Character Areas

While Hermosa Beach largely identifies as a close-knit and unified community, the unique and eclectic character of Hermosa Beach is a direct result of the distinct collection of neighborhoods and commercial areas that make up the fabric of the community. To ensure this unique character is protected for future generations, it is important to define and describe the unique characteristics of each area and establish goals and policies to maintain, enhance, and transform each area.

A community’s character can be defined by the distinctive or unique physical features, or attributes (i.e. hilly, small buildings, wide sidewalks) as well as the social characteristics that are influenced by physical characteristics (i.e. pedestrian-oriented, kid-friendly, safe and comfortable).

Since the character defining features of Hermosa Beach vary by area, this section organizes the community by neighborhood, district, or corridor (see Figure 2.4). The discussion associated with each character area is intended to describe the future vision and articulate the proposed distribution of uses and design for the built environment.

How does this relate to Zoning?

The Zoning Code will incorporate the specific development standards and uses allowed within each zoning district by combining guidance from the following components of the General Plan:

Land Use Designation

The particular land use designation on a parcel identifies the allowable uses and the appropriate range of density or intensity of development allowed.

Character Area

The character area will provide guidance on how buildings should be oriented and interact with the public realm or streetscape to encourage a cohesive and coordinated urban realm for each area.

Goals and Policies

The goals and policies should be consulted for further guidance on how to integrate new projects into the existing urban fabric.

When developing new programs or submitting applications for development this section should be referenced to ensure projects are consistent and compatible with the character of the area.

Neighborhoods

The residential structure of Hermosa Beach is made up of individual neighborhoods whose boundaries are generally defined by their development pattern. Some neighborhoods, like the North End, developed as distinct communities, while others, like the Valley neighborhood, developed incrementally over time.

Each neighborhood offers a different mix of housing types, with some neighborhoods providing exclusively single-family residential uses, and others providing a variety of housing types, often with single- and multi-family buildings coexisting on the same block. Many neighborhoods also offer commercial uses to serve the neighborhood needs.

There are a multitude of neighborhoods present in Hermosa Beach including the North End, Hermosa View, the Walk Streets, Sand Section, Valley, Herondo, Greenbelt, Hermosa Hills, and Eastside.

Districts

There are a number of activity centers with clusters of similar activities or uses – located in close proximity to one another found in Hermosa Beach. Some districts provide a single type of use, while others require a diverse mix of uses to be economically successful. These districts function as destinations or focal points in the city, and are important places to encourage pedestrian activity and cluster particular land uses.

The three districts in Hermosa Beach include the Civic Center, Downtown, and the Cypress area.

Corridors

Arterial roads and other high activity areas laid out in a linear format are another area in which commercial activity occurs. While occurring over a large length of space, many corridors include a series of nodes with activities to avoid a commercial strip pattern of development.

The two key commercial corridors in Hermosa Beach are the Aviation Boulevard and Pacific Coast Highway corridors.
*Open Space is located throughout select neighborhoods, corridors, and districts.*