San Luis Obispo Downtown Concept Plan

Public Draft January 31, 2017



Acknowledgements

To be updated at the completion of the plan Citizens of San Luis Obispo

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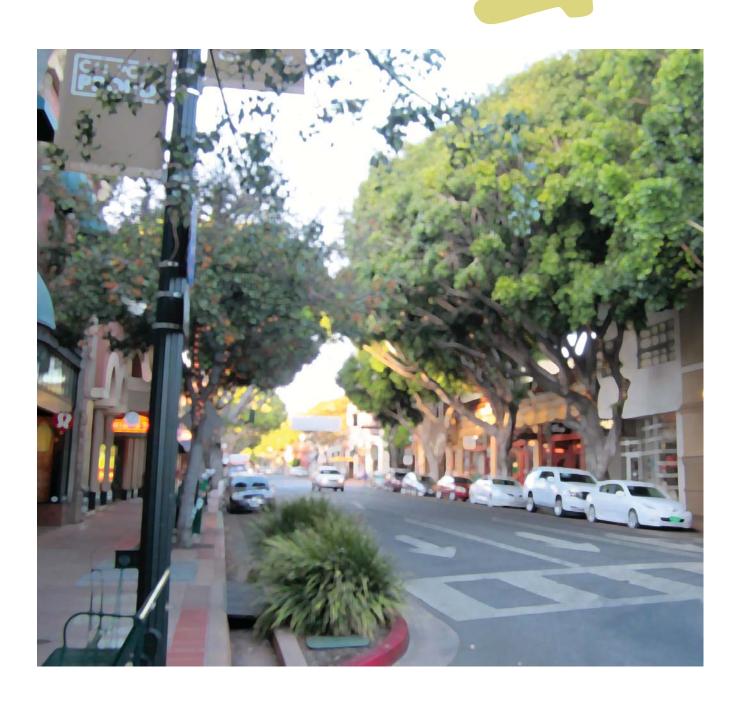
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Introduction



Planning Context

Downtown is about getting people together more than ever. As retail moves online more and more, downtown needs to be a place for people to congregate and enjoy each others' company.

- Resident

Downtown San Luis Obispo is Special

Downtown is a vital and diverse mixed-use district; it is the focus of local and regional government; it is the center of our cultural activities and festivals; it is a place where we go to work and live; it is where we enjoy entertainment, dining, and music; it is our favorite meeting place. Downtown San Luis Obispo is the heart of our community.

The success of the downtown is a fragile thing; if not nurtured it will likely be lost. Constant vigilance, ongoing experimentation, adaptability, and visionary leadership are necessary to keep the downtown vital. With these thoughts in mind, the City Council asked staff to prepare an update to the 1993 Conceptual Physical Plan for the City's Center (Downtown Concept Plan or Plan) with the support of a consultant team and a Creative Vision Team of ten community volunteers.

Background

In late 1990, the City Council authorized the preparation of a vision plan for the downtown and authorized the City Manager to establish a committee of community design professionals who would be willing to do the work on a voluntary basis. Chuck Crotser, Rodney Levin, Andrew Merriam, Pierre Rademaker, and Kenneth Schwartz volunteered to be the design team for the effort to develop the Downtown Concept Plan.



The City Council adopted the Downtown Concept Plan by resolution on May 4, 1993. It has served as a vision for the downtown ever since, and has been referred to over the years as a guiding tool for development projects and for acquisition of public spaces downtown.

The recent update to the General Plan Land Use Element in 2014 included an implementation objective to update both the Downtown Concept Plan and the Mission Plaza Master Plan. As part of the 2015–2017 Financial Plan, the City Council allocated funding for both efforts.

On August 18, 2015, the City Council approved the scope of work and request for proposal for consultant services associated with updating the Downtown Concept Plan. In addition, the City Council adopted a resolution creating the Creative Vision Team (CVT) for the project and defining its term and charge.



What is the Downtown Concept Plan?

The Downtown Concept Plan includes both the illustrative physical plan and this supplement. This supplement provides the narrative or story to guide achievement of the illustrative plan. Together they are the community's long-range vision for the downtown, which will guide both public and private investment toward realization of the vision.

How Will the Plan Be Used?

The 1993 Downtown Concept Plan has served as a vision for the downtown for almost 25 years, and although not a regulatory document, the plan has been referred to over the years as guidance for development projects and for public improvements downtown. The Downtown Concept Plan will continue to serve this function.

The Downtown Concept Plan is one of many tools available to staff and stakeholders to implement the General Plan. Staff will continue to review specific development applications in the downtown for consistency with adopted regulatory documents, while using the Downtown Concept Plan as guidance for the holistic vision for the downtown. As a vision document, plan consistency is encouraged, rather than required. Where the Plan shows potential public or community use of privately owned property, this does not reflect any City intent to restrict the use of any such property or to acquire any particular piece of private property. The Plan also does not intend to convey any assurance that any public or community use would ever be made of any private property, but rather to reflect an integrated concept for desirable uses and amenities in the downtown. As the downtown evolves, the vision for various properties







Land Use Element Program 4.24:

The City shall update the Downtown Concept Plan by 2016 and shall regularly update the plan as required to address significant changes in or affecting the Downtown area including the opportunity for meaningful public input.

Land Use Element Program 4.25:

The City shall consider features of ... the Downtown Concept Plan in the approval of projects in the Downtown, recognizing that the plan is a concept and is intended to be flexible.

in relationship to one another may evolve as well, resulting in modification of this Plan.

The Implementation Plan in Chapter 5 includes a prioritized list of the public programs, projects, and actions needed for implementation of the Downtown Concept Plan. It will be referred to when updating other relevant planning documents, or developing Capital Improvement Program

General Plan Consistency

The Downtown Concept Plan is consistent with the City's General Plan, which guides the use and protection of various resources to meet community purposes. The General Plan provides the overarching vision, goals, policies, and programs for the city. The General Plan is implemented through city ordinances, regulations, guidance documents, and focused plans by topic, such as the Bicycle Transportation Plan, or by area, such as the Mid Higuera Street Enhancement Plan. New private and public development projects are evaluated for their consistency with the General Plan, compliance with municipal codes, and implementing regulations and guidelines, such as the Downtown Concept Plan.

The Land Use Element represents a generalized blueprint for the future of the City of San Luis Obispo. Section 4, Downtown, includes a set of policies and programs for the downtown area which the Downtown Concept Plan operates under. Policy 4.1 describes the downtown's role:

Downtown is the community's urban center serving as the cultural, social, entertainment, and political center of the City for its residents, as well as home for those who live in its historic neighborhoods. The City wants its urban core to be economically healthy, and realizes that private and public investments in the Downtown support each other. Downtown should also provide a wide variety of professional and government services, serving the region as well as the city. The commercial core is a preferred location for retail uses that are suitable for pedestrian access, off-site parking, and compact building spaces. Civic, cultural, and commercial portions of Downtown should be a major tourist destination. Downtown's visitor appeal should be based on natural, historical, and cultural features, retail services, entertainment and numerous and varied visitor accommodations.

The direction for updating the Downtown Concept Plan comes specifically from Programs 4.24 and 4.25, as shown in the box to the left.

The Downtown Concept Plan is also guided by the policies and programs in the Circulation Element, which is discussed further in Chapter 4, Mobility and Streetscape. Both the Land Use and Circulation Elements were updated in December 2014.

Plan Area Boundary

As noted in the General Plan, the downtown embraces residential neighborhoods, the commercial core and civic area, and less intensely developed commercial, office, and residential areas. Figure 1.1 illustrates the General Plan Downtown Planning Area and the downtown core (in white, in the center).



Figure 1.1. **General Plan Downtown Planning Area**

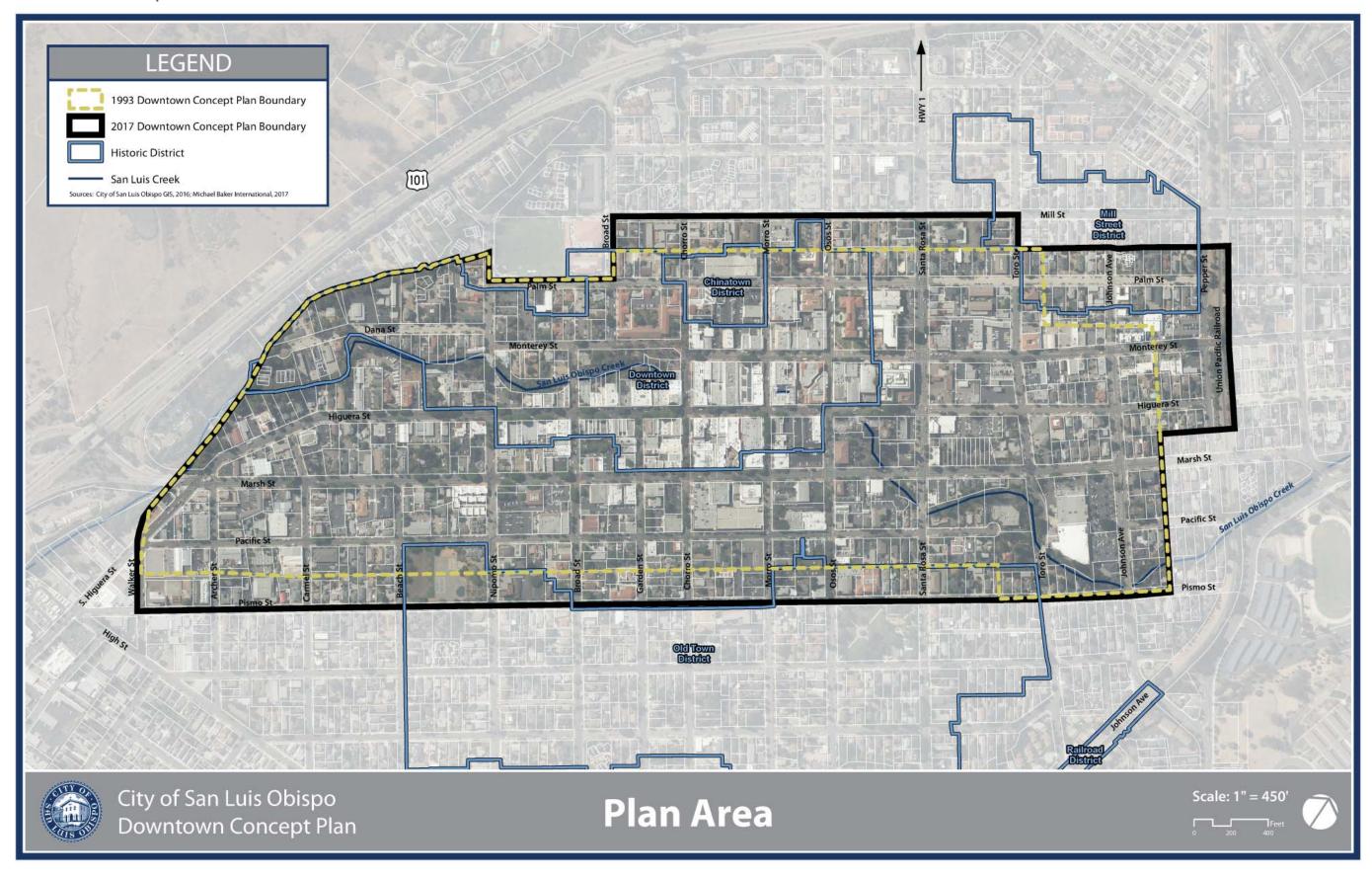


The 1993 Concept Plan included an area nearly identical to the downtown core. The current Downtown Concept Plan boundary has evolved to include a slightly larger boundary than the downtown core, in order to include adjacent uses, context, and connections, as well as opportunity areas.

The Downtown Concept Plan area boundary is generally bounded by Mill Street to the north, Pismo Street to the south, Pepper Street to the east, and South Higuera and Walker Street to the west, as shown in Figure 1.2. Downtown Concept Plan Area.

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Downtown Concept Plan Area Figure 1.2.



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Planning Process

The Downtown Concept Plan is being updated through a community-based planning process guided by staff, consultants, and the CVT.

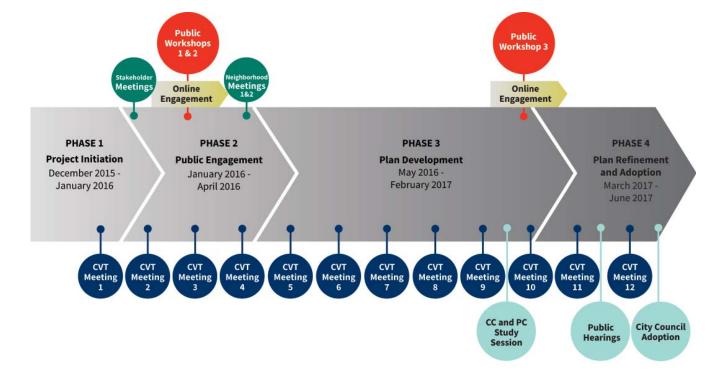
Figure 1.3. Process Graphic summarizes the four-phase process used to update the Downtown Concept Plan.

The project includes broad-based public engagement in accordance with the City's adopted Public Engagement and Noticing Manual, including stakeholder focus groups, online engagement, public workshops, and neighborhood meetings.

A complete summary of community outreach activities is included in Appendix A and will be updated at the completion of the project.







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Concept Plan Vision



Concept Plan Vision



The 1993 Vision

The update of the Downtown Concept Plan builds off the vision of the 1993 Conceptual Physical Plan for the City's Center. The 1993 Plan's vision was to preserve, protect, and enhance downtown San Luis Obispo as:

- 1. The major commercial and business center offering a wide variety of goods and services;
- 2. The historic center of the City and the County;
- The seat of County government;
- The primary cultural and entertainment center of the County;
- A major destination point for tourists; and
- 6. The major congregation center an enjoyable place to meet others, to celebrate, and to participate in festivities.

The 1993 vision was used as one of the building blocks for developing the Downtown Concept Plan's updated vision of downtown today, as described in the text box below.



2017 Vision Statement

As the heart of our community, downtown San Luis Obispo will serve as the center for arts, culture, shopping, entertainment, and government. A well-balanced mix of uses makes the downtown economically, culturally, and socially vibrant, and its authenticity creates a welcoming, livable atmosphere. It is our urban neighborhood.

Planning Principles and Goals

Based on public input, previous planning efforts, the values that remain relevant from the 1993 Plan, and the overall vision, the CVT developed eight Project Planning Principles to guide the development of the Downtown Concept Plan, numbered below.

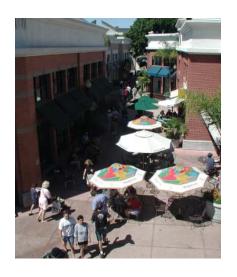
Following each Planning Principle are corollary Goals that guide the vision of our future downtown as embodied in the Illustrative plan.

1. Strong Identity: Preserve and enhance the downtown's distinct sense of place and memorable character.

- 1.1 Preserve and augment the visual mixture, diversity, and interest of the downtown while retaining its traditional character.
- 1.2 Foster an economically and culturally diverse downtown environment by encouraging a wide variety of housing, commercial, workplace, and cultural experiences.
- 1.3 Encourage the use of sustainable materials, green infrastructure, and renewable energy resources in downtown development.
- 1.4 Provide harmonious transitions between core area functions and surrounding neighborhoods.
- 1.5 Focus attention on the downtown's gateways through landmark buildings, public art, and public spaces that announce your arrival in the downtown.
- 2. 2 Plentiful and Safe Public Spaces: Provide opportunities for positive social interaction, quiet moments, and access to the natural environment, where everyone feels safe and welcome.
 - 2.1 Treat sidewalks and paseos as wide and inviting urbanized parks with street trees, ample seating, bike parking, lighting, public art, and other street furniture.
 - 2.2 Encourage mid-block paseos that enable opportunities for improved pedestrian access, shopping, outdoor dining, and informal gathering places, but not at the expense of a vibrant street front.
 - 2.3 Provide opportunities for a variety of new public spaces and recreation downtown, including pocket parks, plazas, wide sidewalks with seating, an expanded Creek Walk, parklets, and creative rooftop public spaces.



Don't overbuild!! The quality of life here is because of the simplicity. - Resident



I love the idea of downtown being our core area...u-e need to continue the focus on infill projects that create density within the downtown core. while pushing parking lots to the brim of downtown.

- Resident

- 3. Variety in Form and Function: Encourage a variety of compatible uses, activities, and housing types for an inclusive and vital downtown.
 - 3.1 Provide a physical framework that retains and strengthens the economic health and vitality of the downtown.
 - 3.2 Encourage mixed-use development throughout the downtown, as shown in the illustrative plan.
 - 3.3 Create opportunities for smaller, independent businesses downtown.
 - 3.4 Ensure the downtown functions both as a commercial district and a residential neighborhood, with a variety of housing opportunities.
 - 3.5 Encourage the City and County to meet their future office needs in the vicinity of their existing government centers.
 - 3.6 Provide new in-lieu fee parking districts over time to accommodate the needs of future mixed-use development, recognizing that the demand for parking today will not necessarily be the same in the next 25 years.
 - 3.7 Reduce auto travel by providing services, jobs, and housing in proximity to each other.
- 4. Enhanced Mobility: Enhance the downtown's walkability, making it easier to get to and travel throughout for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.
 - 4.1 Design downtown streets for pedestrians first, followed by cyclists; encourage walking and bicycling by making the downtown safe and welcoming.
 - 4.2 Improve downtown's circulation by emphasizing alternative routes for through automobile traffic that do not pass through the core area.
 - 4.3 Provide ample wayfinding to direct drivers to parking structures so they do not need to drive through the downtown core to access them.
 - 4.4 Provide safe bicycle infrastructure that connects to neighborhoods to encourage people to ride bicycles to and from downtown rather than drive.



4.5 Collaborate on a new transit center to meet the needs of downtown employees, residents, and visitors.

5. Universal Accessibility: Promote a downtown that is safe, inclusive, and easy to navigate for those using all modes of transportation.

- 5.1 Locate parking structures at strategic points on the periphery of downtown that are within easy walking distance of major activity areas.
- 5.2 Provide ample pedestrian wayfinding throughout the downtown.
- 5.3 Ensure that sidewalks, crosswalks, and public improvements are universally accessible and easy to navigate.
- 5.4 Design street improvements with appropriate lighting, visibility, and other public safety features to help reduce the potential for crime.
- 5.5 Design street improvements with adequate short-term loading zones for commercial and personal vehicles (ride sharing) as well as disabled person parking.

6. Art, Culture, and History: Encourage artistic and cultural opportunities and celebrate the downtown's unique history.

- 6.1 Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the downtown's historic structures.
- 6.2 Preserve historic residential neighborhoods on the periphery of the downtown.
- 6.3 Expand cultural, historical, and artistic opportunities in the downtown, including enhancing the downtown Cultural District.

7. Innovative and Human Scale: Embrace original and compatible design that supports connections to the surrounding built environment, public realm, and hillside views.

- 7.1 Reduce or redevelop surface parking lots with two-story minimum development or convert to public open space where appropriate.
- 7.2 Support compatible building heights of two to five stories in the downtown. Encourage residential uses above the ground floor.

It is important to place a higher priority on making the downtown area accessible to persons with disabilities. This would include better parking, better maintained walkways and paths of travel that have reduced grade.

- Resident

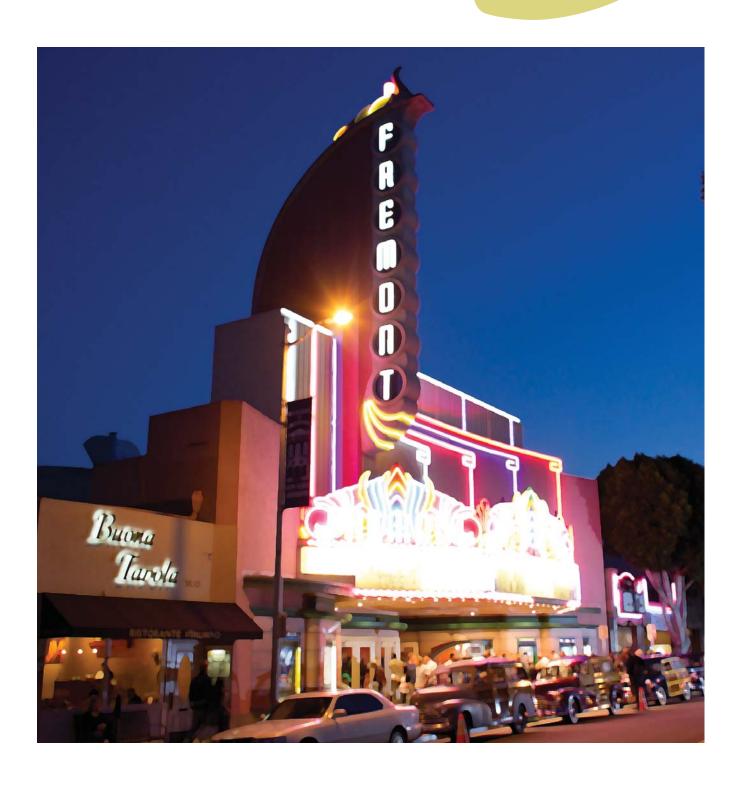


We need more people-scale walkable shopping including a grocery store and a gym for all the downtown residents we have and want more of. - Resident

- 7.3 Target height carefully and in limited areas; consider locating taller buildings toward the center of blocks, in pockets, and in low areas to lessen impacts on views.
- 7.4 Encourage higher-density projects and smaller dwelling units for a vibrant residential mix in the downtown.
- 8. Ecological Connections: Protect, enhance, and reveal the natural areas and ecological functions that are an integral component of the downtown area.
 - 8.1 Preserve access to open space and views of hillsides from public areas downtown.
 - 8.2 Enhance San Luis Obispo Creek as a visual, recreational, educational, and biological resource for public enjoyment and wildlife habitat.
 - 8.3 Design streetscape and public realm improvements with green infrastructure components.



Plan Diagrams



Plan Diagrams

Downtown Concept Plan Illustrative

The Downtown Concept Plan Illustrative shown in Figure 3.1 graphically represents the future vision for downtown San Luis Obispo. The plan depicts envisioned future land uses, public spaces, and private development. Together, this Plan and supplement can help the reader "experience" the downtown from different perspectives. The Plan has been developed as a digital model which has the potential to evolve into a tool that could be used to plug in detailed models of future development projects as they are approved, to visualize how they will fit into the greater context of downtown San Luis Obispo of the future.

Planning Assumptions

To develop the Downtown Concept Plan Illustrative, some assumptions were made, including the following: The uses in the Illustrative were developed based on the City's existing zoning regulations map. However, uses were flattened (e.g., all commercial zones were shown as Commercial Mixed Use) and lot coverage standards were not applied. Generally, there is more density and more lot coverage shown in the Downtown Concept Plan than exists today. Most surface parking lots are shown as redeveloped, and additional structured parking is envisioned around the outer ring of the downtown. Density is not necessarily synonymous with height in the Downtown Concept Plan. Detailed height recommendations remain under the purview of the General Plan and **Zoning Regulations**. Expanded or new in-lieu parking fee districts are assumed to meet the needs of the envisioned mixed-use development pattern. Residential uses are assumed for upper stories for a true mixeduse downtown. Historically significant resources are shown as remaining. Projects submitted to the City for development approval that are entitled but not yet built are shown in the Illustrative as they were approved; development projects submitted to the City but not yet entitled may be shown differently than submitted.

The numbers on the plan describe the future vision for each block as it redevelops in the future. Detailed block descriptions are included in Table 3.1, which follows the Plan Illustrative.

As a downtown resident, I'd like more attention paid to how things like noise, parking, changes to traffic flow, etc. affect the quiet enjoyment of our neighborhoods and property values.

- Resident



Figure 3.1. Downtown Concept Plan Illustrative



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Table 3.1. Block Descriptions

	Block Descriptions
Block #	Blocks with no numbers have no redevelopment opportunities envisioned and are shown only for context. Entitled projects, as of January 2017, are included. Projects under development review are also included but may be different than submitted.
2	New residential opportunities in the R-4 zone along the corner of Broad and Mill Streets.
3	New residential opportunities in the R-4 zone on Mill Street. Community-serving reuse of the historic Ah Louis Store. Commercial mixed-use development between the Ah Louis Store and the Palm parking structure. Chinatown interpretive exhibits are displayed along the front of the parking structure to better highlight the area's history.
4	New residential opportunities envisioned on site of current AT&T building. City-owned property (City Hall, current SLO Little Theatre, and surface parking lot) are renovated to incorporate additional city or leased offices and improved outdoor public space along Palm Street frontage.
5	Office mixed use is envisioned in the existing surface parking lot facing Santa Rosa Street.
6	City-owned Ludwick Center is redeveloped into a full-featured Community Recreation Center, with full-sized gym, multi-use rooms, staff offices, and below ground parking. Office mixed use is envisioned next to the Ludwick Center facing Santa Rosa Street.
9	Office mixed use is envisioned in the existing surface parking lot on the corner of Nipomo and Dana Streets. New small-scale residential is envisioned at the end of Dana Street in the R-3 zone. The City-owned Rosa Butron Adobe property is opened to the public and managed as a park. The IOOF property is envisioned as residential. A new connection from Dana Street crosses San Luis Creek and connects residents to the expanded Creek Walk.
10	A new parking structure on the corner of Palm and Nipomo Streets is constructed to include office mixed use along Nipomo Street, with the SLO Little Theatre along Monterey Street. An addition to the History Center is shown on the City-owned parking lot on Monterey Street, wrapping around the building to the property on Broad Street. If this is not all needed for the History Center, then it is envisioned for other community-serving use in the Cultural District.
11	Mission Plaza will be improved as envisioned in the Mission Plaza Master Plan. An expanded Museum of Art is shown connecting to Mission Plaza.
12	The Chinatown Project is under construction. It includes both new construction and the reuse of historic buildings for commercial mixed use along Monterey Street, including retail and student housing, and hotel use with plazas and paseos fronting Palm Street. A future envisioned pedestrian connection is shown to Chorro Street.
13	An additional portion of the existing alley is opened to public use, connecting through the block to Osos Street, adjacent to the library.
14	The large lawn at the County building is envisioned as a demonstration garden with interactive public art. The courthouse is expanded toward Santa Rosa Street, with opportunities for additional office and commercial mixed use. Courthouse drop-off and parking areas are relocated on the lower level.
15	The surface parking lots on this block are envisioned to be redeveloped into a 3–4-story County office building with parking. Commercial or public uses along Monterey Street will help activate the street. Residential and office mixed use will continue to occupy the block along Palm Street.

Block Descriptions

Block

#

Blocks with no numbers have no redevelopment opportunities envisioned and are shown only for context. Entitled projects, as of January 2017, are included. Projects under development review are also included but may be different than submitted.

- 16 The corner of Monterey and Johnson Streets will redevelop into 3-4-story commercial mixed use (ground floor commercial and residential above), similar to The Mix across the street. The existing off-street parking will be converted to plaza space. The existing development pattern will mostly remain along Palm Street, with some new office mixed use and residential opportunities.
- 17 This block continues to redevelop, with the surface parking lot on the corner of Monterey and Pepper Streets converting to commercial mixed use, envisioned as ground floor commercial with residential or residential and office above. This gateway location is an opportunity for a signature building.
- 18 This large block is envisioned to include new commercial mixed use, a hotel and conference facility, and residential opportunities near downtown's main entrance. Historic buildings will be preserved while a variety of uses will be infused south of the creek along Higuera Street. New development will open onto and interact with the expanded Creek Walk, which will connect to Higuera and Dana Streets. Included in this block are four different projects currently in the works: The Lofts at Nipomo is a 4-story mixed-use project along the creek that currently includes 23 residential units, 7 hotel rooms, and approx. 3,500 sq. ft. of commercial space; South Town 18 is a 4-story mixed-use project along the creek that currently includes 18 new residential units and approximately 70 sq. ft. of commercial space; Downtown Terrace is a medium-density residential project with approximately 30 new prefabricated manufactured homes on the site of the current mobile home park; and The Creamery will be expanded and rehabilitated with paseo connections to Nipomo and Higuera Streets and an interior courtyard where there is currently parking.
- 19 The City-owned parking lot at Higuera and Nipomo Streets will be converted to a public plaza that is envisioned to provide seating, an interactive fountain, and more positive activity at this prominent Downtown Corner. Neighboring restaurants or cafes can share a portion of the space and management responsibilities. Pedestrians cross the creek here and can walk to the parking structure, Children's Museum, and other Cultural District opportunities. Safety and accessibility improvements are made to the Creek Walk and its connections to adjacent businesses. This block also includes a public park on the corner of Broad and Monterey Streets across from the Museum of Art; it is envisioned with historic interpretation, paths to the creek, and children's play opportunities. It could also include a small facility for leasing and cultural uses. The entitled Monterey Place project is also located on this block; it is a mixed-use development with 23 residential units, a bed and breakfast with 11 rooms, and lower-level office, retail, and restaurant space along the creek, with a paseo connection through the project to the pedestrian bridge.
- 20 As this block redevelops, uses along Monterey Street will open up to the shared street more. The intersection at Chorro and Monterey Streets will be enhanced to better connect pedestrians to the plaza.
- 22 This block is envisioned to include a commercial mixed-use project next to the Fremont Theater and connecting to Higuera Street. It will include lower-level commercial with upper-level office and residential uses, and may also include a mid-block paseo. Ground-floor improvements along Osos Street will make it more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly.

Blo	Block #	Block Descriptions
#		Blocks with no numbers have no redevelopment opportunities envisioned and are shown only for context. Entitled projects, as of January 2017, are included. Projects under development review are also included but may be different than submitted.
2	3	New landmark buildings are envisioned along Santa Rosa Street, opening onto corner plazas with public art and a mid-block paseo. Commercial mixed-use buildings along Monterey Street will include housing on upper levels. A parking structure and transit center are envisioned along Higuera Street, with community serving and commercial mixed use along most of the street front. Public open space is envisioned on the parking structure rooftop or adjacent private development, where people can enjoy views of the surrounding hills.
2	4	This block is envisioned to include 2–4-story commercial mixed-use development along Monterey Street with upper-level residential. Buildings will be sited along the street front with upper stories that may be stepped back for scale and increased outdoor space. A small plaza area on Monterey Street will connect to a pocket park on Higuera Street, for neighborhood green space and small-scale play opportunities. Office use on Higuera Street is envisioned with upper-story residential.
2	5	This block will continue the redevelopment pattern along Monterey Street with 2–4-story commercial mixed use. Upper stories may be stepped back for scale, with opportunities for increased outdoor space and residential uses. Residential uses will continue along Higuera Street.
2	6	This block serves as the main downtown gateway. It is envisioned to include an iconic commercial mixed-use gateway development at the Marsh and Higuera intersection, announcing arrival into downtown. It will include an entry plaza with public art, and a parking structure to serve surrounding commercial mixed use and hospitality uses. This area will be further enhanced with intersection improvements.
2	7	New commercial mixed use and hospitality are envisioned in this block, with historic resources remaining. A mid-block paseo in alignment with Beach Street connects pedestrians between Marsh and Higuera Streets and to Block 28.
2	8	This block includes the San Luis Square Project currently under review. It includes three 4-story mixed-use buildings with retail space and 48 residential units facing Higuera, Nipomo, and Marsh Streets. A paseo travels through the center of the block between buildings, connecting to the Jack House and Gardens and adjacent commercial mixed use. The Jack House and Gardens will be used more as a public park as the surrounding area redevelops.
2	9	The corner of Marsh and Nipomo Streets is envisioned with 3–4-story commercial mixed use with residential on the upper levels. New 2-story commercial mixed use is envisioned for the surface lot on the corner of Broad and Marsh Streets to retain compatibility with the existing development pattern. There will be opportunities for pocket plazas and outdoor dining.
3	0	An improved "social alley" will provide pedestrian access through this block and also connect to Bubblegum Alley, as part of the Garden Street Terraces/Hotel Serra Project currently under development. The 4-story project includes 64 hotel rooms, 25,000 sq. ft. of commercial space and 8 residential units, as well as improvements to Garden Street.
3	2	The entitled Discovery SLO project will be located on the corner of Chorro and Marsh Streets. It will reuse the existing 24,500 sq. ft., 2-story commercial building, and includes a bowling alley, restaurant, outdoor patio, and open banquet area. No other changes are proposed for this block.

Block Descriptions Block Blocks with no numbers have no redevelopment opportunities envisioned and are shown only for context. # Entitled projects, as of January 2017, are included. Projects under development review are also included but may be different than submitted. 33 The entitled Granada Hotel Expansion Project will include a 24-unit, 4-story hotel addition with roof deck in the interior of the block, located in the Historic Downtown District. In addition, the current surface parking lots between Higuera and Marsh Streets are envisioned for infill with a 3-4-story commercial mixed-use project. This new development will continue the vibrant downtown street front, creating opportunities for lower-level commercial and upper-level housing or office. A paseo is envisioned to align with Court Street, providing additional pedestrian connections. 34 This block is envisioned to redevelop to take advantage of the creek with additional outdoor patios, paseos, and pocket plaza areas. The prominent corner of Higuera and Santa Rosa will redevelop with 3-4-story commercial mixed use. 35 This block along Santa Rosa and Higuera Streets is envisioned to redevelop with 3-4-story commercial mixed-use projects. This site is an ideal location for upper-story residential and office opportunities. A paseo is shown connecting pedestrians to the parking structure and transit center on Block 23. Eight 3-story townhomes are located next to the historic hospital property on Marsh Street. 36 This block is envisioned to redevelop over time with 2–3-story office mixed use along Higuera Street, with housing on upper levels facing the pocket park across the street. New office/mixed use will be on the corner of Toro and Marsh Streets. 38 Announcing an entry into downtown, Higuera Street frontage is envisioned to redevelop with 3-story commercial mixed use. This block is part of the "flex zone," which envisions flexible uses such as live/work studios or larger-footprint shared work spaces. 39 Archer Street is reconfigured with a small plaza and alley access mid-block. Along Marsh Street, new hospitality uses and commercial mixed use with upper-level residential or office are envisioned, conveniently located across from structured parking. Commercial mixed use is also shown redeveloping along Pacific Street. 40 Multifamily housing is envisioned in the R-4 zone along Pacific Street. Commercial mixed use will redevelop around the corner of Marsh and Carmel Streets, which could include housing on upper stories, conveniently located to structured parking. 41 A similar development pattern is envisioned on this block: Multifamily housing will redevelop in the R-4 zone across from Emerson Park, and commercial mixed use will redevelop on Marsh Street, with upper-level office and housing opportunities. The historic Kaetzel Garden House will remain. A local market or other neighborhood-serving use could be located on the ground floor at Beach and Marsh Streets, supported by surrounding multifamily housing. 42 A diagonal plaza is envisioned through this block, providing a connection to Emerson Park from downtown as well as additional outdoor dining, event, and public art opportunities. Commercial mixed use will front onto Marsh and Pacific Streets, with the historic Parsons House remaining. A parking structure is included to accommodate new development in the area, with microretail storefronts along Pacific Street for a small local business cluster. 43 New commercial mixed use is envisioned at Pacific and Garden Streets, which could include upper level housing or office. New commercial mixed use along Marsh Street could include a ground-floor local market with structured parking across Broad Street. The corner of Broad and Pacific Streets

includes a brewpub and restaurant with retail space.

Block	Block Descriptions
#	Blocks with no numbers have no redevelopment opportunities envisioned and are shown only for context. Entitled projects, as of January 2017, are included. Projects under development review are also included but may be different than submitted.
44	On the surface parking lot at the corner of Marsh and Chorro Streets, new commercial mixed use is envisioned with upper-level residential. Along Pacific Street, the surface parking lot redevelops with office mixed use with a small area for shared parking behind, as well as across the street in the existing structured parking.
45	This block includes the existing Marsh Street parking structure. While not changing significantly, small-scale public improvements may enliven the Pacific Street frontage.
46	The surface parking lot on the corner of Osos and Marsh Streets is envisioned to infill with 3–4-story commercial mixed use. Office mixed use will be added on the corner of Morro and Pacific Streets. An area for shared parking is shown remaining behind the office uses, as well as across the street in the structured parking.
47	Cheng Park is shown expanding across the creek onto the existing surface parking lot, with a paseo providing connections to it from Marsh and Pacific Streets. Additional commercial mixed-use and office mixed-use projects are envisioned on the block.
48	The property on the corner of Marsh and Santa Rosa Streets is envisioned as multi-story office mixed use set back from the creek with an adjacent patio area. Offices redevelop into office mixed use. Alley-access parking is shown behind buildings. Historic buildings remain. A widened walkway along Toro Street better connects pedestrians to the adjacent shopping center and the Dallidet Adobe. A walkway at the end of the cul-de-sac connects pedestrians to Toro Street.
49	The shopping center footprint remains as is. The green space on the corner of Marsh and Toro Streets is envisioned as a small pocket park, and the pedestrian path behind the shopping center connects to the new pedestrian path from the Dallidet Adobe across Toro Street.
51	This block is envisioned as part of the mid-Higuera Plan transition area, or "flex zone." Larger footprint commercial mixed use may accommodate incubator businesses, technological uses, or uses such as shared marketplaces or shared work spaces. Walker Street ends in a cul-de-sac at the Pacific/Pismo Alley, creating a small plaza along Higuera Street and additional street front opportunities. The Old Gas Works building on Pismo Street is rehabilitated and incorporated into a mid-block pocket park.
52	Pismo Street between Archer and Carmel Streets is envisioned as redeveloping with 2–3-story residential in the R-3 zone. This block of Pacific Street has more of an industrial feel with a variety of commercial mixed uses and the possible adaptive reuse of the brick building at the corner of Archer and Pacific Streets.
53	Pacific Street between Carmel and Beach Streets is envisioned as redeveloping with multifamily housing in this R-4 zone adjacent to Emerson Park. Along Pismo Street, corner properties are shown redeveloping into garden apartments still in keeping with the scale of the neighborhood.
54	As housing increases in downtown, improvements are envisioned at Emerson Park to provide more opportunities for outdoor play for neighborhood residents. The surface parking is replaced with park elements, as new structured parking is envisioned in block 42.
55	This block envisions redevelopment of some small office buildings and surface parking lots into 2–3-story office mixed use on Pacific and Broad Streets.

Block	Block Descriptions
#	Blocks with no numbers have no redevelopment opportunities envisioned and are shown only for context. Entitled projects, as of January 2017, are included. Projects under development review are also included but may be different than submitted.
56	This block envisions redevelopment of some small offices and surface parking lots into 2–3-story office mixed use along Broad and Pacific Streets. Alley-access parking is accessible from Pacific and Pismo Streets.
57	Some existing single-story buildings and surface parking lots are envisioned to convert to 2–3-story office mixed use along Pacific and Chorro Streets with residential on upper levels. A small plaza area is included along Marsh Street.
58	Some existing single-story buildings are envisioned to convert to 2–3-story residential and office uses, compatible with the mixed Office/R-3 zoning of the block, and the R-4 across Pismo Street. The historic properties on the corner of Pacific and Chorro Streets will remain.
59	New office mixed use includes 9 residential units and approximately 8,000 sq. ft. of commercial space. Also envisioned is 2–3-story office mixed use on the surface parking lot at the corner of Pacific and Morro Streets.
60	Underdeveloped single-story buildings and surface parking along Pacific Street are envisioned as

2–3-story office mixed use. Small-scale alley-access parking is shown behind buildings.

Proposed Uses Downtown

By encouraging a diverse mix of uses in the downtown, the City intends to promote a compact urban core; provide additional (including affordable) housing opportunities; and reduce auto travel by providing services, jobs, and housing in proximity to each other. The City desires the safety and vitality that comes with having a true mixeduse downtown for a 24-hour "eyes on the street" environment. This section provides additional details regarding the proposed uses in the downtown, as shown on the Illustrative Plan.

I like mixed uses! Different strokes for different folks!

- Resident



Commercial Mixed Use

The Commercial Mixed Use category is intended to show areas appropriate for vibrant commercial mixed-use development. As the predominant use in the downtown core, it is designed to integrate retail and service commercial uses with residential and office uses. In multiplestory buildings, retailers are the primary tenants on the ground floor and upper floors are envisioned to contain residential, office, or both, depending on market demand. This category is shown in areas zoned as Downtown Commercial (C-D), Retail Commercial (C-R), and Service Commercial (C-S) zones. Housing is strongly encouraged on upper levels.











COMMERCIAL MIXED USE - Street-front commercial uses with upper level residential and/or office uses

Office Mixed Use

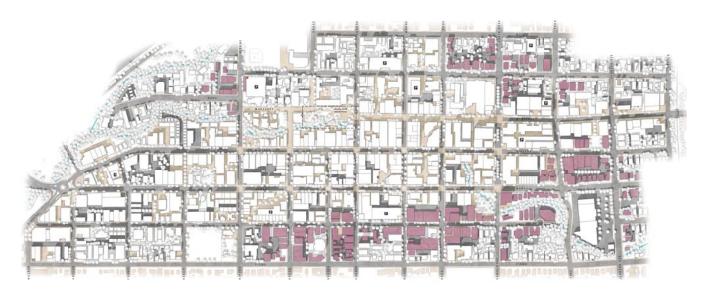


The Office Mixed Use category is shown in areas zoned as Office (O); it is intended to show areas in the downtown intended primarily for a variety of office uses, while encouraging compatible commercial and/ or residential uses to be integrated into upper floors or to the rear of a site. Office Mixed Use is intended to act as a buffer between Commercial Mixed Use and Residential areas. In many cases, Office Mixed Use is shown with alley access and small-scale parking behind to accommodate on-site parking for patrons.









OFFICE MIXED USE - Office uses with compatible residential and/or commercial uses

Hospitality/Community Serving

Hospitality includes uses such as hotels and convention or conference centers. As of December 2016, there are three hotel projects under way in the Central Downtown subarea. Three new hospitality uses are proposed in the plan, all in the South Downtown subarea. Rooms for short stays that are integrated into predominantly commercial uses are not shown as Hospitality.

Community Serving uses include schools, churches, museums, government offices, recreation centers, courts, and transit centers. A cluster of community-serving uses can be seen around the Mission, City offices, and County government center.











COMMUNITY SERVING - Government facilities, museums, churches, and schools

HOSPITALITY - Hotels and conference facilities

Residential

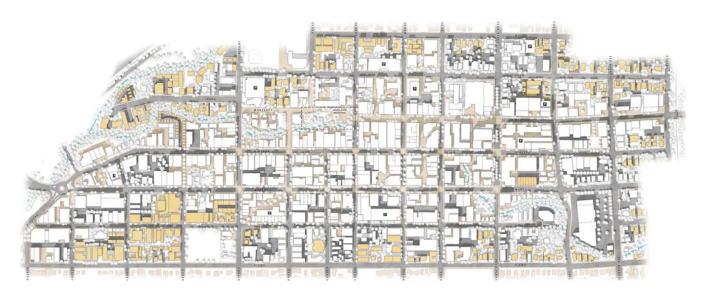
Residential uses are shown in the R-2, R-3, R-4 (Medium, Medium-high, and High Density residential) zones primarily around the perimeter of the downtown, adjacent to lower-density residential neighborhoods. Some housing currently exists in the O zone downtown and is shown as such in the plan.

The residential uses illustrated in the Plan are consistent with General Plan Housing Goal 5, which aims to provide variety in the location, type, size, tenure, and style of dwellings.









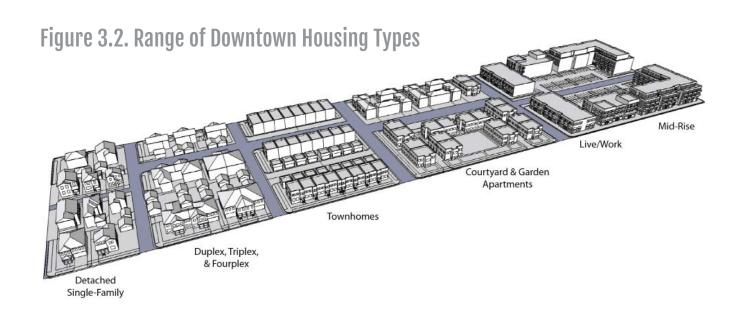
The Plan encourages a wide variety of housing types to appeal to different demographics, and includes a spectrum of housing options. Residential uses are envisioned to accommodate low income, workforce, and high-end housing for seniors, families, and single professionals. Residential uses downtown include a range of multi-unit housing types that help meet the vision for a more compact and walkable downtown living environment. The imagery and diagram shown below represents a range of housing types that should be considered in the future.















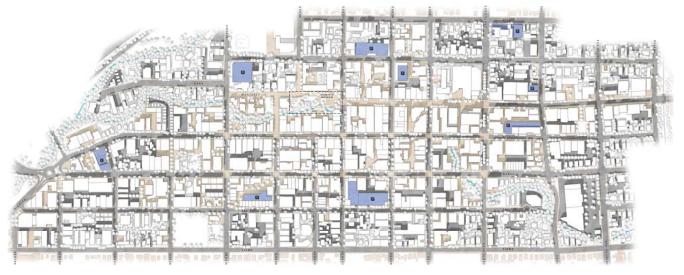
Parking Structures

As of December 2016, there are three existing parking structures in the downtown, while another (the Palm-Nipomo structure) is in the works. The Plan shows three additional structures (plus additional parking at a new County office building and at the Ludwick Center) to accommodate parking needs as the downtown redevelops.

As in 1993, this Plan assumes new infill development on most existing surface parking lots in the downtown; instead, cars will primarily park in new structures accessed from Palm, Nipomo, Marsh, Pacific, and Toro Streets. The intention is to direct drivers to parking structures first, so they will not need to drive through the downtown core. This also assumes that there will be new or expanded in-lieu fee parking districts to accommodate new development patterns and parking needs.

The Plan also assumes that parking structures will have limited street frontage, and located behind other uses that are more compatible with a vibrant downtown street, such as ground-floor retail or commercial mixed use. Roofs on some parking structures or adjacent buildings are envisioned to be used for parks, plazas, outdoor dining, photovoltaic shade structures, and access to views.





PARKING - Above or below ground parking that may include roof top public spaces

Parks, Plazas, and Paseos

The Plan shows public parks in dark green and plazas and paseos in tan interspersed throughout the downtown.

With additional people living in the downtown comes the need for additional parks. A variety of different park types are shown in the Plan. Several park uses improve public spaces that already exist, such as Emerson Park (Block 54). Some park uses provide multiple benefits such as converting the lawn of the County building to a garden area with seating and public art (Block 14). Others preserve historic resources, such as the Old Gas Works (Block 41), or the Rosa Butron Adobe (Block 9). New parks are also proposed that expand existing park space, such as the park in Block 19 adjacent to the Creek Walk, or the expansion of Cheng Park (Block 47).

Paseos (mid-block walkways) are encouraged in new development, but not at the expense of a vital streetscape. Paseos are mostly shown connecting parks and plazas with the street system. They are also illustrated on the Street Types Diagram (Figure 4.1). Plazas and paseos should incorporate public art in fun and imaginative new ways. Plazas of different sizes are shown at the downtown gateways, at key corners (Block 19), and on existing surface parking lots (Blocks 15, 16, 24, and 42).









PARKS - May include publicly accessible historic sites, gardens and walkways



"The Mix" development project on Block 17 shows contrast to historic downtown core

Planning Subareas

This section breaks down the Downtown Concept Plan into three subareas and describes in more detail some of the key proposals in those areas. Each subarea has different characteristics, development patterns, and project details. The three plan subareas are north downtown, central downtown, and south downtown, as described below. For additional information, see Table 3.1, Block Descriptions.

North Downtown

North downtown is generally Santa Rosa to Pepper, and Mill to Pismo. The area around Monterey and Johnson Streets (coined "MoJo") is envisioned to redevelop over time with commercial mixed use along its vibrant street front, connecting the upper Monterey area to the downtown.

Figure 3.3. North Downtown Planning Subarea



As reinvestment occurs, north downtown will transition from one- and two-story structures, many with parking in front, to structures of two to five stories built to the sidewalk. North downtown will feature a variety of design styles in contrast to the historic downtown core, which is more traditional in architectural style. Density and intensity will be focused primarily along Monterey Street; Marsh and Higuera will have more intensive development near Santa Rosa, which will gradually lessen as it approaches Pepper Street to respect the adjacent neighborhoods. The Pepper Street railroad bridge will incorporate public art and act as a key gateway to the downtown.



An example of public art on a railroad bridge at a downtown entry

Santa Rosa Street narrows at Mill Street with widened sidewalks or a center-landscaped median, announcing one's arrival in downtown. The intersections of Monterey at Santa Rosa and Higuera incorporate public art and scramble intersections, allowing improved bicycle and pedestrian connections across the busy street.

A new **County office building** with parking and active fronting retail is envisioned on Block 15; it will have the potential to house a "one stop" counter for County services. Block 23 is envisioned as the home to a new transit center. Block 23 will also include structured public parking, iconic mixed-use buildings, and rooftop public open space.



Newly renovated iFixit building (Block 17)



Scramble intersections improve pedestrian and bike access



Sketch of Santa Rosa and Monterey Intersection by Pierre Radamaker, CVT Member

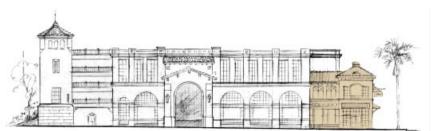
A new **pocket park** is shown on Higuera with a connecting plaza along Monterey (Block 24). Ludwick Center on Santa Rosa and Mill Streets (Block 6) is improved as a two- to three-story community recreation center with a full-sized gymnasium, multipurpose rooms, and underground parking. A public path at the end of Pacific Street will connect pedestrians to Toro Street around the Dallidet Adobe.

Central Downtown

Central downtown contains the Chinatown Historic District, and most of the Downtown Historic District. Central downtown boasts charming, historic architecture and development patterns and serves as the community's cultural and civic heart. One of the key concepts in this area is an expanded, walkable, vibrant, and art-filled cultural district, the focus of which is along Monterey Street.

Figure 3.4. Central Downtown Planning Subarea





Palm Street view of proposed parking structure at Palm and Nipomo Street (Block 10)

Visitors arriving in cars can park in the **new parking structure** at Palm and Nipomo Streets, then walk to the SLO Little Theater, Children's Museum, expanded History Center, Museum of Art, Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, and Mission Plaza in a short two-block stretch (Blocks 11 and 19). A **new park** on the corner of Monterey and Broad Streets celebrates local history while connecting to the Creek Walk and Mission Plaza. On the corner of Higuera and Nipomo Streets, a new plaza provides casual outdoor seating, gathering, and playing opportunities.



Sketch of a new park on the corner of Monterey and Broad Streets (Block 19) by Keith Gurney, CVT Member

The bridge across San Luis Creek easily connects shoppers on Higuera Street to the Cultural District and new structured parking. Other changes envisioned in central downtown include an expanded City Hall complex on Block 4, and County Courthouse complex toward Santa Rosa Street (Block 14). Both projects envision accommodating growth on underutilized surface parking lots, while keeping government jobs centrally located downtown. Additional housing opportunities are envisioned in Blocks 2, 3, and 4 along Mill Street, on the edge of central downtown.



Sketch of Broad and Marsh Street Intersection looking at Block 42 by Chuck Crotser, CVT Member

Currently one of the few pedestrian "dead zones" in central downtown, the large surface parking lots on Block 33 are now envisioned as commercial mixed use with upper-level offices and housing and paseo connections through the interior. On Block 34, as redevelopment occurs, it is reconfigured toward the creek, and across the street on Block 47, Cheng Park is expanded. Another key proposal in central downtown is the envisioned redevelopment of Block 42, with a diagonal paseo providing a connection to Emerson Park from the downtown, as well as new outdoor dining, event, and public art opportunities. Commercial mixed-use fronts onto Marsh and Pacific Streets, with the historic Parsons House remaining. A parking structure is included to accommodate new development in the area, with micro-retail storefronts along Pacific Street for a small local business cluster.



Sketch of Chorro and Monterey Street intersection looking from the etrance of Mission Plaza by Pierre Radamaker, CVT Member

South Downtown

South downtown is currently on the edge of the downtown—but not for long. Development pressure is moving south, which presents significant opportunities for this area over the next 25 years.

Blocks 38, 51, and portions of 39 and 52 present an opportunity for a unique and flexible zone or "flex zone" with the ability to accommodate adaptive reuse of industrial buildings, and/or redevelopment for largerfootprint incubator businesses with loft-style mixed-use residential. Consistent with the Mid-Higuera Plan, Block 51 includes a small plaza along Higuera Street, where Walker Street dead-ends.



Recent flex mixed-use development in South Downtown

Figure 3.5. South Downtown Planning Subarea





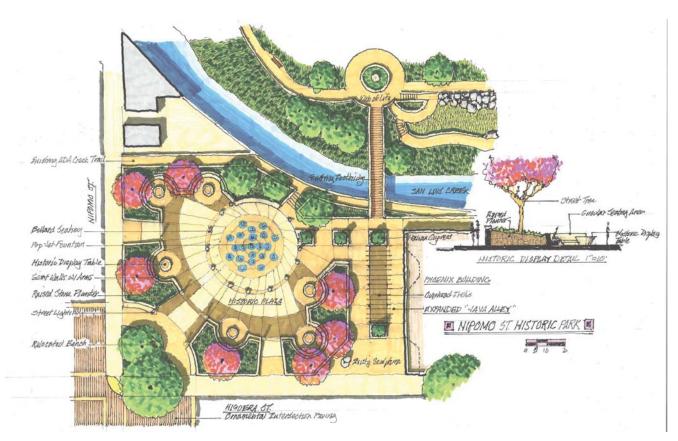
Gas Works building (Block 41) presents opportunity for reuse



Improved interaction with the creek near the Creamery around Block 18

The Old Gas Works building (Block 41) is rehabilitated and incorporated into a mid-block pocket park to provide some relief to the area's increased density. Block 39 shows expanded hospitality uses, such as lodging or a convention center, as does the southernmost end of Block 18. A parking structure on Block 26 between Marsh and Higuera Streets accommodates both facilities and the increased commercial mixed use in the area.

Design elements unique to the downtown announce one's arrival at Block 26 (the Marsh/Higuera intersection), one of the downtown's key gateways. There is an emphasis on signature buildings and public realm improvements appropriate to San Luis Obispo, along with creative public art and intersection enhancements. Continued revitalization in the area around The Creamery on Block 18 will create a lively, walkable, mixeduse area with improved connectivity and positive interaction with the creek. Historic buildings will be preserved while a variety of uses will enliven Higuera Street toward the southern entrance of the downtown.



Sketch of new plaza at Block 19 (Higuera and Nipomo intersection) connecting Central to South Downtown by Keith Gurney, CVT Member

As in the 1993 Downtown Concept Plan, an enhanced and wellconnected **Creek Walk** will provide a physical and visual connection to nature and a unique recreational amenity downtown. The path will extend from the existing Creek Walk at Nipomo Street to the Cerro San Luis trailhead with the intent of activating the creek area with positive uses and consistent activity so that negative uses will decrease. As reinvestment occurs along the riparian corridor, buildings will turn to face and interact with the creek, creating interesting spaces that can be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. The Creek Walk will connect to Higuera Street at several points, and to Dana Street across from the improved Rosa Butron Adobe.

The Jack House and Gardens in Block 28 will be buffered from adjacent development by paseos, including a connection from Marsh Street to Higuera Street, following Beach Street's alignment; its use will increase as more people live and work nearby. Emerson Park in Block 54 will be revitalized to better serve the needs of nearby residents. Blocks 9, 52, 53, 40, and 41 envision a variety of additional housing opportunities in the residential zones on the edge of the downtown, while keeping with the character of the area.



Jack House and Gardens (Block 28) will provide open space for nearby employees and residents



Creek walk will improve visual and physical connectivity to nature



Existing community garden at Emerson Park (Block 54)

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Mobility & Streetscape



Mobility and Streetscape

Background

The Downtown Concept Plan includes a focused consideration of mobility to and through the downtown and is consistent with the goals of the General Plan Circulation Element.

The City's Circulation Element sets transportation goals to provide a safe and accessible transportation system while reducing dependence on single-occupant use of motor vehicles. It also promotes and expands alternative transportation modes such as walking, bicycling, riding buses, and ridesharing. The Circulation Element includes a transportation goal for the downtown to be more functional and enjoyable for pedestrians (Goal 1.6.1.5). Circulation policies also aim to reduce congestion in the downtown. The boxes to the left illustrate the General Plan's priority mode ranking for downtown, and the modal split objectives, showing the City's commitment to increase the use of alternative forms of transportation and depend less on single-occupant use of vehicles.

To support achievement of General Plan goals, the Downtown Concept Plan includes a vision for the future downtown streetscape, including street types, locations, features, and bike facility improvements. This vision responds to the City's transportation goals and policies to create better transportation habits, support a shift in modes of transportation, and establish and maintain beautiful and livable street corridors.

Improving mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists to better connect to and move around the downtown was one of the most widely discussed topics throughout public engagement activities. Workshop and online engagement participants discussed issues related to mobility downtown for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers. Parking was a frequent topic. Participants also suggested ideas for how to design a more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environment. Complete public input can be found in Appendix A. Stakeholder Outreach Summary.

Following are two mobility diagrams and accompanying definitions, developed to convey concepts regarding downtown street types (Figure 4.1) and downtown bicycle improvements (Figure 4.2). They are meant to work together to convey the vision for mobility downtown.

The General Plan's priority mode ranking for the downtown area is:

- **Pedestrians**
- 2. **Bicycles**
- **Transit** 3.
- 4 **Vehicles**

General Plan Circulation Element, Table 3, Policy 6.1.3, May 2015



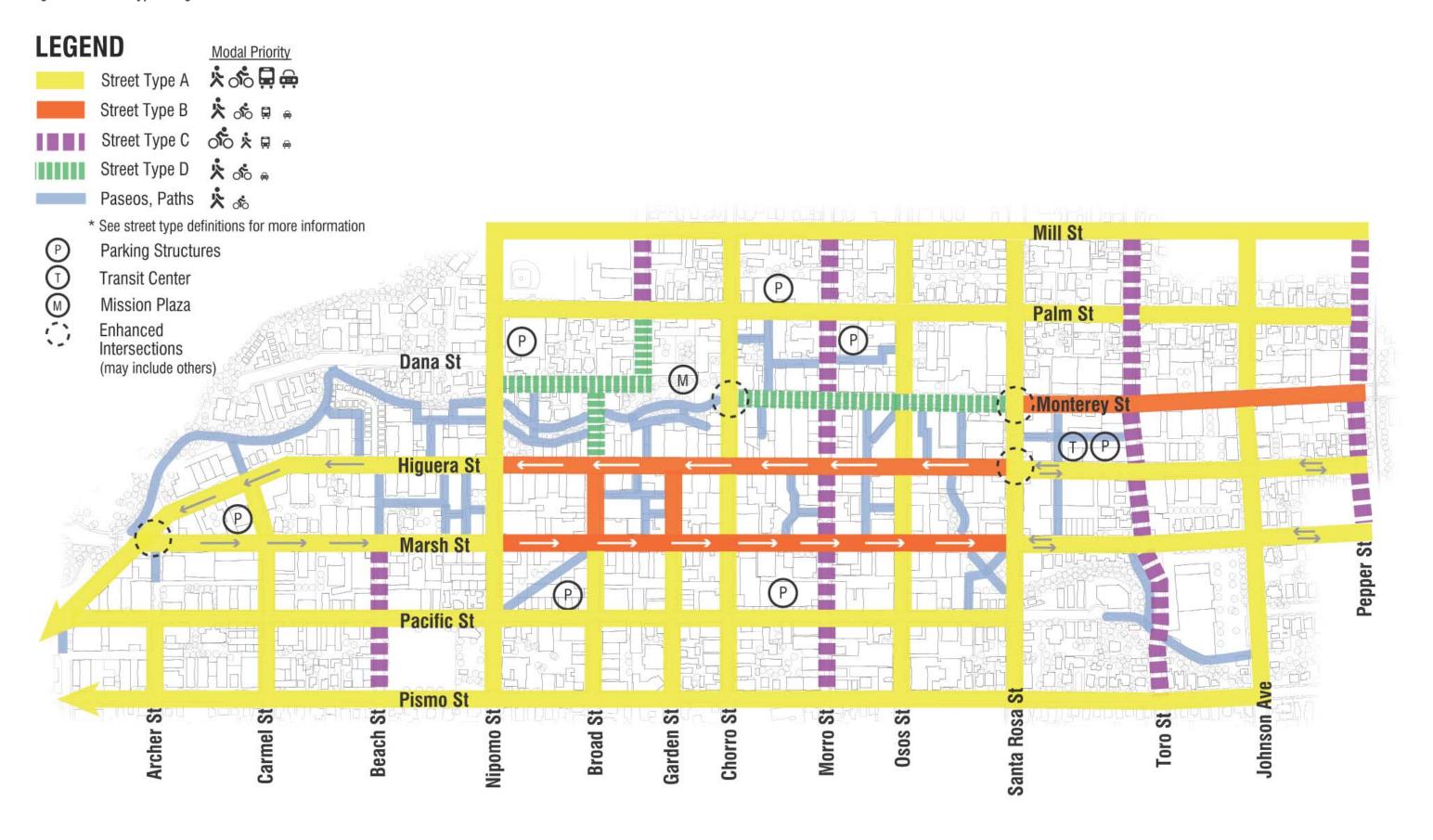
Modal Split Objectives (% of City Resident Trips)

Type of Transportaiton:

Motor Vehicles 50% Transit 12% **Bicycles** 20% Walking, Car Pools, 15% & Other

General Plan Circulation Element, Table 1, May 2015

Figure 4.1 Street Types Diagram



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Street Types

This section provides definitions and imagery that correspond to the Street Types Diagram (Figure 4.1). Street types are conceptual in nature and are meant to illustrate possible scenarios in the downtown; they are not to be confused with street classifications in the General Plan.

Street Type A

Modal Priority: All modes have equal priority

The role of Street Type A is to move people to and through the downtown safely and efficiently. This street type is designed to ensure safe speeds and accessibility for users of all ages and abilities. These streets are designed so that people can easily walk to shops or residences, bike to work, and cross at intersections safely. Street Type A is primarily located around the perimeter of the downtown, and on connector streets, in a grid pattern to disperse traffic volume. These streets include a variety of street classifications. The transit center (Block 23) and parking structures are located on Street Type A. Bike improvements can include signed routes, sharrows, bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, or cycle tracks.







Street Type B

Modal Priority: 1. Pedestrians 2. Bicycles 3. Transit 4. Automobiles Street Type B is located in the heart of the downtown and along Monterey St north of Santa Rosa St. Street Type B gives the pedestrian realm a higher proportion of the right-of-way. It strives to have lower automobile volumes and speeds than Street Type A, as drivers will park in structures on surrounding streets. These densely developed streets will allow ample room on sidewalks for outdoor gathering, socializing, dining, and commerce. Street Type B includes portions of Marsh, Higuera, Monterey, Broad, and Garden Streets. Bike improvements can include sharrows, bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, or cycle tracks.







Conceptual Street Type B cross section for Marsh or Higuera Streets between Nipomo and Santa Rosa

Street Type C

Modal Priority: 1. Bicycles 2. Pedestrians 3. Transit 4. Automobiles Street Type C gives bicycle facilities a higher proportion of the right-ofway, and prioritizes bicycling over vehicle travel. Many of these streets are shown as bike boulevards on the Bicycle Facilities Diagram (Figure 4.2). These streets will connect with adjacent neighborhoods to bring more bicyclists downtown. Street Type C includes portions of Beach, Broad, Morro, Toro, and Pepper Streets.





Street Type D

Modal Priority: 1. Pedestrians 2. Bicycles 3. Slow Automobiles Street Type D is also known as a shared street. Pedestrians are prioritized, but slow automobiles are allowed. It minimizes the segregation of pedestrians and vehicles in its design. This is done by removing features such as curbs, road surface markings, traffic signs, and traffic lights.

Street Type D is similar to car-free streets in appearance, with unique paving patterns that differ from vehicular streets and that encourage outdoor seating, public events, and festivals. Cars are not prohibited but are not encouraged. These streets are flexible in nature, as they can be easily converted to car-free streets temporarily or over time with removable bollards or other barriers. Street Type D includes portions of Monterey and Broad Streets.









The following elements are also included as part of the downtown street system:

Paseos

Modal Priority: 1. Pedestrians (slow bikes allowed)

Paseos are public or private pedestrian passageways between buildings. They often connect parks or plazas to the public streetscape. They provide additional car-free opportunities for shopping, dining, or seating. The Street Types Diagram and the Illustrative plan both show a network of paseos throughout the downtown.









Intersection enhancements include elements such as raised or painted crosswalks, bulbouts to provide refuge and decrease crossing distances, pedestrian scrambles (diagonal crossings to increase efficiency), or roundabouts. The Plan encourages enhanced intersections throughout the downtown as it redevelops. A roundabout is envisioned at the Marsh/Higuera intersection, and pedestrian scrambles are shown on Santa Rosa Street.

Mid-block Crossings

Mid-block crossings should be considered at logical locations where crossing is currently occurring regularly. They should connect paseos and/or break up long blocks.



Drop Off/Loading Zones

Drop off/loading zones for commercial vehicles and rideshare/ridesource vehicles should be incorporated throughout the downtown at key locations and major activity centers. They should be a safe distance from corners, well lit, free of furnishings/fixtures, and clearly marked.

Bicycle Improvements

As bicycling has become a more popular transportation choice due to its health, economic, environmental, and even time-saving benefits, more communities are committed to creating safer places to cycle. San Luis Obispo is no exception. It recently received recognition as a Gold Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists. The Bicycle Facilities Diagram (Figure 4.2) illustrates the proposed vision for bicycle facilities for the future downtown, with corresponding definitions and imagery.

The Bicycle Facilities Diagram is consistent with the City's Bicycle Transportation Plan and supports the General Plan's modal split objective of 20 percent of City resident trips by bicycle. Most of the specific improvements are identified as either existing or planned. Planned improvements are recommendations from the Bicycle Transportation Plan. The new ideas are shown as "proposed." Those include a cycle track or buffered bike lane along the length of Marsh and Higuera Streets in the Downtown Concept Plan area. Either option would improve the comfort level of less experienced bicyclists and families riding to the downtown. It would make the downtown more welcoming and easier to navigate for cyclists, thereby increasing ridership. These bike improvements would connect users to adjacent neighborhoods, and to other on-street improvements as shown conceptually in the Street Types Diagram.

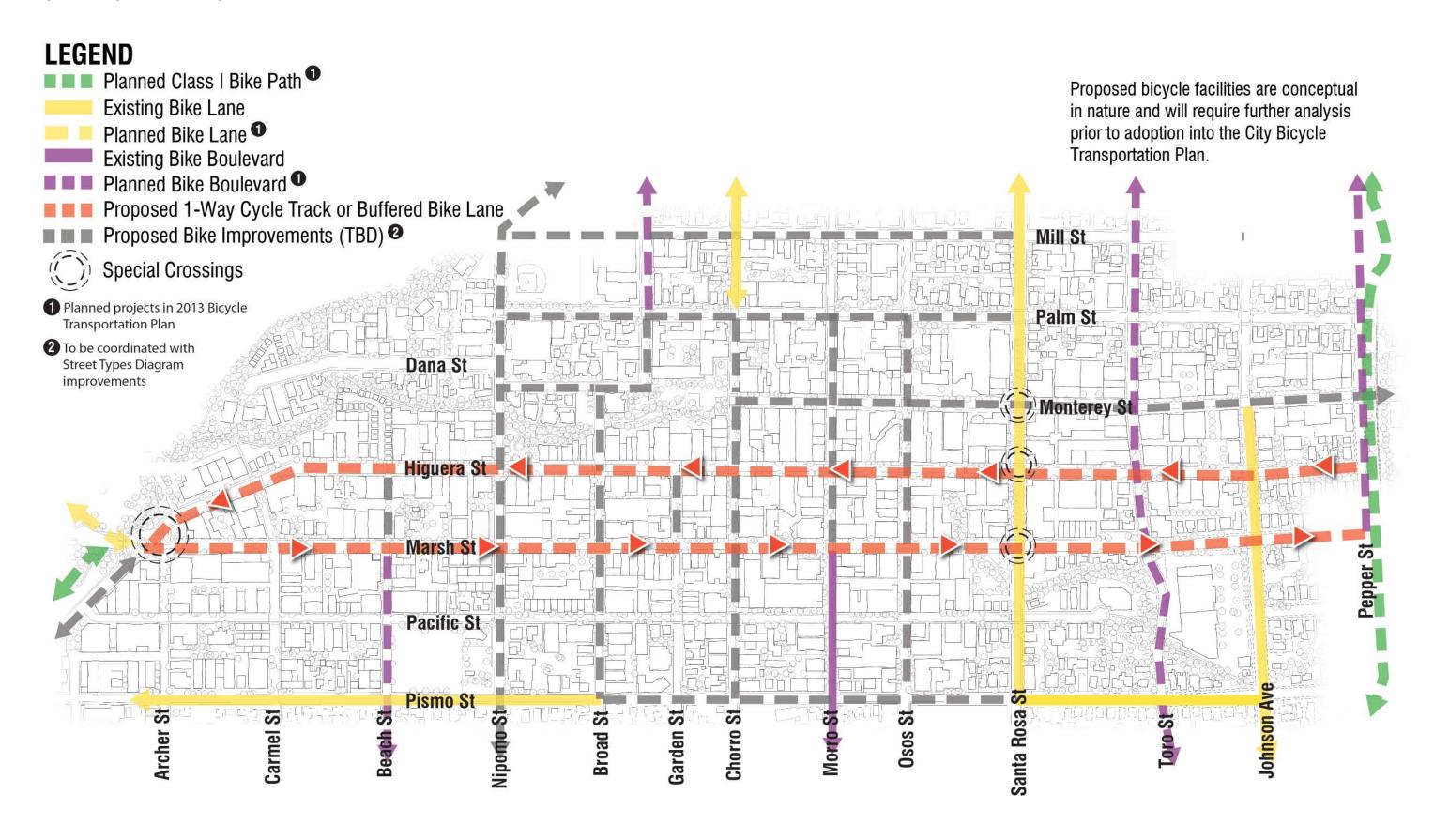






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Figure 4.2 Bicycle Facilities Diagram



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Bicycle Facilities

The purpose of this section is to provide definitions and imagery that correspond with the Bicycle Facilities Diagram. Images are examples from San Luis Obispo as well as other communities.

Bike Path

Also referred to as a Class I bikeway, bike paths provide a completely separated right-of-way for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with crossflow by motorists minimized. Because of their separation from motor vehicle traffic, Class I paths commonly attract users less comfortable riding on roadways with traffic and can be an effective tool in providing transportation connections within neighborhoods, to recreational facilities such as parks and open spaces, or as high-speed bicycle commuter routes. There are two planned bike paths shown in Figure 4.2.

Bike Lane

Bike lanes are considered a Class II facility and provide a striped lane for one-way bicycle travel on a street or highway. It is the City's long-term goal to establish and maintain Class II bike lanes along all arterial streets and highways (except Highway 101) since these corridors provide the most direct access to important destinations and are frequently used by commuting bicyclists. There are four existing bike lanes and one planned bike lane shown envisioned for the downtown.

Bike Boulevard

Categorized as a Class III bike routes, bike boulevards are a shared roadway (bicycles and motor vehicles share the space without marked bike lanes) where the through movement of bicyclists are given priority over motor vehicle travel on a local street. Bicycle boulevards are designated on low-speed, low-volume, local streets that parallel higher traffic arterial streets. There is one existing bike boulevard and four planned bike boulevards envisioned for the downtown.

Cycle Track

Categorized as a Class IV bikeway, cycle tracks (also known as separated bike lanes or protected bike lanes) are exclusive bikeways with elements of both a separated path and on-road bike lane. They are located within or next to the roadway, but are made distinct from both the sidewalk and roadway by vertical barriers or elevation differences.











Cycle tracks are designed to encourage less experienced road riders in an effort to relieve automobile congestion, reduce pollution, and increase safety through reduced bicycle/automobile conflict. Cycle tracks may be one-way or two-way, and may be at road level, at sidewalk level, or at an intermediate level. There are two potential cycle tracks proposed for the downtown.



Buffered Bike Lane

A buffered bike lane is an on-street bike lane that has a painted buffer either between the bike lane and parked cars, between the bike lane and the standard motor vehicle lane, or both. Typically, the buffer is striped with diagonal lines and serves to keep bicyclists from riding in the "door zone" and/or to add separation between bicyclists and motor vehicle traffic. There are two potential buffered bike lanes proposed for the downtown.



Downtown Streetscape Elements

Communities are rediscovering the broad benefits streets can provide as public spaces, including local commerce, socialization, community celebration, and recreation. Enhancing streetscapes and public spaces is a key priority for the downtown's envisioned future. Using thematic design elements throughout the downtown in a consistent manner will additionally define downtown San Luis Obispo's "sense of place" and leave a lasting impression.

When asked what people enjoy about downtown San Luis Obispo, the most frequent community responses reflected social and serendipitous interactions offered on downtown's streets, or in public spaces, local retail, and outdoor dining establishments. The community also expressed a desire to enhance and perpetuate central downtown as a traditional historic core with more design flexibility in the other subareas of downtown.



Given this, future streetscape furnishings and materials should embody a traditional/Main Street feel in central downtown and around historic properties, with flexibility for other styles in the north and south downtown subareas. The following images and types of street furnishings are examples of fixtures and treatments that support this sentiment and are appropriate for the future downtown.

Lighting

Street lighting is a key organizing streetscape element in downtowns that provides safety and ambiance, and defines the nighttime visual environment. As streets are improved with a focus on pedestrian and bicycle travel, lighting should be designed not only for vehicular traffic on the roadways, but also for pedestrians and cyclists on sidewalks and pedestrian paths. Street lighting through bollards should be considered rather than overhead lighting, in order to preserve views of the night sky throughout the downtown.

Seating

To create streets and public places that foster socialization, seating should be plentiful in the downtown. Benches should be clustered and installed facing one another to create "outdoor living rooms" that do not inhibit the pedestrian right-of-way.

Bicycle Racks

To accommodate the increase in cyclists as street improvements and bicycle infrastructure are implemented over time, bicycle racks should continue to be installed in safe, frequent, and convenient locations throughout the downtown. Racks should not interfere with the flow of pedestrian traffic. Covered bicycle racks and bicycle lockers should also be located in parking structures near entrances, for safety and convenience. Plentiful bicycle racks help make cycling a convenient option for downtown patrons, workers, and residents.

Bicycle Corrals

Bicycle corrals should be installed in strategic locations throughout the downtown to help provide additional short-term bicycle parking. Each facility can accommodate up to 16 bicycles in the same size area as a single vehicle parking space. Bicycle corrals serve as a good solution where sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate bicycle racks and in areas with high demand for bicycle parking. When placed near street corners, a corral also increases visibility and creates an additional buffer between the sidewalk and vehicles.

Parklets

A parklet is a sidewalk extension that projects into the street, offering more space and amenities for pedestrians. It is generally the size of one or two parking spaces, and may include greenery, art, seating, bicycle parking, or outdoor dining. Parklets are usually temporary, and often volunteer-driven. A growing number of cities are developing guidelines for installing parklets. They are a low-cost alternative to providing more small-scale gathering or seating downtown.



Seating arranged for socialization



Peak bike racks downtown



Vertical bike corral to save space



Parklet with ample seating

Unique wall art installation

Public Art

Public art helps define and reveal the unique character of a community's identity. It should be incorporated into the downtown in imaginative new ways, some of which are discussed in the City's Public Art Master Plan. Public art can take many forms, such as being interactive or incorporated into street furniture. Whatever its form, public art attracts attention. Great public art can take an ordinary place and make it spectacular.

Convertible shade structure

Farmers Market Infrastructure

As the home of the City's weekly farmers market, which provides an outdoor venue for commerce, dining, and entertainment, the future downtown should include infrastructure improvements that provide necessary services to accommodate this grand event. Whether the farmers market continues to be held on Higuera Street or another location (such as Mission Plaza and Monterey Street), infrastructure such as power hookups should be incorporated into future street improvements.

Public Restrooms

Important but often overlooked, public restrooms should be incorporated into other public places downtown, such as Mission Plaza and Emerson Park, and should be clearly visible from the street, for wayfinding, accessibility, and safety. Restrooms may also be quasi-public, accessed from the exterior of a café adjacent to a public plaza. Development and management options are varied.



Small downtown public restroom



Public restroom integrated into a downtown development

Green Infrastructure

San Luis Obispo residents place high value on access to the natural environment, with San Luis Obispo Creek named as one of the City's top assets. Preserving and enhancing access to nature is a strong part of this downtown vision.

Stormwater runoff is a major cause of water pollution in urban areas. Green infrastructure elements can be integrated into public facilities as a cost-effective and resilient approach to water management. Green infrastructure also provides many community benefits: It protects, restores, or mimics the natural water cycle, and it enhances community safety and quality of life.

The following types of green infrastructure could be woven into downtown San Luis Obispo incrementally over time to improve the environment and quality of life.

Bioretention: Stormwater management structures with open bottoms, allowing for infiltration into the ground. Examples include rain gardens, planters, and swales.

Drywell: An underground structure comprising a perforated pipe surrounded with gravel, which provides stormwater infiltration.

Pervious pavement: A pavement system comprising a porous paving surface with an underlying permeable aggregate base layer.

Rainwater capture and use: A system that captures and stores for reuse rainwater from impervious surfaces such as rooftops and paved surfaces.

Green roof: There are a range of approaches for designing green roofs, depending on the desired access to the roof, depth of soil, diversity of plant types, cost, and maintenance.

Green wall: Encompasses several forms of vegetated wall surfaces, including green façades, living walls, and living retaining walls.



Bioretention



Pervious pavement



Rainwater capture

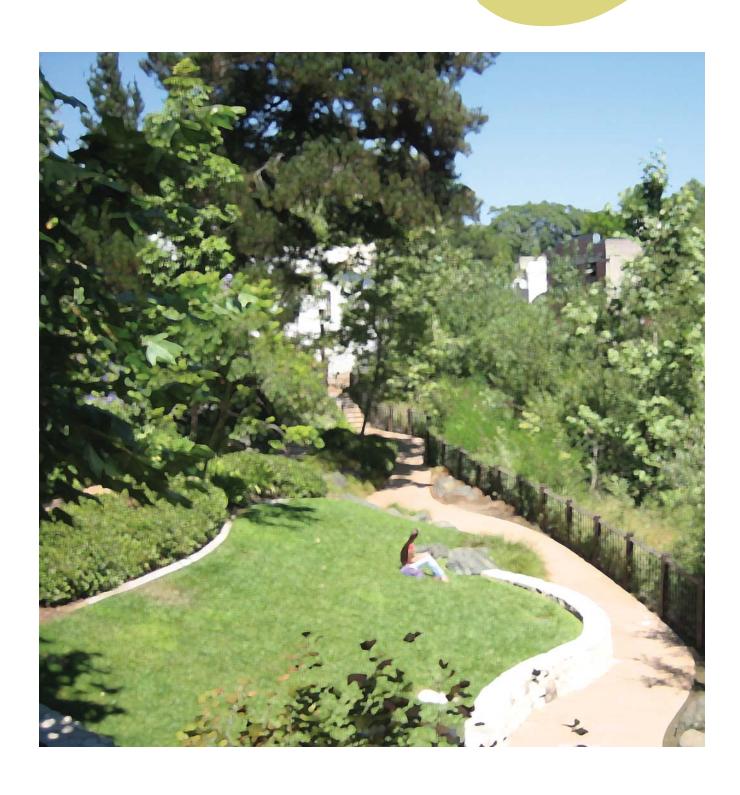


Green roof with green wall



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Implementation







The Downtown Concept Plan is supported by the following Implementation Plan, which provides a list of major public programs and projects needed for plan implementation. Actions will be implemented over the long-term, 25+ year time frame of this plan, as feasible. As the Downtown Concept Plan is a high-level vision for downtown, all actions will require further study and analysis before implementation. Priorities will be assigned after additional public input opportunities.

The city should build on downtown's relatively good walkability by carefully crafting an even more human-centric, convivial design and atmosphere. Parklets and bike corrals should be added where there is support from a majority of the businesses on the respective block. Curb extensions should be a priority to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort (bonus if they also provide stormwater filtration).

- Resident



Table 5.1 Implementation Plan

Action	Implementation Action	Priority	Respo	Responsibility	
ID		1 = Short Term 2 = Mid Term 3 = Long Term Ongoing	Lead	Support	
	LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
	Zoning Regulations				
1	Include relevant concepts from the Downtown Concept Plan as part of the update of the City Zoning Regulations, such as expanded commercial mixed use overlay zone and increased floor area ratios.		City		
	Housing				
2	Work with partners on developing additional programs and incentives to aid in the provision of additional housing options downtown, as shown in the Concept Plan Illustrative.		City	HASLO, Partners	
	Government Offices				
3	Investigate the feasibility of redeveloping the Cityowned old library building and the surface parking lot behind City Hall to house additional city services within one campus and create a welcoming public space.		City		
4	Investigate the feasibility of developing a County office building with staff parking and commercial or public uses along the street front on County property on Monterey Street (Block 15).		County		
5	Investigate the feasibility of adding additional office space to the County courthouse, to bring the building to Santa Rosa Street, with commercial or public use at the corner of Monterey and Santa Rosa Streets.		County		
6	Investigate the feasibility of leasing unused City office space at a subsidized rate to qualifying nonprofit organizations.		City		
	Economic Development				
7	Work with partners on developing a program to retain, attract, and support smaller, independent, and culturally diverse businesses.		City	Chamber, DTA	
8	Consider developing an economic analysis of downtown, looking at the preferred mix of land uses for long-term economic health.		City	SLOEVC, Chamber	
9	Investigate opportunities for implementing free WiFi in public areas downtown.		City	DTA, County, Others	
	ARTS, CULTURE, AND HISTORY				
	Public Art				

Action		Priority	Responsibility	
ID	Implementation Action	1 = Short Term 2 = Mid Term 3 = Long Term Ongoing	Lead	Support
10	Incorporate public art with public realm improvements throughout downtown, beyond the locations identified in the Public Art Master Plan.		City	
	Cultural District and Programming			
11	Work with community partners on furthering the idea of a Cultural District in the area around Monterey Street, between Mission Plaza and Nipomo Street. Encourage enhanced cultural, historical, and artistic uses in this general area.		City	Cultural partners, DTA, Chamber
12	Consider including additional and different ways to bring history alive in the Cultural District area, including interpretive information on the area's natural resources, the Anza National Historic Trail, and El Camino Real historic bells.		City	Cultural partners
13	Implement the Mission Plaza Concept Plan, including redevelopment of streets in the Cultural District to Street Type D (shared street) as described in Chapter 4, with possible eventual conversion to car-free streets. These street sections include: Monterey Street between Nipomo and Broad Streets; Broad Street between Palm and Monterey Streets; and Broad Street between Monterey and Higuera Streets		City	
14	Work with the History Center and other community partners on developing a mobile history walking tour app for downtown.		History Ctr	City
15	Consider investigating the feasibility of a West End Historic District, encompassing the area of Higuera and Marsh Streets southwest of the Downtown Historic District.		City	History Ctr
	Historic Facilities			
16	Develop and implement a master plan for the public use of the Rosa Butron Adobe property.		City	
17	Develop and implement a restoration plan for the Murray Adobe in coordination with the Mission Plaza Master Plan.		City	
18	Work with the History Center on expansion plans to provide capacity for future needs.		History Ctr	City
	RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND PUBLIC RESTROOMS			
	New Parks, Plazas, and Paseos			

Action		Priority	Responsibility	
ID	Implementation Action	1 = Short Term 2 = Mid Term 3 = Long Term Ongoing	Lead	Support
19	Update the Park and Recreation Element of the General Plan, including a citywide Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, to refine the community's vision for parks and recreation downtown and aid in implementation.		City	
20	Develop a feasibility analysis for the acquisition, design, and development of a public park on the corner of Monterey and Broad Streets, connecting to the Creek Walk.		City	Property owner
21	Develop a feasibility analysis for the acquisition, design, and development of a pocket park and plaza between Monterey and Higuera Streets (Block 24).		City	Property owner
22	Develop a feasibility analysis for the acquisition, design, and development of a small pocket park on the corner of Toro and Marsh Streets.	0	City	Property owner
23	Develop and implement a master plan for a public plaza on City property on the corner of Higuera and Nipomo Streets, as shown in the Concept Plan Illustrative.	0	City	
24	Encourage the replacement of the existing lawn around the old courthouse building with a drought-tolerant demonstration garden with seating and public art (Block 14).		County	City
25	Work with private developers to implement a system of paseos as shown in the Concept Plan Illustrative.		Private de- velopers	City
26	Update the Design Guidelines to encourage the development of paseos that are interesting, safe, well connected, and interact with development as shown in the Concept Plan Illustrative.		City	
	Existing Parks and Public Facilities			
27	Develop and implement a master plan for Emerson Park to ensure that it is used most efficiently and accommodates the needs of the neighborhood.		City	
28	Develop and implement a master plan for the Ludwick Center to better meet the community's needs for a full-service recreation center.		City	
	San Luis Creek			
29	Make improvements to the existing Creek Walk so it is a safe, inviting, and enjoyable experience for everyone.		City	Property owners
30	Develop and implement a master plan for the expansion of the Creek Walk from Nipomo Street to the Marsh/ Higuera intersection, as shown in the Concept Plan Illustrative.		City	Property owners

Action		Priority	Responsibility	
ID	Implementation Action	1 = Short Term 2 = Mid Term 3 = Long Term Ongoing	Lead	Support
31	Develop and implement a master plan for San Luis Obispo Creek in the downtown area; potentially combine it with a Creek Walk master plan.		City	Property owners
	Public Restrooms			
32	Ensure the provision of public restrooms downtown, including new restrooms at Mission Plaza and Emerson Park.		City	
	PUBLIC SAFETY			
33	Coordinate with public safety so that streets and public spaces are designed to reduce crime through lighting, visibility, emergency access, and other public safety features.		City	
	MOBILITY AND CIRCULATION			
	Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements			
34	Continue the installation of pedestrian level wayfinding signage to direct pedestrians and cyclists to the best routes and key locations downtown.	0	City	
35	Develop and implement a plan for a walking path around the Dallidet Adobe property to Toro Street.		City	History Ctr
36	Consider inclusion of bicycle facility recommendations (as described in Chapter 4) into the Bicycle Transportation Plan after additional study.		City	
37	Work with interested partners on the feasibility of a bike share program.		City	Bike SLO- County, others
38	Develop a downtown pedestrian plan, or alternatively, a bicycle and pedestrian plan for downtown to further study specific locations for improvements to enhance the pedestrian experience, using the Downtown Concept Plan as a guide.		City	
	Transit and Multimodal Facilities			
39	Work with community partners to develop a transit center downtown to meet the transit needs of downtown employees, residents, and visitors.		City	SLOCOG, RTA, others
40	Investigate the feasibility of providing free trolley service along Higuera and Marsh and between downtown parking garages throughout the year, in addition to existing Monterey Street service.		City	Partners

Action		Priority Responsib		nsibility
ID	Implementation Action	1 = Short Term 2 = Mid Term 3 = Long Term Ongoing	Lead	Support
41	When updating the City's Capital Improvement Program, consider inclusion of multimodal street type improvements as described in Chapter 4.		City	
42	Prioritize mobility improvements to be consistent with the General Plan's priority mode ranking in downtown: 1. Pedestrians, 2. Bicycles, 3. Transit, 4. Vehicles.		City	
43	Consider redevelopment of Monterey Street between Chorro and Santa Rosa Streets to Street Type D (shared street), as shown in Figure 4.1.		City	
44	Consider redevelopment of the downtown streets shown as Street Types A, B, and C in Figure 4.1.		City	
45	Conduct a feasibility analysis to determine the optimal future design of the Marsh/Higuera intersection to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and accessibility.		City	
46	When improvements are needed, consider a redesign of the Broad Street bridge (between Monterey and Higuera Streets) and a Creek Walk connection underneath.		City	
	Parking Facilities (motor vehicle, bicycle, structures)			
47	Continue the installation of wayfinding signage to direct motorists to public parking and keep vehicles away from the downtown core.		City	
48	Design parking structures with secure bike parking, transit and trolley stops, pedestrian wayfinding signage, electric vehicle charging stations, and pedestrian crossings where feasible.		City	Partners
49	Design parking structures to integrate public rooftop amenities such as outdoor viewing areas, public spaces, or appropriate community facilities where feasible.		City	Partners
50	Design parking structures so that they are located behind commercial or office mixed use to the extent possible to keep the sidewalks pedestrian-scale and active.		City	Partners
51	Develop or partner with private developers to build parking structures as conceptually located in the Downtown Concept Plan.		City	Partners
52	Investigate implementing variable parking pricing during peak hours.		City	
53	Develop or expand in-lieu parking fee districts to accommodate future development patterns as illustrated in the Downtown Concept Plan.		City	
54	Conduct a parking demand study every five years to reevaluate demand for parking as technology, mobility needs, and demand evolve.		City	

Action		Priority	Responsibility	
ID	Implementation Action	1 = Short Term 2 = Mid Term 3 = Long Term Ongoing	Lead	Support
55	When making street improvements, develop plans to ensure the adequate provision of on street parking for the disabled; short-term loading zones for commercial vehicles; and passenger drop-off and loading zones for shared economy and rideshare vehicles.		City	Partners
	Circulation			
56	Work with the Downtown Association and business owners to designate mutually beneficial hours of regulation for delivery vehicles, to minimize traffic congestion.		City	DTA
57	Evaluate and adjust traffic signalization at intersections as necessary to improve downtown circulation for safety and efficiency.		City	
	STREETSCAPE			
	Green Infrastructure, Parklets, and Planters			
58	Develop a program for designing and installing parklets downtown.		City	
59	Work with partners on exploring funding incentives for additional streetscape improvements, such as adopting a tree or a planter (similar to the memorial bench and rack with plaque program).		City	DTA
60	Maintain a healthy downtown street tree canopy; evaluate and replace tree grates annually to ensure obstruction-free sidewalks as well as proper tree health and growth capacity.		City	
61	Include green infrastructure in public improvement projects whenever feasible.		City	
	Farmer's Market			
62	Coordinate with the Downtown Association on farmers market infrastructure needs before any major street redesign.		City	DTA
63	Consider moving the farmers market to Monterey Street if it is improved as a Street Type D (shared street).		DTA	City
	Lighting & Street Furniture			
64	Implement a lighting plan on downtown streetscapes, public spaces, and storefronts for enhanced safety and placemaking.		City	DTA, others
65	As Street Type improvements are made, update a plan for the design and installation of coordinated street furnishings (e.g., seating, lighting, bike parking) to create a clear sense of place for downtown, or by subdistrict.		City	DTA

Action		Priority	Respoi	Responsibility	
ID	Implementation Action	1 = Short Term	Lead	Support	
	implementation Action	2 = Mid Term			
		3 = Long Term			
		Ongoing			
	Maintenance				
66	Develop an improved system for coordinating street and sidewalk cleaning that clearly defines the responsibility of the City and downtown merchants.		City	DTA	
LEGEND	DTA = Downtown Association				
	SLOEVC = San Luis Obispo Economic Vitality Corporation				
	HASLO = Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo				
	SLOCOG = San Luis Obispo Council of Governments				
	RTA = Regional Transit Authority				
	SLOCOG = San Luis Obispo Council of Governments				
	RTA = Regional Transit Authority				

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San Luis Obispo Downtown Concept Plan

Summary of Outreach

April 27, 2016 - DRAFT

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INTRODUCTION

The early work of the San Luis Obispo Downtown Concept Plan update involved broad-based public engagement, including targeted stakeholder interviews, a public open house, a public workshop, an online survey, two neighborhood meetings and three meetings with the Creative Vision Team (CVT). This document summarizes the results of the public engagement activities, and is intended to inform the next phase of the project to draft the concept plan update.

Overview of Outreach Activities

Phase I outreach activities to date include:

- Stakeholder focus groups: On January 19 and 20, 2016, the project team conducted a series of roundtable
 discussions with 48 downtown stakeholders. Stakeholders represented a broad cross section of interested
 parties, including downtown businesses owners, residents, property owners and developers, nonprofit
 organizations representing historical resources, arts and cultural activities and facilities, seniors, students, and
 special interests such as bicycling, environmental protection, historic resources, neighborhoods, design, and
 green building. Members of the team also sat in on several of the Mission Plaza Master Plan stakeholder
 interviews, including those with City Council members.
- Workshop 1 (Imagine Downtown SLO Open House with Mission Plaza Master Plan): On February 20, 2016, approximately 75 people officially signed in at workshop 1, which was organized as an open-air festival including information boards, interactive stations, and walking tours. Dozens of other attendees dropped in and participated casually in addition to those who signed in.
- Workshop 2: A week after Workshop 1, on February 27, 2016, approximately 110 people officially signed in as
 attendees at workshop 2, an event that built on input received during workshop 1 and included a visual
 preference survey, interactive group mapping exercises, and tactile self-guided exercises. All of these
 activities were designed to generate discussion about potential solutions and to illustrate where and how those
 solutions may be realized in the downtown
- Survey/online engagement: The City received 393 survey responses on Open City Hall, the City's online
 engagement tool, which equals 19.7 hours of public comment. Participants were asked to provide basic
 demographic information and to respond to a series of questions such as their impressions of, draw to,
 favorite things about or places within downtown as well as ideas for improving Mission Plaza. The input was
 received between February 18 and March 9, 2016.
- Neighborhood Meetings: To round out community engagement, the City hosted two neighborhood meetings
 that took place on April 18 and 19, 2016. The two meetings attracted approximately 35 residents from the
 neighborhoods surrounding downtown During the meetings residents were asked to comment on issues and
 concerns, ideas and opportunities, and what they love about living downtown.



SUMMARY OF INDIVIDUAL OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Stakeholder Focus Groups

The project team conducted a series of roundtable discussions with downtown stakeholders representing a broad cross section of interested parties, including businesses owners, residents, investors, agents for downtown development, nonprofit organizations, seniors, students, and special interests such as bicycling, environmental protection, historic resources, neighborhoods, design, and green building.

Stakeholders have a predominantly positive impression of downtown. The most common impressions were comfortable scale, walkable, vibrant, and historic.

When asked what people enjoy about downtown SLO, the most frequent stakeholder responses reflected social and serendipitous interactions offered by local retail, outdoor dining, public spaces and people enjoying themselves.

Stakeholders also appreciated downtown's physical environment, including both built and natural surroundings: The built environment and the feel created by it, including the historic buildings; the atmosphere, ambiance, and sense of place, and the diversity of styles, layout, and aesthetics. They also enjoy nature both in and around downtown: the creek, trees, parks, sunshine and views.

The issues and challenges mentioned by stakeholders were wide-ranging and fell into four broad categories:

- 1. Social behavior, safety, and maintenance
- 2. Mobility and parking
- 3. Land uses, tenant mix, and land economics
- 4. Urban form and intensity

Stakeholders expressed the most disagreement about building height. A clear split exists between stakeholders who want shorter buildings (1–3 stories) and those who want to see height and density increased (3–5+ stories). Although stakeholders may disagree about height, an underlying value is common. Open space protection is important. Some people want to be able to experience the joy of the views of the open space and hills from downtown and would like height limited to protect views. Others, supportive of growth in the city, want to protect open space and prefer higher density and height in downtown to avoid conversion of open space and the hillsides that surround the city.



The following table generally illustrates the comparative levels of concern among stakeholders.

Social Behavior, Safety, Maintenance		Mobility & Parking		Uses, Tenants, Economics		Urban Form & Intensity	
Homelessness		Pedestrians & pedestrian infrastructure	••••	High rents, chain stores, business/economic diversity		Buildings too high & impact views	
Overconcentration of bars, alcohol-induced behavior		Parking & car dominance				Increase height, increase density	
Safety (general)	••••	Bicyclists & bicycle infrastructure	••••	Housing	•••		
Trash	•••	Multimodal transit	•••	Restrictive zoning	•	Diversity of form	•
Noise		Higuera & Marsh		Nonprofits, but no affordable space	•	Form-based code	•

For a full list of issues, as well as potential solutions generated by stakeholders, the complete summary can be found in Appendix A, Stakeholder Focus Group Summary .



Public Workshop 1

Between 75 and 150 people participated at an outdoor Saturday workshop in Mission Plaza. Overall, the input was consistent with the opinions expressed during stakeholder interviews. The big ideas, visions, likes, and things stakeholders want to change demonstrate areas of consensus (i.e., appreciation for downtown as the heart of the city) and areas of divergence (i.e., how tall buildings should be in the future). As a result of public workshop 1, the project team identified four topics to be further vetted in workshop 2.

- Improve the public realm to activate space and celebrate art, culture, history, and play.
- Redesign streets to improve the experience of pedestrians (foremost), bicyclists, and transit riders and, in some places, to decrease the amount of space dedicated to motorized vehicles.
- Increase or maintain existing building heights.
- Protect views.



A description of each station and key takeaways is included below and transcription of input is located in Appendix B: Transcriptions of Input Received During Workshop 1.

Walking Tours

A series of one hour walking tours were conducted during the course of the event. Two tours departed at 11:30pm and again at 1:30pm. The purpose of the tours were to discuss and envision what downtown San Luis Obispo was in the past, is today, and could be in the next 25 + years. The tours were aimed to generate discussion about issues and generate ideas about solutions. The two tours followed different routes and prompted participants to identify which views into and out of the downtown should be maintained as well as where they believe taller buildings may be appropriate and inappropriate. Participants were also asked to a few questions related to stops on each tour route:

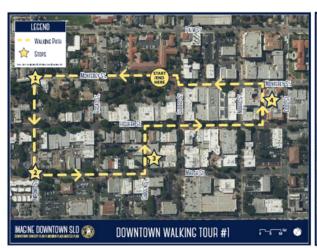


Tour 1:

- Nipomo and Monterey Looking West How do you feel about the proposed Palm/Nipomo parking structure?
 Would you like to see uses on the group floor and/or the rooftop? If so, which ones?
- Marsh and Nipomo Looking North What would you keep and what would you change about this area of Marsh Street?
- Garden Street between Higuera and Marsh What elements do you like or dislike about this street?

Tour 2:

- Chorro and Mill Looking South Would you support higher density housing at this location (why/why not?)
- Santa Rosa and Higuera Looking North Should the area North of Santa Rosa have similar form/standards as downtown? (why/why not?)
- Chorro and Higuera Looking North and West Look at the numerous ways outdoor dining has been implemented on these streets. Which approach works best and why?
- Chorro and Marsh Looking South What would you most like to see on the corner surface parking lot at this
 intersection?





Vision Wall

This brainstorming activity asked participants to add their responses to the following question, "What three words describe what you want Downtown SLO to be in the future?" Using large markers, participants recorded up to three words or short phrases onto a large sheet of vinyl. 194 different responses were recorded. Responses varied from key adjectives describing downtown of the future, to short phrases painting a picture of an improved or preserved downtown core. Appendix B includes transcription of the input received on the Vision Wall.





Big Ideas

This station generated innovative ideas by inspiring participants to think outside the box. Participants were asked to use a "big ideas sheet" to draw or write their response to the following question: "If budget and time were not constraints, what is your one BIG IDEA to improve Downtown SLO?" (this can be today up to 20+ years in the future). Facilitators took pictures of people holding their ideas, and responses were hung on the booth's clotheslines. Participants shared 98 big ideas, with themes generally focusing on circulation (about 25%), cultural uses and amenities (about 10%), and building height (about 5%), with other comments addressing issues ranging from the need for increased vegetation to specific commercial uses that would be appropriate for downtown. Regarding circulation, most big ideas involved making specific locations more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly, with numerous ideas to shut down entire sections of downtown to motor vehicles. Circulation comments also focused on lower



speeds for vehicular traffic and the need for more parking. Cultural ideas typically focused on uses and amenities around the art museum. Building height ideas typically focused on limiting or maintaining the height downtown. See Appendix B.

What I Like and What I'd Change: Map 1 – "Heart" of Downtown and Gateways

At this table, participants were asked to identify where they typically enter the downtown using a gold star sticker as well as placing a heart sticker to identify where people would geographically identify the "heart" of downtown.

Generally people liked this exercise and found it understandable without a lot of clarifying questions. The majority of hearts were in Mission Plaza and near the corner of Chorro and Higuera. Concentrations of stars were along Morro where it enters downtown from the south, and along Chorro where it enters downtown from the north, Higuera at the east end of downtown. Some people placed stars by their home if they live in the study area.

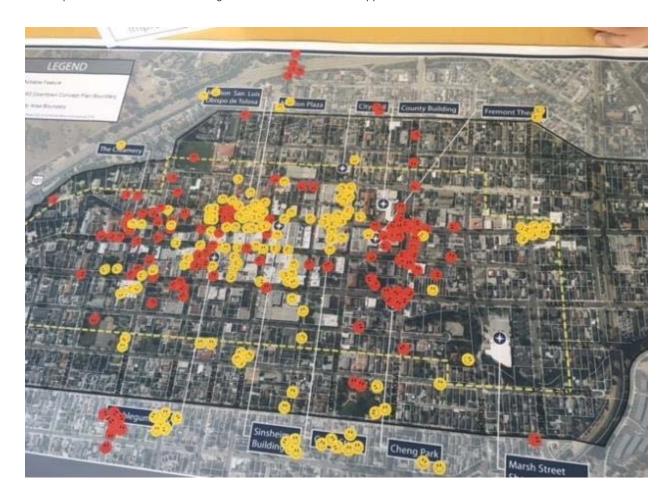




What I Like and What I'd Change:

Map 2 - Downtown Assets and Opportunities for Improvement

This exercise asked participants to use up to three smiley face stickers to identify what areas they like (Assets) and up to three sad face stickers to identify areas that need improvement (Opportunities for Improvement). Overall, there was a concentration of happy faces on Monterey and Johnson, bubblegum alley, the Mission and Mission Plaza, Court Street, the historic portions of the block of Monterey with J.P. Andrews and Bella Mundo, buildings/blocks on either side of Higuera between Morro and Garden. In general, the higher concentration of sad faces were placed on bubblegum alley, County building, site of former Shell station on Santa Rosa, block bounded by Higuera, Dana, Nipomo, and Beach, and Mission Plaza by the bathrooms. At this exercise, people expressed that they were unsure how their input would be interpreted from this map since it could be spatial or issue-related. For non-geographic comments, participants were encouraged to fill out "I like" and "I'd change" stickers and post them on the accompanying flipcharts. A full transcription of the "I like"/ "I'd change" exercise is included in Appendix B.

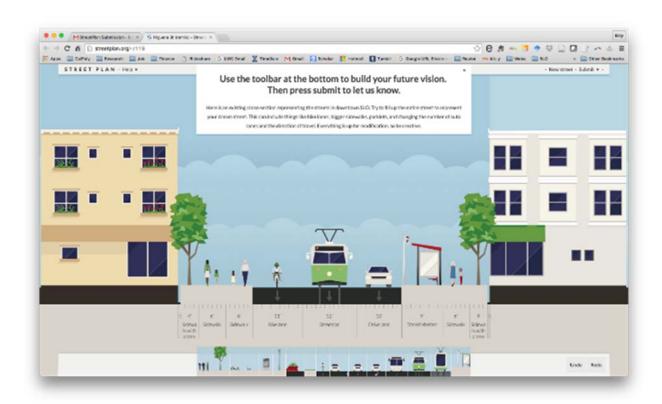




Street Plan

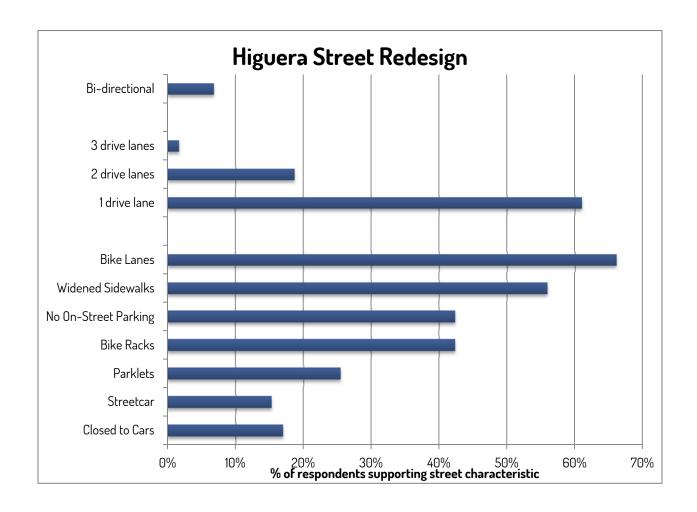
The Street Plan station was hosted by Cal Poly staff and students. It consisted of a series of laptops set up with internet access where participants could engage in an interactive online activity of redesigning Higuera Street through a tool called "Street Plan."

Facilitators helped guide participants through the exercise showing them how to navigate the tool which allowed them to make choices about which elements of the street were most important to them, including but not limited to; sidewalks, transit, bike lanes, parking, landscaping, and auto lanes. Users could drag and drop elements into the existing street dimensions shown as a basic two dimensional cross section to play around with which elements they felt were most appropriate or desired. The activity was made available at Workshop 1 and online through March 8th, 2016.



Participants could share their final street design with others via social media and/or submit it through the online tool. The online tool received 59 entries. Cal Poly staff and students developed a process to tally how frequently each street feature was used by participants. Results from the Higuera Street Redesign activity are summarized in the table on the following page. Adding bike lanes was the most frequently selected feature in participant's street design, followed by one driving lane and widened sidewalks.



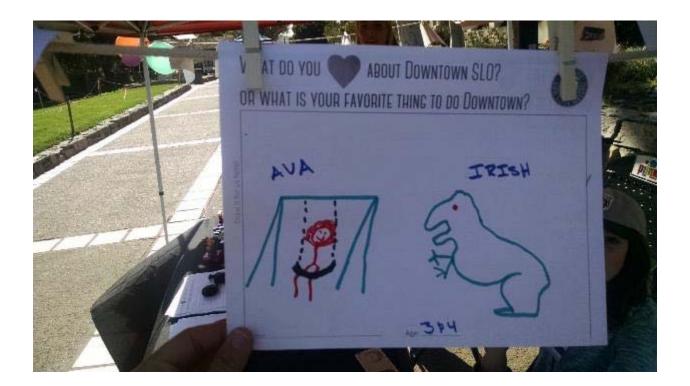




Kid's Tent

Workshop 1 also included youth engagement. At this station, games geared toward children provided a draw into the plaza and allowed parents to participate in activities while their children were close by and engaged. Youth volunteers from San Luis Obispo High School facilitated a coloring or writing activity geared toward extracting input from children on what they love most about Mission Plaza and what their favorite thing is about downtown SLO.

Children illustrated their favorite activities, foods, shops and places. They also drew some fantastic dinosaurs. Some of their favorite destinations included the creek, Bowl'd, frozen yogurt, swings, and the bear and child fountain at Mission Plaza.





Mission Plaza Master Plan Booths

The Mission Plaza Master Plan Project team facilitated a station that that included two booths. The first booth provided information about the Mission Plaza Master Plan process, opportunities for community input, and existing conditions compiled to date. This table was more informative and gave people the opportunity to be introduced to the Mission Plaza Assessment and Master Plan process.

The second booth was focused on gathering feedback. It included a large map of the Mission Plaza that people used to comment on with markers, pens and sticky notes. Flip charts with titles such as "Issues and Concerns" and "Ideas and Improvements" were also provided so that participants could add comments. Smaller maps were handed out so that people could take a walking tour around the plaza and log feedback as they walk. The walking tour activity was aimed at exploring opportunities for improvements such as event modifications, restroom improvements, lighting, and pedestrian connections.





Public Workshop 2

The second public workshop was designed to help refine some of the key issues and ideas that generated varying and sometimes conflicting input at the stakeholder interviews and Workshop 1 in order to move us forward in concept plan development.

The event took place at the San Luis Obispo County Library and attracted about 110 people. The workshop included a presentation with a visual preference survey, small group exercises, and self-guided activities. Some groups came to consensus more easily than others, and some were divided. In general, the following themes emerged from the majority votes in the breakout group exercises. An abbreviated summary appears below. For more detailed information, please see Appendix C for a spatial diagram of responses and Appendix D for transcriptions.



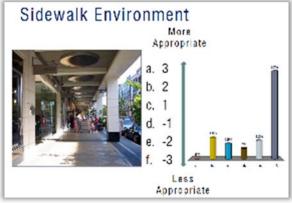


Live Polling "Warm-Up" Preference Survey

After a brief presentation outlining the project team, goals and workshop 1 recap, participants were invited to engage in a fun warm up activity using electronic live polling software (Turning Point Technology).

The visual preference survey prompted participants to use their electronic remote control to cast their vote on a series of imagery of streets, sidewalks, public spaces, and buildings based on whether they thought they were appropriate or inappropriate for downtown San Luis Obispo. Participants were asked to give their first reaction to the image shown on the screen. The exercise was intended to be an icebreaker to help people focus on the upcoming workshop activities, and survey results will not be used to determine plan recommendations. Polling devices were provided to everyone who wanted to participate but not all attendees opted to engage in all of the questions. The final three slides were questions based on Workshop 1 results. The intent of these questions was to help direct the discussion for the self-quided actives at the end of the event which focused on drawing and model building exercises. Full results of the visual preference survey can be found in Appendix E.





Small Group Exercises

The majority of the workshop was devoted to participants engaging in small group exercises. Participants were divided into seven groups and asked to work as a table to respond to a series of questions regarding public realm, street

improvements, building heights, and views in downtown. The summary of input received follows.

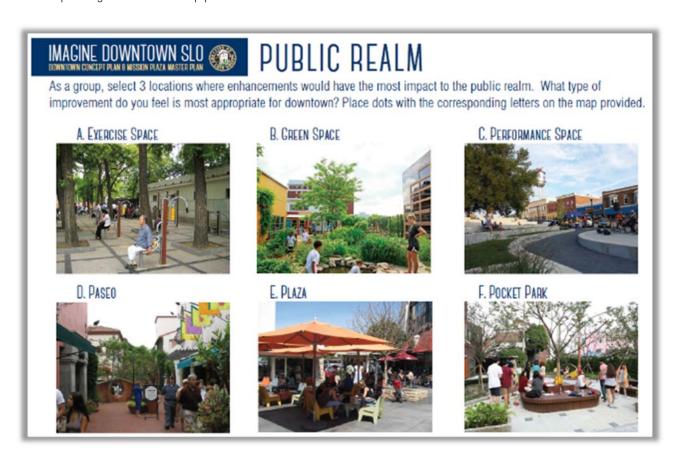
Please see Appendix C for spatial a diagram of responses. Appendix C uses colors to indicate participants' preferred street type (as shown in the legend) and numbers to signify the number of breakout group that voted for the same street type on each various segment. For transcription of additional comments received, please refer to Appendix D.





Exercise 1: Public Realm

As a group, participants were asked to select three locations where enhancements would have the most impact to the public realm as illustrated in the worksheet below. Then they were asked "What type of improvements do you feel are most appropriate for downtown?" and members of the small groups worked together to place dots with the corresponding letters on the map provided.



Results of the activity are displayed in the table below with priority locations in the left column and types of improvements across the rest of the table. Green spaces and pocket parks received the most responses and the Creamery area, the County Courthouse Lawn, Mission Plaza and San Luis Creek were chosen by the most groups as opportunity areas for public realm improvements.

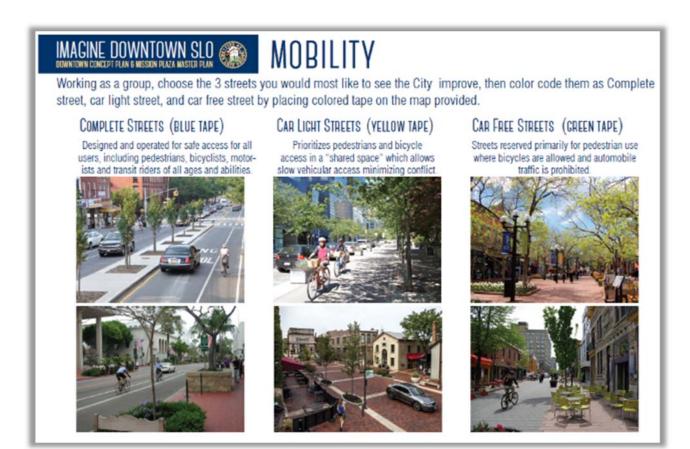


Location (by # of votes)	A. Exercise Space	B. Green Space	C. Performance Space	D. Paseo	E. Plaza	F. Pocket Park
The Creamery/Creek				П		П
County Courthouse Lawn		111				
Mission Plaza (improvement to/expansion of)		П			I	
Along creek	I					П
Mitchell Park	I		I			
Corner parking lot at Higuera and Nipomo		I				I
On rooftops (Nipomo and City 919 Palm Structures)		I			I	
SW corner of Chorro and Marsh (bank parking lot)		I				I
Santa Rosa north of County Building		I				
Garden Street (mid-block)					I	
Above Ludwick Community Center					I	
Next to Bank of America (no type specified)						
Emerson Park (no type specified)						
By Fremont (no type specified)						



Exercise 2: Mobility

Working as a group, participants were asked to choose the three streets they would most like to see improved downtown, then color code them as a complete street (blue), car-light street (yellow), or car-free street (green) by placing colored tape on the map provided. As described in the worksheet that accompanied the exercise, complete streets are designed for all modes and types of users; car-light streets are places designed for pedestrians and bicyclists to be the most dominant mode; and car free streets are preserved primarily for bike and pedestrian use.



Most of the small group discussions focused on Higuera, Marsh, Monterey, and Santa Rosa Streets. Highlights include complete street improvements for the length of Marsh and Santa Rosa Streets within the study area boundary. Three groups demonstrated an interest in a car-free Monterey Street between Nipomo and Broad Streets, Monterey Street between Osos Street and Santa Rosa Street, Broad Street between Monterey Street and Palm Street, and Higuera Street, between Nipomo Street and Santa Rosa Street. This demonstrates that almost half of the table groups recommended closing the Broad Street "dog leg" between Palm and Monterey Streets adjacent to Mission Plaza. Several groups were split between wanting to extend the closure of Monterey between Nipomo and Santa Rosa Streets or making Monterey "car light" on either side of Mission Plaza.

Through individual comments in other engagement activities, participants frequently showed an interest in making mobility improvements downtown. These group activities helped, to some degree, refine priorities. Please refer to Appendix C for a spatial representation of the mapping activity results.



Exercise 3: Height and Massing

Working as a group, participants were asked to design a representative block north of Santa Rosa, in central downtown, and south of Nipomo. For that block, choose a Lego configuration to represent future building height and massing for each block. Options provided included A. reduce or remove stories to create open space, B. keep existing height and massing, C. add height but step back upper stories so buildings are tallest in the center of the block, D. add height and



build to the sidewalk, E. Design your own configuration.

At the end of the activity, little commonality was demonstrated amongst tables and hence, no real conclusion could be drawn or summarized. The inherent value of the exercise was the discussion amongst tablemates about where they felt strongly opposed to or open to additional height or view preservation. It was apparent that there were two schools of

thought amongst workshop participants.

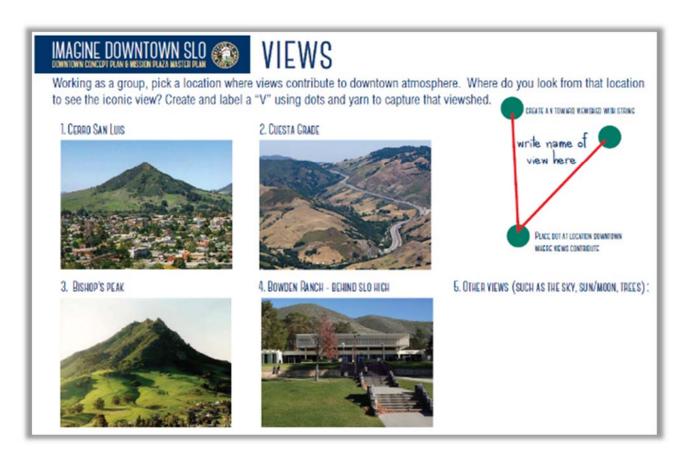
- 1. The small town character, lifestyle, and scale of today is highly valued and there is a fear that it will be lost to new taller development in the future.
- 2. If downtown doesn't adapt and make room for new residents, more diversity in use/activities, and increased vibrancy, downtown's economic vitality may be uncertain in the future.





Exercise 4: Views

Working as a group, participants were asked to pick a location where views contribute to the downtown atmosphere. They were asked "where do you look from that location to see the iconic view? Create and label a "V" using dots and yarn to capture that viewshed."



The following is a summary of the number of votes for each view participants prioritized as "iconic:"

A. Cerro San Luis	B. Cuesta Grade	C. Bishop's Peak	D. Bowden Ranch (behind SLO High)	Other
23 votes	10 votes	2 votes	5 Votes	Up Marsh Up Monterey 360° from rooftops



Small Group Exercise Summaries by Group

Green Group (Chris)

Between 12 and 14 people participated in the exercises at the green table. Participants prioritized Mission Plaza (active and cultural spaces), the creek near The Creamery shopping center parking lot at Higuera Street and Nipomo Street (paseos), and uptown in the vicinity of Monterey Street between Johnson Avenue and Pepper Street (green space/plaza).

Participants spent the majority of the time discussing circulation changes and agreed that Marsh Street should be a complete street through the study area. Participants would make Higuera Street "complete" from the western study area boundary to Nipomo, where they would close it to vehicles through Santa Rosa Street. Participants agreed that Monterey Street should be car-light or closed to vehicles around the Mission, car-light from the Mission to Santa Rosa Street, and "complete" through the eastern study area boundary.

The group generally agreed that heights should stay as they are through much of the study area, with an interest in maintaining the current look and feel of central downtown. South of Nipomo, the group was in favor of potentially higher densities than are currently occurring, as long as green spaces were integrated throughout to break up development and prevent the area from becoming overly urban. The group's individual responses regarding views and viewsheds focused on the view of Bishop's Peak from Nipomo Street and views of the creek throughout the study area.

Red Group (Amy)

Approximately 13 people collaborated at the red table. With regard to the discussion about public space, the group came up with 6 or 7 options and chose the top three locations and type of improvement they'd like to see. The group prioritized 1.green space along San Luis Creek throughout the DT study area with enhanced and additional green space along creek including walkable green space and dining, 2. Rooftop green spaces on top of buildings and 3. A Paseo/plaza at the Mission Mall between Higuera and San Luis Creek. The idea is to open up Mission Mall and enhance the plaza space along the creek (adjacent to the Birkenstock store).

On the topic of mobility, the group decided to prioritize Monterey, Higuera and Santa Rosa Streets as follows:

- Monterey Street car free between Nipomo and Santa Rosa. Group also add the block of Broad between Monterey and Palm to this closure as they felt it was all connected.
- Higuera Street car light between Nipomo and Osos. Group also added the block of Garden Street between
 Higuera and Marsh to this closure as it was the group's understanding that this is already part of the plan for
 this street once the Garden Street Terraces project is complete.
- Santa Rosa Street complete street through the entire study area.

The height and massing discussion was the most challenging exercise for the group and some people didn't participate much because they didn't feel comfortable expressing their ideas through LEGO bricks. Generally the group wasn't very comfortable having one block represent the whole district of downtown. Most people wanted a variety of heights — especially in the north and south ends. Most people felt comfortable with the maximum heights as they currently are (3



stories) in the core (most historic) district. As for prioritizing views, 4 voted for views towards Cerro San Luis, 2 voted for 360 degree views from parking structures, and others selected views down Higuera, up to east Cuesta Ridge, looking east down Monterey and toward the creek.

Black Group (Rebecca)

During the public realm discussion, the participants attempted to spread out the new parks/plazas over the three different areas of downtown as follows:

- Santa Rosa as this area grows, there should be a new park/plaza area also
- Lawn area in front of the court house could be better utilized as public space with a redesign
- Mitchell Park it has great potential, but needs to be activated in positive ways as there are too many homeless and it feels unsafe
- Mission Plaza (also see streetscape discussion below) could expand and connect across the creek via creek walk to the surface parking lot at Higuera and Nipomo which would turn into a mini park/plaza area.

The mobility discussion prioritized Monterey, Marsh and Higuera. There was a desire to slow down traffic with complete street improvements on Higuera and Marsh as approaching/leaving HWY101 and connect that area more to downtown. There was discussion about converting to two-way streets, but it was not unanimous. Folks were hesitant to deemphasize cars too much on Higuera and Marsh b/c of concern that traffic would then move to/more greatly impact neighboring streets, however, in the downtown core on Higuera between Nipomo and Santa Rosa, there was a desire to elevate peds even more. On north Monterey, the group decided they would like to slow down vehicles as infill development continues and pedestrian connectivity is encouraged. Some members discussed that a street closure around Mission Plaza was a good way to expand the Plaza. Generally, the group supported looking at converting Monterey adjacent to Mission Plaza to pedestrian-only or pedestrian-mostly to expand the plaza.

With regard to height and massing, the group decided to keep the scale as-is in the downtown core and the SW area. With greenspace mixed in the core area (but the intention was not to demo buildings to put in green space). The white LEGO bricks showed generally 2-3 story buildings in the core, and 1-2 story buildings in the lower section of downtown. In the upper Monterey area, it was voiced that it would be okay to go taller. People showed three story buildings with stepped-back height increases. The discussion on views varied and some people pointed out views up the streets, white others pointed out views that would be blocked by pending development.





White Group (Xzandrea)

Eleven people participated in the exercises at the white table. Participants prioritized public realm discussion around green space (improvements to Emerson Park, the front lawn of the Old Courthouse, development of pocket parks along the creek, and encouraging green space on the top level of existing and new parking structures), the Ludwick Community Center (maintaining the existing indoor exercise area and creating other public indoor exercise opportunities at the southern end of the downtown core), and creating a public plaza north of Santa Rosa Road to support the new commercial and residential development that is occurring north of the downtown core.

Participants focused their mobility discussion on Monterey Street (between Broad and Nipomo) and on Morro Street (between Pacific and Monterey). They were split between the "car-light" and "car-free" along that section of Monterey and felt that a hybrid of the two concepts would be the most appropriate. On Morro Street they wanted to extend the bicycle boulevard through a "car-light" street design. Participants also discussed the need to reduce speeds along Marsh and Higuera but did not come to consensus on a preferred street treatment.

The group spent the most time discussing height and massing. Solar orientation was very important to the group and they generally felt that the existing setting (adjacent to historic buildings, views, character of the block, and natural lighting) should be the primary factors evaluated when determining building heights and massing. Approximately 2/3^{rds} of the group felt that the height limitations should be removed and that each development should be evaluated on a case by case situation since the downtown is so diverse and each street has a very unique character to take into consideration when determining the appropriateness of building designs. The remaining 1/3rd of the group felt that 4 stories that step back from the property lines would be the most appropriate maximum building height and massing. There was consensus amongst the group that Marsh Street should be an open corridor that allows light to travel down the street (tall buildings should not tower the street and create a tunnel effect). The group generally agreed that as the elevations increased the allowable building heights should be reduced to ensure protection of view sheds.

During the view discussion there was consensus amongst the participants that all public buildings/structures should have roof top areas that could be used for public green space and areas to get unobstructed views (Cerro San Luis, Cuesta Grande, Bishops Peak, etc.). Each member also identified on the map which view they felt was the most important to them.

Blue Group (Tammy)

Between 12 and 14 people participated in the exercises at the blue table. During the public realm discussion, the group prioritized green space (On Marsh Street between Garden and Chorro Streets), paseos (at Garden Street between Marsh and Higuera Street) and plazas (at the Fremont Theatre) above the other types of public space. Additionally, there was a minority report for green space at Marsh Street south of Osos corridor-wide.

On the mobility topic, participants prioritized Santa Rosa Street and Marsh Street as complete streets, Higuera Street and Monterey Street south of Mission Plaza as car-light streets and the areas adjacent to the Mission (on Broad Street) and near the Courthouse as car-free streets. There was a minority report stating that Higuera Street should be a complete street and Center Street should be car-free.



For height and massing, the group felt that there should be no change to the scale of development in the core or center of downtown to better maintain viewsheds. As a divided group, some participants expressed that height could be added (with setbacks) at the outer segments or city entrances, but others felt that more height was inappropriate and would jeopardize views and small town scale

Yellow Group (Michael)

Nine people participated in the exercises at the yellow table, although we lost and gained folks during the course of the exercise. Participants prioritized public realm discussion around new areas for green space, including the surface parking lot at the corner of Marsh and Chorro, and expanded uses at Mitchell Park.

Participants focused their mobility discussion on making major changes to the street network, including closing down Monterey Street to vehicular traffic (other than transit) between Santa Rosa and Chorro. Cross-traffic at Osos, Morro, and Chorro would still be permitted. They also decided to expand the sidewalks on Higuera and Marsh Street by reducing travel lanes and going to two-lane traffic on both streets.

The group spent some time discussing height and massing, however, there was no consensus developed on locations for tall buildings. In general, the group was supportive of buildings that stepped back at the upper stories. For example, concerns were expressed about the design of the Anderson Hotel and generally the feeling was that new buildings at that height should be stepped back at the upper floors. The most expansive discussion occurred regarding the viewsheds that should be preserved. Several locations were identified with cones of view to Cerro San Luis, Bishop Peak, and the Santa Lucia foothills.



Overflow Group (Siri)

The overflow table included two residents and property owners who live near Mission Plaza, four local seniors, and a non-resident downtown property owner. In response to the question about improvements to the public realm, the group focused on the creek, where they would like to see a variety of activities to draw attention to the green space and to discourage homeless activity. They also suggested recreation-related improvements to Emerson Park. The group selected rooftop green spaces as the third opportunity to improve the public realm.

In response to the second question about street improvements, the group discussed the need for free-flowing traffic through the downtown for those traveling in all directions. The group would like to see complete street improvements the full length of Marsh Street and Santa Rosa Street. For local circulation, the group was hesitant to close any streets to cars because they acknowledged the special needs of seniors and those with disabilities who need door-to-door services from private vehicles or transit providers. Consistent with this concern, the group would like to see accessible



street parking spaces maintained in the future. The most vocal participants expressed opposition to closing the dog-leg. With this in mind, the group selected Higuera Street for car-light improvements.

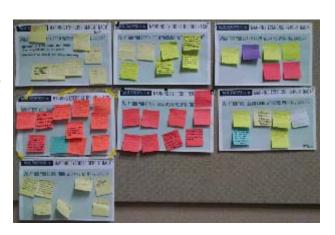
The third question about height was the most challenging for the group. Generally speaking, they do not want to see increases in height beyond the current condition in downtown. They are open to the concept of a few taller landmark buildings, particularly if they are located adjacent to the Highway 101. The final discussion regarding views was a very important one to the group's participants, and they identified views in most directions. Specifically, the group discussed and identified views from Mission Plaza, Monterey Street (visible while driving or walking down the road), and rooftop locations that offer panoramic views of the surrounding hillsides.

What did you learn Exercise?

The final exercise the groups were asked to complete, was to share with the table what they learned from working as a group. Please refer to Appendix D "What I learned" section for a complete transcription of this activity.

Self-Guided Activities

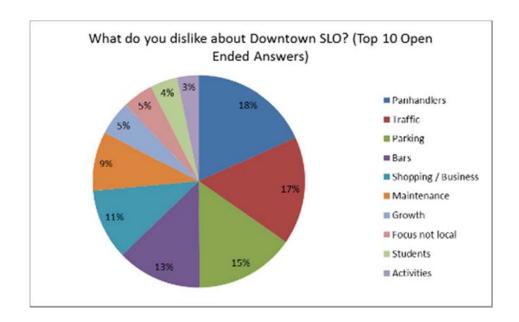
Appendices D and E include the complete results of the visual preference survey and photos of the maps produced by each of the small groups.

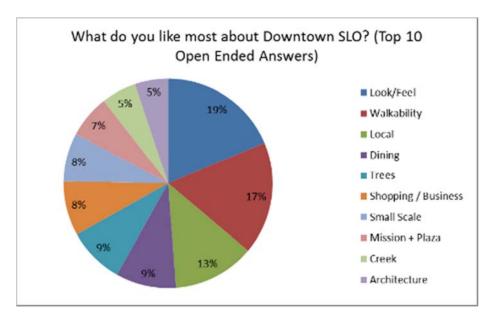




Online Survey

The City posted a series of questions on their online engagement tool "Open City Hall" which was available from February 18-March 9, 2016. Approximately 400 participants took the survey. Questions were geared toward understanding how participants perceive downtown, why they visit, what they like and dislike about downtown and what they would like to see Mission Plaza used for most. Seventy nine percent of survey respondents responded that they "Love" or "Like it a Lot" "San Luis Obispo's Downtown. People most like the look and feel of downtown and its walkability, and most dislike panhandlers and traffic/parking. See Appendix G for full responses to the Online Survey questions.







Neighborhood Meetings

Residents who live or own homes in the downtown or surrounding neighborhoods within the General Plan Downtown Planning Area, were invited to participate in two neighborhood meetings. Almost 3,500 postcards were mailed. The meetings took place on April 18, 2016, at 5:30 at the Senior Center (with approximately 30 attendees) and on April 19, 2016, at noon at the Ludwick Community Center, with about 15 attendees. The meetings included a group discussion about neighbor-specific issues and concerns, ideas and opportunities, and what they value about living downtown.

A more detailed transcription of input recorded is included in Appendix F. The following paragraphs summarize some of the highlights from the neighborhood meetings.

Issues and Concerns

Parking and Traffic

Neighbors are very concerned about large volumes of traffic and the spillover of parking into residential neighborhoods. They see lack of adequate parking in the downtown and infrequency of transit times as part of the problem. In addition, residents are critical of streets that are designed predominantly for vehicles, which creates an environment of potential conflict between pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. Additional comments included vehicles cutting through neighborhoods to avoid congestion, lack of drop-off and pick-up zones, underutilized surface parking lots, and lack of education about parking options, which could all be part of a systematic solution to parking and traffic concerns.

Pedestrians

The pedestrian environment is important to residents. By far the biggest concern related to the pedestrian experience downtown are narrow sidewalks and obstructions and trip hazards making pedestrian travel difficult. Additional issues included short crossing times at cross walks, the need for more visual cues for drivers at crosswalks, conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles, and curb cuts that are too narrow and/or high.

Facilities and Operations

Residents expressed some frustration about how downtown is maintained or operated that negatively impacts downtown residents. For example, a few people said that there are not enough trash receptacles on the edges of downtown, and as a result there is a proliferation of litter in their neighborhood. Also, since the downtown recycling center closed, there are more bottles and cans littering the area. A need for more public restrooms was also noted.

Setting

Residents expressed high levels of concern about crime, vandalism, and overconcentration of bars. Homelessness was raised as an issue that makes the environment uncomfortable for residents and visitors to downtown. Additional concerns about setting were air quality and pollution, safety, and walk-through traffic from downtown.

Housing

Multiple residents expressed a need for a neighborhood market. Two identified the lack of affordable housing as an issue and one person described an imbalance between residents and visitors.



Historic Character

Historic character in the downtown core is important to preserve for residents. They believe that such character is an important attractor for pedestrian traffic and pedestrian traffic is important to businesses.

Economics

Residents listed a variety of comments that reflect market conditions. They are concerned about high rents and real estate costs, the rental housing stock, empty storefronts, and businesses, particularly local businesses, closing.

Growth

Residents in and around downtown are concerned about growth. They mentioned the rate of growth, lack of diverse downtown uses, and demographic imbalances. Several participants were concerned about blocked views resulting from downtown growth and they would like to see residents have more influence in decision-making about building heights.

Height, Massing, and Intensity of Development

Meeting participants broadly supported limitations on new building height. A few discussed negative impacts of development on our environment and noise impacts in neighborhoods.

Policy Enforcement

Lastly, residents described concerns about policy enforcement and a handful of people felt that the City lacks enforcement of existing policies and development standards. Moreover, they believe that public comments are not reflected in decision-making.

What do you Love about Living Downtown?

Neighborhood meeting participants expressed what they value about living downtown.

Connections to nature

Views received overwhelming support. Additional comments included sun on streets, creeks, trees, parks, and open space protection.

Small Town Feel

Neighbors value the historic character of their neighborhoods and the sense of community they feel, as well as an appreciation for their neighbors.

Proximity

An overwhelming number of residents appreciate their proximity to downtown and that they are within walking distance of services; they value not needing a car.



Art/Culture

Various expressions of art and culture are important to residents. The appreciate events, fairs, and music in the park. A few appreciate public art and the art museum. And some would like more opportunities for art.

Bicycle infrastructure

A few people expressed their appreciation for bicycle boulevards.

Ideas & Opportunities

Local residents also offered ideas and opportunities to address issues and concerns as well as to enhance existing assets. The following suggestions got more than one "vote;" the full list of suggestions is included in Appendix F:

Improve Crosswalks

- Reflective lines on crosswalks
- More mid-block crossings

Improve pedestrian and bicycle experience downtown

- Promote walking/bike riding through infrastructure improvements
- Improve downtown pedestrian access, connections to surrounding areas, and to parking structures
- Conduct road diets and widen sidewalks (focus on Higuera and Marsh)
- Close Monterey from Chorro to Osos
- Increase the number of trash and restroom facilities
- Build additional bike lanes
- Secure bike parking in parking garages or within businesses, more bike racks, racks for family/cargo bikes
- More safe routes to school
- Build more bulb-outs, medians, improved crosswalks

Traffic & Parking

- Build parking structures and require employers to provide parking facilities specifically for employees
- Encourage parking structures; eliminate surface lot, and on street parking

Trees/Nature

- "Tree conservation corps" to preserve rather than replace trees
- Increase public park space

Art

Cultural district; more public art



Housing/Density

- Encourage downtown housing
- Solar access with buildings
- Don't build more without secure water
- Decrease density as you move away from downtown

Neighborhood Amenities

- More local shopping opportunities
- Family friendly activities and more variety

Other

- Increase activities and experiences downtown instead of storefronts only
- Activate Mission Plaza to reduce homeless population



Takeaways from Engagement Activities

Some of the overall themes from the extensive engagement activities are highlighted below. Transcriptions and additional details from the individual activities are included in the appendices.

What Participants Value

From the input gathered throughout the Downtown Concept Plan outreach process to date, we have learned that the vast majority of community members who have participated value the following things about our downtown:

- The small town feel and historic character
- Access and views to open space
- Its walkable scale
- Vibrancy and sense of community

Common Concerns and Areas for Improvements

During the public engagement activities, public stakeholders provided hundreds of comments that help us better understand concerns as well as opportunities for improvement. Some comments were expressed rarely. Other input pooled around the following prevailing themes:

- Public/open space: Activate a variety of public spaces downtown; design for positive social interaction, access to views, and connections to the natural environment.
- Mobility: Improve access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. Elevate these modes of transportation
 in the downtown, while providing adequate parking in garages on the perimeter.
- Art, culture, history, and diversity: Enhance arts and cultural opportunities, preserve downtown's historic charm, and encourage a diversity of local businesses, uses, and activities.
- Height and scale: Avoid a domineering built environment that blocks views, interrupts the existing pedestrian scale, and overwhelms the public realm.
- Public safety and nuisance issues: Address vagrancy, panhandling, public drunkenness, dirty sidewalks, and other negative activity that appears to be increasing in downtown.

Issues, Ideas, and Next Steps

The following section identifies some priority issues as expressed by the community through the public outreach process, followed by ideas for possible resolution of the issue and finally, next steps for the project team that will need to be addressed moving forward in the update of the Downtown Concept Plan.

It's important to note that the results from Workshop 2 were cumulative in nature as priority discussion topics/issues from Stakeholder Focus Groups fed into Workshop 1 exercises, input from Workshop 1 fed into Workshop 2 exercises



and the online survey questions, and input from Workshop 2, the online survey and neighborhood meetings has led us to the issues, ideas, and key questions in this section.

Increasing mobility options, enhancing the public realm, and height and scale rose to the top after the stakeholder interviews and Workshop 1 as three issue areas that will need to be addressed by the Concept Plan update. Workshop 2 was designed to garner more feedback on, and possible solutions for, these issue areas.

Issue 1: Improving Mobility

Improving mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists to better connect to and move around downtown was one of the most widely discussed issues. Participants discussed issues related to mobility downtown for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers. Parking was also a frequent topic. Public stakeholders also suggested ideas for how to design a more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environment.

Idea #1: Improving mobility and safety downtown for pedestrians and bicyclists was one of the most widely discussed issues. Changes to the downtown streetscape (including sidewalks) could improve the downtown experience for pedestrians and bicyclists, but downtown needs to also accommodate drivers and transit users, and not redirect traffic problems to other adjacent streets. In addition to improving safety and connectivity into and around downtown, input focused on increasing pedestrian and bike safety at intersections and mid-block.

Idea #2: The original Downtown Concept Plan proposed parking garages spread around the perimeter of the downtown core to accommodate vehicles but keep them away from the heart of downtown, and reuse surface parking lots for other opportunities. There was much support for this concept in the public input process. There were also ideas suggested about trolleys/transit connecting parking garages, removing more on-street parking, and developing multi-use parking structures with public amenities on the top level.

Idea #3: Participants in Workshop 2 proposed a combination of complete streets, car light streets, and car free streets recognizing that the function and form of the street network varies and could be improved to accommodate all users on some streets and a sub-set of users on other streets. Many of the ideas focused on improvements for the following streets:

- Higuera car-light street (Nipomo to Santa Rosa)
- Marsh complete street (entire length)
- Monterey car-light or car-free street (Nipomo to Santa Rosa)
- Santa Rosa complete street (entire length)

Idea #4: Create more opportunity for social interaction on our streets



Issue 2: Enhancing the Public Realm

Various aspects of the public realm were also very common concerns. Stakeholders also place significant value on the ways that the public realm adds life, character, and places to socialize in downtown. Ideas for the enhancing the public realm included:

Idea #1: Creation of New and Better Social Spaces: Through the outreach process participants identified a variety of locations and ways to improve the public realm. The most common locations and improvements include:

- County Courthouse Lawn improve the use of the area in front of the Courthouse on Monterey so it acts more like a public plaza
- Mission Plaza —expand and improve the plaza
- San Luis Obispo Creek Improve public access to the creek, include pocket parks, plazas and exercise space
- Use land near the Creamery to connect it to the creek
- Use/convert public garage rooftops for public spaces
- Improve the existing parks in and near downtown, including Emerson and Mitchell Park

Idea #2: The public realm also includes issues such as access to nature, opportunities for youth, creative expression, events, and more. These ideas and locations for public realm improvements, in addition to others, should be considered, compared, and prioritized (as applicable) based on their ability to address multiple desires of public stakeholders. Some of what we heard includes:

- Improve access to and across San Luis Creek
- Connect public and cultural areas Support cohesive design between public and cultural areas
- Accommodate/encourage public art installations
- Consider mini parks/pocket parks/parklets
- Provide public amenities such as restrooms, street furnishings (bike racks, garbage cans, etc.) and wireless connections
- Provide parks in areas for viewshed protection

Idea #3: Stakeholders also raised many concerns about public behavior such as drunkenness, panhandling, and littering. Design public realm improvements to discourage negative behavioral issues; activate park areas for a variety of people and families. Consider Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in public realm design.

Issue 3: Infill Development

Not surprisingly, the public engagement process to date has not resolved differences of opinion as they relate to building height and scale and access to views in downtown. However, the process has advanced the conversation from hardline opinions to consideration of solutions, recognizing that stakeholders value and would like to preserve access to open space (by accommodating development in the city) and views of open space from public areas downtown.

A variety of ideas emerged regarding infill development downtown:



Idea #1: Create a diverse, dynamic robust downtown that has more people living, working and visiting while preserving its history, charm, walkability, and economic vitality.

Idea #2: Maintain the pedestrian scale of the street, while allowing for appropriate height and density of infill development.

Idea #3: Target height carefully and in limited areas rather than across large swaths of land. Height is more tolerable/desirable toward the center of blocks, in pockets, in low areas (topography) so as to lessen impacts on views, and adjacent to the freeway. Use rooftops to regain views downtown.

Idea #4: Redevelop surface parking lots (while providing parking in multi-story lots).

Idea #5: If we want people living downtown, we need to provide amenities for residents, not just visitors (neighborhood commercial, local businesses, etc.).

Next Steps

The Creative Vision Team (CVT), staff, and consultant project team will be working to refine and translate these broad ideas into physical plan recommendations to be included in the Draft Downtown Concept Plan. Draft Plan workshops are scheduled for the Fall.