



TOWN OF LAKE COWICHAN

Economic and Sustainable Development Committee
Tuesday, October 10th, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. – Council Chambers

1. **AGENDA**

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Page #

INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS (if applicable)

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

3. **BUSINESS ARISING AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

(a) **Recent Items:**

- (i) Sustainable Waste and Composting – Partnership Options.
- (ii) Weir Upgrade or Replacement.
- (iii) Additional Lake and River Access Opportunities.

(b) **Ongoing Items Still Being Addressed:**

- (i) Business Walkabout.

4. **DELEGATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

None.

5. **CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

6. **STAFF REPORTS**

None.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

- (a) Business Showcase.
- (b) Homelessness, Mental Health, and Substance Addictions.
- (c) Short-term Rentals and Impact on Affordable Housing.
- (d) Council: Crafting a Vision for Downtown Lake Cowichan (see example attached)
- (e) Readiness of Town to Accommodate Development Requirements.

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8. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

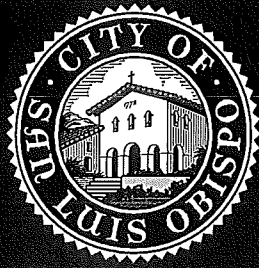
9. **PUBLIC RELATIONS ITEMS**

10. **MEDIA/PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD**

11. **IN-CAMERA**

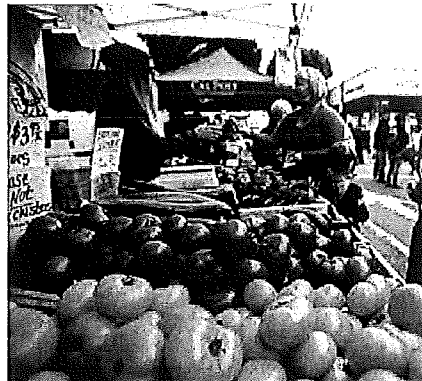
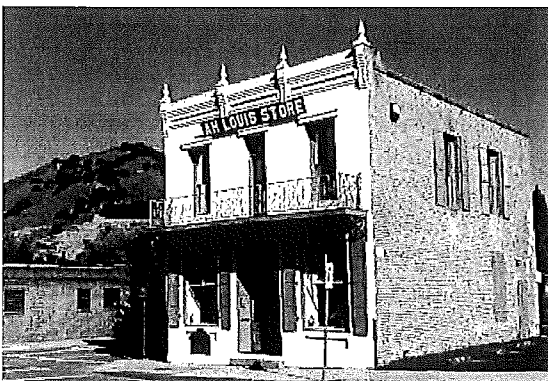
12. **ADJOURNMENT**

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San Luis Obispo Downtown Concept Plan

Public Draft July, 2017



Council adopts a vision plan for downtown

Seeking to maintain the downtown's vibrancy, desirability and charm, the City Council Tuesday adopted the Downtown Concept Plan and provided direction to continue to move forward with Mission Plaza Concept Plan specifically identifying the replacement of the restroom as a key first phase of implementation.

The long-range vision for the downtown includes more infill housing, pedestrian and bicycle improvements, including a bicycle and pedestrian bridge across Monterey Street, additional parking structures, improved public restrooms and more public art. Meanwhile, Mission Plaza could feature more patio space for concertgoers, a café and shared streets designed to easily convert to event space.

The Downtown Concept Plan was first adopted in May of 1993 and has served as a vision for the downtown area ever since, guiding capital improvement projects as well as public and private development. The General Plan Land Use Element update in 2014 included an objective to update both the Downtown Concept Plan and the Mission Plaza Concept Plan.

The premise of the Downtown Concept Plan is that keeping the downtown area vibrant requires constant vigilance, ongoing experimentation, adaptability and visionary leadership. The plans take several trends into consideration, including changes in transportation and retail, the aging population, changing housing needs and sustainability.

The updated Downtown Concept Plan resulted from a collaborative process with robust public engagement. The project began in December of 2015 and was led by a Council-appointed Creative Vision Team of ten volunteers who provided important direction and design assistance. It also included stakeholder meetings, public workshops, neighborhood meetings, and an online survey. The final draft was unanimously recommended for adoption by the Planning Commission in July.

The plans are not regulatory documents, but they will guide the form and character of the downtown for the next 25 years. They can be found on the project website at www.slocity.org/downtown.

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.

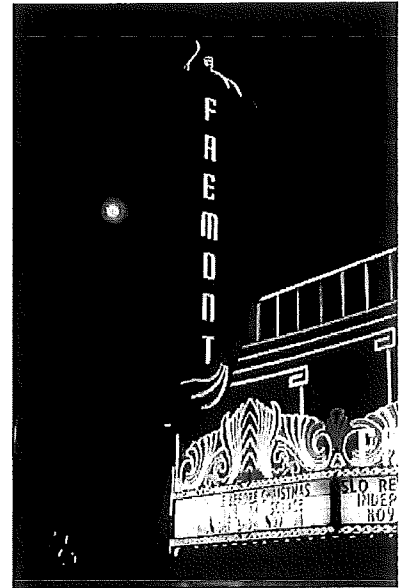


From the 1993 Conceptual Physical Plan for the City's Center

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.

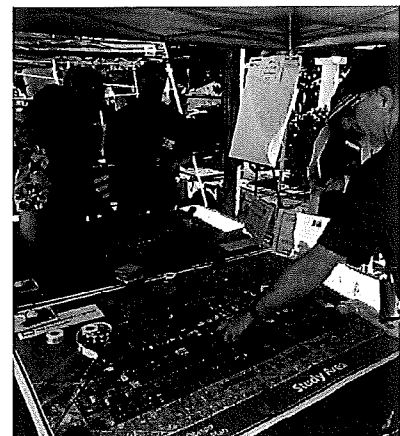
The recent update of the General Plan Land Use Element in 2014 included an implementation objective to update both the Downtown Concept Plan and the Mission Plaza Concept Plan. As part of the 2015–2017 Financial Plan, the City Council allocated funding for both efforts.

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.

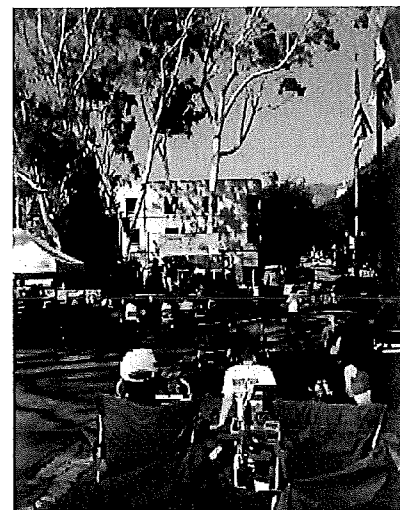


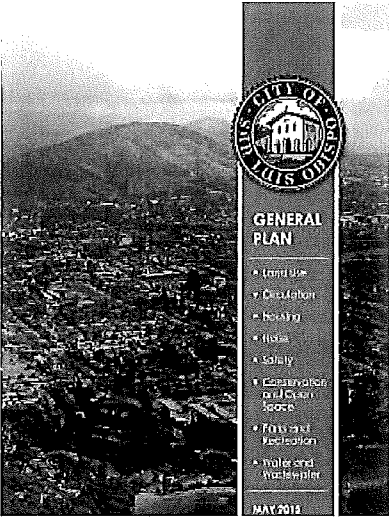
How Will the Plan Be Used?

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.

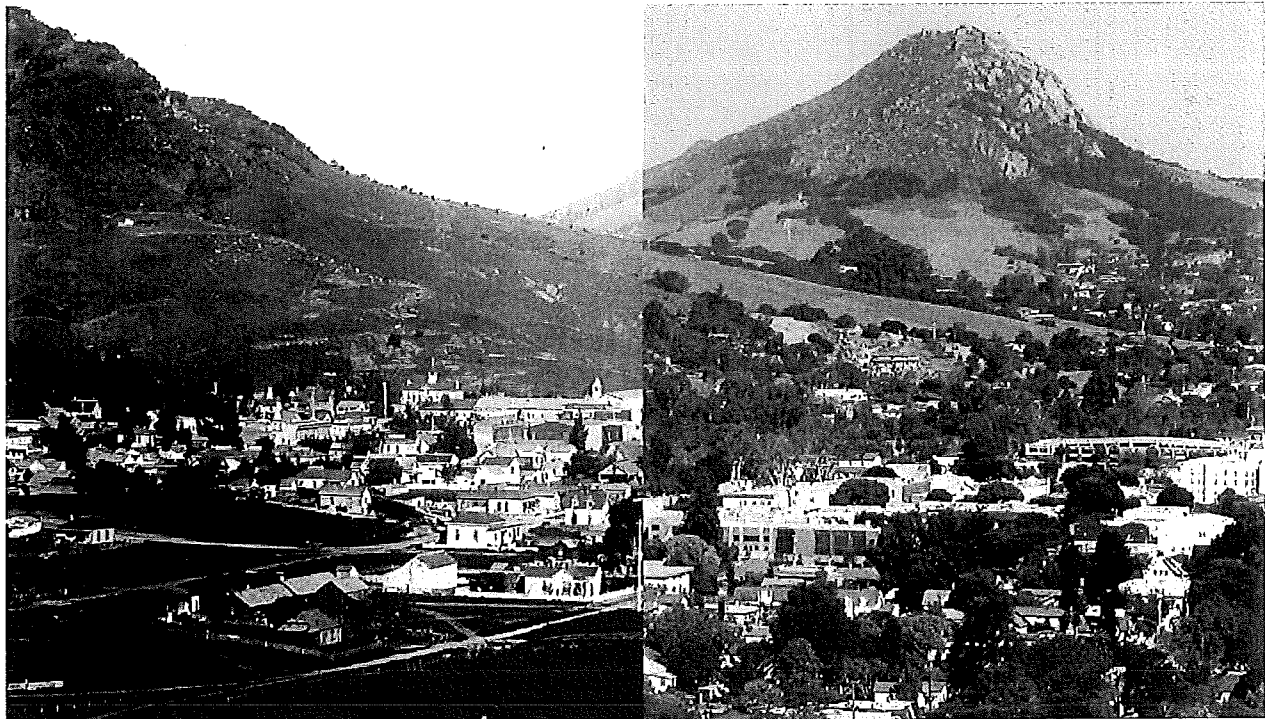
Community Design Guidelines

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

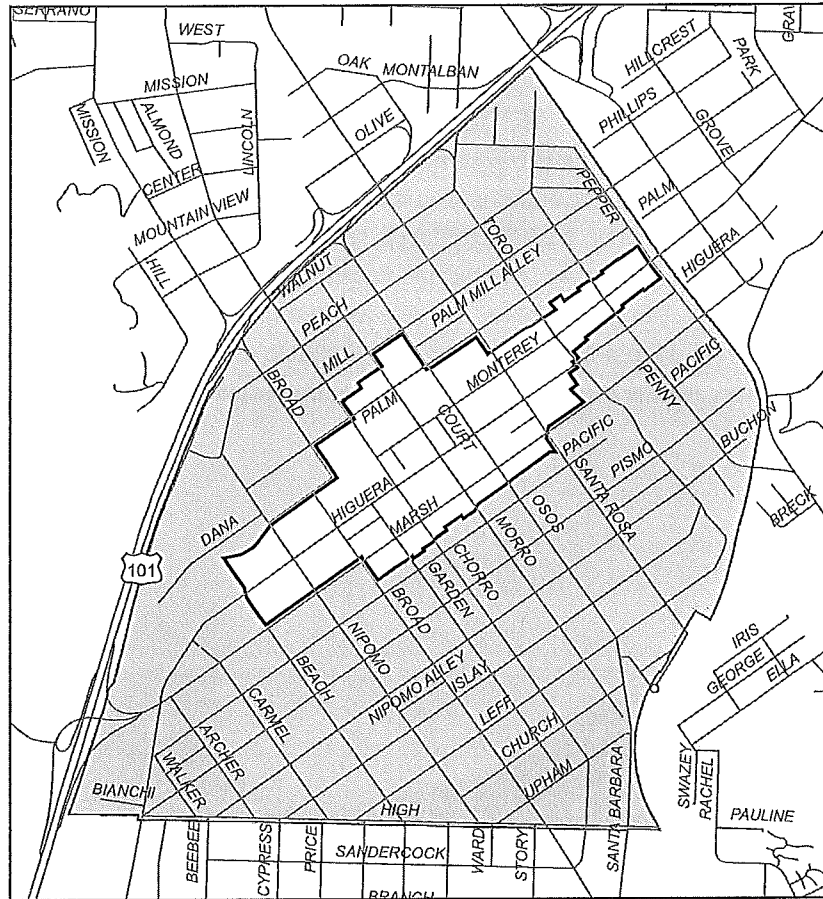


Downtown photo collage courtesy of Pierre Rademaker. Photo on left, circa 1890, photo on right, 2008

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

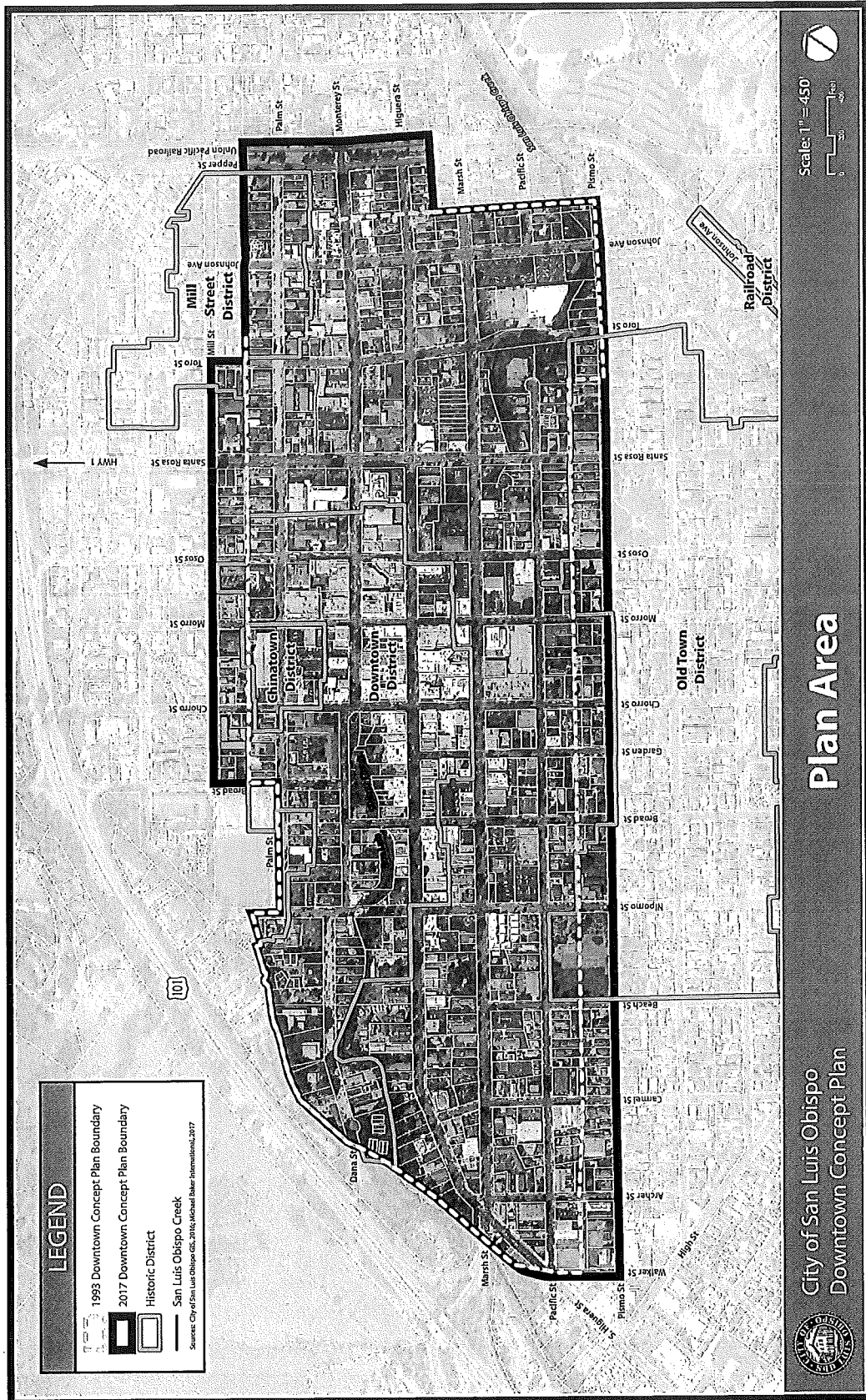


Source: San Luis Obispo General Plan, May 2015, page 1-39

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



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 A.

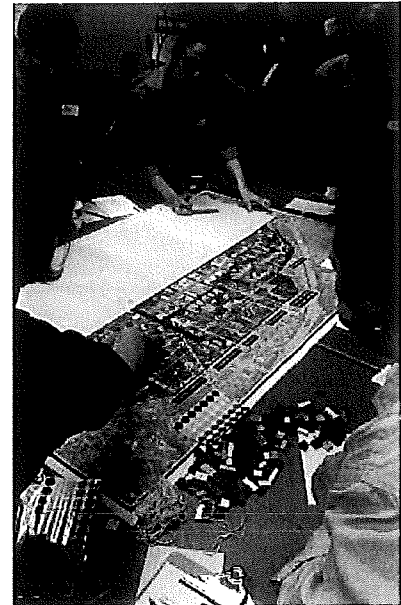
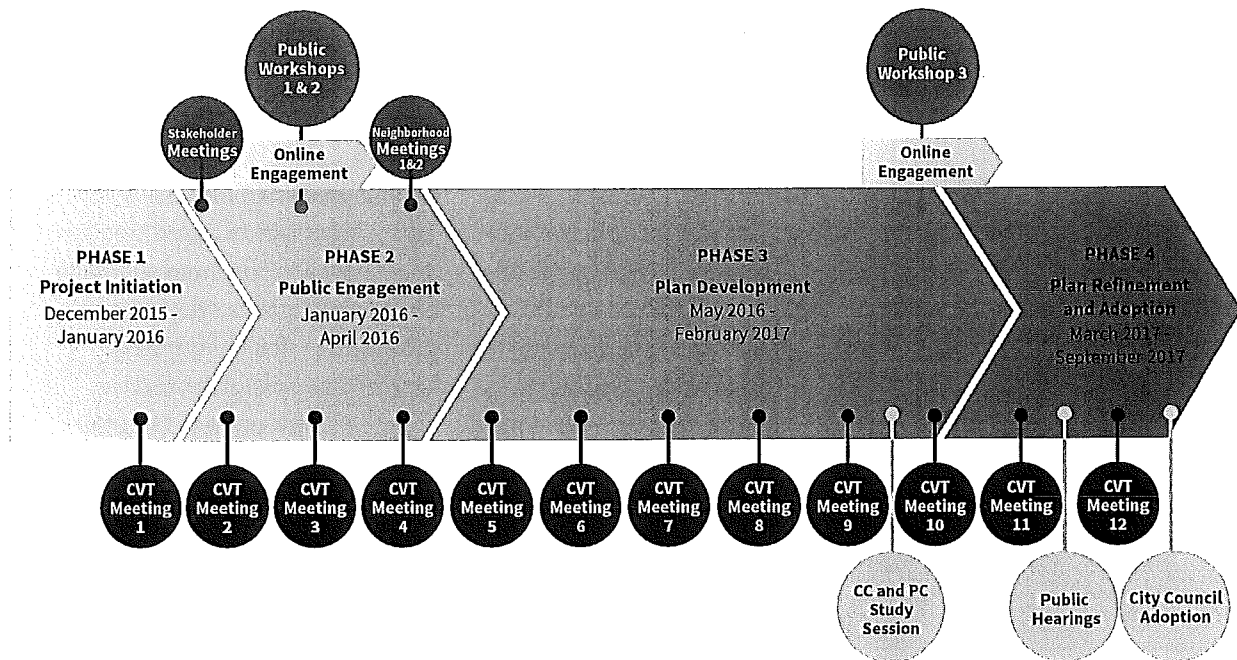
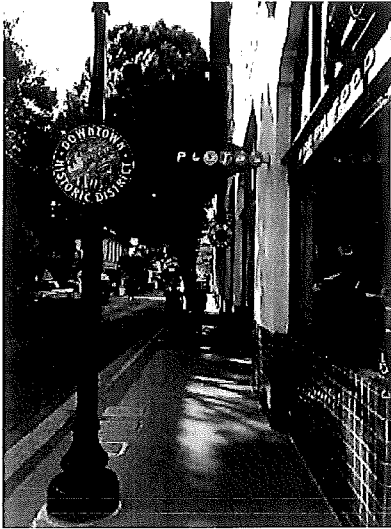


Figure 1.3. Outreach Process Graphic

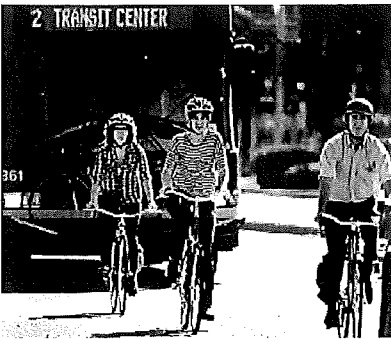


The Changing Downtown



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.

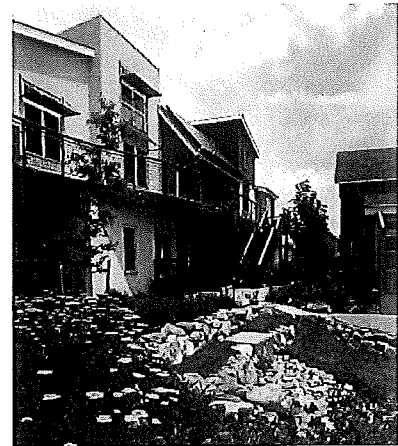


- 2. Retail:** A common dialogue in communities around the world is the decline in the retail industry. A dramatic upward trend in online shopping identifies a clear change in customer spending habits that has been attributed to customers' access to better prices, more convenient shopping due to flexible 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 is the largest in our nation's history, with 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.

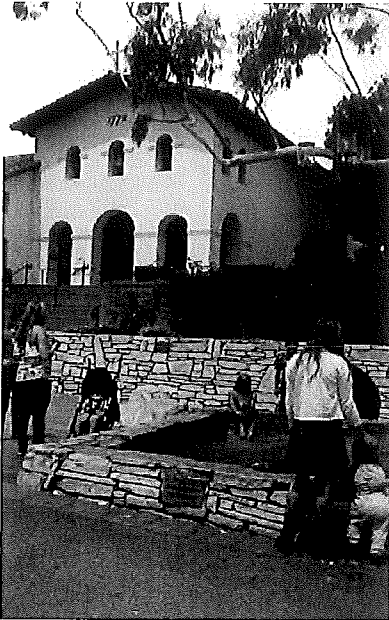


Vision, Principles, and Goals



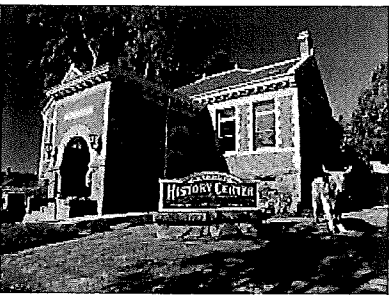
Concept Plan Vision

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 Encourage the use of sustainable materials, green infrastructure, and renewable energy resources in downtown development.
- 1.4 Provide harmonious transitions between buildings, uses and surrounding neighborhoods.
- 1.5 Focus attention on the downtown’s gateways through improved street design, architecture, public art, and public spaces that announce your arrival.

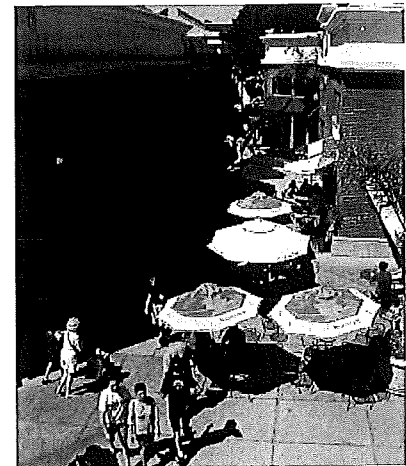
2. Plentiful and Safe Public Spaces: Provide opportunities for positive social interaction, quiet moments, and access to the natural environment, where everyone feels safe and welcome.

- 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 walkability, 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 travelling to and throughout downtown.

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

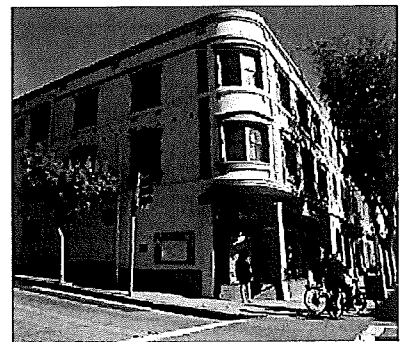
- 6.1 Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic structures.
- 6.2 Preserve historic residential neighborhoods on the periphery of the downtown.
- 6.3 Expand cultural, historical, and artistic opportunities, including enhancing the downtown Cultural District.
- 6.4 Celebrate downtown with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



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 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.

