was dedicated in 1922, yet has been the site of a congregation since 1889.

Churches continue to maintain a significant presence in Uptown. There are 12 churches in the Uptown Specific Plan area, and own over 12% of property within its boundaries. Some of these properties are sizable, as is the number of people who congregate on Sunday mornings. Churches can also take advantage of the Park Once strategy to fulfill their parking needs, rather than occupying increasingly large surface lots. And churches can develop affordable and moderate income housing on surplus land.

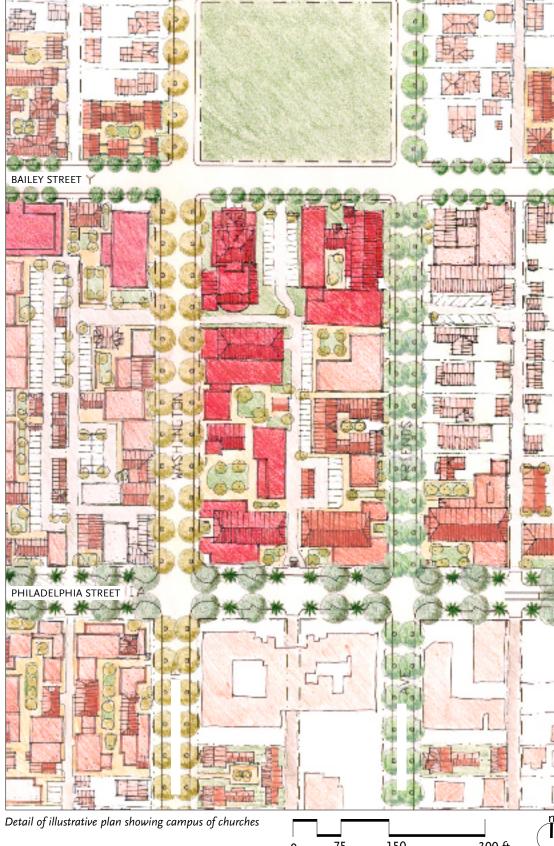


Above: The First United Methodist Church on Bailey Street south of Central Park, serves as a landmark with its tall spire mounted by a cross and a pedestrian-friendly facade with its orientation towards the



Key plan highlighting concentration of church properties south of Central Park

Detail of illustrative plan showing campus of churches



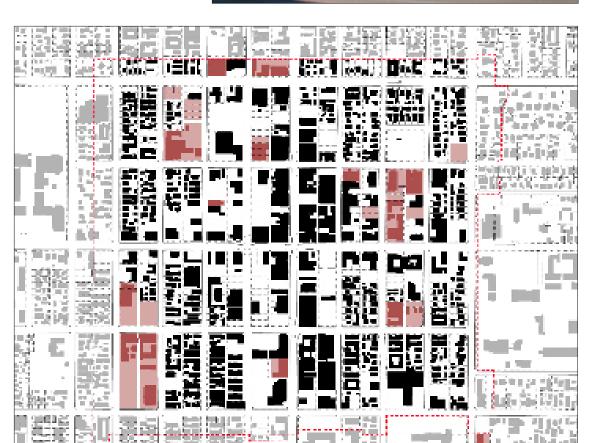
Recommended initiatives to benefit from the significant presence of churches in Uptown:

- City should pay special attention in the land use regulations and form-based code to churches including frontage and signage requirements, that are different from those governing retail, commercial, or residential development
- Churches attract thousands of congregates every Sunday morning for services, and retail establishments and restaurants should take advantage of this potential customer base
- Churches are encouraged to use surplus land to build affordable housing
- · Given the multifaceted services offered by many churches ministries, social services such as assisting the homeless, education and day care centers—they should develop their properties more in the form of small landscaped campuses rather than as isolated structures with parking in between.

Good Shepherd Church on Bailey Street across from the Post Office, an example of a building which is both appropriately monumental in its entrance as an institutional building, and more modest in scale in its side wings and thus sensitive to the surrounding residential neighborhoods.









onceptual perspective of new church building on Washington Avenue in a campus-like setting with street trees, landscape, and affordable housing next door.

## 2.1.5 College as Stakeholder

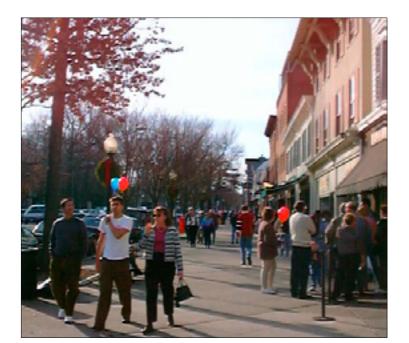
The presence of a nationally recognized institution of higher learning adjacent to a historic retail core is a rare opportunity for building town/gown synergies that benefit both areas. A college is a center of great intellectual activity, including public events such as evening classes, public lectures, exhibitions, and conferences. College faculty, staff, and students are often active in the local community, as tax-paying and voting citizens, housing residents, retail consumers, and community service volunteers. Similarly, a civic and retail center serves as a resource for the college by providing financial and personal service, stores and restaurants, entertainment attractions, civic activities, and off-campus housing.

Whittier College is a four-year independent residential liberal arts college distinguished by its small size, nationally recognized liberal arts curriculum, and innovative interdisciplinary programs. The campus houses 29 academic and administrative facilities, a performing arts center, a chapel, a library, athletic fields and facilities, and seven residence halls. The College has a diverse body of approximately 1,500 students, including 42 percent American minorities, and 5 percent international students. The College has been intimately tied to the history of Whittier and of Uptown as far back as 1893, when Whittier College began construction of its first building, Founders Hall, on its campus overlooking Uptown.

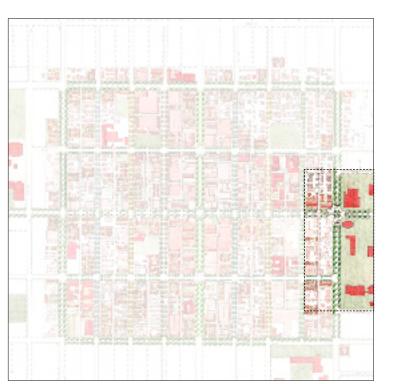
Uptown and Whittier College can derive greater mutual benefit from an improved economic and physical relationship.

Recommended initiatives for improving the Uptown/Whittier College relationship:

- Mark the intersection of Painter Avenue and Philadelphia Street as a gateway for both Uptown and Whittier College with a landmark (e.g. a statue of a poet), pilasters on the four corners, archways, and/or special paving for pedestrian
- Introduce traffic calming on Painter Avenue, including tree wells at the edges of the vehicular pavement with on-street
- Facilitate greater pedestrian flow between the College and Uptown through signaled mid-block crossings on Painter Avenue, and the aforementioned traffic calming measures as well as the special paving for pedestrian crosswalks at Painter and Philadelphia
- Introduce campus-related retail, such as cafes, bookstore, grocery store, and clothing stores on Philadelphia Street east of Greenleaf Avenue to attract students, faculty, and staff into
- Introduce a greater variety of housing types, including live/ work units and more affordable ownership and rental housing (e.g. for new faculty and staff)

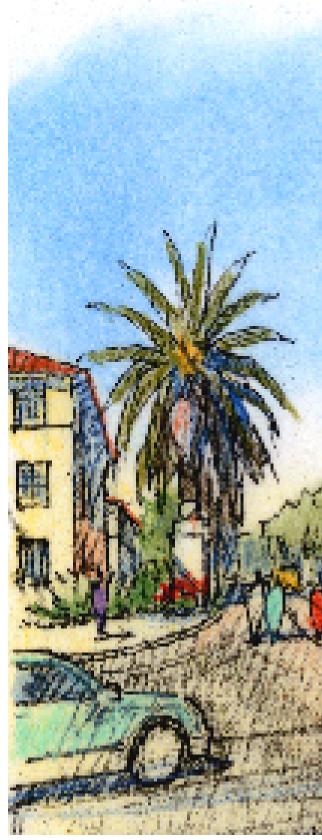


Above: A retail area can thrive due to the presence of a college or university, as seen on Nassau Street next to Princeton University in New Jersey.

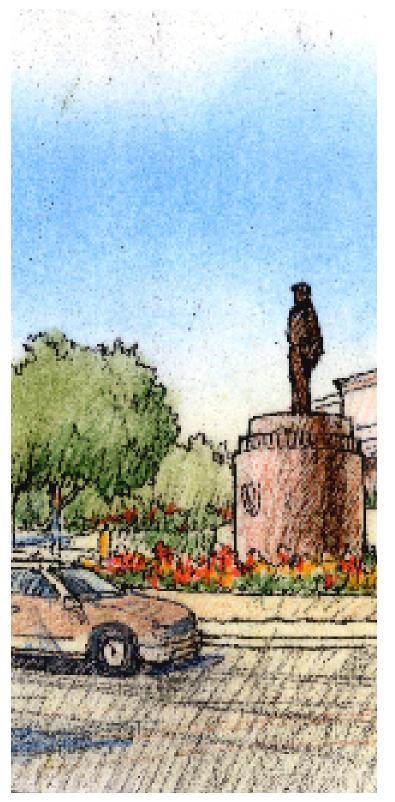


Key plan highlighting eastern edge of Uptown along Painter Avenue

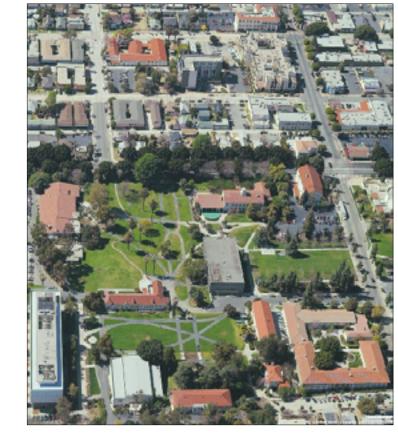




Perspective view of an example of pilaster at intersection marking a gateway.



Perspective view of an example of a monument (e.g. a statue of a poet) at



Above: An aerial view of the Whittier College campus in the foreground and the eastern edge of Uptown in the background with Painter Avenue as the dividing--and connecting--line.



Above: The Whittier College campus contains a number of elegant buildings-such as Deihl Hall--and green open spaces, which serve as excellent neighbors to Uptown.

### 2.1.6 Sense of Identity

A place with a sense of identity is perceived as a district with a distinct character and is memorable to those who experience it. In other words, a destination is attractive to people, activities, and development because it has a sense of identity. A number of elements contribute to a sense of identity: historic architecture, pedestrian scale buildings, wide sidewalks, and a vibrancy that emerges out of a mix of land uses for living, working, shopping, and recreation. At the same time, what appear to be minute issues—such as lighting and cleanliness—can affect the character of a place as much as the quality of its architecture.

Uptown possesses several significant assets: a grid system of interconnected streets and service alleys, a compact size, blocks which are of easily walkable dimensions, numerous historic buildings, an overall pedestrian-scale urban fabric, and distinctive retail offerings. Many of these assets, however, are lost in the shuffle of vacant lots, an over-supply of free parking and an excessive number of surface parking lots, buildings which are insensitive to their surroundings, inadequate variety of retail destinations, and issues of lack of a perception of safety, poor lighting on some streets, dirty sidewalks, and inconsistent design quality both in the buildings and the landscape.

Recommended initiatives for transforming Uptown into a place with a greater sense of identity:

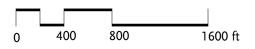
- Improve the design quality of Uptown, through rigorous enforcement of the form-based code (see chapter 4) and a similarly rigorous design review process for modification of existing structures and the construction of new ones
- Improve the landscape quality of Uptown (see Section 2.2.) through the planting of more street trees, two new parks, and a proactive tree succession plan for Greenleaf Avenue and Philadelphia Street
- Mark the edges of Uptown through the intense planting of trees along Hadley Street, Painter Avenue (using bulbouts), Penn Street, and Pickering Avenue (see Section 2.2)
- Mark the gateways to Uptown by designing landmarks and special paving at the four intersections of Hadley/Greenleaf, Philadelphia/Painter, Penn/Greenleaf, and Pickering/ Philadelphia, plus access from the major regional artery of Whittier Boulevard at Philadelphia Street
- Increase safety in Uptown by attracting more residents and "eyes on the street", increased number of visitors through destination-type national retail stores, external lighting at night on each store, and more safety patrols funded by parking revenue, such that it becomes a destination during the day and in the evening

   Increase safety in Uptown by attracting more residents and Above: Children playing Park: Uptown Whittier time, and embraces its proposed for both young and old.

- Incorporate public art, especially by local artists, in the form of murals and sculptures at key intersections, near the entrances to the Park Once structures, and in public spaces
- In order to encourage longer visits, consider incorporating public rest rooms where practical and safe, including considerations for supervision and cleanliness



Illustrative plan with elements highlighted that will help give Uptown a greater sense of identity, such as edges marked with intensely-planted tree lined streets and gateways at Whittier and Philadelphia and Painter and Philadelphia





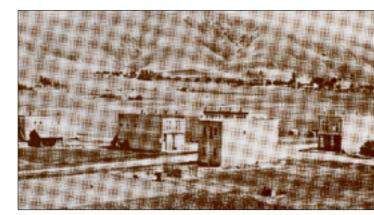
Above: Children playing on the John Greenleaf Whittier statue in Central Park: Uptown Whittier is an historic area which continues to evolve over time, and embraces its past as well as its future as an attractive destination for both young and old





Above: A sense of identity is most evident during the day, but also at night as seen in the historic night-time photograph of Christmas lighting in Uptown on the left. Today, on the right, Uptown attracts visitors in the evening to its restaurants and bars, and in order to become more of a night time destination, it will require better street lighting, increased lighting on the exteriors of buildings and stores, and an improved sense of safety through a variety of measures, including public safety patrols and an increase presence of people on the sidewalks.









Above: Images showing historic evolution of Uptown's sense of identity



Conceptual perspective view of distinctive new courtyard housing with park in front, and retail and Park Once structure behind, on Bailey Street