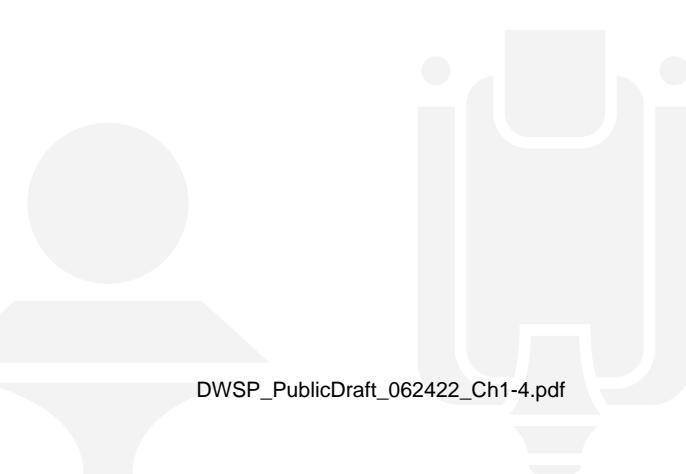




# DOWNTOWN WATSONVILLE SPECIFIC PLAN

CITY OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA—Public Draft, June 2022







# DW

downtown  
watsonville  
specific plan

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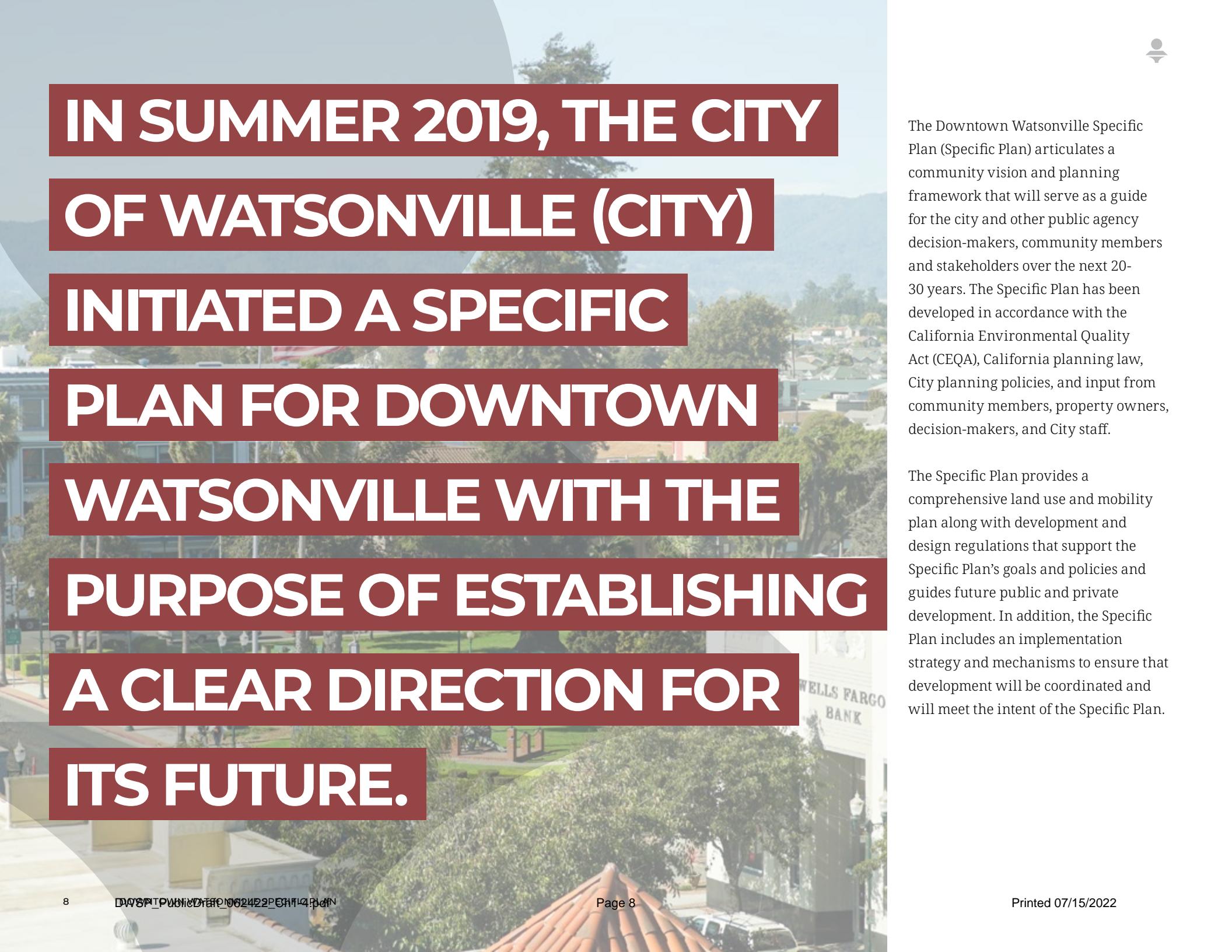
The work upon which this publication is based was funded in whole or in part through a grant awarded by State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), FHWA and FTA. The City of Watsonville was a recipient of a Sustainable Transportation Grant administered by Caltrans. The statements and conclusions of this report are those of the City of Watsonville and the consultant team and not necessarily those of Caltrans, or its employees. Caltrans make no warranties, express or implied, and assume no liability for the information contained in the succeeding text.

A scenic view of a coastal town. In the foreground, there's a large, multi-story building with many windows and a green roof. Several palm trees are scattered throughout the scene. An American flag is flying from a pole on the right side. The background shows more buildings and trees, suggesting a hillside town. The overall atmosphere is sunny and bright.

## *Chapter 1:* **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1—What is a Specific Plan
- 1.2—Plan Context and Purpose
- 1.3—Existing Conditions
- 1.4—Plan Objectives
- 1.5—Plan Structure





# IN SUMMER 2019, THE CITY

## OF WATSONVILLE (CITY)

### INITIATED A SPECIFIC

### PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN

### WATSONVILLE WITH THE

### PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING

### A CLEAR DIRECTION FOR

### ITS FUTURE.

The Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan (Specific Plan) articulates a community vision and planning framework that will serve as a guide for the city and other public agency decision-makers, community members and stakeholders over the next 20-30 years. The Specific Plan has been developed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), California planning law, City planning policies, and input from community members, property owners, decision-makers, and City staff.

The Specific Plan provides a comprehensive land use and mobility plan along with development and design regulations that support the Specific Plan's goals and policies and guides future public and private development. In addition, the Specific Plan includes an implementation strategy and mechanisms to ensure that development will be coordinated and will meet the intent of the Specific Plan.



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT**—The Terrace at 445 Main Street was built in 2018 and offers 54 Market Rate apartment rentals in Downtown Watsonville; Main Street offers a charming scale and a mix of uses necessary to enhance the downtown.

The Specific Plan and accompanying EIR is funded through a Sustainable Communities Grant from Caltrans, and SB 2. The intent of the SCS grant is to provide financial support to cities to encourage local and regional planning that furthers state goals, including the provision of a safe, sustainable, integrated, and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability. Additional funding is provided by a SB 2 grant from the State of California to complete the Program EIR.





## Section 1.1

# WHAT IS A SPECIFIC PLAN?

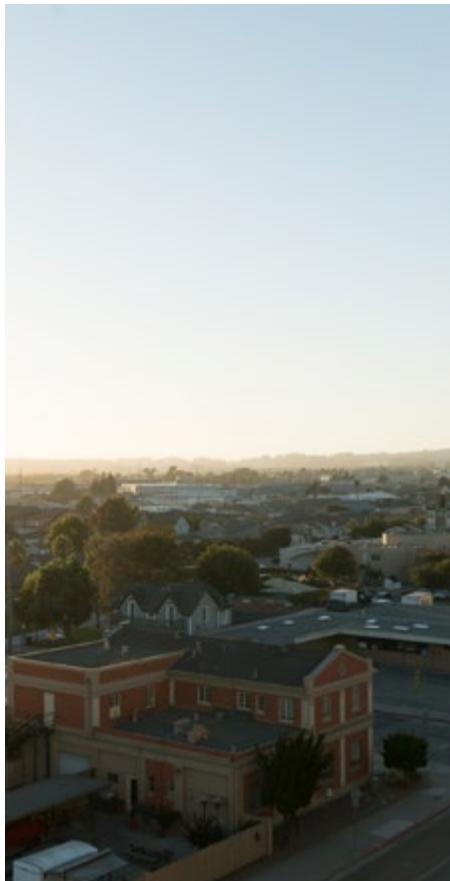
**PHOTO CAPTION**— Watsonville Civic Plaza provides municipal services for residents of Watsonville. The building houses government offices, including the Watsonville legislative body, and provides public records, government services, and information about Watsonville services.



**A Specific Plan is a regulatory tool that local governments use to implement their General Plan and to guide development in a localized area.** While the General Plan is the overall guide for growth and development in a community, the goal of a Specific Plan is to focus on the unique characteristics of a special area by customizing the planning process and land use regulations to that area. The authority for preparation and adoption of specific plans is set forth in the California Government Code, Sections 65450 through 65457. The California Government Code authorizes jurisdictions to adopt specific plans by ordinance as regulatory documents. The law allows adoption of Specific Plans as may be required for the implementation of the General Plan.

A Specific Plan is intended to be a tool for developers, property owners, City staff and decision makers by providing strong and clear policies, development standards, and a vision that guides land use decisions, infrastructure improvements, design, and economic development activities in the project area.

**A Specific Plan includes:**



Distribution, location, intensity, and extent of the uses of land.



Development and design regulations for buildings and the public realm.



Major components of transportation and infrastructure.

This Plan also provides opportunities for streamlined CEQA review. The Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) prepared for the Plan may simplify environmental review for projects that are consistent with the Plan.

The Plan does not replace or augment building safety codes or other non-planning related codes. All applications for new construction, substantial modifications to existing buildings, and changes in land use shall be reviewed for conformance with this Specific Plan. This Plan is adopted by ordinance under the authority of the City's Municipal Code, which establishes Specific Plans as a tool to regulate land use and development.



## Section 1.2

# PLAN CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

**The City of Watsonville is in the Pajaro Valley of Santa Cruz County and is approximately six square miles in size.** The city is bounded by the Pajaro River to the south and unincorporated Santa Cruz County to the east, north and west. Regionally, the City is located near the epicenter of a rail transit network currently in the planning phases. The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail envisions passenger transit along the rail line and the 2018 California State Rail Plan envisions rail service along the same line. This provides Watsonville with a unique opportunity to establish critical connections and plan the appropriate location for a future transit stop along the Scenic Trail on Walker Street and determine appropriate land uses in the vicinity of the future rail transit station.

---

**PHOTO CAPTION**—California yarrow and California poppies bloom among native grasses on Watsonville Slough Farm.



The City ~~had~~ continues to be the economic, educational, and cultural center of the Pajaro Valley, one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world. The City's jurisdictional boundaries are restricted by an urban growth boundary and airport land use restrictions. Because of these limitations on growth, the City has put efforts toward incorporating additional housing and economic opportunities through higher density infill along the City's major corridors, including the downtown. The Specific Plan will help achieve these objectives by accommodating additional residential uses in a compact and active mixed-use environment through both new construction and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

The Plan area constitutes about 195.5 acres with about 55.5 acres dedicated to streets and rights-of-way. Downtown is centered on Main Street and extends west to the edge of existing neighborhoods and the industrial district, south to Pajaro, and several blocks east to the existing neighborhoods. The Downtown Specific Plan area is shown in **Figure 1-1** and **Figure 1-2**.

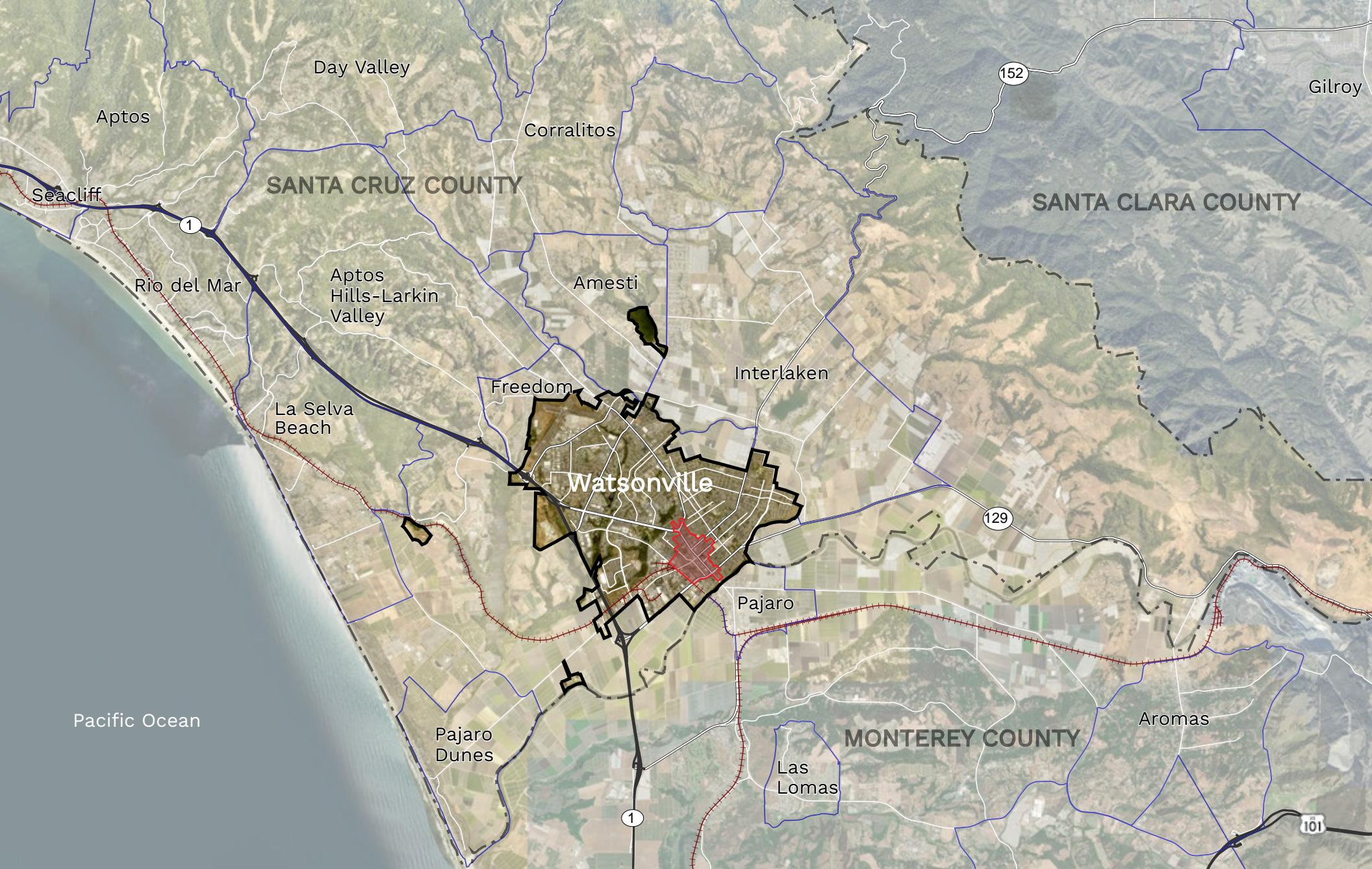
#001

Posted by **Pam** on **07/13/2022 at 11:49pm** [Comment ID: 5639] - [Link](#)

*Type: Suggestion*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

typo - has been; been missing



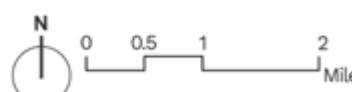
**FIGURE 1-1**  
**DOWNTOWN**  
**WATSONVILLE SPECIFIC**  
**PLAN CONTEXT AREA**

DWSP\_PublicDraft\_062422\_Ch1-4.pdf

**Zones**

- County Boundary
- City of Watsonville Boundary
- City Boundaries
- Specific Plan Area

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Printed 07/15/2022

13

Organized in a traditional urban street grid with walkable neighborhoods and shopping corridors, downtown Watsonville is the heart of the community. Development in downtown started before the City was incorporated in 1868. The area contains a mix of contemporary and historic buildings, urban plazas, higher-density residential buildings, government offices, community-serving retail uses, and is home to numerous community events that attract both visitors and residents.

Once a thriving and bustling downtown, the Main Street has struggled to compete regionally with other commercial areas and has experienced high retail and commercial vacancy rates for the past several decades. The City has taken many steps to revitalize the downtown since the destructive 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, including several downtown plans and downtown design guidelines, as well as the development of a new Civic Plaza that is home to the South County Courthouse, City library, City Administrative offices, City Council Chambers, and public meeting space.



State Highway 152 (SR-152), a Caltrans facility, operates along portions of Main Street and as a one-way couplet along E Lake Avenue and E Beach Street. Riverside Drive on the south end of the Plan area is a part of State Highway 129 (SR-129). Caltrans has been an integral part of the planning process and for developing recommendations for right-of-way improvements such as sidewalks and streets within their facilities. The City has also worked on improvements to the downtown parking district and completed a downtown parking study to modernize the on- and off-street parking provided in the downtown to attract shoppers and assist in retail business investment and opportunity.

Downtown is also beginning to see interest from private developers for new mixed-use and residential development. With growing interest and attention to downtown Watsonville, the City has established this Plan as the visionary guide for development in downtown Watsonville.



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM**—A mixed-use development with ground floor commercial and parking garage; Martinelli's has significantly contributed to Watsonville's heritage; Corner business; Main Street intersection at Maple Street.



**FIGURE 1-2**  
**DOWNTOWN WATSONVILLE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA**



## Section 1.3

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM**—Downtown Watsonville has a wonderful foundation to build upon. From a charming Main Street, to historic buildings, to a strong civic plaza that includes City Hall, Police Station, and Fire Department.



## Existing Land Use

The Specific Plan area is served by a mix of uses which include retail, commercial, civic, religious, industrial, and residential. City Hall and the Police Station, Civic Plaza with Council Chambers, Library and County Courthouse, U.S. Post Office, and Cabrillo College are the major civic and institutional anchors in the downtown. The historic City Plaza is the significant downtown public open space that supports civic and community activities. At the center of downtown is Main Street, along which many of the historic and large mixed-use buildings are located with ground-floors consisting of local retail and services while the upper levels accommodate office and residential uses. Along Walker Street, single-story industrial buildings provide employment.



**PHOTO CAPTION**—The Downtown housing stock has architecturally unique single-family homes with heights ranging from one to three stories.



Whereas citywide residential stock is overwhelmingly single-family (approximately two-thirds), housing stock downtown is the opposite. Roughly 60 percent of the downtown residential stock is in multifamily structures. From 2000 to 2022, the City-wide multifamily inventory has increased by 14 percent however, multifamily rents per square foot per month have increased by 42 percent making the housing stock less affordable.<sup>1</sup> Watsonville's downtown has seen the successful delivery of new mid-rise housing, a clear sign that denser housing may be viable at other sites in the downtown area.

There has been no office development in downtown Watsonville since 2008, but continued employment growth and fully occupied existing stock hints at future potential to incorporate more office and employment type uses.<sup>1</sup> The retail industry is going through a complex evolution and “brick and mortar” retail is increasingly challenging, but downtown retail is well occupied and additional convenience retail and restaurants likely will be market supportable as local resident and worker populations increase. Industry trends favor experiential retail and featuring local food & beverage may be a strategy for balancing uses in the downtown while also attracting more residents and visitors.

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<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau, ESRI Business Analyst, California Department of Finance, Economic & Planning Systems, Inc



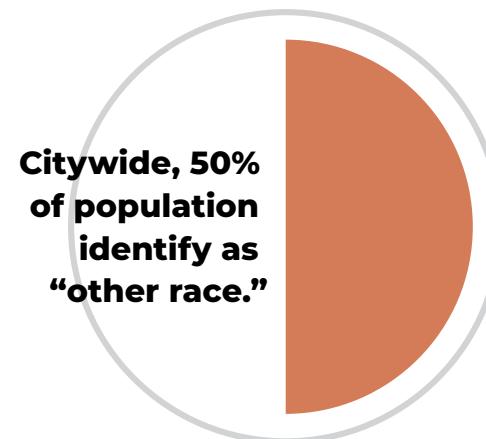
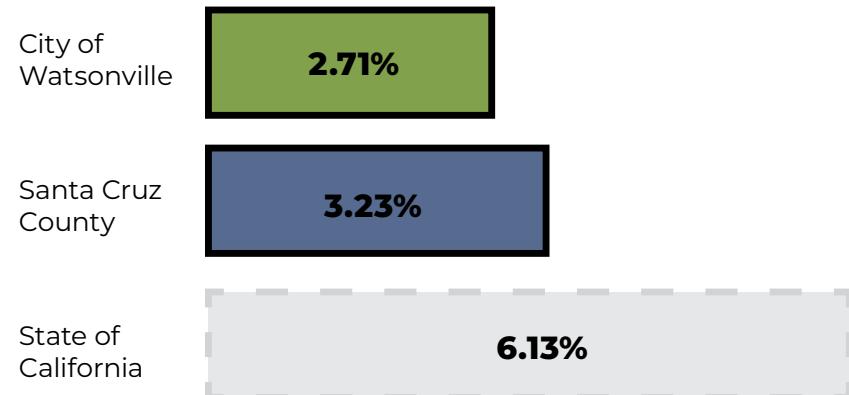
## Demographics Trends

The Specific Plan area and the City of Watsonville have social and demographic characteristics that define a unique part of Santa Cruz County. However, the 2010-2020 population trends of the city (2.71%) show a lower rate of population change than the state (6.13%) and county (3.23%).<sup>2</sup> By comparison to Santa Cruz County and the State of California, the city and downtown are notably younger and culturally and ethnically diverse. The younger ages of downtown and city residents also likely contribute to other socio-economic discrepancies, such as household income discussed in the next section. The city-wide population is nearly 50 percent “other race” while countywide, roughly seven in ten residents are “white alone.”<sup>3</sup> The relatively high reporting of the “other race” category in Watsonville likely is attributable to Spanish-speaking residents who do not self-identify as white alone, and thus report “other race.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Finance E-5

<sup>3</sup> US Census Bureau, ESRI Business Analyst, Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.

### Population change between 2010–2020



**Countywide, roughly seven in ten residents are “white alone.”**

#002

Posted by **Pam** on **07/14/2022 at 12:03am** [Comment ID: 5642] - [Link](#)

*Type: Suggestion*

*Agree: 2, Disagree: 0*

Is there no better racial demographic data available for Watsonville than this Census data where folks had to choose between "white only" or "other race", without other options including Latinx? I suggest adding it if possible.

# Economic Trends

The city and downtown are distinctly economically disadvantaged, with relatively low educational attainment and income levels. The median household income in downtown, at roughly \$36,500, is over \$24,000 lower than that citywide. And at about \$61,496, citywide median household income is over \$28,000 below the countywide median.<sup>4</sup> Household income is closely related to educational attainment. Data reveals a high concentration of downtown residents (40 percent) have less than a 9th grade education<sup>5</sup> comparison, approximately 28 percent of city residents and about 11 percent of county residents have less than a 9th grade education.<sup>6</sup>

Watsonville has enjoyed growth in non-agricultural economic sectors and remains a county-wide leader in agricultural and logistics industries. Recent job growth in Watsonville has occurred at a healthy rate, significantly outpacing population growth in recent years. The annual employment growth rate in the city over the past decade (2008-2018) was 1.2 percent, which is slightly above the statewide growth rate (1.14 percent).<sup>6</sup> Examining the city's employment sectors more closely, the five largest industries are fairly evenly divided. These five sectors represent approximately 13,500 positions, or 62 percent of all jobs. Because of the rural and agricultural nature of region, the largest industry in Watsonville comprises roughly 3,200 agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting jobs. This is followed by nearly 2,900 public administration jobs and the demographically driven sectors of healthcare and retail, which, combined, account for nearly 5,300 jobs. The fifth largest sector, manufacturing, accounts for about 2,100 positions.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> US Census Bureau, ESRI Business Analyst

<sup>5</sup> US Census Bureau, ESRI Business Analyst, Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.

<sup>6</sup> California EDD, Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.

<sup>7</sup> California Employment Development Department; Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.

## Median Household Income

Downtown  
Watsonville

**\$36,500**

*Citywide:  
\$61,496*

City of  
Watsonville

**\$61,496**

*Countywide:  
\$89,496*

## Percentage of Population with Less than a 9th Grade Education

Downtown  
Watsonville

**40%**

City of  
Watsonville

**28%**

Santa Cruz  
County

**11%**

#003

Posted by **Pam** on **07/13/2022 at 11:56pm** [Comment ID: 5640] - [Link](#)

*Type: Question*

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

Cabrillo College was mentioned as a public asset in downtown (p.16), but given this stat, there needs to be more focus on pre-college support to get folks college ready. How is the downtown plan supporting all public ed. institutions, esp high schools and adult ed?



## Section 1.4

# PLAN OBJECTIVES

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**PHOTO CAPTION**—The city lights up the beloved City Plaza for the winter holidays. The annual tree lighting ceremony usually takes place the Sunday before Thanksgiving.



**Downtown Watsonville is the heart of the community and the Specific Plan channels existing momentum and establishes a vision and framework that supports a high-quality of life.** The goals, policies, and strategies in this Plan are grounded in the reality that no single plan for a limited geographic area can comprehensively address all the issues faced by a community. At the same time, a planning document like a Specific Plan is one of the best tools the city has available to state a vision directly and explicitly for the community and enact mechanisms to achieve it. Long-term success of the Plan will rely not only on the City and other public agencies (e.g., Caltrans) that fund and maintain public improvements and services, but also on the people who live, work, and visit downtown Watsonville. This is a plan to support a community-driven vision.

The Specific Plan strives to foster higher-intensity and encourage mixed-use neighborhoods by building on the historic origins of the downtown area, celebrating its historic buildings, community events, and open spaces, all while harnessing new ideas, investment, and innovation. The Specific Plan will knit together the historic downtown with adjacent industrial and residential areas to create walkable and complete neighborhoods with a mix of retail, services, amenities, employment, and residential uses that will help to activate downtown; all day and into the evening, seven days a week.

The Specific Plan aims to establish a community vision, guiding principles, policies, standards, and a planning framework to guide how the downtown should evolve into the future. The Specific Plan is intended to inform future public and private actions relating to the Plan area's development to realize the community vision.



It also provides the foundation for the city to continue pursuing other partners, strategies, and funding sources for the improvements and programs identified in the Plan. Reinvestment, reuse and infill development, redevelopment of properties in the downtown area, and strategic corridors shall be preceded and guided by this plan.

The Specific Plan will also encourage compact development near transit to decrease automobile dependency, reduce both local and regional traffic congestion and related greenhouse gas emissions, and provide additional guidance and plans to increase multimodal access to and from the historic Downtown area.

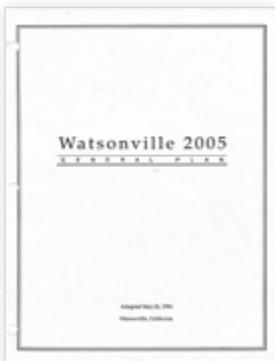
**PHOTO CAPTION**—The Holiday Lights in the Plaza also activates the downtown streets with entertainment for kids.



## Section 1.5

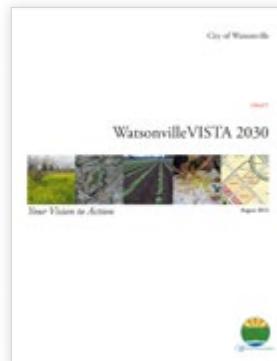
# RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS<sup>004</sup>

**The Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan takes into consideration numerous interrelated existing adopted plans, policies, and regulations, at the City, regional, State, and federal levels.** This Plan balances the desires and aspirations of diverse group of community members and stakeholders, as well as local and regional initiatives with competing objectives.



### 2005 General Plan

Per California State law, specific plans must be internally consistent with the jurisdiction's general plan. The Watsonville 2005 General Plan (adopted 1991) regulates the land uses in the Specific Plan area. Where Specific Plan zoning is inconsistent with the 2005 General Plan, the General Plan is being updated concurrent with this Specific Plan to ensure consistency between the two documents.



### 2030 Draft General Plan

The Draft 2030 General Plan contains policies and guidance for downtown Watsonville including a vision that contains the highest densities, the most pedestrian friendly design, and the greatest variety of uses in downtown in attractive infill projects. The Draft 2030 General Plan focuses on most intensive redevelopment on underutilized sites while protecting and enhancing historic properties. The Draft 2030 General Plan also calls for strengthening retail and cultural

destinations, broadening available housing options, and creating a "sense of place." The Plan focuses on the importance of the design of the interface between the public and private realms and the goal to make pedestrian-friendly streets and urban environments.

### Zoning Ordinance

The land use and development standards in this document supersede the land use and development standards in the Zoning Ordinance (Title 14 of the City's Municipal Code) for properties within the Specific Plan area. Regulations not addressed in this Plan, such as standards for specific land uses, will still be regulated by the Zoning Ordinance. (See Chapter 6: Land Use & Zoning for additional information.)

### Housing Element

The current Housing Element (5th Cycle 2015-23) is a required element of the City's General Plan and includes city-wide strategies to address housing. The 6th Cycle Element is expected to be updated in the coming months. The City's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for the 6th Cycle is approximately 2,053 units, many of which may be built in downtown Watsonville.

#004

Posted by **Pam** on **07/14/2022** at **12:10am** [Comment ID: 5646] - [Link](#)

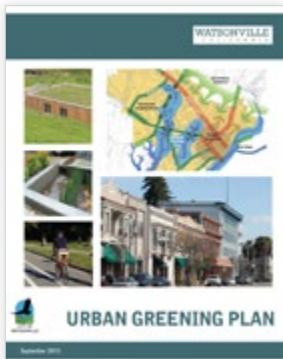
*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

I appreciate how this is laid out to help lay folks like me know about all these other inter-relating docs.

## Complete Streets Plan

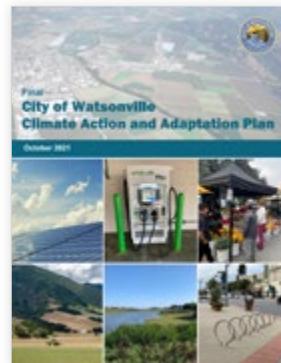
The Downtown Complete Streets Plan provides a vision of a multi-modal, revitalized Downtown that is safer and more accessible for all users and modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and motorists. The Complete Streets Plan describes improvements that would improve safety, provide greater access, and add amenities for those traveling in the Downtown. The recommendations in the Complete Streets Plan are superseded by the Specific Plan provisions.



## Watsonville Urban Greening Plan

The Watsonville Urban Greening Plan was developed in 2012 to identify and design projects that address greenhouse gas emissions or help residents adapt to challenges posed by climate change. The Urban Greening Plan is composed of six key elements,

three of which are referenced in this plan: Citywide Street Tree Program, Landscape Guidelines and Policy, and Green Roof Design Report & Criteria.



## Watsonville Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

The Watsonville Climate Action and Adaptation Plan was developed in 2021 to reduce the community's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions below certain targets. As the transportation sector contributes the greatest amount of GHG emissions, the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan calls for implementing a range of strategies to reduce the number and length of vehicle trips, including facilitating smart growth, increasing multimodal transportation facilities, managing better available parking, and supporting passenger rail service. The Specific Plan supports these strategies through fostering high-density, infill development near

transit, identifying pedestrian and bicycle enhancements, and revising parking and other development standards to reduce the transportation sector's GHG contribution by reducing single-occupant vehicle driving and encouraging alternative modes of transportation.

## Citywide Signage and Wayfinding Plan

The City of Watsonville is working to complete and adopt a Citywide Signage and Wayfinding Master Plan that will define the types and design of signs, where they should be used, located, and what information they include. The program will consider all modes of transportation and will outline a phased implementation strategy. The plan will also provide sufficient detail to support the manufacturing, fabrication and installation of signage and wayfinding in the city.



## Section 1.6

# PLAN STRUCTURE

The Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan (Specific Plan) is organized into the following chapters:



**Chapter 1: Introduction** sets the stage for the rest of the document by discussing the local context, relationship to other planning documents, purpose of the plan, and objectives.



**Chapter 2: Downtown Vision, Goals & Policy Direction** describes the existing context, issues and opportunities, engagement efforts and the vision and guiding principles to direct future development in downtown Watsonville. This included the physical design and policy strategies to collectively shape the future of the Plan area.



**Chapter 3: Design Framework** provides recommendations for public realm improvements in addition to providing a description of the intent and purpose for each downtown Character Area.



**Chapter 4: Mobility and Transportation** explores multi-modality, the street network, street cross-sections and streetscape standards, bicycle and pedestrian networks, and parking and curb management.



**Chapter 5: Public Realm Improvements** focuses on a series of publicly accessible rights-of-ways, parks, squares, plazas, courtyards, alleys, paseos, and parklets and the connections between those spaces.



### **Chapter 6: Land Use and Zoning**

sets standards and guidelines to regulate future development on privately-owned properties in downtown Watsonville. It establishes standards related to allowed land use, development intensity, height, building frontage design, building placement, open area, and block size. The chapter also includes detailed guidance on the design of ground floors, building facades, building architecture, landscaping character, and other building and site design elements.



**Chapter 9: Implementation** provides guidance for reviewing projects under the Specific Plan regulations. It discusses anti-displacement strategies, community benefits and incentives, financing and funding tools, capital improvements and other implementation actions necessary to realize the Specific Plan vision (to be provided).



### **Chapter 7: Historic Preservation**

explores the historic context of downtown Watsonville and identifies potential historic districts and recommendations.

---

**Appendices** provides a thorough Community Engagement Summary (Appendix A), applicable General Plan goals and policies (Appendix B), and detailed information about Downtown Historic Resources (Appendix C).



### **Chapter 8: Infrastructure**

frames the infrastructure context of downtown by identifying utility networks and demand analysis. The chapter includes a list of priority infrastructure projects (including water, sewer, and recycled water).



*Chapter 2:*

# **DOWNTOWN VISION, GOALS & POLICY DIRECTION**

- 2.1—Strengths, Issues & Opportunities
- 2.2—Community Engagement
- 2.3—Downtown Vision Themes & Guiding Principles
- 2.4—Specific Plan Goals and Policies





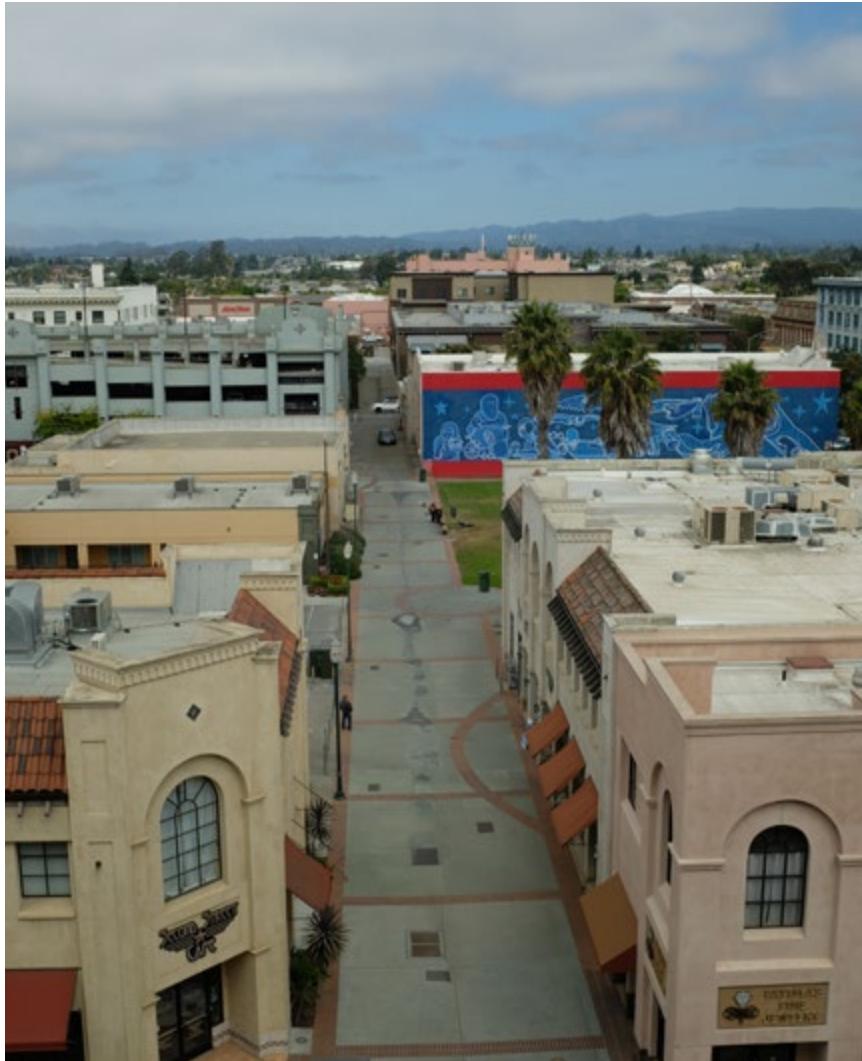
**THE SPECIFIC PLAN WAS  
PREPARED THROUGH A  
PARTICIPATORY  
PROCESS THAT ENGAGED  
THE COMMUNITY, AND  
INFORMED AND INVOLVED  
THE DECISION MAKERS  
THROUGHOUT THE  
PLANNING PROCESS.**

In keeping with the goals of the SCS grant, the Specific Plan process also educated the community about the benefits of infill and improved livability through enhanced mobility strategies.

## Section 2.1

# STRENGTHS, ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

**PHOTO CAPTION**—View of Downtown Watsonville from Civic Plaza



**The project was initiated through a thorough data gathering process, which included reviewing and evaluating relevant planning documents, performing an existing physical conditions analysis of the downtown, and identifying issues and opportunities.** The existing conditions analysis focused on mobility, noise, utility systems, water supply, and market trends. This phase of the project provided an initial level of understanding of the Specific Plan area and framed the direction and recommendations of the Specific Plan.

Downtown Watsonville has a great foundation to build upon, and the Specific Plan is focused on highlighting the opportunities that will lead to a more sustainable, active, healthy, and successful downtown environment. The key strengths, issues and opportunities are described in the following pages.



## City and Downtown Identity

Watsonville is a unique community with agriculture, wine, art, education, and nature themes. The downtown has charming historic and architectural character that complements its vibrant potential. With gems like the downtown plaza, murals, art, and events (e.g., the weekly farmer's market), there is a distinct character that draws people to downtown.

Watsonville is steeped in agricultural history and heritage, with significant ongoing economic activity and culturally deep appreciation for California-grown products. The community also shares civic pride, believes in the City's future, and feels a loyalty to the City and community. The pride in Watsonville is driving the vision for downtown through this Plan, it aligns City and stakeholder goals and establishes a common understanding of the desired future for the city center.

Downtown is, however, challenged by the lack of cohesive identity and functionality, density, and synergy between residents and businesses there is also a lack of activity necessary to feel like a 24/7 bustling downtown.



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM**—Aerial view of Main Street facing south; Agricultural fields in front of the Santa Cruz mountains; Folklórico dance performance at the Watsonville Strawberry Festival

## Downtown Land Uses and Street Grid

Downtown's pedestrian scale, and recent beautification and streetscape improvements, have helped to make downtown more walkable. The downtown is also surrounded by neighborhoods that help to provide diverse housing options in addition to the synergy needed to keep downtown active 24/7. The downtown particularly lends itself to denser development that is suitable for a diverse mix of housing types and income levels (e.g., market rate and affordable) in addition to mixed uses and activities. The existing downtown affords a historic charm with several opportunities for adaptive reuse (e.g., Fox Theater and Mansion House).



Similarly, there is significant economic promise for new businesses, especially those that can provide essential missing services and needs. Downtown is endowed with civic, educational, and institutional anchors that generate vibrancy and provide essential public services to the City and region. Leveraging the downtown's proximity to Cabrillo College will attract a young and educated demographic, and recent changes to the alcohol ordinance will introduce new uses within the downtown. The presence of non-profits and the agricultural industry create unique opportunities for community services and creative business types (e.g., kitchen and retail incubators).

With its historic urban fabric and walkable street grid, the downtown is well positioned to evolve into a unique regional destination that invites visitors in and captures their interest.

The limited residential development makes it challenging to have the activity needed to create a 24/7 downtown environment. As the need for housing grows across the state, and city demands increase, code adjustments and incentives are needed to promote new residential development that increases the local resident base and supports renewed vibrancy. Traditional retail has struggled in downtown, and fitness studios and personal services, or other unique customer-oriented businesses may be the appropriate uses for ground-floor spaces now and moving forward to bring more vitality to downtown.

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**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM**—Fox Theater; Mansion House; The Terrace at 445 Main Street



# Mobility and Parking

With Main Street as the commercial spine of downtown, there is also an opportunity to widen sidewalks, add bike lanes, and introduce parklets that support a walkable community. The Main Street presents a key opportunity to become a strengthened commercial backbone of downtown with streetscape enhancements, ground floor activations, facade enhancements, and travel lane reductions. Additionally, converting E Lake Avenue and E Beach Street, which currently operate as one-way couplets, into two-way streets could enhance safety in the area and encourage multi-modal commuting. Last, squaring off the connection between Union Street & Alexander Street could enhance connectivity while the vacated portion of Union Street could provide an expanded opportunity site for private development.



The existing roadway network in Downtown is not developed in a uniform grid but features a multitude of varying block lengths, several curvilinear streets, and some one-way streets. The downtown roadway network accommodates local access through State Route 152 and State Route 129 while they also serve as conduits of regional travel which includes heavy truck use. Main Street (which is partially owned by Caltrans as State Route 152 and the City of Watsonville) serves as a spine

of the network, distributing traffic beyond the Plan area throughout the city and connecting to State Route 1. The shared ownership of Main Street makes enhancements challenging and requires a heightened level of coordination to achieve improvements.

Navigating the downtown is difficult due to its auto-centric Main Street environment, minimal wayfinding signage, and unresolved traffic and congestion. Downtown retailers also deal with constrained parking



as it remains an issue despite the presence of public parking facilities in the vicinity of the city center. Similarly, pedestrian and cyclist safety are a concern due to limited and unconnected bike facilities, narrow sidewalks, and the lack of streetscape amenities needed to create an appealing and enjoyable public realm.

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**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM**—Streetscape on Main Street in Downtown Watsonville; Mosaic art created through “Watsonville Brillante” project”; Mid-block crossing connects with a paseo to parking behind the frontage buildings

# Business and Economic Environment

While downtown Watsonville is busy during weekday business hours, it tends to quiet significantly in the evening and on weekends. The downtown possesses great economic potential and is a great place to start and grow a business, and to make investments in new and renovated real estate. The economic potential is also supported by the city's general affordability by comparison to the high-cost coastal California; Watsonville offers lower cost housing and commercial spaces. By attracting new businesses to the downtown, the additional daytime workers offer an opportunity to support the evolution of downtown and the new business activity downtown will help enhance the vitality of the city core.

Downtowns have suffered by the ongoing trend in retailing toward large-format stores and online shopping. This will continue to be an economic challenge for small-scale retail businesses, and the growth of downtown as the center of commercial activity. Because of this, downtown Watsonville has faced retail contraction with the COVID pandemic accelerating this trend. However, downtowns that offer unique experiences, dining choices and experiential retail are still great places that people will want to visit and experience.



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT**—Ortiz Store & Deli; El Primo Produce



## Social Issues

The limited number of high-skill employees living in Watsonville has the potential to impact the city's desirability as it relates to existing and potential new business. There is an opportunity to increase Watsonville's labor force skillset by prioritizing programs and services focused on the education and training of Watsonville employees, making the city more desirable for business. Growth of the downtown will also require added efforts to enhance community safety for residents, workers, and visitors.

There are expressed safety concerns that stem from a lack of perceived cleanliness and various social issues, such as ADA compliance, homelessness, and mental health. The increasing societal burden of homelessness, the presence of transient hotels, and the perception of crime has increased and may be affecting downtown's economic development potential. Downtown also struggles with demographic imbalances, households are concentrated in lower income

brackets and the area lacks critical mass of middle-class consumers to support new retail and entertainment uses. While economic diversity is important, demographic, and economic shifts are also cause for fears and concerns related to gentrification, displacement, and small and local business preservation. Similarly, polarizing politics with vocal opposition to growth and private-sector investment may slow or deter the evolution of the downtown.

005

## Governmental Support



**PHOTO CAPTION**—The Civic Plaza houses City Council chambers, County Courthouse and City Library

City services in Watsonville have been at the forefront of effective governance. The Community Development Department is credited for its accessible, creative, and nimble performance processing of development applications which streamlines and facilitates the development process. This planning effort will also provide clear articulation of the City's intentions for Downtown, establishing better clarity for investors and less subjectivity in permitting and entitlement processes.

## #005

Posted by **ambalder** on **07/13/2022 at 11:02pm** [Comment ID: 5632] - [Link](#)

Type: *Necesita un poco de amor*

Agree: 2, Disagree: 0

The issue of homelessness and the concentration of low-income families in the downtown area is poorly framed here. The plan discusses affordable housing and anti-gentrification measures, which should be highlighted here, rather than describing underresourced populations.

## Section 2.2

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**PHOTO CAPTION**—Opportunities for engagement were widely advertised. Below is a flyer for the first virtual community workshop.



## Share your voice Help shape Downtown Watsonville!

Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan

### Virtual Community Workshop

September 30, 2020

5:30 - 8:30 PM

#### Meeting link info

Drop in to share your ideas for the vision of Downtown!

Attendees will be entered into a raffle to have a pizza from Slice delivered during the meeting!

Spanish translation will be provided.



For more information about the project visit the project website:  
[www.cityofwatsonville.org/1626/Downtown-Specific-Plan](http://www.cityofwatsonville.org/1626/Downtown-Specific-Plan)



**In 2019, the City of Watsonville started a community planning process to develop a Specific Plan for Downtown.** The Specific Plan process presented a unique and important opportunity for community members to participate and share their ideas to guide Downtown's future. A primary objective of the Plan was to accurately reflect community aspirations. The city highly prioritized having a community engagement process that was structured to provide multiple opportunities and avenues for engagement, to increase inclusion and participation in sharing input about potential Plan recommendations. This Plan has been developed with extensive input from a broad range of stakeholders which included residents, business owners, workers, property owners, Caltrans, and representatives of community organizations/associations. The Specific Plan's cumulative engagement was a 3-year process and has led to valuable community input, which in turn, grew the visionary outcomes documented in this Plan.



## Engagement Objectives

The project team listened, informed, and translated the community's and stakeholders' viewpoints and vision by using easily understood informational materials that were linguistically and culturally inclusive. The project team regularly reported back to the public regarding how the information gathered would be used in the development of the Specific Plan. The engagement effort was an open and transparent process, centered on key objectives that included:

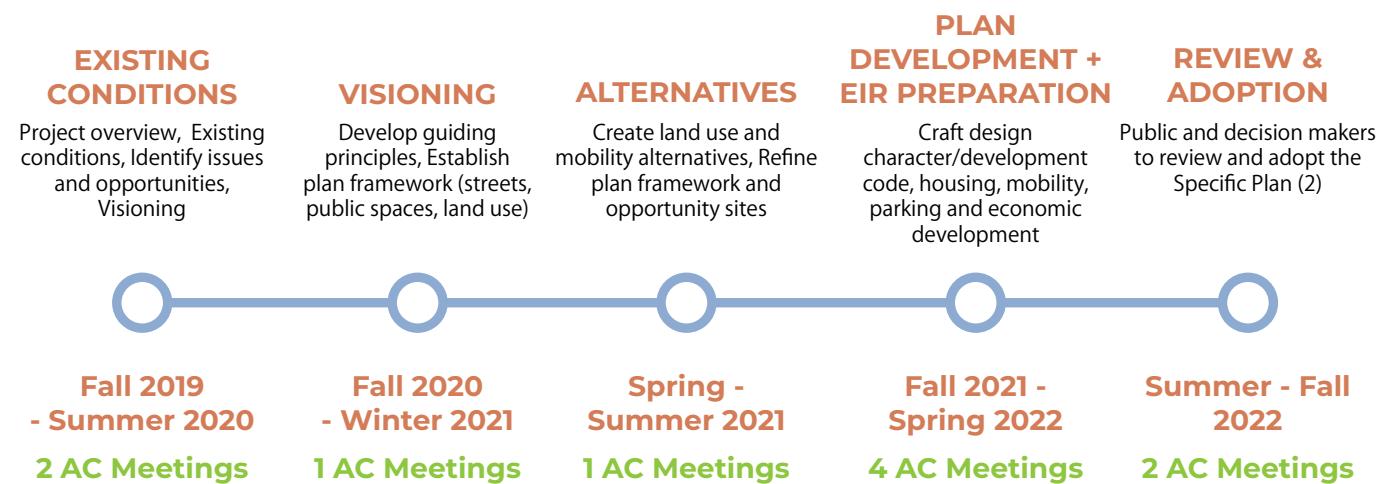
- Consistent, two-way communication between stakeholders and the City,
- Representation from diverse stakeholders including community members who may not usually participate in civic projects and government meetings,

- Education and communication to the public about the planning process,
- Gathering meaningful input and feedback from the stakeholders and the community at large to inform the planning process,
- Alignment of the plan with stakeholder and community needs,
- Solicitation and integration of feedback on key issues for downtown Watsonville, and
- Community ownership of the process and final plan.

## Engagement Plan

At the beginning of the planning process, the project team developed a Public Participation Plan that presented a “roadmap” or synopsis of the activities to be undertaken to develop the Specific Plan. The Public Participation Plan outlined the engagement strategies used to support the technical planning and environmental efforts needed to help define a clear vision for downtown Watsonville. Engagement activities occurred throughout the planning process during key phases, and included the preparation and review of:

- Identification of Key Issues, Opportunities, and Visioning,
- Land Use and Multi-modal Transportation Alternatives,
- Design and development direction for the Specific Plan, and
- Preparation of the Specific Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report.



# Engagement Activities

The City of Watsonville was committed to providing meaningful community engagement opportunities throughout the process. Detailed descriptions of each meeting can be found in Appendix A, where information about meeting format, location, content, and purpose are provided. In summary, the engagement process included the following events:

## Project Information Webpage

The City created a dedicated project webpage on the City of Watsonville website. It included information about the project, documents produced for the project, meeting summaries, and meeting announcements, among other materials.



## Stakeholder Meetings

Meetings were held with representatives of a range of community groups, business leaders, advocacy organizations, and community leaders early in the engagement process to help identify key assets and opportunities.

## Advisory Committee Meetings (8)

The City formed an Advisory Committee (AC), comprised of approximately eighteen (18) individuals, which were strictly advisory and non-voting and met eight (8) times during the planning process. One-on-one interviews with the AC members were also held during the process. The AC provided input on plan concepts, guided the engagement process, and provided advice on plan direction. These meetings were publicly noticed, and Spanish translation was provided at every meeting. All but one of these meetings were held virtually on the City's Zoom platform, making it more convenient for the public to attend.



## Community Workshops (3006)

Interactive community meetings were held three (3) times during the project. These evening meetings were held virtually on the City's Zoom platform due to public health restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Spanish translations were provided at every meeting. The following meetings were held:

- **Workshop #1:** The first workshop contained an overview of the Specific Plan objectives, existing conditions, and a visioning exercise.
- **Workshop #2:** This workshop covered an overview of the final Vision Themes and Guiding Principles. The presentation also covered land use recommendations, opportunity site concepts, as well as the proposed street and bicycle network concepts.
- **Workshop #3:** The final workshop will present the Public Draft Specific Plan for review and feedback.



## ¡Comparta su opinión!

Plan Específico para el Centro de Watsonville  
Taller comunitario virtual  
Mayo 6, 2021, 5:30 - 8:00 PM

Está cordialmente invitado a revisar con nosotros los temas finales de visión, principios y áreas de carácter, así como, los conceptos propuestos para una red de calles y bicicletas y sitios de oportunidad en el centro de la Ciudad.

Enlace para la reunión virtual por Zoom:  
<https://cityofwatsonville-org.zoomgov.com/j/1617235499>

También puede participar por teléfono  
marcando al 1-669-254-5252 código de  
acceso 161 723 5499.

La reunión es en inglés con  
traducción al español.

Puede escanear este código QR  
para entrar a la reunión por teléfono.



Habrá varios sorteos durante la reunión.

**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM**—Project webpage; Advisory Committee Meeting on August 5, 2020; Community Workshop on September 30, 2020; Meeting announcements and materials were made available in both English and Spanish to support an equitable planning process.

#006

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022** at **9:47am** [Comment ID: 5686] - [Link](#)

*Type: Question*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

how many people attended workshops?



## Online Engagement + Community-Wide Surveys (3)

As a parallel process to the workshops, the City used online surveys to engage with and receive input from the public. Surveys were also translated into Spanish to ensure that all voices in the community were heard. The topics covered included:

- Strengths, Issues, and Opportunities Survey (666 Respondents),
- Draft Vision Themes and Guiding Principles Feedback (100 Comments Received), and
- Public Space, Character Areas, Streetscape & Bike Network (257 Respondents).

Community Survey #1  
Strengths, Issues, Opportunities, and Vision

1. How often do you visit Downtown?

0-1 times a week  
 1-2 times per month  
 3-4 times a month  
 Once a year  
 Never

2. What are the reasons you come to Downtown? (Please select all that apply)

I live in downtown  
 I work in downtown  
 I live  
 Shop  
 Visit the Library  
 Visit the Parks  
 Go to the City Hall - County offices  
 Visit a business  
 Go to a food service  
 Attend Farmer's Market  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Community, there are many great things about Downtown Watsonville. What do you like most about Downtown? Please pick three strengths that are most important to you.

## Pop up Event 007

In conjunction with the two online surveys, the project team conducted nine pop-up events at the weekly Farmers Market at Watsonville City Plaza to enable a broader diversity of community members to provide their input. The project team hosted informational booths at each pop-up event to answer questions, hand out project flyers and collect paper survey responses in English and Spanish.

Additionally, the project team spoke with a group of Watsonville High School students on October 28th, 2020, about the specific plan and to receive the students' input on the Community Survey #1.



## Additional Engagement

The project team identified additional engagement efforts to bring attention to the Specific Plan project, while also soliciting feedback from a wide range of constituents. Meetings with the following organizations/groups were held in addition to the foundational engagement efforts detailed above:

- Watsonville Citizens Academy
- Empower Watsonville (PVPSA Youth Group)
- Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC)
- Watsonville Vision Zero Task Force (WVZTF)
- WVZTF Working Group on Bike Friendly Communities
- Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board
- Watsonville High School



### Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan Community Survey #2

Community Survey #2 is an opportunity to share your thoughts about the future of Downtown Watsonville. Your input and feedback will help the City create a shared vision for the Downtown Specific Plan.



#### Survey Link:

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/DWSPSurvey2English](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DWSPSurvey2English)  
or scan this QR code with your smartphone!

Share your ideas for the vision of Downtown!



For more information about the project, visit the project website: [www.b.gy/lcyrbz](http://www.b.gy/lcyrbz)



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT**—Strengths, issues, and opportunities survey; Pop-up booth at the Farmer's Market in the Plaza; Community survey flyer

#007

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 9:48am** [Comment ID: 5687] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

I appreciate the range of community engagement strategies employed!

## Section 2.3

# DOWNTOWN VISION THEMES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**PHOTO CAPTION**—The six vision themes for the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan were informed by extensive community input.

### Vision Themes



Vitality



Dignity



Equity



Preservation



Safety



Innovation

**As the heart of the town, and the center of life and culture, Watsonville's downtown plays an important role in defining the city.** Downtown's vibrancy provides important amenities—attracting people to a common area, a place for festivals and celebrations, a great place to start a small business, and a lively place that is attractive to young and old alike. The success of the downtown requires focusing the most intensive redevelopment on underutilized sites while at the same time protecting and enhancing historic properties. This area can afford the highest densities, the most pedestrian friendly design, and the greatest variety of uses. It is not only a business district, but also a neighborhood. Watsonville's downtown is envisioned to grow over time, and as such, the form and development of the downtown will be based on anticipated realities.

Downtowns are complex with numerous physical, economic, social, and programmatic layers – the needs of each of which need to be carefully balanced to allow the whole place to succeed. Developed with extensive community input, the Vision Themes and Guiding Principles are intended to provide a high-level framework for the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan. The Vision Themes and Guiding Principles for the Specific Plan were informed and created utilizing community and stakeholder input (See Appendix B). The vision and guiding principles seek to foster a cohesive downtown as a destination, promote

residential development, afford land use flexibility, attract business, and enhance the sense of community safety.

The Vision Themes and Guiding Principles for the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan were informed and created utilizing community and stakeholder input. This input came in the form of individual stakeholder meetings, a community workshop, several Advisory Committee meetings, and a community wide survey.



# Guiding Principles and Implementation Strategies

## 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.
- Foster a sense of place through community driven murals and public art installations.
- Continue and build off successful community event momentum – such as the Farmers Market, Film Festival, Wine Walk and Music in the Plaza.
- Promote the uniqueness and small-town charm of the downtown as a vibrant and safe place to live, work, and play.
- Revitalize and showcase the beautiful historic architecture and urban fabric in downtown.

## 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.
- Ensure downtown offers a variety of uses and experiences that are accessible to a range of ages, income levels, and other socioeconomic status.<sup>013</sup>
- Build on existing uses that provide services and support to the community.
- Activate downtown throughout the day and into the evening through strategically planned uses, programs and events that serve diverse community needs and interests.
- Improve surrounding neighborhoods' connection physically and socially to the downtown.

## Create housing opportunities for all

- Encourage housing (market rate, affordable, and low income) that supports the varied socioeconomic interests and needs of the community.<sup>010</sup>
- Increase supply and diversity of housing to support different types of households including young adults, families, seniors, empty nesters, individuals or families with special needs, and people experiencing homelessness.
- Revitalize vacant historic structures into vibrant mixed-use buildings that incorporate housing.
- Promote higher density mixed-use residential near public transportation, along Main Street, and other main corridors.<sup>011</sup>

## Promote local economic prosperity

- Maintain and strengthen downtown's diverse business presence supporting economic prosperity for all.
- Attract new commercial uses – retail, restaurants, entertainment uses, office uses – to downtown to expand its economic base.<sup>008</sup>
- Incentivize uses that help create an 18-hour downtown and encourage social and commercial vitality in downtown.
- Embrace local entrepreneurship, talent, and creativity through public/private partnerships (Cabrillo College, Digital Nest, etc.) and use of available vacant space.
- Support the non-profit presence in the downtown, leveraging positive community connections and attracting residents to downtown.

## #008

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 9:55am** [Comment ID: 5691] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

I think we need to look closely at why Target is the go-to place for shopping in Watsonville. How could small local businesses take back some of their customers? What are the things people need to buy frequently and how could they be available downtown?

## #009

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 9:52am** [Comment ID: 5690] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes to higher density housing especially along transportation corridors! We need to lessen dependence on cars.

## #010

Posted by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022 at 8:39pm** [Comment ID: 5901] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

In order to support a thriving downtown community, it is important to maintain a mix of housing stock. Economic diversity supports a vibrant mix of businesses which contributes to a successful downtown environment.

## #011

Posted by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022 at 2:55pm** [Comment ID: 5720] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

"Adaptive Re-use" is an important housing strategy as we move forward with planning for housing downtown. We need to focus on housing density as a way to reduce GHG and address climate change.

## #012

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 9:51am** [Comment ID: 5689] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

I would argue we don't need more market rate housing, which is extraordinarily expensive. And when "affordable housing" is set at percent of market rate, it means it's not affordable to the majority of people. We need truly

affordable housing.

#013

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022** at **9:49am** [Comment ID: 5688] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Very important!

## Create a vibrant, safe, and active downtown

- Encourage mixed use with ground floor commercial uses and housing above.
- Reclaim and adaptively reuse vacant historic buildings for new, contemporary uses that contribute to the desired character.
- Establish architectural aesthetic and signage guidance for downtown businesses to adhere to - creating a distinct and unified look in the downtown
- Incentivize more housing to bring more people to downtown.
- Allow outdoor dining and seating to encourage activity and provide additional opportunities for community gathering.
- Establish continuous active street frontages to encourage a successful pedestrian environment.
- Create a complete and safe downtown for all users with pedestrian, bicycle, and mobility-aid friendly focused design.
- Improve pedestrian safety and comfort throughout the downtown through streetscape improvements including additional lighting, shaded sidewalks, plantings, and other infrastructure.

## Foster 019 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.
- Ensure cleanliness downtown through the investment 018 in clean-up programs promoting a sense of community ownership and pride.
- Foster cultural pride through community planned programs and events that respect and honor Watsonville's history.
- Embrace Watsonville's rich cultural history by uplifting the past through design, art, and event programming.
- Work cooperatively with community members to help build a sense of belonging and ownership.

016

## Re-imagine and innovate mobility options and connections

- Design safe pedestrian, bicyclist, and mobility aid facilities that invite all users regardless of age and ability to use and enjoy 017 015
- Connect downtown to the future rail trail and commuter rail improving regional mobility.
- Focus development momentum around downtown transit facilities creating a complete and connected neighborhood.

## Incorporate sustainable design elements to improve community health

- Leverage connections to the adjacent natural environment (Pajaro River, sloughs, etc.) with bicycle and walking trails.
- Bring awareness to Watsonville's natural environment with educational displays.
- Consider establishing targets for urban greening and low-impact development (street trees, native plantings, and increase in plant materials, pervious paving, etc.) 014

## #014

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 9:58am** [Comment ID: 5693] - [Link](#)

Type: Suggestion

Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

Yes, and link to removing carbon from air. Climate change is biggest public health threat ever.

## #015

Posted by **JS** on **07/14/2022 at 6:31pm** [Comment ID: 5831] - [Link](#)

Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

Agreed! I live in downtown and I no longer ride my bike due to safety concerns: it's too hectic, and it seems fewer drivers are following the 'rules of the road' since the pandemic.

## #016

Posted by **Pam** on **07/14/2022 at 12:16am** [Comment ID: 5648] - [Link](#)

Type: Suggestion

Agree: 1, Disagree: 0

I suggest you mention specifically reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing climate resilience here. I understand details of that are laid out in the CAAP but it seems important to include explicitly here.

## #017

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 9:57am** [Comment ID: 5692] - [Link](#)

Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

This is critical. Must increase active transportation and decrease accidents!

## #018

Posted by **nataalieco** on **07/14/2022 at 1:48pm** [Comment ID: 5719] - [Link](#)

Type: Missing

Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

I don't see public restrooms included anywhere in this plan. One just opened in the plaza but more will be needed with

the plan to make an active downtown. Many businesses restrict their restrooms to customers or employees. Public restrooms are needed for a dignified downtown

#019

Posted by **Pam** on **07/14/2022 at 12:19am** [Comment ID: 5649] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

I appreciate the principles laid out here, especially this one.



## Section 2.4

# SPECIFIC PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES

**Downtowns represent the heart of great cities.** Great downtowns are commercial, cultural, and symbolic centers. They serve all residents and attract many visitors. They offer vibrant and inviting places to shop, work, live, and attend civic events. They also reveal the unique history of a place and the pride that the community has invested in it.

**PHOTO CAPTION**—The historic Fox Theater, located on the corner of Main Street and Maple Avenue, is one of Santa Cruz County's oldest movie theaters.



The goals and policies outlined in this section set forth the framework for realizing the vision for downtown Watsonville, serve as guidelines for decision making and provide direction for the future. The goals and policies demonstrate the intentions for the physical development, redevelopment, conservation, and growth of the downtown. These policies strive to facilitate housing production and preservation; increase retail-entertainment activity; encourage higher-density mixed-use residential projects; add visitor-oriented uses; support a greater range of civic and cultural activities; improve the safety and comfort of pedestrians; enhance bicycle infrastructure and connections; and target uses and activities that appeal to a wide range of Watsonville's residents and employees.

**These are organized in the following topics:**

1. Land Use
2. Urban Design
3. Affordable Housing and Housing Production
4. Anti-displacement Strategies
5. Historic Preservation
6. Economic Development
7. Mobility and Parking
8. Transit
9. Infrastructure

The City's General Plan also contains goals and policies for the downtown. The relevant goals and policies are included in Appendix B.

# Land Use

## Goal 1

Diversify the mix of land uses in Downtown Watsonville to maximize its function as the city's vibrant and cohesive center, while also maintaining its overall historic scale and character.

- **Policy 1.1: Mixed Use**

**Development.** Encourage a broad range of mixed-use development (e.g., commercial on the ground floor, mixed with dwelling units and/or office on the upper floors).

- **Policy 1.2: Range of Densities.**

Encourage multifamily housing at 021 appropriate densities, both in mixed use and stand-alone formats to bring in more residents to Downtown Watsonville and create an 18-hour downtown. 023

- **Policy 1.3: 18-hour Downtown.**

Encourage new uses that bring evening and weekend activity, such as retail shopping 022 services; food stores; restaurants and cafes; entertainment venues; community facilities; outdoor public spaces; and other similar uses.

- **Policy 1.4: Active Uses.** Encourage

and reinforce areas of existing and new street-activating retail and other ground floor uses (see Chapter 6: Land Use & Zoning for details).

- **Policy 1.5: Robust Retail.** Attract

neighborhood and visitor serving uses, including experiential retail and restaurants, to increase patronage from Watsonville residents and the surrounding region. 020

- **Policy 1.6: Employment.** Attract

office uses to bring additional daytime population that further supports restaurants and retail and diversifies Watsonville's employment base.

- **Policy 1.7: Opportunity Sites.**

Prioritize development on the identified opportunity sites to catalyze revitalization in downtown.

- **Policy 1.8: Priority CBD**

**Processing.** Provide priority development review processing for mixed-use (residential/commercial) projects.



**PHOTO CAPTION**—The City-owned right-of-way on Main Street has a landscaped median that contributes to the street environment.

## #020

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 10:02am** [Comment ID: 5695] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

What kinds of businesses could supply things people need and spend money on? Target gets a ton of business; how can some of that money come into smaller businesses downtown?

## #021

Posted by **ambalder** on **07/13/2022 at 11:04pm** [Comment ID: 5633] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 4, Disagree: 0*

Yes! Prioritize family housing instead of studio and 1 bedroom housing.

## #022

Posted by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022 at 3:00pm** [Comment ID: 5721] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Thursday nights Downtown Watsonville used to be the place to go for shopping, family activities, walks etc. How can we bring these experiences back and make downtown a vibrant, inviting place to be?

## #023

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 10:01am** [Comment ID: 5694] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

Yes, we need housing for families that is truly affordable.



# Urban Design

## Goal 2

Diversify the mix of land uses in Downtown Watsonville to maximize its function as the city's vibrant and cohesive center, while also maintaining its overall historic scale and character.

- **Policy 2.1: Character Areas.** Recognize that different parts of the Specific Plan area have distinct character and should be designed to enhance those unique characteristics. Promote, encourage, and increase higher levels of infill, reuse, reinvestment, and revitalization within each of the Character Areas.

- **Policy 2.2: Historic Core.** Prioritize new active uses, adaptive reuse, and pedestrian improvements in the Historic Core along Main Street and around the Plaza.

- **Policy 2.3: Varied Intensity.** Allow the highest densities and heights in the Historic Core and Civic Core with moderate-intensity developments in areas adjacent to single family neighborhoods.

## Goal 3

Incorporate placemaking concepts to make Downtown a pedestrian friendly, active, and vibrant mixed-use environment.

- **Policy 3.1: Active and Attractive Street Wall.** Create an active continuous street wall with buildings at the back of walk along Main Street and other major corridors to create a seamless pedestrian experience. The downtown should offer an attractive urban environment, with pedestrian-friendly streets and a high level of special enclosures created by taller buildings built close to the street.

- **Policy 3.2: Built Form.** Orient the function, shape (height and mass) and configuration of buildings to the street to create an urban experience.

- **Policy 3.3: Gathering Spaces.** Encourage entertainment, dining, cultural uses, and other social gathering spaces to activate the area, draw visitors, and serve residents throughout the day.

- **Policy 3.4: Walkable Environment.** Improve the pedestrian experience, public space, aesthetics, and design quality to attract visitors, serve residents and workers, and promote walking.

#024

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 10:04am** [Comment ID: 5696] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 2, Disagree: 0*

Yes, very important to promote walking.

## Goal 4

Celebrate Watsonville's unique setting and resources to make Downtown a regional attraction.

- **Policy 4.1: Sense of Place.** Leverage and strengthen Watsonville's cultural and historic identities to create a sense of place. **028**
- **Policy 4.2: Tourism & Cultural Destinations.** Attract more visitors by adding cultural activities and facilities, such as regular concerts and museums.
- **Policy 4.3: Unique Elements.** **027** Allow and encourage public and private buildings and development projects that promote Watsonville's history, arts, and culture through the addition of signs, distinctive landscaping, monuments, and/or other features that identify the downtown as a distinct place.

### • **Policy 4.4: Connections to Nature** **025**

Connect to the Watsonville Slough and Pajaro River with bicycle and walking trails and **026** use interpretive graphics to celebrate these unique resources.



**PHOTO CAPTION**—The Watsonville City Plaza is a gathering place for the community.

## #025

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 10:05am** [Comment ID: 5698] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

Agree!

## #026

Posted by **JS** on **07/14/2022 at 6:37pm** [Comment ID: 5836] - [Link](#)

Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

Yes, complete a biking/walking trail along the Pajaro River to the beach, and offer free shuttles from downtown to the beach in summer.

## #027

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 10:05am** [Comment ID: 5697] - [Link](#)

Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

Yes, existing murals and mosaics are a great asset - encourage more unique art and architectural elements.

## #028

Posted by **ambalder** on **07/13/2022 at 11:05pm** [Comment ID: 5634] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

Agree: 3, Disagree: 0

Yes! Highlight local art and represent our community's history, including our agricultural workers!!



# Affordable Housing and Housing Production

029

## Goal 5

Increase the production of new below market rate (BMR) and market rate housing units in downtown.

- **Policy 5.1: Mix of Unit Types.**

Encourage a range of housing types and sizes – including small, medium, and large residential units, intergenerational housing, co-housing, live-work, or other innovative housing formats for a variety of different household sizes, income levels and stages of life throughout the Plan area.

- **Policy 5.2: Inclusionary Housing.**

Pursue plan-wide affordable housing production through existing inclusionary policy and development of all-affordable projects.

- **Policy 5.3: Housing Needs.**

Broaden available housing options by identifying housing affordability and typology gaps and providing to developers.

## Goal 6

Leverage City resources and funding for production of more affordable housing in Downtown.

- **Policy 6.1: Incentives for Housing Production.**

**Production.** Develop new and apply existing incentives for affordable housing. Apply existing city incentives (e.g., providing City affordable housing funding such as CDBG, Affordable Housing Fund, etc.) to promote the development of affordable housing in the Plan area.

- **Policy 6.2: City Funding and Expediting Processing.**

Encourage 100% below-market-rate housing with City funding and collaborative, streamlined project processing.

030

- **Policy 6.3: Funding.**

Consider innovative funding sources, tax credit programs, and public-private partnerships to make affordable housing more viable in the Plan area.

- **Policy 6.4: Publicly owned Sites.**

Consider offering or developing 100% below-market-rate housing on publicly owned opportunity sites.

- **Policy 6.5: Fee deferrals.**

Provide deferred low interest loans for selected development impact fees for 100% below-market-rate housing projects.

## #029

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 10:10am** [Comment ID: 5699] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

This section is critical. I constantly hear about the lack of decent affordable housing in meetings and conversations.

## #030

Posted by **ambalder** on **07/13/2022 at 11:07pm** [Comment ID: 5635] - [Link](#)

*Type: Still True*

*Agree: 3, Disagree: 0*

Please include specific targets for the different income levels i.e. extremely low-income, low-income, etc.

# Anti-displacement Strategies

031

## Goal 7

Pursue reinvestment in existing affordable housing in the downtown to stabilize existing neighborhoods.

- **Policy 7.1: Existing affordable housing stock.** Protect existing affordable housing downtown (older housing stock) by restricting condominium conversions, preserving existing SROs, instituting replacement requirements, and by expanding the City's existing Owner-Occupied and Rental Housing Rehabilitation programs.
- **Policy 7.2: Reinvestment.** Partner with non-profits and affordable housing developers to support acquisition of and reinvestment in existing affordable housing downtown.

- **Policy 7.3: Education and Outreach.** Promote existing programs among downtown residents through outreach efforts and educational opportunities.
- **Policy 7.4: Existing City Programs.** Continue implementing existing citywide housing programs such as the inclusionary housing ordinance, incentives such as priority processing for 100% affordable housing projects.

- **Policy 7.5: Assistance Programs.** Continue to look for grant opportunities to expand funding for the First Time Home Buyer Program and Down-payment Assistance Program.

**PHOTO CAPTION**—Informational booth for the 2020 Census



## #031

Posted by **Pam** on **07/14/2022** at **12:27am** [Comment ID: 5651] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

This is very important to prevent gentrification of our downtown.

## #032

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022** at **10:11am** [Comment ID: 5700] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

Yes to 100% TRULY affordable housing!

## #033

Posted by **JS** on **07/14/2022** at **6:38pm** [Comment ID: 5838] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes



# Historic Preservation

034

## Goal 8

Maintain and enhance the historic character of the Downtown through coordinated planning that builds upon its key assets and reinforces its historic development patterns.

035

- **Policy 8.1: Historic Identity.** Identify and protect the integrity of the historic core around the Plaza.
- **Policy 8.2: Historic Preservation.** Continue to identify, designate, and maintain significant buildings, homes, and landmark features.
- **Policy 8.3: Street Grid.** Protect and enhance the existing fine-grained street grid pattern in Downtown.

- **Policy 8.4: Adaptive Reuse.** Protect historic structures by strongly encouraging their adaptive reuse.
- **Policy 8.5: Sensitive Infill.** Use development and design regulations to develop sensitively designed infill projects.
- **Policy 8.6: Historic Districts.** Evaluate and designate groupings of historic structures as historic districts.

- **Policy 8.7: Historic Ordinance.** Update the City's historic ordinance to reflect best practices for the preservation and modification of historic structures.



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Historical view of Main Street in Downtown Watsonville

## #034

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 10:15am** [Comment ID: 5701] - [Link](#)

*Type: Suggestion*

*Agree: 2, Disagree: 0*

I'm not so attached to historic preservation especially when past ways of doing things were discriminatory; why celebrate historic oppression? This needs more consideration.

## #035

Posted by **JS** on **07/14/2022 at 6:49pm** [Comment ID: 5845] - [Link](#)

*Type: Suggestion*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes, historic (and newer) buildings are important, if in use. But what about absentee landlords & empty buildings like the Fox? Can the City create a "use or lose" ordinance so that if a building sits empty for xx years the city can reclaim it, or slap a hefty yearly fee?

# Economic Development

## Goal 9

Enhance commercial activity as a driver for downtown's economic vitality and growth.

037

- **Policy 9.1: Existing Businesses.**

Retain existing retail and service businesses that serve the needs of the community and provide employment opportunities for residents.

- **Policy 9.2: Mix of Uses.** Ensure the continued presence of a diverse range of retail and service uses in the Specific Plan area, even as the character and use mix of downtown Watsonville change over time.

- **Policy 9.3: Regional Attraction.**

Encourage location of new retail, professional, and residential uses as well as personal services within the downtown to serve the entire Pajaro Valley region.

- **Policy 9.4: Opportunity Sites** 036

Prioritize infill development on vacant and underutilized sites to jumpstart Downtown's revitalization.



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Produce mural at East Beach Plaza

## #036

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 10:16am** [Comment ID: 5702] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

I would love to see vacant buildings occupied with the kinds of services and retail the community needs.

## #037

Posted by **ambalder** on **07/13/2022 at 11:09pm** [Comment ID: 5636] - [Link](#)

*Type: Question*

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

How would new zoning limits restricting certain businesses impact this policy?

Reply by **Pam** on **07/14/2022 at 12:32am** [Comment ID: 5652] - [Link](#)

*Type: Question*

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

Not a reply but related question: if an existing business closes, can a new business of the same type open there, even if it's on the restricted list for new businesses?



# Mobility and Parking

040

038

## Goal 10

Provide convenient access and circulation for all modes of transportation, enhance walkability and bikeability in Downtown Watsonville.

- **Policy 10.1: Complete Streets.** Design streets to provide safe and comfortable facilities for all people walking, biking, rolling, riding transit, or operating motor vehicles.
- **Policy 10.2: Main Street.** Re-design Main Street as a traffic calmed street with an emphasis on active uses and the highest levels of pedestrian activity.
- **Policy 10.3: Caltrans Facilities.** Work with Caltrans to re-imagine SR 152 to function as a Downtown Street with priority given to pedestrians and destination traffic.
- **Policy 10.4: Truck Route.** Consider removing the truck route designation from SR-152 within Downtown.

041

## Goal 11

Provide an efficient parking strategy to manage parking demand and supply in Downtown.

- **Policy 11.1: Parking Management.** Effectively manage parking to accommodate demand through increased utilization of existing supply.
- **Policy 11.2: Shared Parking.** Eliminate barriers to development by reducing requirements for on-site parking through use of shared parking.

039

- **Policy 10.5: Bicycle Network.** Provide a connected network of bike facilities within the Specific Plan area and connect to existing and planned regional bike trails including the Pajaro River Levee Path, Watsonville Slough Trail, and the Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail.
- **Policy 10.6: Bicycle Facilities.** Require bike repair stations at key public locations and bicycle parking to make bicycle usage more convenient.

039

- **Policy 10.7: Pedestrian Improvements.** Improve pedestrian facilities to improve safe and efficient pedestrian circulation in Downtown including upgraded crosswalks, curb extensions, midblock crossings, and paseos.
- **Policy 10.8: Travel Demand Management.** Increase the availability of mobility options to access and travel within the Specific Plan area without driving alone and reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) associated with new development.

- **Policy 11.3: Parking Minimums.** Reduce parking requirements to increase housing affordability and reduce construction costs.
- **Policy 11.4: Parking District Expansion.** Expand the boundaries of the existing Downtown Parking District to match the Specific Plan boundary.
- **Policy 11.5: Curb Management.** Effectively manage competing priorities for curb space to safely accommodate active travelers, passenger pick-up/drop-offs, and deliveries.

## #038

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 10:19am** [Comment ID: 5703] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

These are all critical for a healthier future. We need to provide mobility options that are convenient, affordable, enjoyable and efficient. Cars fool us into thinking they are all of the above but they are actually making us sick and making the planet unlivable.

## #039

Posted by **JS** on **07/14/2022 at 6:51pm** [Comment ID: 5847] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes! There are currently very few bike racks downtown

## #040

Posted by **Pam** on **07/14/2022 at 12:33am** [Comment ID: 5654] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

Love the focus on green forms of transportation!

## #041

Posted by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022 at 3:03pm** [Comment ID: 5722] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Very important to provide a safe and comfortable pedestrian experience.

## Transit

### Goal 12

Leverage and support existing transit services to realize Downtown's potential to become a multi-modal mixed-use district.

- **Policy 12.1: Transit Center.** 044

Capitalize on the presence and function of the Transit Center at Rodriguez Street by improving pedestrian connectivity to the rest of downtown.

- **Policy 12.2: Historic Transit Station.**

Work with the appropriate agencies to establish a transit station at the historic Watsonville Railroad Depot and improve connections to the rest of Downtown. 043



## Infrastructure

### Goal 13

Ensure that the infrastructure in place is adequate to meet the needs of residents and businesses in Downtown Watsonville.

- **Policy 13.1: Water Demand.**

Evaluate demand for water use and estimate needed upgrades to ensure adequate water supply for the anticipated amount of development.

- **Policy 13.2: Sanitary Sewer.**

Identify any needed upgrades to ensure adequate wastewater removal.

- **Policy 13.3: Stormwater quality.**

Minimize impacts to stormwater quality in a manner that improves water quality by following City of Watsonville's Stormwater Post Construction requirements.

- **Policy 13.4: Urban Sustainability Area.** 042

Consider pursuing approval of an Urban Sustainability Area designation from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

- **Policy 13.5: View corridors.**

Minimize the impact of utilities on view corridors by undergrounding utilities as infill projects are developed.

**PHOTO CAPTION**—Santa Cruz METRO Bus

#042

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 10:21am** [Comment ID: 5706] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Not sure what this means but sounds important.

#043

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 10:21am** [Comment ID: 5705] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

Yes! Looking forward to passenger rail service also!

#044

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 10:20am** [Comment ID: 5704] - [Link](#)

*Type: Suggestion*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Would love to see this become a mobility hub for all kinds of transportation - e-bikes, e-scooters, dispatch for shared electric vehicles, etc



*Chapter 3:*

# DESIGN FRAMEWORK

- 3.1—Introduction
- 3.2—Design Framework
- 3.3—Character Areas
- 3.4—Growth Projections for the Specific Plan Area





**DOWNTOWN WATSONVILLE  
ALREADY HAS THE FOUNDATION  
FOR A GREAT CITY CENTER.  
ITS HISTORIC BUILDINGS, SMALL  
SHOPS, URBAN STREETS,  
AND PLAZA MAKE IT A  
MEMORABLE AND  
PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY PLACE.**

## Section 3.1

# INTRODUCTION

**PHOTO CAPTION**—Watsonville Civic Plaza



**At the same time, there are many promising opportunities to build upon downtown's attractive features.** The downtown also has vacant lots and nondescript low-rise buildings that, over time, might be replaced with urban uses that can contribute to the area's vitality. The Specific Plan presents an extraordinary urban design opportunity to create a unique sense of place by building on these existing elements, as well as highlighting the historic character and architectural features of the area.

The goal of the Design Framework is to develop the Plan area holistically, as a system of spaces, structures, and environments integrated into its surroundings rather than as linear strips of unrelated buildings and undefined streetscapes. A clear framework with a strong sense of place provides visitors and residents with an understanding of how to find their way around easily and safely and to efficiently identify uses and activities. Arrangement of land uses into identifiable nodes, improved streetscapes, connected courtyards

and open spaces, and enhanced landmarks and features will help make Downtown Watsonville an accessible, distinctive, and cohesive identity.



## Section 3.2

# DESIGN FRAMEWORK

**The Design Framework, as illustrated in Figure 3-1, sets forth the overall urban design approach that will achieve the Specific Plan's goal of transforming the area into an active, vibrant downtown.** The urban design approach is based on the major strategies, or “big ideas,” identified by the community during the development of the Specific Plan. Each of these strategies is intended to support the implementation of the Downtown vision with the creation of new housing, jobs, and improvements to transportation and public spaces for residents and businesses in the downtown.

### These big ideas or strategies are:

- Retain downtown's charming historic architecture and character
- Build on and extend downtown's walkable scale
- Activate downtown with new uses, special events and programming
- Provide improvements to the public realm—streetscape, public art, murals
- Re-imagine Main Street right-of-way to address traffic calming and walkability goals
- Provide more housing choices and maintain affordability
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and safety
- Address traffic speed and congestion concerns

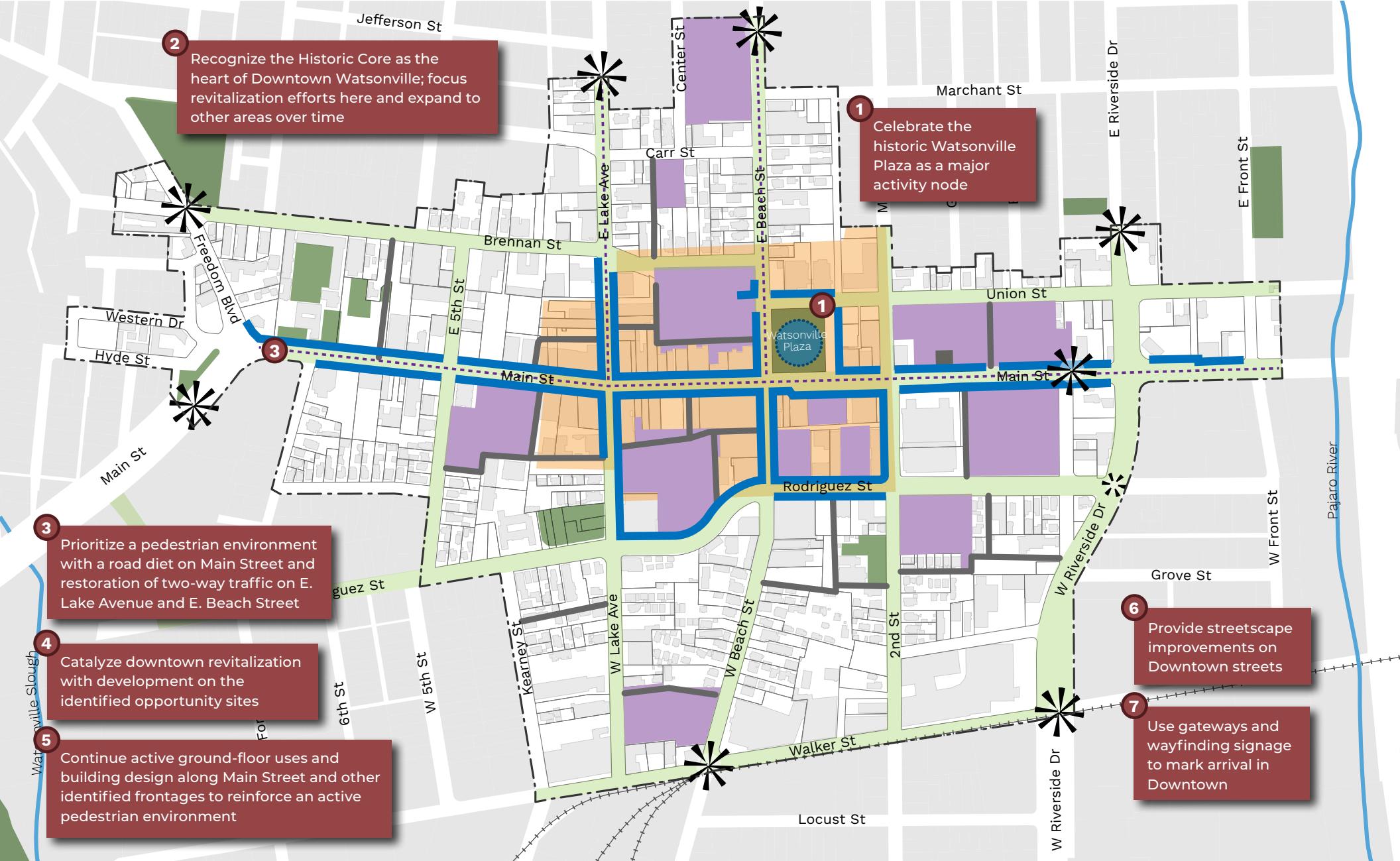
**PHOTO CAPTION**—Aerial view of Watsonville City Plaza



The Design Framework recognizes that the Plaza is the focus of the Downtown and the area immediately surrounding it should have the most prominence in terms of activity, building intensity and priority. This area (see Historic Downtown Core character area in the next section) will be the focus of changes to the street network with traffic calming and “road diet” on Main Street, as well as several placemaking elements to improve the pedestrian experience. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings and new mixed-use infill with new ground floor active storefronts will create an active street frontage. Parklets, sidewalk extensions and street amenities including high-

quality furniture and street lighting will contribute to the desired sense of place. A palette of carefully selected street trees will unify the variety of land uses that currently exist and are proposed in the Plan area.

The Design Framework also considers the desired land use vision for other parts of downtown. This vision is described in the next section that describes the identified character areas. Along with the vision for the character areas, the design concepts for opportunity sites, and the bicycle network recommendations together also inform the design framework.



## Section 3.3

# CHARACTER AREAS

**TOP TO BOTTOM**—Main Street streetscape; Fox Theater in Downtown Watsonville

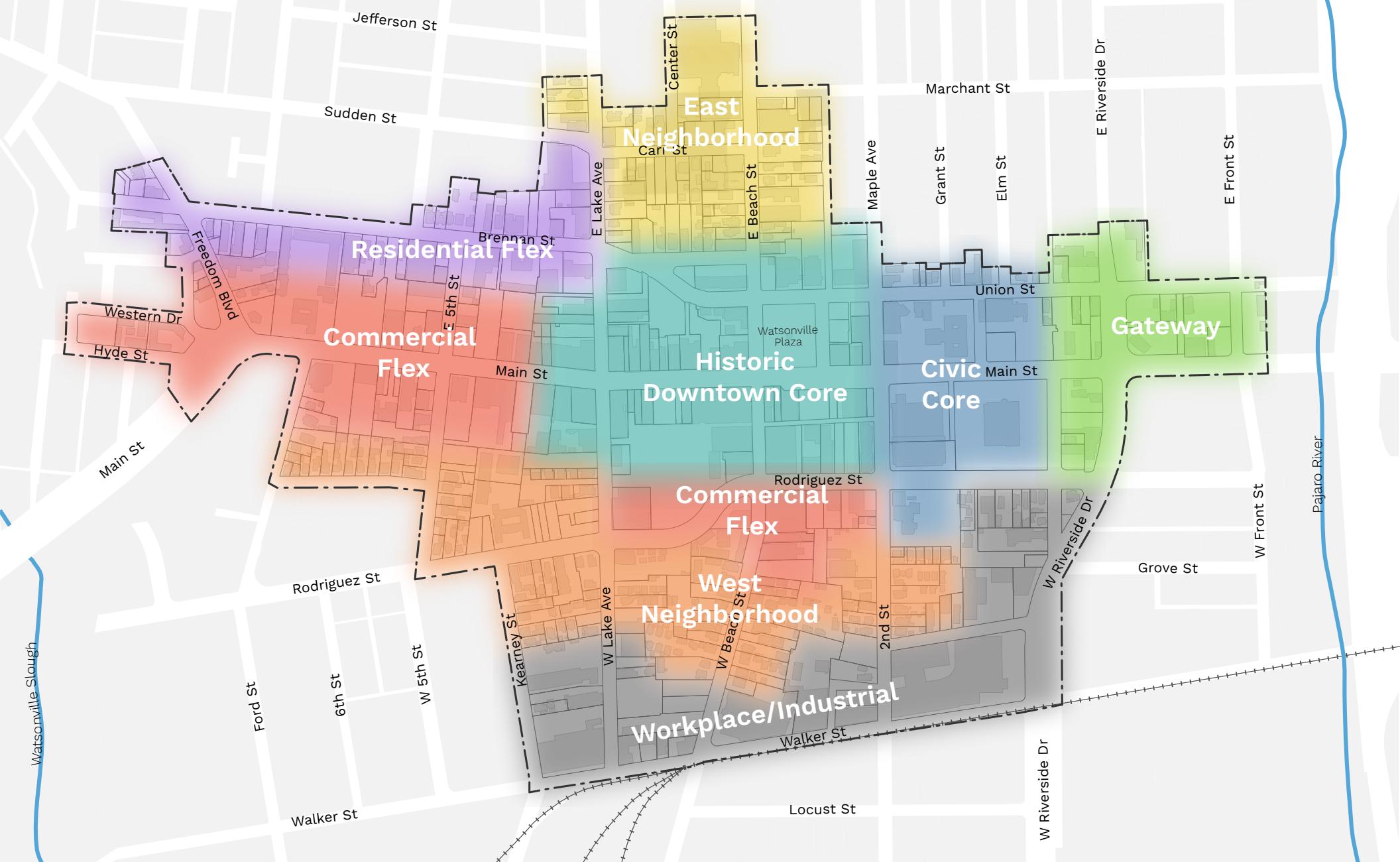


**Different parts of the Plan area have varied and distinct use and form characteristics which should be recognized and enhanced as the Plan area redevelops.** Each of these subareas or “character areas” define the identity and “look and feel” of each area within downtown, the attributes that make each of these places distinct and unique, fostering a sense of place with consistent urban design. Character Areas establish a framework that each one is developed with an appropriate mix of land uses, activities, public open spaces, and amenities, as these are the building blocks for a complete neighborhood.

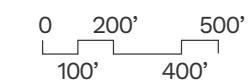
There are eight-character areas within the Specific Plan: Historic Downtown Core, Civic Core, Gateway, East Neighborhood, West Neighborhood, Workplace/Industrial, Commercial Flex, and Residential Flex. **Figure 3-2: Character Areas** illustrates the boundaries of the character areas within downtown.

For each of the character areas, this section provides a more focused vision, defines the desired urban design characteristics, and provides guidance for the land use mix. Each character area contains strategies

and priorities to implement the vision for downtown Watsonville, and to create a unified sense of place and address land use compatibility. This section provides high-level guidance on vision, use, placemaking strategies, and opportunity sites within each area. Chapter 6: Land Use & Zoning prescribes development and design regulations for all construction within the Plan area.



## FIGURE 3-2 CHARACTER AREAS



## Opportunity Sites

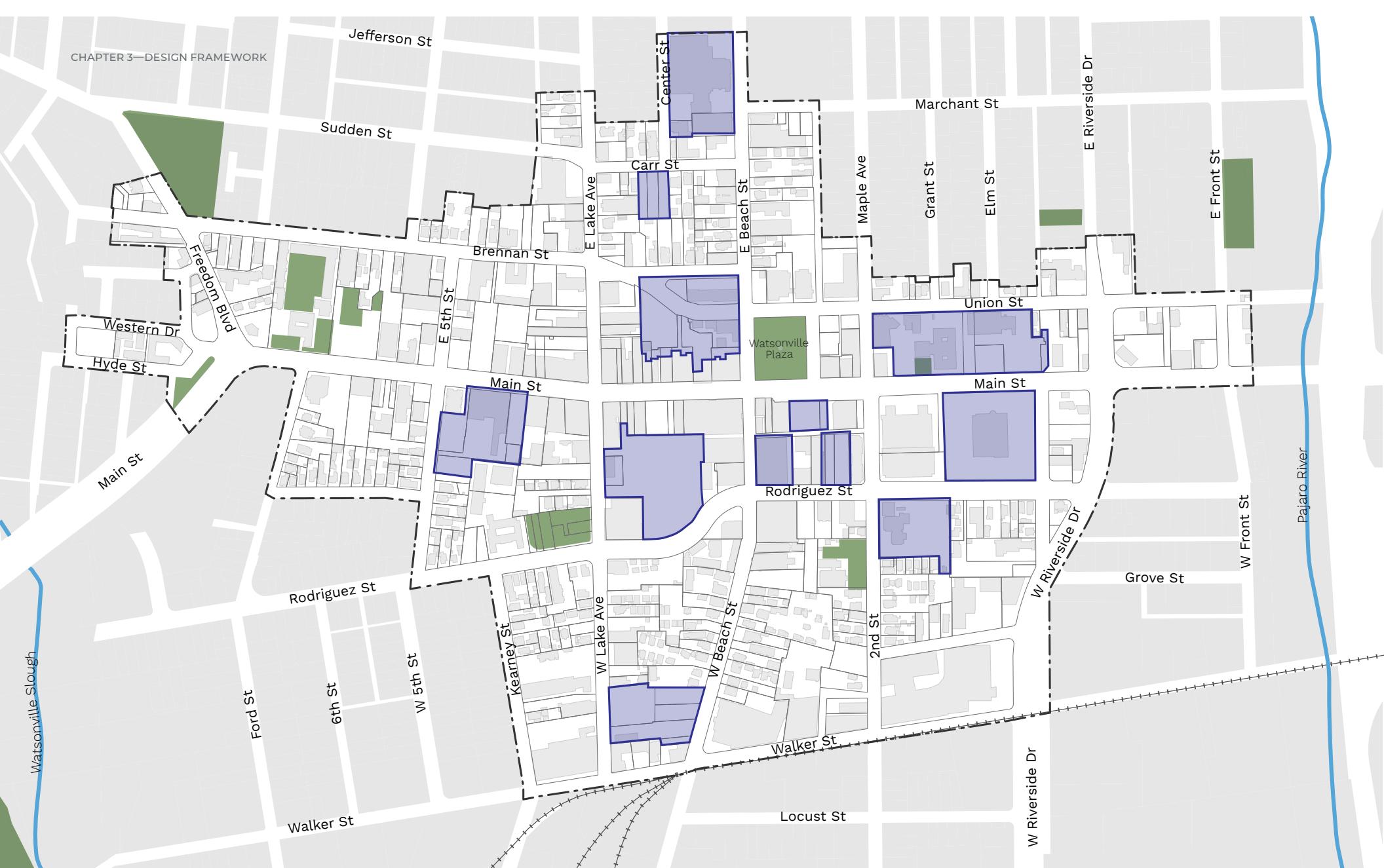
In some of the character areas, vacant and underutilized sites have been identified as opportunity sites. Development on these opportunity sites have the potential to be catalytic projects that could help to spark redevelopment and reinvestment in the downtown. Many of these sites are publicly owned, or if privately-owned, have owner interest in redeveloping.

The concept designs shown for these opportunity sites are intended to be illustrative in nature. Development on these sites shall follow the regulations noted in Chapter 6. **Figure 3-3** illustrates the location for Opportunity Sites in downtown Watsonville:

---

**PHOTO CAPTION**—Martinelli's property is identified as a opportunity site.





**FIGURE 3-3**  
**OPPORTUNITY SITES**



0 200' 500'  
100' 400'

# Historic Downtown Core

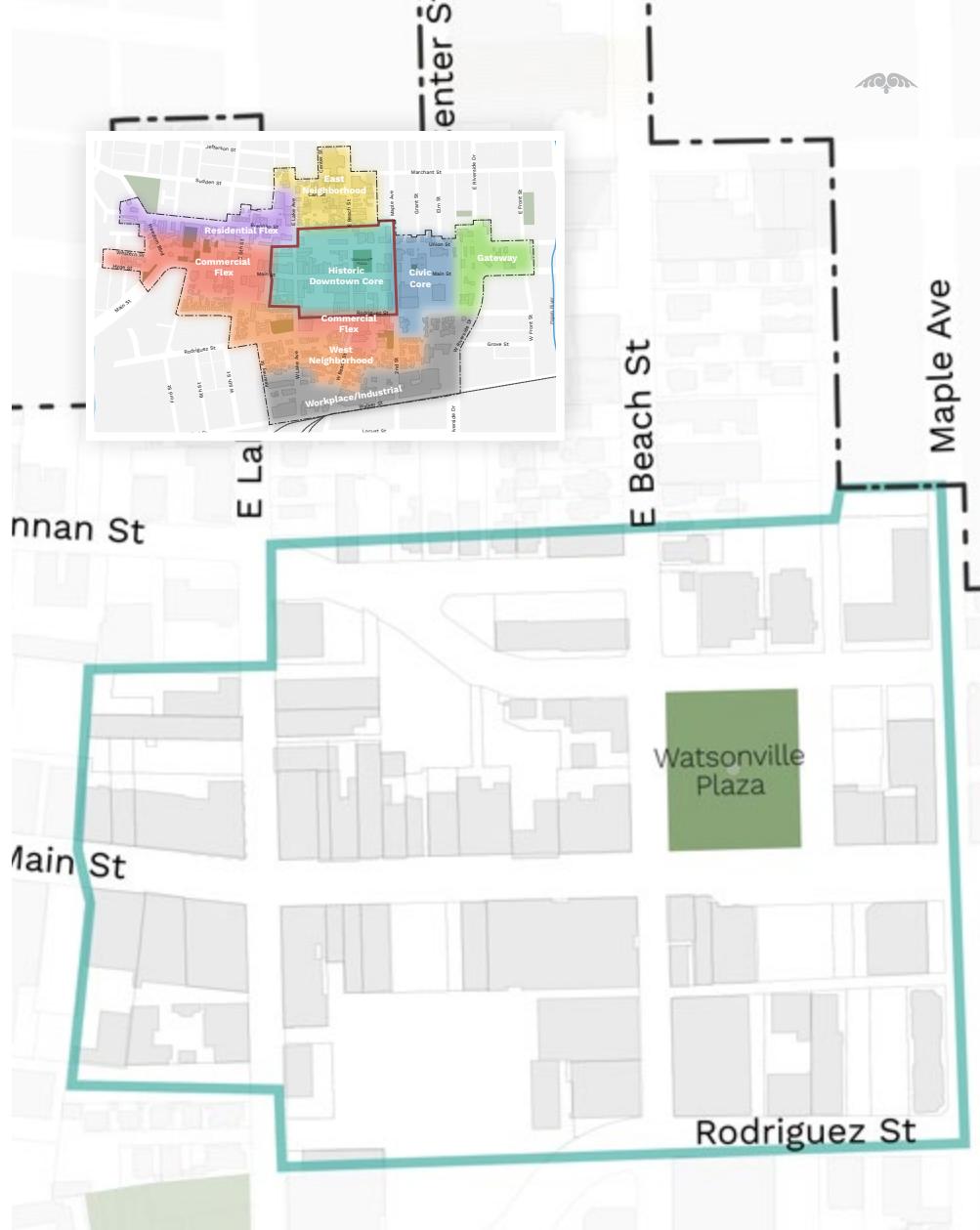
## Existing Setting

The Historic Downtown Core is in the heart of downtown and includes a mix of well-regarded landmarks and places like Watsonville Plaza as well as many historic buildings that give downtown Watsonville a unique and authentic character. See **Figure 3-4**.

The Plaza is well programmed with many special events, ranging from weekly Farmers Markets to the annual Strawberry Festival. The historic buildings in this area are built at the front property line with no setbacks, creating a strong street wall presence along the sidewalk. The sidewalks are narrow, typically 10 feet in most locations. Street amenities are limited with sporadic street trees and street furniture. The existing street network establishes a clear hierarchy but is challenged by the constraints posed by Caltrans Route 152 along portions of Main Street and E. Lake Avenue and

E. Beach Street. However, it presents an opportunity to make enhancements that are inclusive of transportation and traffic management, safety, and streetscape design (e.g., wider sidewalks, parklets, bulb outs, etc.).

The Historic Downtown Core has the potential to be a successful mixed-use area that incorporates housing and ground-floor retail. Today, there are only a limited number of housing units in this area. Several buildings in the Downtown Core have vacant and underutilized storefronts and are non-contributing to the street character with boarded or closed storefront windows and openings, disrupting the historic street pattern. Several vacant parcels and surface parking lots provide an opportunity for infill development.



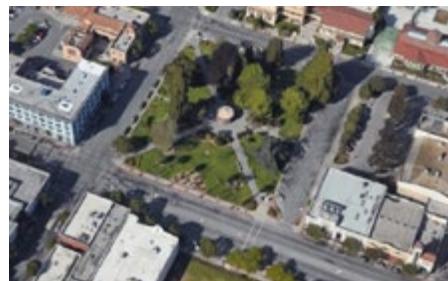
**FIGURE 3-4**  
**HISTORIC DOWNTOWN CORE CHARACTER AREA**

- Character Area Boundary
- Specific Plan Boundary
- Parks/Open Space

## Vision

The vision for this character area is to create an active, vibrant pedestrian-oriented environment that builds on the historic fabric and brings more vitality to downtown throughout the day and into the evening. To achieve this vision, the Plan seeks to recalibrate this area to create and maintain a continuous street wall with transparent and visible storefronts. To preserve the historic charm of the Historic Downtown Core, façade rehabilitation will be necessary to restore the historic frontage character. Ground floors in this area should be designed to be retail-ready, with the appropriate height, street setbacks and outdoor space necessary to enable and encourage street activity.

The street network will be modified to create a traffic-calmed Main Street with reduced number of travel lanes, parklets and bulb-outs. The E. Beach and E. Lake one-way couplet will be converted to two-way with the Beach Street portion removed from the Hwy 152 system. Both streets will also accommodate parklets, on-street parking and new streetscape amenities.



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM**—Mansion House; Watsonville City Plaza;

Lettunic DWSP Public Draft 062422\_Ch1-4.pdf

## Uses

The types of uses envisioned in the Historic Downtown Core include residential, commercial, office, and service uses among other similar uses deemed conditionally acceptable by the City.

## Placemaking Strategies

The Historic Downtown Core is a critical location to support active modes of transportation and street activity in the downtown. To promote a people-centered use of public space, the following placemaking strategies have been identified for the Historic Downtown Core character area:

- Require active ground floor uses (retail and restaurants), with housing and office above.
- Encourage and enable outdoor dining on sidewalks and new parklets.
- Maintain and create a continuous and active street-wall (e.g., new shopfronts and façade rehabilitation of existing buildings).
- Incorporate consistent and unifying streetscape and public realm improvements.
- Create and manage a Downtown Improvement District including a shared parking supply, branding and wayfinding program, programming of special events, etc.

045

## Opportunity Sites

The Historic Downtown Core is home to two major opportunity sites for significant infill development, of which the city controls several key parcels. These opportunity sites in the Historic Downtown Core character area are the Mansion House block and Gottschalk block.

#045

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 4:56pm** [Comment ID: 5758] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

I would hope park-lets would be open to public, not just for customers of certain businesses.

## Mansion House Block

The opportunity site is located within the block bound by Main Street, Beach Street, Alexander Street, and Lake Avenue. The Watsonville Plaza is directly adjacent to the site. Prior to the 1960's, Brennan and Union Streets were not connected and instead the Brennan continued to Alexander Street before ending at Beach Street. Similarly, Union Street stopped at Beach Street. In the 1960's, Union and Brennan Streets were connected through the Mansion House block, which created an island between Union and Alexander Street. The Specific Plan considers restoring the former street configuration for this block, which would create a major development site in the heart of downtown. While issues of traffic flow, utilities relocation and other topics would need to be considered and addressed, this opportunity site would be a major catalyst. The development site includes the City-owned parking lot behind the Mansion House and the vacated street right-of-way.

The new site configuration could accommodate a shared parking structure<sup>046</sup> as well as a new mixed-use infill project that could better define and connect to the Watsonville Plaza. The new development could include ground-level commercial spaces, residential above, and public courtyards connected with paseos. This mixed-use infill development would help to support activity in the Historic Downtown Core. The Ortiz Deli building located on the corner of E. Beach and Alexander Streets, could be retained, and incorporated in the new site configuration.

A small plaza at the terminus of Union Street would create a view corridor, connecting street activity to the interior courtyards, alleyways, and paseos. Programming of these interior public open and gathering spaces with outdoor dining, cinema, and other active uses will help activate the development. See **Figure 3-5 Mansion House Opportunity Site** for details.

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**PHOTO CAPTION**—Examples of multifamily residential units and shared public outdoor spaces to be programmed with various activities at different times of the day.

**Figure 3-5 Mansion House Opportunity Site**



## #046

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 4:59pm** [Comment ID: 5762] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Red flag about parking structures - they can cost a fortune. Does it make sense to construct any more parking structures? make sense to pay an enormous amount of money per space? Can we find ways to keep cars out of downtown? Free frequent shuttle to a remote lot?

## Gottschalks Block

This block is one of the larger sites located directly in the heart of downtown, bound by Main Street, Beach Street, Rodriguez Street, and Lake Avenue. West of Main Street is the Gottschalk building which has a charter school use above vacant ground-floor commercial space. The 54-unit Terrace housing development is located in this block. Other uses on this block include a CVS Pharmacy, Auto Zone and the Resetera single room occupancy development. Much of the block interior is privately-owned surface parking lot serving the various uses located in that block.

The concept for this opportunity site addresses the goal to improve pedestrian circulation through large blocks by using paseos and alleyways to break the large blocks up into smaller blocks. These smaller blocks would reinforce the historic nature of the Downtown Core as a walkable and easy to navigate environment. These paseos could also create a comfortable pedestrian connection between the Watsonville Transit Center on the corner of W. Lake Avenue and Rodriguez Street and Main Street.

In the near term, there is an opportunity to provide better circulation on-site. Connections could be improved by incorporating a drop-off/pick-up location and reconfiguring the shared parking lot to establish a pleasant walking path along the back of the buildings. Improvements could be as simple as reconstructing part of the building to providing critical access through the block from Main Street into the interior of the block. The parking lot presents a longer-term development opportunity to provide a shared parking structure, new uses along W. Lake Avenue and Rodriguez Street.

Figure 3–6 Gottschalks Block Opportunity Site

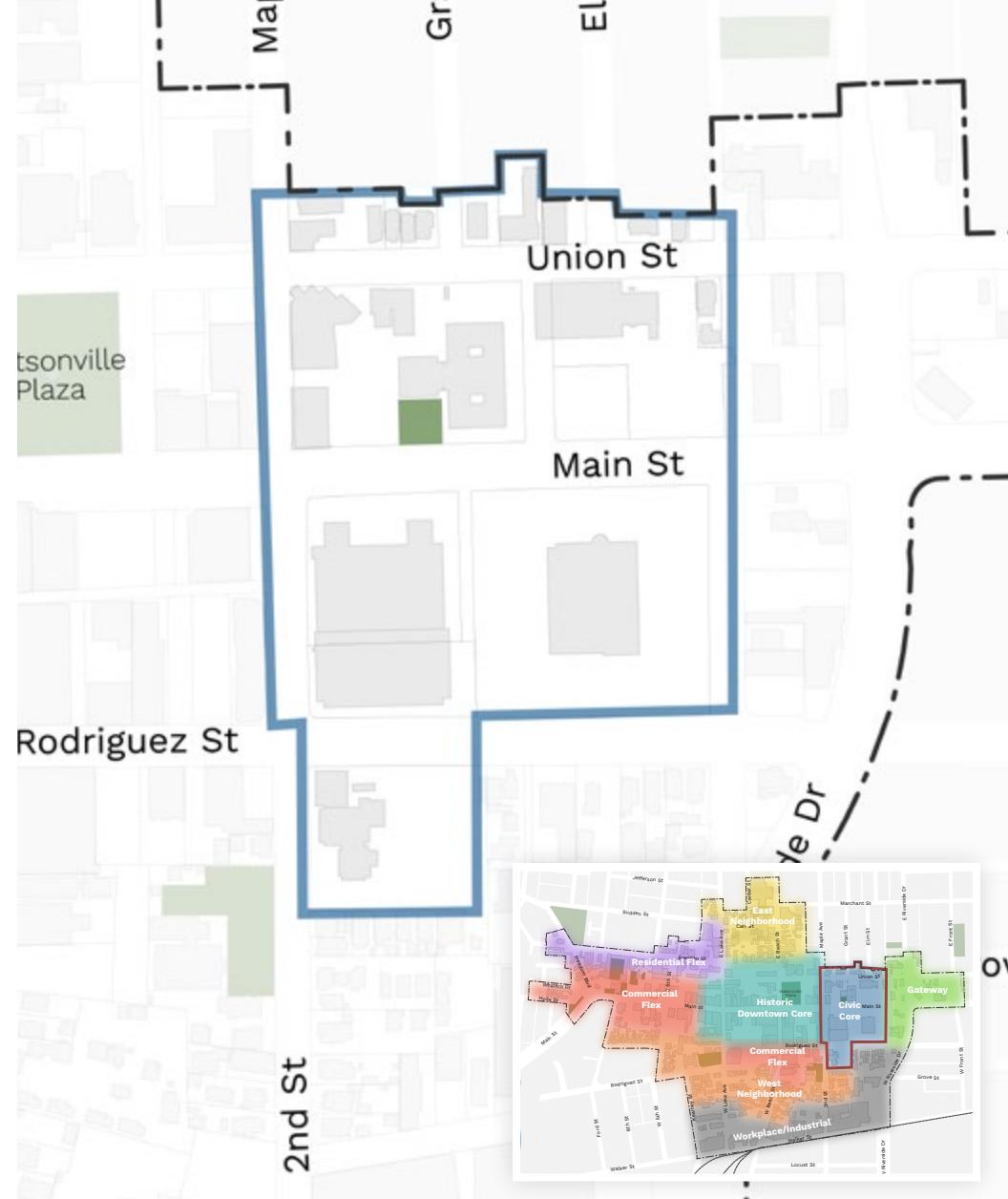


## Civic Core

### Existing Setting

The Civic Core is uniquely positioned within downtown and is anchored by City Hall, the joint-use Civic Plaza, Library, Police Station, and Post Office. Many properties in this character area are publicly owned. The Civic Core has some of the tallest buildings and massing in the downtown with prominent buildings like the joint-use Civic Plaza fronting Main Street. Most buildings are located behind parking areas or large landscaped setback areas, providing a suburban frontage. The City also owns the Fire Station site with a large parking lot to the rear along 2nd Street. The US Post Office parcel with its expansive parking lot surrounding the post office is a large presence on Main and Rodriguez Streets that is ripe for intensification. Additionally, a shared parking structure (located on 2nd Street and Rodriguez Street) adds to the shared parking supply for the Historic Downtown Core and the Civic Core on nights and weekends.

The Main Street segment in the Civic Core is not under Caltrans jurisdiction and is under the control of the City. Recent streetscape improvements along Main Street include a landscaped median, crosswalks, street trees and other street amenities. Improvements to make Rodriguez Street more pedestrian-friendly are needed. Main Street is the gateway from the south from Pajaro. Traffic calming along Main Street is a desired goal.



**FIGURE 3-7**  
**CIVIC CORE CHARACTER AREA**

- Character Area Boundary
- Specific Plan Boundary
- Parks/Open Space

## Vision

The vision for this character area is to maintain its core civic functions and to extend the active pedestrian environment from the Historic Core by adding active mixed-use infill development. This vision can be achieved by consolidating city functions in a couple of specific locations, allowing space for new development. The vision also includes the long-term repurposing of the large, underutilized Post Office site, in addition to streetscape upgrades such as landscape medians and crosswalks to provide connectivity and improve walkability along Main Street and Rodriguez Streets.



## Opportunity Sites

The Civic Core has several City-controlled, vacant, and underutilized sites on Main Street which present an important opportunity to evolve the Civic Core into a thriving civic mixed-use area within downtown. Opportunity sites in the Civic Core character area include The City Hall, Police Station, Fire Station, and US Post Office sites.

## Uses

The types of uses envisioned in the Civic Core are civic uses, mixed-use with retail, housing, and entertainment.

## Placemaking Strategies

The Civic Core is a character area intended to be defined by civic focused uses in a mixed-use environment. There is an opportunity to consolidate similar uses while also integrating area-unifying public realm enhancements that are supportive of active modes and connections. The following placemaking strategies have been identified for the Civic Core character area:

- Redevelop the majority city-owned block fronting Main Street between Maple Street and 1st Street with active, mixed-use infill including retail, housing, entertainment, and City Hall uses.
- Consolidate City essential services - Police and Fire - on Rodriguez Street and the Fire Station site.
- Allow higher densities and intensity along Main Street to match the scale of the Civic Plaza, while ensuring a transition in scale to neighborhoods east of Union Street.
- Establish a consistent and unifying streetscape with public realm improvements supportive of walkability along Main Street and Rodriguez Street.
- Leverage the underutilized <sup>047</sup>ic Center parking structure to provide significant shared parking on nights and weekends.
- Extend Central Avenue from Main Street to Union and Rodriguez Streets to create a connection and infill sites

**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM**—Watsonville Civic Plaza; Porter Building; Intersection of Main Street and Second Street in front of Porter Building

#047

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 5:07pm** [Comment ID: 5767] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes! Utilize the parking already available. Don't build new parking structures a couple of blocks away.

# City Hall/ Civic Campus

This is a city-owned site where municipal services and the Police Department are located. This site excludes the Porter building located on the corner of Maple Avenue and Main Street and will be sold to a private entity. To achieve the site's full potential, the Police Department could be relocated to the fire station site on 2nd Street and Rodriguez Street. The redevelopment project could include a mix of market rate and affordable housing, new commercial uses along with accommodating existing City Hall functions. This site could be occupied by 3-4 story mixed-use and/or residential buildings over a single-story podium, with courtyard space above the parking. The development would need to be sensitive to adjacent single-family uses by transitioning into smaller neighborhood-scaled multifamily buildings along the east side of Union Street. Larger, taller buildings would be located along the Main Street frontage, echoing the scale of the 4-story Civic Plaza.

**PHOTO CAPTION**—Example of mixed-use and residential development

**Figure 3-8 City Hall/Civic Campus & U.S. Postal Service Opportunity Site**



## U.S. Postal Service (Long-Term) 048

This is a prime location that is currently used by a one-story post office surrounded by a vast surface parking lot. If the postal service building were to cease operations in this location or be relocated elsewhere in the city in the future, this site has tremendous potential to connect to and support the City Hall/Civic Campus site and function as a Civic Core gateway into downtown. Redevelopment could create a more active environment and additional development sites by developing a smaller block and street network that extends Central Avenue to the west of Main Street towards Rodriguez Street.

#048

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 5:09pm** [Comment ID: 5771] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Good point - this is a low building on a very large lot. Is there a potential smaller place to re-locate the post office? It's helpful to have it be near downtown.

## Fire Department

The site is located at 2nd Street and Rodriguez Street where the existing fire station and museum would be anticipated to remain. Currently, the back of the site is used for parking and for conducting fire department exercises. If this site is redeveloped, then a new location for conducting these activities would need to be identified. The vision for this site includes relocating the Police Department to this site, consolidating essential City services to one block. In the event of a Police Department relocation, while the interior of the site will contain parking, additional parking needs of the relocated station would need to be supplemented with shared civic parking structure across Rodriguez Street.

**Figure 3–9 Fire Department Opportunity Site**



#049

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 5:11pm** [Comment ID: 5772] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Right, there's plenty of parking in the existing structure on Rodriguez.

# Gateway District

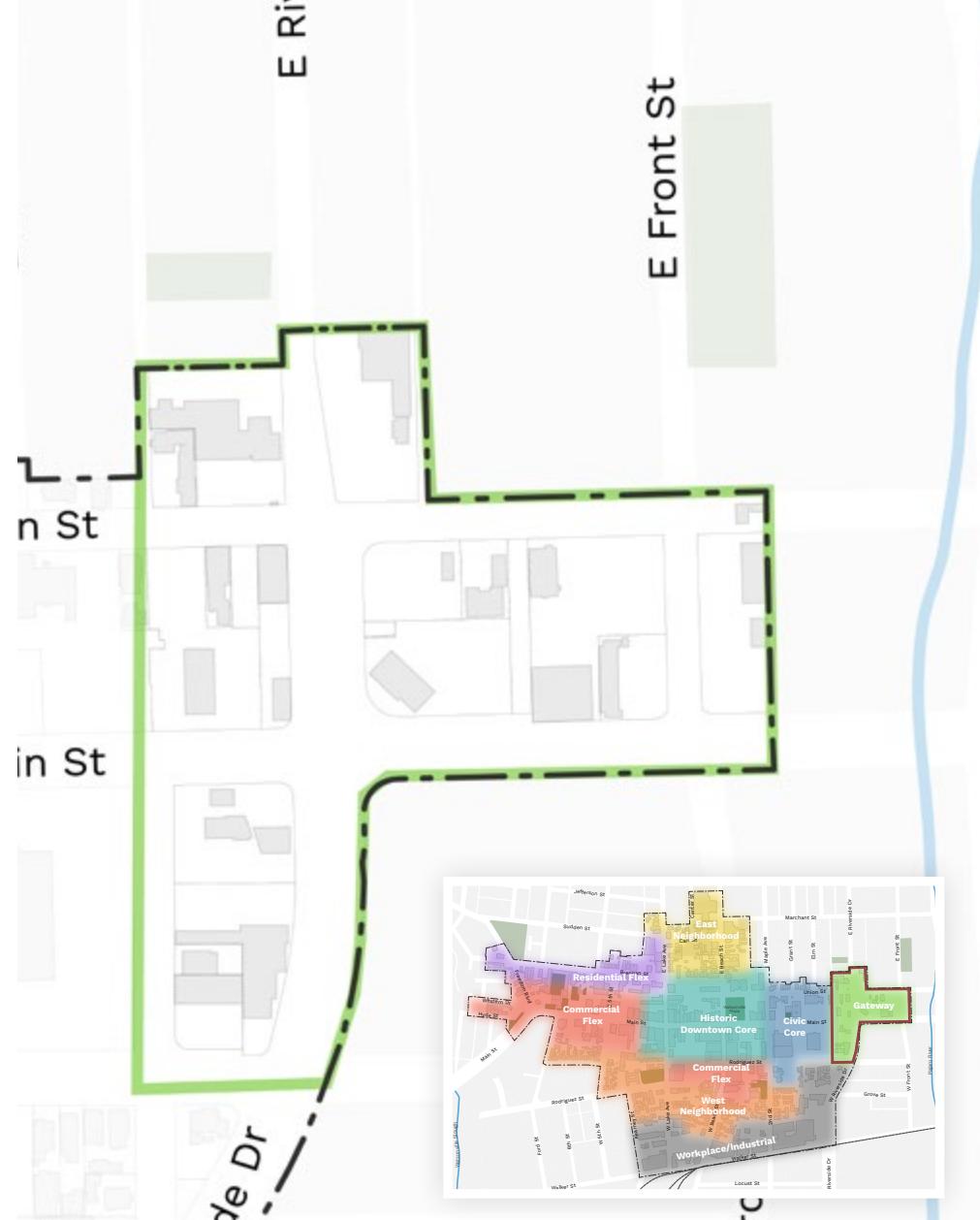
## Existing Setting

The Gateway character area contains the southern portion of the Plan area along Main Street and includes properties along Riverside Drive and First Street. This character area



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Existing view of Main Street near Riverside Drive, a proposed gateway site; Source: Google Maps 2022

functions as a transition area and gateway to the central portion of the Plan area and the more active Historic and Civic Core character areas.



**FIGURE 3-10**  
**GATEWAY CHARACTER AREA**

- Character Area Boundary
- Specific Plan Boundary
- Parks/Open Space

## Vision

The Gateway character area is envisioned to be a transition area and gateway to the central portion of the Plan area and the more active Historic and Civic Core character areas. Development in this character area would create a sense of entry to downtown. Consistent streetscapes and gateway treatments would help create the desired public realm.



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Example gateway to North Park neighborhood in San Diego, CA<sup>8</sup>

## Uses

The uses envisioned in the character area include a mix of commercial and residential uses, both as stand-alone and in a mixed-use format.

## Placemaking Strategies

The Gateway character area is defined by its transitional nature and will establish a sense of arrival or departure from the downtown. The following placemaking strategies have been identified for this area:

- Establish a gateway into downtown on Main Street near Riverside Drive with gateway signage and/or gateway monuments.
- Require new development to be built at or near the street, creating an urban form consistent with the denser Civic Core and Historic Downtown Core character areas.
- Establish consistent and unifying public realm improvements.

## Opportunity Sites

No opportunity sites for this character area have been identified. However, connections to the Pajaro River Levee Trail have been identified at two potential access points including at Front Street at the Linear Park and on Walker Street. This site is just outside the Plan area, but if considered, could positively influence the Plan area in addition to reinforcing bicycle connectivity along Union Street.

<sup>8</sup> "North Park Sign" by Jlantz, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0



# Commercial Flex

## Existing Setting

The Commercial Flex character area covers portions of Main Street north of the Historic Core, and along Rodriguez Street at Beach Street. This area is adjacent to historic neighborhoods that provide a strong customer base for downtown uses. The large block sizes within this area limit walkability for pedestrians. Much of the original building stock is still in place, which could be revitalized with minor improvements. Along Main Street, the uses evolve to less active uses such as churches, schools, banks along with commercial uses. The street frontages along Main Street are generally intact and can be improved with minor interventions. The Rodriguez Street section contains a variety of under-utilized lots and buildings in a street environment with inconsistent street treatments.



**FIGURE 3-11 COMMERCIAL FLEX CHARACTER AREA**

\* Note: Map is not to scale.

- Character Area Boundary
- Specific Plan Boundary
- Parks/Open Space

## Vision

The vision for this area is to become a lively, walkable mixed-use environment with new active ground floor uses that bring foot traffic to the area. The intent is to create a mix of uses that includes housing and commercial but is less intensive than the Historic Core and Civic Core areas. The Commercial Flex area is an ideal location to encourage, but not require, active ground floor uses as well as continue the street wall along Main Street with both horizontal and vertical mixed use.



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM**—Two-story building on street corner in Downtown Watsonville; Multifamily housing; Mixed density housing in Downtown Watsonville; Blocked off shopfront openings on building side.

## Uses

The types of land use envisioned support a mixed-use environment inclusive of commercial, housing, and office uses.

## Placemaking Strategies

The Commercial Flex area could evolve into a vibrant mixed-use area, providing a concentration of new jobs and residents within a short walk of the Historic and Civic Cores. The following placemaking strategies would support such a vision:

- Build off the strong existing street network and incorporate improved connectivity as infill occurs.
- Attract infill development types that activate downtown.
- Incorporate diverse type and affordability levels of new housing options.
- Support vertical mixed use on Main Street or stand-alone residential projects on other sites.
- Establish consistent and unifying public realm improvements.
- Construct a traffic circle at Freedom and Main Streets.

## Main and 5th Street Infill

This is a three-parcel site that include a city-owned parking lot and two privately-owned parcels. The site is serviced by an existing alley on 5th Street and a city parking lot off Lake Avenue. The site includes the Ramos Furniture Store, indoor playground store and a public parking lot. Bank of America is located on the corner of Main and 5th Streets. To the south of the site is a pleasant courtyard next to the Woman and Infants Center (WIC), which is currently not connected to the interior of the block.

Redevelopment of this site provides an opportunity to create new mix of uses, improve pedestrian connectivity within this large block, and highlight the existing gathering spaces such as the WIC courtyard. Reconfiguring the rear part of the site could connect the existing alley and parking, allowing for vehicular access and circulation to provide access to the new buildings. The internal block connections could also link to the WIC courtyard and provide pedestrian connections to Main Street and Lake Avenue.

The portion of the site fronting Main Street provides a development site for a new mixed-use building. The concept establishes a mixed-use development along Main Street with walk-up residential buildings toward the back of the site. The 3-4 story development could take the form of a podium building over parking that would line the ground floor of Main Street with commercial uses. The upper levels would access residential units or office use, and courtyard space. This building should introduce a significant number of residences or office square footage into downtown.

South of the Bank of America building, is a second parking area that is underutilized. The concept for this portion of the site includes neighborhood scaled multifamily buildings (e.g., missing middle or multi-plex courtyard typology) with surface parking that blends into the single-family housing along 5th Street.

**Figure 3-12 Main and 5th Street Opportunity Site**



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Example of mixed-use development

#050

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 5:15pm** [Comment ID: 5774] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

omit "that"

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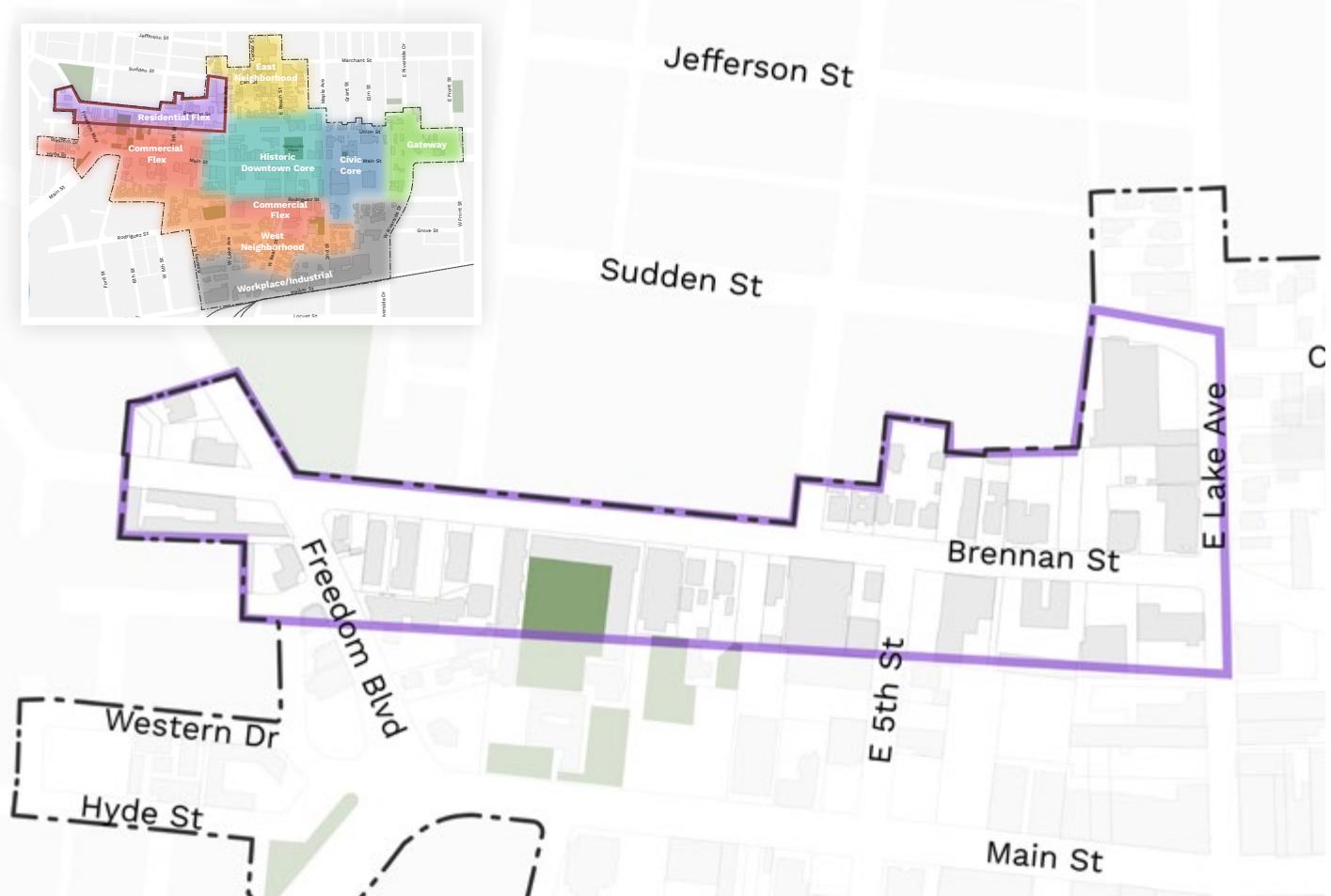
# Residential Flex

## Existing Setting

The Residential Flex Character Area is located along the segment of Brennan Street between E. Lake Avenue and Freedom Boulevard. The area is more suburban in character and includes many existing single-family homes; many of which have been converted to commercial or office uses.



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Existing view of Brennan Street (between 5th Street and Palm Avenue); Source: Google Maps 2022



**FIGURE 3-13 RESIDENTIAL FLEX CHARACTER AREA**

\* Note: Map is not to scale.

- Character Area Boundary
- Specific Plan Boundary
- Parks/Open Space

## Vision

The vision for the Residential Flex character area is to continue a mix of residential and commercial uses with an appropriate scale of transition east into the residential neighborhoods. Small scale and stand-alone residential is permitted along Brennan Street and clustered to the east side of the street while the west side accommodates more service and business uses.



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Examples of multi-story multifamily residential housing

## Uses

The types of land use envisioned in the Residential Flex Character Area support a mixed-use environment inclusive of small-scale residential, commercial and office uses.

051

## Placemaking Strategies

This area would seek to retain its residential character while supporting compatible uses and development typologies of similar scales. The following placemaking strategies support in achieving the area's vision:

- Create opportunities for new housing choices in downtown, either as stand-alone projects or as vertical mixed-use infill along Brennan Street.
- Consider increased density/intensity that creates a scaled-down transition to the surrounding single-family neighborhood.
- Establish streetscape and public frontage improvements that support new and existing businesses on the west side of the street.

## Opportunity Sites

Given the existing residential character of the Residential Flex zone, no opportunity sites were identified in this character area. The focus of this area should be on placemaking opportunities.

#051

Posted by **JS** on **07/14/2022 at 7:13pm** [Comment ID: 5856] - [Link](#)

*Type: Question*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Agreed, we need more multi-story housing downtown. However, living right next to this zone I would ask the city: what plans are there to address the increased traffic & parking in the neighborhoods? Parking is already jammed on these streets.

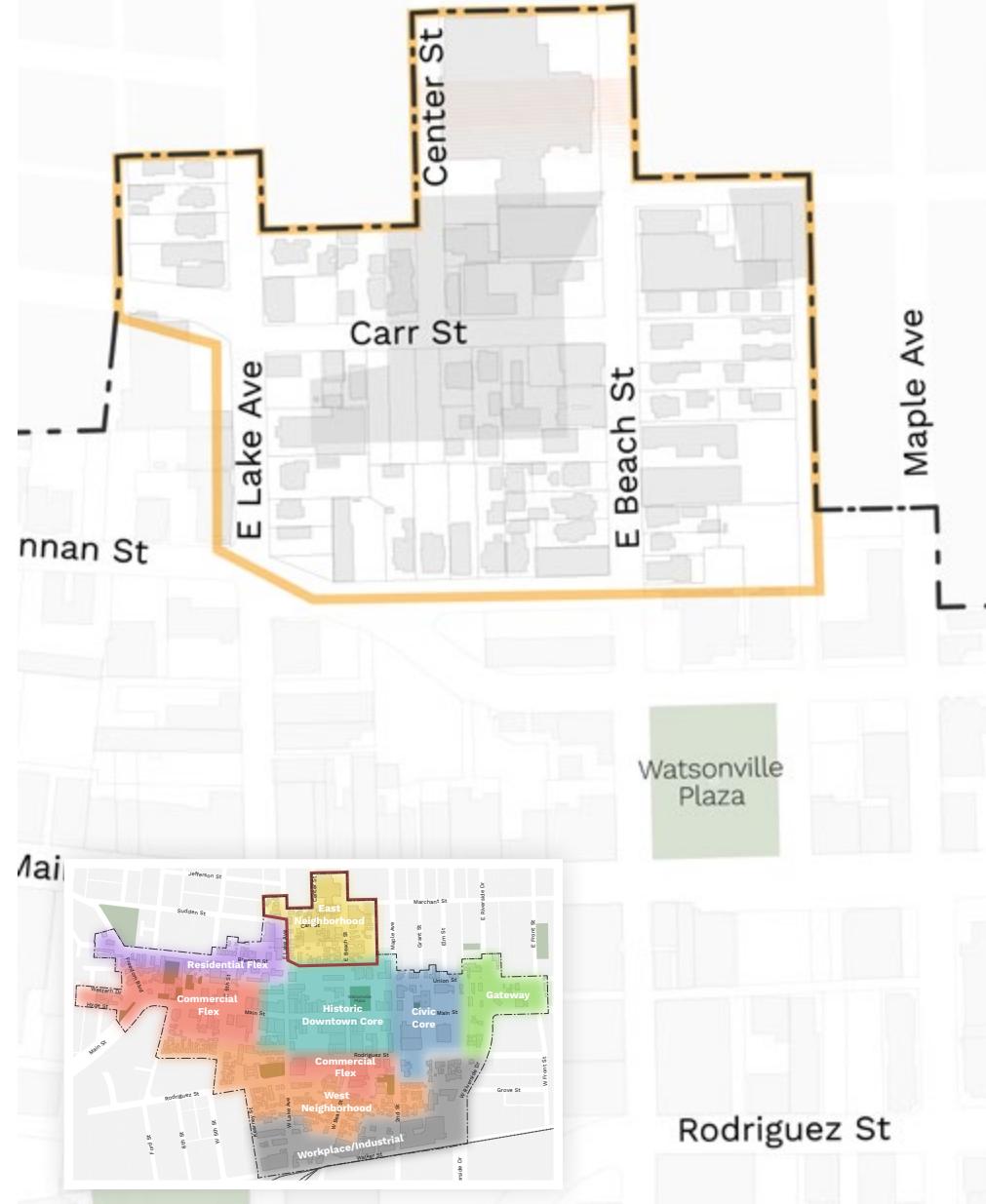
# East Neighborhood

## Existing Setting

The East Neighborhood character area is anchored by the Martinelli's property and contains a mix of uses that include traditional single-family residential of which many have been converted to offices and neighborhood commercial, public, and industrial uses. There is also a strong traditional urban development pattern in the area where downtown extends into the historic neighborhoods. Many of the single-family homes are historic and have been converted to office uses. The East Neighborhood is also home to a significant amount of landmark civic and industrial buildings that support an authentic neighborhood character (e.g., Martinelli & Co., Veteran's Memorial Building, School, Church, etc.).

The Martinelli's facility is an important historic and cultural resource for downtown. The iconic company started business in 1886 at this location. While business operations have mostly been relocated to other more modern facilities, this site has a special significance for both the company and the City of Watsonville.

The character area is flanked by the Hwy 152 couplet on E. Lake Avenue and E. Beach Street and is characterized by higher traffic volumes and speeds. The public realm is in need of major improvements.

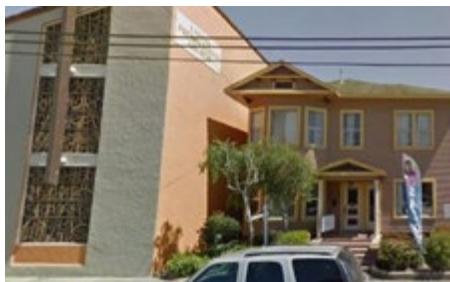


**FIGURE 3-14**  
**EAST NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AREA**

- Character Area Boundary
- Specific Plan Boundary
- Parks/Open Space

## Vision

The vision for this character area is to create a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood with residential, commercial, office, civic, and educational uses. The buildings in the area would be appropriately scaled and step-back to smoothly transition into, and maintain compatibility with, the surrounding context and historic neighborhoods.



## Uses

The types of land use envisioned support infill opportunities for housing (standalone multifamily or mixed-use), commercial, office and visitor-serving uses.

## Placemaking Strategies

- Encourage the adaptive reuse of the Martinelli's Site with uses that are supportive of the activation of downtown (e.g., residential, commercial/office, civic, college, etc.)
- Allow neighborhood-scale multifamily and enable neighborhood-scale mixed-use infill.
- Preserve the character and quality of historic homes on Beach Street and Alexander Street. Focus on uses that leverage the value of these significant architectural landmarks (e.g., bed & breakfasts, restaurants, coffee shops, galleries, etc.)

**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM**—Martinelli Building; Victorian-style home on East Beach Street; Victorian-style home; Multifamily housing adjacent to church; Veterans Memorial Building

## Martinelli Site

The Martinelli's site is a 2-acre property that is currently zoned industrial and serves as a production facility for the Martinelli's company. Martinelli's is a culturally meaningful business in Watsonville, due to its long-standing history. The company has another, larger facility in town and no longer uses this property for its main operations. It has expressed the possibility of ceasing operations in downtown Watsonville in the future, and if that were to occur, the site would become available for a new development opportunity. While the Specific Plan does not provide a design concept for this site, the plan establishes parameters for the redevelopment of the site while also ensuring that Martinelli's is not restricted in its use while it exists. Given the site's cultural significance, adaptive reuse is strongly recommended.

New development will need to consider the site's historic and cultural significance, proximity to the high school, the activation of Beach Street and the adaptive reuse of portions of the existing brick L-shaped building. New development would be appropriately scaled to respond to the adjacent housing located on Eaton Court and Center Street. New uses could include a mixture of housing, retail, and office as well as visitor serving uses, such as a museum, art gallery, coffee shops, and others.

## Bethel Parking Lot

This is a vacant parking lot near Martinelli's that has the potential to be developed with residential infill development.



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Martinelli property

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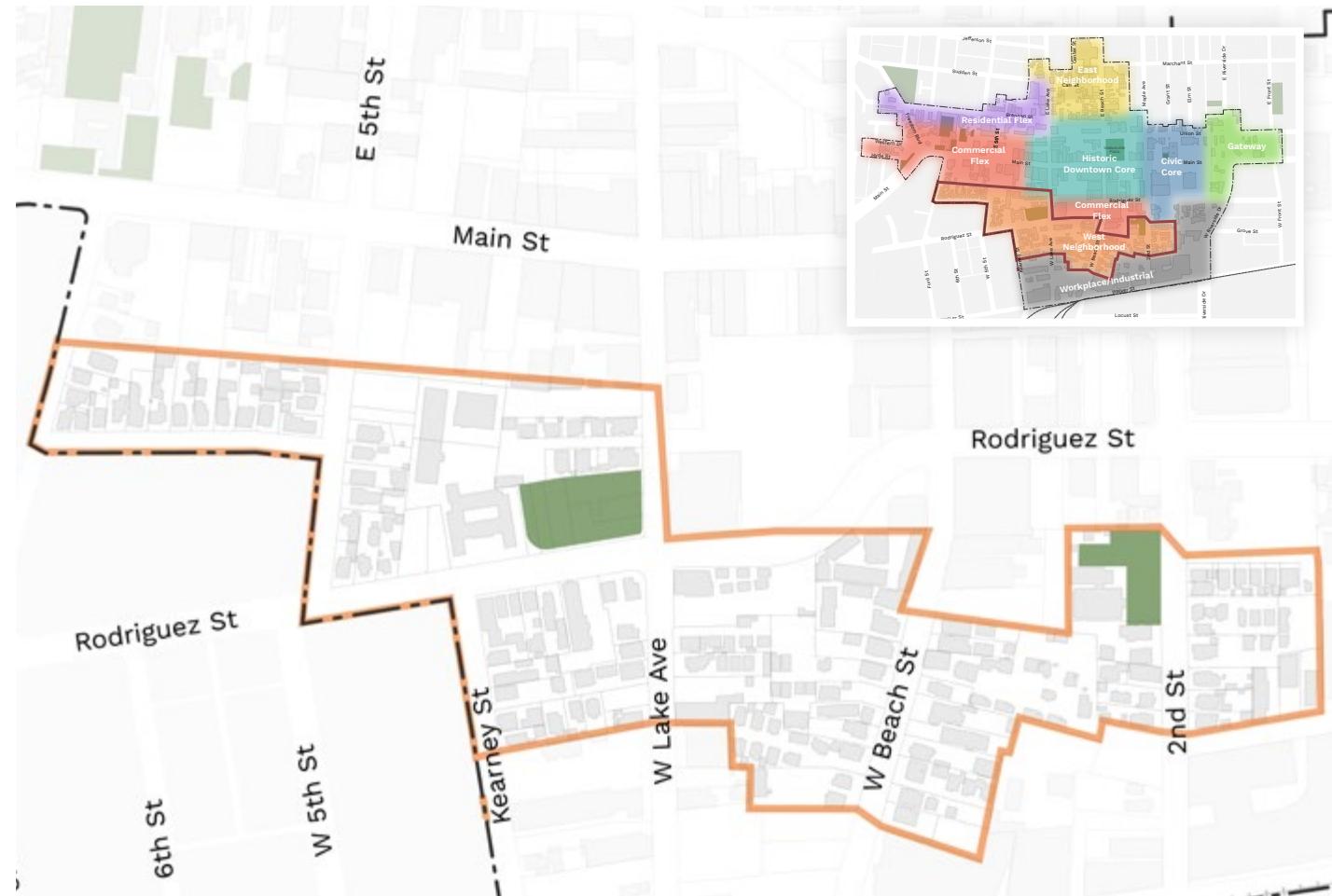


# West Neighborhood

## Existing Setting

The West Neighborhood character area is a short walk from the Historic Downtown and Civic Core areas and has a strong mix of uses – residential, commercial, and industrial – in suburban patterns. Incompatible uses currently exist adjacent to each other with multifamily residential directly adjacent to industrial uses. Numerous historic houses with strong architectural character exist in this area, with many well-maintained properties that have been improved creating a charming and appealing environment.

The large block sizes in the West Neighborhood are long, up to 1,000 feet long and deter walking. The West Neighborhood is also home to Marinovich Park and Radcliff Elementary School which bring people to the area from all over the city.



**FIGURE 3-15 WEST NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AREA**

\* Note: Map is not to scale.

- Character Area Boundary
- Specific Plan Boundary
- Parks/Open Space

## Vision

The vision for this area is to build on existing uses and transition to a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood – allowing a wide variety of active uses, including multifamily housing, live-work, maker spaces, and light industrial uses.

Underutilized sites could be adaptively reused for live-work opportunities while leveraging the concentration of residents within proximity to the Workplace Industrial, Historic Downtown Core, and Civic Core character areas. Additionally, major street frontages such as Lake Avenue, Beach Street, and Rodriguez Street are envisioned to have a more urban feel with smaller setbacks.



**TOP TO BOTTOM**—Multifamily housing in Downtown Watsonville; Mix of commercial and residential uses

## Uses

The types of land use envisioned support infill opportunities for housing (standalone multifamily or mixed-use), commercial, office and incubator/light industrial uses.

## Placemaking Strategies

- Support by-right neighborhood-scale multifamily and enable neighborhood-scale mixed-use infill.
- Evolve the area into a horizontally mixed-use neighborhood with a wide variety of active uses, including multifamily housing, live-work, maker space, light-industrial, etc.
- Enhance bike and pedestrian connections by focusing on the access point to the Watsonville Slough along Walker Street/Harkins Slough Road. The slough is located outside the Specific Plan area but still has a significant importance to downtown.

## Opportunity Sites

There are limited vacant sites available; however, there are several underutilized properties that provide opportunities for reinvestment.052

#052

Posted by **Pam** on **07/14/2022** at **12:43am** [Comment ID: 5655] - [Link](#)

*Type: Question*

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

Can the City offer residents who also own their homes no cost loans or grants to build onto a one story property, as a way to support building up/infill?



# Workplace/Industrial

## Existing Setting

The Workplace/Industrial character area is located along Walker Street and is adjacent to the Westside Industrial Area. It is characterized by factory and light-industrial businesses originally serviced by rail. The Workplace/Industrial area has a strong jobs base and presents a good opportunity for new businesses to locate in and near downtown. The vacant and underutilized industrial buildings in the area are not in pristine condition but have the potential for adaptive reuse.

Currently, the large block sizes and incomplete pedestrian infrastructure deter walkability. The truck-oriented public realm with multiple, large driveways, parking access and rolled curbs further contribute to this condition.

The historic rail depot is located at Walker Street and W. Lake Avenue, just outside the Plan boundary. In the future, the Historic Depot could potentially provide passenger rail access to Watsonville, making this area a new downtown gateway. Walker Street contains the planned Segment 19 of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail, which is both a multi-use path and an on-street facility.



## Vision

The vision for this area is to continue to provide jobs for residents and build off the existing workplace/industrial character by adapting underutilized sites into business incubators for tech, creative offices, makerspaces, galleries, breweries, coffee roasters, and coffee shops. This area could be more tactically activated to attract a critical mass to downtown. A prototypical approach can be applied to turn some of the parking areas of former industrial businesses into areas with outdoor dining, congregating, and usable outdoor space. This area will have a funky industrial-artsy feel with a continued eclectic mix of industrial and limited new infill housing. The historic depot could provide future passenger rail access to Watsonville, making this area a new downtown gateway.

This area has large, underutilized buildings that can be adaptively re-used while the lower cost of land in this area could incentivize new investment. Walker Street would become more active with public facing uses and amenities, while the future transit stop at the historic depot could provide linkages back to the Downtown Core.



**LEFT TO RIGHT**—Industrial and residential uses; Industrial buildings in Downtown Watsonville

## #053

Posted by **me@judyg.com** on **07/08/2022 at 2:09pm** [Comment ID: 5479] - [Link](#)

*Type: Suggestion*

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

Or beer gardens on Walker Street. There are plenty of spaces for restaurants on Main Street.

Walker street needs to allow for trucks and industry to thrive and not worry about pedestrians. We DO need safe and good access from the depot to Main st. Focus on the train depot..

## #054

Posted by **me@judyg.com** on **07/08/2022 at 2:13pm** [Comment ID: 5482] - [Link](#)

*Type: Suggestion*

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

We can attract technology here that specializes in agriculture. We can have markets that sell the amazing produce that is grown here. We can support ourselves and become a thriving influence on the nation.

## #055

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 5:25pm** [Comment ID: 5780] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes to modern rail service!

## #056

Posted by **me@judyg.com** on **07/08/2022 at 2:12pm** [Comment ID: 5481] - [Link](#)

*Type: Suggestion*

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

A place that feeds the country, houses and nurtures the people that grow the food. With Dignity. We have a downtown area that can be vibrant. We can have an electric ZERO Emission train that brings us to the world and the world to us.

## #057

Posted by **me@judyg.com** on **07/08/2022 at 2:11pm** [Comment ID: 5480] - [Link](#)

Type: Suggestion

Agree: 1, Disagree: 0

...depot and the train as being the future route into Watsonville.

Watsonville is perfectly Watsonville. This is a place with a rare culture of Agriculture. We need to develop ourselves honestly and proudly as who we are. We can be the agricultural town role model.

Reply by **Pam** on **07/14/2022 at 12:45am** [Comment ID: 5656] - [Link](#)

Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

Yes! This would be good to make more explicit in the intro chapter.

## #058

Posted by **me@judyg.com** on **07/08/2022 at 2:08pm** [Comment ID: 5478] - [Link](#)

Type: Suggestion

Agree: 1, Disagree: 0

Watsonville is an agriculture-based town.

Please do NOT reimagine the Walker Street area.

Our industry needs to be lauded, heralded, and honored. We do not need to be a Capitola, a Walnut Creek, a tourist destination, or a tech hub. We do not need coffee roasting gatherings...

## #059

Posted by **me@judyg.com** on **07/08/2022 at 2:13pm** [Comment ID: 5483] - [Link](#)

Type: Suggestion

Agree: 1, Disagree: 0

Our town center can draw citizens with just a few tweaks increasing pedestrian safety. Please honor and support our citizens and culture.

Reply by **Pam** on **07/14/2022 at 12:48am** [Comment ID: 5657] - [Link](#)

Agree: 1, Disagree: 0

Love this, but I'd replace "citizens" with "people"

## #060

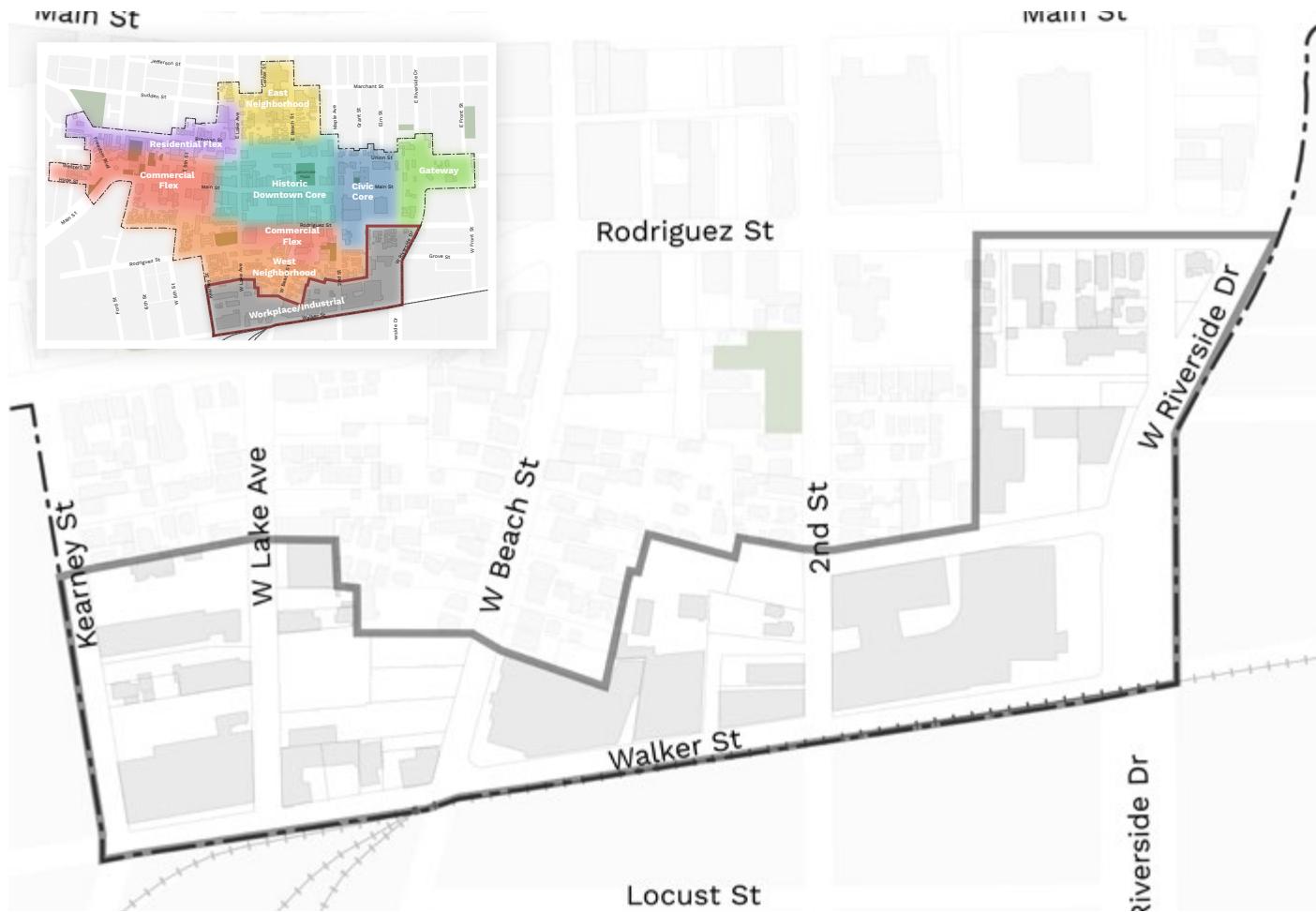
Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022** at **5:27pm** [Comment ID: 5781] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes to shuttle/pedi cab service to downtown.

## Uses

The types of land use envisioned for this area focus on employment uses include industrial, flex, research and development, office, supportive commercial and limited residential.



**FIGURE 3-16 WORKPLACE/INDUSTRIAL CHARACTER AREA**

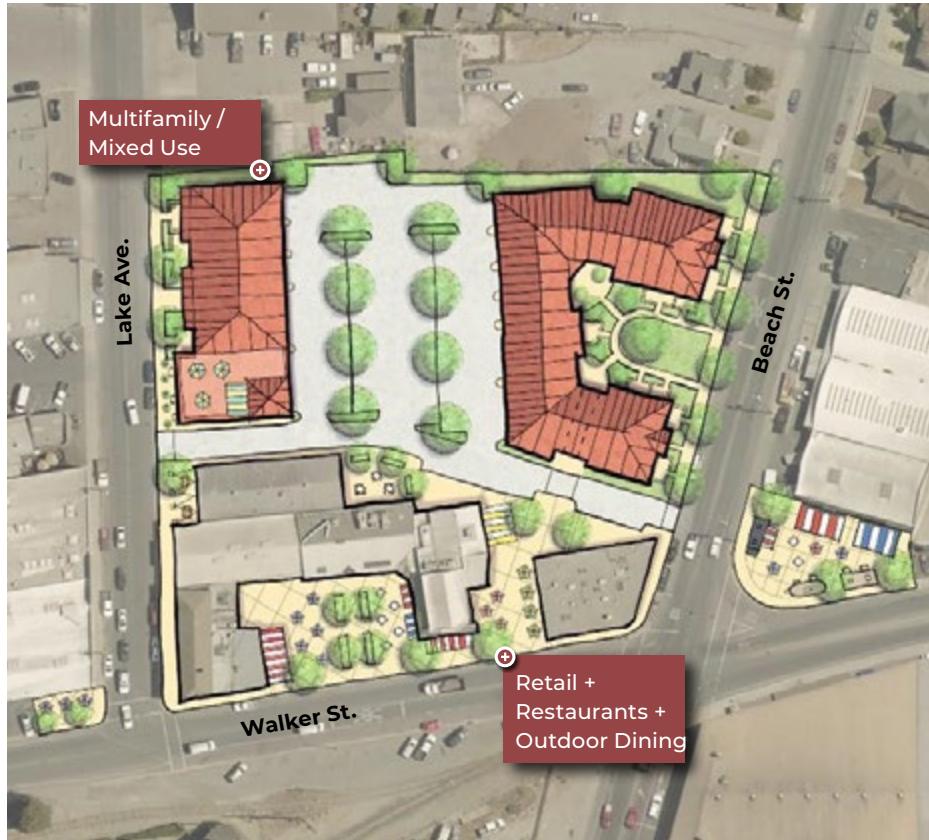
- Character Area Boundary
- Specific Plan Boundary
- Parks/Open Space

## Placemaking Strategies

- Encourage and incentivize adaptive reuse of vacant/underutilized industrial sites.
- Focus a critical mass of activity around the historic depot site and Walker Street.
- Redevelop large vacant / underutilized sites to provide a concentration of new jobs and within a short walk of the Historic Core.
- Conditionally allow residential uses on strategic sites, especially in conjunction with transit service along the rail corridor.
- Support streetscape and public realm improvements on Walker Street that activate building frontages and support new businesses and pedestrian activity (including wide sidewalks, street trees & furnishing, outdoor dining, public plazas & paseos, etc.).
- Establish consistent and unifying public realm improvements.

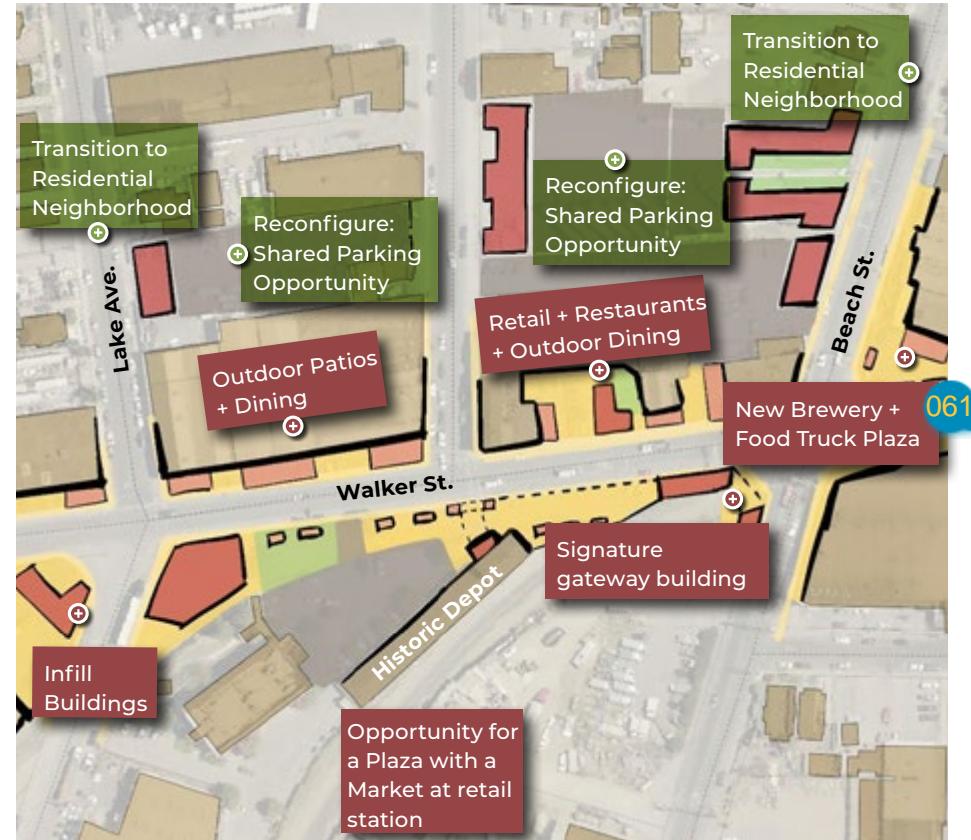
## Beach/Lake Industrial Site

Figure 3-17 Beach/Lake Industrial Site



A major opportunity site in the Workplace/Industrial character area is located between W. Lake Avenue and W. Beach Street and one parcel east of Walker Street. Currently, an under-utilized truck parking lot, this large site is under single ownership. Redevelopment of this site could include a variety of different uses, including a light industrial flex development. It could also redevelop with a mix of uses including residential, as shown in Figure 3-17.

**PHOTO CAPTION**—Examples of re-purposed industrial buildings



#061

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 5:29pm** [Comment ID: 5782] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

I think a food truck plaza is a good idea. Support small local businesses.

## Section 3.4

# GROWTH PROJECTIONS FOR THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

The Specific Plan area is mostly developed with historic commercial buildings and established residential neighborhoods. Hence, future potential growth is likely to be directed to a limited number of vacant or under-utilized sites that could be redeveloped. The goal of this approach is to develop growth projections that can cover all anticipated development in the next 25 years but not over-estimate what could be built. The following process outlines how these projections have been prepared.

These growth projections will be the basis for traffic forecasts, as well as the EIR technical studies for noise and air quality. The growth projections will also be used to forecast greenhouse gas emissions and analyze infrastructure demand (water, sewer, wastewater). The City will monitor development relative to the projections over time.

**Table 3-1 Growth Projections for the Specific Plan Area**

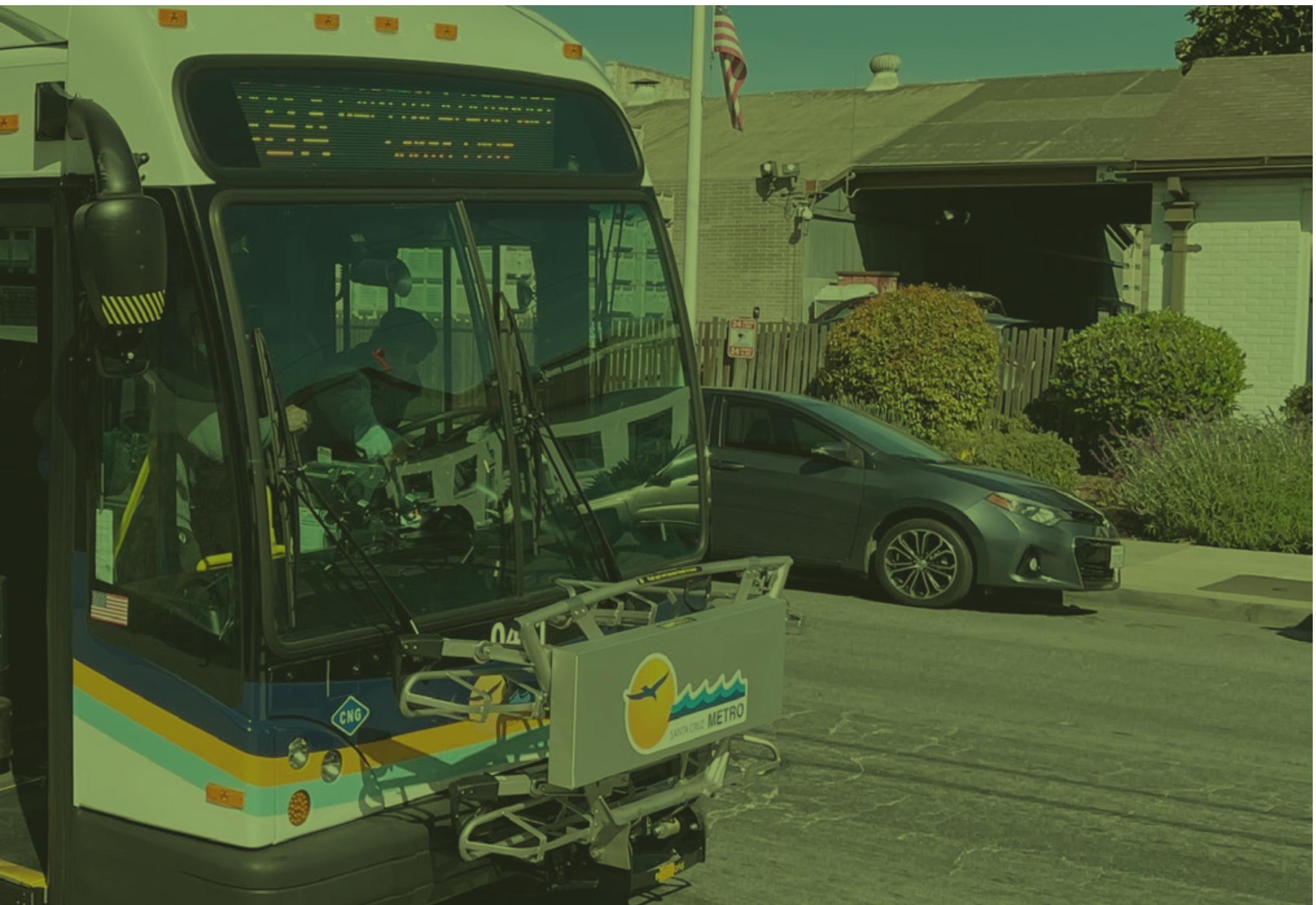
| Land Use                        | Residential<br>(du) | Commercial<br>(SF) | Industrial<br>(SF) | Civic (SF)     |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Residential Units               | 3,910               |                    |                    |                |
| Dining Establishments           |                     | 146,777            | 8,051              |                |
| Retail                          |                     | 56,453             |                    |                |
| Office                          |                     | 22,581             |                    |                |
| Civic                           |                     |                    |                    | 114,569        |
| Research & development/<br>Flex |                     |                    | 100,632            |                |
| Industrial                      |                     |                    | 402,530            |                |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>3,910</b>        | <b>226,780</b>     | <b>402,530</b>     | <b>114,569</b> |



*Chapter 4:*

# MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION

- 4.1—Multimodal Network and Strategies
- 4.2—Street Network
- 4.3—Parking, Curb Management and Transportation Demand Management





# THE PUBLIC REALM AND TRANSPORTATION CHAPTER PRESENTS

## STRATEGIES AND NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL MODES OF TRAVEL WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN WATSONVILLE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

Along with the associated standards and guidelines for implementation. The chapter includes the following topics:

- **Multimodal Network and Strategies**—a description of the vision and framework for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit network recommendations in the Plan area, including an overview of existing networks and recommended standards and guidelines for implementation.
- **Street Network**—a description of the street network, design concepts for downtown streets, pedestrian network improvements, and bike network improvements.
- **Parking, Curb Management and Travel Demand Management**—a description of parking, curb management and transportation demand management strategies, including an overview of existing systems and recommended standards and guidelines for implementation.

## Section 4.1

# MULTIMODAL NETWORK AND STRATEGIES

**PHOTO CAPTION**—Streetscape of Main Street in Downtown Watsonville



## Mobility Framework

The multimodal network and strategies recommendations within this chapter are informed by the Specific Plan's Vision Themes and Guiding Principles that were developed through stakeholder meetings, community workshops, and Advisory Committees.

### Specific Plan Themes<sup>062</sup>

- **Safety**—Create a transportation network that is safe for all travelers by reducing conflicts between modes and implementing proven traffic calming design elements throughout the Plan area.
- **Dignity**—Design facilities for walking, biking, and rolling that provide safe and comfortable access for travelers of all ages and ability.
- **Equity**—Provide a range of affordable mobility options to improve access for all residents, employees, and visitors of the Plan area.
- **Vitality**—Improve connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and support access to local businesses within the Plan area.
- **Preservation**—Enhance the streetscape experience of the Plan area through improvements like additional lighting, planting, and shading.
- **Innovation**—Reduce vehicle trips and accommodate future demands through implementation of parking, transportation demand, and curb management strategies.

#062

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:12pm** [Comment ID: 5812] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Terrific themes!

## Mobility Goals

**Complete Streets**—Design streets to provide safe and comfortable facilities for all people walking, biking, rolling, riding transit, or operating motor vehicles.



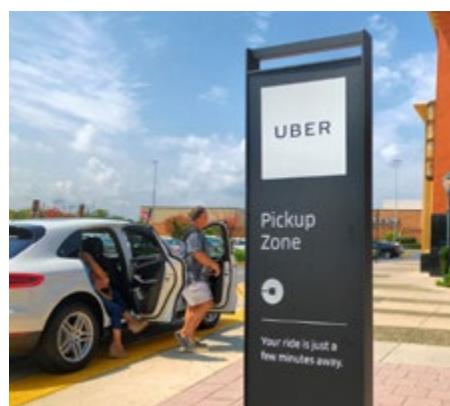
**Parking**—Effectively manage parking to accommodate demand through increased utilization of existing supply and eliminate barriers to development by reducing requirements for on-site parking through use of shared parking. **064**



**Curb Management**—Effectively manage competing priorities for curb space to safely accommodate active travelers, passenger pick-up/drop-offs, and deliveries.



**Travel Demand Management**— **063**  
Increase the availability of mobility options to access and travel within the Plan area without driving alone and reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) associated with new development.



This chapter is also informed by recent transportation related planning efforts conducted by the City including the Vision Zero Action Plan (2021), Downtown Watsonville Complete Streets Plan (2019), and Downtown Watsonville Parking Plan (2017). The Specific Plan advances those efforts by providing standards, guidelines, and design concepts to implement the following in Downtown Watsonville:

- Install improvements to enhance pedestrian safety and access, bicycle connectivity, and revitalize Downtown streetscape.
- Provide bicycle infrastructure that connects Downtown to key locations and provides a low stress environment for bicycle riding.
- Provide widened and enhanced facilities for walking.
- Enhance parking, travel demand, and curb management to support an environmentally and fiscally sustainable downtown that increases quality of life in Watsonville.

---

**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM**— Example of a multimodal street with separated bike lanes, on-street parking, and wide, shaded sidewalks Watsonville Brillante at the Civic Center parking structure; Rideshare pickup zone; Carshare parking

## #063

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:15pm** [Comment ID: 5815] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes! Make mobility easy, affordable, convenient, and efficient.

## #064

Posted by **nataalieco** on **07/12/2022 at 4:46pm** [Comment ID: 5576] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 3, Disagree: 0*

Support removing parking requirements for housing developments.

Reply by **Pam** on **07/14/2022 at 12:51am** [Comment ID: 5658] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Agree. We want to encourage less cars and facilitate biking and walking!

Reply by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:14pm** [Comment ID: 5814] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Agree - better utilize existing supply. Reduce new on-site parking requirements and avoid building new parking structures which are very expensive.

# Pedestrian Network

## Existing Conditions

All trips, whether by automobile, transit, or bicycle, begin and end with walk. **067** Current street design standards include provision of sidewalks (7 feet wide) or a combination of planting strips and sidewalks (9 feet wide), which are relatively narrow for downtown commercial areas. The built environment in the Plan area can contribute to a welcoming atmosphere for pedestrian activity where sidewalk widths are adequate. Downtown consists of a mix of land uses ranging from residential to central commercial to light industrial. The City has already made some key investments to improve safety, including sidewalk and crosswalk upgrades, bulb-outs, tactile warning devices, landscaped medians, and added signage. These improvements, while concentrated along a limited number of corridors, are a step in the right direction towards improving pedestrian visibility and comfort. **066**

## Standards



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Existing crosswalk on Main Street near Watsonville Civic Plaza

- **Continuous sidewalks** should be provided on all streets within the Plan area.
- **Design and maintenance of pedestrian facilities** should provide safe and comfortable walking for the most vulnerable travelers, including children, seniors, and those with mobility impairments.
- **Complete street** designs that reduce conflicts between modes and enhance the experience of traveling by active modes should be installed throughout the Plan area.
- **Traffic calming measures** that reduce the speed of motor vehicles and reduce collision severity should be installed throughout the Plan area as deemed feasible by City engineers.
- **Tactile warning measures** such as truncated domes shall be installed with all ramp improvements to enhance navigation for travelers with vision impairments.

## #065

Posted by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022 at 3:12pm** [Comment ID: 5724] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

Reducing vehicle speeds will go a long way toward making the downtown area safer for active transportation, especially for pedestrians. Also, eliminating (or at least reducing) noisy vehicles would make the pedestrian experience much more pleasant.

Reply by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:18pm** [Comment ID: 5820] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes, can anything be done to prohibit revving/speeding?

## #066

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:17pm** [Comment ID: 5818] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes, they have been valuable improvements.

## #067

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:16pm** [Comment ID: 5816] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

By walking, rolling or being carried!

## Guidelines



**TOP TO BOTTOM**—Example of a wide, unobstructed sidewalk with pedestrian amenities and curb bulb-out

- **A clear path of travel**, at least 5' wide should be provided for pedestrians along all sidewalks, without obstruction from lighting, utilities, fire hydrants, or street furniture. Where space allows, sidewalks should be widened to at least 10 feet.
- **Crosswalks** should be clearly marked and provided at each leg of an intersection. Widths should correspond to the sidewalks they connect to or be a minimum of 12' outside stripe to outside stripe, whichever is greater. High-visibility treatments, such as ladder or “triple four” designs, should be used for all crosswalk upgrades or new installations to allow motorists to see pedestrians more easily from further away.
- **Direct accessible ramps** should be provided and aligned to each crosswalk at an intersection.
- **Curb extensions or bulb-outs** should be installed at intersections where feasible to reduce crossings distances, slow turning vehicles, and increase the visibility of pedestrians. Curb extensions may also accommodate streetscape features such as lighting, landscaping, or wayfinding.

- **Lead-pedestrian intervals** should be provided at signalized intersections to prioritize crossing for people walking and using active mobility devices before through and right-turning vehicles are able to enter an intersection.
- **Pedestrian access across driveways** should be provided by maintaining the elevation and material type of the sidewalk across the driveway. Where feasible the length and occurrence of commercial driveways should be limited.
- **Human-scale lighting**, such as the historic double acorn design used in some parts of Downtown should be installed on block faces within the study area that lack or have gaps in lighting for pedestrians.
- **Mid-block crossings** may be provided on block faces between two intersections if warranted by the presence of heavy volumes of desired pedestrian crossings. Yield pavement markings or “shark’s teeth” should be provided in advance of mid-block crossings to alert motorists.
- **Pedestrian activated warning systems** such as Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) may be installed at mid-block crossings without a traffic signal or where heavy traffic volumes and the visibility of pedestrians warrant their presence.
- **Chicanes** are offset curb extensions that may be installed on low volume local streets to slow the speed of motor vehicles. Chicanes are typically installed with a gradual taper so that it creates an S-shaped roadway.

# Bicycle Network

## Existing Conditions

The purpose of the citywide bicycle network is to expand active travel options within the city and adjoining communities for commuters, and to provide opportunities for recreation. In the past decade, Class II bicycle lanes and Class III bike routes have been established along several major collectors and arterial roads. Many of these bikeways connect Downtown Watsonville to the broader Santa Cruz County bicycle network.

Key bicycle network connections to Downtown include a Class II bicycle lane along a portion of Freedom Boulevard (from Miles Lane to Main Street), a multi-class (I, II, III) on Green Valley Road just outside the Plan area, a Class II bicycle lane on Airport Boulevard, and a Class II bicycle lane on West Beach Road. Outside City limits, a Class II bicycle lane on Freedom Boulevard is part of a contiguous, 9-mile route for cyclists traveling from Watsonville to Aptos. Four to five-foot-wide bicycle lanes

are also provided on both sides of the majority of Rodriguez Street, some with buffered area, and serve as a key first/last mile connection to the Watsonville Transit Center.

Bicycle travel within the Plan area is limited to a few corridors and some Class II and Class III bicycle facilities are disconnected with limited intersecting routes which forces people riding bicycles to share space with motor vehicles. Bicycle lanes along Beach Street are inconsistent, changing between Class II and Class III designations within Downtown before discontinuing altogether north of Lincoln Street. Bicycle parking in the Plan area is also limited and may not be easily accessible or provide security for long-term storage.

**PHOTO CAPTION**—Bike lane along Walker Street



#068

Posted by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022 at 8:08pm** [Comment ID: 5874] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Secure bicycle parking downtown is a must if we want people to choose bicycles as an alternate to vehicle travel.

#069

Posted by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022 at 8:06pm** [Comment ID: 5873] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

It's important to have safe, convenient connectivity for bicycles into and throughout the downtown area. Installing a Class IV bike lane on Freedom Blvd. from Miles Ln. to Main St. and along a two-way East Lake Ave. would give good bike access into downtown.

## Standards



**TOP TO BOTTOM**—Examples of a Class II separated bike lane and Class III bike route shared with vehicle traffic

- **Bicycle facility types** shall be designed according to the following standards:
  - **Bike Paths (Class I)** provide a separate right-of-way from motor vehicles for the exclusive use of bicycle riders and pedestrians.
  - **Bike Lanes and Buffered Bike Lanes (Class II)** provide an exclusive space for people riding bicycles on the roadway within a one-way striped lane, with a minimum of 5' of unobstructed paved right-of-way. Striped or vertical “buffers” at least 2' wide may be provided on one or both sides to increase separation between moving and/or parked motor vehicles.
  - **Bike Routes (Class III)** provide right-of-way for people riding bicycles that is shared with motor vehicle traffic. Bike routes should be signed and may include shared lane marking – “sharrows” – on the pavement to increase the awareness of motorists. Because Class III facilities mix bicycle travel with motor vehicles, they should only be implemented on low speed and low volume streets.
- **Separation between bicycles and vehicles** shall be provided with **070** buffers on all bike lanes where minimum travel lane, parking lane, and sidewalk lane widths can be maintained, especially on streets with vehicle travel speeds of 35 mph or greater.
- **Design guidance for construction of bicycle facilities** shall be referenced from the latest versions of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA-MUTCD), National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide, and documents produced by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC).
- **Parking for bicycles** shall be provided throughout the Plan area including short-term parking near major activity centers and long-term parking near the Transit Center.
- **Minimum bicycle parking supply** **071** shall be provided in new developments, with ratios based on the size of the land use, as prescribed by the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) Bicycle Parking Guidelines.
- **Bicycle detection** shall be installed at all actuated intersections along existing and future bike facilities as existing signals are repaired or replaced.
- **Bicycle repair stations** with tools and space for the standard maintenance of a bicycle shall be provided in locations with public long-term bicycle parking and access-restricted rooms in new developments.
- **Conflict zone markings** shall be used to indicate the presence of bicycle facilities through intersections, right-turn pockets, and driveways.
- **Bike box markings** shall be installed at all signalized intersections with bicycle facilities where left turns are permitted to provide a safe place for people riding bicycles to establish themselves ahead of motor vehicles at stop lights.

## #070

Posted by **Pam** on **07/14/2022** at **12:53am** [Comment ID: 5659] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 3, Disagree: 0*

As both a biker and a mother of bikers, I really appreciate this. It adds a lot to safety of biking.

Reply by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022** at **8:10pm** [Comment ID: 5876] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

People will choose bicycle transit over vehicle travel if there are safe, convenient routes.

## #071

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022** at **6:23pm** [Comment ID: 5825] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes, more bike parking! I often end up locking bike to some kind of metal sign when there is no bike parking.

## Guidelines

---



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Example of a bicycle signal head

- **Signal phasing at intersections** with separated bicycle facilities should have their own signal phase for people riding bicycles or a shared lead pedestrian-interval to reduce conflicts from right-turning vehicles.
- **High-visibility paint**, consistent with CA-MUTCD colored paving and striping standards, should be used to delineate where on-street bicycle facilities exist on the pavement of the roadway.
- **Bicycle parking types** should be installed as follows:
  - **Long-term bicycle parking** should provide secure and covered parking for periods longer than two hours. This type of parking is most appropriate for employment sites, schools, transit stations, and multifamily residential uses. Long-term parking should provide protection from the weather and may be implemented using lockers, cages, or access-restricted rooms inside buildings; and
  - **Short-term bicycle parking** should provide convenient parking for where the typical parking duration is less than two hours. This type of parking is most appropriate for retail, service, and institutional uses. Short-term parking should provide a rack configured so the bicycle frame and at least one bicycle wheel can be secured with a U-lock or padlock and cable.
- **Bike share docking stations** may be installed on-street, similar to a parklet, to encourage use at enhanced bicycle facilities and reduce obstructions to pedestrians on the sidewalk.

# Transit Network

## Existing Conditions

The Watsonville Transit Center, located on the corner of Rodriguez Street and West Lake Avenue, provides inter- and intra-city transit connections for the Plan area. The Transit Center is served by Santa Cruz METRO's fixed-route and paratransit services, in addition to a limited number of Monterey-Salinas Transit fixed-route and Greyhound bus services.

## Standards



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Watsonville Transit Center

- **Improve transit** by working with local agencies to expand the speed and frequency of fixed-route bus service.
- **Enhance access to transit** by connecting pedestrian and bicycle improvements to bus stops and encouraging new developments near transit to improve stop amenities. 074
- **Bus stops** should provide shelters, seating, up to date information displays, and lighting.
- **Circulator service** should be supported by working with Santa Cruz METRO to inform route development and identify funding sources to make the zero-emission circulator pilot permanent. 073
- **Support regional transit** 072 ensuring any future station in Watsonville as part of potential passenger rail on the Santa Cruz Branch Line alignment provides easy access to the Plan area.

## #072

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:25pm** [Comment ID: 5828] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes, make plenty of bike parking at new depot station, along with shuttles to meet the train and move people to final destinations.

## #073

Posted by **nataalieco** on **07/13/2022 at 9:35pm** [Comment ID: 5623] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 2, Disagree: 0*

can we make all buses electric?

Reply by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:24pm** [Comment ID: 5826] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

What are the long term plans to convert fleets to electric?

## #074

Posted by **nataalieco** on **07/12/2022 at 4:51pm** [Comment ID: 5577] - [Link](#)

*Type: Suggestion*

*Agree: 3, Disagree: 0*

Encourage micro mobility options near bus station to connect users to their final destinations: scooters, ebikes, electric car shares

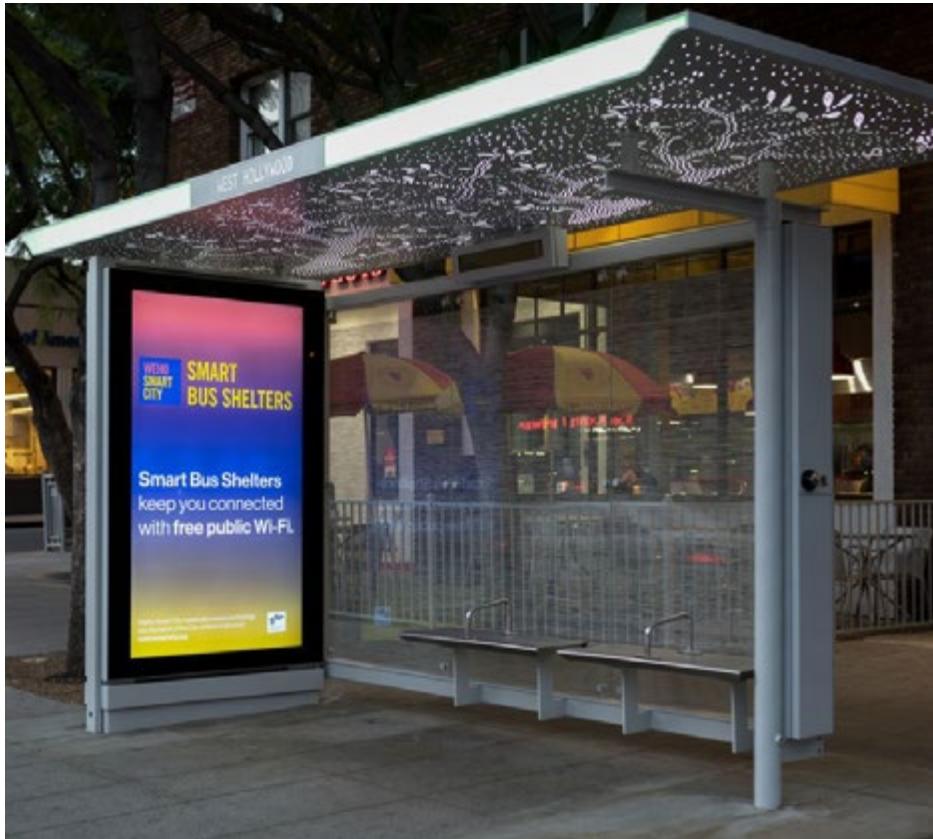
Reply by **Pam** on **07/14/2022 at 12:54am** [Comment ID: 5660] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes!!!

## Guidelines

---



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Example of a bus shelter with real-time information display, enhanced lighting, and free public Wi-Fi

- **Bus stop improvements** including real-time information displays, enhanced lighting, and upgraded shelters may be included to improve the transit riding experience and as TDM mitigation measures for new development.<sup>077</sup> <sup>076</sup>
- **Future transit service** may be expanded by working with local and regional transit operators to adjust routes to enhance connectivity between the Plan area and parts of the community with high concentrations of zero vehicle households, lack current transit options, or currently require multiple transfers.
- **Coastal rail trail access** may be provided by supporting the implementation of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network bicycle and pedestrian trail within the Santa Cruz Branch Line right-of-way.
- **Travel lane use for buses** may include stopping in a travel lane if approved by the City to reduce transit delay. Where feasible in-lane bus stops should only occur on the far-side of intersections.
- **Transit signal priority** may be installed to give buses priority at intersections to enhance speed and reliability.

#075

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:28pm** [Comment ID: 5830] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Interesting concept - is this safe to have buses stop in the travel lane?

#076

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:27pm** [Comment ID: 5829] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Bus stops should have information about schedule so people don't need to have a smart phone to find out when the next bus will come. Solar powered stations? cell phone charging opportunity at benches?

#077

Posted by **Pam** on **07/14/2022 at 12:56am** [Comment ID: 5661] - [Link](#)

*Type: Question*

*Agree: 2, Disagree: 0*

Can these be greened up with plants or trees?

## Section 4.2

# STREET NETWORK

## Roadway Network

**The Downtown roadway network accommodates regional traffic movement and local access. State Route 152 and State Route 129 pass through downtown east to west serving as conduits of regional travel.** State Route 152 continues as Main Street serving as the north-south spine of the network, distributing traffic beyond the Plan area throughout the city and connecting to State Route 1. The existing roadway network in Downtown is not developed in a uniform grid but features a multitude of varying block lengths, several curvilinear streets, and some one-way streets.



The Specific Plan includes several key roadway improvements to support multimodal travel, increase safety, and improve access to local amenities and businesses. The future improvements are also designed to reduce potential conflict points between motorists, people who walk, and people who bike.

### Key improvements include:

- Reducing the number of travel lanes for Main Street from four to three with a center running left turn lane (or landscaped median) and one lane in each direction.
- Converting East Lake Avenue and East Beach Street, which currently operate as one-way couplets, into two-way streets.

- **079** Closing off the connection between Union Street and Alexander Street from East Lake Avenue to East Beach Street and **078** va**078**ing that portion of Union Street for private development.

**Figure 4-1** illustrates the recommended roadway improvements and changes to the directionality of East Lake Avenue and East Beach Street. It also includes Watsonville's existing roadway classification from the 2005 General Plan, which is described below for reference.

---

**PHOTO CAPTION**—Existing view of Main Street.

## #078

Posted by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022** at **8:19pm** [Comment ID: 5886] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

This could be a great area for infill housing or for new businesses.

## #079

Posted by **mgperez** on **07/13/2022** at **8:08pm** [Comment ID: 5608] - [Link](#)

*Type: Suggestion*

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

It wasn't super clear what "squaring off" would look like and what specific area was this referring to? I think including more visuals would be helpful.

## #080

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022** at **6:33pm** [Comment ID: 5832] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

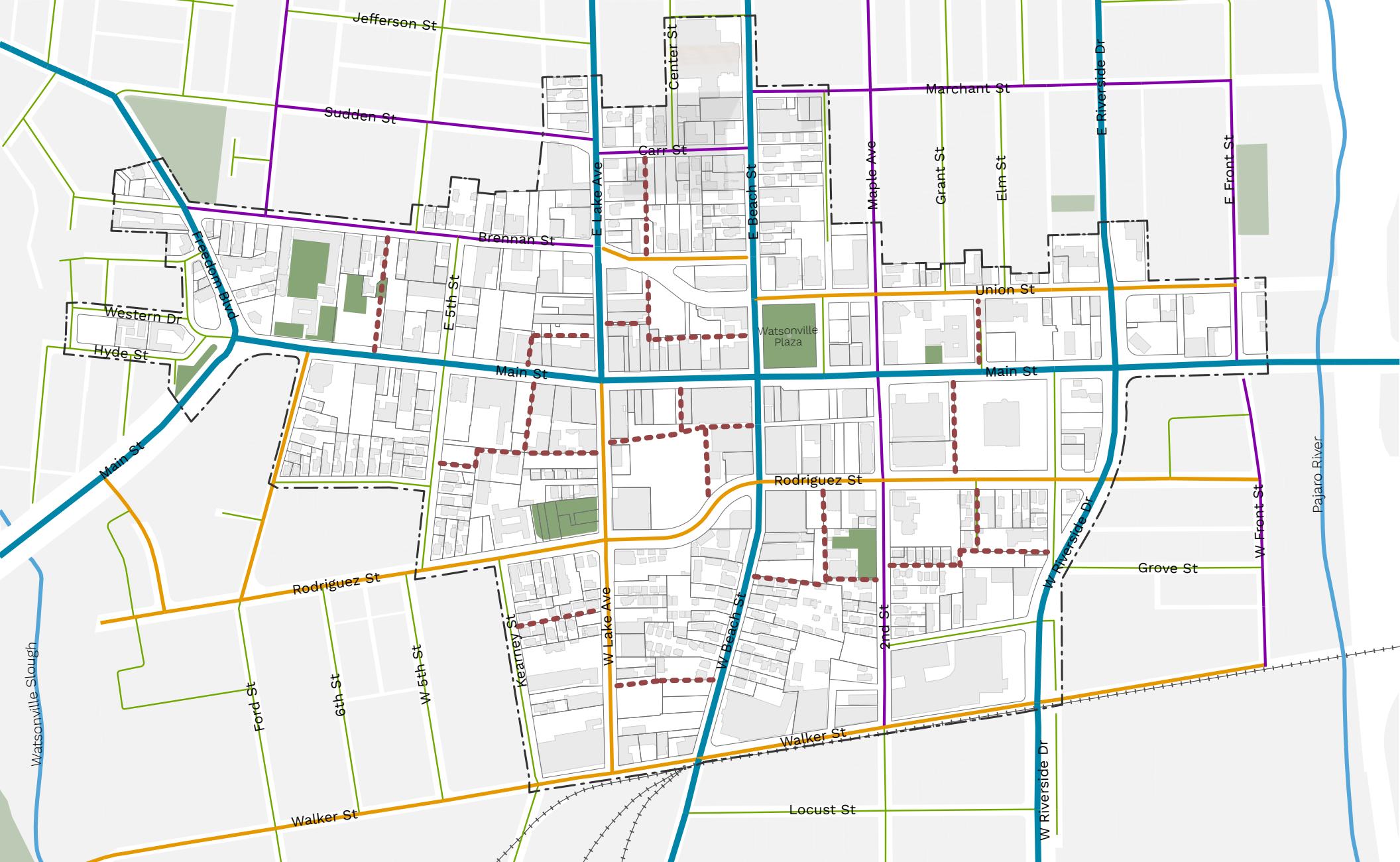
I support this idea. I know it has been controversial in the past. How will peoples' upset be handled? Will streets one block over fill up with more traffic/angry drivers?

## #081

Posted by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022** at **8:18pm** [Comment ID: 5885] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

These improvements are definitely needed on the downtown corridors! Slowing vehicle traffic will make downtown more inviting and attractive for pedestrians and shoppers, people accessing government services as well as visitors.



**FIGURE 4-1**  
**RECOMMENDED SPECIFIC**  
**PLAN ROADWAY NETWORK**  
**IMPROVEMENTS**

## Street Types



- **Major arterials** are higher speed streets that move large volumes of traffic across the urbanized area and provide access to the freeway. Some major arterials, namely Riverside Drive, have on-street parking on segments that border residences and neighborhood commercial development. Major arterials near thoroughfare commercial, shopping centers, and/or industrial areas do not have on-street parking. Main Street is the only major arterial with a landscaped median within the Caltrans right-of-way between Highway 1 and Freedom Boulevard. Except for the portion of Main Street that goes through downtown that is not within the Caltrans right-of-way, no other roadway has both a landscaped median and on-street parking. Major arterials in the Plan area are East and West Beach

Street, East Lake Avenue, Freedom Boulevard, Main Street, and Riverside Drive.



- **Minor arterials** are medium speed, medium capacity streets that connect major arterials and local streets, for regional and local circulation between residential areas and areas of employment or business. Many minor arterials have on-street parking, and these streets typically border residential neighborhoods. Minor arterials in the Plan area are West Lake Avenue, Rodriguez Street, Walker Street, and sections of Ford Street and Union Street.



- **Collector streets** are relatively low speed, low volume street used for neighborhood circulation and access to private property. Collector streets also connect local streets to the arterial network. Designated collector streets in the Plan area are Sudden Street, Carr Street, Brennan Street, Marchant Street, Maple Avenue, 2nd Street, and Front Street.



- **Local streets** are low speed, low volume roadways that provide direct access to primarily residential areas and are characterized by

multiple driveways and on-street parking. Local streets within the Plan area typically do not have a painted centerline, are less than 50 feet in right-of-way, and are mostly found in residential neighborhoods abutting Downtown. Examples of designated local streets in the Plan area include 5th Street, Grant Street, Kearney Street, Center Street, Trafton Street, Elm Street, and Grove Street.



- **Paseos** are narrower facilities between buildings without vehicular access, other than potential fire access, and are dedicated pedestrian-only facilities.

082

## #082

Posted by **Pam** on **07/14/2022** at **1:00am** [Comment ID: 5662] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

There is a small paseo between Rodriguez and Main street behind the Beach St parking garage on that block; it's usually locked up though it has a sign that states open hours during daytime. This isn't included on P57 map but can it be included?

## Roadway Network

**Figure 4–2 to Figure 4–9** present existing street views and cross-sections for future redesign concepts for certain roadways within Downtown Watsonville. These concepts aim to improve the safety and circulation of people walking and biking while preserving residential on-street parking. Street design features also expand the pedestrian realm by installing parklets intermittently along key commercial corridors. The right-of-way dimensions are intended to serve as standards but allow for flexibility in the implementation process for other streetscape features. Implementation of future designs will require further study, engineering, and coordination with adjacent property owners.



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT**—Streetscape along Civic Plaza; Example of a Parklet

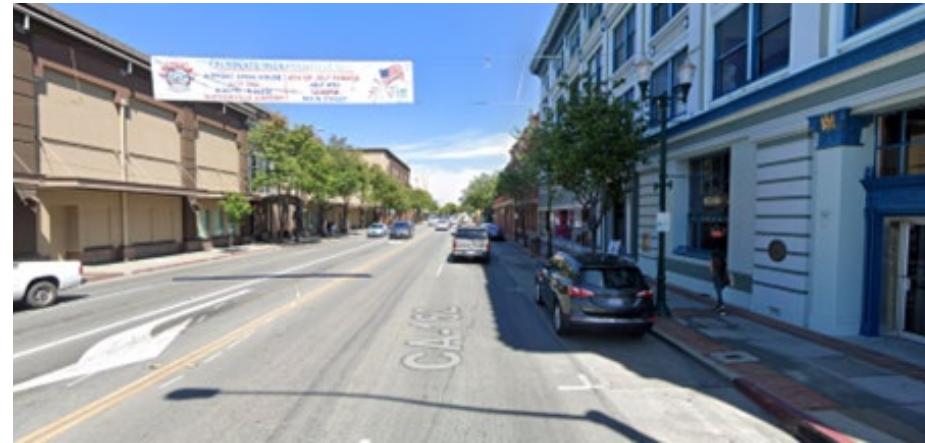
## Main Street (East Lake Avenue to East Beach Street)

Figure 4-2 illustrates the existing view and the future cross sections for Main Street within the Caltrans right-of-way, between East Lake Avenue and East Beach Street. Future improvements include reducing the total number of travel lanes from four to three, with a center running left turn lane and one lane in each direction and reallocating the additional right-of-way to expand the sidewalk furniture zone with on-street parklets and streetscaping adjacent to on-street parking.

### SUMMARY OF CHANGES:

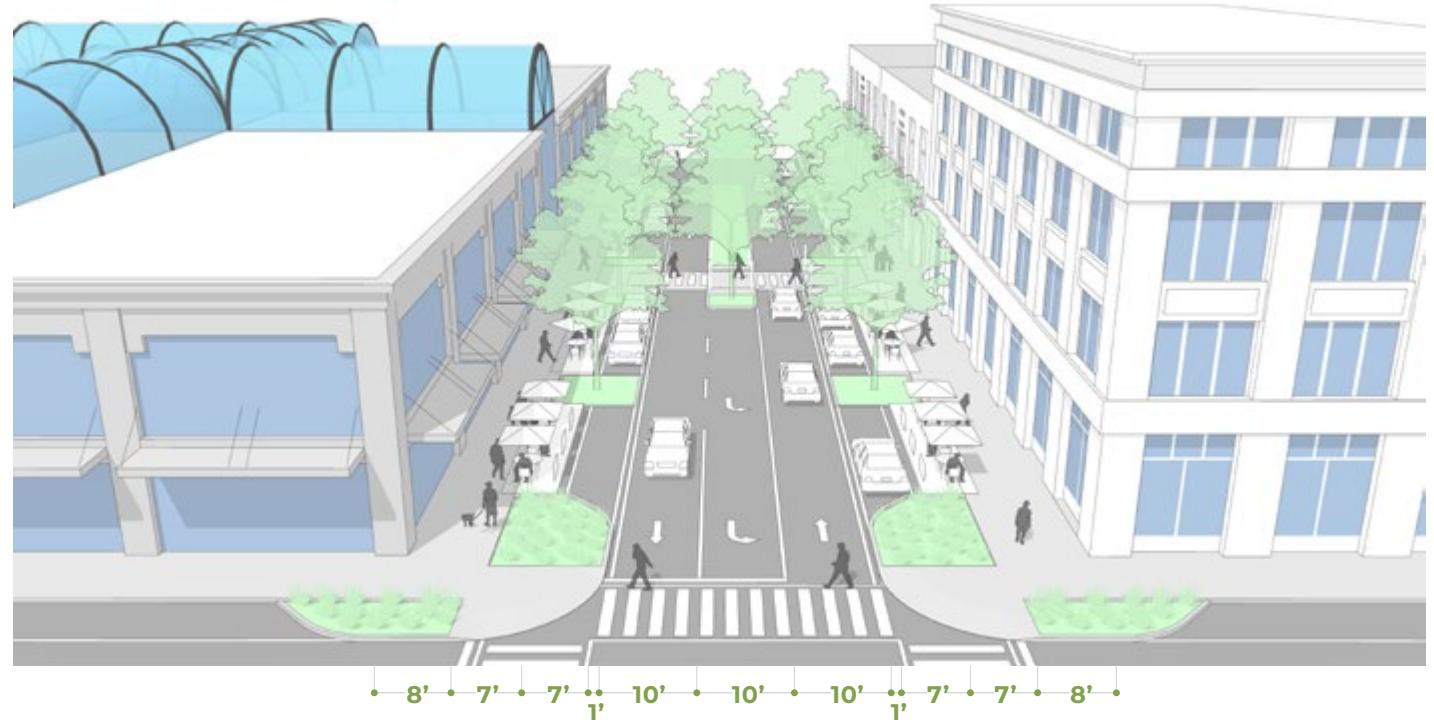
- Reduce travel lanes from four to three with a center running left turn lane and one lane in each direction.
- Reallocate additional on-street right-of-way for parklets, sidewalk furniture, and widened sidewalks where feasible.
- Maintain on-street parking.
- Improve pedestrian crossings at intersections.
- Provide medians at midblock locations where feasible.

083



**PHOTO CAPTION**— Existing View of Main Street (East Lake Avenue to East Beach Street); Source: Google Maps 2022

**Figure 4-2 Future Main Street Cross Section (East Lake Avenue to East Beach Street)**



## #083

Posted by **mgperez** on **07/12/2022** at **5:01pm** [Comment ID: 5578] - [Link](#)

*Type: Question*

*Agree: 3, Disagree: 0*

Who would have access to parklets?

Beneficial: create welcoming environment, can sit a lot of people compared to just holding cars.

Cons: If restaurants say customers only then not everyone in the community will have access to this "public area".

Reply by **nataalieco** on **07/14/2022** at **1:41pm** [Comment ID: 5718] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

Agree- Can we clearly state and prioritize that some of the parklets will be public spaces where anyone can sit and not just belong to businesses?

## Main Street (Central Avenue to 1st Street)

Figure 4-3 shows the existing view and future cross section for Main Street between Central Avenue and 1st Street. This segment of Main Street will reduce wide outside travel lanes to create space for planters or planting strips between the sidewalk and outside vehicular travel lane. Planting strips improve safety by adding more separation between pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

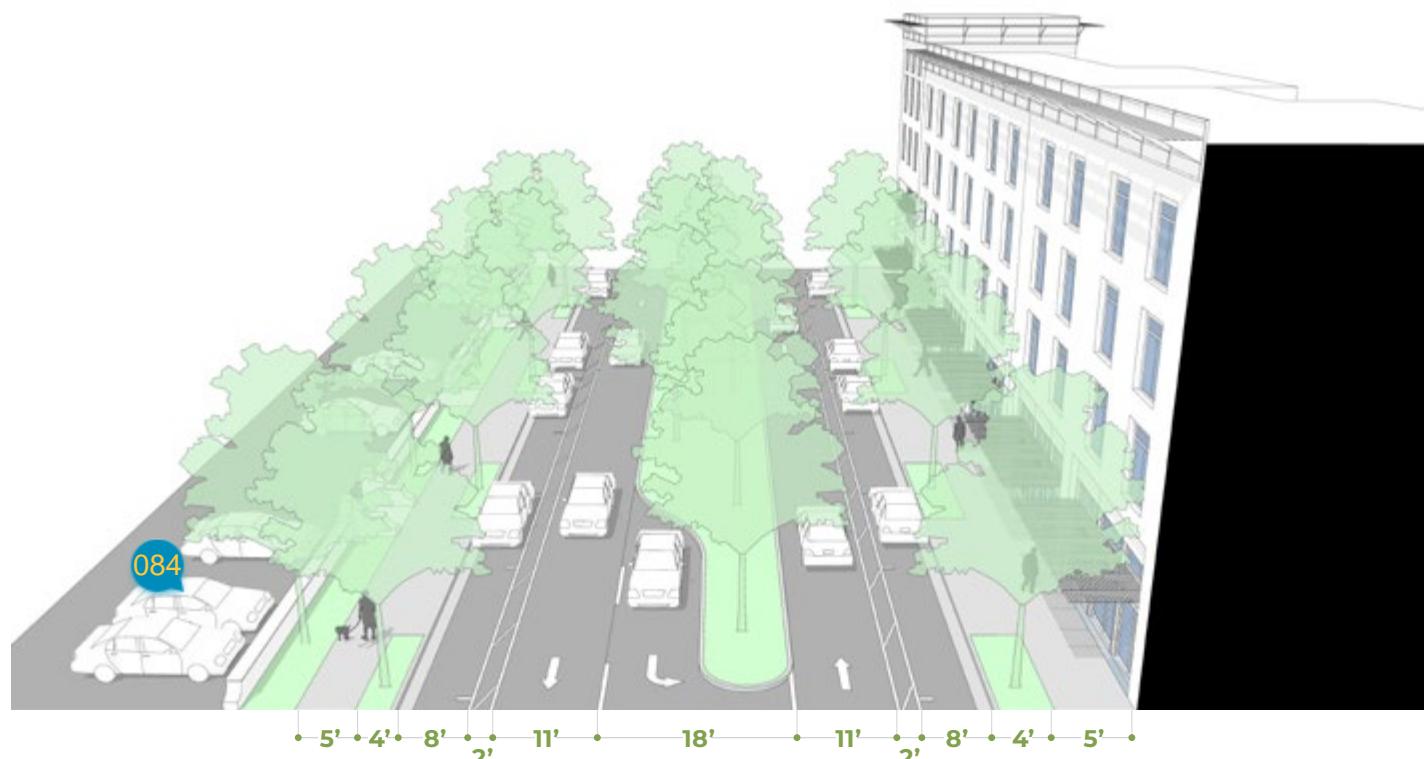
### SUMMARY OF CHANGES:

- Maintain total right-of-way (ROW) of 78 feet.
- Require a public easement of 6 feet at the front property line to expand the sidewalk.
- Reduce travel lanes from four to two with one vehicular travel lane in each direction and maintain or widen the existing landscaped median and/or center running left turn lanes where applicable.
- Replace outside travel lanes with on-street parking and 2-foot buffers.
- Consider expanding the pedestrian realm with bulb-outs and planters at intersections.



**PHOTO CAPTION—** Existing View of Main Street (Central Avenue to 1st Street); Source: Google Maps 2022

**Figure 4-3 Future Main Street Cross Section (Central Avenue to 1st Street)**



## #084

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:35pm** [Comment ID: 5835] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

I am curious how people access this on-street parking area that's separated from the walking lane? I have found it challenging to do perpendicular parking on main st - very difficult to back out into the lane of oncoming traffic and hope this new idea would eliminate that?

## East Lake Avenue

Figure 4–4 shows the existing view and future cross section for East Lake Avenue between Main Street and Brennan Street. Future improvements include converting East Lake ~~085~~ue from one-way westbound to two-way travel, with a center left turn lane where necessary for traffic operations or local access.

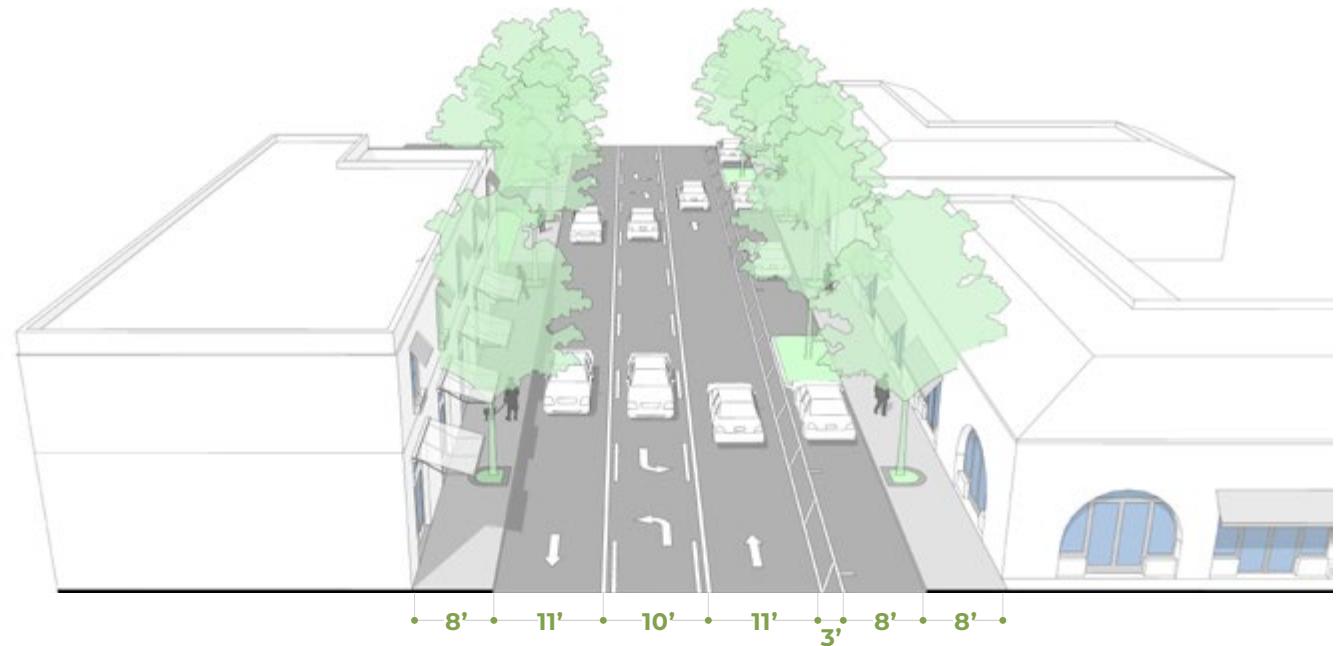
### SUMMARY OF CHANGES:

- Maintain existing ROW.
- Maintain number of vehicular travel lanes.
- Replace two westbound through lanes and dedicated right turn lane at intersections with one through lane in each direction and dedicated center turn lane at intersections or along the full length of commercial blocks as needed for local access.
- Preserve on-street parking.
- Center left turn lane may not be necessary through the length of the corridor and parking may be feasible where no left turn is needed.



**PHOTO CAPTION**— Existing View of East Lake Avenue; Source: Google Maps 2022

**Figure 4–4 Future East Lake Avenue Cross Section (between Main Street and Brennan Street)**



#085

Posted by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022** at **3:14pm** [Comment ID: 5726] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

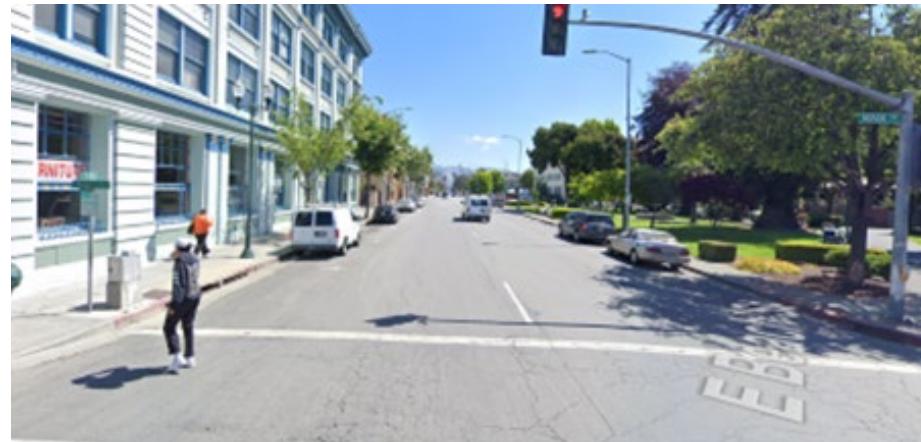
Having traffic be two-way on East Lake would be a great way to possibly reduce vehicle speeds. Adding bike lane improvements would be great too!

## East Beach Street

Figure 4-5 shows the existing view and future cross section for East Beach Street between Main Street and Union Street. Like East Lake Avenue, the East Beach Street future **087** calls for a conversion from one-way eastbound to two-way travel. This one-block segment will include narrower vehicle travel lanes to create space for parklets used to expand the pedestrian realm. Major intersections (not shown here) will include crossing improvements such bulb-outs and upgraded crosswalks to improve pedestrian safety.

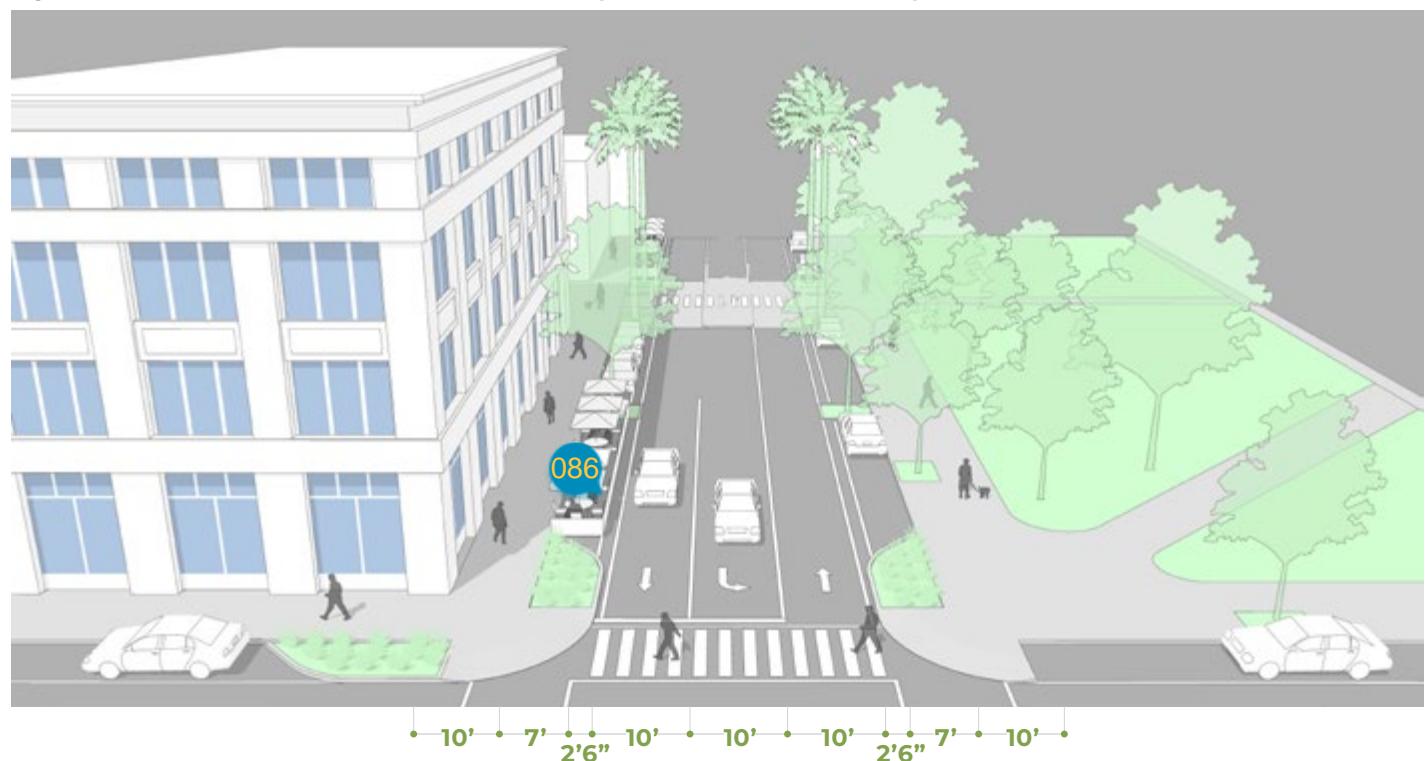
### SUMMARY OF CHANGES:

- Maintain existing ROW.
- Maintain number of vehicle travel lanes.
- Replace two eastbound through lanes with one through lane in each direction.
- Preserve on-street parking where feasible.
- Dedicate 7 feet of curb-to-curb right-of-way for parklets on north side or widened sidewalks on both sides.



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Existing View of East Beach Street; Source: Google Maps 2022

**Figure 4-5 Future East Beach Street Cross Section (Main Street to Union Street)**



## #086

Posted by **Pam** on **07/14/2022** at **1:03am** [Comment ID: 5663] - [Link](#)

*Type: Question*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

These parklets will be open to everyone, correct? Not owned by the businesses around them? If someone bought food at the plaza, could they bring it there to sit and enjoy it?

## #087

Posted by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022** at **3:18pm** [Comment ID: 5727] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Two-way traffic lanes would be a great idea here on East Beach. Parklets would create a pleasant pedestrian experience, and enhance the area for all who visit the downtown area.

## Rodriguez Street

Rodriguez Street provides connection 088 to the Watsonville Transit Center and serves as a major north-south corridor in the bicycle network. The right of way and lane geometry varies along the length of this corridor, and there are several factors that will impact bicycle facility design details. For example, at the West Beach Street intersection, Rodriguez transitions from one to two northbound lanes before transitioning back to one northbound lane north of West Lake Avenue. To accommodate buffered bike lanes and conform with existing lane geometry north of West Lake Avenue and south of West Beach Street, one northbound vehicle travel lane will be removed. Further study will be required. Further south, where there is already a bicycle lane present, there may be an opportunity to implement a parking protected bicycle lane and/or protected intersection design treatments to provide more separation between people riding bikes and moving vehicles. However, the presence of driveways, bus loading zones at bus stops, the fire department, and other potential mid-block vehicle conflict points must be considered.



### PHOTO CAPTION—

Existing view of Rodriguez Street; Source: Google Maps 2022

#### SUMMARY OF CHANGES:

- Maintain existing ROW and vehicle lane widths.
- Maintain only one vehicle travel lane in each direction.
- Increase northbound bicycle lane from 4 feet to 6 feet and maintain best practice bicycle lane widths of 6 feet minimum where feasible.
- Increase east and west side buffer widths and add vertical separation such as planters or flexible bollards where feasible.

Given Rodriguez Street's function as a primary north-south corridor parallel to Main Street, the potential to elevate the public realm and support future development, and the various

design factors for bicycle infrastructure, a focused corridor plan will require additional feasibility analysis and design to define specific recommendations.

## #088

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:38pm** [Comment ID: 5837] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

This street usually feels extra wide to me so seems like yes, room for protected bike lane.

Reply by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022 at 8:22pm** [Comment ID: 5889] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Agreed. Along with redesigned striping for vehicle traffic - one lane in each direction, with turn lanes only if there's room. Give priority to protected bike lanes.

## Union Street

Figure 4–6 shows the existing view and future cross section for Union Street between Maple Avenue and Grant Street. The City has been awarded transportation funding to install corner curb extensions along Union Street and Brennan Street and is planned for construction in 2024. Future improvements provide Class III sharrows with signage along with traffic calming measures to slow vehicular traffic and increase comfort for people biking. Traffic calming measures may include chicanes with planter boxes placed at midblock locations, designed to minimize impacts to on-street parking.

### SUMMARY OF CHANGES:

- Maintain existing ROW.
- Maintain vehicle lane widths.
- Minimize impacts to on-street parking.
- Add Class III marked sharrows with signage.
- Integrate traffic calming measures such as chicanes or planter boxes.

089



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Existing View of Union Street; Source: Google Maps 2022

**Figure 4–6 Future Union Street Cross Section (Maple Avenue to Grant Street)**



#089

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:39pm** [Comment ID: 5839] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Sounds good!

## Walker Street

Walker Street provides connections to the existing and planned regional trail network and to residential and industrial neighborhoods along the west edge of the Plan area. The right of way and lane geometry varies widely along the length of this corridor, and there are several factors that will impact bicycle facility design details. For example, rail tracks run through the center of the street south of West Beach Street, and many of the properties throughout the corridor have rolled curbs and off-street parking or long stretches of flexible vehicle access along their frontages.

Long-term plans from the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network Master Plan call for a bicycle and pedestrian path connecting the Downtown area to the existing trail network in the Watsonville Slough Wetlands and a future trail to Pajaro Valley High School. The proposed rail trail would be located along the existing publicly owned railroad right-of-way, and additional feasibility and concept development will be necessary to define the cross section on Walker Street south of West Beach Street.



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**PHOTO CAPTION—**

Existing view of Walker Street; Source: Google Maps 2022

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**SUMMARY OF CHANGES:**

- Maintain existing curb-to-curb dimensions and one vehicle travel lane in each direction
- Integrate flexible delineators within existing buffers
- Maintain and/or add a clear path of travel for pedestrians and complete sidewalks where possible

The curb-to-curb width and vehicle access needs vary along the length of Walker Street. Where there is sufficient right-of-way, existing bicycle lanes and buffers should be widened to maximize comfort while future phases of the rail trail network are in development.

On Walker Street south of West Beach street, plans for a bike path or bike lane connecting to Riverside Drive and the regional trail network are being considered. Additional feasibility and design strategies for addressing conflicts between onsite parking, driveways, rail tracks and bike access must be considered.

## West 5th Street

Figure 4-7 shows the existing view and future cross section for a typical neighborhood street such as West 5th Street. Neighborhood streets will provide sharrows with signage and traffic calming measures to create a low-stress environment for people walking and biking. Neighborhood streets connect to major east-west and north-south corridors within the bicycle network.

### SUMMARY OF CHANGES:

- Maintain existing ROW and number of vehicle travel lanes, maintain 11-foot vehicle lanes
- Reduce parking lane width by 1 foot, from 8 feet to 7 feet.
- Add Class III marked sharrows with signage.
- Provide a 2-foot buffer between the parking lane and Class III sharrows.
- Preserve residential on-street parking.
- Integrate traffic calming measures such as bulb-outs at intersections, and chicanes or planter boxes at midblock locations where feasible.



**PHOTO CAPTION**— Existing View of West 5th Street; Source: Google Maps 2022

**Figure 4-7 Future West 5th Street Cross Section (Walker Street to Rodriguez Street)**



## Paseos

Figure 4-8 illustrates the conceptual design for the minimum width of a typical paseo that is proposed throughout the study area. Alleyways and the space between buildings are repurposed to create gathering spaces and comfortable walking paths that connect to busier arterial streets.

**Figure 4-8 Future Paseo Cross Section**



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**PHOTO CAPTION**—Example of paseos with businesses and foliage



# Pedestrian Network Improvements

The Specific Plan identifies pedestrian network improvements and best practices for sidewalk design. As illustrated in the cross sections above, there are opportunities to expand the pedestrian realm with parklets and curb extensions, and to increase the permeability of the Downtown street network with paseos. **Figure 4-9** presents the different elements of a Downtown sidewalk, which should include a frontage zone to accommodate building entryways and facades, a pedestrian through zone with a clear path of travel, and a street furniture/curb zone where utilities, landscape elements, and other amenities are located outside of the through zone. The dimensions of these elements will vary in width. For example, on some streets there is no available space for a frontage zone, and commercial land uses will not occupy sidewalk space. Likewise, the total width of the pedestrian through zone will vary depending on available right of way, and the furniture zone width will also vary depending on available right of way or may be accommodated in the expanded pedestrian zone via parklets.

Many of the pedestrian improvements address the need for safer, more visible crossings on high-speed, high-volume arterial streets and comfortable off-street facilities that provide alternative access routes to local amenities. Underutilized alleyways and spaces between buildings shall be repurposed to create a paseo network, which will provide pedestrians alternative paths to travel around **091** Downtown. Upgrades at major intersections such as Main Street and East Lake Avenue may include curb extensions, crosswalk visibility enhancements, and leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs). **Figure 4-10** shows the location of future pedestrian network improvements.

## Recommended Pedestrian Network Improvements

- Enhanced midblock crossings (e.g., pedestrian refuge islands, rapid flashing beacons, pavement markings and signage) to connect paseos intersecting arterial streets.
- Create network of paseos at locations shown in **Figure 4-10**, with minimum widths of 12 feet.
- Improved pedestrian connections (e.g., signalization, high-visibility striping, curb extensions, and/or other treatments) at the locations shown in **4-10**.

**Figure 4-9 Sidewalk Zones for Downtown/Commercial Streets**



## #090

Posted by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022** at **8:24pm** [Comment ID: 5892] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Mid-block crossings are great to give peds more options for moving around town. Narrowing Main St. to 3 lanes would allow for safer crossings.

## #091

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022** at **6:42pm** [Comment ID: 5841] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes! However I think we need to provide more public bathrooms.



## FIGURE 4-10 PEDESTRIAN NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

- Future Pedestrian Improvements
  - Paseos and Mid-Block Walkways
  - Intersection Improvements
  - Midblock Crossings

A legend consisting of five entries, each with a colored line icon and text: 'Specific Plan Boundary' (dashed black line), 'Building Footprint' (grey line), 'Parks/ Open Space' (green line), 'Rail Line' (black line with diagonal dashes), and 'Waterway' (blue line).



#092

Posted by **nataalieco** on **07/12/2022 at 6:17pm** [Comment ID: 5580] - [Link](#)

*Type: Missing*

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

There is a Paseo here that should connect to Main St but is currently locked. Can it be reopened?

# Bicycle Network Improvements

**PHOTO CAPTION**—Recently installed bike lane at Bridge Street/Hushbeck Avenue



The Specific Plan includes several new bicycle facilities. The new facilities will close gaps in the existing bicycle network, expand Downtown's existing network, and allow for more convenient, safe, and comfortable travel by bicycle. Key destinations within downtown will be more accessible with these improvements, including schools, residential neighborhoods, and retail venues. **Figure 4-11** illustrates the existing and future bicycle facilities within downtown.

To create a safe and inviting bicycle network for people of all ages and abilities and to reduce potential conflicts between bicyclists and motorists, it is critical for bicycle facilities to be designed beyond minimum acceptable widths. Many of the bicycle improvements address the need for more east-west connectivity to access Main Street and existing north-south facilities located near the edge of the study area, and to provide comfortable facilities along neighborhood streets. Many residential streets in the Plan area have on-street parking with relatively high utilization rates, and bicycle network recommendations are designed to minimize impact on residential parking.

## Recommended Bicycle Network Improvements 093

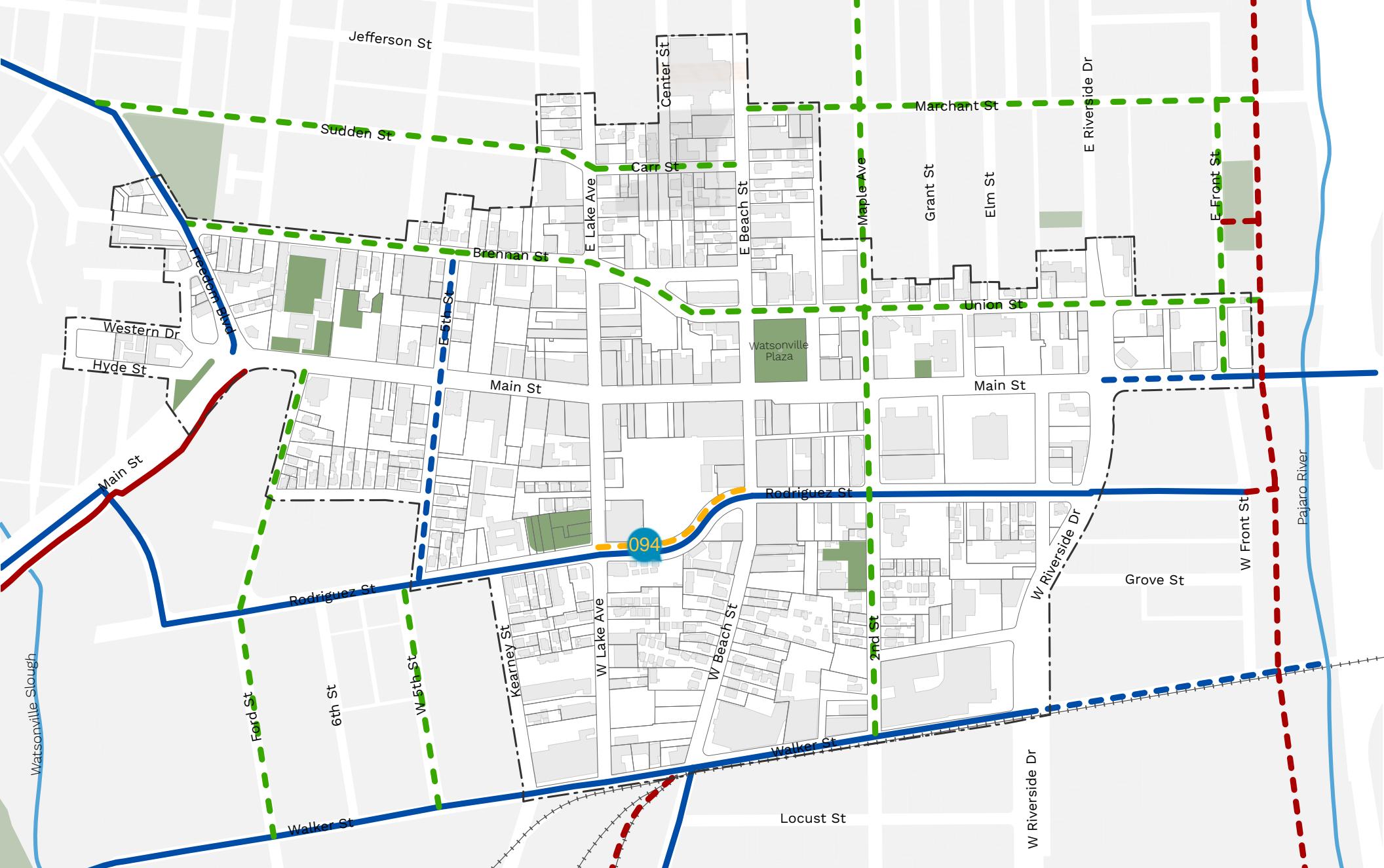
- New signed bicycle route on Merchant Street between East Beach Street and the Levee Trail.
- Identify Levee Trail as a designated public bicycle and pedestrian facility.
- New access improvements from Merchant Street to the Levee Trail.
- New signed bicycle route on Sudden Street between Freedom Boulevard and East Beach Street.
- New signed bicycle route on Brennan Street/Union Street between Freedom Boulevard and the Levee Trail.
- New access improvements from Union Street to the Levee Trail.
- Improved connection to the Levee Trail from River Park.
- Improved wider bicycle lanes, with an enhanced buffer between adjacent vehicular travel lanes and the bicycle lane, on Rodriguez Street between West Lake Avenue and West Beach Street.
- New bicycle lanes on Walker Street from West Riverside Drive to the Pajaro River.
- New shared-use path from West Front Street along Rodriguez Street to the Levee Trail.
- New signed bicycle route on Ford Street between Walker Street and Main Street.
- New signed bicycle route on West 5th Street between Walker Street and Rodriguez Street.
- New bicycle lanes on 5th Street between Rodriguez Street and Brennan Street.
- New signed bicycle route on 2nd Street/Maple Avenue between Walker Street to Lincoln Street.
- New signed bicycle route on East Front Street between Main Street and Merchant Street.

#093

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:43pm** [Comment ID: 5842] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes to this! There will be many more bike riders in Watsonville's future, with coming shared e-bike program and other programs to increase ridership.



**FIGURE 4-11**  
**FUTURE BICYCLE**  
**NETWORK**

**Existing Bicycle Network & Opportunity Corridors**

- Class I Bicycle Path
- Class II Bicycle Lane
- Class III Bicycle Route

**Future Bicycle Facilities**

- Class I Shared-Use Path
- Class II Bicycle Lane
- Class III with Sharrows
- Upgraded existing Class II with vertical separation

- Specific Plan Boundary
- Building Footprint
- Parks/ Open Space
- Rail Line
- Waterway



0 200' 500'  
 100' 400'

#094

Posted by **nataalieco** on **07/12/2022 at 6:48pm** [Comment ID: 5581] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

Lots of room on Rodriguez for separated bike lane. could use planters to beautify separation.

## Section 4.3

# PARKING, CURB MANAGEMENT AND TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

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**PHOTO CAPTION**—Watsonville Civic Center Parking Structure



## Parking System

### Existing Conditions

**As the commercial, civic, and entertainment center of the city, parking is a vital component of Downtown Watsonville.** There are 16 municipal parking lots in Downtown with more than 1,000 publicly available off-street spaces. In addition, there are approximately 550 on-street parking spaces. Combined, there are nearly 1,600 public parking spaces in Downtown. Private parking facilities provide nearly 1,500 additional spaces, which are primarily reserved for customers and employees of specific land uses.



According to the Watsonville Downtown Parking Plan completed in 2017, nearly all parking facilities within Downtown are significantly underutilized. As corroborated by staff in preparation for this Specific Plan, a large parking surplus exists with a few areas of high demand and many underutilized parking lots and garages. On average, approximately half of the parking supply is available across the system during the busiest times of day. Time limits are also inconsistent and may be confusing, thereby discouraging efficient use of existing facilities and “park-once” behavior.<sup>095</sup> The study also found that Watsonville’s ratio of parking demand per square foot is low compared with peer cities on the West Coast of similar size. These factors indicate that the parking system would be supportive of redevelopment at key opportunity sites on existing surface parking lots and should seek to accommodate future parking demand through the more efficient use and sharing of existing supply before investing in new public supply or requiring construction of more spaces as part of new development.<sup>096</sup>

The Watsonville Municipal Code (WMC) establishes minimum off-street parking requirements for different land uses, including residential, commercial, and recreational parking. Many of Watsonville’s parking standards are higher than national standards, set by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), particularly for commercial and industrial uses. However, the city does have a Downtown Parking District, which is contained within but smaller than the Plan area. Properties within the district are exempt from providing on-site parking for commercial uses, which has helped lead to efficient sharing of public parking lots and garages between different land uses with varying peak parking demand times throughout the day and week.

For residential land uses, existing parking requirements for multifamily dwelling units are typically two spaces per unit, with additional guest spaces required depending on the number of bedrooms and the number of units in the building. Although all commercial land uses within the Parking District are not required to provide off-street

parking, minimum requirements still apply to construction of new residential units, even for the adaptive reuse of an existing building. For example, if the owner of an existing building within the Parking District wished to replace a ground-floor furniture store with a restaurant, no new parking would be required, however, converting the upper floors of the same building from vacant office space to residential lofts would require meeting off-street residential parking requirements. The Downtown Parking Plan (2017) recommended an amendment to the zoning code to remove these requirements for residential conversions of existing buildings and to consider removing minimum requirements entirely for all new development within Downtown to make the construction of new housing supply financially feasible and encourage urban designs that foster an improved experience for multimodal travel. The following standards and guidelines are informed by the Downtown Parking Plan and reflect many specific recommendations from that plan.

## #095

Posted by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022 at 8:29pm** [Comment ID: 5898] - [Link](#)

*Type: Suggestion*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

It's controversial, but can we have metered parking on-street, and free parking in garages and City-owned lots?

## #096

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:46pm** [Comment ID: 5843] - [Link](#)

*Type: Love!*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes! Important to have this confirmation that the parking supply is ample and underutilized. For occasional very high demand events, advertise and encourage outside area parking and provide free shuttles in (Strawberry festival, parade, etc).

## #097

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:48pm** [Comment ID: 5844] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

Yes, please change parking limits. It is wrong environmentally and a big hassle to have to move a car into another parking spot nearby because of a short time limit or restriction for only customers of this business...encourage people to park once and then walk around!

## Standards (Public Parking)



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Example of a well-lit parking lot

- **Maximize the use of existing supply** through time restrictions and pricing that best reflect actual demand and the needs of intended users while incentivizing the use of underutilized off-street supply through longer time limits, lower pricing, and/or free validation through local businesses.
- **Accommodate the potential net loss of on-street parking** that may result from installing buffered bicycle facilities, traffic calming, and pedestrian realm improvements.
- **Prioritize in-fill development of off-street parking lots** that are underutilized and not the highest and best use of Downtown land; this should especially be encouraged where associated parking demand can be accommodated by existing public or shared private parking supply.
- **Reinvest all parking revenues** generated to support the continued provision of shared parking, streetscape improvements, and TDM options within the Plan area.
- **Increase parking user safety** by **098** providing increased hours of enforcement in City owned facilities during evening and weekend hours and provide ample and well-maintained lighting.

## #098

Posted by **JS** on **07/14/2022 at 7:30pm** [Comment ID: 5866] - [Link](#)

*Type: Needs Love*

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes, Lot 5 on W Beach is under utilized because it has terrible signage - it's very easy to miss - and inside it's dark and feels unsafe (even if it isn't), esp at night. Huge changes needed here.



## Standards (Private Parking)

**Table 4-1 Off-Street Parking Minimum Requirements**

| Multifamily Residential | Existing Minimum Requirement | Future Minimum Requirement |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Studio/1-bedroom unit   | 2 spaces per unit            | 0.8 spaces per unit        |
| 2-bedroom unit          | 2 spaces per unit            | 1.6 spaces per unit        |
| 3-bedroom unit          | 2 spaces per unit            | No change                  |
| 4-bedroom unit          | 3 spaces per unit            | No change                  |
| 5-bedroom unit          | 4 spaces per unit            | No change                  |

\* Existing Requirements based on WMC § 14-17.210

\* Proposed based off ITE Parking Generation Manual 5th Edition (Land Use Code 221 Mid-Rise Multifamily in Multi-Use District)

**Table 4-2 Off-Street Parking Maximum Requirements for Density Bonus Projects**

| Multifamily Residential | Maximum Limit       |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Studio/1-bedroom unit   | 1 space per unit    |
| 2/3-bedroom unit        | 1.5 spaces per unit |
| 4-bedroom unit          | 2.5 spaces per unit |

- **Expand the Downtown Parking District** to the boundaries of the Plan area to make all non-residential land uses exempt from on-site parking requirements.

- **Encourage shared parking** by allowing new development to accommodate parking demand off-site by using underutilized private or public off-street parking supply through a shared parking agreement.

- **Unbundle parking** by requiring residential developers and property owners to separate the cost of parking from rents so that tenants have the option to purchase assigned parking or forgo a parking space.

- **Remove minimum parking requirements** for new residential units in existing buildings that do not result in a net parking loss, to increase the feasibility of renovating or adaptively reusing non-residential buildings to accommodate housing in the Plan area.

- **Lower minimum parking requirements** for new residential development within the Plan area to right-size supply to support Specific Plan objectives and lower the cost of providing new housing units in the Plan area. Provision of guest parking

should be based on market feasibility and removed from requirements for new multifamily housing. Future reduced minimums are per **Table 4-1**.

- **Projects containing affordable housing** should be exempt from minimum parking requirements if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Rental senior projects 100% affordable to lower income, either with paratransit service or within 1/2-half mile of accessible bus route (operating at least eight times per day).
- Rental special needs projects 100% affordable to lower income households, either with paratransit service or within 1/2-half mile of accessible bus route (operating at least eight times per day).
- Housing developments 100% affordable to lower income households.

- **Maximum parking limits** should be applied to projects that are entitled under the California Density Bonus Law as shown below in **Table 4-2**. AB 2345 sets a state-mandated maximum limit for off-street parking spaces for projects that qualify through meeting specified amounts of affordable housing.

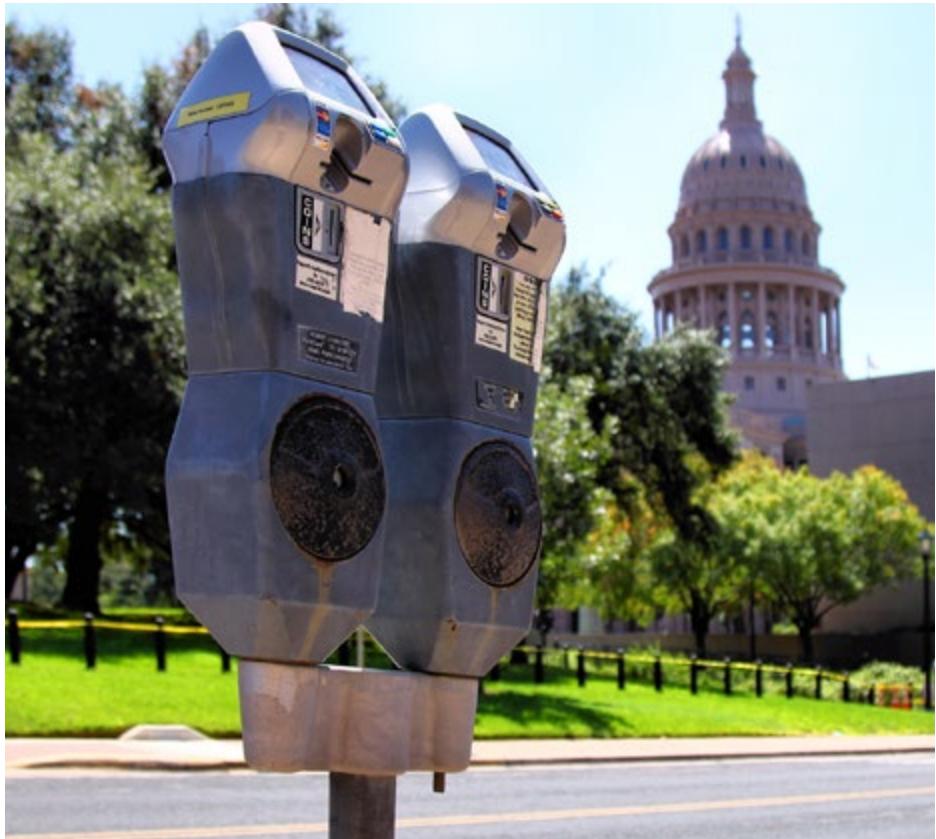
#099

Posted by **annak2205** on **07/14/2022 at 8:30pm** [Comment ID: 5900] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Yes to unbundled parking! If we want to lower the cost of housing, unbundling parking from housing costs will do just that!

## Guidelines (Public Parking)



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Example of a debit and credit card accessible parking meter in Austin, TX<sup>9</sup>

- **Parking time limits** should be set to best serve intended visitors. Most on-street spaces geared towards dining and “park-once” retail and entertainment should allow for at least 2-hours of parking. Some locations with high turnover of visitors may benefit from shorter time limits, while longer time limits should be permitted at off-street facilities with the lowest utilization.
- **Price on-street parking** where parking occupancy rates routinely exceed 85% or near opportunity sites where occupancy can be expected to exceed 85% if time limits are not in place.
- **Performance-based pricing** may be implemented over time so that rates for the highest demand public off-street facilities and on-street spaces best reflect actual demand and regulations encourage target utilization rates. Typical target utilization rates for effectively managed parking systems are 85%-90% per block face for on-street spaces and 90-95% for off-street facilities.
- **Payment technology** where parking is priced should provide options for payment by credit-cards, debit cards, and pay-by-phone.
- **Signage about parking regulations** should clearly communicate restrictions and time limits in a manner that is uniform throughout the Plan area to limit confusion and enhance a sense of place.
- **Wayfinding for parking facilities** should clearly indicate the closest available long-term public parking options throughout the Plan area and may include real-time availability by number of spaces.
- **Parking enforcement technologies** such as license plate recognition (LPR), smart meters, parking access and revenue control systems (PARCS), and handheld citation units may be used to improve occupancy monitoring, regulation enforcement, and revenue collection.
- **Parking permit rates** should be evaluated on an annual or bi-annual basis and may be increased to better support the City’s ongoing costs for providing public parking.
- **Employee permit programs** may be implemented to provide designated parking at reduced rates for Plan area workers in underutilized off-street facilities to increase turnover of spaces closest to businesses and improve availability for customers.

<sup>9</sup> “Parking Meter Austin Texas” by Larry D. Moore, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

## Guidelines (Private Parking)



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Example of a privately-operated lot with stacked parking

- **Removal of minimum parking requirements** for all new uses within the expanded parking district may be evaluated and adopted in the future based on evaluation of parking utilization from development sites post occupancy.
- **Tandem and stacked parking** may be used for non-residential uses with the condition that the spaces are operated by a contracted parking management/valet vendor that has been certified by the City. Mechanized vertical stacking technologies allow for increased developable footprint while accommodating parking demand on-site. Tandem parking that accommodates no more than two vehicles per space may be provided for residential uses.
- **Parking facility design** should conform with standards established by the Public Works Department as outlined in the City of Watsonville Public Improvement Standards Manual.
- **Futureproofing** should be encouraged for any subsequent construction of parking structures, which may include level floors, ramps at the center or external to a garage, and high floor-to-ceiling heights to sufficiently accommodate conversion to commercial or residential uses.

## #100

Posted by **mgperez** on **07/13/2022** at **8:10pm** [Comment ID: 5610] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 2, Disagree: 0*

I like that only someone experienced would have control over these parking structures, but I am still concerned about who would be liable if vehicles were to be damaged in these unfamiliar structures.

Reply by **Pam** on **07/14/2022** at **1:06am** [Comment ID: 5664] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 1, Disagree: 0*

And what about a power outage?

Interesting idea. New for me.

Reply by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022** at **6:51pm** [Comment ID: 5846] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

New to me also, looks like a good space saver and could provide some jobs instead of spending a fortune on huge parking structure.

## #101

Posted by **ambalder** on **07/13/2022** at **11:12pm** [Comment ID: 5637] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

I have seen cars be damaged due to these structures and have reservations about using it.

# Curb Management

## Existing Conditions

Curb space in downtown is designated with loading zones for the exclusive use of vehicles during the loading or unloading of passengers or goods. Commercial vehicles are restricted from stopping at curbs for longer than 20 minutes while loading or unloading materials, and vehicles loading or unloading passengers are restricted to three minutes. There are 17 passenger loading (white curb) spaces and 18 commercial loading (yellow curb) spaces in Downtown, which makes up 2 percent of the Downtown parking supply. Most of the commercial loading spaces are concentrated on East Lake Avenue and Brennan Street whereas most of the passenger loading spaces are located on Brennan and Union Street.

## Standards



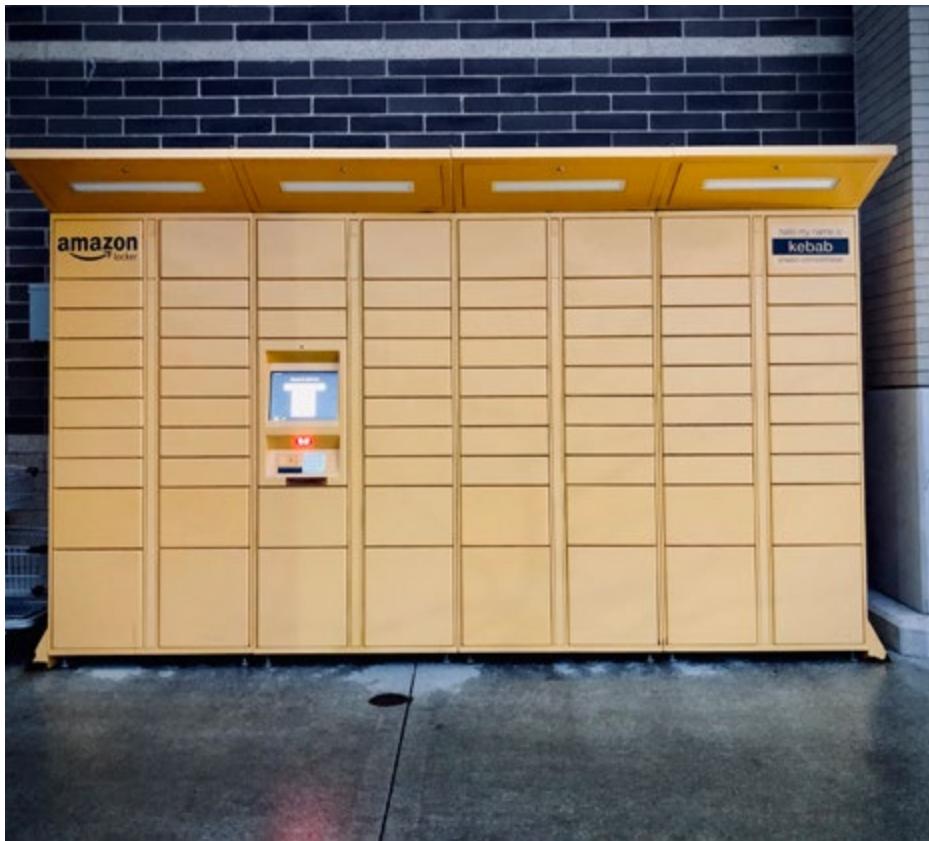
**PHOTO CAPTION**—Example of a passenger loading zone<sup>10</sup>

- **Flexible loading and pick-up/ drop-off (PUDO) zones** in high demand areas that allow for passenger loading, curb-side pick-ups from local business, and immediate deliveries shall be provided throughout the Plan area. Flex loading zones reduce loading impacts on traffic flow, allow for faster taxi TNC pick-up/drop-off times, increase customer access at local businesses, and reduce conflicts for people walking and biking.
- **Freight and commercial loading** for all non-residential uses should be accommodated off-street where feasible and via alleyways where available. These trips should also be encouraged to occur in off-peak hours to reduce impacts on traffic and conflicts with other modes.

<sup>10</sup> "Passenger loading zone" by John Robert McPherson, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

## Guidelines

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**PHOTO CAPTION**—Example of Amazon Locker in Gig Harbor, WA<sup>11</sup>

- **Off-street truck loading spaces** should be provided for certain commercial land uses as stated in § 14-17.1501.
- **Consolidated deliveries** should be encouraged for parcels at businesses and residential uses. Centrally located parcel pick-up kiosks, such as Amazon Hub Lockers, may be used to provide secure deliveries while reducing the amount of vehicle trips and loading by couriers at specific commercial and residential addresses.
- **Mobility data specification** may be required from private operators of shared mobility devices to provide real-time information about their vehicles, including their availability and the location of where they are parked.

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<sup>11</sup> "Amazon Hub Locker - Kebab Gig Harbor" by Senapa, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

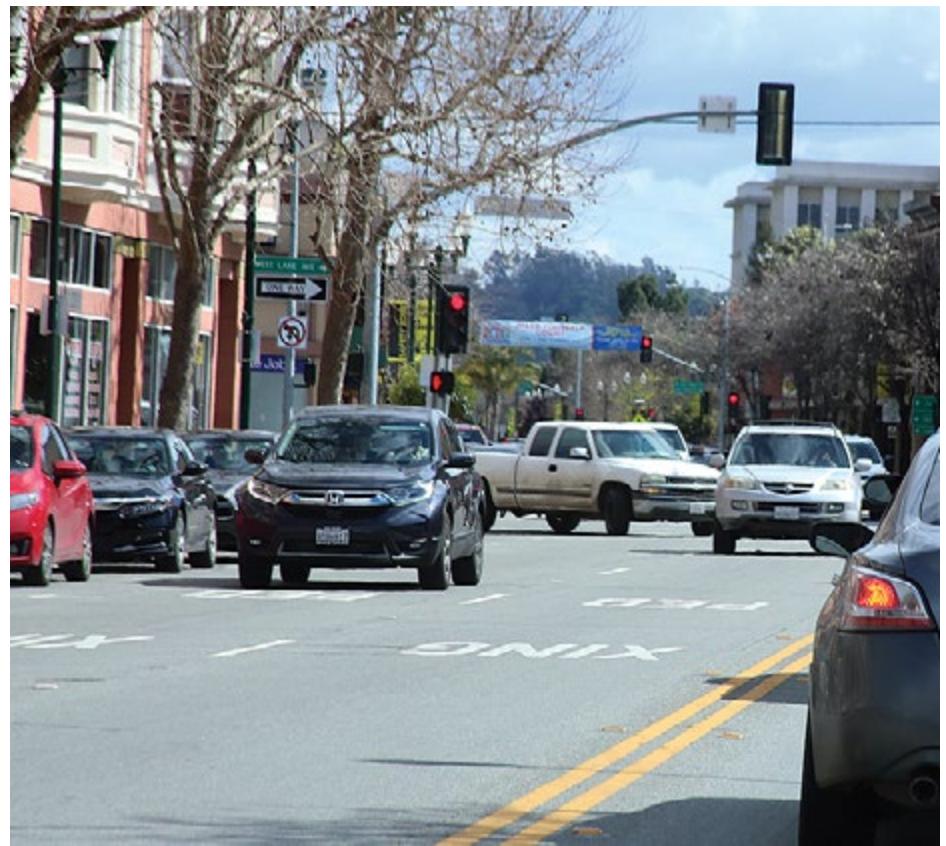
# Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

## Existing Conditions

Transportation demand management (TDM) aims to reduce single-occupant vehicle (SOV) travel, minimize peak period vehicle trips, and shift trips to transit, biking, walking, or shared rides. TDM is a multi-faceted approach to manage transportation resources through pricing, incentives, services, communication, marketing, and other techniques. Strategies work together synergistically to achieve SOV trip reduction and mode share goals. By working to reduce SOV trips within the Plan area, impacts from future development such as congestion or localized pollution can be reduced. TDM also supports sustainability and greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals by helping to reduce associated vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

VMT is a measure of total vehicular travel that accounts for the number of vehicle trips and the length of those trips. As of July 1, 2020, agencies analyzing the environmental impacts from transportation as part of the

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) can no longer define impacts based on traffic congestion. Instead, VMT has been identified as a recommended measure of significance. VMT impacts associated with a project are often determined based on a project's location, which reflects the surrounding density and land use mix and the availability of transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. To mitigate VMT impacts associated with development in the Plan area, an individual project may adjust site design to maximize connectivity to existing multimodal networks and implement TDM strategies to expand mobility choices and support mode shift. Depending on VMT mitigation needs, TDM plans that outline a menu of options to be built or programmed to increase modal options and achieve a quantifiable amount of trip reduction may be required.



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Vehicle traffic on Main Street in Downtown Watsonville

## Standards



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Example of designated carpool and vanpool parking

- **TDM programs** should be developed, implemented, and updated based on regular evaluation to encourage traveling to and within the Plan area by a variety of affordable travel options.
- **Marketing and education** to influence travel behavior change should be conducted by the City or a TMA to promote available mobility options with the Plan area and highlight the importance that travel choices have on the vitality of downtown.
- **Guaranteed rides home** should be made available to all employees within the Plan area through the City's preferred vendor to provide free or subsidize rides in the occasional event of an emergency for commuters who do not drive alone to work.
- **Shared mobility**<sup>102</sup> should be implemented in coordination with a private vendor to install dock-based bike share stations within the Plan area. The City should work with the County to identify additional funding opportunities.
- **Car share spaces and vehicles with a preferred vendor** should be provided in municipal garages, or in private facilities that allow public access, to provide options for residents that choose to live in the Plan area without an automobile.
- **TDM Plan requirements** should be created for some or all development proposals to include required TDM measures—or an approved TDM Plan—as a condition of approval. Site specific TDM measures are most effective when implemented at major employment sites or at higher density mix-use residential projects.
- **VMT Mitigation Fee Program** should be created to assign a monetary value for VMT reduction such that a developer could purchase VMT reduction credits for the purposes of mitigating VMT more than determined impact thresholds which in turn fund the construction of active transportation facilities in the Plan area and enhance connectivity to regional trails.

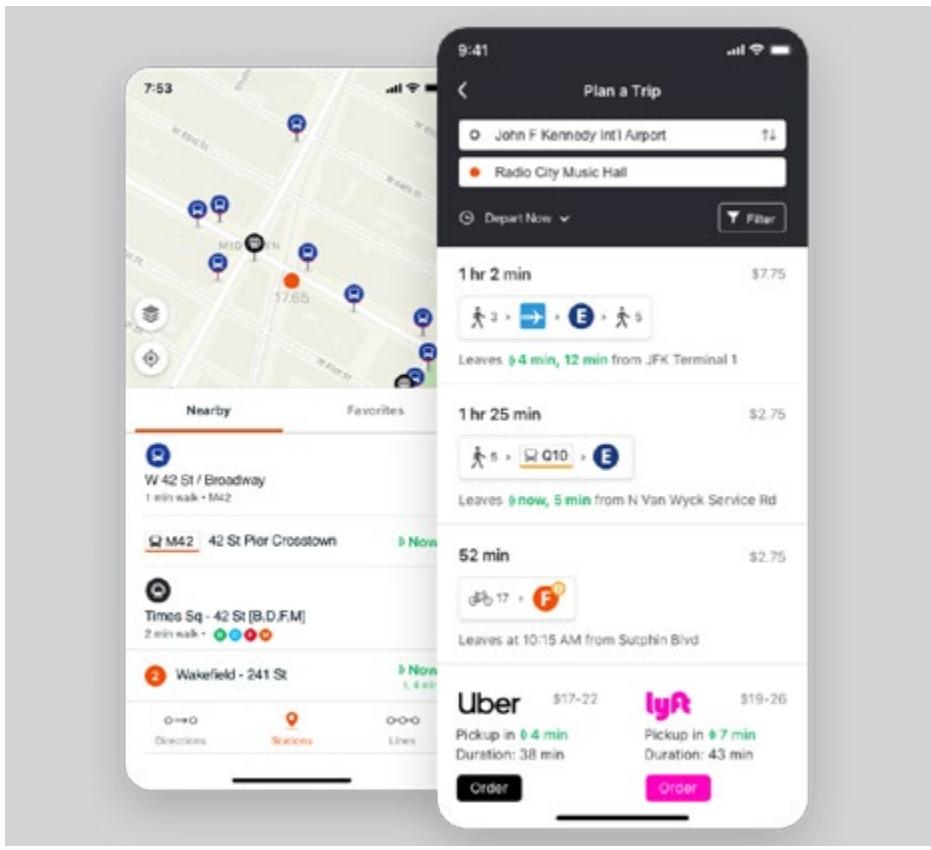
#102

Posted by **Oatmeal** on **07/14/2022 at 6:53pm** [Comment ID: 5848] - [Link](#)

*Agree: 0, Disagree: 0*

Shared clean mobility options are very much needed!

## Guidelines



**PHOTO CAPTION**—Example of a mobile app (Moovit) that integrates all mobility options into one digital platform

- **Transportation Management Association (TMA)** may be established to manage, promote, and communicate TDM options to Plan area residents, employees, and visitors more effectively. TMAs are particularly useful in downtown commercial areas where specific businesses may lack the resources to implement TDM programs themselves. A TMA may also support the creation and distribution of marketing materials of travel options or conduct more targeted educational training with on-site property managers and employers.
- **Discounted transit passes**<sup>103</sup> may be provided to Plan area employees and residents through parking revenues or be included as a TDM mitigation measure for new development.
- **Telecommuting and flexible work schedules** to reduce the frequency of commuter trips during peak hours should be encouraged for major employers and may be included as a TDM mitigation measure for new development.
- **Rideshare matching** that helps connect commuters with similar origins or destinations to available carpools and vanpools should be encouraged for employers and multifamily residential projects and may be included as a TDM mitigation measure for new development.
- **Annual travel surveys** of employer and residents may be conducted to assess the efficacy of TDM programs and travel behaviors within the Plan area.
- **Digital platforms** such as a webpage or mobile phone application may be created to provide information, availability, schedules, and pricing of mobility options for the Plan area.
- **Funding for TDM initiatives** in the Plan area may be supported through revenue generated by public parking.
- **Affordable housing** more than inclusionary rates may be provided as a TDM mitigation measure for new residential development.

## #103

Posted by **Pam** on **07/14/2022 at 1:11am** [Comment ID: 5665] - [Link](#)

*Type: Suggestion*

*Agree: 3, Disagree: 0*

I really want the City to consider free public transport as a way to both encourage ridership and build equity in transportation. Could the City get a grant to test out the effectiveness of free public transport, as a case study? We need to think outside box to reduce ghg emissio