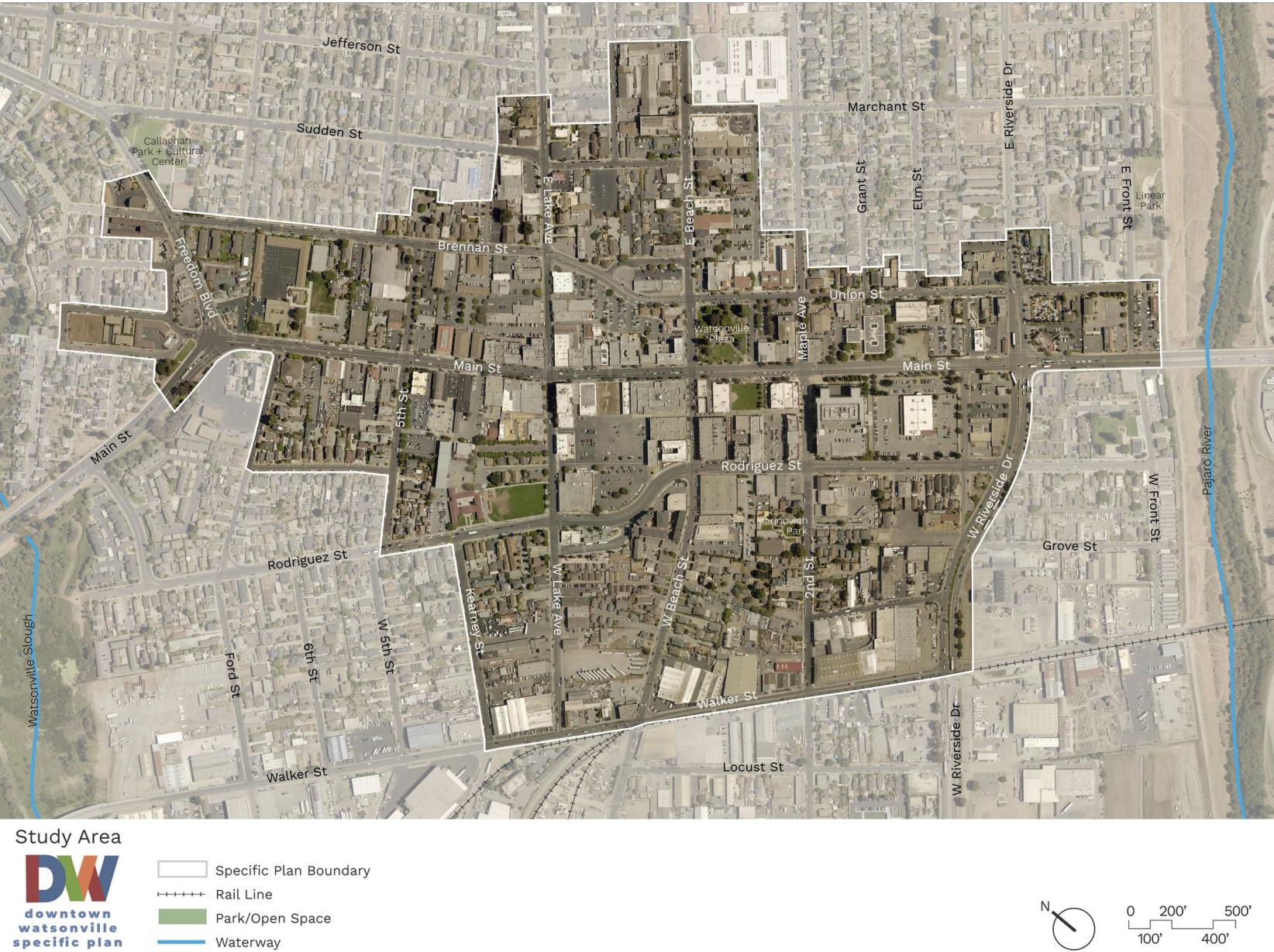


City of Watsonville

Downtown Specific Plan + EIR

Planning Commission Briefing | March 2, 2021

Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan Area



Progress Report to Date

Specific Plan Process and Schedule



Progress To Date

- Existing Conditions Reports

- Market Assessment
- Noise Evaluation
- Transportation
- Utility Systems
- Water Supply
- Land Use and Urban Design

- Downtown Character Areas

- Downtown Core
- Civic Core
- Commercial “Flex”
- Workspace / Industrial
- “Flex” Neighborhoods – (East & West)

- Vision Themes and Guiding Principles

- Land Use and Mobility Alternatives

Community Engagement Efforts to Date

- Stakeholder Interviews
- Advisory Committee Meetings (3)
- Community-Wide Visioning Workshop (1)
- Community-Wide Surveys (2)
 - Strengths, Issues, and Opportunities Survey (666 respondents)
 - Draft Themes and Guiding Principles Feedback (100 comments)

What we've heard so far...

What we have heard so far...

Strengths of the Downtown

- Watsonville is a **unique community** with agriculture, wine, art, education, and nature themes
- **Charming historic architecture** and character
- **The Plaza** is the **Crown Jewel** of the downtown
- **Farmer's Market** has a distinct character and draws people to the downtown
- Recent streetscape improvements, beautifying the streets
- **Murals and art!**
- Scale of **downtown very walkable**
- The neighborhoods in and surrounding Downtown provide affordable housing for residents

What we have heard so far...

Key Issues Facing Downtown

Identity and functionality

- No real destination or cohesive identity
- **Lacking synergy** between residents and businesses
- Lack of density downtown, not enough people live there to activate it
- Little opportunity to be social at night
- Lack of wayfinding signage
- Cleanliness
- Not ADA compliant

Traffic and Safety

- Main Street is too auto-centric, people driving too fast
- Pedestrian and cyclist safety
- Main Street **congestion/traffic**

What we have heard so far...

Key Issues Facing Downtown

Social Issues

- People experiencing homelessness and mental health issues
- Resetar and clientele

Demographic changes

- Fear of gentrification
- Concerns about displacement
- Small local business preservation
- Concern with migration from the Bay area

What we have heard so far...

Opportunities in the Downtown

- Fox Theater and Mansion House both hold **great potential**
- **More housing** is needed (both market rate, low income, and affordable)
- Desire to see **more diverse uses and activities**
- **Cabrillo College** brings young people to the downtown, but need a place to go or something to do
- **Kitchen and retail incubators** and **Digital Nest** establish fresh momentum to build off of

What we have heard so far...

Opportunities in the Downtown

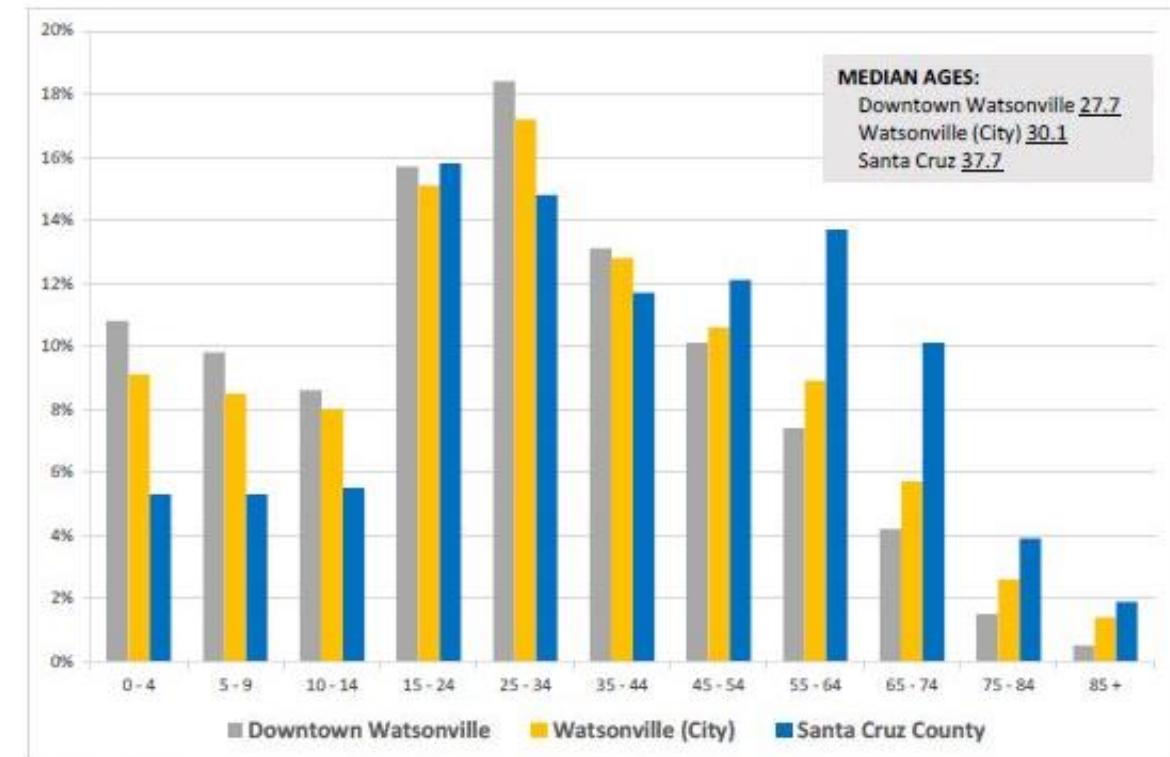
- Strong non-profit presence providing services to residents
- Space for new businesses to come in and provide essential missing services/needs
- Main Street roadway very wide - opportunity to widen sidewalks, add bike lane or parklets
- Recently approved alcohol ordinance allows new uses within the downtown
- Sustainability and community health and is highly valued by community members

Downtown Existing Conditions

Downtown Demographics

- 2,193 residents, 711 households (2019)
 - 4% of the City population
- Median age –
 - Downtown - 27.7 years
 - City - 30.1 years
- Diverse racial and ethnic mix in both the City and Downtown
 - 90% Hispanic origin in Downtown

Age Distribution 2019

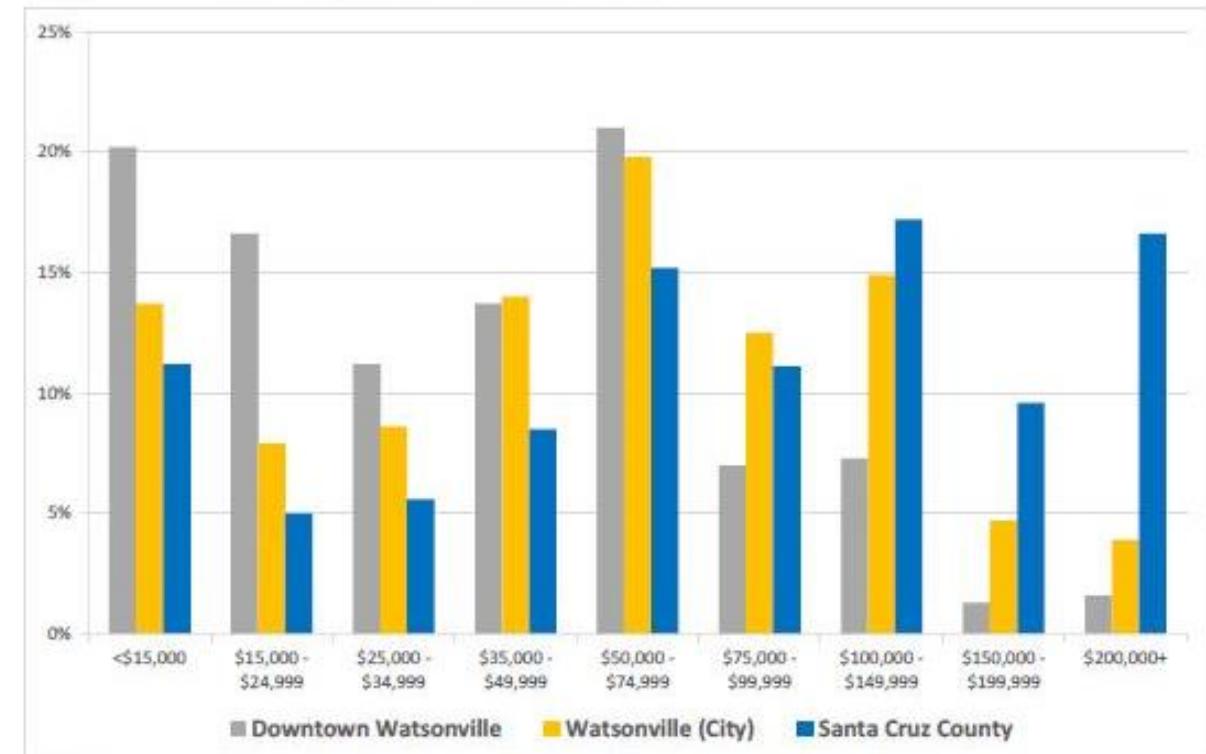


Sources: US Census Bureau, ESRI Business Analyst, Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.

Downtown Demographics

- 2,193 residents, 711 households (2019)
 - 4% of the City population
- Median household income
 - Downtown - \$36,500
 - Citywide - \$55,000
- Pockets of very high-cost housing

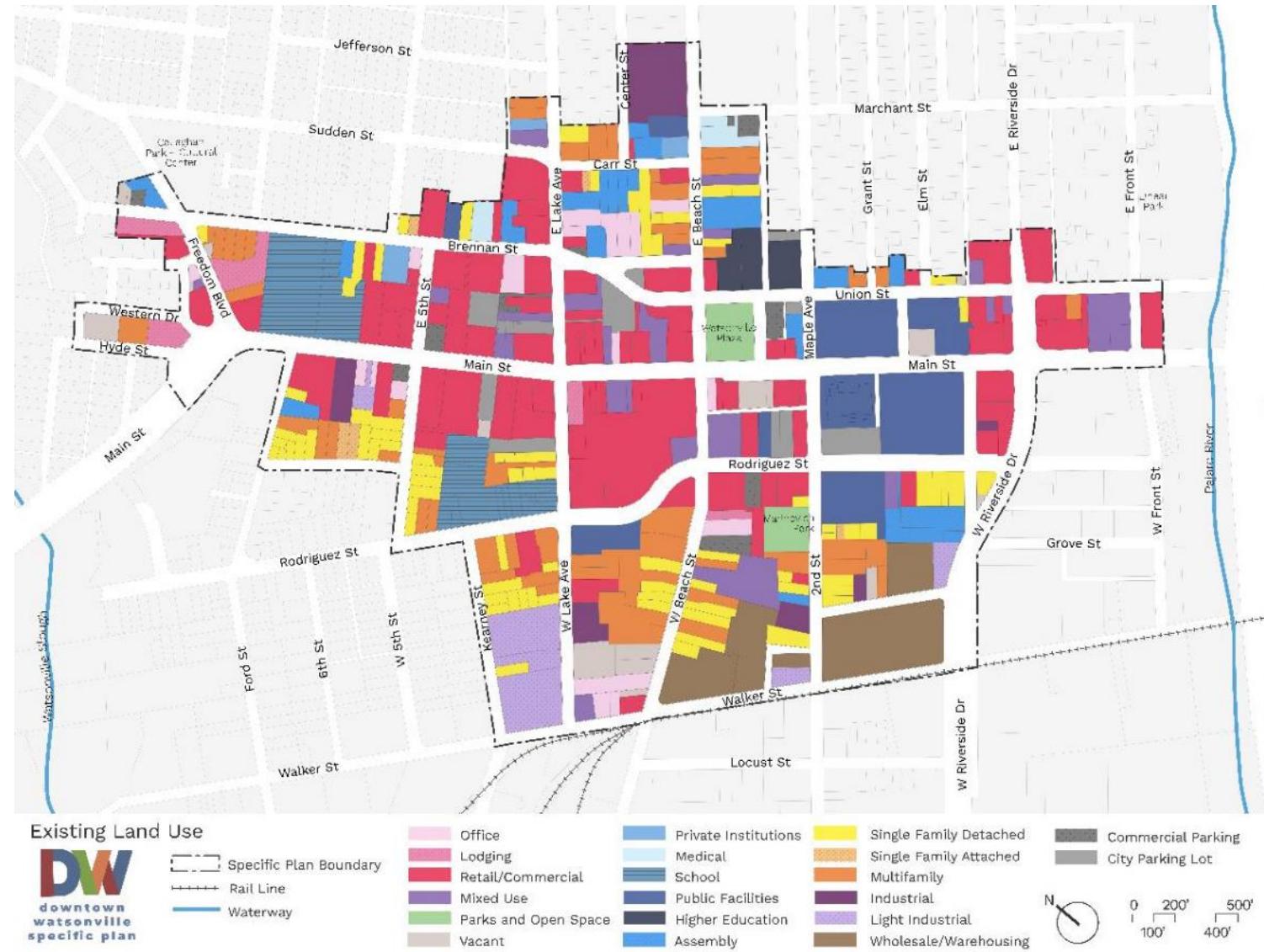
Household Income Distribution 2019



Sources: US Census Bureau, ESRI Business Analyst, Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.

Existing Land Use

- 740 residential units (60% multifamily, 40% single family) in Downtown
- Multifamily is a mix of duplexes, garden-style apartments, higher density buildings with 10+ units
- 81% renters in Downtown, 50% citywide
- Majority of the housing is built before 1970
- Non-Residential uses (as a % of City) –
 - Office – 36%
 - Retail – 30%
 - Industrial – 6%
 - Flex/R&D – <1%

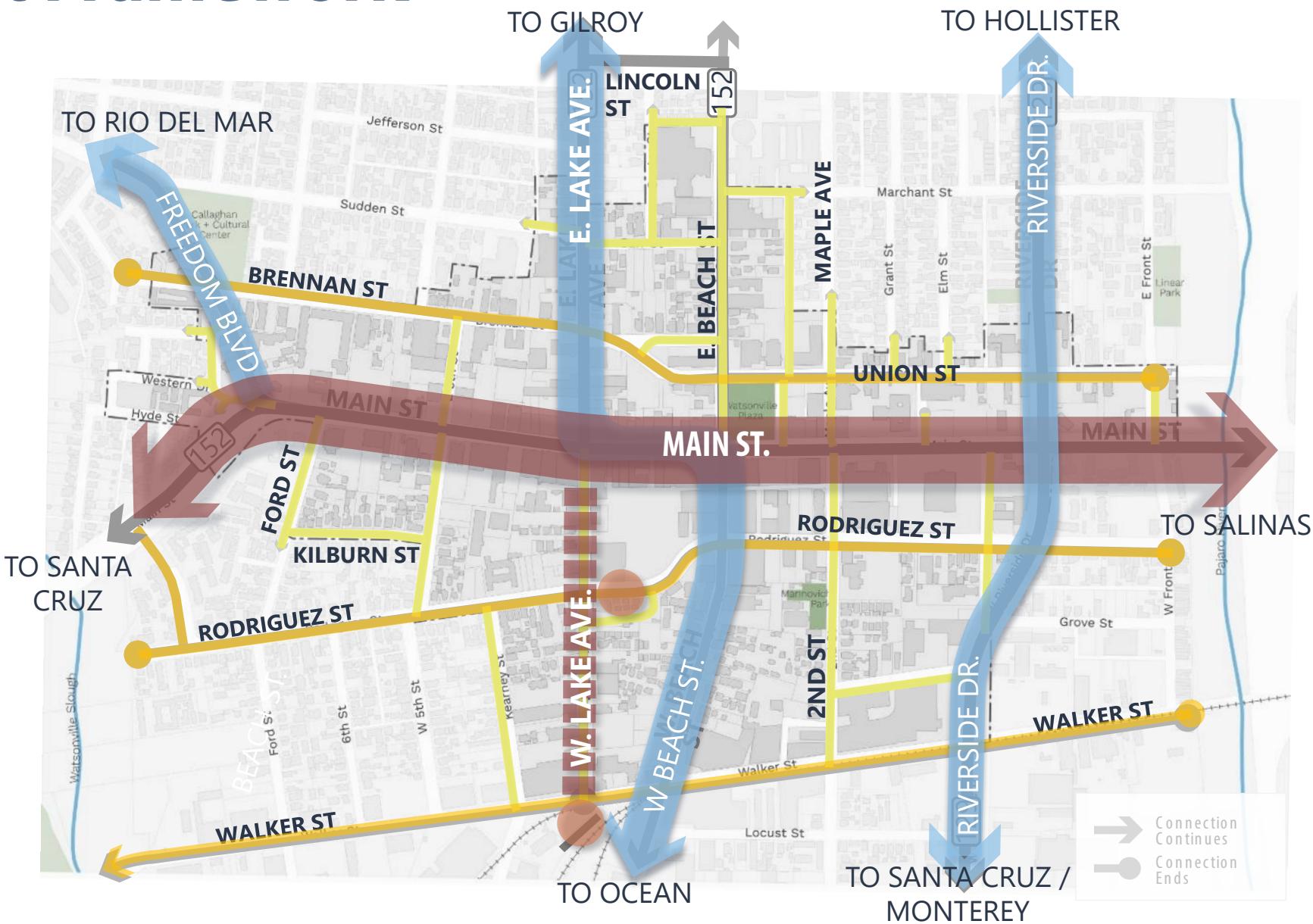


Downtown Street Network

Downtown Street Framework

FRAMEWORK NETWORK

- Main St Corridor (Historic Main Street)
- Regional Connectors: (Lake Ave, Beach St, Riverside Dr, Freedom Blvd; connections to Santa Cruz, Salinas, Gilroy and the beach)
- Cross-Town Connectors: (Union St/Brennan St, Rodriguez St & Walker St)
- Local (Downtown) Street Network
- Historic Depot / Bus Depot / W. Lake Ave Corridor



Downtown Street Framework

LARGE BLOCKS DOWNTOWN:

- Most blocks in Downtown Watsonville are **600ft or longer** (2,000-3000 ft block perimeters)
- Typical walkable urban blocks: **250-400 ft** block lengths (>1,200 ft perimeter)
- Watsonville Plaza: 280 x 250 ft
- Additional connectivity needed through large blocks (paseos & walkable alleys)



Key Findings – Downtown Street Framework

CONNECTIVITY

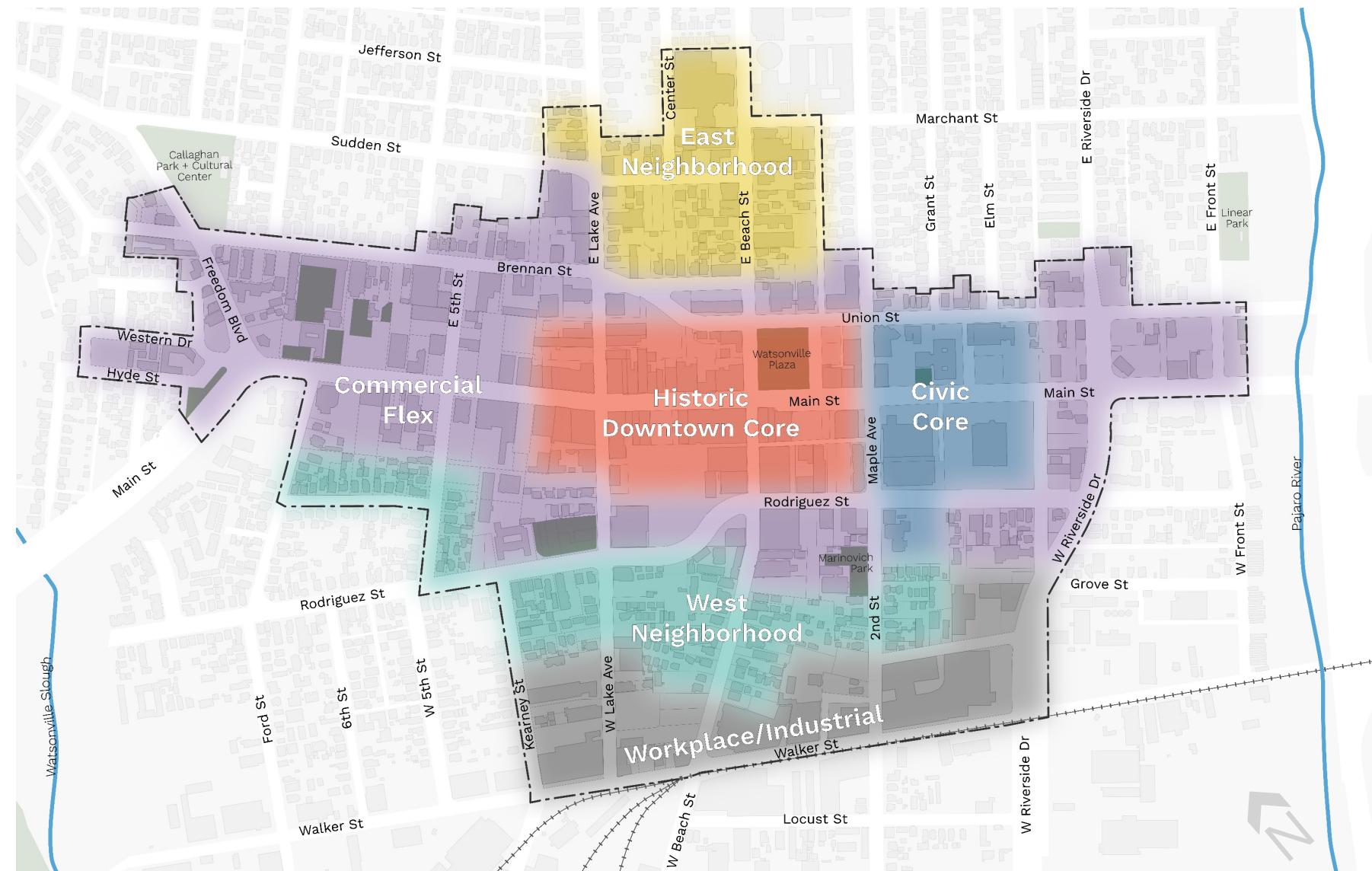
- Strong **existing street-network** with a clear hierarchy
- Additional/improved connectivity can be added relatively simply as infill occurs
- Alley walkways can provide pedestrian connectivity
- Caltrans Route Designations – Hwy 152 and 129
- Main St is not under CALTRANS jurisdiction between Riverside Dr and Beach St only



Downtown Character Areas

Downtown Character Areas

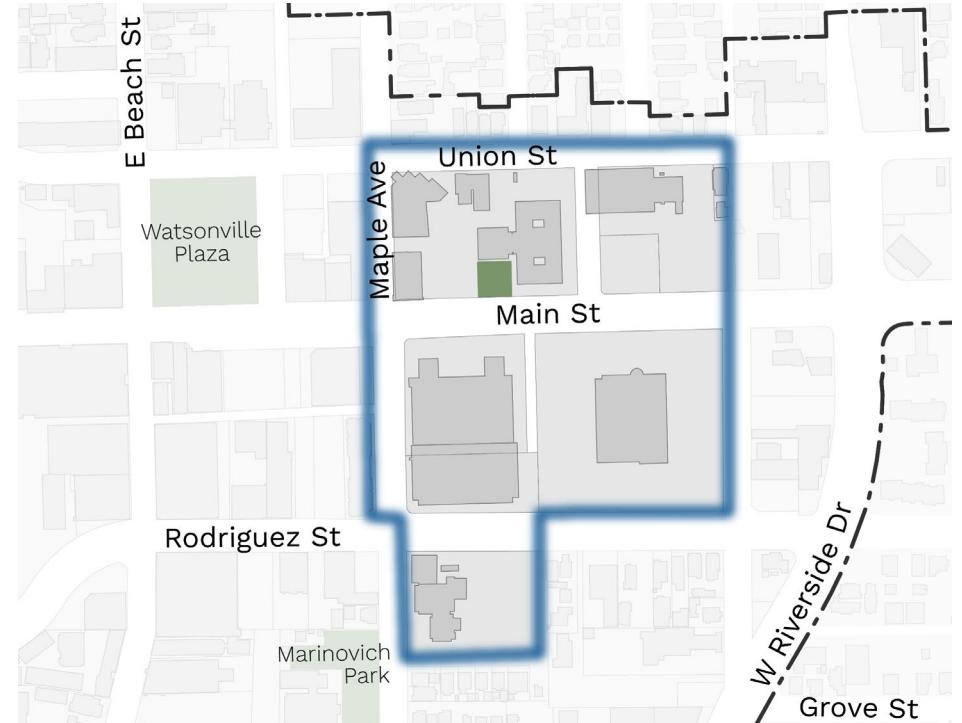
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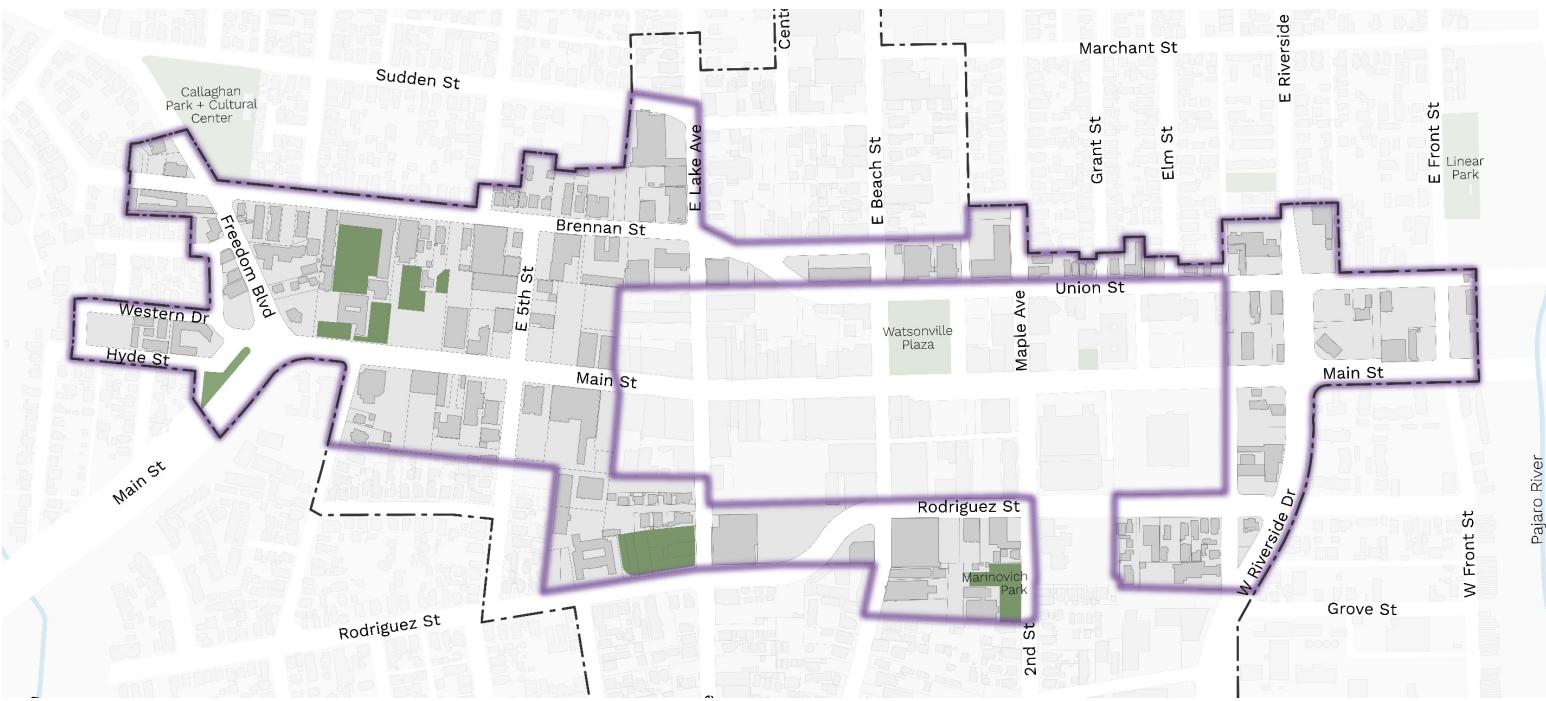
Downtown Core



Civic Core



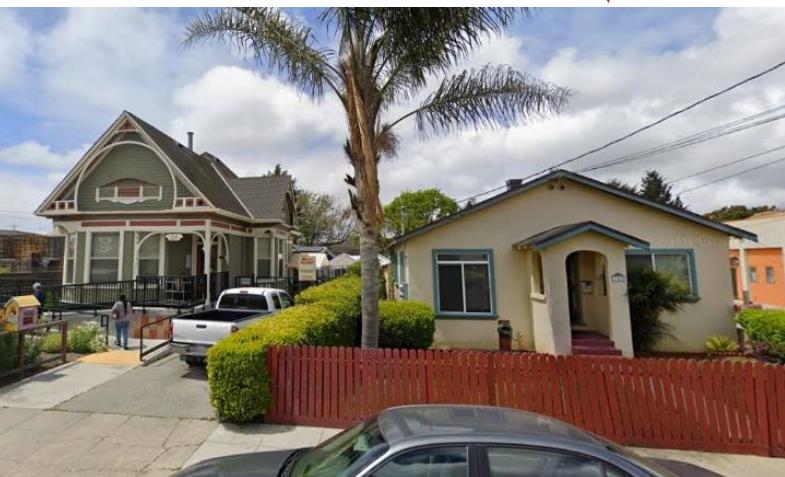
Commercial “Flex”



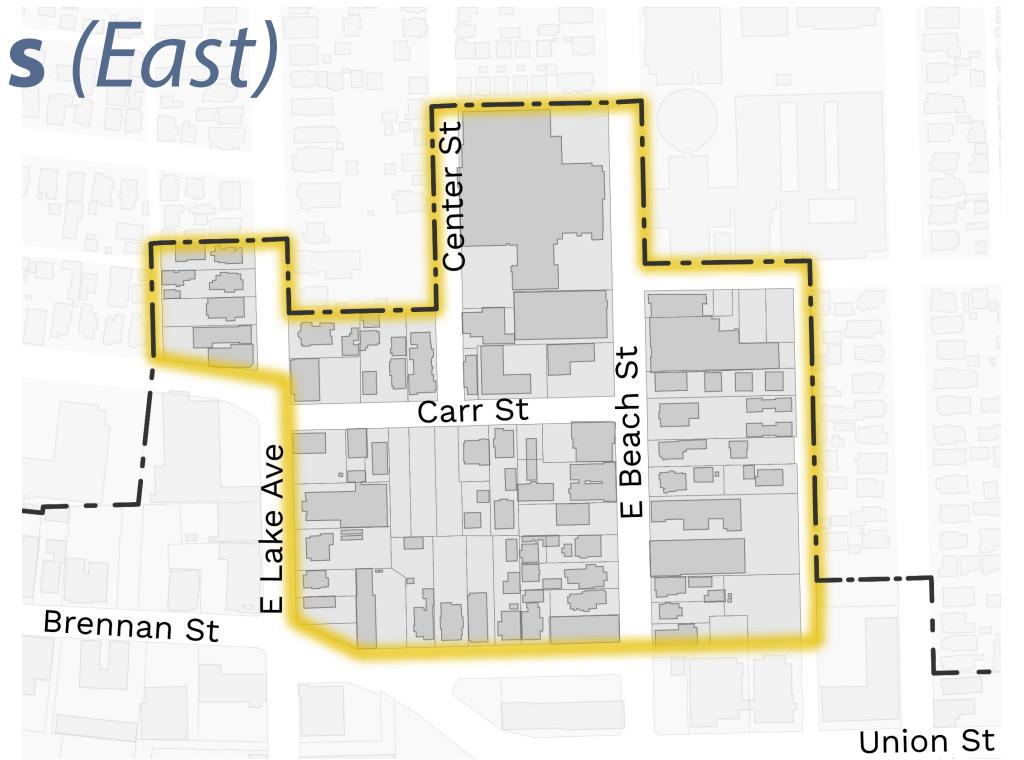
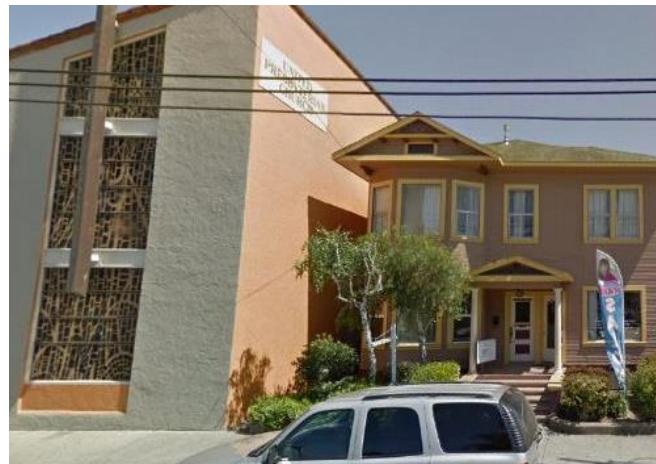
Workplace / Industrial Flex



Downtown “Flex” Neighborhoods (West)



Downtown “Flex” Neighborhoods (East)



Vision Themes and Guiding Principles

Vision Themes



Vitality



Dignity



Equity



Preservation



Safety



Innovation

Guiding Principles

- Preserve key elements that make Downtown unique
- Establish a varied choice of uses and experiences for our diverse community
- Create housing opportunities for all
- Promote local economic prosperity
- Create a vibrant, safe, and active Downtown
- Foster a healthy, inclusive, and culturally connected community where all can thrive
- Re-imagine and innovate mobility options and connections
- Incorporate sustainable design elements to improve community health

Guiding Principles

- **Preserve key elements that make Downtown unique**
 - Celebrate the Plaza as an authentic gathering place and central node for the community and foster its energy to elevate community connections.
- **Establish a varied choice of uses and experiences for our diverse community**
 - Identify and recruit key missing uses that would help diversify the options of experiences in downtown.
- **Create housing opportunities for all**
 - Encourage housing (market rate, low income, and affordable) that supports the varied socioeconomic interests and needs of the community.
- **Promote local economic prosperity**
 - Maintain and strengthen Downtown's diverse business presence supporting economic prosperity for all.

Guiding Principles

- **Create a vibrant, safe, and active Downtown environment**
 - Encourage mixed use with ground floor commercial uses and housing above.
- **Foster a healthy, inclusive, and culturally connected community where all can thrive**
 - Promote livability regardless of age, ethnicity, income by focusing on community connection, needs, and sense of belonging.
- **Re-imagine and innovate mobility options and connections**
 - Design safe pedestrian and bicyclist facilities that invite all users regardless of age and ability to use and enjoy.
- **Incorporate sustainable design elements to improve community health**
 - Leverage connections to the adjacent natural environment (Pajaro River, sloughs, etc.) with bicycle and walking trails.

Next Steps in the Process

Next Steps...

- Refine Land Use and Mobility Alternatives
- Finalize Historic Resources Survey Report
- Host Advisory Committee Meeting #4, Community-Wide Workshop #2, and conduct Community-Wide Survey #2 to gain community input on Alternative direction
- Reconvene with City Council and Planning Commission to gain input on Preferred Alternative direction
- Craft Development and Design Regulations
- Conduct Environmental Analysis

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