

# DOWNTOWN

## DOWNTOWN TODAY



### PRESERVING DOWNTOWN'S QUALITY OF LIFE

### DOWNTOWN'S PARKS AND OPEN SPACE



The bright lights of a city advertise its exhilarating nightlife, but the true test of the quality of urban life is its appeal in the daylight hours. Can people enjoy downtown without being in a shopping mall, packed restaurant, or movie theater? Do residents have paths for jogging, grass for sunbathing, soccer and lawn bowling, and plazas for gatherings, concerts and civic activities?

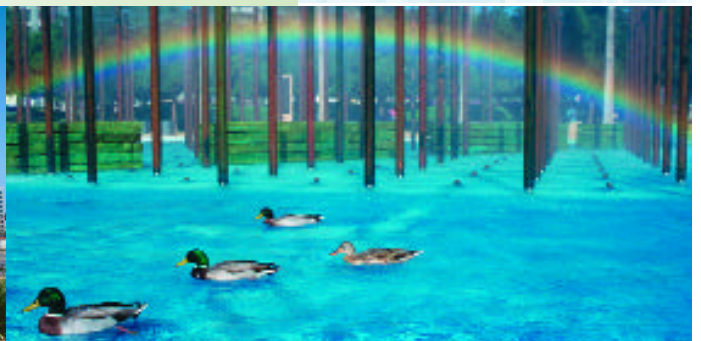
In downtown San Diego, today's answer is certainly yes. A growing abundance of outdoor spaces, all created or improved through redevelopment, are adding to a growing sense of community. They also provide residents, workers and visitors with outlets for recreation or relaxation, as well as artistic, athletic, and cultural expression. San Diego's pleasant weather enhances these special environments for adults, children and pets.

The skyline is changing, due to over \$3 billion of residential, commercial and public development planned or underway. The physical look of downtown differs greatly from just a few years ago. As the community grows, it becomes even more important to maintain a balance between structures and public open space.

"Parks, public plazas, cultural centers and promenades are vital components in the creation of a successful downtown environment, and they are not being overlooked in downtown San Diego," said Peter Hall, CCDC president. "CCDC understands the importance of these elements for a healthy and varied quality of life." While downtown residents enjoy Balboa Park as their backyard, the Ballpark as a side porch, and the Embarcadero as their front yard, there is no shortage of public spaces in between.

"A growing network of parks and open spaces will link downtown's neighborhoods, the waterfront and Balboa Park, adding to downtown's charm and walkability."

Mayor Dick Murphy



## EXISTING DOWNTOWN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Today's downtown parks are unique. They come in various shapes and sizes and offer varied experiences. More will join the scene as neighborhoods grow. The following list of existing parks located in downtown San Diego includes approved park projects (noted with an \*).

### Amici Park

*Unique Feature: Bocce ball courts*

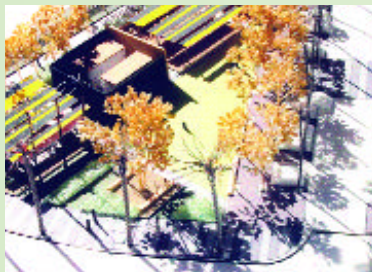
Amici Park, located at the corner of State and Date streets in Little Italy, serves the dual purposes of a playground for Washington Elementary School and a local neighborhood recreational park. With a large green playing field, bocce ball courts, small amphitheater, and public art, Amici Park preserves the neighborhood's cultural heritage and its appeal as a tranquil urban community.



### Balboa Park

*Unique Feature: Second largest urban park in U.S.*

Balboa Park is one of the premier urban parks in the United States, located on the northeastern border of downtown. This 1,400-acre park houses more than 85 cultural institutions, 15 museums and art galleries, 4 theaters and the World Famous San Diego Zoo. Main attractions include the Old Globe Theatre, San Diego Natural History Museum, San Diego Museum of Art, Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, the United Nations Building and Centro Cultural de la Raza. Balboa Park also features a carousel, a miniature railroad and a lawn bowling green. With discount ticket packages, City-provided tram service, several free attractions and rotating free admission among the museums, Balboa Park is accessible to everyone.



### \*Children's Museum Park

*Unique Feature: Interaction between artists and children*

The Children's Museum Park will be a one-acre triangular "art for play" space near the San Diego Children's Museum's new entrance on Island Avenue along King Promenade. The park will feature a large grassy area, three shaded play spaces, playground equipment, a reading tree for storytelling activities, and public art. Design work is complete and construction, funded by CCDC, will coincide with the construction of the new Children's Museum building.



### Asian Garden

*Unique Feature: 7' 3" bronze statue of Confucius*

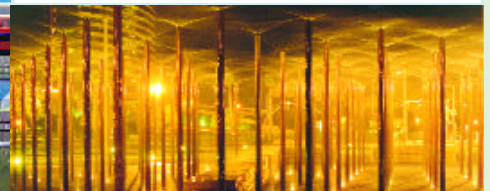
Located at 404 Third Avenue, the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum features an Asian garden with a waterfall, stream, small bridge, fish-pond, stone path and decorative rock interspersed with a variety of plants. A large iron gate at the garden entrance is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen. The garden is a popular destination for tourists, students and community members, and admission is free although donations are accepted. Along with the museum, the Asian garden is open to the public from 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday.



### Children's Park

*Unique Feature: Mounds of grass for playing "King of the Hill"*

Located across from the Children's Museum, along the King Promenade, Children's Park is comprised of lighted pathways, grassy knolls, and a 200-foot-diameter water feature and pond, bisected by the Trolley.





# DOWNTOWN'S PARKS



## Gaslamp Quarter Park

*Unique Feature: Dancing water*

Gaslamp Quarter Park, located at the Gaslamp Trolley stop at Fifth Avenue and Harbor Drive, is an open area with a playful dancing-water feature. Trolley riders and those spending time in the Historic Gaslamp Quarter find it a peaceful place to sit in the sun and people-watch.



## Federal Building Park

*Unique Feature: A quiet spot in the bustling city*

Located on the F Street side of the Federal Office Building and Courthouse, this park forms a cover over underground parking along two city blocks. People enjoy this large grassy area as a sunny place to lounge.

## Horton Plaza Park

*Unique Feature: Historic fountain*

Horton Plaza Park is located on Broadway between Third and Fourth avenues and is easily recognizable as the background of NBC 7/39's downtown studio. The plaza was deeded to the City by Alonzo Horton in 1895 and features the first electric fountain west of the Mississippi, built in 1909 by architect Irving Gill. The plaza has been a venue for concerts, watching parades, festivals, and even a visit from President Benjamin Harrison in 1891. Horton Plaza Park is a central location for people to gather and enjoy the sights and sounds of downtown.



## Horton Square

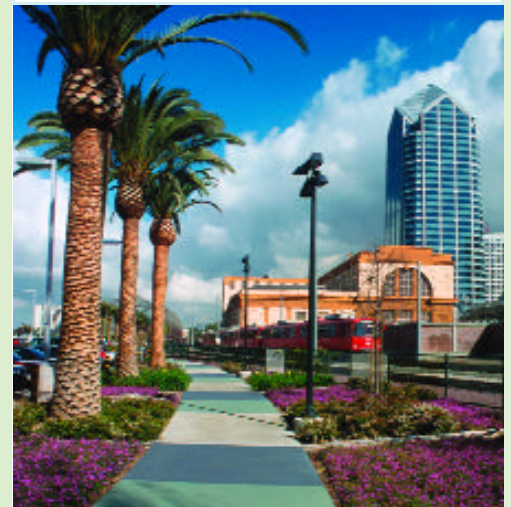
*Unique Feature: Downtown Information Center, Farmer's Market and the Winter Ice Rink*

Horton Square is located outside the NBC office building, near Horton Plaza Park and shopping mall and the Downtown Information Center. A Farmer's Market draws flower and produce vendors into centre city every Thursday afternoon, creating a colorful flurry of activity. NBC sponsors weekly outdoor concerts, and the Square is home annually to the winter ice-skating rink.

## Linear Park

*Unique Feature: Attractive border along railroad tracks*

Bordered by the railroad tracks and Broadway, the Linear Park is a long walkway lined with flowering bushes and hearty shrubs and features a small grassy area shaded by palm trees near E and F streets. It was created as part of downtown's Urban Trails Program.





**Martin Luther King, Jr. Promenade**

*Unique Feature: Public art honoring Dr. King*

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Promenade is an artistic, commemorative urban oasis. Through incremental development, CCDC transformed an under-utilized railroad right-of-way into an attractive visual and physical link between the waterfront and downtown. This half-mile linear park, part of downtown’s urban trails system, features a wide pedestrian walkway embedded with granite segments memorializing Dr. King’s words. Landscaping is colorful and “serape” style. Three unique sculptures celebrate the themes of Dr. King’s work. The walkway cuts through an urban forest of more than 200 trees, colorful flower and grass “buttons,” shrubs, walkways, natural stone benches, bicycle lanes, and jogging paths. This is an ideal location to reflect, picnic, exercise, and enjoy nature without leaving downtown. The San Diego Multicultural Festival is held here each January.



**North Embarcadero Visionary Plan**

*Unique Feature: Best Urban Front Porch*

Originally conceived five years ago, the North Embarcadero Alliance Visionary Plan (NEVP) is a waterfront redevelopment project that will transform downtown San Diego’s northern waterfront—our City’s “front porch”—into vibrant public open space. Central to the improvements is an esplanade consisting of both open and covered walkways, green spaces and art/memorial areas that will be situated next to the bay. View corridors to the bay from east/west streets will ensure that the green spine of the North Embarcadero is visually linked to adjacent neighborhoods and uses. The NEVP has recently entered a new phase with the formation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) among the City of San Diego’s Redevelopment Agency, the Port of San Diego, and CCDC. The JPA will govern the process as staff and the consultant team complete the design for the NEVP. Visit: [www.portofsandiego.org/projects/nevpl](http://www.portofsandiego.org/projects/nevpl).



**North and South Embarcadero Marina Parks**

*Unique Feature: Harbor views*

Just south of Seaport Village is the North Embarcadero Marina Park, a large open waterfront park ideal for picnics, kite flying or watching harbor activity. South Embarcadero Marina Park is on the waterfront side of the Convention Center and provides another grassy area for special events, concerts and festivals.



**Pantoja Park**

*Unique Feature: Downtown’s first park*

Located in downtown’s Marina neighborhood, historic Pantoja Park is a large grassy area lined with trees on G Street between State Street and Kettner Boulevard. The park is named after Don Juan Pantoja y Arriaga, a Spanish frigate pilot who surveyed and mapped the San Diego coastline in 1782. Pantoja Park was the first park in San Diego, dedicated by William Heath Davis in 1850. Local legend states that the ladies of historic “New Town” used to tend to the rubber and eucalyptus trees and other plants, some still in place. The park is now used for casual soccer games and is a popular recreation spot for downtown residents.

**Trolley Park**

*Unique Feature: Makes waiting for the Trolley enjoyable*

Located adjacent to the Seaport Village Trolley stop, Trolley Park is a small grassy area ideal for relaxing in the sun and waiting to catch the next trolley. It’s also next to the famous Kansas City BBQ, site of scenes in the movie, “Top Gun.”





## \*Park at the Park

*Unique Feature: Spot to watch the San Diego Padres play*

A special part of the Petco Park development, this approximately 2.7-acre park will include trees, a tot lot and an elevated grassy area outside the outfield wall that will provide a view of the action inside the ballpark. On game days, fans can use the area to picnic and socialize. On other days, the park becomes a neighborhood park that can be used for concerts and community events. The East Village Square development that surrounds this park will feature 65,000sf of retail space.



## \*Park-to-Bay Link

*Unique Feature: Tree-lined pedestrian corridor*

Construction is underway on this roughly \$30 million public-improvement project located in the East Village neighborhood along Park Boulevard. The Park-to-Bay Link is designed as a landscaped promenade to connect Balboa Park and the San Diego Bay. Artwork and new retail and residential development will border the widened and tree-lined street. The two existing Trolley stations are to be rebuilt as well. The project will also add parking and enhanced lighting, making for a pleasant shopping, strolling, or trolley-riding experience.

## Piazza Basilone

*Unique Feature: Builds Italian flavor*

Set to open during the 2003 Festa in Little Italy, Piazza Basilone is located on the corner of Fir and India streets and features an amphitheater, fountain, and bust of Gunnery Sgt. John Basilone. The plaza is named after Basilone, a famous Italian-American Marine from New Jersey, who died in World War II and is a memorial to Little Italy's 12 young soldiers killed in World War II and the Korean War. The courtyard is designed to be a neighborhood gathering place and will be completed within the next several months.



## William Heath Davis Pocket Park

*Unique Feature: Adjacent to the William Heath Davis House and Museum*

This pocket park is adjacent to the historic William Heath Davis House and Museum, located at 410 Island Avenue in the Gaslamp Quarter. The park is surrounded by decorative wrought-iron fencing and benches and shaded by several trees. The museum gallery and park are available for private parties, and the park is open to visitors touring the William Heath Davis House, San Diego's oldest and arguably most significant building. William Heath Davis, Alonzo Horton, and the County Hospital were former occupants. The Museum is open 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday, and from noon to 4:00 p.m. on Sundays. Admission is free, although donations are accepted.



## \*Tweet Street Park

*Unique Feature: It's for the birds!*

Another linear park utilizing excess public land, high above the Interstate 5 "s" curve, may be small but is full of surprises. On Cortez Hill, it is uniquely designed to make downtown more livable for both the urban human and aviary populations. A trail system will encourage awareness and appreciation for park and wildlife resources within a highly populated urban center. The park will feature birdhouses sculpted by artists, designers, architects and schoolchildren in unusual shapes such as cats and beehives. The park's design creates an attractive nesting environment for the Berwick Wrens native to downtown San Diego.

## M O R E T O C O M E

### Central Park

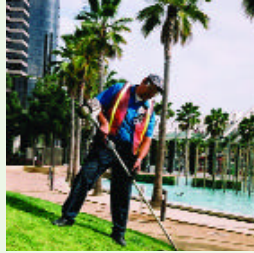
The Port District is planning a 3-4 acre public park just north of Seaport Village connecting Harbor Drive to the waterfront. The harborfront site currently includes the Chesapeake Fish Company and the historic Old Police Station (which will remain as the centerpiece of the park). The Port is seeking a master developer for the project.

### County Waterfront Park

Integrating with the North Embarcadero Visionary Plan, the County of San Diego plans to transform its surface parking lots into gardens, and grassy public gathering spaces. The project has completed the public review process, and engineering work is underway.

# PARK MAINTENANCE

Visitors and residents get the maximum enjoyment out of downtown’s abundant open space when the fountains are flowing, the grass is thick, and the environment is secure and debris-free. Maintaining the beauty and cleanliness of downtown parks is a job that requires the constant efforts of both the City of San Diego and the Downtown San Diego Partnership’s Clean & Safe Program.



The City Park and Recreations Department maintains Horton Plaza Park, Pantoja Park, William Heath Davis House Pocket Park, and Amici Park and provides landscaping services around the City Administration Building and Development Services Building.



The City provides 50 percent of the cost of maintaining the Children’s Park and 40 percent of the Gaslamp Quarter. Horton Plaza Park’s historic granite columns, brass work, and lighting fixtures require specialized care and special expertise provided by the City.

The Downtown Partnership provides maintenance above the city-provided base services with funding provided by downtown property owners. The Clean & Safe Program dispatches maintenance and safety ambassadors to five parks for maintenance services. The ambassadors also assist tourists and residents, wake and check up on the homeless and deter nuisance crimes. The Children’s Park, Gaslamp Quarter Park, Martin Luther King, Jr. Promenade, Linear Park and Trolley Park benefit from the Clean & Safe Program’s regular landscaping and general cleanup.

Through both the City and the Partnership’s services, downtown San Diego’s parks are inviting and comfortable environments, where people can enjoy themselves just as the parks’ founders envisioned.



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## FUTURE PARK PLANNING

As CCDC proceeds forth with the Community Plan update, the importance of new parks and public open space that complement new development remains a top priority. Today, there are 33 acres of new park space in the pipeline including the Children’s Museum Park, North Embarcadero Esplanade, Central Park, the County Waterfront Park and the Park at the Park. In addition to creating generous neighborhood parks, the Community Plan Update Steering Committee is considering the value of adding smaller “pocket parks” that would put open space closer to more residents and could assist with maintenance issues. CCDC has acquired three parcels in East Village that could partially be used for this type of park space in the future. Also being discussed is the potential for decking over portions of I-5 to reconnect Balboa Park to downtown. To stay involved with the Community Plan Update process, please visit: [www.ccdc.com/planupdate](http://www.ccdc.com/planupdate).



## Park Hours Update



The City Council established a park curfew for the Children’s Park, Gaslamp Quarter Park, Pantoja Park, Amici Park and the Children’s Musuem Park, closing them between midnight and 6:00 a.m.

## Dressing up the Parks



San Diego's history is coming alive in downtown parks through a series of bronze sculptures and plaques that comprise the Downtown Walk of Fame, founded in 1998 with Alonzo E. Horton's likeness, which stands outside Horton Square. He is holding a map of the area he developed in the second half of the 19th century. Ernest W. Hahn, developer of Horton Plaza shopping center, stands across the street from Horton. A statue of former Mayor Pete Wilson, downtown's visionary, will be placed in Horton Plaza Park. A list of possible additions includes Bum the dog, who arrived aboard a steamship in 1886, and quickly became a downtown fixture. Bum's picture graced the first dog license. CCDC encourages the continued growth of the Walk of Fame, perhaps one day featuring an audio tour through which visitors could learn interesting stories about the influential figures of downtown's history.

The Laurel Street entrance to Balboa Park honors the Park's early founders and supporters with several bronze statues, including Kate Sessions, Alonzo E. Horton, Ephraim W. Morse, and George W. Marston. Plans are underway for a military tribute to Bob Hope, which will include bronze statues of 11 servicemen and women surrounding the immortalized entertainer on downtown's G Street Mole along the waterfront.

## IT'S A DOG'S LIFE downtown



Every dog has his day, and it seems that day is close at hand in downtown

San Diego. As downtown's residential population grows, so too does its animal population. Hundreds of new furry friends are part of the urban community today. It is not only families from the suburbs that are introducing pets to condo living, but empty-nesters and single professionals are also making Fido a downtown fixture.

Downtown's dog population will certainly increase, as residents find their four-legged friends happily adapt to urban living. There is no lack of services for dog owners, due to the growing industry of canine walking, sitting and grooming businesses and shops stocked with treats to pamper, tantalize and adorn pets. Public spaces, such as Pantoja Park, have become popular places for dogs and residents to gather.

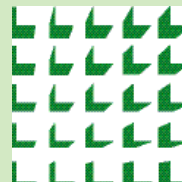
The Centre City Advisory Committee addresses community concerns regarding the rising canine count. While some residents are fighting for designated leash-free hours at local parks, others are worried that giving the dogs free range would make the grass one big "litter box" unfit for human activities. The Committee is working with the Clean & Safe Program to install dog stations around downtown to help owners clean up after their pets. To remain updated on "hound happenings," visit [www.CCDC.com](http://www.CCDC.com) to subscribe to the *Downtown Docket*, a summary of monthly Centre City Advisory Committee meetings.

### CENTRE CITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (CCDC)

Created by the City of San Diego in 1975, CCDC is responsible for downtown redevelopment. The Corporation encourages economic growth, the development of homes and quality of life infrastructure, and the creation of new jobs. Originally, CCDC's area of responsibility included just 325 acres downtown. Adoption of the Centre City Redevelopment Project in 1992 merged three of the original four redevelopment projects and expanded CCDC's area of responsibility to 1,445 acres and envisions commercial and residential development to accommodate 50,000 residents and 150,000 workers by 2025.

### TAKE A TOUR

See downtown's transformation for yourself. Free downtown bus tours are offered on the first and third Saturdays of each month. For reservations, call (619) 235-2222.



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Photography: Skip Jurus