

7. OUR SAFE COMMUNITY

“In general, life and people themselves, make the city more inviting and safe in terms of both experienced and perceived security.”

Jan Gehl, Cities for People

Public safety is a critical component of city services — it constitutes 49% of the City’s \$25 budget. As of 2017, the police department included 35 sworn officers, 12 non-sworn full-time employees, five part-time employees, and two volunteers; and the fire department included 19 full time career firefighters and three part time employees. Because the Downtown area is built-out with limited projected growth, the Specific Plan does not anticipate that additional facilities and/or public safety employees will be required to serve the Downtown area.

South Pasadena is a safe community with low property and violent crime rate. However, personal and community safety and security in Downtown area is a complex issue. The perception of safety or danger does not always relate directly to the actual incidence of crime. We feel comfortable and confident using areas where there is good visibility and effective lighting, where we can be seen and heard by other people.

Thoughtful design, good management, and involvement from downtown merchants and residents is an important instrument in enhancing sense of well being and making places more user-friendly, easy to understand, and secure. The key design principles that promote personal safety and property security are:

1. Natural Surveillance

The objective is to provide surveillance opportunities from buildings and public streets to discourage anti-social activity. For example: shopfront windows, balconies, entries, allow building occupants and passersby to observe on-site and street activities for the purpose of informal surveillance. Mix uses, particularly at street level, add vitality at different times of the day and night.

2. Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

Loss of life because of preventable traffic is tragic. We should protect our most vulnerable road users, including children, older adults, and people walking and bicycling. This requires a citywide effort that brings together engineers, police officers, advocates, and policymakers to work together towards creating safer streets. Wide multi-lane streets with larger block lengths in the Downtown area result in streets that are both difficult to cross and easier to speed on.

The community supported vision calls for following pedestrian and bicycle safety enhancements for Downtown streets:

- Mission Street to be re-stripped as a Main Street with two travel lanes, two bicycle lanes and parallel parking on both sides. This reinforces the character of Mission Street as a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly street connecting the light rail station to Fair Oaks Avenue.
- Fair Oaks Avenue to be configured as a grand double-tree lined street that maintains the four travel lanes, with bicycle lanes located closest to the street curb and separated from the parallel parking by potted plants in the initial phases and permanent planters in the eventual phases. Bulb outs at each intersection help slow traffic speeds. The bicycle lanes remain continuous across the bulb outs.
- Mid-block crossings on Mission Street help break the longer block lengths and encourage pedestrian activity along and across the street.
- A clear and safe alley system could encourage exploration of the Downtown area, and more enjoyable routes, while allowing a finer grain network that is more comfortable for pedestrians. The Pico Alley east of the station and Edison Lane behind Rialto are recommended to be paved and enhanced with string lights. The alley would become a safe and quiet gathering space as well as a safe pedestrian connection, without getting onto Mission Street or Fair Oaks Avenue.

3. Lighting

To overcome issues such as safety, navigation and visibility – light installations can effectively be used to welcome people in dark public spaces. Improving street lighting can reduce the prevalence and incidence of crime. Downtown South Pasadena will attract pedestrians with flattering full-spectrum, low-watt lamps on short poles.

Besides street lamps, lighting can be mounted on buildings and where appropriate light the facade, or can be integrated into bollards, feature lights, and streetscape elements.

Lighting levels should be achieved by increasing the number of lights, not their height or wattage. Rather than be everywhere, lighting levels respond to the context. In downtown area, street lights should be frequent and support nighttime activity. In residential areas, lighting can be limited with well-lit intersections.

Light streaming from storefront windows along downtown streets can make a significant contribution to the feeling of security at night. Mixed-uses along downtown streets, particularly upper level housing as a crime prevention strategy, increases the feeling of safety. Along Mission Street and Fair Oaks Avenue, upper-floor housing provides “eyes on the street” that follow what is going on in the street and deter crime.

POLICIES AND ACTIONS

P7.X Make Downtown streets safe for pedestrians and bicyclist.

A7.X Carry out the safety enhancements recommend by the Downtown Vision for Mission Street and Fair Oaks Avenue.

A7.X Add mid-block crossings and parkletts on Mission Street.

A7.X Amend the development codes to allow a variety of context sensitive street types.

P7.X Employ a range of contextual lighting options to promote safety and security on downtown streets.

A7.X Identify downtown public streets and open spaces that are poorly lit and install context sensitive street lights.

A7.X Install string lights in alleys that provide pedestrian connections to destinations.

A7.X Require new infill development to demonstrate on a lighting plan appropriate level of direct and indirect lighting in the public and private realm.

P7.X Reduce opportunities for criminal activity through physical design standards, recreation opportunities, educational programs, and counseling services.

A7.X For new infill development and major rehabilitation, incorporate natural surveillance principles and best practices into development codes and review processes.

A7.X Amend the development codes to require building designs that promote safety by providing active street frontages.