



San Luis Obispo Downtown Concept Plan

September 2017



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Parks and Recreation Commission

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Citizens of San Luis Obispo

The many residents of the City who participated in the update of the Downtown Concept Plan. *Thank you!*

Project Website: www.slocity.org/downtown

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Introduction



Introduction

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 instructed 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.



From the 1993 Conceptual Physical Plan for the City's Center

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 capital improvement projects and for public and private development in the downtown.

The recent update of the General Plan Land Use Element in 2014 included an implementation objective to update both the Downtown Concept Plan and the Mission Plaza Concept 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 is the community’s vision for how downtown San Luis Obispo should be developed over the next 25 years. This vision is expressed through a series of design principles, project goals, an illustrative physical plan, mobility diagrams, and an action list of public projects. Together, they are the Downtown Concept Plan, the community’s vision for downtown, which will guide both public and private actions and investment over the next 25 years.



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 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 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 lists.

General Plan Consistency

The Downtown Concept Plan is consistent with the City’s General Plan, which provides the overarching vision, goals, policies, and programs for the city. The Downtown Concept Plan is guided by the policies and programs primarily found in the Land Use and Circulation Elements, both of which were updated in December 2014.

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 in the downtown are evaluated for their consistency with the General Plan, and compliance with the City Municipal Code and implementing regulations and guidelines, such as the Zoning Regulations and Community Design Guidelines.

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.

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.

Downtown’s visitor appeal should be based on natural, historical, and cultural features, retail services, entertainment and numerous and varied visitor accommodations.

Key policies from the Circulation Element are described in Chapter 4, Mobility and Streetscape.

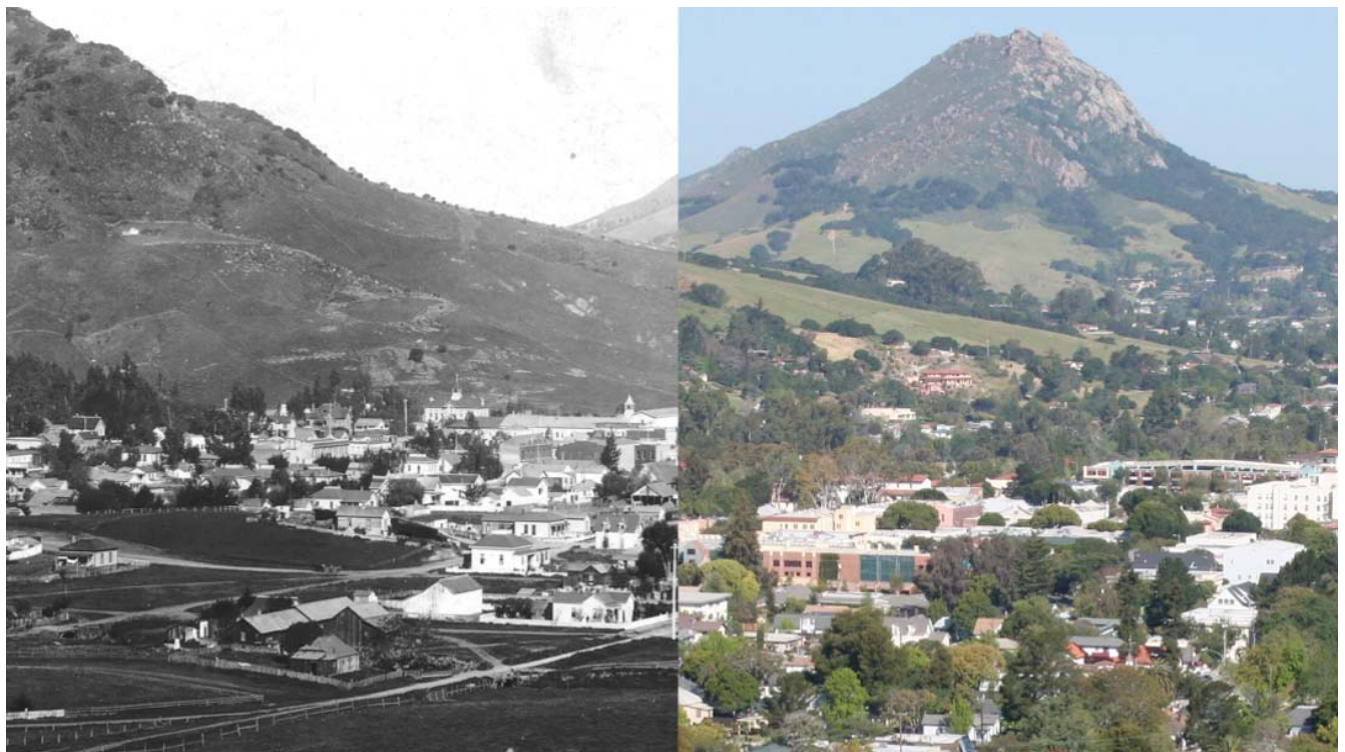
Community Design Guidelines

The Downtown Concept Plan is also consistent with the goals, objectives and guidelines for downtown design articulated in the City’s Community Design Guidelines. Included are guidelines for street orientation; height and scale; façade design; materials and architectural details; and public spaces, plazas and courtyards. In some cases, the Downtown Concept Plan recommends adding additional guidance in the Community Design Guidelines when it is next updated, such as for paseo (mid-block walkways) design and streetscape design. However, in most cases the Community Design Guidelines provide a greater level of detail—especially related to private development—and help describe the community’s high-level vision illustrated in the Downtown Concept Plan.

Goals for Downtown Design

The primary goal of the downtown design guidelines is to preserve and enhance its attractiveness to residents and visitors as a place where: people prefer to walk rather than drive; and where the pleasant sidewalks, shading trees, and variety of shops, restaurants, and other activities encourage people to spend time, slow their pace, and engage one another. The design of buildings and their setting, circulation, and public spaces in the downtown have, and will continue to play a crucial role in maintaining this character and vitality.

Section 4.1-Goals for Downtown Design, San Luis Obispo Community Design Guidelines

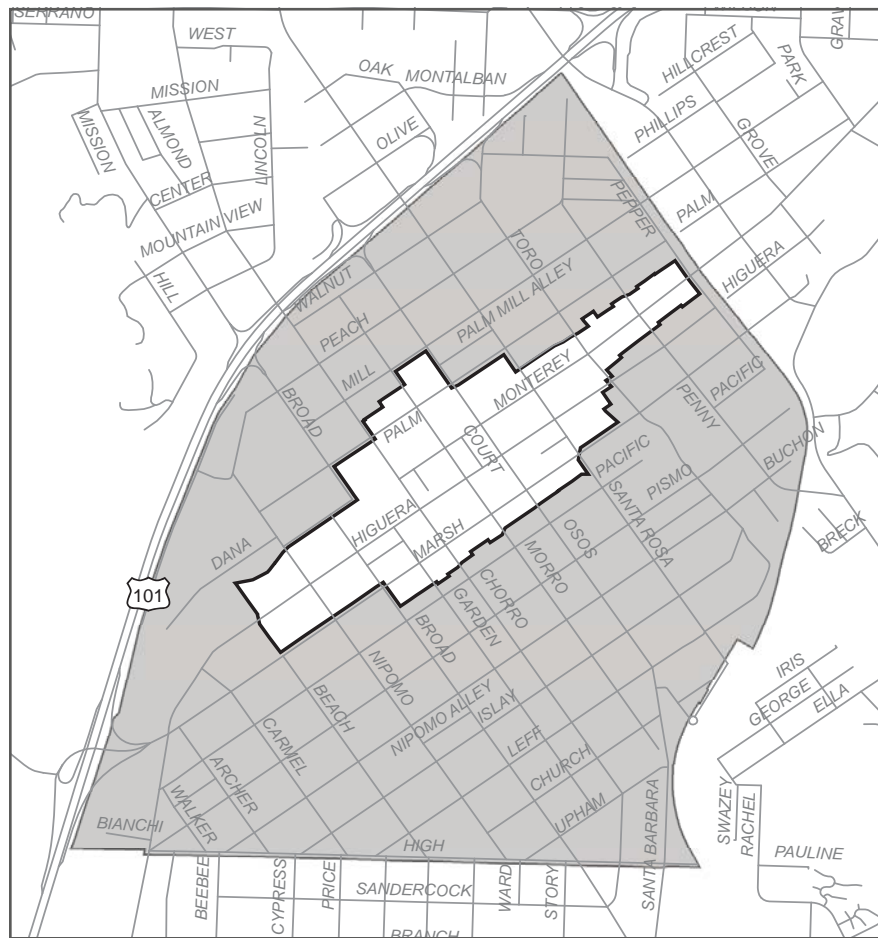


Downtown photo collage courtesy of Pierre Rademaker. Photo on left, circa 1890, photo on right, 2008

Plan Area

As noted in the General Plan, the downtown includes the commercial core and civic area, and less intensely developed commercial, office, and residential neighborhoods. 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 and Core

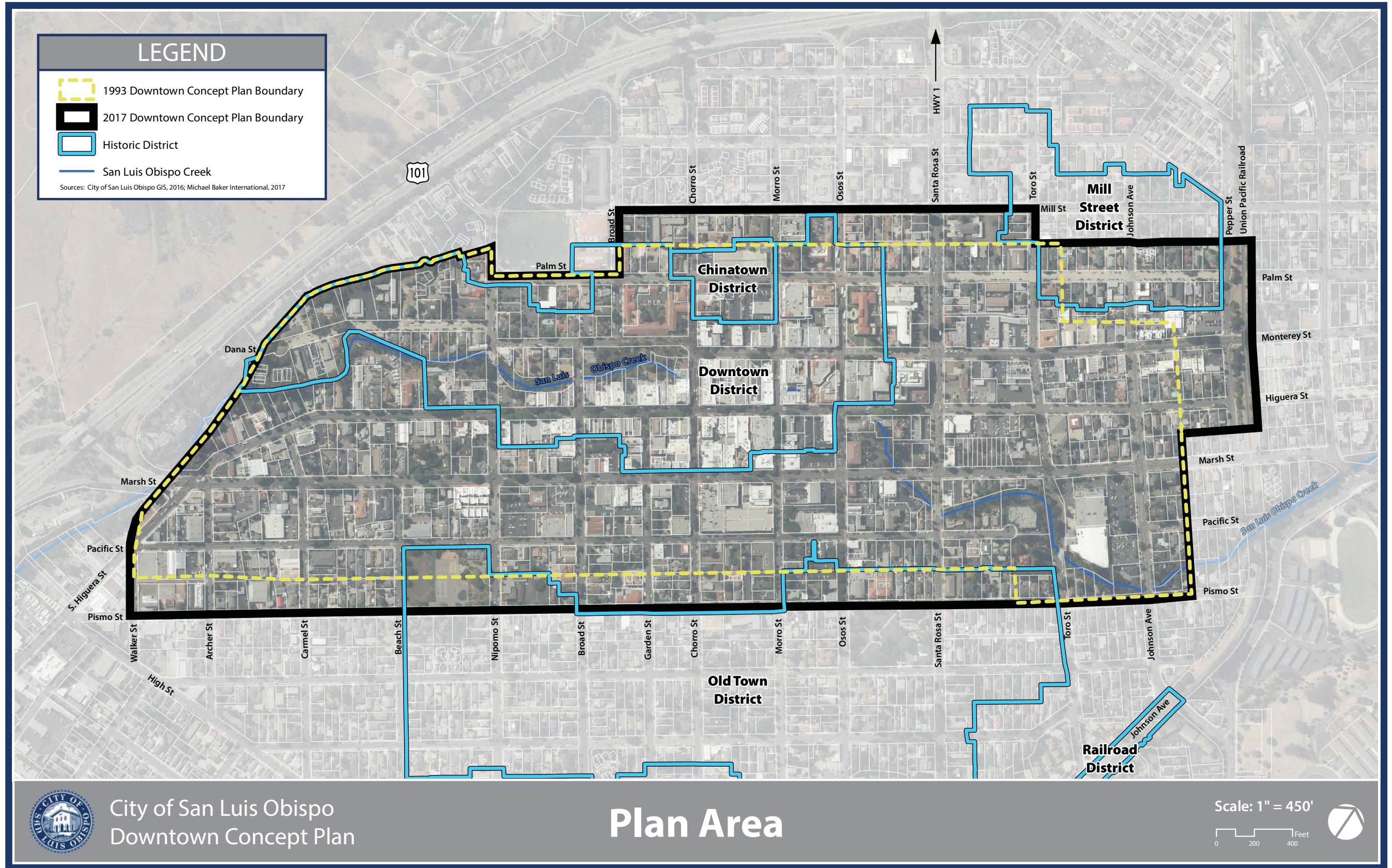


Source: San Luis Obispo General Plan, May 2015, page 1-39

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.

Figure 1.2. Downtown Concept Plan Area



City of San Luis Obispo
Downtown Concept Plan

Plan Area

Scale: 1" = 450'

Planning Process

The Downtown Concept Plan has been updated through a community-based planning process guided by staff, consultants, and the Council-appointed Creative Vision Team.

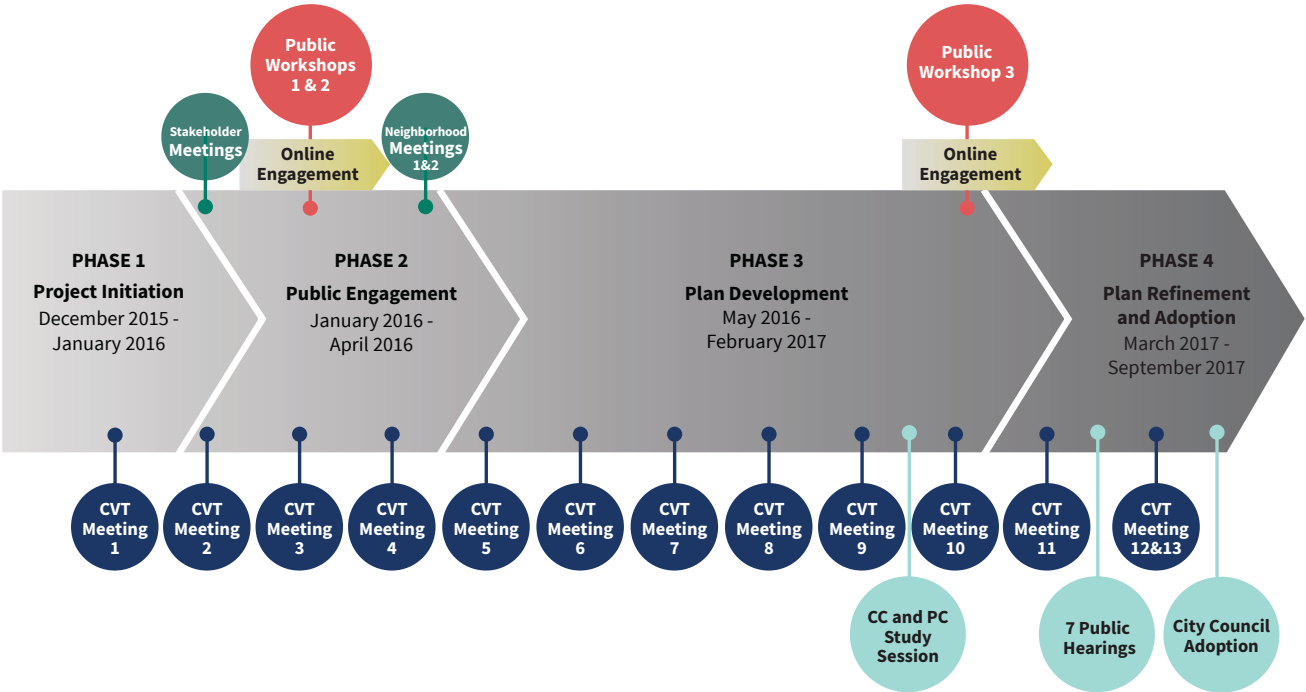
Figure 1.3. Outreach Process Graphic summarizes the four-phase process used to update the Downtown Concept Plan.

The project included broad-based public engagement in accordance with the City’s adopted Public Engagement and Noticing Manual, including stakeholder focus groups, online engagement, three public workshops, neighborhood meetings and Advisory Body review.

Public input has directly shaped the plan. A complete summary of community outreach activities and findings is included in Appendix 1.



Figure 1.3. Outreach Process Graphic



The Changing Downtown



Downtown San Luis Obispo has evolved over the years. Changes to the downtown are the result of public investments, market and urban design trends, economic shifts, city regulations, natural disasters, and time. Update of the Downtown Concept Plan involved bringing the community together to discuss and maximize agreement on the form and character that best constitute the optimal version of downtown San Luis Obispo for the next 25 years, while acknowledging that change is ongoing.

Below are some of the trends that were taken into consideration when developing the Downtown Concept Plan:

- 1. Vehicle innovations and driving patterns:** An important dialogue is taking place today across the extended global automotive industry about the future of transportation and mobility. Signals point to a transformation in personal mobility that is already under way. Self-driving cars have already completed more than 1 million miles of autonomous driving on public streets, and large automobile companies have invested millions of dollars in ridesharing providers such as Lyft and Uber. These trends, coupled with a national push to improve public health by walking and cycling, will impact the future of personal mobility, parking, land use and transportation funding in the community. The change in these patterns will require increased drop-off/pick-up locations, as well as changes in shuttle and public transit use, and in the quantity, design, and location of parking structures.



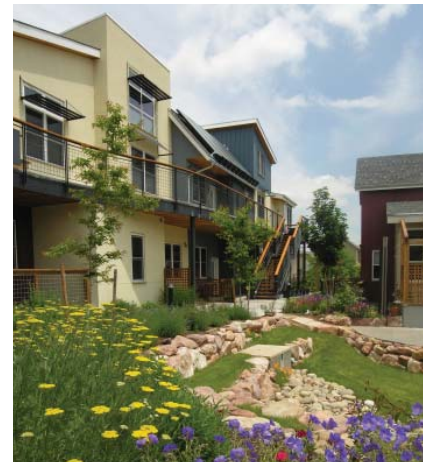
- 2. Retail:** A common dialogue in communities around the world is the decline in the retail industry. A dramatic upward trend in online shopping identifies a clear change in customer spending habits that has been attributed to customers' access to better prices, more convenient shopping due to flexible shipping and return policies, and a decline in retail customer service. These reasons alone make a case that brick and mortar retail needs to evolve into a unique experience that cannot be found online. Although the total amount of retail in the downtown may decline in the future, diversity in retail types, sizes, and atmosphere, as well as an increased focus on unique experiences and neighborhood-serving uses, can help the downtown remain a destination and gathering place with multiple consumer benefits.



3. Aging population: The baby boom generation includes more than 77 million people born between 1946 and 1964. Research shows that a very small percentage of people move after they reach retirement age. With rising life expectancies, we can deduce that San Luis Obispo will have an increasing number of people on fixed incomes whose ability to navigate by personal vehicle will diminish or disappear over time. The downtown of the future should incorporate elements to accommodate the aging population such as an increase in the number of drop-off/pick-up zones, shuttle and transit stops, streetscape improvements for universal accessibility, and affordable senior housing.



4. Housing choices: The twenty-first century household is changing in diversity of family composition, lifestyle, and income. The demand for a home in a more walkable urban environment close to jobs and services is increasing, along with a desire for an affordable small-footprint residence. Housing options that fit these criteria are in short supply throughout the nation, as well as in San Luis Obispo. Downtown's vision takes into consideration the changing needs of residents as people work closer to or out of their homes, downsize, rent longer, and rely less on vehicles.



5. Sustainability: Sustainability is not a trend, but rather a responsibility. It is often defined as the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Sustainable communities are able to perpetuate without negatively impacting the environment, human health, or quality of life. Every decision made should move the community closer to sustainability. New development and the urban form in general should aim to improve air quality, reduce energy and water consumption, and protect the natural environment to the greatest extent possible. Specific applications include projects such as the installation of electric vehicle charging stations, photovoltaic systems, stormwater recapture/green streets systems, adaptive reuse of buildings, climate action plan implementation, and resilience planning.



Vision, Principles, and Goals



Concept Plan Vision

Where We Started



The update of the Downtown Concept Plan builds off the vision of the 1993 *Conceptual Physical Plan for the City's Center*. That 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;
3. The seat of County government;
4. The primary cultural and entertainment center of the County;
5. 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.



While the original vision still resonates today, much has changed since 1993, including increased development pressure; additional interest in living downtown; more focus on providing services and amenities for residents; changes in retail patterns; and attention on how mobility choices and streetscape improvements impact our experience downtown. The previous vision, along with broad public input and the trends impacting the downtown, were used to develop the Downtown Concept Plan's updated vision statement:

Vision Statement

As the heart of our community, downtown San Luis Obispo serves as the center for culture, commerce and government. A well-balanced mix of uses in a walkable environment will make the downtown socially and economically vibrant. Preserving its historic authenticity while accommodating change will create a livable future.

Planning Principles and Goals

Based on our plan vision, as well as public input, previous planning efforts, and the values that remain relevant from the 1993 Plan, 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 by encouraging a wide variety of housing, commercial, workplace and cultural experiences.
- 1.3 Provide harmonious transitions between buildings, uses and surrounding neighborhoods.
- 1.4 Focus attention on the downtown’s gateways through improved street design, architecture, public art, and public spaces that announce your arrival.

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 ample room for movement, gathering, and improvements, including street trees, seating, bike parking, lighting, public art, and other street furniture.
- 2.2 Encourage mid-block paseos 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 downtown, including pocket parks, plazas, wide sidewalks with seating, an expanded Creek Walk, parklets, and creative uses of rooftops.



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

- Resident



I love the idea of downtown being our core area...we need to continue the focus on infill projects that create density within the downtown core, while pushing parking lots to the rim of downtown.
- Resident



2.4 Design streets and other public improvements with appropriate lighting, visibility, and other public safety features to help reduce the potential for crime.

3. Variety in Form and Function: Encourage a variety of compatible buildings, uses, activities, and housing types for an inclusive and vital downtown.

- 3.1 Provide a physical framework that retains and strengthens downtown's economic health and vitality.
- 3.2 Encourage flexible mixed-use development throughout the downtown.
- 3.3 Create opportunities for smaller, independent businesses and services for residents.
- 3.4 Ensure that downtown functions both as a commercial district and a residential neighborhood, with a variety of housing options to meet different needs.
- 3.5 Encourage the City and County to meet their future office needs in the vicinity of their existing government centers.
- 3.6 Reduce auto travel by encouraging the provision of services, jobs, and housing in proximity to each other.

4. Enhanced Mobility: Enhance the downtown's mobility network making it safer and easier to get to and travel throughout for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.

- 4.1 Encourage a street design that places pedestrians first, followed by cyclists; encourage walking and bicycling by making downtown streets safe and welcoming.
- 4.2 Emphasize alternative routes for through vehicular traffic and design streets for slow traffic downtown.
- 4.3 Provide motorists with ample wayfinding to direct them to parking structures and other important destinations.
- 4.4 Provide a safe and easy to use bicycle network that enhances linkages to surrounding neighborhoods.

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 strategically on the periphery of downtown within easy walking distance to major activity areas.
- 5.2 Provide ample pedestrian wayfinding signage.
- 5.3 Ensure that sidewalks, crosswalks, and public improvements are universally accessible and easy to navigate.
- 5.4 Design streets with adequate commercial and passenger loading zones, bus and trolley stops, and parking for persons with disabilities.
- 5.5 As downtown expands, provide adequate transit and shuttle options for mobility impaired persons traveling to and throughout downtown.

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 historic structures.
- 6.2 Preserve historic residential neighborhoods on the periphery of the downtown.
- 6.3 Expand cultural, historical, and artistic opportunities, including enhancing the downtown Cultural District.
- 6.4 Celebrate downtown with a wide variety of permanent and temporary public art installations.

7. Compatible Design: Embrace context-sensitive, original, and human-scale design that supports placemaking.

- 7.1 Support compatible building heights that fit within the context and scale of current development patterns. Generally, new buildings should not exceed 50 feet in height and should be set back above the second or third story.
- 7.2 Allow tall buildings carefully and in limited areas, such as toward the center of blocks, in low areas, and generally outside of the Downtown Historic District.

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 Encourage higher-density projects, smaller dwelling units, accessory dwelling units, and other innovative residential solutions.
- 7.4 Encourage the redevelopment of surface parking lots with more sustainable uses.
- 7.5 Reward innovative and flexible design that is built to last and accommodate change.

8. Ecological Connections: Protect, enhance, and reveal the natural areas and ecological functions that are an integral component of the downtown area, including hillside views.

- 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.
- 8.4 Encourage the use of sustainable materials, green infrastructure, and renewable energy resources in downtown development.



Illustrative Downtown Concept Plan



Illustrative Downtown Concept Plan

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

The Illustrative Downtown Concept Plan (Illustrative Plan) shown in **Figure 3.1** (page 3.4) graphically represents the future vision for downtown San Luis Obispo. The plan depicts envisioned future land uses, public spaces, and private development. Together, the illustrative plan and supplement can help the reader “experience” the downtown from different perspectives. The illustrative plan has been developed as a digital model which has the potential to evolve into a tool that could be used to plug in models of future development projects, to visualize how they will fit into the context of the downtown San Luis Obispo of the future.

Following the Illustrative Plan is **Table 3.1**, which describes envisioned uses in the 60 blocks included in the plan area. The **Proposed Uses** section further describes each type of use proposed, and includes visual examples. The **Planning Subareas** section breaks down the Downtown Concept Plan into three subareas and describes in more detail some of the plan’s key proposals.



Historic photograph of the Tower Building on the corner of Chorro and Higuera Streets

Planning Assumptions

To develop the Illustrative Downtown Concept Plan, assumptions were made, including the following:

The distribution of uses in the Plan Illustrative are based on the City's land use designations in the General Plan. However, there are some key differences, as Commercial, Office, and Residential uses were flattened (e.g., all housing densities are shown as yellow); lot coverage standards were not applied; and mixed-use overlays were applied throughout the plan area. In addition to Residential being shown as a separate use, it is also assumed for upper stories of Commercial Mixed Use and Office Mixed Use for a true mixed-use downtown.

Generally, there is more density and more lot coverage shown in the Downtown Concept Plan than exists today. Density is not necessarily synonymous with height, however. Where notable, heights are described as envisioned in Table 3.1, Block Descriptions. Height determination remains under the purview of the General Plan and Zoning Regulations, and all height discussed in the Downtown Concept Plan is consistent with the plan goals in Chapter 2.

Most surface parking lots are shown as redeveloped, and additional structured parking is envisioned around the periphery of the downtown. Expanded or new parking in-lieu fee districts are assumed to meet the needs of the envisioned mixed-use development pattern. If driving (and parking) trends do not continue as today for the life of the plan, then the need for parking private vehicles will lessen, and these additional parking structures may instead be developed as other uses.

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 Plan as they were approved; development projects submitted to the City but not yet entitled may be shown differently than submitted.

All projects shown in the plan will need further study and CEQA review before they may be implemented. The numbers on the plan are keyed to the block descriptions in Table 3.1, which follows the Plan Illustrative.



Figure 3.1. Illustrative Downtown Concept Plan

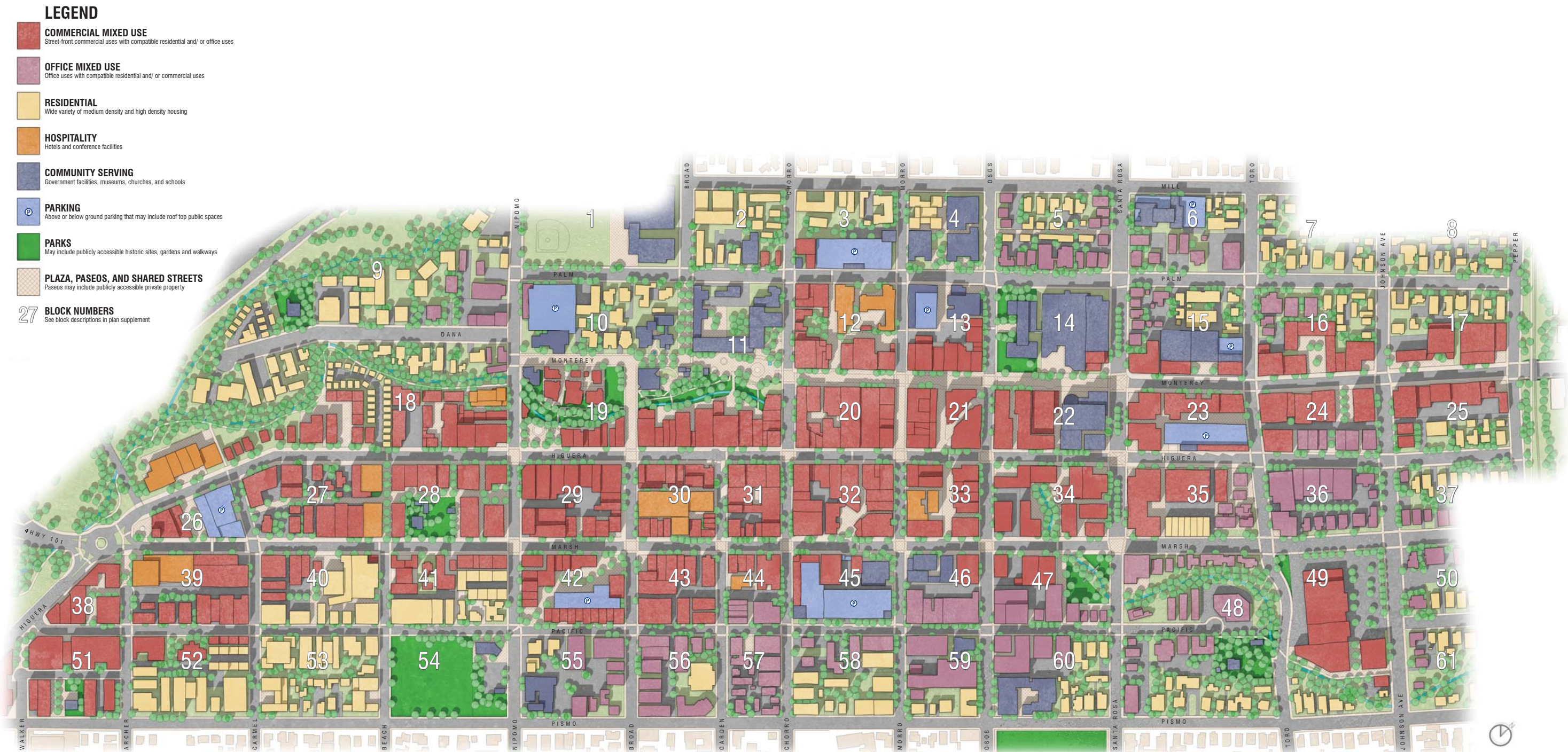


Table 3.1. Block Descriptions

Block #	Block Description
	Blocks with no numbers have no changes envisioned and are shown only for context. Entitled projects, as of January 2017, are included. Projects still under development review may be different than submitted.
2	New residential opportunities are envisioned in the R-4 zone along the corner of Broad and Mill Streets.
3	New residential opportunities are envisioned in the R-4 zone on Mill Street On Palm Street, the historic Ah Louis Store is envisioned for community-serving use with commercial mixed use development on the adjacent surface parking lot. Chinatown interpretive exhibits are displayed along the front of the parking structure to better highlight the area’s history.
4	New residential opportunities are envisioned on Mill Street with the reuse of the AT&T building. City-owned properties (City Hall, current SLO Little Theatre) are renovated and the surface parking lot is infilled to incorporate additional city or leased office space and improved public space along Palm Street.
5	New office mixed use is envisioned along Santa Rosa Street. New residential opportunities are envisioned along the alley.
6	City-owned Ludwick Center is redeveloped into a full-featured Community Recreation Center, with full-sized gym, multiuse rooms, staff offices, and below-ground parking. Office mixed use is envisioned next to the Ludwick Center along Santa Rosa Street.
9	Office mixed use is envisioned on a portion of the surface parking lot at Nipomo and Dana Streets. New small-scale residential is envisioned at the end of Dana Street in the R-3 zone. The IOOF property is also envisioned as converting to residential use. The City-owned Rosa Butron Adobe property is opened to the public and managed as a park. A new connection from Dana Street crosses San Luis Creek and connects residents to the park and the expanded Creek Walk.
10	A new parking structure on the corner of Palm and Nipomo Streets is envisioned to include office mixed use along Nipomo Street, the Theatre relocated along Monterey Street, and public use on a portion of the rooftop. An expansion of 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 it is not all needed for the History Center, then it may be used for other community-serving use in the Cultural District.
11	Mission Plaza will be improved consistent with the Mission Plaza Concept Plan. An expanded Museum of Art is shown connecting to Mission Plaza, with a Creek Walk extension underneath the Broad Street bridge connecting to Block 19.
12	A new hotel with underground parking is under construction in the Chinatown Historic District at Palm and Morro Streets. There will be a paseo connection from the parking structure on Palm Street through Block 12 to Monterey Street, as well as a pedestrian connection to Morro Street. A future mid-block connection to Chorro Street is also envisioned.
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 seating and 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 multi-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 #	Block Description
16	The corner of Monterey and Johnson Streets will redevelop into commercial mixed use (ground floor commercial and residential above), similar in scale to The Mix across the street. The existing off-street parking will be converted to plaza space with additional commercial mixed use surrounding it. 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 multi-story commercial mixed use. It is envisioned with setbacks suitable for outdoor dining and opportunities for interactive public art. This gateway location is an opportunity for an iconic building announcing one's arrival downtown.
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 the expanded Creek Walk, which will wind through the Creamery from Nipomo Street, and extend to the Marsh/Higuera roundabout, with a mid-block connection to Dana Street. Included in this block are four different residential, commercial, and hospitality projects currently in the works.
19	The City-owned parking lot at Higuera and Nipomo Streets is envisioned as a public plaza with seating, interactive elements, and positive activity at this prominent downtown corner adjacent to San Luis Creek. Neighboring restaurants or cafes may share a portion of the space and management responsibilities. Pedestrians can cross the creek here and 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; it is envisioned with historic interpretation, children's play opportunities and a Creek Walk connection under Broad Street to Mission Plaza. The entitled Monterey Place project is also located on this block; it is a mixed-use development with residential, hospitality, and retail uses, with a paseo connection 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 Mission Plaza.
22	This block is envisioned to include new commercial mixed-use opportunities next to the Fremont Theater between Monterey and Higuera Streets with upper level office and residential. Ground-floor improvements along Osos and Higuera Streets will make this block more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly.
23	This prominent block is envisioned with two-story minimum new commercial mixed use infill opening onto corner plazas along Santa Rosa Street, with public art and a mid-block paseo. Housing is included on upper levels along Monterey Street. A parking structure and relocated transit center are envisioned along Higuera Street, with transit facilities 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.
24	This block is envisioned to include two-story minimum commercial mixed-use development along Monterey Street with upper-level residential. Buildings will be sited adjacent to the widened sidewalk with upper stories that may be stepped back for scale and increased outdoor space. There is a small plaza area on Monterey Street for outdoor seating opportunities. Office use on Higuera Street is envisioned with upper-story residential.

Block #	Block Description
	Blocks with no numbers have no changes envisioned and are shown only for context. Entitled projects, as of January 2017, are included. Projects still under development review may be different than submitted.
25	This block will continue the redevelopment pattern along Monterey Street with two-story minimum 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.
26	This block serves as the main downtown gateway. A new roundabout designed for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians brings people to an iconic commercial mixed-use 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 nearby commercial mixed use and hospitality uses.
27	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.
28	This block includes three four-story commercial mixed-use buildings with lower-level retail and upper level residential fronting Higuera, Nipomo, and Marsh Streets. A paseo travels through the center of the block between buildings and behind the Jack House Gardens; it is envisioned to connect to the gardens and a mid-block paseo aligned with Beach Street and connecting to Block 27. The Jack House Gardens are envisioned to be used more as a public park as the surrounding area redevelops.
29	The corner of Marsh and Nipomo Streets is envisioned with 3-4 story commercial mixed use with residential on the upper levels. New two-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.
30	An improved “social alley” will provide pedestrian access through this block and also connect to Bubblegum Alley, as part of the four-story project currently under development. It includes hotel, commercial and residential uses, as well as improvements to Garden Street.
32	The only change shown for this block is the revitalized corner of Chorro and Marsh Streets, repurposing the existing 24,500 sq. ft., two-story commercial building.
33	This block shows an entitled four-story hotel addition with roof deck in the interior of the block, located in the Downtown Historic District. The current surface parking lots between Higuera and Marsh Streets are envisioned to be infilled with a multistory commercial mixed-use project. It will extend 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 is envisioned to redevelop with two-story minimum commercial mixed use.
35	This block along Santa Rosa and Higuera Streets is envisioned to redevelop with two-story minimum commercial mixed-use projects. This block 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 underway next to the historic hospital property on Marsh Street.
36	This block is envisioned to redevelop with 2-story minimum office mixed use along Higuera Street, with housing on upper levels. New office/mixed use will be on the corner of Toro and Marsh Streets.

Block #	Block Description
38	Announcing one's entry into downtown, Higuera Street frontage is envisioned to redevelop with multi-story commercial mixed use. This block is part of the "flex zone," which envisions larger footprint commercial mixed use sites being repurposed to accommodate a variety of different business types, including incubator businesses, shared marketplaces, shared work spaces, or live/work opportunities.
39	A small plaza is envisioned along Marsh Street at the future roundabout, where Archer Street ends. This helps give the area more of a pedestrian focus. The plaza connects to multi-story hospitality and commercial mixed use with upper-level residential or office on Marsh Street. This could be a location for a local grocery, with a pedestrian connection to the structured parking across the street. Along Pacific Street, the "flex zone" continues, with a variety of commercial mixed use opportunities.
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 a portion of the R-4 zone across from Emerson Park, and commercial mixed use will redevelop on Marsh Street, with upper-level office and housing opportunities. Historic properties will remain.
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. An above or below-ground parking structure is included to accommodate new development in the area, with micro retail or live work uses 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.
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 2-story minimum 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.

Block #	Block Description
	Blocks with no numbers have no changes envisioned and are shown only for context. Entitled projects, as of January 2017, are included. Projects still under development review may be different than submitted.
49	The shopping center is envisioned as redeveloping with two multi-story commercial mixed use buildings on its southern end, with a courtyard, widened riparian area, and an improved Creek Walk connection. Residential is envisioned on upper levels. This portion of the Creek Walk extends from Johnson Avenue across Toro Street to the new pedestrian path around the Dallidet Adobe (Block 48). The green space on the corner of Marsh and Toro Streets is envisioned as a small pocket park.
51	This block is envisioned as part of the Mid-Higuera Plan transition area, or “flex zone.” Larger footprint commercial mixed use buildings may be repurposed to accommodate a variety of different business types, including incubator businesses, shared marketplaces, shared work spaces, or live/work opportunities. 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. Pacific Street is envisioned as part of the “flex zone” with a variety of commercial mixed uses and adaptive reuse opportunities.
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 recreation for neighborhood residents. A small surface parking lot remains for disabled and senior parking, and a public restroom is added.
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.
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	A mid-block three-story office mixed use project is currently under construction between Osos and Morro Streets on this block; it also includes residential and commercial space. Also envisioned is a 2-3-story office mixed use building on the surface parking lot at the corner of Pacific and Morro Streets.
60	Underdeveloped single-story lots 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

*I like mixed uses!
Different strokes
for different
folks!*

- Resident

This section provides additional details regarding the proposed uses in the downtown, as shown on the Illustrative Plan. 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 mixed-use downtown for a 24-hour “eyes on the street” environment.



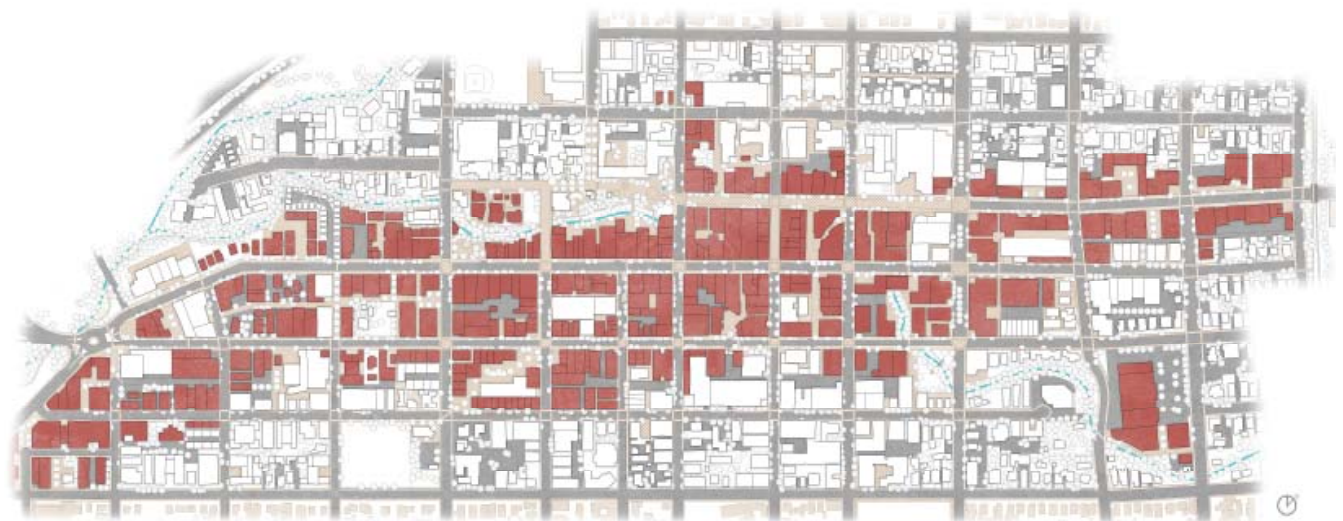
Historic photograph of the San Luis Obispo High School marching band on Higuera at Garden Street

Commercial Mixed Use

As the predominant use in the downtown core, Commercial Mixed Use is designed to integrate retail and service commercial uses with residential and office uses. In multiple-story buildings, retailers are the primary tenants on the ground floor, and upper floors are envisioned to contain residential, office, or both, depending on the design, location and 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.



Various scaled buildings with ground floor retail uses and a combination of residential and office uses above



COMMERCIAL MIXED USE - Street-front commercial uses with compatible 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 residential and/or commercial 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.



Example of mid-rise office mixed use building



Examples of live/work units with ground floor office use and stepped back upper floors with housing



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 June, 2017, there are three hotel projects under construction or entitled in the Central Downtown subarea. Three new hospitality uses are proposed in the plan, all in the Lower Downtown subarea. Rooms for short stays that are integrated into predominantly commercial uses are not shown as Hospitality.

Community Serving uses include schools, places of worship, museums, and government facilities (including offices, recreation centers, courts, and transit centers). A cluster of community-serving uses can be seen around the Mission, City Hall, and the County Government Center.



Examples of hospitality and community serving uses



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.



Examples of garden apartments, condominiums, senior co-housing and a bungalow court



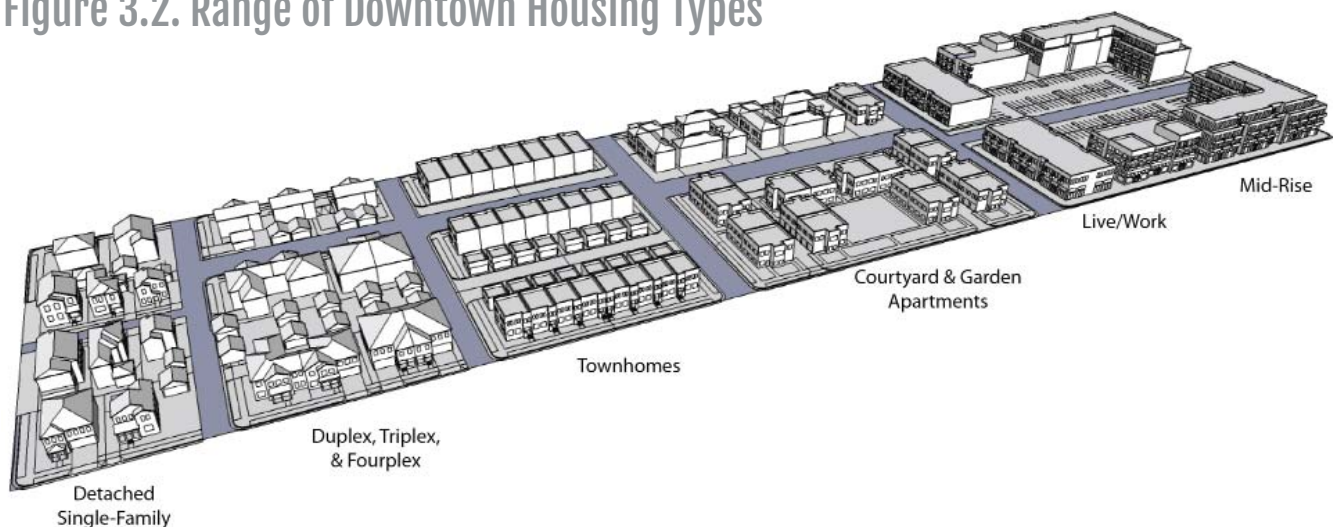
RESIDENTIAL - Wide variety of medium density and high density housing

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 represent a range of housing types that should be considered in the future.



Examples of townhomes, a fourplex, a tiny home village, and live/work units

Figure 3.2. Range of Downtown Housing Types



Parking



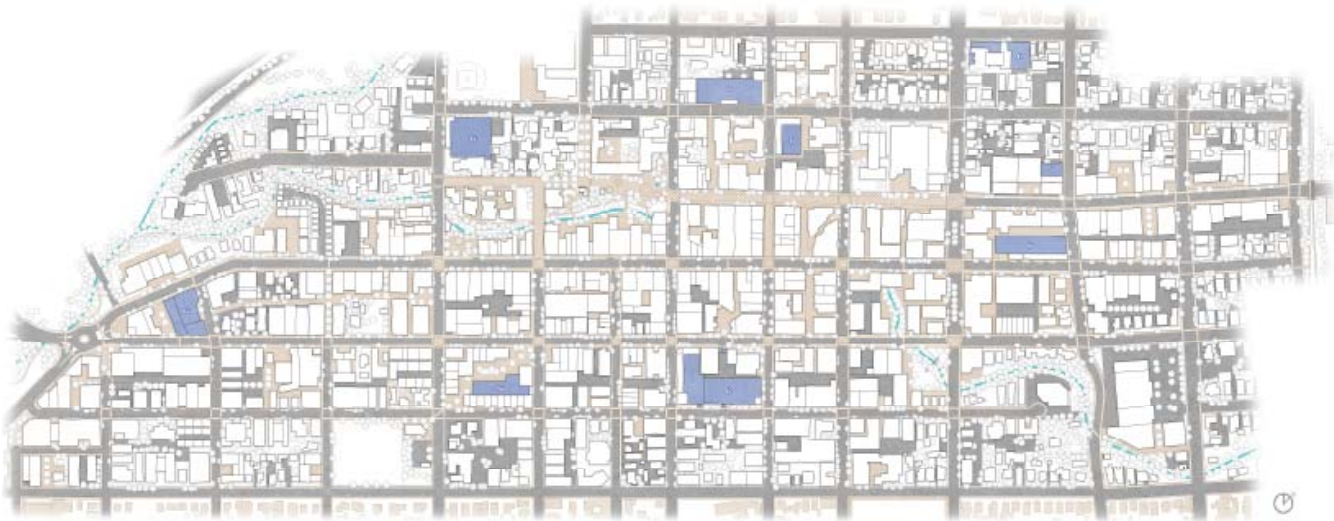
Surface parking on Monterey Street



Parking structures will have limited street frontage, located behind other uses that are more compatible with a vibrant downtown street. Roofs on some parking structures or adjacent buildings are envisioned with other public benefits, such as parks, plazas, outdoor dining, photovoltaic shade structures, and access to views.

As of June 2017, there are three existing parking structures in the downtown, while another is in the planning phase. The Illustrative Plan shows three additional structures, plus 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 parking in-lieu fee districts to accommodate new development patterns and associated parking needs. However, as transportation technology advances and demand for parking evolves, these structures may not be necessary in the downtown. They could be substituted for other uses, or if built, could be done so flexibly, with the ability to be repurposed if not always needed for parking.



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

Parks, Plazas, and Paseos

The Illustrative Plan shows public parks in dark green and plazas and paseos in tan interspersed throughout the downtown. Paseos (mid-block walkways) are also shown on Figure 4.1, Street Types Diagram.

With additional people living in the downtown comes the need for additional public spaces. A variety of different park proposals are shown in the Plan. Emerson Park (Block 54) and Mission Plaza (Block 11) will be upgraded to continue to meet the community's needs into the future. Other parks and plazas will preserve historic resources, such as the Old Gas Works (Block 41), or the Rosa Butron Adobe (Block 9). A new park is proposed in the Cultural District, at the corner of Monterey and Broad Streets (Block 19). A full list of recommendations can be found in Chapter 5, Implementation.

Paseos 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. Plazas and paseos are encouraged to incorporate public art in fun and imaginative new ways. They are shown at downtown gateways and key corners such as Higuera and Nipomo Streets (Block 19), and Broad and Marsh Streets (Block 42).



Examples of a plaza with park-like features; a water play feature suitable for downtown; a paseo as part of the public realm; and an expansion of the Creek Walk.



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

PLAZA AND PASEOS - Primarily hard-surface; publicly accessible but may be privately owned

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 and development patterns. The three plan subareas are upper downtown, central downtown, and lower downtown, as described below. For additional information, see Table 3.1, Block Descriptions.



[Lower Downtown] [Central Downtown] [Upper Downtown]

Upper Downtown

Upper downtown is generally Santa Rosa to Pepper Streets, and Mill to Pismo Streets. As reinvestment occurs, upper downtown will continue to transition from one- and two-story structures, many with parking in front, to structures of at least two stories built to the widened sidewalk. Upper downtown will feature a variety of design styles in contrast to the historic downtown core, which is more traditional in architectural style.



Figure 3.3.
Upper Downtown
Planning Subarea



“The Mix” development differs from the historic core

Density and intensity of development will be focused primarily along Monterey and Santa Rosa Streets; Marsh and Higuera will have more intensive development near Santa Rosa Street, gradually lessening to respect adjacent neighborhoods.

Improvements to Santa Rosa Street, including widened sidewalks, buffered bike lanes, and a center-landscaped median, will announce one’s arrival in downtown. Enhanced intersections will allow improved bicycle and pedestrian connections across the busy street. See page 4.4 for a conceptual cross section of Santa Rosa Street.



Intersection enhancements along Santa Rosa Street will improve pedestrian and bicycle access



The railroad bridge at Monterey and Pepper Streets will incorporate public art and act as a key gateway into the downtown



A new bicycle and pedestrian bridge crosses Monterey Street next to the existing railroad bridge. Both bridges provide an iconic edge to downtown. The new trail connection also provides important bicycle and pedestrian connections to downtown. (Concept sketch by Pierre Rademaker.)

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 **relocated transit center**. Block 23 will also include structured public parking, iconic mixed-use buildings, and rooftop public open space.

Ludwick Center on Santa Rosa and Mill Streets (Block 6) is improved as a multi-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.



Location of new County office building; commercial or public use will help activate the street



Current development pattern on Monterey Street will transition to structures of at least two stories built to the widened sidewalk



Renovated building on Monterey Street will help spur redevelopment



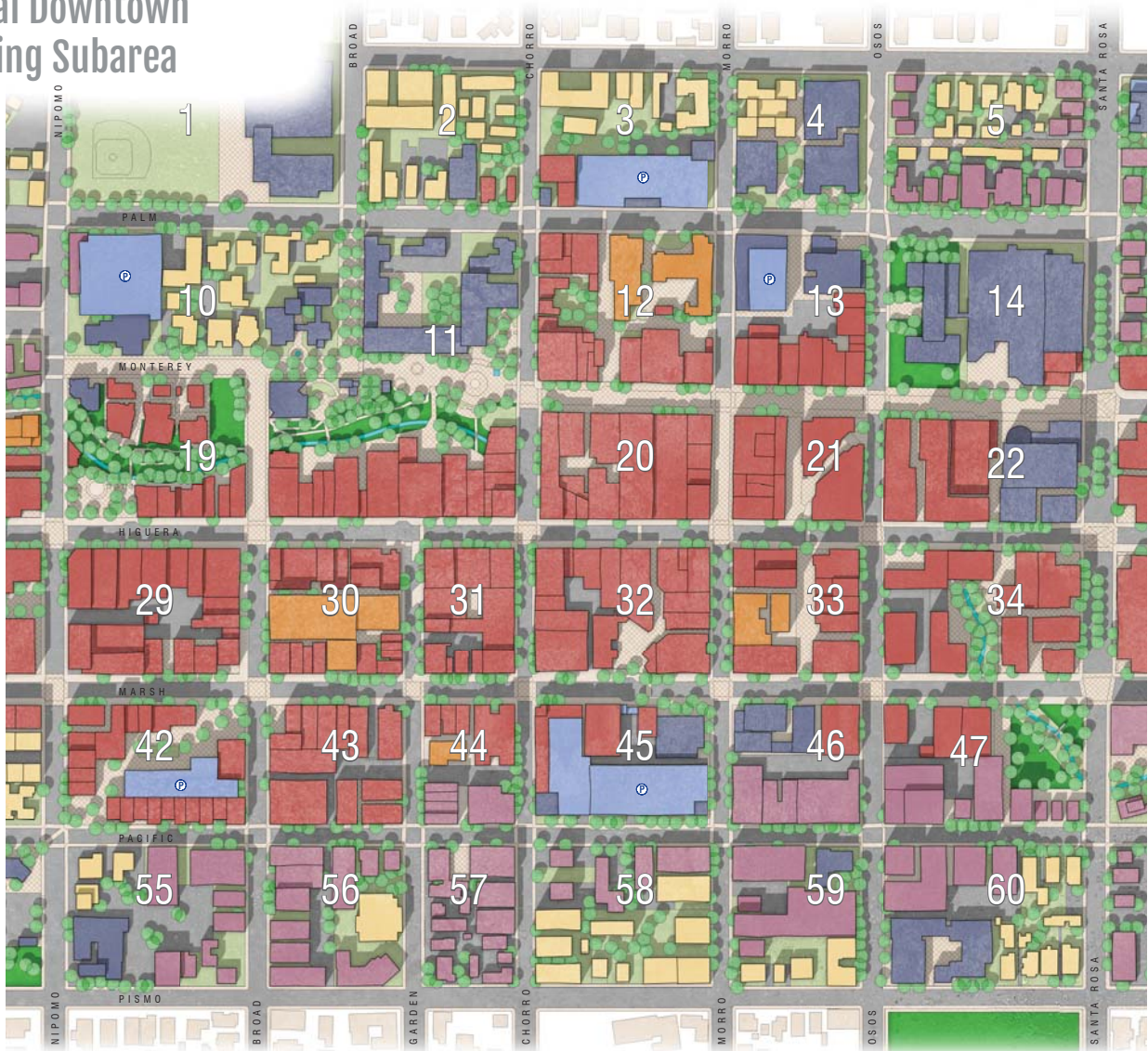
Monterey Street continues to revitalize at this downtown gateway. Surface parking lots redevelop with commercial mixed use projects built toward the street. Residential is on upper stories, and parking is provided behind or in the nearby structure. (Concept sketch by Pierre Rademaker.)

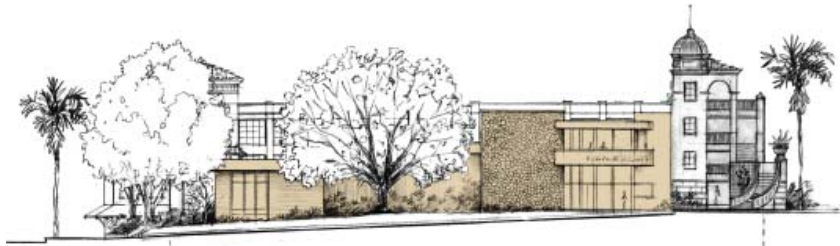
Central Downtown

Central downtown contains the Chinatown Historic District, and most of the Downtown Historic District. It 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, vibrant, and art-filled **Cultural District**, the focus of which is along Monterey Street between Nipomo and Chorro Streets (blocks 10, 11, and 19).

Figure 3.4.
Central Downtown
Planning Subarea





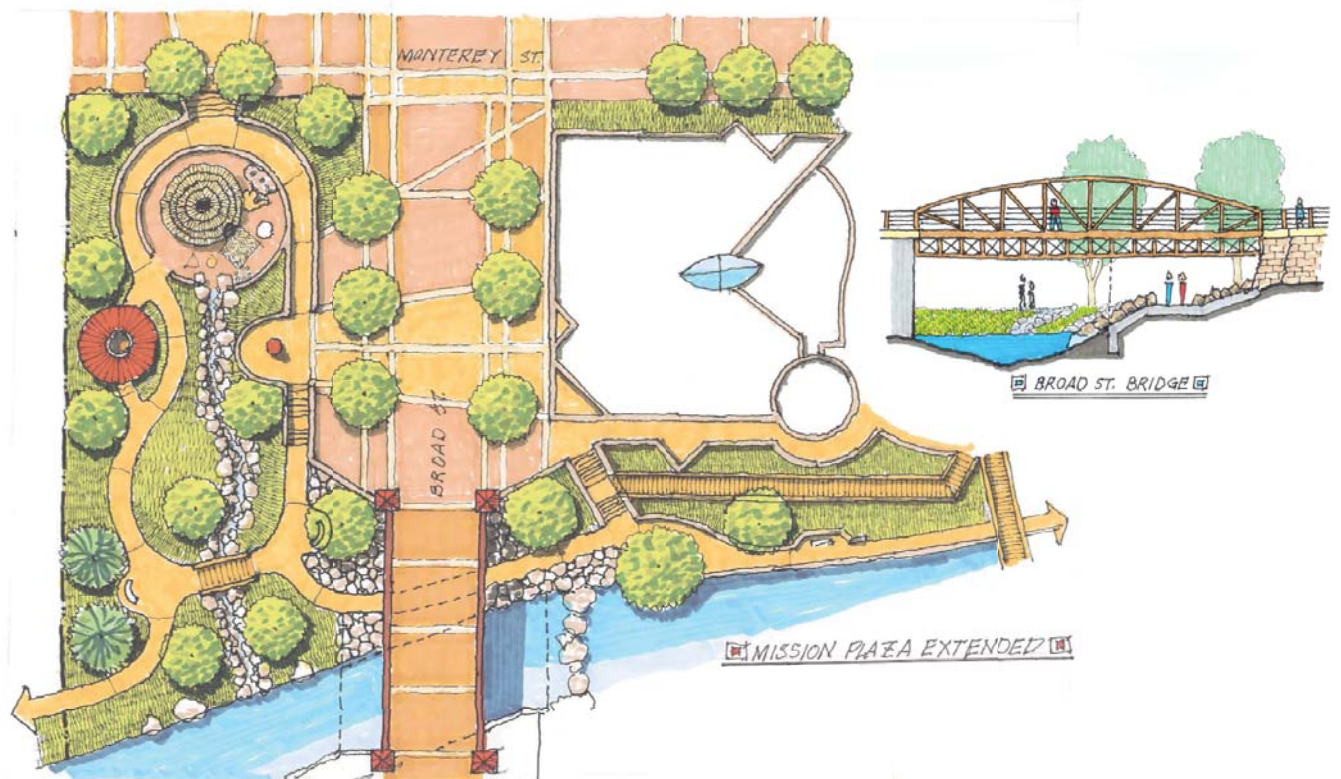
Monterey Street view of the proposed parking structure at Palm and Nipomo Streets with a theater along the street front (Block 10)



Example of a shared street (Street Type D) surrounding Mission Plaza, that will elevate the pedestrian realm in Central Downtown.

Visitors arriving in cars can park in the **new parking structure** at Palm and Nipomo Streets, then walk to the SLO Rep, 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). Refer to the **Mission Plaza Concept Plan** for details on the vision for Mission Plaza.

A new park on the corner of Monterey and Broad Streets celebrates local history while connecting to the Creek Walk and Mission Plaza.



On Block 19, a new park is envisioned at Monterey and Broad Streets across from the new Museum of Art and expanded History Center, in the center of the walkable Cultural District. (Concept sketch by T. Keith Gurnee.)



Historic County Courthouse

Other changes envisioned in central downtown include an **expanded City Hall complex** on Block 4, and **County Courthouse complex** on 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, 4 and 5 along Mill Street, on the edge of central downtown.



Monterey from Nipomo to Santa Rosa Street is envisioned as Street Type D, a shared street, with additional pedestrian amenities—wide sidewalks, outdoor dining, and park-like improvements. Illustrated here is the shared street between blocks 14 and 22. Pedestrians and bicyclists have priority, and new commercial mixed use infuses the block with energy. (Concept sketch by Chuck Crotser.)

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 as shown in the illustration below. Block 34 is reconfigured toward the creek as redevelopment occurs, and across the street on Block 47, **Cheng Park is expanded**.



Court Street paseo entrance



View of block 33, at Higuera between Morro and Osos Streets. Large surface parking lots are infilled, extending the vibrant downtown street front and creating additional commercial, residential, office and hospitality opportunities. A paseo aligns with Court Street, providing additional pedestrian connections. (Concept sketch by Chuck Crotser.)



Example of a plaza with public art and outdoor gathering space

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.



At block 42, a diagonal paseo extends from a corner plaza at Marsh and Broad Streets to a revitalized Emerson Park. The block design provides additional outdoor dining, event, circulation and public art opportunities. Underground parking serves the area and flexible micro-retail or live-work uses along Pacific Street create a local business cluster. (Concept sketch by Chuck Crotser.)

Lower Downtown

Lower Downtown is currently on the edge of the downtown—but not for long. Development pressure is moving into this area between Nipomo St and the Marsh and Higuera intersection, which will present significant opportunities over the next 25 years.



Recent mixed-use development in the flex zone area of Lower Downtown

Figure 3.5.
Lower Downtown
Planning Subarea





Old Gas Works building presents opportunity for reuse

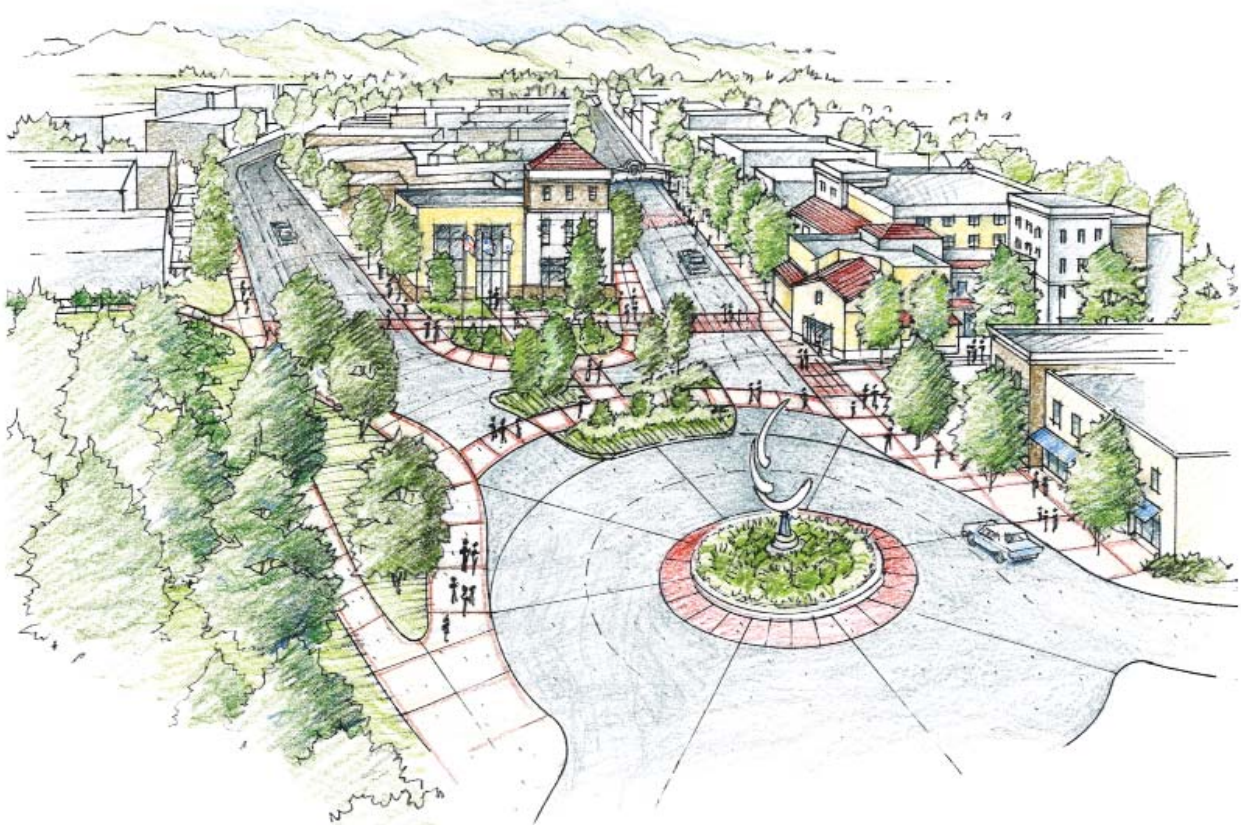


Improved bicycle facilities

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 larger footprint commercial mixed use sites being repurposed to accommodate a variety of different business types, including incubator businesses, shared marketplaces, shared work spaces, or live/work opportunities.

Also in the flex zone, Block 51 includes a **small plaza** along Higuera Street, where Walker Street dead-ends. **The Old Gas Works** building (Block 51) 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.

As shown below, a new **roundabout** at the Marsh and Higuera Street intersection announces one’s arrival downtown. Bicycle and pedestrian safety is improved at this busy downtown **gateway** and new connections are made to the expanded Creek Walk and the Madonna Inn Bike Path.



A new roundabout with pedestrian and bicycle circulation improvements acts as a gateway into downtown. Pedestrian improvements extend to the Creek Walk, and a pedestrian bridge connects a new parking structure to commercial, residential and hospitality uses. (Concept sketch by Chuck Crotser.)

Continued revitalization in the area around The Creamery on Block 18 will create a lively, walkable, mixed-use area with improved connectivity and positive interaction with the creek. Historic buildings will be preserved while a variety of uses will enliven Higuera Street. As the development pattern changes, **sidewalks are widened** on Marsh and Higuera Streets to the new roundabout, encouraging more walking, outdoor dining and socializing opportunities.

As The Creamery parking lot infills and intensifies, across Nipomo Street the city parking lot on Block 19 is converted to a public plaza with seating, interactive elements, and positive activity at this prominent downtown corner adjacent to San Luis Creek. Neighboring restaurants or cafes may share a portion of the space and management responsibilities. The bridge across San Luis Creek easily connects shoppers on Higuera Street to the Cultural District and new structured parking.



Creek Walk improvements will improve safety and increase use



Improvements at Emerson Park will better serve downtown residents



The surface parking lot at Higuera and Nipomo Streets is redeveloped as a plaza; it connects Lower Downtown to Central Downtown and the Cultural District (Block 19). (Concept sketch by T. Keith Gurnee.)

As in the 1993 Downtown Concept Plan, an enhanced and well-connected **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 roundabout. By activating the creek area with positive uses and consistent activity, negative behavior will decrease. As reinvestment occurs along the riparian corridor, buildings will open to 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**.

Public access to the **Jack House and Gardens** in Block 28 will increase with new paseos surrounding it, including a bicycle and pedestrian connection between Marsh and Higuera Streets following the Beach Street alignment. Use of the historic house and garden as well as Emerson Park in Block 54 will increase, as they are creatively adapted to meet the needs of new populations living and working nearby. 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 park space for nearby employees and residents

Mobility & Streetscape



Mobility and Streetscape

Background

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

1. Pedestrians
2. Bicycles
3. Transit
4. Vehicles

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



Modal Split Objectives (% of City Resident Trips)

Type of Transportation:

Motor Vehicles	50%
Transit	12%
Bicycles	20%
Walking, Car Pools, & Other	18%

General Plan Circulation Element, Table 1, May 2015

The Downtown Concept Plan includes a focused consideration of mobility to and through the downtown 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 transportation options, 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 adjacent text boxes illustrate the General Plan's priority mode ranking for downtown, and the modal split objectives, showing the City's commitment to increase mobility options that depend less on single-occupant use of vehicles.











To support achieving these 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 . 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.

Figure 4.1 Street Types Diagram

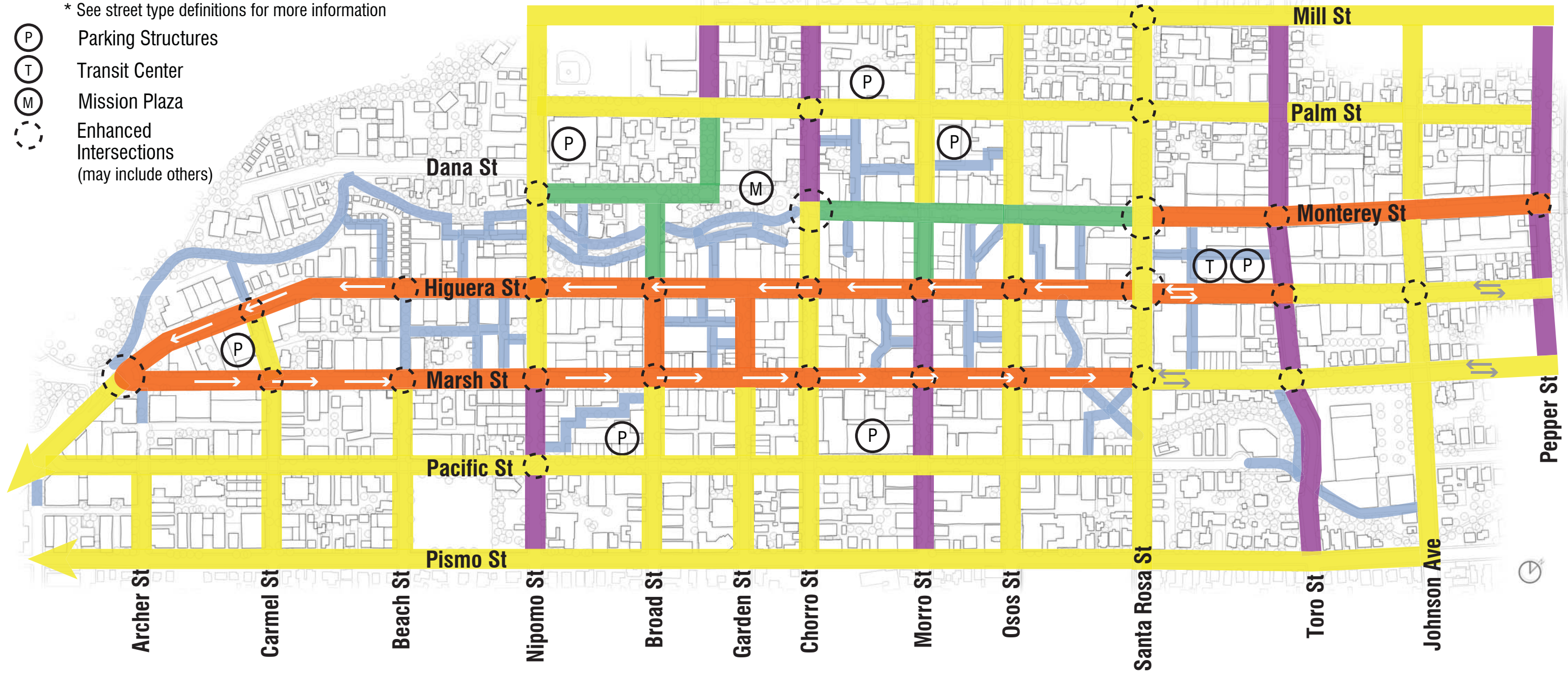
LEGEND

	Modal Priority *
 Street Type A	
 Street Type B	
 Street Type C	
 Street Type D	
 Paseos, Paths	

* See street type definitions for more information

-  Parking Structures
-  Transit Center
-  Mission Plaza
-  Enhanced Intersections (may include others)

Proposed street types are conceptual in nature and will require further analysis prior to implementation.



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 shown in the General Plan, and they will require further study before implemented.

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 vehicle speeds and equally accommodate all users. Bicycle improvements can include signed routes, sharrows, and bike lanes. 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 more equally. These streets include a variety of street classifications. Parking structures are primarily located on Street Type A.



Bike lanes and sharrows



Conceptual Street Type A cross section of Santa Rosa Street. Reducing travel lanes slows traffic and announces your arrival downtown. An 80' right of way allows for widened sidewalks, buffered bike lanes, and a center median planting strip in blocks that are long enough to accommodate it.

Street Type B

Modal Priority: 1. Pedestrians 2. Bicycles 3. Transit 4. Automobiles

Street Type B widens sidewalks and gives the pedestrian realm a higher proportion of the right-of-way. These densely developed streets allow ample room for outdoor gathering, socializing, dining, and commerce. Street Type B is located in the heart of the downtown where pedestrian activity is high and envisioned to increase.

Street Type B includes portions of Marsh, Higuera, Monterey, Broad, and Garden Streets. It strives to have lower automobile volumes and speeds than Street Type A, as lanes are narrowed and drivers are encouraged to park in structures on surrounding streets. Bike improvements can include sharrows, bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, or cycle tracks. Below are three Street Type B cross sections illustrating different conceptual approaches for areas of Marsh, Higuera and Monterey Streets.



Street Type B leaves ample room on the sidewalk for pedestrian activities



Conceptual Street Type B cross section for Marsh or Higuera Street showing two vehicle travel lanes, parking on one side of the street, a buffered bike lane, and 15' sidewalks. As shown on Figure 4.2, Bicycle Facilities Diagram, a buffered bike lane is proposed to bring bicyclists into the Central Downtown on Marsh and Higuera Streets; between Nipomo and Santa Rosa Streets it converts to a protected cycle track.



Conceptual Street Type B cross section for Marsh or Higuera Street with two vehicle travel lanes, angled parking on one side of the street, a protected cycle track, and sidewalks that widen to 24' in between parking areas, allowing for additional pedestrian experiences. As shown on Figure 4.2, Bicycle Facilities Diagram, a cycle track is proposed on Marsh and Higuera Streets in Central Downtown between Nipomo and Santa Rosa Streets.



Conceptual Street Type B cross section for Monterey St in Upper Downtown, showing a buffered bike lane on the uphill and a sharrow on the downhill side of the street, parking on both sides, 12' sidewalks, and two vehicle travel lanes with turn lanes at intersections. Approximately 4' of additional sidewalk right of way is provided by adjacent businesses for enhanced outdoor dining opportunities.

Street Type C

Modal Priority: 1. Bicycles 2. Pedestrians 3. Transit 4. Automobiles

Street Type C provides more of the right-of-way for bikes, and prioritizes bicycling over vehicle travel. These streets prioritize through bicycle movement over vehicular movement, and may employ diverters to redirect vehicular traffic. They will connect with adjacent neighborhoods to bring more bicyclists downtown. These streets are shown as bike boulevards on the Bicycle Facilities Diagram (Figure 4.2).

Street Type C includes portions of Nipomo, Broad, Chorro, Morro, Toro, and Pepper Streets.



Two examples of Street Type C bike boulevards.



Conceptual Street Type C cross section for a typical neighborhood street intersection, including a vehicle traffic diverter.

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, to require a driver to slow and pay more attention. This is done by limiting 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, Broad and Morro Streets.



Examples of Street Type D. Shared streets allow for easy closing to vehicles for festivals and events.



Conceptual Street Type D cross section for Monterey Street showing an ADA vision warning strip and lighted bollards to help delineate the pedestrian and vehicle zones. Pick-up and drop-off zones are allowed throughout.

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, and often connect parks or plazas to the public streetscape. The plan encourages the provision of paseos that do not negatively impact the vibrant downtown street front. The Street Types Diagram and the Illustrative plan show a network of paseos throughout the downtown, both existing and proposed as an integral part of the downtown development. A cross section illustrating a conceptual paseo design is shown below.



Downtown paseo with outdoor dining and shopping



Conceptual paseo cross section showing a mid-block pedestrian connection with seating, bike parking, landscaping and commercial storefronts.

Enhanced Intersections

Intersection enhancements are identified at a variety of locations downtown as shown in Figure 4.1, Street Types Diagram. Through the public engagement process, a number of intersections were identified as needing enhancement.

Some of these locations have existing perceived safety issues for bikes and pedestrians (e.g., the Marsh/Higuera intersection), some act as barriers between subareas (e.g., Monterey and Santa Rosa Street), and others will need to be improved as downtown redevelops (e.g., Johnson and Higuera Street). Intersection locations and improvements will evolve as downtown changes, so the locations identified should be seen as a starting place.

Intersection enhancements may include elements such as raised or painted crosswalks, bulbouts to provide refuge and decrease crossing distances, priority pedestrian signal timing, pedestrian scrambles (diagonal crossings to increase efficiency), and roundabouts. A roundabout is envisioned at the Marsh/Higuera intersection to improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to downtown, and a scramble may be considered at Monterey and Santa Rosa Streets. A cross section illustrating a conceptual enhanced intersection with bulbouts and a pedestrian scramble is shown below.



Painted brick on a mid-block crossing in downtown



A more whimsical approach to an enhanced intersection



Conceptual enhanced intersection showing corner bulbouts and a pedestrian scramble.

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. Where there are more than two lanes of travel, positive control of the crossing is required through the use of sensors, pedestrian hybrid beacons or traffic signals. Locations of existing and proposed mid-block crossings are shown on the Illustrative Plan. A cross section illustrating a conceptual mid-block crossing incorporating a cycle track is shown below.



Conceptual Street Type B cross section for Marsh or Higuera Street showing a mid-block crossing with safety beacons, a passenger drop-off and loading zone, and a “smart parking” zone for bicycle and small vehicle parking.

Drop Off/Loading Zones



Clearly marked passenger loading zone for rideshare vehicles

Drop off/loading zones for commercial, ride share and personal 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. They can be designed in conjunction with specialty parking areas or “smart parking zones,” such as for bikes, scooters, motorcycles or small electric vehicles. They can also be used in conjunction with mid-block crossings as long as all visibility factors have been taken into account. The cross section above illustrates drop off zones for rideshare and smart parking areas.

Bicycle Improvements

San Luis Obispo is a great place to be a bicyclist. The City recently received recognition as a Gold Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists. However, as noted in the City’s 2013 Bicycle Transportation Plan, not all bicyclists are created equal:

Children, seniors, and novice riders, may only feel comfortable riding on very low traffic streets, or facilities separated from traffic. More experienced riders have the ability to integrate with traffic, but still may desire additional space where traffic is moving at higher speeds and need consideration at intersections. The challenge is to provide relatively conflict-free bikeway facilities that meet the needs of the full range of bicyclists’ skill levels.

This is consistent with what we heard during the public engagement process. The Bicycle Facilities Diagram responds to these different needs, with the purpose of increasing the number of residents bicycling downtown.

Figure 4.2 on the following page illustrates the proposed bicycle facilities for the 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. Planned improvements are recommendations from the Bicycle Transportation Plan. New ideas are shown as proposed. They include a cycle track and buffered bike lane on Marsh and Higuera Streets, which will increase the comfort level of less experienced bicyclists and families riding to the downtown. These improvements will make the downtown more welcoming and easier to navigate for cyclists, thereby increasing ridership. The improvements shown conceptually in the Bicycle Facilities Diagram will connect to adjacent neighborhoods and be implemented with other on-street improvements as shown conceptually in the Street Types Diagram (Figure 4.1).



The Morro Street bike boulevard connects cyclists to downtown



Peak bike racks in downtown

Figure 4.2 Bicycle Facilities Diagram

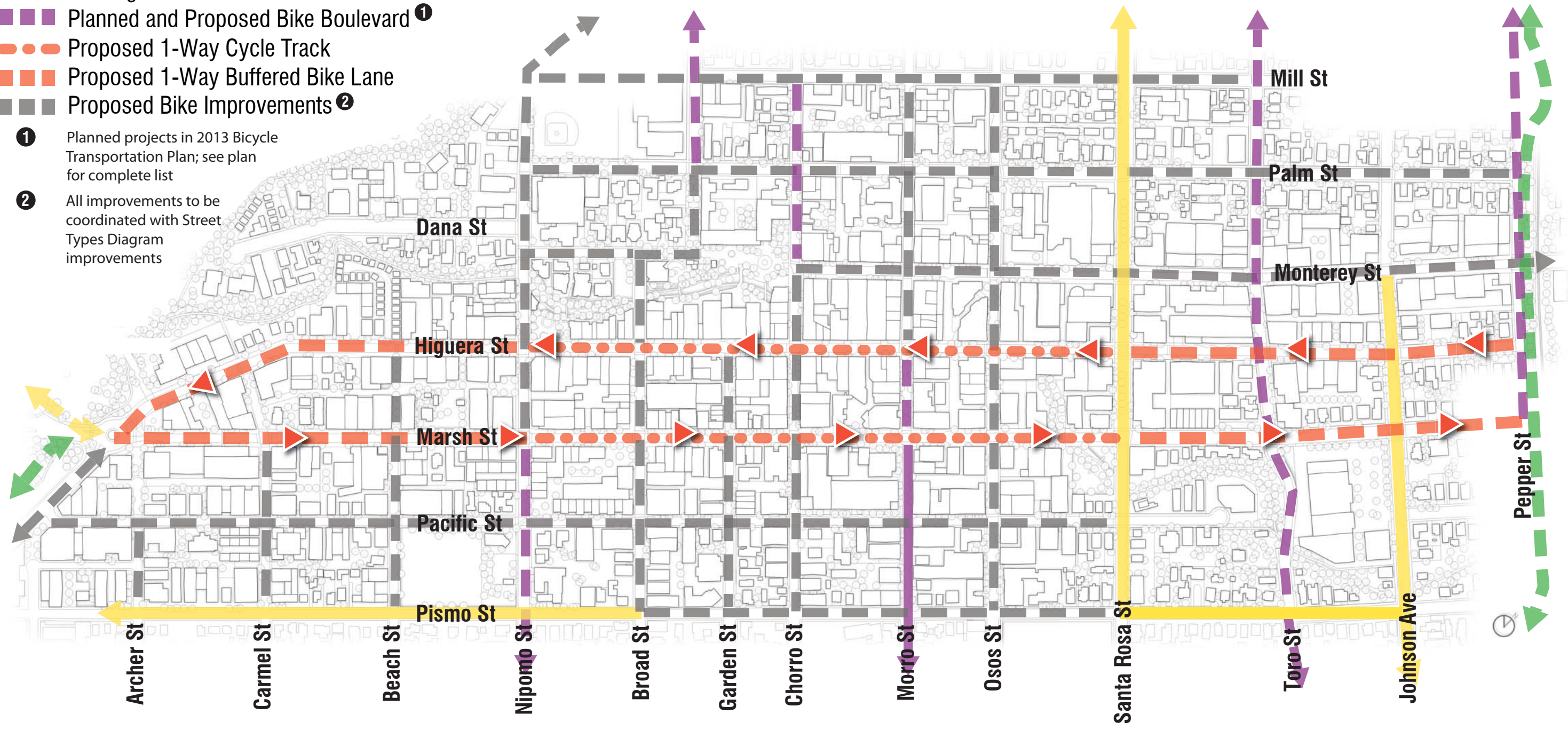
LEGEND

- Planned Class I Bike Path ^①
- Existing Bike Lane
- Planned Bike Lane ^①
- Existing Bike Boulevard
- Planned and Proposed Bike Boulevard ^①
- Proposed 1-Way Cycle Track
- Proposed 1-Way Buffered Bike Lane
- Proposed Bike Improvements ^②

^① Planned projects in 2013 Bicycle Transportation Plan; see plan for complete list

^② All improvements to be coordinated with Street Types Diagram improvements

Proposed bicycle facilities are conceptual in nature and will require further analysis prior to adoption into the City Bicycle Transportation Plan.



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.

Multiuse Path

Also referred to as a Class I bike path, this facility provides 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, multiuse 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 multiuse paths shown in Figure 4.2.



Class I off-street bike path

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 envisioned for the downtown.



Class II on-street bike lane with back-in angled parking

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. They are also considered a Class II facility. 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 buffered bike lanes proposed for the downtown.



Class II buffered bike lane

Bike Boulevard



Class III bike boulevard

Categorized as a Class III facility, 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 five bike boulevards planned or proposed for the downtown.

Cycle Track



Class IV cycle track

Categorized as a Class IV bike facility, cycle tracks (also known as 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 cycle tracks proposed for Marsh and Higuera Streets in the downtown.



Class IV cycle tracks encourage novice riders

Downtown Streetscape Elements

Communities are rediscovering the broad benefits streets can provide as public spaces, including for 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.

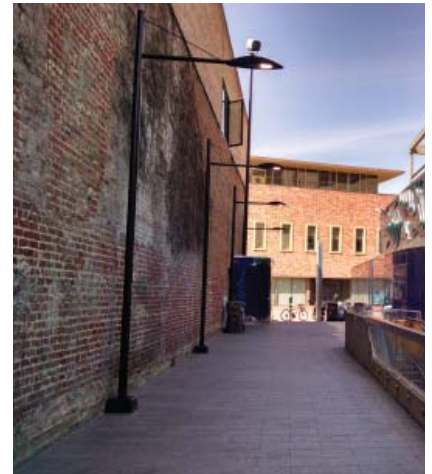
Given this, future streetscape furnishings and materials should embody a traditional/Main Street feel in central downtown and around historic properties, with flexibility for other styles in the north and south downtown subareas. The following images and types of street furnishings are examples of fixtures 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 roadway traffic, but also for pedestrians and cyclists on sidewalks and paths. Intersections should provide higher levels of lighting than mid-block, since this is where conflicts most often occur. Pedestrian-level light standards or bollards should be considered for mid-block, paseos or paths, where lighting can be more controlled and directed, in order to limit light spillover and preserve views of the night sky.

Seating

To create streets and public places that foster socialization, seating should be plentiful in the downtown. On streets with wide enough sidewalks, some benches should be clustered and installed facing one another to create “outdoor living rooms” that do not inhibit the pedestrian right-of-way. Care should be taken in design so that seating is not used for sleeping. Informal clusters of tables and chairs, or seat walls serving multiple uses should also be plentiful in the public realm.



Lighting for safety and function



Lighting for ambiance



Street furniture configured as an outdoor “living room”

Bicycle Parking



Vertical bike corrals save space



Murals turn bike corrals into art



Parklet with ample seating

To accommodate the increase in cyclists as street improvements and bicycle infrastructure are implemented over time, bicycle parking should continue to be provided in safe, frequent, and convenient locations throughout the downtown. On-street **bicycle 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 with good visibility, for safety and convenience.

Bicycle corrals should be installed in strategic locations throughout the downtown to help provide additional short-term bicycle parking. Typically, a bike corral 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. Having plentiful, safe and convenient bicycle parking facilities is integral to increasing cycling downtown.

Parklets

Parklets are areas of the public right of way that are reclaimed for pedestrian uses. This most often includes the conversion of portions of parking lanes to parklets with greenery, art, seating, bicycle parking, or outdoor dining. Parklets that reclaim some of the parking lane are generally the size of one or two spaces. They extend from the sidewalk and project into the street, offering more space and amenities for pedestrians. They can be permanent or temporary, and often are volunteer-driven. A growing number of cities are developing guidelines for installing parklets. Temporary parklets can be a low-cost way to enlarge public usable space along a street. They can also act as a test of a more permanent facility in the future.

Public Art

Public art helps define and reveal the unique character of a community's identity. Art and artful design 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 temporary, interactive, incorporated into street furniture, or helping interpret a specific location. Utility box art is a popular program in the City. Public art could be incorporated into crosswalk design to help create a sense of place downtown, or to differentiate downtown's subareas. Whatever its form, public art attracts attention. Great public art can take an ordinary place and make it spectacular.



Unique wall art installation

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, lighting, and possible shade structures should be incorporated into future street improvements.



Convertible shade structure

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.



Public restroom integrated into a downtown development

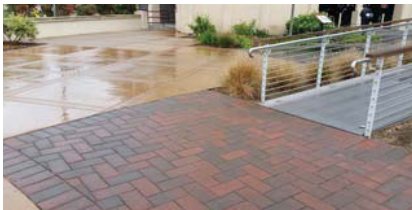


Small downtown public restroom

Green Infrastructure



Bioretention



Pervious pavement



Rainwater capture



Green roof with green wall

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 streets and facilities as a cost-effective and resilient approach to water management. Green streets also provide many community benefits: They protect, restore, or mimic the natural water cycle, and enhance 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 that allows for percolation of excess stormwater.

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

Implementation



Implementation Plan

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. Private development, as envisioned on the Illustrative Diagram, has not been prioritized. Actions will be implemented over the long-term, 25+ year time frame of this plan, as feasible. Actions were prioritized based on public and CVT input and staff review. Ongoing actions indicate those that may be implemented incrementally over the life of the plan, or as opportunities arise. **As the Downtown Concept Plan is a high-level vision for downtown, all actions will require further study and analysis before implementation.**



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 ID	Implementation Action	Priority	Lead	Support
LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
Plan Updates				
1	Further study relevant concepts from the Downtown Concept Plan as part of the update of the City Zoning Regulations.	1	City	
2	Further study relevant concepts from the Downtown Concept Plan when updating the Community Design Guidelines.	1	City	
3	Consider adding guidelines on paseo design in new development that also emphasizes a vibrant street front when updating the Community Design Guidelines.	1	City	
4	Seek to develop downtown streetscape design standards using the Downtown Concept Plan as a guide; coordinate with the development of a Downtown Pedestrian Plan or when updating the Community Design Guidelines.	2	City	
5	Consider amending the Mid-Higuera Street Enhancement Plan with changes shown in the Downtown Concept Plan.	2	City	
6	Include relevant concepts from the Downtown Concept Plan when developing an Upper Monterey Special Area Master Plan.	1	City	
7	Further study relevant concepts from the Downtown Concept Plan when updating the Bicycle Transportation Plan.	1	City	
Housing				
8	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.	1	City	HASLO, Partners
Government Offices				
9	Investigate the feasibility of redeveloping the City-owned 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.	2	City	
10	Investigate the feasibility of developing a County office building with parking and commercial or public uses along the street front on County property on Monterey Street (Block 15).	2	County	
11	Investigate the feasibility of adding additional office space to the County courthouse, facing Santa Rosa Street, with commercial or public use at the corner of Monterey and Santa Rosa Streets.	3	County	
12	Investigate the feasibility of leasing unused City office space at a subsidized rate to qualifying nonprofit organizations.	2	City	
Economic Development				
13	Work with partners on developing a program to attract and retain smaller, independent, and culturally diverse businesses; this could include reusing older, lower-value buildings.	1	City	Chamber, DTA
14	Consider developing an economic analysis of downtown, looking at the preferred mix of land uses for long-term economic health.	2	City	SLOEVC, Chamber

Action ID	Implementation Action	Priority	Lead	Support
15	Investigate opportunities for implementing free WiFi in public areas downtown.	2	City	DTA, County, Others
ARTS, CULTURE, AND HISTORY				
Public Art				
16	Seek to incorporate public art with public realm improvements throughout downtown, beyond the locations identified in the Public Art Master Plan.	0	City	
17	When installing new public art, consider: place-based art that has a connection to our downtown; art that is interactive and engaging; art that is “useful” e.g., painted crosswalks, bridges; temporary installations; uses of other medium such as light and video projection.	0	City	
Cultural District and Programming				
18	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.	1	City	Cultural partners, DTA, Chamber
19	Explore ways to bring history alive in the Cultural District area, including physical and virtual interpretive information on the area’s natural, built, and social history. Topics could include the Northern Chumash Tribes, Anza National Historic Trail, and El Camino Real/ Native American trade route, among others.	2	City	Cultural partners
20	Seek to 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	1	City	
21	Encourage a wide-variety of of historic information and interpretation, including in traditional forms, apps, augmented reality, and other emerging technologies.	2	History Ctr	City
22	Consider investigating the feasibility of a West End Historic District, encompassing the area of Higuera and Marsh Streets southwest of the Downtown Historic District.	2	City	History Ctr
Historic Facilities				
23	Develop a master plan for the public use of the Rosa Butron Adobe property.	3	City	History Ctr
24	Develop a restoration plan for the Murray Adobe in coordination with the Mission Plaza Concept Plan.	1	City	History Ctr

Action ID	Implementation Action	Priority	Lead	Support
25	Work with the History Center on expansion plans to provide capacity for future needs.	1	History Ctr	City
RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND PUBLIC RESTROOMS				
New Parks, Plazas, and Paseos				
26	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.	1	City	SLCUSD, County
27	Develop a feasibility analysis for a public park on Broad Street, between Monterey Street and the Creek Walk (Block 19).	2	City	Property owner
28	Develop a feasibility analysis for a small plaza on Monterey Street between Toro and Johnson Streets (Block 24).	3	City	Property owner
29	Develop a feasibility analysis for a small pocket park on the corner of Toro and Marsh Streets (Block 49).	3	City	Property owner
30	Develop a master plan for a public plaza on City-owned parking lot on the corner of Higuera and Nipomo Streets (Block 19).	2	City	
31	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).	2	County	City
32	Seek to work with private developers to implement a system of paseos as shown in the Concept Plan Illustrative.	0	Private developers	City
Existing Parks and Public Facilities				
33	Develop a master plan for Emerson Park to ensure that it is well used and accommodates the needs of the neighborhood (Block 6)	2	City	
34	Develop a master plan for the Ludwick Center to better meet the community's needs for a full-service recreation center (Block 54)	2	City	
35	Consider public/private partnerships opportunities related to park operations and management.	0	City	Private partners
36	Develop a feasibility analysis for expansion of Cheng Park (Block 47).	3		
San Luis Creek				
37	Seek to improve the existing Creek Walk so it is a safe, inviting, and enjoyable experience for everyone.	2	City	Property owners
38	Further study the expansion of the Creek Walk from Nipomo Street to the Marsh/Higuera intersection, as shown in the Concept Plan Illustrative.	2	City	Property owners
39	Develop a management plan for San Luis Obispo Creek in the downtown area, combined with a Creek Walk Master Plan.	2	City	Property owners
40	Work with interested partners on a Creek Adobe Trail, which would connect to the Rosa Butron, Murray, and Dallidet Adobes (among others), showing the early distribution of the town along San Luis Creek.	3	Interested Partners	City

Action ID	Implementation Action	Priority	Lead	Support
Public Restrooms				
41	Ensure the provision of public restrooms downtown, including new restrooms at Mission Plaza and Emerson Park.	1	City	
PUBLIC SAFETY				
42	Coordinate with public safety on crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) when developing new public spaces downtown.	0	City	
MOBILITY AND CIRCULATION				
Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements				
43	Continue the installation of pedestrian level wayfinding signage to direct pedestrians and cyclists to the best routes and key locations downtown.	0	City	
44	Seek to 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.	1	City	
45	Work with partners to develop a plan for a walking path around the Dallidet Adobe property to Toro Street.	2	City	History Ctr, property owners
46	Consider inclusion of bicycle facility recommendations (as described in Chapter 4 and Figure 4.2) into the Bicycle Transportation Plan, including a cycle track and buffered bike lane on Marsh and Higuera Streets.	1	City	
47	Work with partners on the feasibility of a bike share program.	3	Cal Poly, Bike SLO County, others	City
48	Seek to improve the safety of the bicycle and pedestrian connection from the Marsh and Higuera intersection to the Madonna Inn Bike Path and the Cerro San Luis trailhead across Highway 101.	1		
Transit and Multimodal Facilities				
49	Continue to work with community partners to relocate the transit center downtown to better meet the transit needs of downtown employees, residents, and visitors.	1	SLOCoG	City, County, RTA, others
50	Investigate the feasibility of providing additional shuttle/transit options, including the increased use of the trolley, to provide better access around the downtown.	2	City	Partners
51	Investigate the feasibility of using Autonomous Electric Vehicles for downtown shuttle service between parking structures or another set route.	2	City	SLOCoG, County
52	Consider improving trolley stops with enhanced waiting environments and identification.	2	City	

Action ID	Implementation Action	Priority	Lead	Support
53	When updating the City's Capital Improvement Program, consider inclusion of multimodal street type improvements as described in Chapter 4.	0	City	
54	Prioritize mobility improvements to be consistent with the General Plan's priority mode ranking in downtown: 1. Pedestrians, 2. Bicycles, 3. Transit, 4. Vehicles.	0	City	
55	Consider redevelopment of Monterey Street between Chorro and Santa Rosa Streets to Street Type D (shared street), as shown in Figure 4.1.	2	City	
56	When designing new shared streets or plazas, consider including infrastructure for food booths, trucks, stages, etc.	2	City	DTA
57	Consider redevelopment of the downtown streets shown as Street Types A, B, and C in Figure 4.1.	2	City	
58	Conduct a feasibility analysis to determine the optimal future design of the Marsh/Higuera intersection to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and accessibility.	2	City	
59	When improvements are needed, consider a redesign of the Broad Street bridge (between Monterey and Higuera Streets) and a Creek Walk connection underneath.	3	City	
Parking Facilities (motor vehicle, bicycle, structures)				
60	Conduct parking demand studies every five years to reevaluate need for new parking structures as technology, mobility needs, and driving patterns evolve.	0	City	
61	Continue the installation of wayfinding signage to direct motorists to public parking and limit vehicles in the downtown core.	0	City	
62	Seek to design parking structures with secure bike parking, transit and trolley stops, pedestrian wayfinding, electric vehicle charging stations, and pedestrian crossings.	0	City	Partners
63	Seek to design parking structures to integrate with downtown; including locating behind commercial or office mixed use to the extent possible to keep the sidewalks pedestrian-scale and active.	0	City	Partners
64	Consider designing parking structures with flat decks and the ability to be repurposed if not needed for parking.	0	City	
65	Consider designing parking structures with rooftop amenities that take advantage of views, such as outdoor viewing areas, public spaces, or eating establishments.	0	City	
66	Investigate implementing variable parking pricing during peak hours.	2	City	
67	Consider implementing new or expanded parking in-lieu fee districts, or other funding mechanisms, to accommodate future development patterns as illustrated in the Downtown Concept Plan.	1	City	

Action ID	Implementation Action	Priority	Lead	Support
68	When making street improvements, develop plans to ensure the adequate provision of on-street parking for the disabled; bicycle parking; motorcycle parking; short-term loading zones for commercial vehicles; and ample passenger drop-off and pickup zones for shared economy and rideshare vehicles.	0	City	Partners
Circulation				
69	Work with the Downtown Association and business owners to designate mutually beneficial hours of regulation for delivery and waste management vehicles to minimize traffic congestion.	1	City	DTA
70	Evaluate and adjust traffic signalization at intersections as necessary to improve downtown circulation for safety and efficiency.	0	City	
OTHER				
Green Infrastructure, Parklets, and Planters				
71	Develop a program for designing and installing parklets downtown.	1	City	DTA, property owners
72	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).	3	City	DTA
73	Maintain a healthy downtown street tree canopy; seek to ensure obstruction-free sidewalks as well as proper tree health and growth capacity.	1	City	
74	Include green infrastructure in public improvement projects whenever feasible.	1	City	
Farmer's Market				
75	Coordinate with the Downtown Association on Farmer's Market infrastructure needs before any major street redesign.	0	City	DTA
76	Consider moving the Farmers Market to Monterey Street if it is improved as a Street Type D (shared street).	2	DTA	City
Lighting & Street Furniture				
77	Develop a lighting plan for downtown streetscapes, public spaces, and storefronts for enhanced safety and placemaking.	2	City	DTA, others
78	Before Street Type improvements are made, develop a plan for coordinated street furnishings (e.g., seating, lighting, bike parking) to create a clear sense of place for downtown, or by subdistrict.	0	City	DTA
Maintenance				
79	Develop an improved system for coordinating street, sidewalk, creekwalk and public plaza cleaning that clearly defines the responsibility of the City and downtown merchants.	2	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
SLCUSD = San Luis Coastal Unified School District

PRIORITY

1 = Short Term
2 = Mid Term
3 = Long Term
0 = Ongoing

APPENDIX 1 SUMMARY OF OUTREACH



San Luis Obispo Downtown Concept Plan

Summary of Outreach

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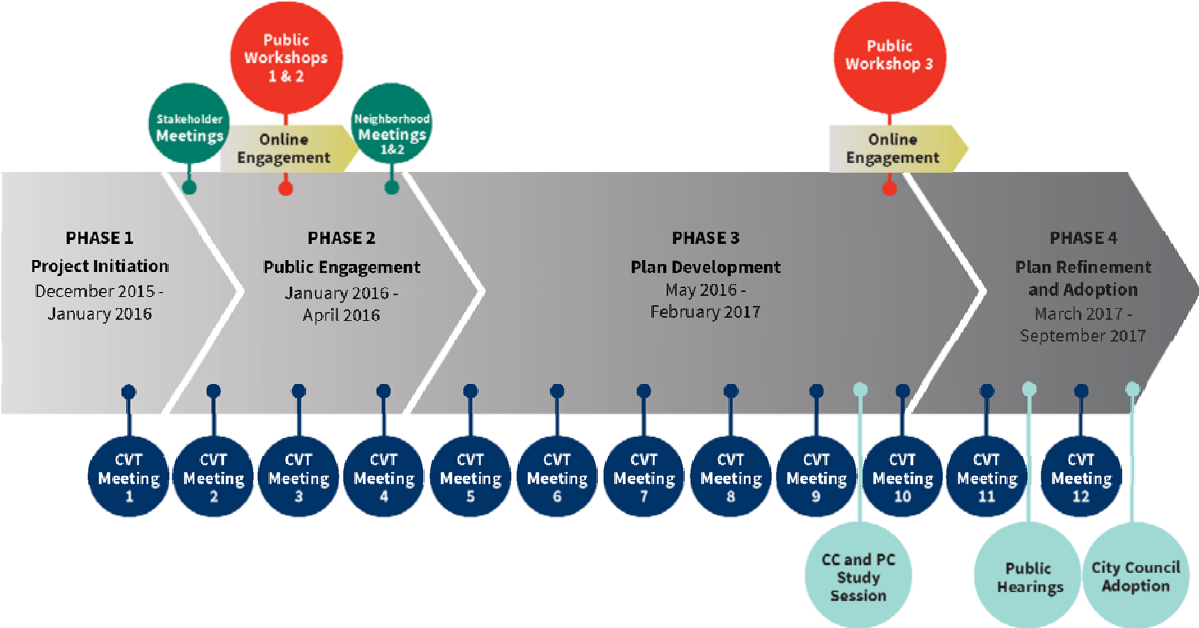
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APPENDICES – Available online at www.slocity.org/downtown

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INTRODUCTION

The update of the San Luis Obispo Downtown Concept Plan involved broad-based public engagement, including targeted stakeholder interviews, a public open house, two public workshops, an online survey, two neighborhood meetings and twelve meetings with the Creative Vision Team (CVT). This document summarizes the results of the project’s public engagement activities, and discusses how it informed the development of the Downtown Concept Plan.



PROJECT PROCESS & TIMELINE

San Luis Obispo Downtown Concept Plan Revised 7.3.17

Overview of Outreach Activities

- 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, at the City-County Library Meeting Room. The event 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.
- **Workshop 3** (Public Draft Downtown Concept Plan Open House): On February 4, 2017, approximately 100 people officially signed in as attendees at Workshop 3, which was held at the City-County Library Meeting Room and was designed to review the highlights of the Draft Plan. The workshop featured two plan overview presentations, and ten facilitated stations with information boards summarizing key elements of the draft plan, where participants could ask questions and provide comments. Attendees were also asked to provide comments on a brief survey that addressed the key topics of the plan.

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 had 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: 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, more 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

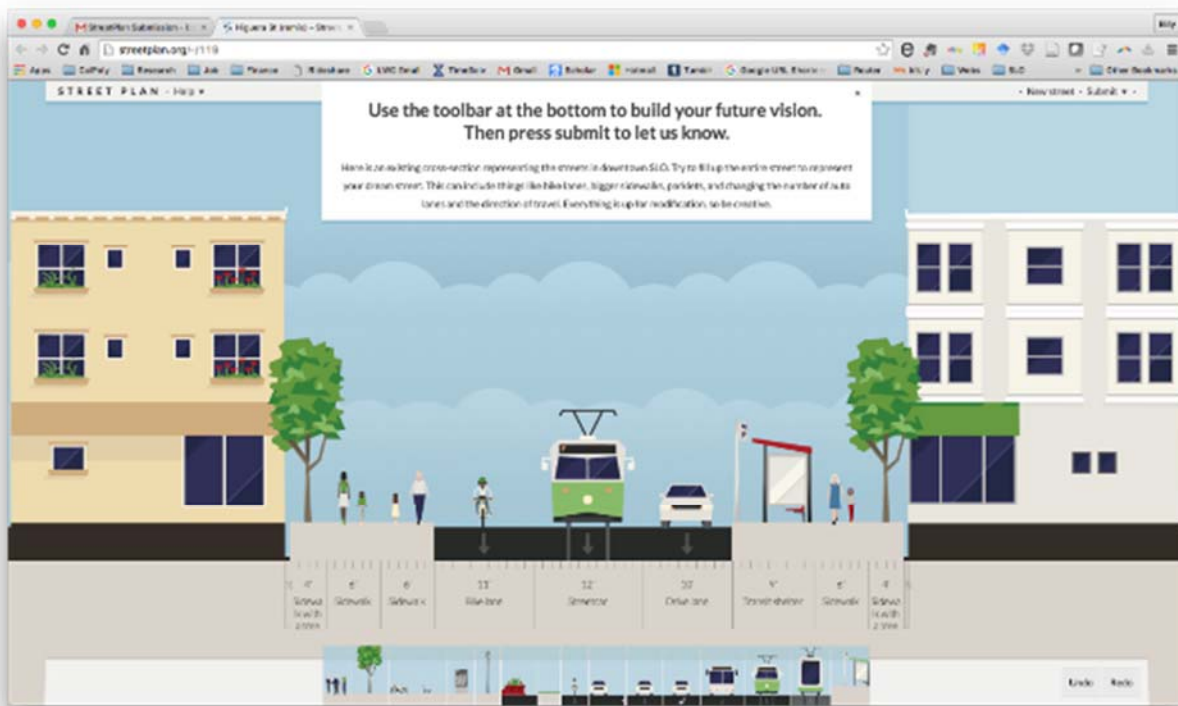
This exercise asked participants to use up to three smiley face stickers to identify what areas they like (Assets) and up to three sad face stickers to identify areas that need improvement (Opportunities for Improvement). Overall, there was a concentration of happy faces on Monterey and Johnson, bubblegum 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.



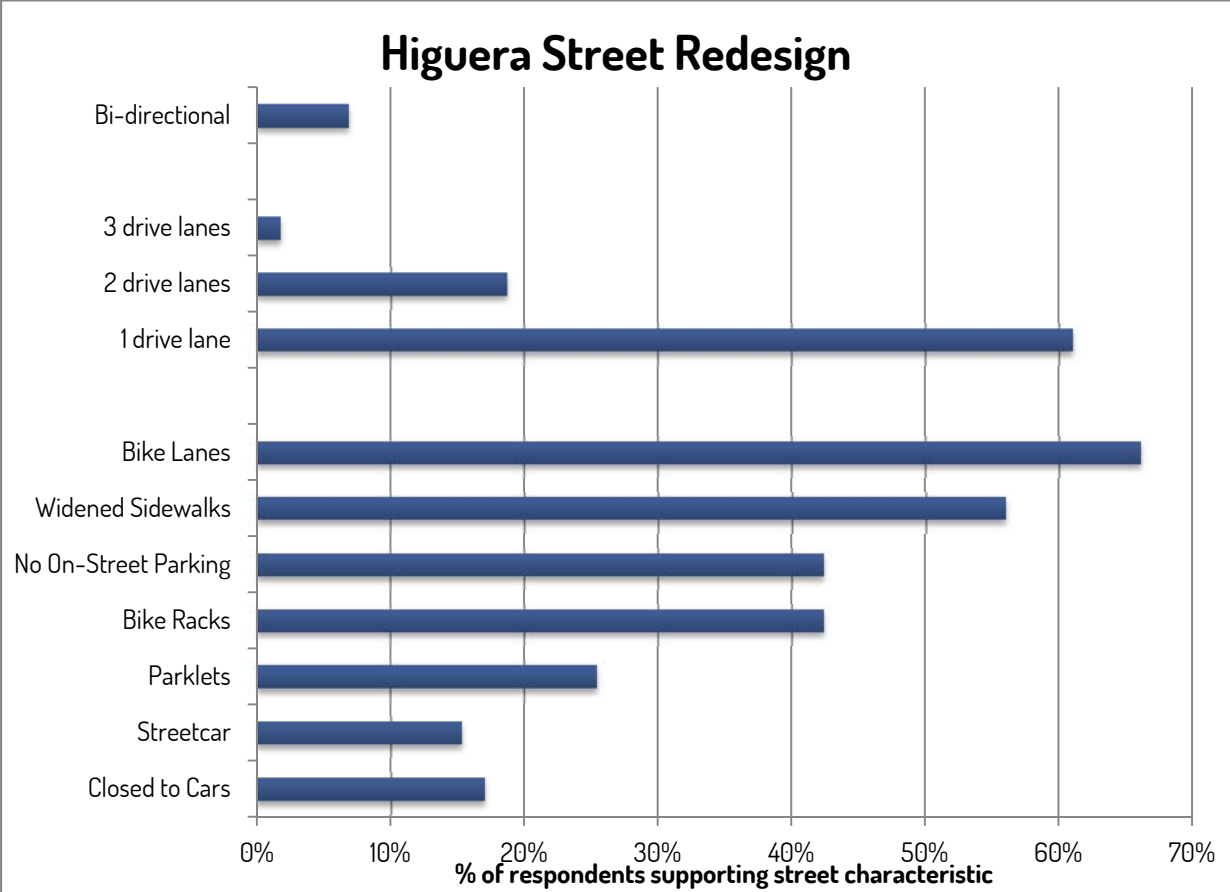
Street Plan

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 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.

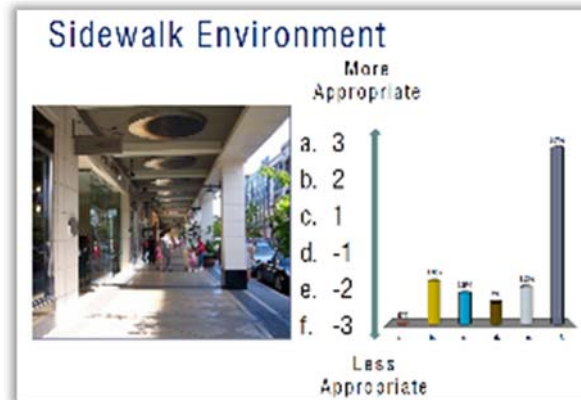
The event took place at the San Luis Obispo County Library and attracted about 110 people. The workshop included a presentation with a visual preference survey, small group exercises, and self-guided activities. Some groups came to consensus more easily than others, and some were divided. In general, 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-guided 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. Appendix H includes images of the



original Workshop Activity Boards developed by participants. 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.

IMAGINE DOWNTOWN SLO
DOWNTOWN CONCEPT PLAN & MISSION PLAZA MASTER PLAN

PUBLIC REALM

As a group, select 3 locations where enhancements would have the most impact to the public realm. What type of improvement do you feel is most appropriate for downtown? Place dots with the corresponding letters on the map provided.

<p>A. EXERCISE SPACE</p> 	<p>B. GREEN SPACE</p> 	<p>C. PERFORMANCE SPACE</p> 
<p>D. PASEO</p> 	<p>E. PLAZA</p> 	<p>F. POCKET PARK</p> 

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						
County Courthouse Lawn						
Mission Plaza (improvement to/expansion of)						
Along creek						
Mitchell Park						
Corner parking lot at Higuera and Nipomo						
On rooftops (Nipomo and City 919 Palm Structures)						
SW corner of Chorro and Marsh (bank parking lot)						
Santa Rosa north of County Building						
Garden Street (mid-block)						
Above Ludwick Community Center						
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.

IMAGINE DOWNTOWN SLO
DOWNTOWN CONCEPT PLAN & MISSION PLAZA MASTER PLAN

MOBILITY

Working as a group, choose the 3 streets you would most like to see the City improve, then color code them as Complete street, car light street, and car free street by placing colored tape on the map provided.

COMPLETE STREETS (BLUE TAPE)	CAR LIGHT STREETS (YELLOW TAPE)	CAR FREE STREETS (GREEN TAPE)
Designed and operated for safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.	Prioritizes pedestrians and bicycle access in a "shared space" which allows slow vehicular access minimizing conflict	Streets reserved primarily for pedestrian use where bicycles are allowed and automobile traffic is prohibited.
		
		

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 B for Workshop 1 details and 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

IMAGINE DOWNTOWN SLO
TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HEIGHT & MASSING

Working as a group, design a representative block north of Santa Rosa, central downtown, and south of Nipomo. For that block, choose a LEGO configuration (as shown below) to represent future building height and massing for each block.

A. Reduce or remove stories to create open space

B. Add height and build to the sidewalk

C. Add height, but step back upper stories so buildings are tallest in the center of the block

D. Keep existing height and massing

E. For other configurations use one Lego brick per story and design your own

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.”

IMAGINE DOWNTOWN SLO
DOWNTOWN CONCEPT PLAN & MISSION PLAZA MASTER PLAN

VIEWS

Working as a group, pick a location where views contribute to downtown atmosphere. 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.

1. CERRO SAN LUIS

2. CUESTA GRADE

3. BISHOP'S PEAK

4. BOWDEN RANCH - BEHIND SLO HIGH

5. OTHER VIEWS (SUCH AS THE SKY, SUN/MOON, TREES):

CREATE A "V" TOWARD VIEWSHED WITH STRING

write name of view here

PLACE DOT AT LOCATION DOWNTOWN WHERE VIEWS CONTRIBUTE

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 pedestrians 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, while 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 2/3rds 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

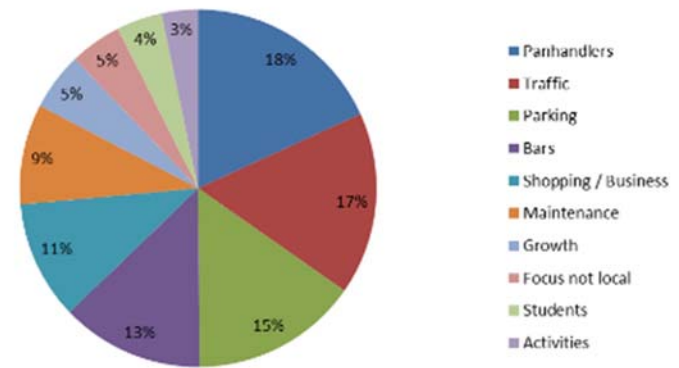
Appendices D and E include the complete results of the visual preference survey and photos of the maps produced by each of the small groups.



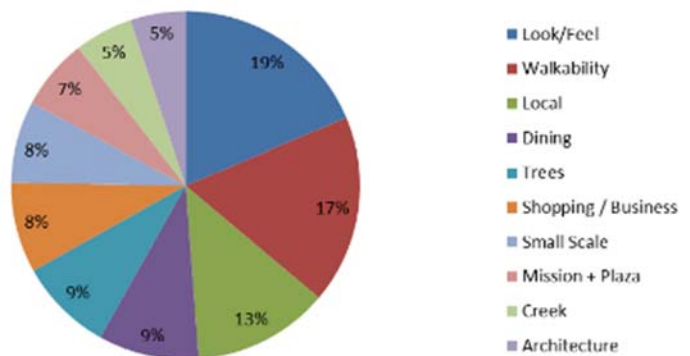
Online Survey

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.

What do you dislike about Downtown SLO? (Top 10 Open Ended Answers)



What do you like most about Downtown SLO? (Top 10 Open Ended Answers)



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. They 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 Prior to Plan Development

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, we learned that the vast majority of community members who 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 were considered 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.).

The Creative Vision Team (CVT), staff, and consultant project team worked to refine and translate these broad ideas into physical plan recommendations which were included in the Draft Downtown Concept Plan and presented at Public Workshop 3.

DRAFT PLAN OUTREACH

Public Workshop 3

The final public workshop was designed to present an overview of the key elements of the Public Draft Downtown Concept Plan and seek input from the community. Both the Draft Plan and the workshop content built off of previous input gathered.

On February 4, 2017, approximately 100 people officially signed in at Workshop 3, held at the City-County Library Meeting Room. It was designed as a drop-in open house with ten facilitated stations and two presentations approximately an hour and a half apart, providing a brief overview of the Draft Plan. The ten stations included information boards summarizing key elements of the plan, where participants could ask questions or provide comments. They included:

1. What is the Downtown Concept Plan? - This station illustrated the Plan area, provided background information on the Draft Downtown Concept Plan and how it came to be, and defined the purpose of the project and how it will be used.
2. What We Heard - Station two provided an overview of the Downtown Concept Plan process, outreach conducted to date and key takeaways from each engagement activity including common values, common concerns and areas of improvement.
3. What We Envision - Station three shared the project vision statement as well as the Project Planning Principles and Goals developed by the project team based on public input and previous planning efforts.
4. The Downtown Concept Plan Illustrative - This station displayed a large graphic of the Downtown Concept Plan and a detailed block-by-block description of what is envisioned for the downtown in the plan.
5. Development Types By Land Use - Station five provided diagrams to illustrate future uses envisioned for downtown, as well as definitions and examples of different development for each use category.
6. Planning Subareas - This exhibit provided highlights of the Concept Plan by subarea with imagery and text to allow participants to visualize each area and how they differ in character.
7. Street Types - Station seven illustrated the Street Types Diagram, which defines how future downtown streets look, feel and function, including the modal priority.

8. Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements – Station eight illustrated the Bike Facilities Diagram and what bike facilities should be included in future downtown street improvements. This station also described what pedestrian improvements should be prioritized in downtown.
9. Streetscape and Green Infrastructure Improvements – This station described the menu of green infrastructure improvements and streetscape elements that should be incorporated into future public and private improvements over time.
10. Implementation Priorities Activity – This station provided a list of implementation actions that are necessary to achieve the Downtown Concept Plan vision and asked participants to place dots on their top 5 priority actions that they felt were most important to them.

To view the Workshop 3 boards, please see Appendix I. Overall, the input from the workshop was very supportive of the plan concepts and the overall future vision for downtown. A few themes emerged from the comments collected at the workshop stations. Ideas that were widely supported included:

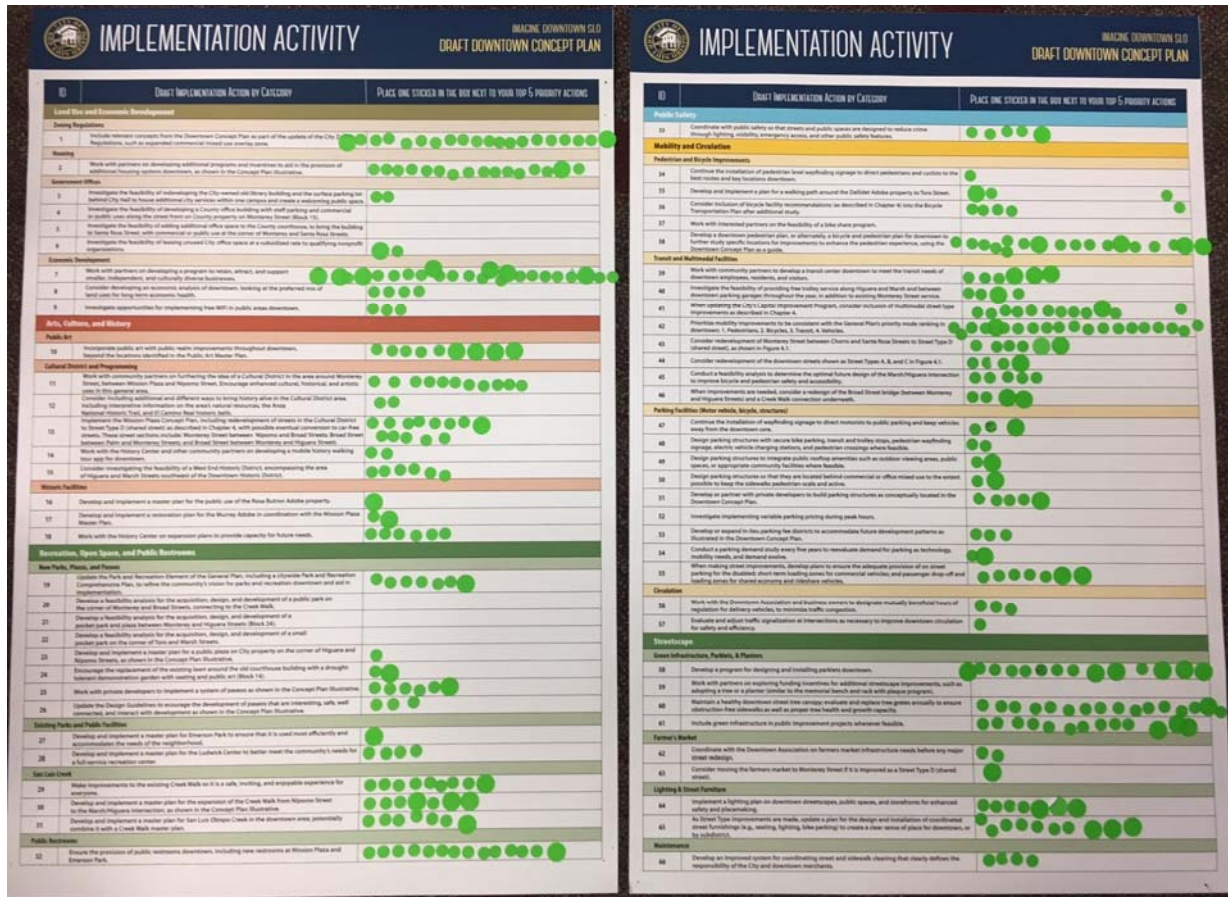
- The overall plan vision and mix of uses: participants like the concept of a true mixed use downtown incorporating housing on upper levels
- Multi modal improvements: people supported the elevated pedestrian and bike priorities, including a cycle track on Marsh and Higuera Streets
- Reconfiguring parking: infilling surface parking lots, directing motorists to parking structures on the perimeter of the core, providing more drop off areas on streets for rideshare, elderly, etc.
- Opportunities for parks and green spaces downtown: including rooftops, parklets, green streets, etc.



Areas that members of the public would like to see changed included:

- Height and scale of development: some residents wanted more limitations on height particularly in the historic core
- Bike boulevards: there were suggestions for changes in how and where two bike boulevards were shown
- Streetscape improvements: some felt that the plan needed to call for even more streetscape improvements, such as restrooms, lighting, trees, benches, and more details shown for things like mid-block cross-walks and bump-outs.
- Car-free streets: some felt that some streets should be completely car-free

Workshop participants ranked the below action items as their top ten priorities for public improvements in the implementation prioritization activity at Station 10:



1. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** - Work with partners on developing a program to retain, attract, and support smaller, independent, and culturally diverse businesses. (24 votes)
2. **TRANSIT AND MULTIMODAL FACILITIES** - Prioritize mobility improvements to be consistent with the General Plan's priority mode ranking in downtown: 1. Pedestrians, 2. Bicycles, 3. Transit, 4. Vehicles. (20 votes)
3. **ZONING REGULATIONS** - 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. (20 votes)
4. **PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS** - Develop a downtown pedestrian plan, or alternately, 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. (18 votes)

5. STREETScape - 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. (16 votes)
6. HOUSING - 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. (16 votes)
7. PUBLIC RESTROOMS - Ensure the provision of public restrooms downtown, including new restrooms at Mission Plaza and Emerson Park. (14 votes)
8. PARKLETS - Develop a program for designing and installing parklets downtown. (14 votes)
9. GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE - Include green infrastructure in public improvement projects whenever feasible. (13 votes)
10. CULTURAL DISTRICT - 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. (13 votes)

For workshop transcripts, please see Appendix J.

Public input from Workshop 3 was shared with City Advisory Bodies in Spring 2017, when they reviewed and provided feedback on the Draft Plan prior to staff and consultants making final plan revisions.

APPENDIX 2

CEQA MEMORANDUM



MEMO

To: Rebecca Gershow
City of San Luis Obispo

From: John Bellas

Cc: Loreli Cappel

Date: April 21, 2017

Subject: CEQA Analysis for the San Luis Obispo Downtown Concept Plan

Michael Baker International (Michael Baker) has conducted an analysis of the Public Draft of the San Luis Obispo Downtown Concept Plan (January 31, 2017) to determine the appropriate level of environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Based on our review, the proposed Downtown Concept Plan is exempt from CEQA both statutorily and pursuant to CEQA's "general rule." In addition, the proposed Downtown Concept Plan would be covered by the City's General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). These three CEQA approaches are described in the following paragraphs. While each approach would be sufficient for this project individually, we recommend that the City cite all three approaches when approving the project.

Statutory Exemption

The proposed San Luis Obispo Downtown Concept Plan is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15262 *Feasibility and Planning Studies*, which states:

A project involving only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the agency, board, or commission has not approved, adopted, or funded does not require the preparation of an EIR or Negative Declaration but does require consideration of environmental factors. This section does not apply to the adoption of a plan that will have a legally binding effect on later activities.

The proposed Downtown Concept Plan is a non-regulatory vision plan that does not have a legally binding effect on later activities; consistency with the plan is encouraged, rather than required. Environmental factors have been considered in the preparation of the plan, including but not limited to aesthetic character, light, natural areas, ecological functions, historic resources, land use compatibility, noise, transportation and circulation, sustainability, and water quality.

General Rule Exemption

The proposed San Luis Obispo Downtown Concept Plan is exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (the "general rule"), which states:

*(b) A project is exempt from CEQA if:
... (3) The activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA.*

The proposed Downtown Concept Plan would not commit the City or any other public agency to undertaking or approving any projects or actions that involve physical changes to the environment. Thus, the Downtown Concept Plan does not have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.

General Plan EIR

The Downtown Concept Plan is an implementation action of the City of San Luis Obispo's General Plan. In particular, General Plan Land Use Element Program 4.24 requires the City to update the Downtown Concept Plan. The City Council of the City of San Luis Obispo certified the EIR for the General Plan Land Use and Circulation Elements Update (State Clearinghouse No. 2013121019) on September 16, 2014. Pursuant to CEQA Section 21166 and Section 15162 of the State CEQA Guidelines, when an EIR has been certified for a project, no subsequent or supplemental EIR shall be prepared unless: (a) Project changes require major revisions of the EIR; (b) Changed circumstances have occurred that require major revisions of the EIR; or (c) New information of substantial importance becomes available that was not known and could not have been known at the time the EIR was certified. The proposed Downtown Concept Plan does not constitute a change in the project that would require major revisions of the EIR. Likewise there are no changed circumstances or new information that would require further environmental review. Adoption of the proposed Downtown Concept Plan would not result any significant effects not discussed in the General Plan EIR and would not result in the substantial increase in the severity of any significant effects identified in the General Plan EIR. In addition no mitigation measures or alternatives not found to be feasible would in fact be feasible and no mitigation measure or alternatives that are different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment. Therefore, the proposed Downtown Concept Plan is covered by the General Plan EIR and that none of the conditions that require further environmental review have occurred.

End of memo.

APPENDIX 3 RESOLUTION



RESOLUTION NO. 10829 (2017 SERIES)

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING THE DOWNTOWN CONCEPT PLAN SUPPLEMENT AND POSTER AS A LONG RANGE VISION AND A GUIDE FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN THE DOWNTOWN

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of San Luis Obispo conducted a public hearing in the Council Chamber of City Hall, 990 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, California, on September 5, 2017, for the purpose of considering Planning File No. GENP-1622-2015, the Final Public Draft of the Downtown Concept Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of the City of San Luis Obispo conducted a public hearing in the Council Chamber of City Hall, 990 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, California, on July 26, 2017, for the purpose of formulating and forwarding recommendations to the City Council of the City of San Luis Obispo regarding the Downtown Concept Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Downtown Concept Plan is an update of the Conceptual Physical Plan for the City's Center, adopted by Resolution No8165 on May 4, 1993; and

WHEREAS, the updated Downtown Concept Plan includes a supplement and poster; and

WHEREAS, the Downtown Concept Plan has been prepared and presented by City staff, consultants, and the Council-appointed Creative Vision Team (CVT); and

WHEREAS, the decisions incorporated within the Downtown Concept Plan reflect substantial public engagement and input. Since project initiation in December 2015, there were focus groups with 48 stakeholders, one open house (75 participants signed in), two project workshops (110 and 100 participants signed in), two neighborhood meetings (35 participants), an on-line survey (393 responses), and 13 CVT meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Plan has also incorporated the input of City elected and appointed officials, including the City Council; Planning Commission; Mass Transportation Committee, Bicycle Advisory Committee, Cultural Heritage Committee, Parks and Recreation Commission, and Architectural Review Commission in the development of the Downtown Concept plan; and

WHEREAS, the City's General Plan Land Use Element contains a program directing the City to update the Downtown Concept Plan to address significant changes in or affecting the Downtown area and include meaningful public input (LUE Program 4.24); and

WHEREAS, the City's General Plan Land Use Element also contains a program directing the City to 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 (LUE Program 4.25); and

WHEREAS, the City's General Plan Land Use Element contains policies on encouraging downtown residential, public gatherings, walking environment, street-level diversity, green space, parking, sense of place, design principles, building height, sidewalk appeal and other related concepts included in the proposed Downtown Concept Plan (LUE Section 4, Downtown); and

WHEREAS, the City's General Plan Circulation Element also contains goals and policies on encouraging better transportation habits, walking and pedestrian facilities, complete streets, and modal priorities in the downtown, as included in the proposed Downtown Concept Plan (CE Goal 1.7.1, Section 5, Policy 6.1.1 and 6.1.3); and

WHEREAS, on July 12, 2017 the CVT unanimously endorsed the Final Public Draft of the Downtown Concept Plan supplement and poster; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has duly considered all evidence, including information presented by the CVT, public testimony, and the evaluation and recommendations by staff, presented at said hearing,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of San Luis Obispo as follows:

SECTION 1. Findings. Based upon all the evidence, the City Council makes the following findings:

- a.) The proposed Downtown Concept Plan implements General Plan Land Use Element Program 4.24 because it updates the Conceptual Physical Plan for the City's Center, addresses changes in the downtown, and included the opportunity for meaningful public input.
- b.) The proposed Downtown Concept Plan sets the stage for implementation of General Plan Land Use Element Program 4.25 because it directs staff to 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.
- c.) The proposed Downtown Concept Plan supports the policies in the General Plan Land Use Element Section 4, Downtown, because it defines the community's long-range vision for the downtown and includes planning principles, goals, concepts and implementation actions that together provide guidance for future development projects and public improvements to improve the downtown.
- d.) The proposed Downtown Concept Plan supports policies in the General Plan Circulation Element Sections 1, 5 and 6, because it encourages better transportation habits, promotes walking, supports the development of complete streets, and prioritizes pedestrians and bicycle improvements in the downtown.

- e.) The proposed 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 downtown.
- f.) 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 lists.

SECTION 2. Environmental Determination. Based upon all the evidence, the City Council makes the following findings, in concurrence with the CEQA Analysis for the Downtown Concept Plan (Appendix 2):

- a) The Downtown Concept Plan is categorically exempt from CEQA under Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies, as an advisory planning document which has no binding effect on future activities.
- b) As a visionary planning document that is conceptual in nature, which does not provide regulatory authority or grant any entitlement for projects which could have a physical effect on the environment to be implemented directly, the proposed Downtown Concept Plan is also exempt under the General Rule, Section 15061 (b)(3) since it can be seen with certainty that the Downtown Concept Plan will not have a significant effect on the environment.
- c) As an implementation action of the City of San Luis Obispo’s General Plan, the proposed Downtown Concept Plan is covered by the Council-certified EIR for the Land Use and Circulation Elements (State Clearinghouse No. 2013121019) and none of the conditions that require further environmental review have occurred.

SECTION 3. Action. The City Council hereby adopts the San Luis Obispo Downtown Concept Plan supplement and illustrative poster, included as Exhibit A and B.

Upon motion of Vice Mayor Rivoire, seconded by Council Member Christianson, and on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Council Members Christianson, Gomez, and Pease,
 Vice Mayor Rivoire and Mayor Harmon

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

The foregoing resolution was adopted this 5th day of September, 2017.



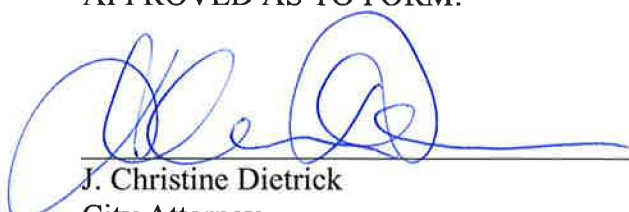
Mayor Heid Harmon

ATTEST:



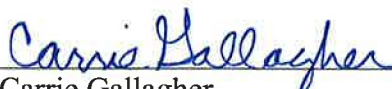
Carrie Gallagher
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



J. Christine Dietrick
City Attorney

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of the City of San Luis Obispo, California, this 9th day of October, 2017.



Carrie Gallagher
City Clerk