

North Lake Specific Plan

RECOMMENDED

November 2025



INTRODUCTION

The North Lake Specific Plan (NLSP) area serves as a primary northern gateway to the City of Pasadena. The Plan area centers along a prominent north/south corridor connecting with the Central District, the I-210 Freeway and the Metro A Line Lake Station to the south; the historic residential neighborhoods of Bungalow Heaven, Washington Square, and Historic Highlands to the east and west; and Altadena to the north. The Plan area also includes east/west portions of Orange Grove Boulevard, Washington Boulevard, and Villa Street, branching off of North Lake Avenue. These intersections act as important commercial nodes and crosstown connections.

Today, the NLSP is predominantly a commercial district whose character reflects the evolution of design and development trends over the past century of growth. However, with the adoption of the 2015 General Plan, there is an opportunity to incorporate medium-scale housing development on infill sites throughout the area, while preserving and celebrating historically significant properties and architectural characteristics and supporting a more pedestrian-oriented streets environment.

This Specific Plan establishes the following vision statement for the NLSP area, which reflects ideas and feedback from a multi-phase community engagement effort between 2018 and 2021:

“North Lake will be a vibrant and visually cohesive corridor, weaving together several distinct, pedestrian-oriented districts that complement and build upon the cultural and architectural history of the community and surrounding neighborhoods.”

The NLSP presents an opportunity for this vision to be grounded in policy and practice, and for the City and community to work together in confronting planning challenges and envisioning the future of the North Lake area. In addition to an extensive public outreach and visioning process, the NLSP represents the outcome of a multi-faceted outreach process and technical planning and design effort, directly informed by the perspectives and expertise of community members, City staff, the Planning Commission, Design Commission, Northwest Commission, and the City Council.

WHAT IS A SPECIFIC PLAN?

In the State of California, a Specific Plan is a regulatory tool that local governments use to implement their General Plan and to guide development in a localized area. The General Plan is the primary guide for growth and development in a community, and a Specific Plan focuses on the unique characteristics of a special area by customizing the land use regulations and development standards for that area. A Specific Plan establishes a link between the policies and implementation programs in the General Plan and individual development proposals in a defined area within the City.

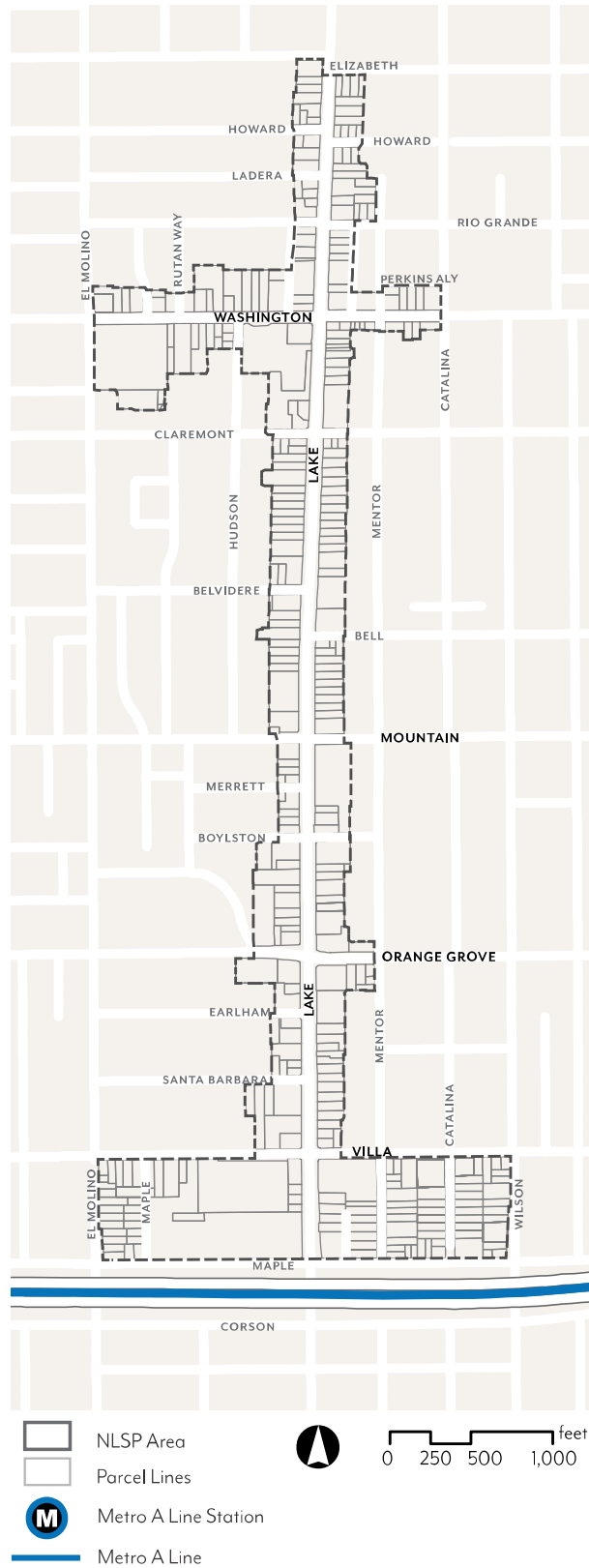
CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter is organized into the following sections:

- » **1.1 Specific Plan Area**
- » **1.2 Purpose**
- » **1.3 Relationship to Other Planning Documents**
- » **1.4 Planning Process and Outreach**
- » **1.5 Specific Plan Organization**

1.1 Specific Plan Area

Map 1.1-1: North Lake Specific Plan Area



The NLSP area generally encompasses the area between Elizabeth Street to the north, Wilson Avenue to the east, Maple Street to the south and El Molino Avenue to the west. While the NLSP primarily regulates development along the Lake Avenue corridor, the standards and policies are influenced by, and intended to provide benefit to the surrounding residential communities, including landmark and historic districts of Bungalow Heaven, Washington Square, and Historic Highlands.



The NLSP area has a variety of architectural styles, many with traditional elements like arched openings.



Landsaped medians throughout the Plan area provide additional greening, slow down vehicles, and create a sense of place for pedestrians.

1.2 Purpose

The NLSP sets out a plan to facilitate investment, development, and improvements to the Plan Area, that will ultimately help realize the community's vision for North Lake Avenue. The NLSP optimizes land uses to increase opportunities for financially feasible commercial and residential developments, and help ensure that new development, sidewalk improvements, and added amenities contribute positively to the pedestrian experience. The NLSP includes standards to protect historic resources and support existing elements of the area that provide a sense of place and distinct character, while providing contextual standards for new development.

Future redevelopment opportunities will focus on infill development and making incremental changes to the area's built environment and land use mix. This document will be used by property and business owners, grant-seeking nonprofits, developers, decision makers, and City staff as the regulations that will guide private and public development projects. While the specific plan introduces a framework and toolkit for designing and implement future developments, it does not mandate or accelerate any specific projects or immediate changes to the built environment.

1.3 Relationship to Other Documents

General Plan

The NLSP is one of eight Specific Plans that serve to implement the City's 2015 General Plan Land Use and Mobility Elements. The General Plan contains eight Guiding Principles and a series of goals and policies that demonstrate the relationship between land use and high-quality design, the arts and culture, sustainable infrastructure, a vital economy, exemplary public services, and public involvement and participation.

The NLSP mirrors and builds upon the General Plan's policies, consistent with the General Plan's vision and guidance. It seeks to focus development around transit, and create a pedestrian-oriented gathering place for surrounding neighborhoods near the Lake/Washington intersection, and create a well-designed and vibrant corridor with a mix of uses that support multiple modes of travel. Projects that are consistent with the NLSP policies and development standards will in turn be consistent with the General Plan Guiding Principles, goals, and policies.

While the NLSP establishes an overall vision for North Lake Ave, the policies and standards herein apply specifically to private development and adjacent sidewalks. The NLSP serves as one of many complementary tools the City uses to implement the General Plan, and to meet sustainability goals through prioritization and guidance for private and public investments.

SUMMARY OF 2015 GENERAL PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Growth will be targeted to serve community needs and enhance the quality of life.
2. Pasadena's historic resources will be preserved.
3. Pasadena will be an economically vital city by providing jobs, services, revenues, and opportunities.
4. Pasadena will be a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable community.
5. Pasadena will be a city where people can circulate without cars.
6. Pasadena will be a cultural, scientific, corporate, entertainment and education center for the region.
7. Community participation will be a permanent part of achieving a greater city.
8. Pasadena is committed to public education and a diverse educational system responsive to the broad needs of the community.

General Plan Land Use Element, 2015

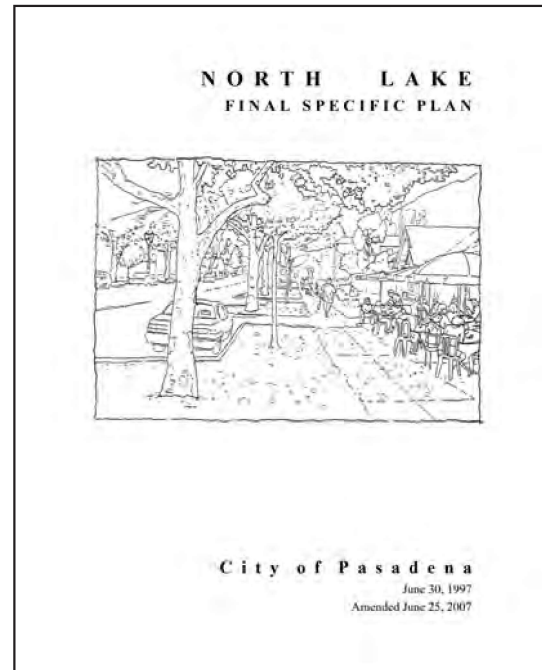
GENERAL PLAN GOAL 36: NORTH LAKE

“A well-designed and attractive corridor supporting multiple travel modes including transit, bicycling, and walking with clusters of distinctive places for shopping, dining, and living.”

GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

- » **36.1 Economic Vitality of the Avenue.** Transform North Lake Avenue from a low-density strip commercial corridor to series of distinctive low- to medium-density, pedestrian oriented, mixed-use villages designed and scaled to transition with adjoining residential neighborhoods where residents and visitors can live, shop, work and be entertained.
- » **36.2 Lake Transit Village.** Provide for the development of higher intensity mix of retail, office, and multi-family housing uses in proximity to the Metro Gold Line station that expanded the customer base for local businesses and support Metro Gold Line ridership contributing to the reduction of vehicle trips, energy consumption, and GHG emissions.
- » **36.3 Lake-Washington Neighborhood Village.** Promote the development of additional commercial uses with housing and pedestrian-oriented plazas and amenities to establish a “village-like” environment where people shop, dine, meet friends, linger, and actively use public places.
- » **36.4 Neighborhood Compatibility.** Require that the types of use and location, scale, and design of development buffer commercial and mixed-use development on Lake Avenue from adjoining lower residential neighborhoods.
- » **36.5 Transitional Heights and Setbacks.** Protect adjacent Low Density Residential and Low-Medium Density Residential areas north of Orange Grove Boulevard, which contain a number of locally and nationally recognized historic properties and districts, from the development of mixed use or residential projects by requiring appropriate transitional heights. Mixed use or residential projects proposed in these locations shall be limited to no more than three stories in height abutting the Low and Low-Medium residential areas. Appropriate setbacks shall also be established in order to provide further protection.
- » **36.6 Accessibility.** Design Lake Avenue and Washington Boulevard as complete streets that accommodate transit, bicycle, and pedestrian use. Include wider sidewalks, public plazas, bike lanes, and bicycle parking.

General Plan Land Use Element, 2015



Previous North Lake Specific Plan

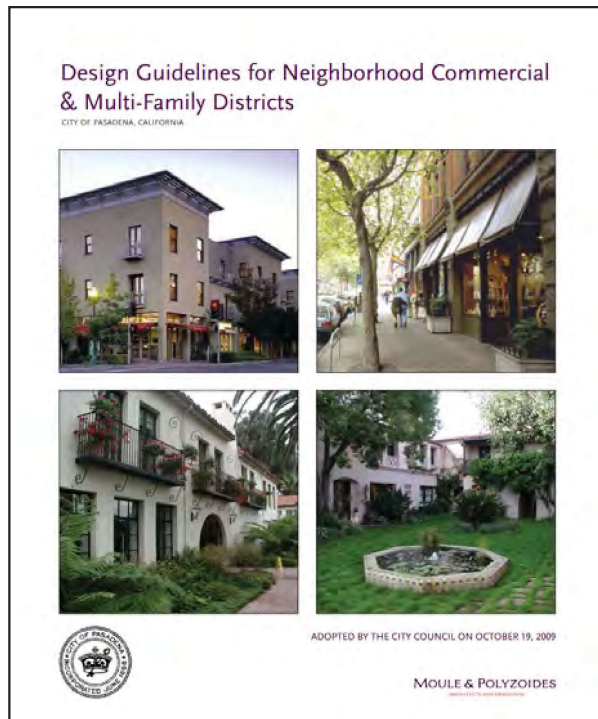
The NLSP builds on many of the objectives from the original 1997 NLSP (amended in 2007) with updated goals, policies, land use regulations, and development standards that address current and future current needs, opportunities, and challenges. The previous Plan’s aspirations for Lake Avenue to grow beyond its role as a major north/south mobility corridor and meet its full potential as a thriving center of activity for residents of surrounding neighborhoods remain integral to the goals, policies, and standards of the NLSP update. This update of the NLSP further supports the goals and policies set forth in the General Plan.

Zoning Code

The Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) is one of the primary tools for implementing the City’s General Plan. Specifically, Title 17 of the PMC, or the Zoning Code, describes allowable land uses, development standards, and permit requirements for each zoning district in the City. The zoning districts and associated land use regulations and development standards established by the NLSP will be codified in the Zoning Code.

Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial & Multi-Family Districts

The Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial & Multi-Family Districts (October 2009) supplement the design-related goals and policies of the General Plan Land Use Element and offer more direction for



proceeding with the design of a project. The guidelines illustrate options, solutions, and techniques to achieve the goal of excellence in new design specifically for commercial, residential, and mixed-use buildings that are subject to design review. The guidelines are not zoning regulations or development standards, but rather performance goals that apply to areas within the City that do not have detailed guidelines or supplement existing guidelines, including those in the NLSP.

Sign Design Guidelines

The Sign Design Guidelines provide guidance in the way signs are designed, constructed, and placed in order to further implement the purposes of Chapter 17.72 (Sign Regulations) of PMC. The guidelines are intended to provide good examples of techniques that should be used in order to meet the City's expectations for quality business signage to be applied during the City's design review process or Master Sign Plan process.

Bicycle Transportation Action Plan

The Department of Transportation's Bicycle Transportation Action Plan (BTAP) (August 2015) provides specific goals, objectives, actions, and timeframes for creating an environment (1) where people circulate without a car, (2) that significantly increases the number of people who commute by bike, (3) that increases the number of people who commute by bike, (3) that increases the number of people who use a bike for utilitarian trips, fitness and recreation, and (4) that provides business and economic benefits for the City. The BTAP provides details for a network of bikeways so that

every neighborhood is within a quarter mile of an effective bicycle route and funding strategies to implement the plan. The NLSP area contains a portion of the BTAP's Villa Street buffered bike lane or cycle track route that stretches from Champlain Avenue to Hill Avenue. While outside of the plan area, a bicycle lane running east-west on Washington Boulevard from Forest Avenue to El Molino Avenue are located immediately west of the plan area boundaries. The NLSP also supports the BTAP through promoting enhanced sidewalks that allocate space for bicycle parking and supporting bicycle infrastructure within the plan area.

Active Transportation Plan

The Department of Transportation's Active Transportation Plan would integrate, complement, and update previous City planning documents, including the City's 2024 Pedestrian Transportation Action Plan, 2021 Greenways Feasibility Study, City's 2015 Bicycle Transportation Action Plan, and 2006 Pedestrian Plan to create a comprehensive action plan for safe and accessibility walking, biking, and rolling in the City. The community-driven plan will focus on four key areas: implementation strategy development, prioritization and planning for future active transportation infrastructure improvements, consistency with the Mobility Element of the City's General Plan and incorporating the latest best practices in active transportation.

Local Roadway Safety Plan

Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP) identifies roadway safety solutions by analyzing citywide collision data and prioritizing them based on cost-benefit and efficacy analysis. The LRSP was prepared in August 2022, consistent with California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) program guidelines. This program and subsequent analysis provide a uniform set of criteria for the state of California to evaluate and provide funding to local agencies for local roadway safety improvements.

Local Roadway Safety Action Plan

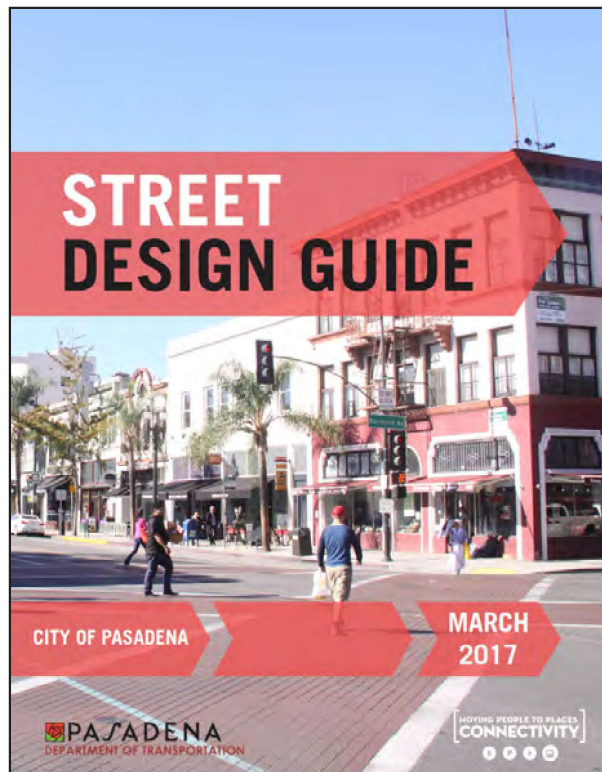
Local Roadway Safety Action Plan (LRSAP) is a traffic safety plan that incorporates inclusive public and stakeholder engagement into the detailed collision analysis of the 2022 Local Roadway Safety Plan as a prerequisite for a United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Implementation Grant Program. The LRSAP identifies and prioritizes projects from various City traffic safety plans, such as the Bicycle Transportation Action Plan, Pedestrian Transportation Action Plan, Capital Improvement Program, and Local Roadway Safety Plan, on a uniform set of metrics for future USDOT SS4A Implementation Grant funding opportunities.

North Lake Avenue Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Plan

Part of the Pasadena Transportation Action Plan (PTAP), the North Lake Avenue Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Plan was programmed by the City of Pasadena to focus on enhancing traffic and pedestrian safety along North Lake Avenue Between Maple and Mountain Streets. The segment length of 0.6 mile-long is intended to identify concerns and opportunities to enhance traffic and walkability along the corridor. The North Lake Avenue & Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Plan project team has engaged in several efforts to understand the existing nuances of the corridor. Such efforts include examining and analyzing roadway characteristics, traffic volumes, and collisions. The Plan is consistent with the Pasadena General Plan goals of creating a pedestrian-friendly environment and enhancing the streetscape. As the project prioritizes access for people of differing abilities by providing more accessible pedestrian crossings and maintaining curb access for paratransit users, it is consistent with the goals of the Complete Streets Act of California.

Pasadena Street Design Guide

The Department of Transportation's Pasadena Street Design Guide (March 2017) implements the 2015 General Plan Mobility Element Complete Streets Policy, including the following goals and objective: (1) Streets should reflect neighborhood character and accommodate all users; (2) Complete Streets should accommodate all users such



as pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit, skateboarders and scooter; and (3) Streets should reflect individual neighborhood character and needs, and support healthy activities such as walking and bicycling. The NLSP references the Street Design Guide as it applies to sidewalks, parkways, and street trees, which fall under Chapter 5 (Public Realm) of the NLSP.

Greenways Feasibility Study

Building upon the efforts of the 2015 Mobility Element and associated Bicycle Transportation Action Plan, the City of Pasadena commissioned a detailed feasibility study to further develop improvements on four north-south bicycle boulevard corridors, or Greenways. The study evaluates traffic calming features based on existing traffic conditions, bicycle level of traffic stress, vehicle level of service, and cost of corridor improvements, and proposes planning level concept plans for each Greenway. Two of the Greenways identified are El Molino Avenue and Wilson Avenue, located a quarter mile to the west and east of Lake Avenue, respectively. On El Molino Avenue parallel to the NLSP area, the study proposes Class III bicycle boulevard using “sharrow” markings and offset edge islands to create traffic-calming chicanes. On Wilson Avenue parallel to the NLSP area, the study proposes a Class III bicycle boulevard using “sharrow” markings, mid-block traffic-calming islands and diverters, and painted bike intersection crossings at Orange Grove Boulevard. Both of these north-south greenways would connect to buffered bike lanes on the I-210 overcrossings, improving bicycle access to the Central District and the two-way cycle track along Union Street.

Master Street Tree Plan

The Department of Public Works' Master Street Tree Plan serves as the guiding document that designates the official tree species to be planted on a block-by-block basis throughout the City. The NLSP references the Master Street Tree Plan in Appendix A.2 (Design Guidance for Tree Selection) to guide discussions between the City and community when updating the Master Street Tree Plan for the area. Appendix A.2 includes a description of the existing street trees along North Lake Avenue within the plan area, followed by recommendations for potential new species.

Pasadena Climate Action Plan

The Pasadena Climate Action Plan (CAP) (March 2018) provides a strategic framework measuring, planning, and reducing the City's share of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with the goal of reducing emissions by more than half by the year 2035. The NLSP supports the CAP and the identified strategies to reduce GHG through sustainable land use and pedestrian infrastructure as well as urban greening, which are addressed in Chapter 4 (Land Use), Chapter 5 (Public Realm), and Appendix A.2 (Design Guidance for Tree Selection).

2.2 Existing Land Uses, Urban Form, & Public Realm

LAND USE

Land use is a characterization of how a property or building is used and describes the general activity occurring on a site, such as commercial retail, office, residential, industrial, or open space. Land uses influence the surrounding environment in a variety of ways; for example, some uses, like retail stores and restaurants, may draw pedestrians to an area and create a more active sidewalk environment, while other uses, like industrial, are generally more auto-oriented in nature.

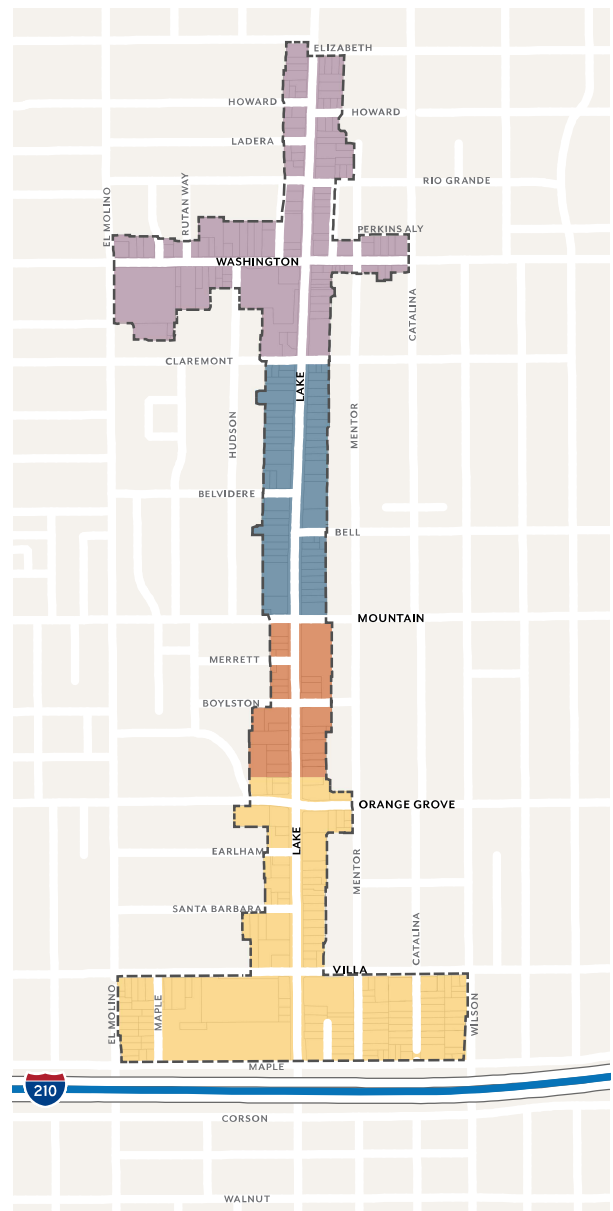
URBAN FORM

Urban form refers to the physical form of a building, both individually and collectively within a district, and its placement within a specific site. Elements of urban form such as a building's scale and height help to determine the overall character of an area. Urban form is influenced by a combination of planning regulations and development standards, architectural design, and site-specific factors such as lot size.

PUBLIC REALM

The public realm refers to spaces that are publicly owned and/or publicly accessible. The NLSP regulates the portion of the public realm between private development and the roadway, typically comprised of sidewalks, parkways, street trees, and other amenities such as seating, bicycle parking, bus shelters, and trash receptacles. Other portions of the public realm such as the roadway are designed, regulated, and maintained by various other City departments and planning documents.

Map 2.2-1: North Lake Specific Plan Subareas



- Washington Place
- Vineyard Gardens
- North Lake Village
- Lake Station District

WASHINGTON PLACE

The Washington Place subarea serves as a northern entrance to both the City and the NLSP area, extending from the Specific Plan's northern boundary at Elizabeth Street, south to Claremont Street, and along Washington Boulevard between El Molino and Catalina Avenues. The subarea is focused around the neighborhood-serving commercial node at the intersection of Lake Avenue and Washington Boulevard, with commercial office, retail, and restaurant uses occupying a variety of building typologies.

While the Santa Catalina Library, the Washington Theater building, and several traditional retail storefronts reflect the subarea's early pre-1940 development, Washington Place includes an eclectic variety of mid-to-late 20th-century and early-2000s development. Lake Avenue's somewhat fragmented and inconsistent built form reflects its competing functions as both a major thoroughfare and neighborhood-serving commercial corridor. Many commercial uses in the subarea feature parking in the rear, with sidewalk-oriented entrances that activate and provide passive surveillance to the streetscape. Other buildings have blank walls and poor transparency along the sidewalk that detract from the pedestrian-friendly design.

In contrast with the subarea's sidewalk-facing storefronts, the North Lake Square Shopping Center serves as the most prominent example of the subarea's auto-oriented strip mall developments, containing approximately three acres of surface parking on the southwest corner of Lake Avenue and Washington Boulevard. This condition reflects a stark shift in the urban form that occurred with the rise of the automobile. Buildings along the west side of Lake Avenue mirrored the contiguous, pedestrian-oriented storefront form along the east side of the street. The west side of

Lake Avenue was demolished in 1951 to accommodate the construction of the shopping center and parking lot. The pedestrian-oriented storefront form on the east side of the street remains. Similarly, the gas station on the northeast corner of the Lake/Washington intersection replaced a pedestrian-oriented commercial storefront that housed the Ice Cream Parlor, a significant community gathering space. Aside from the strip malls, and gas station, commercial buildings along Lake Avenue are typically built to the sidewalk without a setback. Residential uses in the subarea are typically single-family homes featuring substantial grass lawn setbacks of 20 feet or greater. Buildings within the subarea are generally one to two stories in height, with a few exceptions such as the three-story apartments attached to the Washington Theater building.

Like its urban form, Washington Place's public realm features a variety of conditions reflecting an evolution of planning priorities and development styles over the past century. Sidewalk widths and conditions are generally adequate for pedestrian travel, and street trees are frequent and large enough to provide visual enhancement and shade. However, the public realm offers inconsistent amenities and attention to pedestrian comfort and experience, particularly for an area with predominantly neighborhood-serving commercial uses.

Sidewalk widths in the subarea are generally 10 to 12 feet along both Lake Avenue and Washington Boulevard, with some exceptions. Sections of sidewalk on both sides of Lake Avenue between Washington Boulevard and Rio Grande Street have been extended to approximately 18 feet in width, accommodating additional space for parkways and tree plantings. Parkway widths in the subarea are typically



The Oversen Building is one of the traditional storefronts in the subarea.



An example of neighborhood-serving commercial uses along Lake Avenue.

5 feet, however some parkways along Lake Avenue north of Washington Boulevard feature irregular parkway widths of 1-3 feet, and up to 10 feet on extended sidewalk segments. Most parkways include grass, street trees, and occasional landscaping elements.

Street tree canopy in the subarea is most consistent along Lake Avenue in the block south of Washington Boulevard, where sidewalk street trees are complemented by additional street trees along a landscaped street median. Most trees planted along other portions of Lake Avenue in the subarea are mature enough to provide intermittent shade coverage on both sides of the street, however street trees and associated shade coverage is much less consistent along Lake Avenue north of Rio Grande Street, particularly on the west side of the street. Sidewalks along Washington Boulevard within the subarea are consistently planted with columns of palm trees, which do not provide shade canopy for pedestrians despite framing the street with striking visual effect.

At bus stops, riders can typically find benches and trash receptacles, however the only covered bus shelter in the subarea is located at the corner of Lake Avenue and Claremont Street. Sidewalk lighting is provided through ornately designed pedestrian-scale streetlamps. Signalized intersections offer pedestrian crossing opportunities along Lake Avenue at Rio Grande Street, Washington Boulevard, and Claremont Street. Other than the Lake Avenue intersection, there are no marked pedestrian crossing opportunities along Washington Boulevard within the NLSP area, other than El Molino Avenue at the western edge of the subarea (1,400 feet from Lake Avenue), and Catalina Avenue at the eastern edge of the subarea (750 feet from Lake Avenue).

The 5-acre Washington Park, located at the intersection of Washington Boulevard and El Molino Avenue, provides ample green space along with playground equipment, basketball and tennis courts, and a softball diamond. There are currently no other public plazas, pocket parks, or smaller public gathering spaces.



A small business on Lake Avenue at Howard Street with a mural.



Washington Park is the only public park in the subarea.



A bus shelter at the corner of Lake Avenue and Claremont Street is the only covered bus stop in the subarea.



Example of curb extensions along Lake Avenue with enhanced landscaping.

VINEYARD GARDENS

The Vineyard Gardens subarea is a nod to “Lake Vineyard Avenue,” the former name of Lake Avenue. The subarea encompasses the section of Lake Avenue between Claremont Street to the north and Mountain Street to the south. It has a predominantly residential character, comprising a mix of single-family and multi-family residential uses, however small commercial uses are also located throughout the subarea, many of which occupy formerly residential structures. The scale and form of its development reflects that of the neighboring Bungalow Heaven and Washington Square historic residential districts.

The subarea is characterized by a variety of historic architectural styles, low building heights, and large landscaped setbacks. The north/south block lengths are long and comprised of mostly small lots with approximately 45 feet of frontage and shallow depths, reflecting the early 1900s subdivisions intended for residential use. One- and two-story single-family residential buildings that remain include California Bungalow (Craftsman), Mission Revival, and Minimal Traditional styles that were popular from the 1900s through the 1940s. Many of the residential front yard setbacks were reduced from their original width to accommodate the 1929 widening of Lake Vineyard Avenue into a major arterial street.

Greater variation to the subarea’s urban form is introduced south of Belvidere Street. The most notable exception to the subarea’s design character is the Los Angeles County Social Services building, which is one of the subarea’s few three-story structures, and features high level windows and blank walls facing Lake Avenue.



A neighborhood business operating in an older, single-family structure.

The subarea’s public realm includes mature street trees that provide high-quality shade in some segments but are inconsistent, in part due to the prevalence of driveways. Sidewalk widths within the subarea along North Lake Avenue are typically between 10 to 12 feet, with approximately half of the sidewalk width dedicated to grass parkway. Decorative brick paving and street trees are incorporated in sidewalk extensions toward the southern end of the subarea, but are too inconsistent to provide to create a cohesive public realm character. Bus stops on either side of Lake Avenue at Belvidere Street provide a sheltered bench and trash receptacles. Sidewalk lighting is provided through ornately designed pedestrian-scale streetlamps.

In addition to signalized pedestrian crossings at the northern and southern boundaries of the subarea (Claremont Street and Mountain Street) the only opportunity for pedestrians to cross Lake Avenue within the subarea is at Belvidere Street, located 1,000 feet from the nearest crossing in either direction. Given Lake Avenue’s 75-foot roadway width, the lack of dedicated crossing opportunities presents accessibility challenges for pedestrians in the area.



Small commercial uses and multi-family residential uses along Lake Avenue.



Sheltered bus stop located along Lake Avenue at Belvidere Street.

NORTH LAKE VILLAGE

The North Lake Village subarea encompasses the section of Lake Avenue between Mountain Street to the north and Orange Grove Boulevard to the south. The subarea is characterized primarily by commercial retail uses, many of which are occupied by several fast food establishments with street-facing surface parking lots and drive-through facilities. The subarea also includes several neighborhood-serving small businesses, as well as a large CVS drug store and pharmacy.

The subarea is intersected by Boylston Street about halfway between Mountain Street and Orange Grove Boulevard. On the east side of Lake Avenue, this creates two large north/south blocks of approximately 600 feet each. On the west side of Lake Avenue, Merrett Drive intersects the northern half of the subarea, creating two smaller blocks. The CVS and associated surface parking lot occupy approximately 3 acres in the northeastern block of the subarea.

The subarea is characterized by 1-2 story structures that reflect an eclectic variety of design styles from mid- to late-20th Century development and a diversity of site planning arrangements with low lot coverage. The prevalence of small building footprints, inconsistent setbacks, large surface parking lots, and frequent driveway curb cuts create an auto-oriented character. Many commercial lots feature shared driveways and surface parking lots for adjacent businesses. Sidewalk-fronting storefronts generally provide surface parking lots in the rear, exemplified by Rose City Plaza's retail businesses along Lake Avenue.

Facade treatments lack consistency within the subarea. Some sidewalk-oriented buildings in the subarea contribute to visual interest and the pedestrian experience through transparency, awnings, and articulation, while other commercial buildings, most notably the CVS, feature blank walls fronting the sidewalk. Some commercial operations

have adaptively reused formerly residential homes, similar to those found more commonly in the Belvidere Gardens subarea. Fast-food establishments within the subarea have typically received contemporary architectural updates in line with corporate design guidance.

The Eberle Mortuary building, occupied by Union Station Homeless Services at 825 Orange Grove Boulevard, is a designated Pasadena landmark. According to the City's 1995 North Lake Historic Survey, the building appears eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a significant example of Mission Revival architecture.

The subarea's public realm typically provides adequate sidewalk widths, however pedestrian comfort is challenged



Vehicle repair business featuring a large driveway curb cut.



CVS and its surface parking which take up 3 acres in the northeast of the subarea.



One of the fast food establishments in the North Lake Village subarea.



Sidewalk conditions featuring street furniture.

by development patterns that focus on vehicle travel and access for surface parking lots and drive-thru lanes. The Pasadena North Lake Avenue Traffic & Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Plan proposes a traffic signal with high visibility crosswalks and curb extensions at the central intersection of Lake Avenue and Boylston Street, which currently lacks the infrastructure for pedestrians to cross Lake Avenue safely within the subarea.

Improved sidewalks north of Boylston Street feature extended widths with decorative brick paving and large tree wells. Street tree coverage is inconsistent, however mature street trees provide shade toward the north and southern ends of the subarea. A landscaped median in the southern portion of the subarea also contains mature trees, contributing to traffic calming and greening in the subarea.

Public street furniture and amenities in the subarea are limited to bus stop benches and trash receptacles, and occasional bicycle racks. Sidewalk seating areas associated with restaurants contribute positively to the pedestrian experience and activate the public realm. Sidewalk lighting is provided through ornately designed pedestrian-scale streetlamps.



Restaurant offering outdoor seating for diners.



One of the few residential homes within the district.



View of landscaped median on Lake Avenue.



Improved sidewalks with decorative brick paving and large tree wells.

LAKE STATION DISTRICT

The Lake Station District is the NLSP's southernmost subarea, bounded by Orange Grove Boulevard to the north, Wilson Avenue to the east, Maple Street to the south and El Molino Avenue to the west. The I-210's Lake Avenue freeway on and off ramps, Lake Avenue Overpass, and Lake Metro A Line Station (accessible via the overpass) all contribute to a multimodal southern gateway to the subarea. The subarea is characterized by a mix of commercial, institutional, and residential uses. Residential and institutional uses are primarily focused in the area south of Villa Street, between El Molino Avenue and Wilson Avenue, with the prominent Lake Avenue Church and Villa Gardens health center and retirement community to the west of Lake Avenue.

Institutional uses continue up the west side of Lake Avenue to Santa Barbara Street, including Fire Station 33 and Pasadena Covenant Church. Although not an institutional use, the Pasadena Job Center serves as a resource in connecting reliable workers with homeowners and contractors, and as a community hub for education and cultural exchange. A variety of commercial uses front Lake Avenue and Orange Grove Boulevard throughout the rest of the subarea. At the time of the NLSP's update, the City acquired a parcel at the southeast corner of Lake Avenue and Villa Street (formerly Kaiser Permanente) with the intent of redeveloping the site with multifamily housing and neighborhood services.

The Lake Station District's urban form is generally characterized by one to two-story buildings with a mix of architectural characters. Notably, the subarea's institutional uses introduce exceptions to the scale and form of development, featuring taller building heights and unique design. The subarea's two long blocks on the east side of Lake Avenue reinforce an auto-oriented corridor character, while the west side of Lake Avenue is broken into four blocks, contributing to a more walkable environment and providing access to adjacent neighborhoods via Earlham Street and Santa Barbara Street.

Many commercial storefronts and office uses in the subarea contribute to a relatively consistent street wall with structures built at or near the front property line, as well as a pedestrian-oriented character with windows, awnings, and entrances that open to the street. However, many include surface parking lots and blank or opaque walls adjacent to the sidewalk.

The southern portion of the subarea also includes two residential areas between Villa Street and Maple Street: the block between El Molino Avenue and Maple Way, and the block between Mentor Avenue and Wilson Avenue. These blocks feature a mix of single-family and multi-family



I-210 freeway on ramp along Lake Avenue and the Lake Avenue Metro A Line Station.



Fire Station 33, located in the subarea.



Single family residential homes along Maple Way.

residential building typologies, typically ranging between 1 to 3 stories. Many of the subarea's single-family houses are built in the California Bungalow and Craftsman styles typical of Pasadena's historic urban form. The C.C. Lory House, a local landmark and significant example of the early 1900s Vernacular Hipped Cottage architectural style, is located in the subarea along Catalina Avenue.

The public realm within the Lake Station District subarea is adequately designed to accommodate pedestrian activity, however Lake Avenue's street design and building forms prioritize vehicle movement and access, greatly diminishing the overall pedestrian experience. Pedestrian access is particularly challenging along Lake Avenue between Orange Grove Boulevard and Villa Street, which lacks a marked pedestrian crossing opportunity for 1,200 feet. Sidewalk widths range from 10 to 12 feet throughout the corridor, with relatively consistent tree wells and streetlamps, and occasional bicycle racks. Most blocks include a bus stop with seating and a trash receptacle. A lack of parkways along the corridor maximizes room for pedestrian travel and sidewalk amenities, but increases a feeling of exposure to vehicle traffic. Some segments of the subarea have clusters of street trees planted with enough consistency to provide shade and a sense of buffer from the street, however mature street tree canopy is lacking from several portions of the corridor. Some more recent tree plantings offer potential to enhance the pedestrian experience through shade and buffering as they mature. The subarea does not include any publicly-accessible open spaces.



Bus stop with street furniture along Lake Avenue.

Public realm conditions along Villa Street, Maple Street, El Molino Avenue, Mentor Avenue, Catalina Avenue, and Wilson Avenue in the residential portions of the subarea are comfortable with consistent shade provided by mature street trees. Full sidewalk widths typically range from 10-15 feet, with 5 feet of walkable sidewalk space and 5 to 10 feet of grass parkway.

The North Lake Avenue Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Plan proposes sidewalk improvements from Orange Grove Boulevard to Maple Street, including curb extensions at all corners of the North Lake Avenue and Orange Grove Boulevard intersection and enhanced signals, signage, and striping at the fire station. South of Villa Street, the Safety Enhancement Plan proposes traffic calming measures and improved pedestrian conditions such as high-visibility crosswalks and pedestrian refuge island to shorten crossing distance across Lake Avenue.



A historic pastrami restaurant, The Hat, located along Lake Avenue.



Medical office located along Lake Avenue.

Ch. 3

Vision, Goals & Policies

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Vision, Goals & Policies

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The NLSP Vision, Goals, and Policies establish the desired outcomes of the plan and provide general direction for achieving these outcomes.

VISION

- » The vision characterizes the intended future of the NLSP area, as shaped by both the General Plan and extensive community input during the plan update process. The NLSP vision contains an overarching vision statement and seven supporting vision objectives.
- » The Vision Concept Map (Figure 3.1-1) illustrates how the vision is applied to specific areas along the corridor.

GOALS

- » A goal is a statement that describes a desired future condition or “end” state. Goals are change and outcome oriented, achievable over time, though not driven by funding.

POLICIES

- » A policy is a clear statement that guides a specific course of action for decision-makers to achieve the associated goal.

The vision, goals, and policies in this chapter are presented in the following sections:

- » **3.1 Vision**
 - » 3.1.1 Vision Statement
 - » 3.1.2 Vision Objectives
- » **3.2 Goals & Policies**
 - » 3.2.1 Plan Area Goals & Policies
 - » Public Realm
 - » Development & Design
 - » Economic Development
 - » 3.2.2 Subarea Goals & Policies
 - » Washington Place
 - » Vineyard Gardens
 - » North Lake Village
 - » Lake Station District



Towards a Great North Lake Avenue in Chapter 5 provides additional guidance on transforming North Lake Avenue into a more multimodal, people-focused boulevard with new amenities, landscaping, programming and more.

3.1 Vision

3.1.1 VISION STATEMENT

North Lake will be a vibrant and visually cohesive corridor, weaving together several distinct pedestrian-oriented districts that complement and build upon the cultural and architectural history of the community and its surrounding neighborhoods.

3.1.2 VISION OBJECTIVES

1. Sustainable Growth

A lively mix of new residential and neighborhood-serving retail shops, restaurants and services, close to transit and open space.

4. Economic Vitality

Small businesses and local institutions that contribute to the area’s economy, providing jobs as well as other benefits to the area.

2. A Sense of Place

Places with a unique identity and character that people want to visit, built around engaging gathering spaces and inviting streetscapes.

5. Walkable Neighborhood

Sidewalks designed for pedestrian comfort, safety, and mobility, with easy connections to people’s daily needs and multimodal transport.

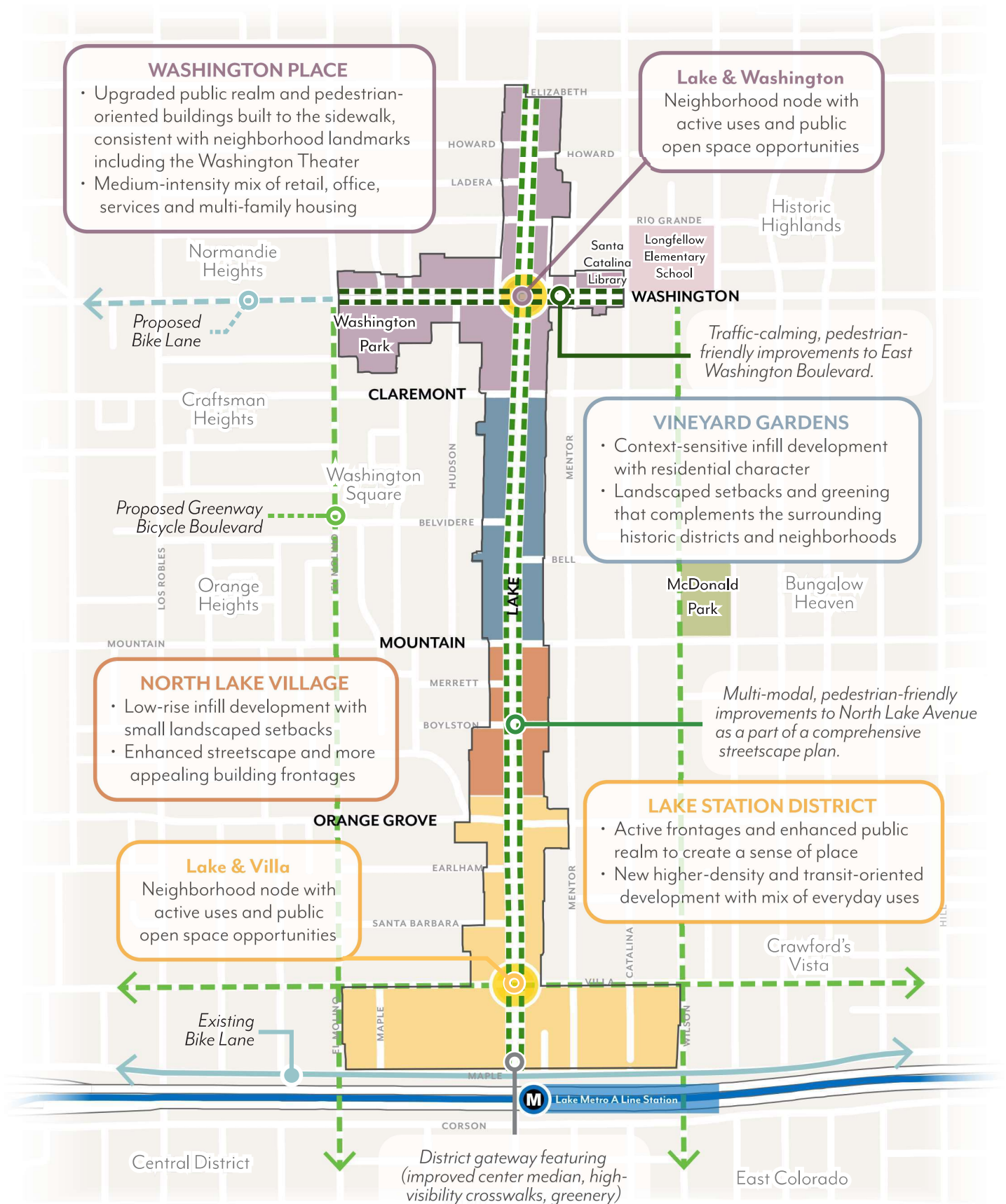
3. High-Quality Homes

Well-designed multi-family housing that creates varied and affordable options to fit all kinds of Pasadena residents and families.

6. Green Community

Attractive streets lined with consistent, healthy tree canopies and landscaping that will support climate resiliency and improve public health.

Figure 3.1-1: Vision Concept Map



3.2 Goals & Policies

The goals and policies in this section provide policy direction for implementing the vision for the NLSP area and achieving the desired outcomes based on community input and General Plan guidance. Goals and policies also provide guidance to decision makers such as City staff, City Commissions, or City Council when reviewing development projects, and they can also help support grant funding efforts to supplement the City budget for public improvement projects.

The NLSP includes goals and policies that are applicable to the entire Plan area, as well as specific subareas. The goals and policies for the Plan area are organized by topic:

- » Public Realm
- » Development & Design
- » Economic Development
- » Subareas



Sidewalks with outdoor dining, pedestrian amenities, and greening features create an active and welcoming pedestrian environment.

PUBLIC REALM

Goal 1. A high-quality public realm, including sidewalks and public open spaces, that contribute to North Lake Avenue’s overall identity and sense of place.

Policies:

- 1.a. Walkability.** Provide an unobstructed path of travel for users of all abilities that can reasonably accommodate pedestrian volumes along the corridor.
- 1.b. Public Amenities.** Provide a designated portion of the sidewalk as the Amenity Zone for public amenities such as seating, bicycle parking, trash receptacles, bus shelters, parkways, tree wells, or other stormwater management features. Variations in design of these amenities can contribute to the distinction of subareas along the corridor.
- 1.c. Enhanced Storefronts.** Encourage attractive and welcoming storefronts using street-oriented entrances, planters, seating, and other enhancements to a building’s entrance and ground floor exterior.
- 1.d. Outdoor Dining.** Encourage a vibrant outdoor dining environment for restaurants fronting North Lake Avenue to generate activity and promote a lively and dynamic sidewalk zone.
- 1.e. Lighting.** Provide adequate pedestrian-scale lighting along sidewalks and in public spaces to enhance the safety and comfort of visitors, especially at night, using dark sky-friendly design to limit light pollution by directing lighting downwards.
- 1.f. Activation Opportunities.** Support features that attract activity and community gathering in the public realm such as outdoor dining, kiosks, seating, and public art, such as murals.
- 1.g. Placemaking Opportunities.** Introduce placemaking features such as decorative landscaping treatments, signage, and seating at North Lake Avenue’s intersections with Washington Boulevard, Mountain Street, Orange Grove Boulevard, and Villa Street, to establish continuity and enhance the corridor’s visual identity.
- 1.h. Enhanced Gateways.** Enhance visual and physical conditions surrounding North Lake’s gateways from areas to the north and south.
- 1.i. Public Art.** Encourage collaboration between City departments, Arts and Culture Commission, Northwest Commission, and local businesses to identify locations for public art installations and other aesthetic improvements that reflect and build upon the North Lake Avenue community identity.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES FOR THE PUBLIC REALM

The NLSP Public Realm goals and policies were crafted to align with the Planning Commission Subcommittee’s vision for North Lake Avenue (introduced in Chapter 1), which could be further refined in a comprehensive streetscape plan for the corridor. A new streetscape plan could include detailed guidance and precise recommendations of improvements that would promote pedestrian strolling and discovery, connect neighborhoods, differentiate subareas, and accommodate activities such as people watching, street vending, farmers markets, and outdoor dining. The streetscape plan can also influence canopy trees, parklets, and kiosks that would provide shade and gathering spaces along the street, with street furniture, pedestrian-scaled lighting, bus shelters, bike racks, public art, and additional amenities. *Refer to Public Realm Standards (Chapter 5) and Implementation (Chapter 7).*



Sidewalks and public spaces with seating, trash and recycling receptacles, parkways, shade trees, and pedestrian infrastructure provide a comfortable and amenity-rich experience for pedestrians in commercial and mixed-use settings.



Landscaped parkways and setbacks and consistent shade trees with large, healthy canopies provide a more comfortable pedestrian experience and support sustainability objectives.

PUBLIC REALM

Goal 2. A comfortable and well-connected NLSP area that encourages sustainable modes of travel such as walking, biking, rolling, and public transit.

Policies:

- 2.a. Multi-Modal Environment.** Encourage non-driving modes of travel and multi-modal connections within the district by providing sufficient space for installations such as bus shelters and bicycle racks.
- 2.b. Traffic Calming.** Support public realm and traffic calming improvements that promote safe, comfortable, multi-modal mobility along North Lake Avenue, such as the North Lake Avenue Traffic & Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Plan.
- 2.c. Pedestrian Environment.** Improve pedestrian conditions throughout the Plan area through expanded sidewalks, more streetscape amenities and shade, and pedestrian-oriented design to enhance walkability.
- 2.d. Pedestrian Mobility.** Support the addition of signalized crossings, bulb-outs, continental crosswalks, scramble crosswalks, pedestrian lighting, and other improvements that promote safe, efficient, and comfortable pedestrian connections.
- 2.e. Bicycle Connections.** Support proposed bicycle facilities within and surrounding the Plan area per the City's Bicycle Transportation Action Plan (BTAP), Active Transportation Plan, and/or other City plans.
- 2.f. Transit Connections.** Support North Lake Avenue's connections to transit and neighboring activity hubs through addition of bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements around the Metro A Line Lake Station and freeway overpass between the NLSP and the CDSP areas.
- 2.g. Bus Stop Amenities.** At all bus stops, support implementation of shading devices to shelter transit users from the elements. Provide adequate lighting, comfortable seating, and real-time transit information.



Enhanced crossing treatments, such as a scramble, can support a safe and comfortable pedestrian experience.



Wide sidewalks with tree canopies and storefront awnings that provide shade for passersby.

PUBLIC REALM

Goal 3. A green corridor with sufficient landscaping and shade coverage to encourage pedestrian mobility and support sustainability objectives such as carbon sequestration, mitigating the urban heat island effect, and increasing stormwater capture.

Policies:

- 3.a. Parkway.** Incorporate parkways into the public sidewalk, providing opportunities for street tree planting, improving permeability for rain and stormwater capture, and cooling the sidewalk environment.
- 3.b. Street Trees.** Encourage street tree planting in amenity zones, street medians, and “tree lanes” to provide a substantial year-round shade canopy, and consider the addition of accent trees to support resilience and celebrate the City’s climate and heritage.
- 3.c. Street Tree Distribution.** Increase the frequency and consistency of canopy trees to improve air quality and allow pedestrians to walk the length of the corridor in a shaded environment.
- 3.d. Tree Protection.** Require the protection and maintenance of mature and healthy trees which bring aesthetic, environmental, and economic benefits to the NLSP area through the Citywide Tree Protection Ordinance.
- 3.e. Landscaped Setbacks.** Incorporate thoughtful landscaping with sustainable and native plant materials in areas where wider, buffered setbacks are appropriate.
- 3.f. Landscaped Medians.** Support the addition of landscaped street medians along the entire Lake Avenue corridor within the NLSP area to provide traffic calming benefits, safe crossing options, and opportunities for usable space such as community gardens and pedestrian ‘ramblas’.
- 3.g. Resilient Plantings.** Support the inclusion of native, drought-tolerant and fire-resistant species to increase urban resilience and create habitat for insects and birds.
- 3.h. Water Conservation.** Encourage low-impact development (LID) and smart irrigation techniques in all landscaping, incorporating permeable paving, bio-swales, and other methods to control runoff and capture stormwater for onsite reuse.



Parkways provide opportunities for street tree plantings, landscaping, and improving permeability.



Consistent street trees add beauty to the public realm and improve the pedestrian experience.

DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN

Goal 4. Complementary building forms that reflect the scale of the neighborhood, preserve historic resources, and support a vibrant, walkable district.

Policies:

- 4.a. Transit-Oriented Development.** Promote higher density, transit-oriented development within close proximity of the Metro A Line station, supported by multi-modal linkages, and pedestrian and open space amenities.
- 4.b. Architectural Diversity.** Allow for a range of architectural styles and forms that provide visual interest and quality design through massing and façade standards that strengthen the corridor’s identity.
- 4.c. Historic Compatibility.** Require new development adjacent to the district’s five designated historic districts and various designated properties to be compatible with historic scale and design features.
- 4.d. Scaled Transitions.** Require higher-intensity new development along North Lake Avenue to provide appropriate transitions to adjoining lower density residential neighborhoods.
- 4.e. Transparency.** Require façade transparency to improve visual interest, reduce the prevalence of blank walls, and establish a connection between ground floor commercial uses and the public realm.
- 4.f. Pedestrian Orientation.** Support site planning, façade design, and landscaping to support pedestrian-oriented places that focus activity on the street.
- 4.g. Materials.** Use durable, high-quality materials that exhibit a sense of permanence on all sides of a building, but particularly at the street level and entrances.
- 4.h. Hardening.** Employ materials and designs that reduce the chance of ignition during wildfires, to include using flame-resistant siding and roofing, enclosing eaves, covering vents, and clearing flammable material from a perimeter buffer zone.
- 4.i. Loading, Storage, and Utilities.** Locate service areas away from public streets and residential neighborhoods, as far as feasible.
- 4.j. Parking Impacts.** Locate onsite parking underground or in the rear of the lot with access from a secondary street to reduce the visual impact and prevent the introduction of new curb cuts or new surface parking lots abutting North Lake Avenue.



Ground floor design can contribute to the connection between public and private realms.



Transparency along streets establishes a connection between the public realm and private uses.

DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN

Goal 5. Ample access to open space for both passive and active enjoyment, with a range of well-designed private, common, and public spaces.

Policies:

- 5.a. Residential Open Space.** Incorporate private and common open space areas that correlate to a building's size and number of residents, including sheltered places for people to sit and talk such as porches, loggias, balconies, and arcades.
- 5.b. Commercial Open Space.** Require large non-residential or mixed-use projects to provide open space for employees, visitors, and the public.
- 5.c. Functional Spaces.** Create usable, functional open spaces for residents, employees, and visitors alike.
- 5.d. Urban Greening.** Use open space areas to further environmental goals – such as carbon sequestration and reducing the urban heat island effect – through tree planting, stormwater capture, and native landscaping.
- 5.e. Comfortable Setting.** Create a pleasant micro-climate in open space areas, including shade from summer sun and access to winter sunlight; locate seating with consideration to noontime sun and shade.
- 5.f. Underutilized Spaces.** Encourage the creative transformation of underutilized spaces along the North Lake corridor, such as large surface parking lots, to add a variety of placemaking and open space opportunities.
- 5.g. Outdoor Dining.** Encourage outdoor dining along the street frontage that is protected from vehicles through methods such as screening or landscaping.



Publicly accessible open spaces such as a pedestrian paseo contribute to an enhanced public realm and create an inviting gateway environment for residents and visitors.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal 6. A supportive environment for new development and businesses that are compatible with surrounding residential uses and historic resources.

Policies:

- 6.a. Healthy Mix of Uses.** Expand convenient access to transit, institutions, services, and amenities that will attract and retain businesses/private investment in the community.
- 6.b. Redevelopment Potential.** Incentivize redevelopment of the underutilized Food 4 Less, CVS, and former Big Lots sites to replace large surface parking lots with new housing above community serving stores or offices along the North Lake Avenue frontage.
- 6.c. Housing Options.** Support a range of housing types, including co-living and micro-units, that allow for variety in affordability and configurations, provide shared amenities, and are suitable for people across all phases of life.
- 6.d. Adaptive Reuse.** Encourage adaptive reuse to support new businesses and character of existing buildings.
- 6.e. Balanced Requirements.** Elevate quality of design while maintaining a reasonable level of flexibility to increase market feasibility for new developments.
- 6.f. Parking Reductions.** Reduce parking requirements to incentivize historic preservation, the provision of public open space, transit usage, and to lower the cost of development.
- 6.g. Lower Barriers to Entry.** Simplify parking standards and exempt small businesses from costly parking requirements to enable greater flexibility for changing uses and economic factors.
- 6.h. Park Once Districts.** Support opportunities to “Park Once and Walk” along North Lake Avenue by working with property and business owners to increase shared parking in publicly owned parking lots and to reduce on-site parking requirements.
- 6.i. Façade Improvements.** Encourage and assist existing owners to upgrade their properties flanking the public right-of-way through building repair, re-modeling, re-painting, and landscaping.
- 6.j. Cohesive Business District.** Develop and maintain a cohesive and unique visual identity for the NLSP area’s businesses, supported by formation of a business and/or property-owner association and comprehensive sign program.



Adaptive reuse can preserve the character of historic residential buildings while adding convenient access to neighborhood services and a variety of other uses.



Facade treatments utilizing high-quality, textured materials and landscaping contribute to the human scale of the street.

3.2.2 SUBAREA GOALS & POLICIES

WASHINGTON PLACE

Goal 7. An active, walkable, neighborhood-serving gateway to North Lake Avenue, with development that respects and reinforces the neighborhood’s rich history.

Policies:

- 7.a. Northern Gateway.** Introduce plazas and active commercial uses that create a sense of place and welcome residents and visitors into the North Lake corridor from neighborhoods to the north.
- 7.b. Historic Commercial Character.** Reinforce the historic pedestrian-oriented commercial character of the Lake/Washington intersection.
- 7.c. Enhanced Public Realm.** Enhance public realm by requiring wider sidewalks, shade trees, publicly-accessible open space, and sidewalk dining that support a sense of place.
- 7.d. Pedestrian Improvements.** Support the addition of marked crosswalks and related infrastructure that reduces crossing distances, slows vehicle speeds, and improves pedestrian connectivity and safety along East Washington Boulevard.
- 7.e. Engaging Ground Floor.** Flexible ground floor uses supported by active streetscapes and design treatments that engage pedestrians and encourage business activity.
- 7.f. Proximity to Services.** Allow for neighborhood businesses that provide daily services within walking distance for residents in the Plan area and surrounding neighborhoods.
- 7.g. Sensitive Transitions.** Allow building heights that support commercial development and provide appropriate transitions to adjacent Historic Landmark Districts such as Historic Highlands, Bungalow Heaven, and Washington Square.



Traditional architecture helps reflect the area’s historic character.



Seating and landscaping, along with other amenities such as bicycle parking, shade trees, and enhanced crosswalks, provide for a comfortable pedestrian experience.



Conceptual illustrations of streetscape improvements on North Lake Avenue near Washington Boulevard.

VINEYARD GARDENS

Goal 8. A residential mixed-use corridor that encourages traditional architectural forms and details behind landscaped setbacks, reinforcing the historic character of the existing homes and adjacent neighborhoods.

Policies:

- 8.a. Architectural Diversity.** New development should complement the existing architecture and reference architectural styles such as California Bungalow, Mission Revival, and Minimal Traditional styles.
- 8.b. Historic Resources.** Preserve architecturally and culturally significant structures and encourage future alterations or repairs to maintain the resource’s character-defining features.
- 8.c. Adaptive Reuse.** Encourage sensitive reuse of existing buildings to achieve the preservation and rehabilitation of both designated and undesignated historic properties.
- 8.d. Sensitive Transitions.** Require that new development along North Lake Avenue provides appropriately scaled transitions to adjoining lower density residential neighborhoods, including Historic Landmark Districts of Bungalow Heaven and Washington Square.
- 8.e. Enhanced Streetscape.** Increase setback area to provide additional sidewalk, amenities, aesthetic enhancements to activate the public realm and transition to residential uses.
- 8.f. Greening.** Contribute to overall greening along the corridor through consistent tree canopies, well-maintained parkways and landscaped setbacks.



Vineyard Gardens will continue to accommodate adaptive reuse to achieve preservation of the neighborhood’s historic character while welcoming new businesses and services.



New development can complement existing architecture while introducing new types of housing for a diverse group of residents.



Conceptual illustrations of new multi-family residential development with a landscaped median on North Lake Avenue.

NORTH LAKE VILLAGE

Goal 9. A commercial mixed-use corridor supported by an enhanced streetscape that promotes opportunities for gathering spaces and neighborhood connections, designed with sensitivity to the adjacent landmark districts.

Policies:

- 9.a. Mixed-use Redevelopment.** Allow mixed-use projects in the area to expand housing opportunities and promote the revitalization of underutilized land.
- 9.b. Ground Floor Commercial.** Commercially focused ground floor uses to support existing businesses, encourage new businesses and promote more neighborhood services for the surrounding community.
- 9.c. Sensitive Transitions.** Require that commercial and mixed-use development along Lake Avenue provides appropriately scaled transitions to adjoining lower density residential neighborhoods, including the Bungalow Heaven Historic District.
- 9.d. Street Orientation.** Require new buildings to orient frontages to the street and sidewalk, phasing out auto-oriented site layouts that prioritize vehicle access and encourage driving.
- 9.e. Ground Floor Design.** Implement design standards and guidelines relating to entrances, transparency, and other elements that help create a ground floor commercial character.
- 9.f. Outdoor Dining.** Encourage the re-use and redesign of outdoor space such as excess surface parking areas to establish a vibrant and inviting outdoor dining environment.
- 9.g. Greening.** Contribute to overall greening along the corridor through consistent tree canopies and well-maintained parkways.
- 9.h. Pedestrian Improvements.** Support implementation of the City's North Lake Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Plan through sidewalk improvements and high visibility pedestrian crossings.



Conceptual illustration of pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development and streetscape enhancements.

Towards a Great North Lake Avenue

GREAT STREETS are more than transportation corridors—they are dynamic public spaces that foster community, support local economies, and invite people to gather, linger, and return. They are places people want to be.

The Planning Commission Subcommittee’s vision for North Lake Avenue aims to transform the corridor into a ‘Great Street.’ This vision prioritizes the creation of a cohesive and inviting streetscape, and the public realm standards outlined in this chapter were developed to support the Subcommittee’s long-term plan for North Lake Avenue. The sidewalk and parkway requirements of the NLSP will facilitate the establishment of a high-quality public realm that’s capable of accommodating various uses and users, enhancing North Lake’s identity and sense of place.

Placemaking is a collaborative, community-centered approach to planning, designing, and managing public spaces that turns a space into a *place*, prioritizing people and their experiences. Instead of focusing solely on aesthetics or infrastructure, placemaking asks: How do we create spaces where people want to gather, interact, and feel a sense of belonging? Placemaking can improve not just the physical environment of a space, but the social and economic health of a community as well.

The Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a nonprofit dedicated to creating and sustaining public spaces that build strong urban fabrics through placemaking, defines the following ten qualities of a Great Street. By applying these principles, North Lake Avenue can become not only functional but also a place of community connection and everyday life.



1 Attractions & Activities

People are drawn to places that offer engaging activities—and they’re more likely to come back. Without things to do, spaces stay empty and can fall into decline. Successful destinations offer a diverse range of experiences that appeal to all ages, genders, times of day and year, and group sizes. A well-planned destination links these experiences along an inviting path that encourages exploration and repeat visits.

2 Unique Image & Identity

The most memorable streets have an individual identity, shaped by their architecture, history, culture, or even the type of businesses they host. This image should feel authentic and be reinforced through signage, public art and street design, as well as upkeep, as cleanliness and maintenance are crucial to preserving a positive image and sense of pride. Local stories, materials, and design elements that reflect the community’s character should be celebrated.

3 Active Street Edges

The ground level of buildings should engage the street, with features that promote interaction between indoor and outdoor spaces. Active uses like shops, cafés, or galleries make streets more vibrant and walkable than blank façades or empty lots. At a minimum, the edges should offer visual interest and transparency; blank walls, parking, and other dead zones along the sidewalk should be avoided. Uses should be designed for year-round activity and help tie both sides of the street together.

4 Essential Amenities

Well-designed amenities support a lively and functional street. These include lighting, shading, trees, landscaping, bus shelters, bike racks, waste bins, and different seating options such as single seats, benches, and café chairs. Giving people choices in where and how they sit is often overlooked but essential. Grouping amenities together encourages use and enhances comfort and convenience.

Elements of a Great Street

FURNITURE



A variety of permanent, temporary, and/or modular furniture should be widely accessible and distributed throughout, inviting people to stop and stay in the public realm.

PUBLIC ART



Murals, sculptures and other forms of art can be incorporated into all kinds of projects, including streetscape plans, development projects and infrastructure works.

SHADE



Shade trees and human-made shade structures offer protection from the sun and can contribute to pedestrian comfort in the high heat of summer.

BIKE FACILITIES



Bike racks, corrals, lockers create an environment where people feel encouraged to use alternative modes of transportation (and confident in the security of their bike).

LIGHTING



Street lamps and other forms of lighting, from string lights to building-mounted sconces to ground lighting, play a major role in the identity and safety of a street after dark.

WAYFINDING



Signage with directions and walking distances to nearby destinations and landmarks, biking and transit routes, and/or other local and historical information can help orient visitors.



5 Ongoing Management

Effective management is the backbone of a successful street. This involves more than maintenance—it includes tenant coordination and programming regular events to keep the space active. Programming can range from small performances and sales to larger civic, cultural, or seasonal events. Frequent small-scale events—like musicians, walks, or pop-up vendors can help build habit and presence.

6 Seasonal Strategies

To maintain vibrancy year-round, especially in places with less formal management, seasonal events like holiday markets, festivals, and recreational programs are vital. These strategies help draw people in during different times of the year, keeping the street animated regardless of season. Temporary elements such as seasonal installations or decor can keep the street dynamic and fresh.

7 Design for Diverse Users

A Great Street is for everyone. It should serve a mix of ages, cultures, income levels, and physical abilities. Public space feels truly vibrant when everyone feels welcome and no single group dominates. To best achieve this from the start, spaces should be designed with input from community members, including those historically excluded from planning processes, in order to ensure the design reflects their needs, values, and desires. It's about equity, representation, and flexibility.

8 Balanced Transportation

A successful street supports multiple modes of transportation, ensuring safe access for all by prioritizing walking, biking, and public transit. Use traffic calming strategies (like narrowed lanes, curb extensions, and reduced speed limits) to ensure that vehicles don't overwhelm the space. Pedestrian safety and comfort should come first; intersections and crossings must be safe spaces for people.

"The best streets are comfortable to walk along with leisure and safety. They are streets for both pedestrians and drivers. They have definition, a sense of enclosure with their buildings, distinct ends and beginnings."

— Allan B. Jacobs, author of *Great Streets*

9 Blended Spaces

Public life often happens where public and private spaces overlap. Patios, sidewalk cafés, retail displays, and shared street designs help blur this boundary, with businesses like shops and restaurants spilling onto sidewalks. Encouraging this interaction adds energy to the street and supports local businesses.

10 Neighborhood Integration

Great streets don't exist in isolation—they connect to the broader urban context of the city. Thoughtful transitions from district to district (e.g., commercial businesses to quieter residential neighborhoods) help maintain community character and reduce conflicts. Simple measures such as changes in scale, building type, street width, or landscaping can signal this shift in pace and use.

Adapted from Qualities of a Great Street, Project for Public Spaces.