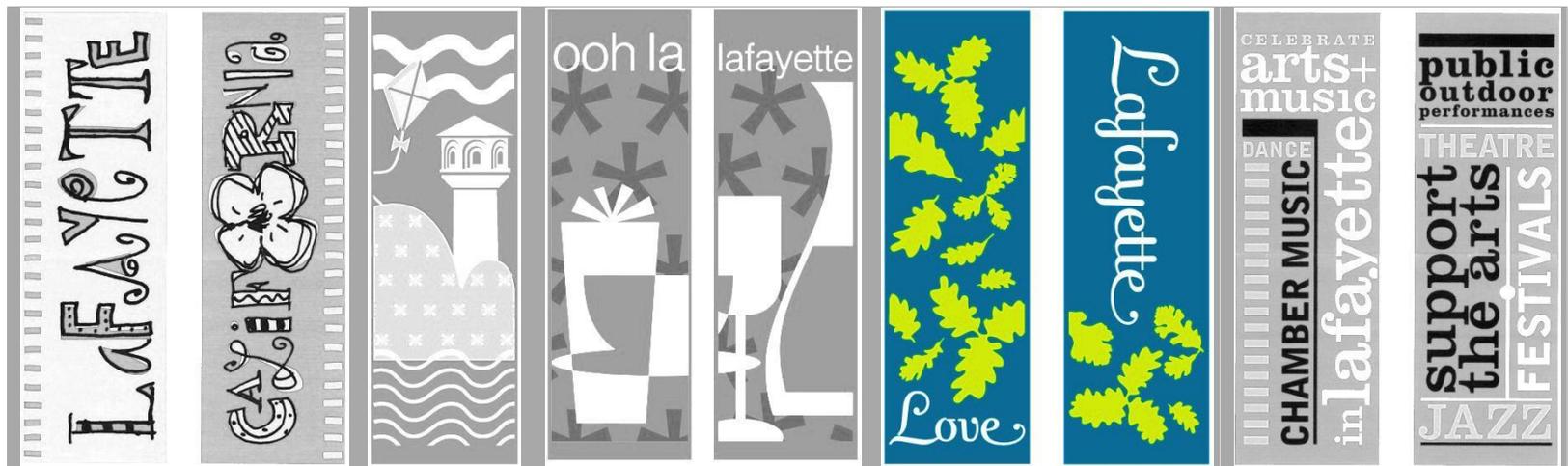


CITY OF LAFAYETTE

# DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN



SEPTEMBER 10 • 2012



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**SEPTEMBER 10 • 2012**

*The Downtown Specific Plan ("DSP") is a flexible and dynamic document. As time passes certain assumptions underlying the DSP may no longer be valid due to changing circumstances or new information. Therefore, the DSP may be amended in the future and no future development rights shall be implied by the DSP.*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### City Council

Carol Federighi • *Mayor*  
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Brandt Andersson  
Carl Anduri  
Don Tatzin

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\* To be added upon adoption

† Hyperlinked



# INTRODUCTION

If Lafayette did not exist, someone would have to invent it. There would have to be, among all of America's cities, at least one that found the balance between a vibrant downtown and the natural world.

If Lafayette did not exist, there would have to be at least one city with 500 acres of undisturbed oak woodland located just a half mile from the bustling village center, preserved for all time, with deep water and paths, and paddleboats and playgrounds, with red tailed hawks and vultures, and with its own iconic tower.

If Lafayette did not exist, someone would have to invent a city that so respected the service of America's war veterans that it anchored its entrance to downtown, not with a big box store or an auto mall, but with a beautiful memorial building dedicated to the regions' veterans and their fallen brethren.

If Lafayette did not exist, someone would have to invent it. There would have to be, among all of America's jurisdictions a place where when the need arose, the people came together to build a monumental library and learning center.

If Lafayette did not exist, someone would have to invent a city with a pedestrian-oriented downtown where people bumped into old friends while shopping for fresh vegetables and meat and fish and flowers in the town's markets; where people lingered in coffee shops and gathered on Saturday afternoons in bakeries; where diners had plenty choice between fast food and slow food and everything in between; where independent merchants thrived alongside popular regional chains; where a BBQ joint sat next to an art gallery, and a funky saloon flanked a fancy Starbucks; where the longest continuously operating live theater in the County delivered plays in an historic barn.

Fortunately, for us, some people did invent such a city. From humble beginnings more than 150 years ago, ten generations of Elam Browns, pioneers, caretakers, businesspeople, volunteers, saloon operators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, elected officials, commissioners, task force members, school board members, staffers, homeowners, parents, children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, just to name a few, have planned for, nurtured, and sustained this magical creation we call home.

This Downtown Specific Plan (“DSP”) was prepared to continue this planning, nurturing, and sustaining of Lafayette’s downtown. It accomplishes the following:

- Establishes the critical relevance of sustainability to the downtown, as well as the entire Lafayette community.
- Promotes land uses that retain the downtown character. The DSP provides for the services and amenities desired by the community, while improving and sustaining the economic health of the downtown. It confirms the downtown as a place for all types of housing to meet all types of needs.
- Preserves the downtown character through design. This is accomplished through the DSP’s goals, policies, and programs establishing design principles and creating opportunities for enhancing the public realm.
- Seeks to improve downtown circulation. This is accomplished through management of traffic congestion rather than roadway improvement, including facilitating alternative modes of transportation – walking, biking, and transit. Improvements to circulation are also accomplished through a smarter parking strategy with facilities that can meet the needs of both customers and employees.
- Preserves the downtown’s natural features – its creeks and trees – so they continue to contribute the downtown character and the community’s quality of life.
- Preserves downtown character through a district-based strategy. This DSP builds on the distinctive character of the different parts of the downtown. It envisions the downtown as a series of interconnected districts whose different physical characteristics and land uses complement each other.
- Establishes priorities for downtown public improvements while identifying funding sources that could be used for these improvements and their ongoing maintenance.

# 1. VISION STATEMENT

Create a downtown with small town character and a sustainable quality of life that includes a central core, pedestrian relationships between services, and is a place where residents can congregate, shop, enjoy cultural activities, conduct their civic affairs, and savor the beauty and ambience of this small town.

Encourage the evolution of a distinctive Lafayette character that is informal with variations in architectural styles, massing, and setbacks while maintaining scenic views to surrounding hills and maximizing the enjoyment of its natural environment.

Reinforce downtown as the city's center for business, civic and cultural activities with land use, circulation and design policies that retain the focus of the downtown as a retail center and multifamily residential neighborhood.

Encourage economic activity beneficial to the community and support, enhance and maintain the community.





## 2. OVERVIEW

The DSP builds on the Lafayette General Plan and other policy documents to provide a detailed land use and design framework to guide private development and public investment in the downtown. The DSP was developed through a six-year process designed to maximize public input and participation. The DSP articulates a vision to preserve and enhance the small town character while guiding change that will occur over the next 20 years.

*Purpose • 5*  
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### PURPOSE

#### Reasons for the Downtown Specific Plan

The City Council began the conversation about a downtown specific plan in June 2006. In December 2006, the Council decided to proceed with a community-based plan for these reasons:

**General Plan.** The General Plan orders that a number of downtown planning tasks be completed, including the creation of three distinctive areas – Downtown Core, East End, and West End. It also demands that the City establish urban design guidelines, provide public parking and other amenities, and encourage housing in the downtown. Finally, it calls for the updating of the specific plans completed more than 20 years ago. The DSP represents the completion of these tasks.

**New Development.** The DSP will allow the City to be proactive rather than reactive to new development proposals. While recent economic conditions slowed down development activity, the City continues to see new project proposals in anticipation of a stronger economy.

**Library and Learning Center.** The Library is a significant cultural and educational attraction, and its programs draw the community and attract regional visitors to the downtown. The DSP ensures future development on parcels around the Library complement this important community asset.





## Downtown Specific Plan Objectives

The downtown will continue to change over the next 20 years whether or not a plan is adopted; the point of the DSP is to guide these changes in a way that benefits the community and sustains its quality of life. The DSP thus seeks to amplify the General Plan's goals by providing a detailed land use and design framework. The DSP's objectives are to:

- Foster, create, and nurture a sustainable downtown that provides options for getting around, including increasing opportunities for walking and bicycling and for a variety of housing while preserving our natural resources.
- Preserve the small town character through a district-based strategy while guiding development to enhance this character.
- Guide public investment allocating scarce resources to create maximum effect.
- Provide quality housing choices for all ages and income levels.
- Enhance transportation options to improve downtown circulation.
- Foster a healthy business environment through careful planning, guided private development, and public investment.
- Provide additional parking opportunities for customers and employees.
- Develop community amenities and facilities to complement the downtown.
- Protect and enhance the downtown's natural resources.
- Nurture a culture of good building and sensitive site design.

## PLANNING PROCESS

The downtown planning process began in 2006. As the result of discussion at the City Council / Redevelopment Agency Board and a community presentation on December 11, 2006, the process was initiated. In February 2007, a consultant selection committee representing City commissions and committees and downtown interests was established by the City Council. The committee selected a consultant team led by Wallace Roberts and Todd LLC to develop a draft plan. The committee evolved into the Downtown Strategy Advisory Committee, and it was charged with working with the consultant and providing opportunities for public participation.

The Committee included representatives from:

- City Council / Redevelopment Agency Board
- Planning Commission
- Design Review Commission
- Circulation Commission
- Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission
- Senior Services Commission
- Youth Services Commission
- Creeks Committee
- Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan Implementation Committee
- Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation
- Lafayette Chamber of Commerce
- Lafayette Homeowners Council
- Downtown Property Owner / Developer

The community-based planning process began in May 2007. In September 2007, the City undertook a survey of every residence and business in Lafayette to solicit input on the downtown. The survey was sent to approximately 11,000 addresses, and about 2,400 completed surveys were returned. The response rate of 22 percent is generally considered to be a high participation rate. The survey asked a series of questions about the downtown.

### Opinions about the downtown from the survey:

*Very or somewhat satisfied: availability of services (87%); retail choices (70%); overall impression of the downtown (63%); parks and other usable open / natural space (57%)*

*Very or somewhat dissatisfied: ease of parking (56%); ease of getting around without driving (42%); variety of affordable housing for persons of all ages (36%)*

### Opinions on the importance of potential improvements:

*Very or somewhat important: reduced traffic (88%); better architecture for new buildings (83%); more parking (81%); improved street furnishings (74%); and more parks and plazas (70%)*

*Not as important: wider sidewalks (54%); public art (45%); free downtown shuttle (44%)*

### Opinions about uses:

*Want more: entertainment, cultural uses (49%); quality sit-down restaurants (48%); retail (38%)*

The result of this planning process was the Draft Lafayette Downtown Strategy & Specific Plan which was released for public review in January 2009. In May 2009, the City Council determined the scope of the Revised DSP, initiated the environmental review, and forwarded the process to the Planning Commission. Beginning in October 2009, the Commission reviewed the Revised DSP (September 2009). A revision of the 2009 DSP was completed in September 2011. The Planning Commission completed its review of the 2011 DSP with its recommendation to adopt the revised DSP dated May 21, 2012 with Resolution 2012-13 on May 21, 2012. The City Council began its review on June 25, 2012, and completed its review on September 10, 2012 with its adoption of Resolution 2012-31. A chronology of the planning process is included as Appendix A.

## WHAT IS A SPECIFIC PLAN

The Planner's Guide to Specific Plans from the Governor's Office of Planning and Research provides the best guidance on this type of land use policy document:

*A specific plan is a tool for the systematic implementation of the general plan. It effectively establishes a link between implementing policies of the general plan and the individual development proposals in a defined area. A specific plan may be as general as setting forth broad policy concepts, or as detailed as providing direction to every facet of development from the type, location and intensity of uses to the design and capacity of infrastructure; from the resources used to finance public improvements to the design guidelines of a subdivision.*

Additional citations from the Guide and Government Code regarding specific plans are included in Appendix B.

The DSP is subject to environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Guide, cited above, also provides guidance on CEQA and specific plans:

*Adoption of a specific plan is a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As such, the specific plan normally requires the preparation and consideration of an environmental impact report (EIR) disclosing the potential significant environmental effects of the plan, plan alternatives, and the means by which possible environmental damage may be reduced or avoided. Revisions to an existing specific plan may also require CEQA analysis through a subsequent, supplemental, or tiered EIR, or a negative declaration. The information in the EIR provides decision makers with the insight necessary to guide policy development, thereby ensuring the plan's policies will address and provide the means by which to avoid potential impacts to the environment.*

*To the extent feasible, the process of preparing the specific plan and the environmental analysis should proceed concurrently because both documents require many of the same studies and resulting information. As the name implies, a specific plan EIR should contain analyses specific enough to reflect the level of detail in the plan.*

A specific plan cannot be adopted until the environmental review is certified as adequate as defined by CEQA.

Development projects proposed over the life of the DSP will be subject to the requirements of CEQA with respect to additional environmental review.



## HOW TO USE THE DSP

The DSP is to be used to provide a clear understanding of the vision that the community has set for downtown Lafayette. This document will be used by City Council, Commissions, and Committees, City staff, residents, property owners, businesses, developers, and other government entities as the land use and design policy document for downtown development over the next 20 years. The DSP also identifies priorities for public improvements. The DSP is organized as follows:

**1. Vision Statement.** This chapter articulates the vision for Lafayette’s downtown over the next 20 years.

**2. Overview** and **3. Context.** These chapters provide the background for the DSP. **Context** includes:

- Setting
- History of the Downtown
- Demographics
- Relationship with Other Plans

**4. Downtown Character.** This chapter is the heart of the DSP; it includes:

- Land Use. The DSP describes the existing land use context and the plan for the downtown.
- Districts. The DSP envisions the downtown as interconnected districts and neighborhoods whose different physical characteristics and land uses complement each other while providing variety and texture. Each district is described by its existing context (land use, character, and circulation and streetscape) and what is planned. There are four districts: West End; Downtown Retail; Plaza; and East End. There are also three Downtown Residential Neighborhoods. The Downtown Retail and Plaza districts form the Downtown Core.
- Views. To reiterate the importance of views to the downtown, the DSP includes language from the General Plan.
- Design Review: Process, Guiding Principles, Findings, and Downtown Design Guidelines. Both the General Plan and DSP envision design guidelines to form future development. To establish the foundation for these guidelines, the DSP includes design guiding principles and the framework for design review findings and building height exception findings.
- Cultural and Historic Resources. The aim of the DSP is to preserve the downtown’s rich heritage.

**5. Sustainability.** This chapter describes the DSP’s intent to use sustainability as a core value in planning the downtown through land use, transportation and circulation, economic development, and resource conservation.

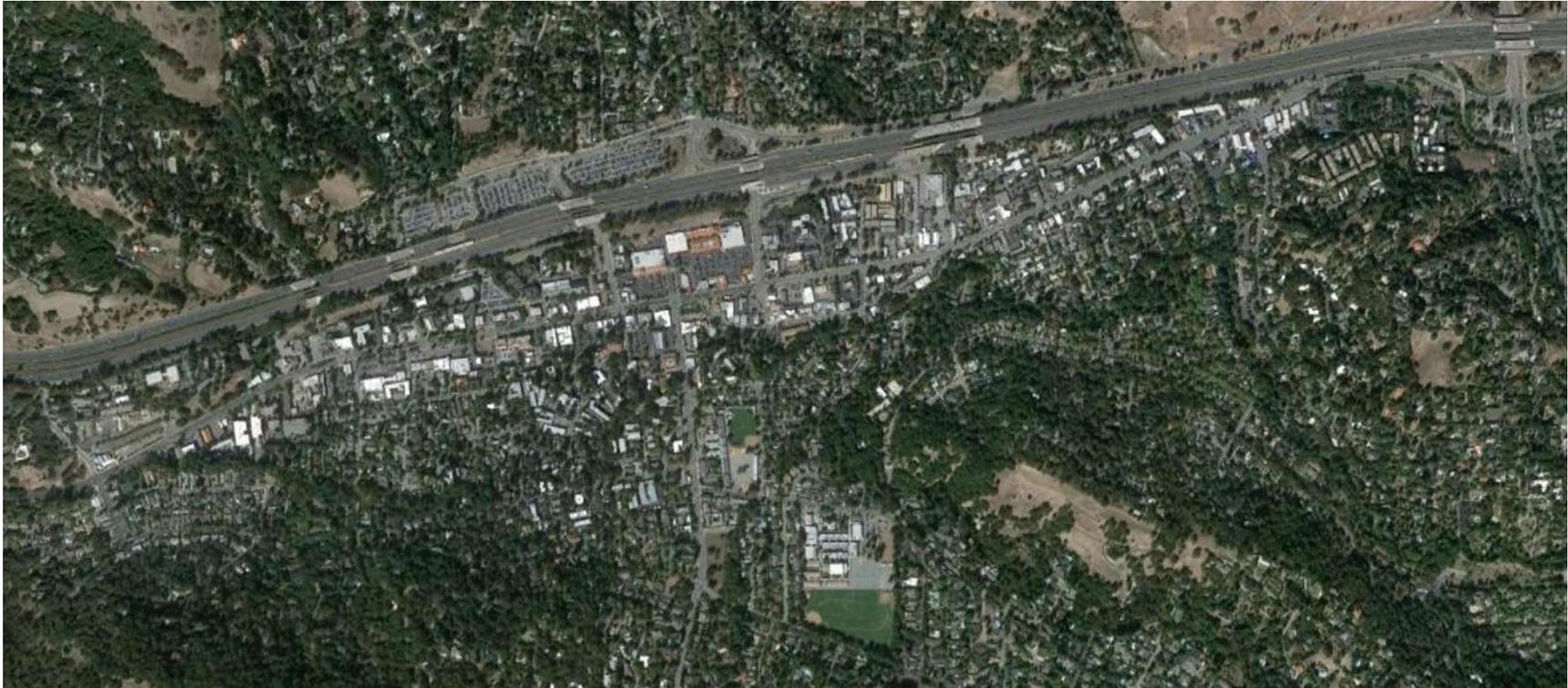
**6. Getting Around.** This chapter describes circulation and transportation – Motor Vehicles, Pedestrians, Bicycles, Transit, and Transportation Demand Management – and Parking.

**7. Public Realm.** This chapter includes those elements that are publicly managed and that contribute to the greater public good. These include:

- Streetscape
- Parks and Other Spaces
- Trees
- Creeks
- Public Art
- Public Facilities and Services

**8. Economics.** This chapter describes potential funding sources and uses, including capital projects and maintenance, and the priorities for public improvements.

**9. Implementation.** This chapter identifies the steps that will be taken to implement the DSP.



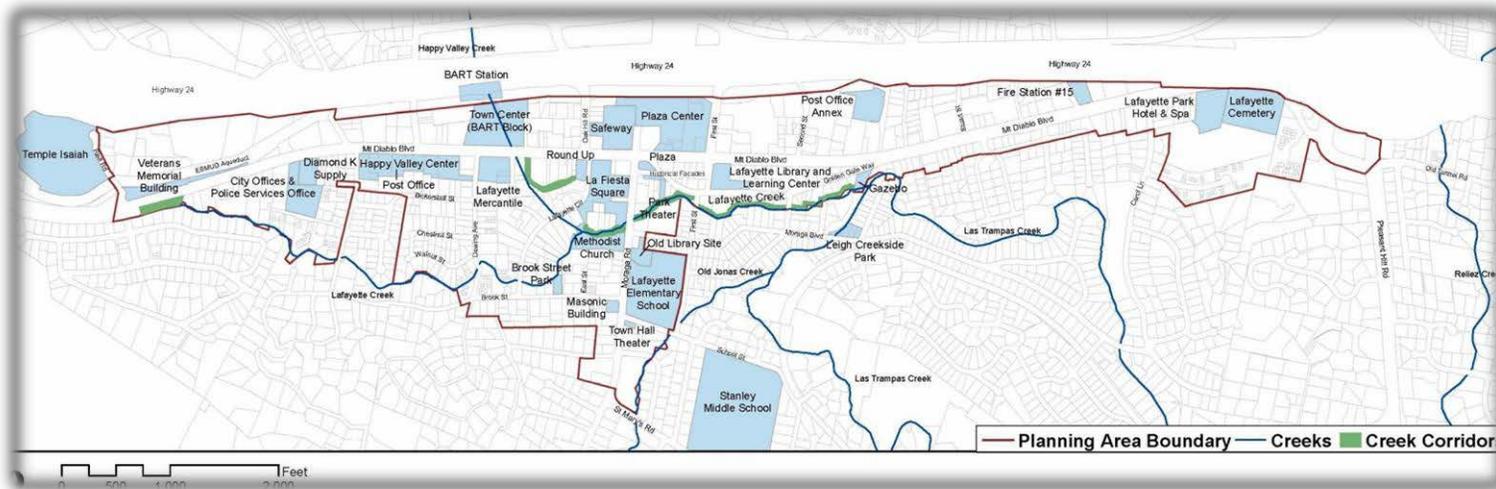
# 3. CONTEXT

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## SETTING

Lafayette is located in central Contra Costa County on the eastern side of San Francisco Bay between Oakland and Walnut Creek. The City is 14.6 square miles and located about 17 miles east of San Francisco and 10 miles east of Oakland. The DSP Area encompasses all of the downtown, approximately 297 acres. The Area’s northern boundary is SR 24 and BART; the eastern boundary is mainly Pleasant Hill Road; the southern boundary extends down Moraga Road to St. Mary’s Road; and the western boundary is Risa Road. The arterials are Mount Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road. Public facilities include: BART Station, City and Police Services Offices, Contra Costa Consolidated Fire Protection District Station 15, Lafayette Elementary School, Lafayette Library and Learning Center, Veterans Memorial Building, and Brook Street Park. Natural resources in the planning area include segments of Happy Valley Creek, Lafayette Creek, and Las Trampas Creek.

Figure 1. Context Map



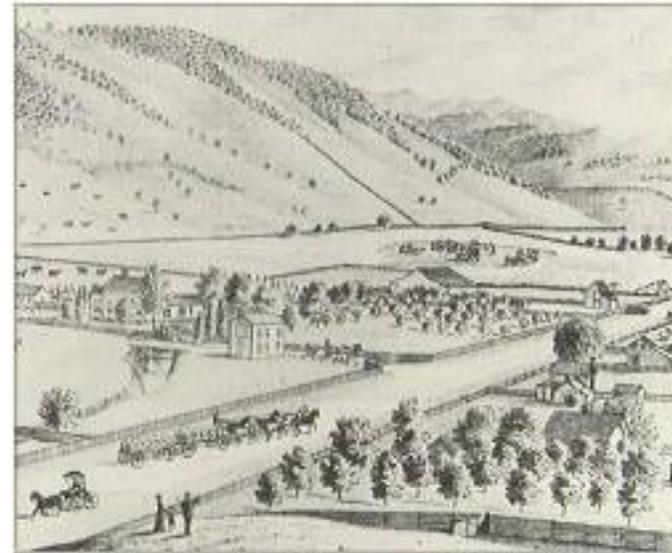
## HISTORY OF THE DOWNTOWN

Lafayette's history as a community began more than 10,000 years ago when the Saclans, a Miwok subgroup of Native Americans, settled villages along the area's many creeks. In 1847, Elam Brown, the second Yankee settler in Contra Costa County, led a 14-family wagon train through the Donner Pass. He bought the 3,329-acre Mexican land grant called Rancho Acalanes, which encompasses almost all of present day Lafayette. The first three homes were built in February 1848, making this the first community in central Costa Contra County. One of these homes belonged to Elam and Margaret Brown, and it was the first structure built in the future downtown.

The downtown was established as the heart of the community when the first Lafayette Grammar School opened in 1852 near what is now Moraga Road and Mount Diablo Boulevard. Brown built a steam-powered gristmill on Lafayette Creek near First Street. The community's commercial center grew quickly after that. Downtown in the 1860's included the gristmill, Pioneer Store, grammar school, blacksmith shop and hotel, all located around a dusty 100-foot by 150-foot triangular piece of open land. Recognizing its importance as a gathering place and focal point for the young community, the Browns deeded the parcel to the town in 1864, making it one of the first public parks in California. The plaza is the present-day Lafayette Plaza, located at Mount Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road.

Another milestone in the establishment of downtown occurred during 1860-1861, when the Pony Express stopped in town 19 times to exchange horses near the plaza. With increased traffic came opportunities, and downtown businesses thus grew to serve other travelers, such as stagecoach passengers, train passengers, and cattlemen driving their stock over the Berkeley-Oakland hills to market.

Train service ran between Oakland and Sacramento through Lafayette beginning in 1913, and there was a downtown station. The train was originally known as the Oakland Antioch and Eastern Railroad; it changed to the Sacramento Northern Railroad. The last passenger train ran through Lafayette in 1941, and the last freight train ran in 1957. The line eventually became today's Lafayette-Moraga Trail.



At the beginning of the twentieth century, downtown had two hotels, two blacksmith shops, the Methodist Church, grammar school, the Pioneer Store, post office, library, telephone office, and the Good Templar Hall. Town Hall was built in 1914 to house community gatherings. In the 1920's, the downtown was described by a newcomer to Lafayette as a ... *little horse-and-buggy village having about five to eight hundred people, a couple of grocery stores, a blacksmith shop, a hot-dog stand, a service station, a hardware store, a barber shop, a rickety little post office, a volunteer fire department with one model T truck, a little church on a hillside, and a couple of frame schoolhouses.*

The community experienced a steady increase in population after the old tunnel opened in 1937 to serve traffic between Oakland and Berkeley and Contra Costa County. In 1938 alone there were requests for 225 new water meters. It was also noted by a resident at the time that there were ... *dangers to pedestrians in the downtown from traffic.* The big growth spurt occurred in the 1950s and 1960s when in a ten-year period Lafayette nearly tripled in size from a town of 7,000 to a city with over 20,000 residents. It was during this time, before the freeway was constructed, that traffic on Mount Diablo Boulevard became a major complaint for residents. The downtown became the hub of this growth. One key decision in 1965 involved the selection of the BART Station site. Rather than place it on the outskirts near Pleasant Hill Road as originally proposed, the current downtown location was selected.

Planning for the downtown began in the 1950s by a group called the Lafayette Design Project in response to increased growth and congestion. Its goal was to tackle the proliferation of signs, lack of land use planning, and environmental and beautification issues. This seminal effort, conducted by local citizens working with the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, is considered the bedrock upon which all of Lafayette's subsequent planning has rested. To illustrate the vision and import of this plan, the Design Project said in 1961:

*A spacious tree-lined street, cool and pleasant with dappled and patterned shade, with music of playful water in fountains, neatly arranged signs serving to identify, but not confuse, slowly moving traffic of customers rather than speeding through-traffic, satisfaction of well-organized color in buildings, attention creating and visually interesting arcades, vari-colored pennants waving to awaken interest from a distance; this is the new picture for Mt. Diablo Boulevard.*

Many important citizen-led efforts for the downtown have followed in the Design Project's path, including two General Plans, a Downtown Blue Ribbon Task Force, three specific plans, two parking studies, and numerous traffic studies. The 1988 Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan was particularly well done and influential, as it has guided downtown improvements for over twenty years.



The other major influence on downtown planning was the Redevelopment Project which was created in 1994. The purpose of redevelopment was to eliminate blighting influences, enhance the long-term economic well-being of the community, provide public infrastructure and facilities, and increase the supply of affordable housing. Before redevelopment was eliminated in California, Lafayette's Redevelopment Project facilitated the following projects in the downtown:

- Lafayette Plaza
- Mount Diablo Boulevard / Moraga Road improvements
- Town Center
- Veterans Memorial Building
- Lafayette Library and Learning Center
- Eden Housing
- Other public improvements



## DEMOGRAPHICS

After the tremendous growth spurt in the 1960s and 1970s, Lafayette's population has stayed almost constant with very limited growth especially compared to other Contra Costa cities. Its population in 1990 was 23,501, and it grew to only 23,893 in 2010 (US Census). The Association of Bay Area Governments projects Lafayette's 2030 population at 26,400, an increase of 9.6 percent overall, and less than one percent per year (Projections 2009).

Lafayette's population is aging. The median age in 2000 was 42.3 years; in 2010, it was 45.2. In 2000, 14.4 percent of the population was 65 years and older. Ten years later, that percentage grew to 16.6 percent.

Lafayette continues to be affluent with a 2009 median household income of \$118,974. This compares to County median of \$87,435. (State of California)

Figure 2. Community Demographics

	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census
Total population	23,501	23,908	23,893
Median Age (years)	40.1	42.3	45.2
Under 18 years	5,311 (22.5%)	6,192 (25.9%)	5,949 (24.9%)
65 years and older	3,207 (13.5%)	3,447 (14.4%)	3,972 (16.6%)
Total housing units	9,270	9,334	9,651
Occupied units	8,976	9,152	9,223
Owner-occupied	6,822 (76%)	7,047 (77%)	6,917 (75%)
Renter-occupied	2,154 (24%)	2,105 (23%)	2,306 (25%)
Average household size	2.57	2.60	2.58
Average family size	2.92	3.02	3.01

## RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS

State law requires a specific plan to discuss its relationship with its general plan. It is also important to explain how the DSP relates to other policies and programs. This section discusses these relationships with plans, policies, regulations, and programs relevant to the downtown.

### General Plan

Adopted in 2002, the General Plan is the City's primary land use policy document. All land use decisions must be either consistent with the General Plan or the General Plan must otherwise be amended before the decision is made.

The General Plan articulates the main concepts underlying policies for the downtown. These concepts are the foundation for the DSP:

- *Establish a Downtown Core area along both sides of Mt. Diablo Boulevard bounded by Mountain View Drive, Highway 24 and First Street. The Downtown Core represents the focus for Lafayette's commercial and cultural life. The policies and programs of this chapter capitalize on the BART Station. They encourage a mixture of retail, office, commercial and residential uses to meet business, service, shopping and dining needs of the community and visitors alike. The Downtown Core should be a pedestrian-friendly and safe environment, both day and night, where residents of the downtown and the community at large can shop, eat and enjoy cultural events.*
- *Strengthen the West End Commercial Area by continuing the mix of office and office-related service activities. Restaurants, business services, office support activities, lodging and electronic-commerce related uses and improvements are emphasized. Multi-family residential use is also supported in this area.*
- *Improve the appearance and function of the East End Commercial Area by supporting the consolidation and redevelopment of under-performing properties. Identify design policies and improvement opportunities to upgrade the appearance of the corridor. Continue to encourage services and auto-related uses that are essential to Lafayette's economy.*
- *Address the unique needs and functions of distinct commercial areas by establishing "character areas" with specific policies and programs for the Golden Gate Way, Brown Avenue, the Park Hotel, Plaza Way, the BART Block and Shield Block. The Downtown Core and surrounding commercial area should thrive as an integrated whole, each part supporting and encouraging the other.*
- *Continue to encourage multifamily residential uses downtown.*
- *Establish urban design guidelines to improve the appearance of future development downtown. The guidelines should address the location and design of buildings and parking areas, protection of scenic views, signage, landscaping, pedestrian access, public open space and related amenities.*
- *Provide additional public amenities downtown, such as distinctive lighting, public parking, open space and pedestrian paths.*
- *Increase retail sales tax revenues by capturing a greater percentage of the regional market and by encouraging people to stop in Lafayette for shopping, personal services, and entertainment.*

- *Increase the property tax base through infrastructure improvements and renewed private and public investment downtown.*
- *Preserve and enhance historic sites and structures.*

The General Plan anticipates further planning study in the downtown:

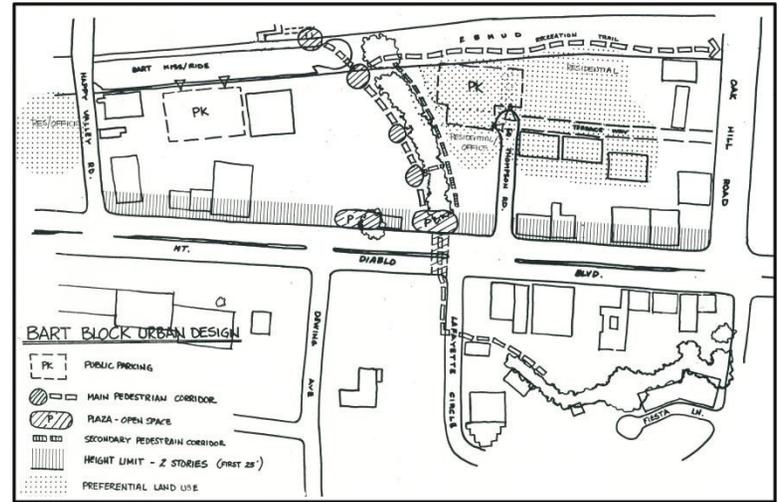
- *Program LU-10.5.1: Continue to implement and update specific plans for character areas.*
- *Program LU-10.2.1: Prepare a specific plan to identify areas where structures would be allowed up to 45 feet in height between Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Highway 24. Such a plan would establish findings such as the following. The design: demonstrates exceptional design; is compatible with adjacent properties; is sensitive to the residential areas surrounding the downtown; does not block identified viewsheds; enhances the creek area, as applicable; and constitutes a substantial public benefit to the community.*
- *Program LU-11.1.1: Develop a long-range plan that establishes a vision for the future of the East End Commercial Area, based on the community's overall vision for Lafayette, its vision for the Downtown Core, and on future trends in commercial, retail and auto-oriented land use activities.*



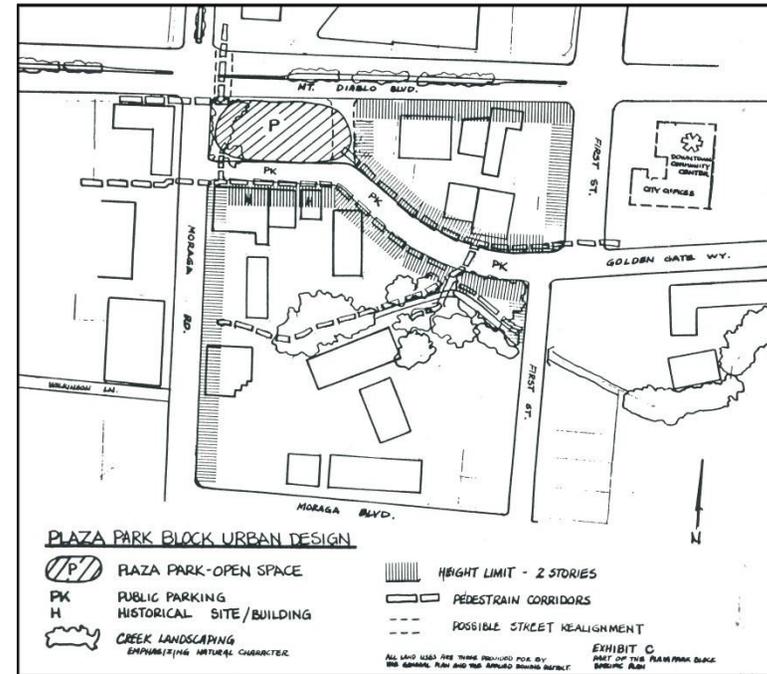
## Specific Plans

Three policy documents were adopted in the 1980s as specific plans for certain areas of the downtown. These were the areas that were expected to redevelop sooner than other parts of the downtown. The DSP incorporates, updates, and supersedes these three plans. Following are summaries of these plans.

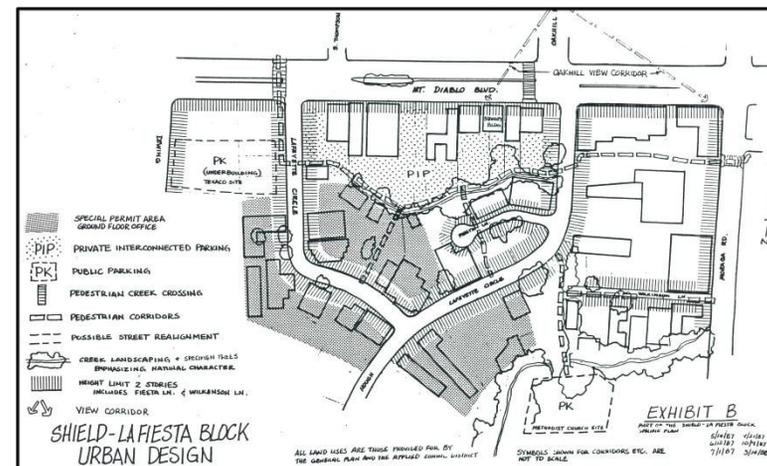
**BART Block.** The Plan was adopted in 1986, and it has guided the redevelopment of the Town Center project and adjacent areas between Oak Hill Road and Happy Valley Road north of Mount Diablo Boulevard since then. The Plan's development strategy and image for this area was to make it a downtown retail focal point, bolstered by office and residential uses. The location of the BART Station dictated that this is an area oriented to transportation. At the same time, the Plan's design standards were aimed at preserving views of hills from SR 24, BART Station and along the creek, creating variations in height, being pedestrian-oriented, providing open space, and relating to the existing built and natural environments. The Plan established a limit of three stories but allowed additional height above 35 feet in areas where additional height could be mitigated.



**Plaza Park.** The Plan was adopted in 1987, and ultimately it became the basis for the redevelopment of the Lafayette Plaza area in 2000-2001. The Plan's intent was to retain the Plaza area as the symbolic center of Lafayette with a public park supported by adjacent retail and entertainment facilities. It offered an opportunity to focus and highlight the historical significance of the buildings and the small-scale village character in the area. The Plan recognized that the creek edges provide opportunities as walkway corridors or as sites through which redevelopment could provide for landscaped public amenities. In terms of urban design, the height, design and architectural treatment of all the buildings along the edges of the streets was to be presented to complement the pedestrian scale and historical character of the area.



**Shield Block / La Fiesta Center.** The Plan was adopted in 1988, and served as the guiding document for the redevelopment of La Fiesta Square and around Lafayette Circle. The Plan's intent was to provide an exceptionally attractive clustered retail shopping area to entice the pedestrian shopper and enhance the creekside setting as a focus and pedestrian amenity. In terms of urban design, ground floors were to be preserved for pedestrian oriented retail uses. Buildings were to relate well with existing buildings and natural features, and, where larger building forms were permitted, the forms were to be broken up to lessen the building mass. The Plan encouraged coordination among owners to provide interconnected parking areas. It supported the crossing of Happy Valley Creek within the Shield Block to provide access to the downtown from the neighborhoods.



## Redevelopment Plan

The Redevelopment Plan was adopted in 1994, and it set forth the following objectives for the redevelopment of downtown Lafayette: stimulate and encourage revitalization; eliminate conditions of blight; prevent the recurrence of blighting conditions; and implement the goals and policies of the General Plan. In 2011, redevelopment in California was eliminated, and a tool to enhance and revitalize downtown was lost. The Redevelopment Plan is no longer in effect.

## Zoning Ordinance

The DSP identifies changes to be made to the Zoning Ordinance to control land uses and establish development standards. A summary of the amendments are in Implementation. The Zoning Ordinance also regulates flood damage prevention, including creek setbacks. These regulations will not be changed; they will continue to regulate development in flood hazard areas.

## Public Art Ordinance

The Public Art Ordinance was adopted with the purpose to enhance the cultural experience of the community by adding public art that is of the highest quality, visually stimulating, and of enduring value. Provisions of the Ordinance will apply to projects developed pursuant to the DSP.

## Environmental Strategy

The City adopted its Environmental Strategy in 2006 and again in 2011. The DSP is consistent with the Strategy, including its mission statement: *The City of Lafayette is committed to developing and implementing environmental policies and programs that will enable the City and its residents to meet their present needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.*

The Strategy includes guiding principles and goals, including the principle that environmental sustainability should be considered and reflected in City policy and decisions.



## **Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan**

This Master Plan was prepared by Russell Beatty and adopted in 1988. Its intent was ... *to develop a strong, positive visual image for Lafayette's downtown and much needed amenities for pedestrians to make Lafayette a more comfortable, safer and enjoyable place.*

The scope of the Master Plan encompasses the entire business district south of SR 24 and limited to major downtown streets. The Plan addresses physical improvements and landscaping, including: street trees; medians; sidewalk pavement crosswalks; lighting; furnishings; and bus stops.

## **Bikeways Master Plan**

The Bikeways Master Plan was adopted in 1973 and updated in 2006 to develop bike lanes, routes, paths, parking, and other facilities to allow for safe, efficient and convenient bicycle travel within Lafayette and between Lafayette and regional destinations. The DSP is consistent with the adopted Bikeways Master Plan.

## **Master Walkways Plan**

The Master Walkways Plan was adopted in 1999 and updated in 2008. Its purpose is:

*... to define and set forth the methods, criteria and standards... to provide Lafayette with a system of walkways that will afford safe and efficient pedestrian movement along roads and streets having significant foot and vehicular traffic. The final result is intended to be an arrangement of walkways not only throughout the downtown area but also one that connects residential areas with public transportation, schools, community amenities, parks, City and regional trail systems, and the downtown.*

The DSP is consistent with the adopted Master Walkways Plan.

## **Trails Master Plan**

The Trails Master Plan was adopted in 2006. It addresses the General Plan goal to ... *provide an attractive system of parks, trails and recreation facilities throughout the city to meet the needs and interests of all ages and capabilities.* The Master Plan identifies two trails downtown – Shield Block Creek Trails and Lamorinda Trail Loop. The DSP is consistent with the adopted Trails Master Plan.

## **Parks and Recreational Facilities Master Plan**

The Parks and Recreational Facilities Master Plan was adopted in 2009. The purpose of this Plan is to create a road map for providing the parkland and park facilities needed to serve the citizens of Lafayette according to the goals and policies established in the General Plan and other adopted City plans. The DSP identifies opportunities for three downtown parks that are consistent with the Plan. The DSP is consistent with the Parks and Recreational Facilities Master Plan.

## **Environmental Impact Report**

The EIR evaluates effects resulting from the DSP's implementation through a series of technical analyses as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Planning Commission recommended certification of the Final EIR by Resolution 2012-12. The Final EIR was certified by the City Council on September 10, 2012 by Resolution No. 2012-30. Appendix D is the adopted Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the DSP; it is incorporated into the DSP by reference.

## 4. DOWNTOWN CHARACTER

### **Preserve the character of the downtown.**

This is the single most common comment about downtown planning. No matter what opinions are about traffic, parking, building height, or future growth, people love the feel of their small town downtown surrounded by hillsides and oaks – an oasis hidden away in the middle of the very urban Bay Area.

Using words to define Lafayette’s character is difficult, but people seem to know when they see it. Consider these comments:

- *The buildings that exemplify the downtown character to me include La Fiesta Square, the Clock Tower, Pizza Antica (former Freddie’s), and Postino.*
- *The Mt. Diablo Blvd. block from Lafayette Circle (west) to Lafayette Circle (east) has a casual, pedestrian-friendly feel. Somehow the street does not appear as wide as it really is in this block.*
- *Mercantile and BART block restaurants and businesses, and of course Lafayette Plaza. Veterans Building, Library.*
- *I think of kids with ice cream outside the candy store having fun. The corner park with people, walking a dog, having coffee at the Squirrel. Outdoor cafes, with Lafayette residents dining alfresco....*
- *The Round-Up with its gravel parking lot across the street from ritzy La Fiesta Square.*
- *Interesting nooks and places – the funky-brick building across from Diablo Foods, the large oak east of the Theater on Golden Gateway, the courtyards at The Forge and Park Hotel, the garden in front of Postino’s.*

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The purpose of this chapter is to describe the key elements that contribute to this character, and the plan to retain it while guiding future growth and change. These elements are: Land Use; Districts; Views; Design Review: Process, Guiding Principles, Findings, and Downtown Design Guidelines; and Cultural and Historic Resources.



## LAND USE

### The Existing Context

The downtown is the commercial center of Lafayette, serving and complementing the residential neighborhoods within it and around it. Historically, downtown grew along Mount Diablo Boulevard, which has transitioned from a rural highway to our “Main Street.” Commercial uses (retail and office) traditionally have been concentrated near the intersection of Mount Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road, but are also found all along the 2.2 miles length of Mount Diablo Boulevard and on side streets, such as Golden Gate Way, Lafayette Circle, and Brown Avenue. Residential uses are mostly concentrated south of Mount Diablo Boulevard, but are also found throughout the planning area. The remainder of the 297-acre planning area is made up of a variety of civic and miscellaneous uses. Lafayette’s roads provide vehicular access to and from the downtown, but they have limited capacity and, given Lafayette’s topography, there is little room to widen them.

**Figure 3. Existing Downtown Land Use Types**

<i>Land Use Types</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>%</i>
Commercial (retail and office)	113	38
Residential	74	25
Miscellaneous (utilities and undocumented uses)	20	7
Vacant	18	6
Civic (public and institutional)	18	6
Industrial	0	0
Recreation	1	< 1
Right of Way	53	18
	297	100

### Commercial

The General Plan defines “commercial” as facilities for buying and selling of commodities and services, including retail and office uses.

Typical retail uses are stores, eating establishments, and personal services. These are concentrated between Mountain View Drive / Dolores Drive and First Street. Major retail nodes include Happy Valley Center, Town Center, Lafayette Mercantile, Shield Block, La Fiesta Square, Safeway, and Plaza Center. Some scattered retail uses are located along the west and east ends of the boulevard, south on Moraga Road, and along Brown Avenue. Automobile-oriented retail and service uses are found primarily in the East End. Examples include tires sales, drive-through fast food, and hardware sales.

The central downtown has evolved into a retail and restaurant food cluster. A “Restaurant Row” has emerged that draws diners from throughout the East Bay. Restaurants now comprise the largest business segment, as measured by sales tax receipts, in Lafayette. There is also a strong selection of food and grocery stores.

Office uses are found throughout the area with the highest concentration located in the West End in large office buildings along and setback from Mount Diablo Boulevard. Offices can also be found on upper floors above retail uses throughout the area. Medical offices are scattered along Moraga Road, Mount Diablo Boulevard, and Dewing Avenue.

**Residential**

Residential uses can be found throughout, but much of Lafayette’s multi-family housing stock is concentrated both east and west of the central downtown and south of Mount Diablo Boulevard. There are some small single-family units as well in these older neighborhoods. Downtown residential units are generally Lafayette’s most affordable housing. The General Plan’s Housing Element affects housing.

The State legislature has for the past 20 years made housing an important function subject to its review and approval. The Housing Element is the principal vehicle by which the State determines whether a city or county has provided adequate sites to meet its regional housing need allocation targets. The Housing Element for 2007-2014 was certified by the State in July 2011.

The Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is a process which addresses the need for and planning of housing across a range of affordability in all communities in California. Each city and county is given a target share of the anticipated current and future regional housing demand. Lafayette’s 2007-2014 RHNA is 361 units. The Housing Element shows that there are 28.99 acres of vacant and underdeveloped land in downtown Lafayette that potentially could support up to 760 units.

The Housing Element states that the City’s goal is to achieve an adequate supply of safe, decent housing for all residents of Lafayette. This goal will be achieved by:

- Maintaining and preserving the existing housing stock
- Retaining the character of Lafayette’s residential neighborhoods
- Meeting the City’s regional housing needs allocations
- Providing additional affordable housing, particularly for senior citizens and young families

**Figure 4. ABAG RHNA for Lafayette ■ 2007-2014**

Total Projected Need	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate	Average Yearly Need
361	113	77	80	91	52
	31%	21%	22%	25%	



## **Civic**

The term “civic” refers to public, institutional, and non-profit uses, such as schools, government facilities, parks, utilities, and places of religious assembly. These uses provide invaluable educational, cultural, governmental and other amenities and add richness to the fabric of the community.

Existing civic uses in the downtown include:

- Veterans Memorial Building
- City Offices
- Police Services Office
- County Building Inspection
- Post Office
- Parking lot at Mount Diablo Boulevard and Oak Hill Road
- Lafayette Plaza
- Lafayette Library and Learning Center
- Gazebo and parking lot
- Post Office Annex
- Fire District Station 15
- County Supervisor’s District Office
- Alamo-Lafayette Cemetery
- Town Hall Theater
- Lafayette Elementary School
- Masonic Lodge
- Brook Street Park
- Firehouse Preschool
- Parking lot on Moraga Road north of Brook Street
- Lafayette United Methodist Church
- Lafayette Nursery School
- BART Station
- Caltrans Right-of-Way
- EBMUD Aqueduct Right-of-Way
- EBMUD Pumping Plant

## **Mixed-Use**

Mixed-use properties are found primarily in the Core and south of Mount Diablo Boulevard. These include properties with retail or office on the ground floor and office or apartments on the upper floor. Examples are the Clocktower Building and Lafayette Mercantile. Mixed-use development is often thought of simply as a vertical layering or stacking of uses. However, it can also be a horizontal mix of uses. The Town Center project is an example of horizontal mixed-use development where the residential and commercial uses are in separate buildings on the project site.

While the concept of mixed-use seems modern and urban, it is a land use configuration that has historic roots. For example, the concept of living over one’s store or place of business has been done in downtowns – large and small – for centuries. While it lost favor as auto-oriented and spread-out suburban living prevailed, mixed-use remains as a type of compact land use that works in downtowns, even suburban downtowns. This is due to a number of factors, particularly in the Bay Area, that include: an increasing interest in sustainable lifestyles; high land prices; lack of affordable housing; wanting to live closer to shops, restaurants, services and transit; less dependence on cars; and preserving open spaces.



## What the Plan Proposes

The General Plan expresses distinct downtown land use policies to protect its small-town character while addressing and seeking to control the changes that will inevitably occur in the future. The DSP aims to do the same thing over the next 20 years; it implements the General Plan by:

- Confirming and strengthening the General Plan’s concept of a Downtown Core
- Integrating the BART station into the downtown
- Promoting civic uses in the downtown
- Encouraging a mixture of retail, office, and residential uses to meet the business, service, shopping, dining, and cultural needs of the community and visitors
- Strengthening the identity of the West and East Ends
- Building on the unique character areas – Plaza Way /Golden Gate Way and Shield Block
- Encouraging multifamily housing

<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Downtown Character – Land Use.</b> Promote land uses that retain the downtown’s small town character while providing the services and amenities needed and desired by the community.
Policy 1.1	Encourage commercial uses that benefit the economic health of the community.
Program 1.1.1	Encourage a diverse mix of well-designed retail uses, including unique and locally-owned businesses.
Program 1.1.2	Encourage a variety of food-related uses.
Program 1.1.3	Continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce and property owners, businesses, and developers in promoting the downtown.
Policy 1.2	Promote and sustain the downtown as a multifamily residential neighborhood to support a diversity of residents.
Program 1.2.1	Implement the housing policies of the General Plan.
Program 1.2.2	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow the development of multifamily housing by right. Restrict housing to upper floors along Mount Diablo Boulevard in the Downtown Retail District.
Program 1.2.3	Support residential projects that are transit-oriented, particularly within easy walking distance of BART and other transit.

Program 1.2.4	Support family and senior housing.
Program 1.2.5	Preserve existing housing by regulating the conversion of residential uses to non-residential uses through the Zoning Ordinance.

Policy 1.3	Promote civic and cultural uses in the downtown.
Program 1.3.1	Allow and encourage civic uses to make them more accessible to all segments of the community.
Program 1.3.2	Retain existing civic uses.
Program 1.3.3	Promote the expression of the arts as a cultural amenity for the downtown and the community.

## DISTRICTS

The DSP uses districts to describe and plan the downtown. Lafayette has a linear downtown – stretching over two miles along Mount Diablo Boulevard – and areas have their own distinctive characters. The DSP envisions districts whose different physical characteristics and land uses complement each other while providing variety and texture to the entire downtown. Each district is described by its existing context and by what is planned by the DSP.

<b>Goal 2</b>	<u>Downtown Character – Districts</u> . Create districts whose characteristics and land uses complement each other while providing variety and texture to the downtown.
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Policy 2.1	There are four downtown commercial districts – West End, Downtown Retail, Plaza, and East End, and three Downtown Residential Neighborhoods – Mountain View Drive / West Road, Brook Street / Hough Avenue, and Carol Lane.
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Figure 5. Downtown Districts and Residential Neighborhoods



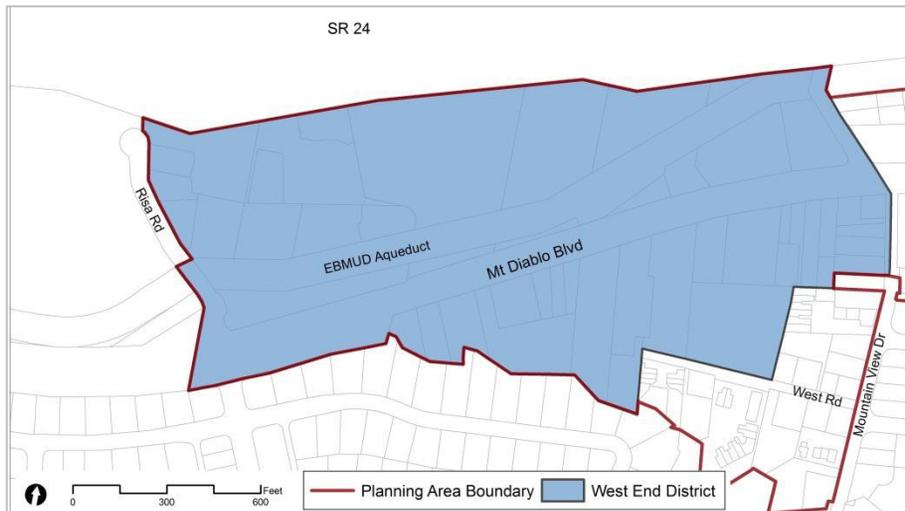
## West End District

This district:

- Is the western gateway to the downtown
- Connects the downtown with Lafayette Reservoir and the community's far western residential areas
- Contains a variety of businesses – offices, commercial uses, and housing – that are of a use or scale that may not be appropriate in the Downtown Core yet are essential to Lafayette's economy and serve both community and regional needs



Figure 6. West End District



## **The Existing Context – West End**

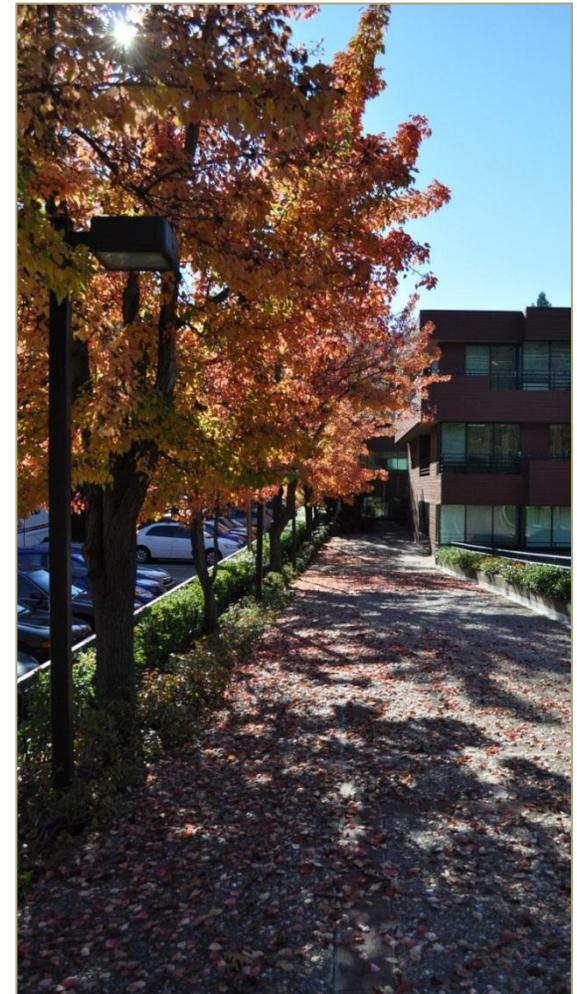
**Land Use.** The primary land uses in the West End are office and multifamily residential. Office uses generally front Mount Diablo Boulevard with residential uses behind. There are some medical uses and a few retail uses. Civic uses include the Veterans Memorial Building, City of Lafayette Office, City of Lafayette Police Services Office, and Contra Costa County Lamorinda Building Inspection Office. The EBMUD Aqueduct runs through the north side of the district.

**Character.** Development occurred mostly in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Development on the south side of the boulevard reflects those times, with landscaped parking in front and two- and three-story buildings set back and sloping down towards the creek. There is a large apartment building located along the creek and behind the buildings fronting the street. Some small older buildings front the street; some have been well-maintained while others have not.

On the north side of the boulevard, most of the development, both office and multifamily residential, is at the top of the hill adjacent to SR 24. Heavy stands of trees screen these developments from Mount Diablo Boulevard and the freeway. There is a large vacant parcel that was once a motel; this property is currently approved for a condominium project. The Veterans Memorial Building, considered a landmark building, establishes the downtown’s western gateway.

**Circulation and Streetscape.** There is a landscaped median in front of the Veterans Building with the plantings, lighting, and banners similar to those used in the central downtown area. These improvements enhance the gateway. On the south side of the boulevard, sidewalks, curbs and gutters run along the newer office developments and at the west end. In the middle, there are sections of no improvements, or in need of improvements with broken paving. On the north side, there are improvements along the Veterans Building site and at the eastern end. There is a long strip with no walkway in the middle of the north side. The designated pedestrian crossings in this district are at the signalized intersection at Mount Diablo Boulevard / Risa Road / Village Center and Mount Diablo Boulevard /Mountain View Drive / Dolores Drive. There are existing, continuous bike lanes on both sides of Mount Diablo Boulevard. Utility lines are not undergrounded.

Pedestrians walk along Mount Diablo Boulevard in this district for a variety of reasons. Residents walk to and from the West End to reach BART, stores, and schools. Office workers walk to and from their places of work to BART and for lunch and lunchtime errands. There are also pedestrians, and quite a few runners, going to and from the reservoir.



## What the DSP Proposes – West End

This district will be:

- Primarily an office/commercial district with related support services where there is less emphasis on retail uses
- An area within easy walking distance to BART and downtown amenities that includes and supports multifamily uses
- An area in which an informal pattern of development is encouraged. Buildings may locate at the street edge behind the required landscaped setback or setback from the street, unlike the Downtown Core where buildings will be encouraged to be located at the street edge to improve the retail/pedestrian ambiance
- Less of a pedestrian area, more of a place where people will use their cars

Land Use. The West End will remain as the place for larger office developments. This land use is important to the local economy and serves both a community and regional need. Lafayette's proximity to the Oakland / Berkeley and Interstate 680 corridor employment centers, coupled with access to BART and SR 24, and proximity to downtown retail, positions the community as an attractive employment location. A range of office uses, particularly small office spaces, will provide opportunities for Lafayette's many professionals to establish a business location and to work in their own community. The other predominant use will continue to be multifamily residential. The West End provides opportunities to live within walking distance of workplaces and transit.

Some small retail nodes serving workers and residents should be supported. The Veterans Memorial Building will remain as the main civic use and focal point. Since the City and County offices are in rental spaces, it is possible that, at some point within the timeframe of the DSP, these civic uses could be relocated elsewhere in the downtown. If that were to occur, these uses should be relocated to the Plaza District.

Character. The design intent is to maintain the more open and transitional character with generous landscaped front and side setbacks. The Veterans Memorial Building has set a high standard for design in the district. Its use of stone, wood, and natural landscaping will be a model for future development.

Circulation and Streetscape. Street improvements will be intermittent landscaped medians with turn pockets. The landscaping will be heavier with more native species than in the Downtown Core to reflect the transition between the more rural area to the west of the downtown and the Core. Walkways, including those areas where there are gaps, will be improved to accommodate the variety of pedestrians that walk along Mount Diablo Boulevard every day.



Policy 2.2	<u>West End - Land Use.</u> This district will be primarily an office/commercial area with related support services with less emphasis on retail uses.
Program 2.2.1	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the types of uses below. The amendment of the Zoning Ordinance will include a list of all the uses allowed by right and with a land use permit:  <u>Uses allowed by right</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offices (e.g., administrative, consultative, medical, realty)</li> <li>▪ Personal services (e.g., dry cleaners, salons)</li> <li>▪ Retail</li> <li>▪ Housing</li> <li>▪ Civic and cultural</li> <li>▪ Commercial sales and services</li> <li>▪ Eating establishments (e.g., restaurants, cafes)</li> </ul> <u>Only with a land use permit</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Auto fueling and servicing</li> <li>▪ Automotive sales, repairs, and cleaning (the major repair or painting of motor vehicles, including body work and installation of major accessories, as well as the washing and polishing of motor vehicles)</li> </ul>
Policy 2.3	<u>West End - Density.</u> The maximum residential density is 35 units per acre.
Policy 2.4	<u>West End – Building Height.</u> The maximum number of stories is three. The maximum height is 35 feet with the ability to increase the height limit to 45 feet only if the City Council is able to make the strict findings to grant an exception to the 35-foot height limit.
Policy 2.5	<u>West End - Pedestrian Experience.</u> While this district is more auto-oriented, safe and continuous pedestrian access is a priority.
Program 2.5.1	Eliminate walkway gaps, and improve walkways so they are accessible to all people.
Policy 2.6	<u>West End - Parking.</u> The location of parking will be flexible.
Program 2.6.1	Each development proposal will be assessed to determine where parking will be appropriate – in the rear, front or side.

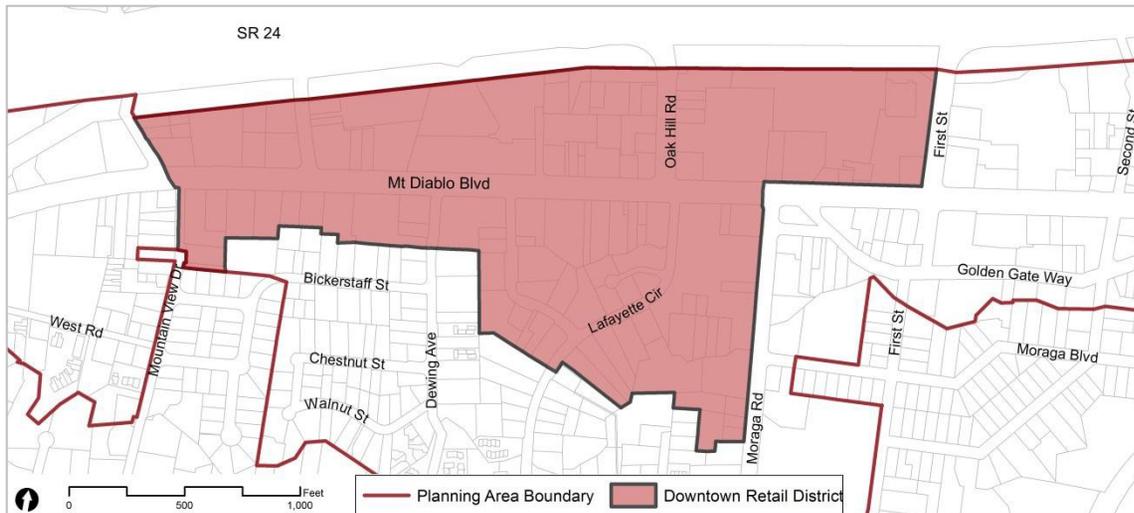
## Downtown Retail District

This district is:

- The “heart” of the downtown containing a rich mix of uses that attract pedestrians
- Reminiscent of a traditional downtown main street with more concentrated, easily accessible retail shopping and personal service central area
- An area in which the physical closeness of different uses and mixing of uses within buildings are encouraged



Figure 7. Downtown Retail District



### **The Existing Context – Downtown Retail**

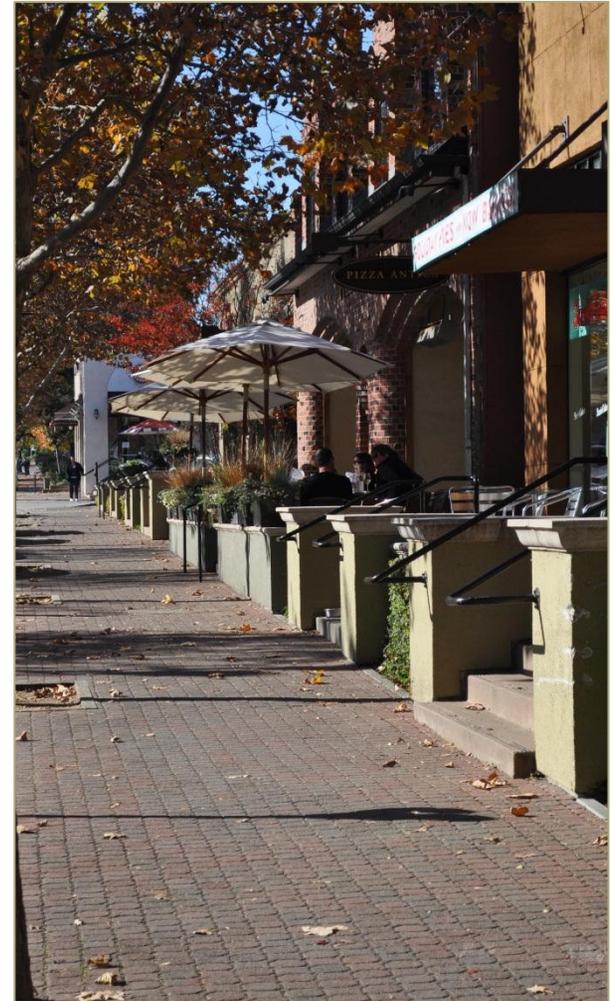
Land Use. The predominant use in this district is retail. The major shopping complexes are all located here, including Happy Valley Center (Trader Joes – Diablo Foods), Town Center, La Fiesta Square, Safeway, and Plaza Center (McCaulous – Whole Foods). Ground floor retail uses are located along Mount Diablo Boulevard. Some office uses, such as banks, are on the ground floor, but most offices are above the first floor. Multifamily uses are predominantly behind the commercial uses. On the north side of the boulevard, the most notable examples are the Town Center Apartments and the apartments on Terrace Way. South of the boulevard are multifamily units along Lafayette Circle. The west side of Moraga Road has retail and office uses.

Civic uses include the Post Office in the Happy Valley Center and the south side of the BART Station. There is a small public parking lot owned by the City of Lafayette at the southwest corner of Mount Diablo Boulevard and Oak Hill Road. The City owns a parking lot on the west side of Moraga Road adjacent to the Methodist Church, which is within this district along with its parking lot off Lafayette Circle. The Chamber of Commerce is located on Lafayette Circle. While not a land use per se, the Community Banner board at the northwest corner of Mount Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road serves an important civic function.

The Shield Block, a downtown character area, has a variety of uses: retail, office and residential. While there are no civic uses, the east side of the block along Lafayette Circle sometimes functions as a community space for festivals and other events.

Character. The character is an eclectic mix of architectural styles reflecting its history and ranging from the 1920s and 1930s to contemporary. Buildings and properties that have architectural, historical, or other character include: Postino, Clocktower, Town Center, Lafayette Mercantile, Methodist Church, Roundup, Hen House, and La Fiesta Square.

The buildings along Mount Diablo Boulevard generally have no setbacks from the sidewalk as is common, traditional, and desirable in downtown retail areas. There are some exceptions, such as Town Center retail and Postino, where the parts of the buildings are set back because of their historic locations. Off-street parking is provided in lots at the front of buildings in the older shopping centers. The newer centers and many of the smaller retail buildings have off-street parking at the rear of the buildings. The east side of La Fiesta Square faces Moraga Road. Trees provide an important element. There are several large oaks, redwoods and other trees at Town Center and in the Lafayette Circle area.



The Shield Block is often considered the best example of Lafayette's downtown character. It has buildings that capture early days of the downtown (Postino, Hen House, Roundup), more modern development that captures the small town feel (Clocktower, Chamber of Commerce building), a creek, large oak and redwood trees, and an ambience that cannot be programmed. This block is developed with low scale, older buildings, some of which are considered representative of downtown character. These have many of the features that people find attractive, such as passageways, retail spaces along the sides of buildings, and off-street parking at the back or on the sides. Architectural styles are traditional, and many buildings are wood- or brick-clad. Some of the largest oak trees in the downtown, including the Hospice Tree of Lights by the Hen House, are found in this block.

Circulation and Streetscape. The busiest streets in the downtown are the "Y" formed by Moraga Road, Mount Diablo Boulevard, First Street, and Oak Hill Road. The traffic conditions on the "Y" and Moraga Road are impacted by traffic coming and going to Moraga and by school-related traffic, particularly Lafayette Elementary School and Stanley Middle School. Most of the circulation and streetscape improvements in this district are recent. Major improvements to the Mount Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road intersection were made in 2000-2001, and there is an ongoing program to upgrade the sidewalks consistent with the Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan. Streets that have not been improved recently are Oak Hill Road and First Street north of Mount Diablo Boulevard. Both of these have freeway ramps

There are traffic signals at every intersection along Mount Diablo Boulevard, except at Golden Gate Way, facilitating pedestrian crossings. There is an off-street, multi-purpose pathway from the BART Station through the Town Center development to Mount Diablo Boulevard, which serves as a primary access route between the Station and the downtown. Lafayette Circle and Hough Avenue are designated bicycle boulevards. On-street parking is parallel except at the Lafayette Mercantile where there is diagonal parking. Most of the utilities are undergrounded.

For the Shield Block, circulation improvements along Mount Diablo Boulevard are complete. Both sides of Lafayette Circle along the Shield Block have gaps in the walkways. There is on-street parking. Trees along Lafayette Circle are dominant. There is a long-standing desire to provide a pedestrian corridor along the creek in the Shield Block.



### **What the DSP Proposes – Downtown Retail**

This district will:

- Be Lafayette’s primary retail center
- Have a critical and compact mass and a more intimate feel
- Emphasize pedestrian convenience and de-emphasize auto-oriented uses that detract from an overall atmosphere of convenience, comfort and safety for the pedestrian retail shopper
- Be walkable
- Take advantage of the BART station
- Have new buildings close to the sidewalk
- Have ground floor uses attracting the pedestrian shopper through attractive displays and signage
- Have special paving treatments on sidewalks and crosswalks that distinguish this district from the rest of the downtown
- Encourage development to incorporate, improve, and use the creekside setting

**Land Use.** As Lafayette’s “shopping center,” this district will continue to offer a variety of goods and provide a diversity of restaurants and other food-related stores and personal services. It is important to provide uses that allow shopping and dining to be done locally. Not only is this good for the economic health of the community, it promotes pedestrian activity and results in fewer motorized vehicle trips. These smaller retail uses are generally pedestrian-oriented; shoppers and diners can park a short distance away or residents can easily walk without carrying bags of groceries or other “car trunk” goods.

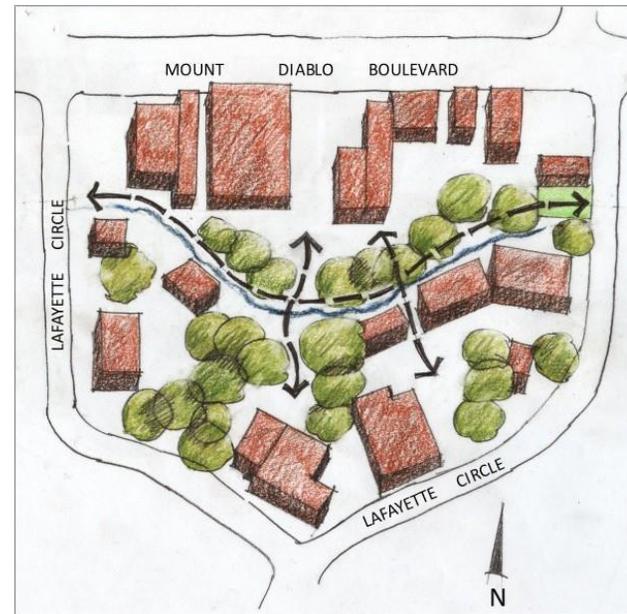
Because this district is adjacent to the BART Station, transit-oriented development will be encouraged, such as office and multifamily residential uses in mixed use developments. Residential units will be attractive to those who want to live in the downtown for its amenities and convenience – seniors, empty nesters, young adults, and those with limited mobility or other disabilities.

The Shield Block will continue its mix of uses in a wooded setting with retail along Mount Diablo Boulevard. Retail will be encouraged to continue along the frontage of Lafayette Circle. Residential and office uses will be

encouraged in the middle of the block along the creek. Restaurant uses will also be appropriate along the creek corridor. As there is a shortage of parking in this area, opportunities for shared parking and improved access will be explored.

An important civic use proposed for this block is a town green, an area that is adjacent to the creek and contains some of the most significant downtown oak trees. This will be a passive park and intended for shoppers and other downtown patrons to gather, have a place to relax, and participate in community events. The park may contain both hardscape and landscaped areas, and it should include seating and areas for public art. The design of the town green should also take advantage of its adjacency to the creek. The City does not intend to use eminent domain to acquire properties for park use.

**Figure 8. Shield Block**



Character. The design intent is to maintain the ambience of a small town downtown of people strolling, shopping, dining, gathering, working, and living in an interesting and vital downtown. This will be accomplished by using elements characteristic of this as well as other favorite downtowns, including:

- Variations in building design and siting
- Attractive retail storefronts at the sidewalk that entice shoppers
- Restaurants with outdoor dining spaces
- Community spaces, plazas
- Quality signs
- Street furniture
- Passageways between buildings
- Public art
- Water features
- Abundance of landscaping
- Architectural design details

It is also the intent to encourage the improvement of existing, but aging development. An example is the Happy Valley Center. Because there are multiple owners, it has been difficult to promote improvements – paint, signage, landscaping, parking layout – to enhance the center. Improvement of this center has been one of most frequent public comments.

Shield Block’s character will continue, preserving the village scale and ambience, preserving the wooded landscape, and providing spaces for community gatherings and events. The architectural style will include passageways, covered walkways, and outdoor dining spaces to enhance the natural setting. The use of natural materials for building architecture will be important in maintaining the character of the block. The town green will be designed as an integral and complementary design element. It is the intent to create an exceptionally attractive area to entice people to shop, dine, and linger.

Circulation and Streetscape. Circulation improvements will be consistent with those that have been completed already. The existing street layout and topography make capacity improvements difficult. The aim is to improve mobility for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Ideas to be pursued include a downtown shuttle that will travel on Mount Diablo Road and Moraga Road, walkways that connect residential areas with the retail areas and the BART Station, and more pedestrian and bicycle amenities. Implementation of a creekside walkway in the Shield Block is still important to enhancing the character of the district. It is also the aim to improve the aesthetics of these streets to enhance the overall character of the district and the entire downtown.



Policy 2.7	<u>Downtown Retail - Land Use.</u> This district is the retail center of the downtown with a pedestrian ambiance and higher intensity of uses.
Program 2.7.1	<p>Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include the uses below. The amendment of the Zoning Ordinance will include a list of all the uses allowed by right and with a land use permit:</p> <p><u>Uses allowed by right - ground floor fronting on Mount Diablo Boulevard</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Retail</li> <li>▪ Personal services (e.g., dry cleaners, salons)</li> <li>▪ Civic and cultural</li> <li>▪ Banks (e.g., using large windows, relating to the street)</li> <li>▪ Eating establishments (e.g., restaurants, cafes)</li> </ul> <p><u>Uses allowed by right - elsewhere on all floors (these uses will be allowed on Lafayette Circle in the Shield Block on condition that their storefronts are designed to relate to the pedestrian on the street)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Retail</li> <li>▪ Personal services (e.g., dry cleaners)</li> <li>▪ Offices (e.g., administrative, consultative, medical, realty)</li> <li>▪ Housing</li> <li>▪ Food sales (e.g., grocery stores)</li> <li>▪ Civic and cultural</li> <li>▪ Banks</li> </ul> <p><u>Uses not allowed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Large office buildings without retail on ground floor</li> <li>▪ Auto service, sales, and repair</li> <li>▪ Uses that detract from an overall atmosphere of convenience, comfort, and safety for the pedestrian retail shopper (e.g., uses with trucks entering and exiting the site)</li> </ul>
Program 2.7.2	Require projects on Moraga Road to evaluate their impacts on school and sub-regional traffic.
Policy 2.8	<u>Downtown Retail - Density.</u> The maximum residential density is 35 units per acre.
Policy 2.9	<u>Downtown Retail – Building Height.</u> The maximum number of stories is three. The maximum height is 35 feet with the ability to increase the height limit to 45 feet only if the City Council is able to make the strict findings to grant an exception to the 35-foot height limit.

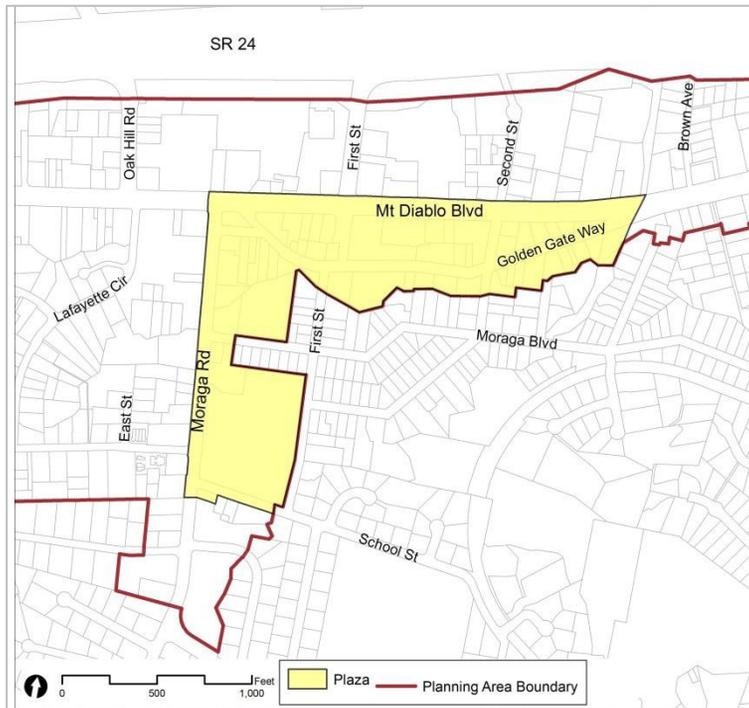
Policy 2.10	<u>Downtown Retail - Pedestrian Experience.</u> The pedestrian experience in this district is a high priority, and sidewalks are preferred over walkways.
Program 2.10.1	Provide a safe, attractive, and active pedestrian space with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider sidewalks</li> <li>• Benches on the sidewalk</li> <li>• Landscaping consistent with the Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan</li> <li>• Uses spilling out into the sidewalks blurring the edge between the public and private realms</li> <li>• Pedestrian crossings at conveniently spaced locations</li> <li>• Attractive signage</li> <li>• Public art</li> </ul>
Policy 2.11	<u>Downtown Retail - Parking.</u> The location of parking will be away from the street to maximize the pedestrian experience.
Program 2.11.1	Parking will be generally located at the rear of the building or above- or below-grade. Parking on the side of a building may be acceptable if its location does not disrupt the pedestrian experience of walking along an active retail frontage. The location of parking will be considered on a case-by-case basis to afford flexibility to address the needs of shoppers.
Policy 2.12	<u>Downtown Retail - Shield Block.</u> Capture the intent and essence of the Shield Block / Plaza Way Specific Plans.
Program 2.12.1	The design guidelines will include, but not be limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting pathways and footbridge crossings will be provided at intervals along the creek to provide access with the neighborhoods to the south.</li> <li>• Sidewalk design will provide recognizable separation of pedestrians and vehicles but not dissolve an informal, random flow of the street edges which favor pedestrian orientation.</li> <li>• Overhead utility lines will be undergrounded.</li> <li>• Buildings will relate well to existing building and natural features of the area.</li> <li>• Building clusters with courtyards, connecting corridors, seating, outdoor dining canopies and other pedestrian oriented architectural features will be encouraged.</li> <li>• Larger buildings will be broken up to reduce the impact of mass.</li> <li>• The use of natural materials, such as wood, brick, and shingles is preferred. Exterior colors will be used to create a casual, but distinctive quality.</li> <li>• Buildings will have entrances and display windows facing the interior of the block as well as the street to foster interior pedestrian flow.</li> <li>• For buildings along Mount Diablo Boulevard, there will be no setbacks or very limited setbacks. Plazas, recesses, arcaded or spaces that create wider sidewalks for cafes and other uses will be encouraged.</li> <li>• Developments along the creek will install creekside landscaping emphasizing native and riparian species.</li> </ul>

## Plaza District

This district:

- Celebrates its civic and cultural institutions and places (Library, Lafayette Plaza, Town Hall Theater, Gazebo)
- Creates an “outdoor room” in which the community can gather for events such as City-sponsored gatherings and Chamber of Commerce-sponsored events
- Provides a secondary street (Plaza Way and Golden Gate Way) that has a slower, more relaxed pace than Mount Diablo Boulevard
- Preserves Lafayette’s history along Plaza Way

Figure 9. Plaza District



## The Existing Context - Plaza

Land Use. Commercial uses are located throughout the district. Retail is at the northern end of Moraga Road and wraps around Plaza Way. Other retail, including fast food restaurants, is located on Mount Diablo Boulevard. Auto service uses are on Golden Gate Way. Office uses are mainly at the eastern end of Golden Gate Way. Residential uses are on Golden Gate Way. Chateau Lafayette, an independent senior living complex, is located on Moraga Boulevard just east of Moraga Road.

Civic uses on Mount Diablo Boulevard are the Plaza, Library and Learning Center, and Gazebo and associated public parking lot. The Library houses the Friends of the Lafayette Library Book Room, Lafayette Historical Society, and Library and Learning Center Foundation. Civic uses on the east side of Moraga Road are Town Hall Theater, Lafayette Elementary School, and former Library site.

Plaza Way / Golden Gate Way embrace a mix of uses, reflecting its eclecticism. Commercial uses include: restaurants, thrift stores, professional and medical offices, vacant theater, hair and nail salons, auto body shops, cleaners, swimming pool service, private parking lots, and a convenience market. Residential uses are on upper floors of buildings.

Character. The character of this district is defined by its buildings. Some of the oldest and most historic buildings and properties are here: the original Lafayette Plaza that was donated by Elam and Margaret Brown in 1864; Wayside Inn and the Pioneer Store buildings; and Town Hall Theater. Other notable buildings and structures are the Library and Learning Center, former library, Lafayette Elementary School, Park Theater, and gazebo.

There are three general areas within the district. The first is along the south side of Mount Diablo Boulevard with its mixture of low scale commercial buildings. The second area is along the east side of Moraga Road with a mixture of low scale retail, medical and professional office buildings and multifamily residential. The elementary school is the most dominant building.

The third area is Plaza Way / Golden Gate Way, beginning at the Plaza and ending at the gazebo. This street has a very different feeling from Mount Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road because of the variety of building styles, narrow street width, lower traffic count, pedestrian scale, and the creek corridor. On the north side, there is the gas station, small offices and retail, library and its solar array, auto repair services. On the south side there are the historic buildings fronting the Plaza, Park Theater, parking, apartments, and small commercial buildings. The creek frames the south side, and even behind buildings, creekside trees provide a visual and physical buffer for the neighborhood to the south.

Plaza Way / Golden Gate Way is the most eclectic and historic area in the downtown. The Plaza and adjacent historic buildings from the 1800s, 1930s, Park Theater, commercial buildings from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, new library, and 1960s apartments all contribute to its uniqueness. The most prominent features are the Library at the center of the area and the creek corridor. While the creek itself is partially channelized and only visible at certain points, its stands of trees can be seen all along Golden Gate Way.



Circulation and Streetscape. The busiest streets in the downtown are the “Y” formed by Moraga Road, Mount Diablo Boulevard, First Street, and Oak Hill Road, and the first two border this district. Substantial numbers of cars pass along the district’s northern edge on the way to and from SR 24. In contrast, Golden Gate Way is a quiet, narrow street with some speed bumps and little traffic. Plaza Way is one-way with right-turn access from Moraga Road. Its primary purpose is to provide parking for the adjacent businesses and vehicular access to Lafayette Plaza. The only median improvements are on Mount Diablo Boulevard between First Street and Moraga Road. There is not enough right-of-way on Moraga Road to install medians without significantly impacting traffic, pedestrian, and bicycle circulation.

The western end of Golden Gate Way and Plaza Way were improved in 2000-2001 as part of the Mount Diablo Boulevard / Moraga Road and Lafayette Plaza projects. To facilitate a pedestrian environment, there is a series of raised crosswalks and a raised intersection at First Street. The street is a planned bicycle boulevard. Golden Gate Way serves as the primary access route to the library as its sole driveway entrance is on Golden Gate Way. Moraga Road, Golden Gate Way, First Street, and, to a lesser degree Second Street and Moraga Boulevard, serve as key routes to and from nearby schools. During school pick-up and drop-off times the streets experience surges of congestion. There are crosswalks at Mount Diablo Boulevard, First Street and Second Street. Overhead utility lines dominate the streetscape.

### **What the DSP Proposes - Plaza**

This district will:

- Have a critical and compact mass and a more intimate feel
- Emphasize pedestrian convenience and de-emphasize auto-oriented uses
- Site new buildings close to the sidewalk on Golden Gate Way and Plaza Way
- Have special paving treatments, banners, lighting, public art, and landscaping that distinguish this district from the rest of the downtown

Land Use. With the Library and Learning Center and other important civic facilities and amenities, this district will continue to serve as home to those facilities and amenities vital to the community’s social and cultural well-being. This district is considered, along with the Downtown Retail District, the Downtown Core. The intent of the DSP is to draw on the library as a cultural and educational asset for both the community and the region and create a synergy of complementary uses.

The district will retain its mix of uses, but civic and cultural uses will be encouraged here as well as complementary retail and multifamily uses. The current types of land uses will continue on Mount Diablo Boulevard. Retail, office and multifamily uses will be allowed. Moraga Road will continue as a retail area with office and civic and multifamily uses.

Plaza Way / Golden Gate Way will be encouraged to evolve into a pedestrian-friendly retail, multifamily, and civic use area complementary to the Library. It will be a hub of community activities seven days a week and into the evenings. Therefore, uses that take advantage of and create relationships with these activities will be the focus of this area; these include restaurants, stores, small offices, senior housing, family housing, and additional civic uses. The middle section of Golden Gate Way will be the location of multifamily housing, particularly adjacent to the creek which provides a buffer and transition to the single-family neighborhood on Moraga Boulevard and Third Street. This area is an ideal location for senior and family housing because the library is a multigenerational community center, is within easy walking distance of pre-K through 8th grade schools, and is close to other senior housing.

To complement the library, an active park is proposed on the property at the southeast corner of Golden Gateway and First Street adjacent to the creek. This property is the best location for an active park given its proximity to the library, schools, and residences. The park will be designed to serve residents and downtown patrons, and may include such uses as children’s play equipment, interactive public art, and picnic benches and tables. The intent is to create a park in conjunction with the development of entire property located at the southeast corner of Golden Gate Way and First Street through a public/private partnership. The specific location of the park on this property will be determined at that time.

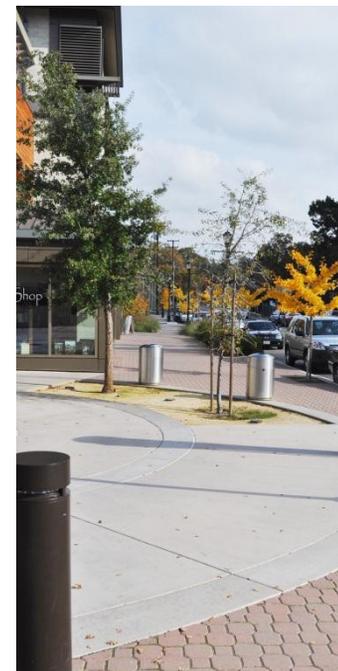
A passive park is proposed adjacent to the gazebo at the east end of this district. With its creekside setting, connections to regional trails, and location on Mount Diablo Boulevard, this park will be an amenity to the residents of the two nearby senior housing facilities, and it will also serve as a waystop for pedestrians and bicyclists. The design of the park may include picnic tables and benches, a play lawn, and garden areas. Development of this site as a park will depend, in part, on replacing the existing public parking spaces. It will need to be developed in conjunction with adjacent private development. The City does not intend to use eminent domain to acquire properties for either of these park uses.

Character. Development along the south side of Mount Diablo Boulevard will serve as the less-intense transition between the pedestrian-oriented, more concentrated Downtown Retail District and the more auto-oriented East End. Moraga Road is the transition between the Downtown Core and the neighborhoods to the south. It will be less intense than the Mount Diablo Boulevard area, and will use setbacks and more residential style development to enhance that transition. The school and Town Hall Theater will continue to define this part of the district’s character.

The intent for Plaza Way / Golden Gate Way is an intimate pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use area with a higher intensity of development than the rest of the Plaza District. The library, with its small site, community spaces, off-street parking, and public art, sets an example for new development. The historic character of buildings along Plaza Way and the theater façade will be considered in new development.

Circulation and Streetscape. On Mount Diablo Boulevard, the improvements include a median with turn pockets in front of the library. Moraga Road does not have enough right-of-way width to increase capacity or add medians; however, improvements will be made to increase mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists while maintaining circulation flow for vehicles. Plaza Way and the west end of Golden Gate Way were improved in 2000-2001. The improvements will be continued the length of Golden Gate Way to retain it as a narrow, tree-lined, pedestrian-friendly street.

Circulation around the library, particularly for children using a new park, school children, and seniors, will be a prime consideration in the design of improvements. Techniques such as alternative street/pavement treatments and enhanced crosswalks will be employed. Occasional speed bumps or tables will be continued.



Policy 2.13	<u>Plaza - Land Use.</u> This district will celebrate the civic and cultural life of the community.
Program 2.13.1	<p>Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include the uses below. The amendment of the Zoning Ordinance will include a list of all the uses allowed by right and with a land use permit:</p> <p><u>Uses allowed by right on Plaza Way that take advantage of Lafayette Plaza and the street’s central and visible location</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Retail</li> <li>▪ Civic and cultural</li> <li>▪ Eating establishments (e.g., restaurants, cafes)</li> </ul> <p><u>Uses allowed by right elsewhere on all floors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Retail</li> <li>▪ Civic and cultural</li> <li>▪ Personal services (e.g., dry cleaners, salons)</li> <li>▪ Offices (e.g., administrative, consultative, medical, realty)</li> <li>▪ Housing</li> <li>▪ Eating establishments (e.g., restaurants, cafes)</li> <li>▪ Public parking</li> </ul> <p><u>Uses not allowed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Large office buildings without retail on ground floor</li> <li>▪ Auto service, sales and repair</li> <li>▪ Uses that detract from an overall atmosphere of convenience, comfort, and safety for the pedestrian retail shopper (e.g., uses with trucks entering and exiting the site)</li> </ul>
Program 2.13.2	If the City Office and/or Police Services Office were to relocate, they should be moved to the Plaza District or Downtown Retail District where they will be in the heart of the downtown with access to transit.
Policy 2.14	<u>Plaza - Density.</u> The maximum residential density is 35 units per acre.
Policy 2.15	<u>Plaza – Building Height.</u> The maximum number of stories is three. The maximum height is 35 feet with the ability to increase the height limit to 45 feet only if the City Council is able to make the strict findings to grant an exception to the 35-foot height limit. The exception is Plaza Way where the maximum height is 35 feet and two stories.

Policy 2.16	<u>Plaza - Pedestrian Experience.</u> The pedestrian experience in this district is a high priority, and sidewalks are preferred over walkways.
Program 2.16.1	Provide a safe, attractive, and active pedestrian space with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider sidewalks</li> <li>• Benches on the sidewalk</li> <li>• Landscaping consistent with the Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan</li> <li>• Uses spilling out into the sidewalks blurring the edge between the public and private realms</li> <li>• Pedestrian crossings at conveniently spaced locations</li> <li>• Attractive signage</li> <li>• Public art</li> </ul>
Policy 2.17	<u>Plaza - Parking.</u> The location of parking will be away from the street to maximize the pedestrian experience of walking along an active retail frontage.
Program 2.17.1	Parking will be located at the rear of the building or above- or below-grade. Parking on the side of a building may be acceptable if its location does not disrupt the pedestrian experience.
Policy 2.18	<u>Plaza - Plaza Way / Golden Gate Way.</u> Maintain the intent of the relevant development standards contained in the original Plaza Park Block Specific Plan.
Program 2.18.1	The design guidelines will include, but not be limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus and highlight the historical significance of the buildings in the area.</li> <li>• Consider opportunities for walkways along the creek.</li> <li>• Preserve and enhance the natural character, including the trees and shrubbery, near the creek.</li> <li>• Preserve the small scale village and historic character around the Plaza through the design and architecture of the buildings.</li> <li>• Provide variations in building height.</li> </ul>



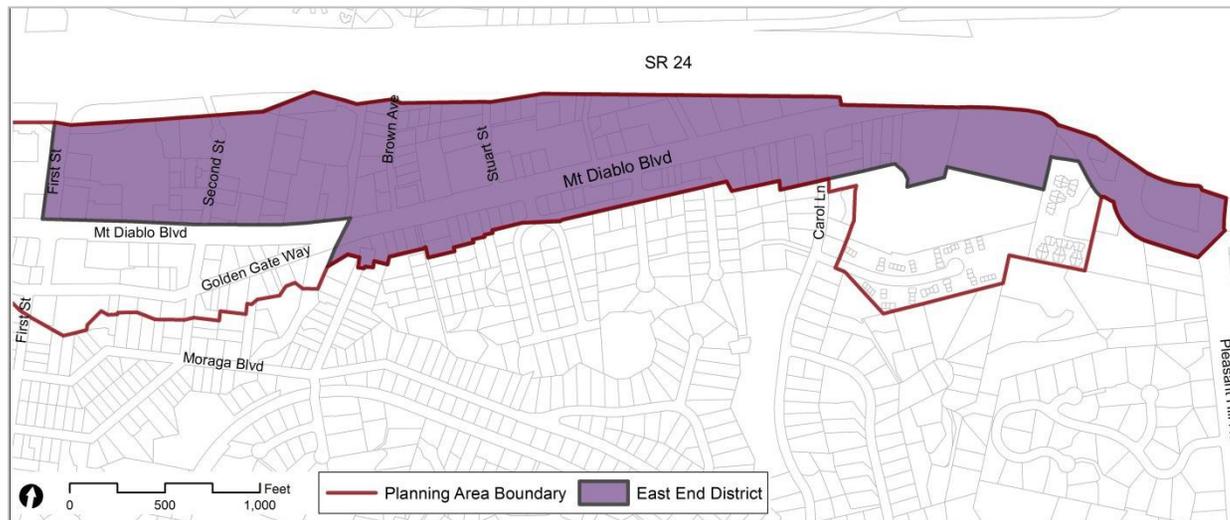
## East End District

This district is:

- The eastern gateway to the downtown
- Lafayette's service district
- An area containing uses that are essential to Lafayette's economy and serve both community and regional needs
- An area offering a variety of supplies and services (commercial, auto-oriented, and auto-service uses) of a scale that may not be appropriate in the other districts



Figure 10. East End District



## The Existing Context – East End

Land Use. Uses in this district are varied. There are offices, auto-oriented retail, pedestrian-oriented retail, and multifamily residential. The Lafayette Park Hotel is the major commercial use. Auto-oriented uses include auto repair and servicing, storage facility, and equipment rental. Retail uses that are more pedestrian-oriented include hair salons and food. There is a large veterinary practice. Commercial uses front Mount Diablo Boulevard with residential uses behind on Stuart, Aileen, and Elizabeth Streets. Civic uses include: Contra Costa Fire Protection District Station #15; County Board of Supervisors District Office; Lafayette Cemetery; EBMUD pumping facility; and City-owned vacant land.

Along Brown Avenue there are retail, office and residential uses. Hall Lane is mixed-use with office and residential.

Character. The design character of the district is as varied as its uses. At the eastern end, it is dominated by the proximity of freeway immediately adjacent to Mount Diablo Boulevard and the freeway off-ramp that crosses above the boulevard. Most of the development is from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, and most is undistinguished. The exception is the hotel, the most significant building in the East End. Its building mass is countered by the heavily landscaped hill that rises up behind it. This same hill also visually buffers adjacent residential neighborhoods. The other exception is Lafayette Cemetery, providing a manicured green open space.

Mount Diablo Boulevard is at its widest west of Carol Lane. Unbroken by medians or other improvements, it is often referred to as an “airport runway.” As typical for other areas of the downtown, development occurred mostly in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. On the north side of Mount Diablo there are some larger office and residential developments; a large self-storage facility was built in 2003. Notable buildings and structures are El Charro and the gateway at Willow Drive into the older neighborhood to the south. Because the street is so wide and the scale of most buildings is low, businesses are often unnoticed. There is a variation in building designs. This variety in styles, along with mature sidewalk landscaping, ameliorates the otherwise “strip commercial” feel.

Brown Avenue is characterized by small, one- and two-story buildings or clusters of buildings. Many of them were originally houses or duplexes. The Forge and the cottage-style restaurant represent the typical 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Because of topography, the SR 24 overpass structure is a dominant element. The hills to the north are visible from the street corridor.

Circulation and Streetscape. Major improvements are the freeway infrastructure, including a daunting chain link fence running along the boulevard, and a landscaped median with a signal and crosswalk in front of the hotel. There are sidewalks, curbs and gutters in some sections along the boulevard. Other sections have no walkway. West of Carol Lane, there are few public improvements, except for sidewalk trees and walkways. Some segments of the boulevard have a meandering walkway and planting strip. There is a signalized intersection at Carol Lane with crosswalks. There are unprotected mid-block crosswalks at Aileen and Stuart Streets. There are existing bike lanes along Mount Diablo Boulevard. However, in the eastbound direction, the bike lane ends near Mount Diablo Court, and it is replaced by sharrows indicating a shared bike/automobile lane. A shared lane also exists from Pleasant Hill Road westbound to approximately where the hotel is located, after which the bike lane begins.

The Fire Station has a street signal that can be activated when engines leave the station. Stuart, Aileen and Elizabeth Streets are private, and there are no public improvements.

The Mount Diablo Boulevard / Brown Avenue intersection is signalized with crosswalks. There is on-street parking on Brown Avenue. Some of the businesses have off-street parking lots. Hall Lane is private, and there are no public improvements. Overhead utility lines impact the streetscape.

## What the DSP Proposes – East End

This district will be:

- Where auto service uses and larger commercial establishments will be allowed
- An area where an informal pattern development is encouraged
- Buildings may locate at the street behind the required landscaped setbacks or set back further from the street

Land Use. This district will remain as a mix of varied uses given that most of the area is well-developed with the hotel, cemetery, residential, office and auto-oriented retail. The area is too far from the downtown core to create strong synergies with its pedestrian-oriented retail uses. However, the area around the hotel could be a good location as a node of ground floor pedestrian-oriented uses, such as restaurants, that will complement the visitor services provided by the hotel. Upper floors of buildings will be suitable for small offices, multifamily residential or hotel expansion.

This district will remain as Lafayette’s location for auto-oriented commercial uses, including auto services. Nodes of pedestrian-oriented retail uses will be encouraged. These uses will provide services to employees, customers and residents. They will also serve the residential neighborhoods to the south of Mount Diablo Boulevard.

Brown Avenue will retain its mixed-use village character. The intent is to encourage this small area as a destination while still providing opportunities for living and working. This will be accomplished by maintaining small parcels with small scale development, and encouraging café style restaurants, boutique retail, and small offices. Multifamily residential will be encouraged. Hall Lane is a good location for denser townhouse developments.



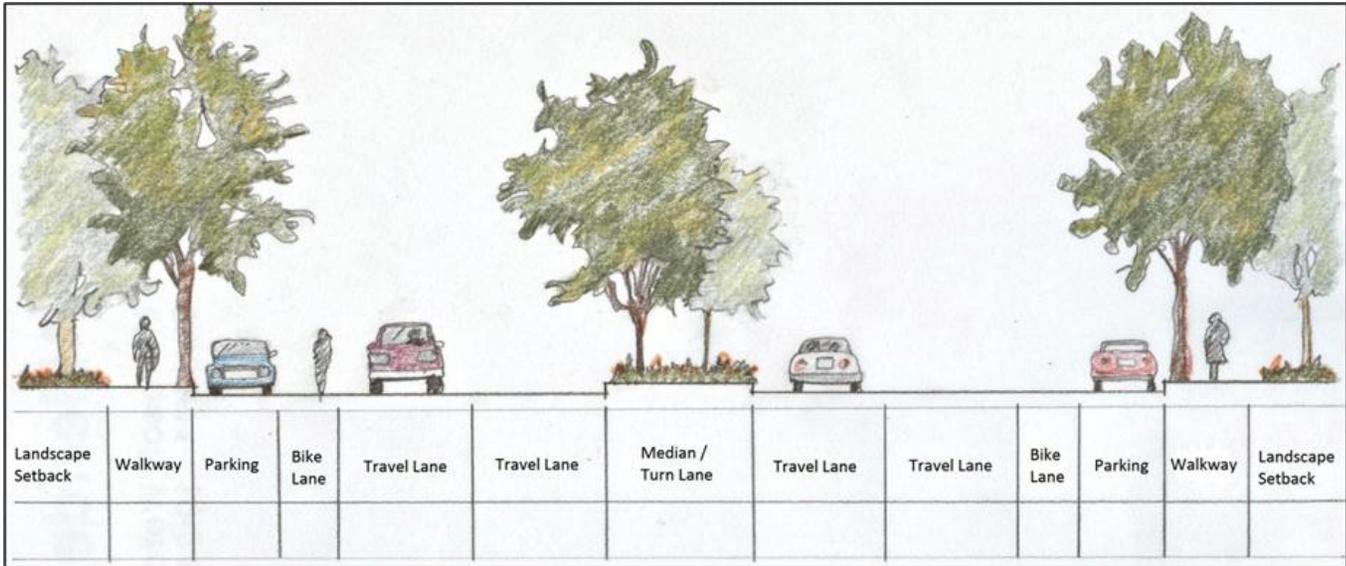
Character. This district is the eastern gateway to the downtown for local and regional traffic heading west from SR 24 and Pleasant Hill Road. Lower scale development is appropriate to the district character and in keeping with the auto-oriented uses. The informal arrangement of buildings and variety in design will be maintained to avoid the district from developing into a strip commercial zone. To mitigate the proximity of the freeway, an abundant use of trees will be required, especially at the eastern end near Pleasant Hill Road.

The physical character will continue to be dominated by the freeway, hotel and cemetery. An abundance of trees and landscape will mitigate the freeway and continue and enhance the character established by the hotel and cemetery. Development at the southwest corner of Mount Diablo Boulevard and Pleasant Hill Road will be very important. Redevelopment of existing buildings near the hotel should complement it, rather than detract from it.

Circulation and Streetscape. The intent is to improve the streetscape of the district while maintaining physical and visual access to businesses. Intermittent landscaped medians with turn pockets will reduce the runway effect on Mount Diablo Boulevard west of Carol Lane. The improvements made in front of the hotel should be continued west of Pleasant Hill Road. These medians and other improvements will be designed through a public process with East End businesses and property owners. Protected crosswalks will be included. This district would benefit from a shuttle service to and from the Downtown Core. Figure 11 illustrates a conceptual cross-section showing how various circulation elements could work together.



Figure 11. East End – Example of Mount Diablo Boulevard Cross-Section



Policy 2.19	<u>East End - Land Use</u> . This district will contain uses that are essential to Lafayette’s economy, and community and regional needs, and offers a variety of supplies and services.
Program 2.19.1	<p>Amend the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the types of uses below. The amendment of the Zoning Ordinance will include a list of all the uses allowed by right and with a land use permit.</p> <p><u>Uses allowed by right</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial</li> <li>• Auto-related (service, sales)</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Small offices (e.g., administrative, consultative, medical, realty)</li> <li>• Retail</li> <li>• Eating establishments (e.g., restaurants, cafes)</li> <li>• Personal services (e.g., dry cleaners, salons)</li> </ul> <p><u>Only with a land use permit</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large office buildings (such as the existing office complexes in the West End on the south side of Mount Diablo Boulevard)</li> </ul>

Policy 2.20	<u>East End - Density</u> . The maximum residential density is 35 units per acre.
Policy 2.21	<u>East End – Building Height</u> . The maximum number of stories is three. The maximum height is 35 feet with the ability to increase the height limit to 45 feet only if the City Council is able to make the strict findings to grant an exception to the 35-foot height limit. The exception is Brown Avenue between Mount Diablo Boulevard and Deer Hill Road where the maximum height is 35 feet and two stories.
Policy 2.22	<u>East End - Pedestrian Experience</u> . While this district is more auto-oriented, safe and continuous pedestrian access is a priority.
Program 2.22.1	Eliminate walkway gaps, and improve walkways so they are accessible to all people.
Program 2.22.2	Install intermittent medians to enhance the aesthetics of the Mount Diablo Boulevard corridor, reduce traffic speeds, and improve pedestrian safety. Work with local businesses, property owners, and the Chamber of Commerce to implement this program.
Policy 2.23	<u>East End - Parking</u> . The location of parking will be informal; there is no “one size fits all” parking solution for this district.
Program 2.23.1	Prepare on-street parking prototypes or templates.
Program 2.23.2	Each development proposal will meet the following requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide sidewalks for pedestrians with a minimum width of six feet.</li> <li>▪ Improve aesthetics by providing landscaping that reaches the street</li> <li>▪ Provide safe ingress and egress from the property</li> </ul>
Policy 2.24	<u>East End - Brown Avenue</u> . Maintain the small-scale village and historic character.
Program 2.24.1	The design guidelines will encourage small scale developments on small lots.
Program 2.24.2	Develop a plan for public improvements that may include the following elements: traffic calming; intersection improvements; public art; walkways; street trees; lighting; crosswalk at the northern end; and undergrounding utilities.

## Downtown Residential Neighborhoods

The neighborhoods adjacent to the commercial areas of the downtown are part of the DSP because of their proximity to downtown services, transit, and amenities. They provide affordable housing and a variety of housing types. The aim of the DSP is to protect these neighborhoods.

Figure 12. Downtown Residential Neighborhoods



### **The Existing Context – Downtown Neighborhoods**

Neighborhood I: Mountain View Drive / West Road. There is a mix of one-story single-family homes and multifamily townhouse developments. On the north side of West Road there are a few single-family homes and a long masonry wall separating the neighborhood from the office buildings along Mount Diablo Boulevard. On the south side and at the end of the street there are two clusters of townhouses. The small homes probably date from the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, and they retain the character of these years. The townhouses are from the 1980s; they reflect the style of the time with wood shingles. There are fewer trees along Mountain View Drive than along West Road, which has a number of redwood trees around the townhouses. Mountain View Drive to Brook Street is sometimes used as a Mount Diablo Boulevard bypass. There are gaps in the walkway improvements along the west side of Mountain View Drive. West Road is private with no through-traffic, but there are walkway improvements in sections near the newer development.

Neighborhood II: Brook Street / Hough Avenue. The predominant land use is smaller scale multifamily residential with townhouses and apartments dating from the 1940s through early 2000s. There are single family homes in the Walnut / Chestnut Streets area, some of which are small enough to be considered cottages. The civic use is Brook Street Park. Because the lots are small, the feel of the neighborhood is fairly dense. The density, traditional architecture, abundance of trees, narrow streets, and occasional walkways form the neighborhood’s character. Most of the neighborhood has narrow residential streets and occasional gaps in the walkways. Hough Avenue and Dewing Avenue provide “back door” access to the Downtown Core.

Neighborhood III: Carol Lane. The predominant use in this neighborhood is multifamily residential. Lafayette Highlands is a rental apartment complex off Carol Lane. There are townhouses on Marlene Drive. Both developments date from the 1960s-1970s. Along Carol Lane between the Highlands’ driveway and Marlene Drive, there are residential and office uses.

### **What the DSP Proposes – Downtown Neighborhoods**

Neighborhood I. This neighborhood will provide a medium-density townhouse residential area at a physical scale compatible with nearby residential areas. Office and retail uses will not be allowed except for home occupations. The older single-family homes will be encouraged to be maintained and offer an affordable housing option. If redevelopment were to occur by combining parcels, lower intensity multifamily uses will be appropriate as a transition between the commercial uses along Mount Diablo Boulevard and the residential uses to the south. Its natural setting and open space will be preserved.

Neighborhood II. This neighborhood will offer a varied mix of housing types as well as other uses at a scale that does not detract from its residential character. It is important to preserve and promote a diversity of housing types and affordability for the downtown and community. This neighborhood is a valuable resource for making living in Lafayette more accessible, especially for young families who wish to send their children to nearby schools and for seniors who wish to be close to downtown services and amenities. The neighborhood also presents the opportunity to create housing types for residents that want to walk to stores, BART, and the Library and Learning Center while living in a small traditional neighborhood. If redevelopment were to occur by combining parcels, lower intensity multifamily uses will be appropriate.

Neighborhood III. Given the age and type of existing development, it is unlikely that this neighborhood will change over the next 20 years. It should be maintained as a multifamily neighborhood with a variety of options for affordable housing.

Policy 2.25	<u>Downtown Residential - Land Use</u> . Offer a variety of affordable housing choices within easy walking distance of the downtown and BART.
Program 2.25.1	<u>Neighborhood I</u> . Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow only the development of townhouses and single-family residences.
Program 2.25.2	<u>Neighborhood II</u> . Amend the Zoning Ordinance as necessary to promote residential development and prohibit office uses with the intent of retaining and encouraging the eclectic mix of residential types and defining the neighborhood boundaries to prevent the encroachment of non-residential uses.
Program 2.25.3	<u>Neighborhood III</u> . Maintain the current zoning since this neighborhood is built out.

Policy 2.26	<u>Downtown Residential – Density</u> . The maximum residential density is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood I – 17 units per acre</li> <li>• Neighborhood II – a portion is 17 units per acre and a portion is 35 units per acre*</li> <li>• Neighborhood III – a portion is 17 units per acre and a portion is 35 units per acre*</li> </ul>
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Policy 2.27	<u>Downtown Residential - Building Height</u> . The maximum height is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood I – 25 feet</li> <li>• Neighborhood II – a portion is 25 feet and a portion is 35 feet</li> <li>• Neighborhood III – a portion is 25 feet and a portion is 35 feet</li> </ul>
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Policy 2.28	<u>Downtown Residential - Pedestrian Experience</u> . Strengthen the pedestrian connections between the neighborhoods and the downtown to ensure safety and accessibility while maintaining the quiet, residential quality of these neighborhoods.
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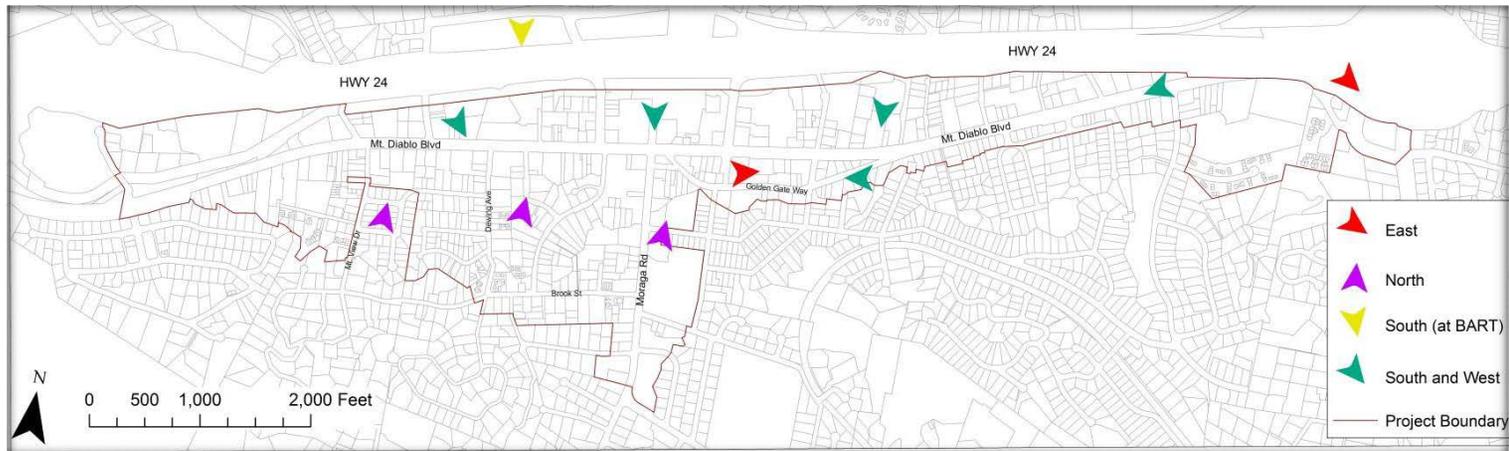
\*For more information, see the Zoning Ordinance.

## VIEWS

Views of the surrounding hillsides and of Mount Diablo to the east contribute significantly to downtown character. They remind us of what makes Lafayette and its downtown special. Maintaining scenic views of Mount Diablo and surrounding hills and ridges also imparts a sense of identity and image to the downtown. The challenge comes in balancing view preservation and ensuring the downtown remains vital and an important part of Lafayette's quality of life.

While it is not possible to entirely prevent some blockage of scenic views downtown, it is important to preserve views of surrounding hillsides and ridges from Mount Diablo Boulevard. Scenic views can be preserved by maintaining a variety of building heights, providing open view corridors between buildings and utilizing setbacks and building heights.

**Figure 13. Scenic View Corridors**



This figure is intended to provide an overview of the principal scenic views from public rights-of-way in Lafayette. It is not an exhaustive analysis of scenic view corridors. Site-specific analysis of scenic views may be required on a case-by-case basis to ensure the protection of scenic views in the community.

The DSP continues the policies of the General Plan.

Policy 2.29	Preserve the scenic views of Mount Diablo and hillsides from the downtown
Program 2.29.1	<p>Use the General Plan’s Scenic View Corridors map as a guide to protecting and enhancing scenic views in the development process. In evaluating development proposals, the City will consider the views that people see when traveling by motor vehicle and bicycle and on foot. These corridors are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking north – views of Lafayette Ridge (primarily from the south side of Mount Diablo Boulevard and at intersections of side streets with Mount Diablo Boulevard)</li> <li>• Looking east – views of Mount Diablo (views of the mountain viewed as one proceeds along Mount Diablo Boulevard in the eastbound direction)</li> <li>• Looking south – views of Mountain View Ridge and ridges in Moraga (primarily viewed at the intersection of side streets)</li> <li>• Looking east and south from the BART station platform</li> </ul>
Program 2.29.2	Evaluate the impact on view corridors when reviewing development proposals by consistency with design review findings and, if applicable, height exception findings.

## DESIGN REVIEW: PROCESS, GUIDING PRINCIPLES, FINDINGS, AND DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Lafayette has developed slowly, gradually, organically over the past 150 years, and development in the downtown reflects the varied styles of those times. Thus, while some California cities (e.g., Santa Barbara) are notable for a certain consistency of architectural style and form, it is Lafayette’s very eclecticism that distinguishes it, and its variety in building type that adds character. It is a goal of the City to preserve this character. A General Plan goal (LU-7): *Encourage downtown development that is attractive and enhances community identity and small town character.*

To meet this goal, the DSP does three things. First, it outlines the process for design review of development in the downtown. Second, it establishes guiding principles for design that will inform all downtown development. Third, based on these principles, the DSP establishes the framework for design review findings for all new projects in the downtown. It also establishes strict criteria for rare and exceptional projects that necessitate an exception to the maximum height.

These three elements of the DSP – process, guiding principles and findings – are the basis for downtown design guidelines to be developed and adopted as part of the DSP’s implementation. These standards and guidelines are a General Plan program (LU-7.1.2) to implement its Policy LU-7.1: *Ensure that site planning, architecture, color, materials and landscaping contribute to the community identity and small town character.*

## Process

The success of the downtown over the last few decades is largely a result of the public design review process. While the City has not had design review findings specific to downtown development, the process, as implemented by the Design Review and Planning Commissions, has proven successful.

The DSP calls for building upon this structure for new development by starting the dialogue with the developer before the design has begun. This early interaction will be critical in communicating the City's goals and establishing a hierarchy of the guiding principles based on site specific opportunities and constraints and surrounding context. The intent behind this process is for clear communication of the City's goals and community needs as they relate to the site specific constraints and opportunities. Taking into account the extent and scale of a proposed project, Planning staff will use its discretion on requiring a study session before the Design Review Commission and/or Planning Commission. Details of this process will be prepared after the DSP is adopted.

The public design review process will be improved with early opportunities for productive dialogue with the commissions, staff, developer, and public.

### *What this means -*

- Utilizing pre-application meetings to convey the community's goals and values based on site opportunities and constraints to potential developers before any design work has commenced
- Study sessions to provide timely and thorough early feedback on site constraints and preliminary design
- Public hearings when the formal application is submitted
- Providing notification to the public above and beyond the minimum required by state law
- Allowing the public to easily access project information on the City's web site

## Guiding Principles

The guiding principles are ideals that must be achieved for downtown development as deemed appropriate. These principles serve as the foundation for the guidelines, and will be supported with tools and simple diagrams to show multiple ways to achieve them. Listed below each guiding principle are general concepts to further explain the intent of the principle.

- The project will preserve and enhance Lafayette's sense of place characterized by its small town environment within a unique natural setting, its character established by its district, and its immediate context.

### *What this means -*

- Relationship of the project to (1) the character of downtown Lafayette, (2) the district's distinctive character, (3) the surrounding context and (4) the project site
  - Appropriate height
  - Elements that make the project unique to Lafayette; avoidance of generic design
- The project will enhance Lafayette's character with a variety of styles, massing, articulation, setbacks, heights, or spacing.

### *What this means -*

- Looseness in the downtown fabric
- Opportunity for the project to have its own distinctive design that is reviewed, but not prescribed by the City
- Variety of setbacks – all buildings should not be aligned
- Variety in look and feel
- Articulation of building heights, massing, setbacks

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- The project will enhance circulation connectivity in the downtown (e.g., walkways, paths, internal connection between parking lots).

*What this means -*

- Pedestrian and bicycle connections
- Links to the parking network
- Connections between parking lots or consolidation of parking lots
- Common driveways and linked corridors
- Access to creek corridors
- Trails, paths, and recreational connections

- The project will preserve views of surrounding hillsides and ridges by varied building heights, setbacks, or view corridors.

*What this means -*

- Scenic views of Mount Diablo and surrounding hills and ridges that impart a sense of identity and image to the city
- Openness to the broader landscape through varied heights and setbacks
- Building height reduced and articulated when views are impacted
- Avoidance of a monotonous row of buildings at the back-of-sidewalk and down the boulevard which would block views to surrounding hills and ridges

- The project will respond to the site’s opportunities and constraints, unique character of the site, and surrounding context.

*What this means -*

- Non-obtrusive parking
- Orientation of buildings to the street, public spaces, and surrounding properties
- Building height reduced and articulated to respond to site characteristics and surrounding context
- Relationship to existing creeks, vegetation, topography, views, etc.
- Light and shade analysis on adjacent properties and on the public realm

- The project will exhibit quality design and detailing.

*What this means -*

- Quality and durable materials and craftsmanship
- Cohesive design
- Attention to details, including lighting, signage, mechanical treatments, windows, doors
- Natural materials, such as wood, brick, and shingles, are preferred
- Exceptionally attractive areas to entice people to shop, dine, and linger

- The project will contribute public benefits to the downtown.

*What this means -*

- Courtyards, plazas, passages, landscaping, creek enhancements
- Public amenities, such as seating, public art
- Connections for pedestrians, bicycles

- The project will incorporate elements of sustainability.

*What this means –*

- Community connectedness
- A mix of uses in the downtown
- Alternative ways to move (bikeways, walkways, pedestrian-friendly), reduced automobile dependence
- Site opportunities
- Sun (utilizing solar power), solar orientation
- Passive cooling with trees
- Building efficiency
- Infrastructure energy efficiency
- On-site renewable energy sources
- Water-efficiency
- Versatility in use and materials (long-term solutions)
- Ventilation (heating and cooling)

- The project will enhance the pedestrian experience.

*What this means –*

- Informality to create interest and diversity at the pedestrian level
- Intimacy in scale
- Open and inviting storefronts with transparency at the ground floor (e.g. large display windows)
- Continuity at ground plane to create a sense of a common public environment
- Bench/trees – public amenities
- Blurred line between public and private space (realm)
- Presence or expression of the building’s use or products

## Findings

The General Plan calls for establishing downtown design guidelines and findings to improve the appearance of future development downtown, contributing to the community’s identity and small town character. Findings explain and communicate the reasoning behind the decision, present the facts and policy considerations that contributed to the decision, ensure adherence to procedures and requirements, and serve as an essential element of defense if the decision is challenged. Findings provide the City with the strength to grant approval for exemplary projects and the tools to deny projects that do not meet the scrutiny test. The general findings for development in the downtown are informed by: (1) the General Plan’s goals, policies, and programs, (2) the DSP’s Vision Statement, (3) the Guiding Principles, and (4) the existing design review findings, applicable city-wide. The objectives to the findings are listed here.

### Design Review Findings

All projects in the downtown will be required to meet design review findings that include:

- Response to the downtown’s unique character
- Scale of the project within its context
- Maintain views of the hills and ridgelines
- Minimize solar shading on adjacent properties and the public realm
- Articulation of design elements
- Visual interest and diversity
- Contribution to the downtown
- Consistency with City policies, regulations, and standards

## **Height Exception Findings**

Because of the beautiful hillsides visible from the downtown, including views of Mount Diablo, and because Lafayette treasures the small town character of its downtown, building height will always be an important consideration in building design. The General Plan (Program LU-10.2.1) calls for appropriate building height within its goals and policies. At the same time, it recognizes that additional height is acceptable when a building demonstrates excellent design, is compatible with adjacent properties, is sensitive to the residential neighborhoods surrounding the downtown, does not block identified viewsheds, and constitutes a substantial public benefit to the community.

The DSP builds upon the General Plan and sets a height limit of 35 feet and three stories for most of the downtown with the ability to increase the height limit to 45 feet only if the City Council is able to make the strict findings to grant an exception to the 35-foot height limit. There is no exception to the three-story limit. The Council will scrutinize the justifications on a project- and site-specific basis, considering the unique characteristics surrounding the proposal. Granting a height exception shall not be considered precedent setting. The Council may grant a building height exception if the applicant can prove the following findings:

1a. Unique site circumstances that mitigate the height when viewed from Mount Diablo Boulevard (such as topography, setbacks, or backdrops): The site or surrounding context mitigates the apparent height without compromising the site's natural features.

OR

1b. Necessity (why it cannot comply with the 35-foot height requirement): The burden is on the applicant to provide compelling reasons why the proposed project cannot be developed unless it exceeds the maximum height limits. Project economics cannot be the sole reason for seeking an exception.

AND

2. Significant net public benefit and amenities.

For prominent buildings or sensitive locations, the hearing body may impose additional requirements for projects that warrant additional protections.

## Downtown Design Guidelines

The guidelines will define the guiding principles and provide a comprehensive and clear list of simple ideals based on direct observations about Lafayette. Narratives and images of successful projects in Lafayette and elsewhere will be used to illustrate these principles. A one-size-fits-all approach will be avoided. Each guiding principle will be supported with tools and simple diagrams to show multiple ways to achieve it.

These tools will allow for flexibility to maintain and enhance the informal character of the downtown and encourage variety in style, height, and setback, and spacing. While fulfillment of all the principles will be required, not all of the tools would be used. Rather, only those tools applicable for the particular site based on its constraints and context would be used.

<b>Goal 3</b>	<u>Downtown Character – Design Review: Process, Guiding Principles, Findings, and Downtown Design Guidelines.</u> Preserve and enhance the sense of place characterized by a small-town environment within a unique natural setting.
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Policy 3.1	Guide the evolution of the downtown’s distinctive character, described as informal with variations in styles, massing and setbacks, and with a dominance of landscape, and with a high level of design quality.
Program 3.1.1	Adopt Downtown Design Guidelines developed through a public hearing process.
Program 3.1.2	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include Design Review Findings and Height Exception Findings.
Program 3.1.3	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include the process for downtown design review.

Policy 3.2	<u>Height</u> . Building height will be determined based on scale, views, and public benefit to preserve and enhance the sense of place. The Design Guidelines will include the standards established in the Zoning Ordinance.
Program 3.2.1	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to establish a three-story height limit for the downtown. The maximum height is 35 feet, with possible exceptions as noted below in Program 3.2.2.
Program 3.2.2	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to modify the height limits, with no exceptions to increased height for the following areas of the downtown: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown Residential Neighborhood I: 25 feet maximum</li> <li>• Downtown Residential Neighborhood II: 25 feet and 35 feet maximum depending on location</li> <li>• Downtown Residential Neighborhood III: 25 feet and 35 feet maximum depending on location</li> <li>• Plaza Way: 35 feet and two-story maximum</li> <li>• Brown Avenue: 35 feet and two-story maximum</li> <li>• Projects governed by development agreements</li> </ul>
Program 3.2.3	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow the City Council to grant a building height exception to allow up to 45 feet and three stories for rare and exceptional projects based on the City Council’s ability to make strict findings. Prior to the amendment of the Zoning Ordinance, a project seeking a height exception to allow up to 45 feet and three stories shall first obtain the City Council’s approval and shall meet the City’s variance findings and the height exception findings listed in this DSP.

## CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Lafayette’s history and character as a community began in the downtown over 150 years ago. As the downtown continues to evolve in the future, it is important to preserve those cultural and historic resources that help define Lafayette.

The City has officially designated five buildings, structures, or sites in the downtown as historic landmarks:

- Lafayette Plaza – southeast corner of Mount Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road
- Lafayette Methodist Church – 955 Moraga Road
- Pioneer Store – 3535 Plaza Way
- Town Hall Theater – southeast corner of Moraga Road and School Street
- Way Side Inn – 3521 Golden Gate Way



As part of the DSP environmental review, additional resources were identified in the downtown:

- Site of the Elam Brown Grist Mill – near Lafayette Plaza
- Geils Building – 3531 Plaza Way
- Park Theater – 3519 Golden Gate Way
- Office building – 3534 Golden Gate Way
- Lafayette-Alamo Cemetery – 3285 Mount Diablo Boulevard
- Lafayette Orchards Archway – Mount Diablo Boulevard at Willow Street
- The Forge – 3416 Mount Diablo Boulevard
- Roundup Saloon – 3553 Mount Diablo Boulevard
- Garrett Building (known as Postino) – 3565 Mount Diablo Boulevard
- Commercial building – 3582 Mount Diablo Boulevard
- Site of James Bickerstaff House – 3615 Mount Diablo Boulevard
- Celia’s Mexican Restaurant – 3666 Mount Diablo Boulevard
- Old Firehouse School – 984 Moraga Road
- Office building – 3611 School Street
- Hen House – 20 Lafayette Circle
- Site of Elam Brown House – 32 Lafayette Circle
- Peacock Alley – 100 Lafayette Circle
- Office building – 240 Lafayette Circle
- Residential court – 947 Dewing Avenue
- Residence – 3606 Chestnut Street
- Residence – 3618 Chestnut Street
- Residential courts – 3606 and 3610 Bickerstaff Road

<b>Goal 4</b>	<u>Downtown Character – Cultural and Historic Resources</u> . Preserve Lafayette’s history in the downtown.
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Policy 4.1	Encourage the preservation of downtown historic resources by exploring appropriate and viable reuse.
Program 4.1.1	Consider adding to the list of designated City historic landmarks and using the resources identified in the Final EIR as a guide.
Program 4.1.2	Investigate federal tax benefits that could be available to owners of designated historic buildings, structures, and sites through the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
Program 4.1.3	Include references to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings or Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings in the downtown design guidelines for designated historic buildings, structures, and sites.



## 5. SUSTAINABILITY

California and the nation have set goals to address climate change, and are committed to creating sustainable communities that meet current needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

The most basic definition of "sustainable" is something that can be successfully maintained and continued indefinitely. Water provides a relevant example of a limited resource in California. If we continue to use more fresh water every year, but the supply is fixed or on the decline then that is obviously not sustainable. Whereas, if our total use stays at a constant, manageable level with increased efficiency offsetting an increasing population, then that would be sustainable. This basic concept applies equally well to land use (commercial, residential, civic), transportation, building design, energy use, waste management, and resource conservation. If the downtown evolves in a way so that each of these areas is sustainable, then our downtown will continue to function successfully over the long term.

The City of Lafayette is meeting this challenge by integrating physical, environmental, social, and economic elements in the development and implementation of policies and programs for a sustainable downtown. It is important to emphasize that sustainability does not mean focusing on one element – only housing or only transit. It is the intent of the DSP to integrate sustainability as a core value in planning for a downtown that includes all of the following elements:

- A variety of housing choices for all ages and income levels
- Employment opportunities
- A variety of quality goods and services
- Green building and infrastructure
- Enhanced transportation alternatives
- Sufficient and well-placed parking
- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Places for citizens to gather, relax, and enjoy the downtown
- Access to enhanced green spaces
- Preservation of natural resources
- Protection of the cherished views of surrounding hillsides and open sky

The elements that work together to create an efficient, sustainable downtown are land use, economic development, transportation circulation, and resource conservation.

*The City recognizes that to achieve its commitment it requires the effort of individual community members and that it has an important role in educating its citizens and acting as a model. In fulfilling its commitment, the City of Lafayette should be guided by the following principles:*

- *The importance of environmental sustainability should be considered in City policy and decisions.*
- *The protection, preservation and restoration of the natural environment are high priorities of the City.*
- *Broad community cooperation among the City government, businesses, residents, community organizations, and schools and other service providers is essential to effective community governance.*
- *Community awareness, responsibility, participation and education are key elements of an environmentally sustainable community.*
- *Environmental quality, economic health and social equity are related.*
- *The City recognizes that it is part of a wider community and that local environmental issues cannot be separated from their broader context.*

• City of Lafayette Environmental Strategy

## Land Use

Lafayette developed historically like most post-World War II communities: spread-out, low density development sustained by the use of the automobile; street networks that foster additional driving; and segregation of land uses, separating homes from shopping, work, and other activities. Since 1974, however, the General Plan laid the foundation to have a more sustainable community and particularly a sustainable downtown. The original Plan identified the opportunities that were possible from the “nearly ideal location of the BART station.” It included a pedestrian-oriented retail core, multi-family residential, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The current General Plan continues this direction for a sustainable downtown. It includes goals, policies, and programs that:

- Protect the hillsides and focus growth in the downtown
- Reinforce the downtown as the city’s center for business, civic, and cultural activities
- Preserve downtown character
- Promote bicycle and pedestrian circulation
- Encourage multi-residential development in the downtown
- Incorporate energy- and water-efficient site planning, building design and materials, and landscaping

It is the intent of the DSP to support projects that use less energy and water, are healthy to work in or live in, use environmentally-friendly material, and are pedestrian and bicycle friendly. An example are projects that provide options for a variety of housing options – market rate and affordable, for seniors, families, young adults, empty nesters – that use less energy and promote sustainability by allowing residents to walk to stores, schools, services, cultural amenities, and regional transit.

## Transportation and Circulation

Although cars are an essential part of our lives, a sustainable community offers and encourages alternative ways of getting around. Walking, bicycling, and transit encourage socialization, promote exercise, and slow the pace of busy lives.

Lafayette, like many other communities, was mostly developed after World War II as a car-centric suburb utilizing inexpensive fuel and uncongested, brand new streets. But as the population increased, the number of cars increased – from one per house to two and three per house, and the use of bicycles, particularly by children, decreased. These factors contributed to some of downtown Lafayette’s biggest concerns – traffic congestion and the lack of parking. This is because the use of cars has grown steadily, while road capacity cannot, and this is not sustainable. Fortunately, there are tremendous opportunities in the downtown to make the use of cars more efficient and utilize other forms of transportation, such as walking, bicycling and taking public transit.

*In 1960, 21.5% percent of households in the US had two or more vehicles. By 2007, the percentage grew to 58.2%, a 171% increase.*

• US Department of Transportation, US Census Bureau

*In 1969, approximately 50% of all students in the US walked or biked to school, and 87% of children who lived within one mile of school walked or traveled by bike. By 2001, only 15% of students walked or biked to school. By 2007, in some communities, parents driving their children to school represented 20-30% of peak-hour morning traffic.*

• Safe Routes to School: 2007 State of the States Report

## Economic Development

Economic development by definition is the strengthening of the material prosperity of a community. It may not mean growth, although growth of employment and residential opportunities and public revenues may be byproducts. Sustainable economic development strengthens the local economy in a way that meets present needs while planning for the future. Sustainable commercial uses offer products and services that fulfill the community’s needs while contributing to the economic, social, and environmental health of the community. Such uses operate in all sectors, including retail, food services, personal services, entertainment, administrative, and financial. They offer products and services that the community wants and needs, are competitive in price and performance, and reduce the local impact on the environment.

## Resource Conservation

Resource conservation preserves the resources that sustain our way of life. These resources include adequate water, efficient energy, creeks, trees, natural hillsides, clean air, and people. Preservation means balancing land use, transportation and circulation, and economic development with the need to protect these resources. Preservation practices include water and energy conservation, protection of our natural resources, ensuring social equity, and maintaining public health.

*Amenity and comfort ratings were about 80% higher for a tree-lined sidewalk compared with those for a non-shaded street. Quality of products ratings were 30% higher in districts having trees over those with barren sidewalks.*

- Urban and Community Forestry Appreciation Tool Kit, US Department of Agriculture Forest Service

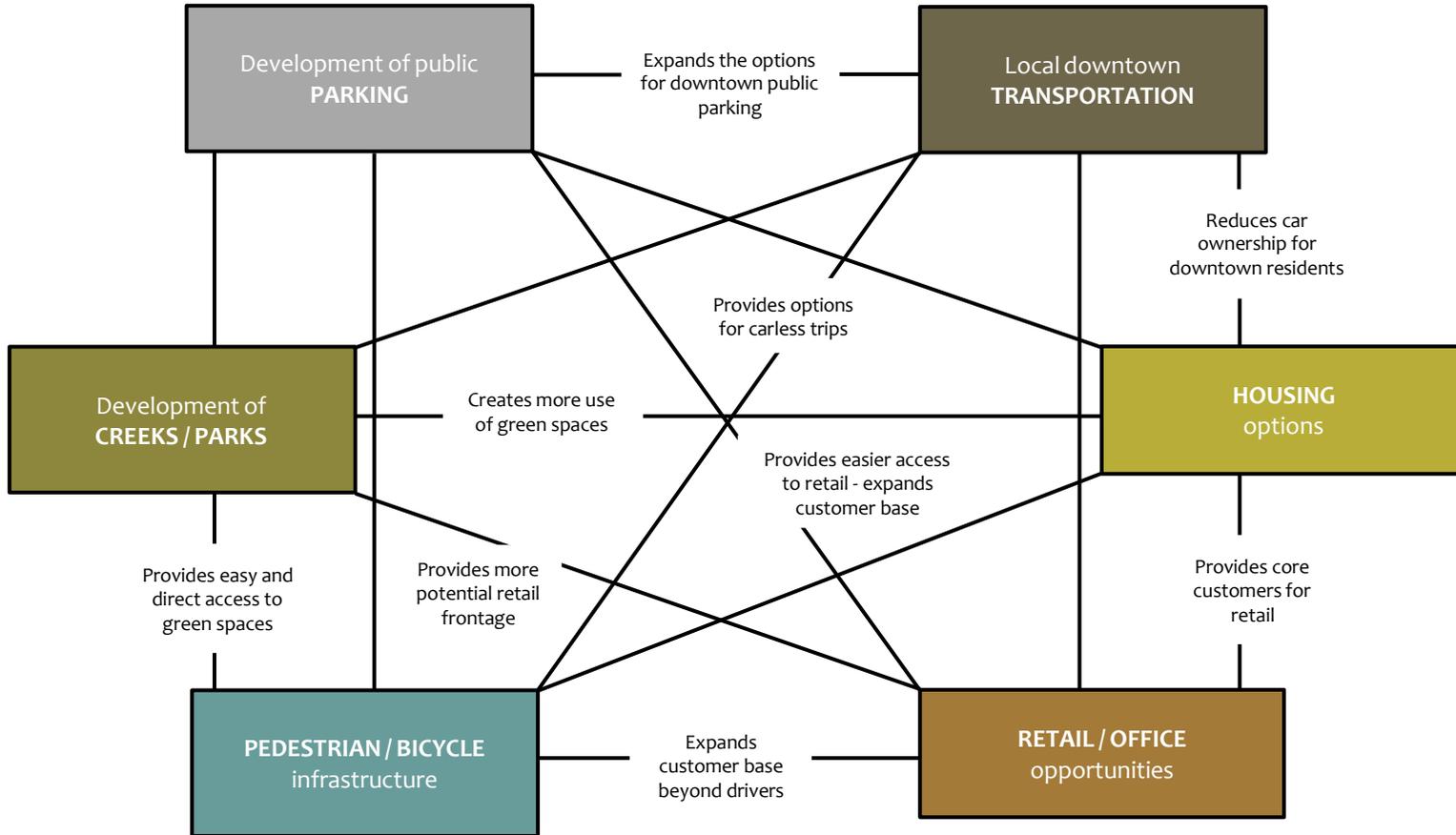
## Synergies of a Sustainable Downtown

Recognizing that policies and actions in one element impact another, the integration of sustainable practices in land use, transportation and circulation, economic development, and resource conservation are necessary to create the vibrant downtown that we want and foster the health and well-being of the community. When these practices are applied to the downtown through these elements, positive interactions and synergies result. The graphics on the following pages display some interactions that can result in an efficient, successful and sustainable downtown Lafayette.



**Figure 14. Sustainability**

Synergies of a Sustainable Downtown Lafayette  
Each Element Supports the Others



<b>PARKING</b> ■ <i>Development of downtown public parking options leads to:</i>		
Creeks / Parks		Green space users not using retail / office or housing parking
Housing		More parking options for housing guests
Retail / Office		Easier access to retail and office uses and more potential retail customers
Pedestrians / Bikes		More park-and-walk trips to, from, and within the downtown
Transportation		Use of local transportation options that connect parking, retail, and office
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b> ■ <i>Development of downtown transportation options leads to:</i>		
Creeks / Parks		Easy connections between housing, retail, and office to green spaces
Housing		Fewer vehicles when destinations are accessible by transportation
Retail / Office		Expanded area for core retail
Pedestrians / Bikes		Shorter pedestrian trips without cars
Parking		Expanded parking location options
<b>HOUSING</b> ■ <i>Development of downtown multifamily housing options leads to:</i>		
Creeks / Parks		Higher use levels for green spaces
Retail / Office		Support for more successful retail
Pedestrians / Bikes		Downtown residents walking and riding bicycles
Parking		Core customers for downtown retail without the need for parking
Transportation		Core customers for local transportation
<b>RETAIL / OFFICE</b> ■ <i>Development of more retail and employment opportunities and more vibrant retail leads to:</i>		
Creeks / Parks		Users for green spaces and related amenities for those users
Housing		Enhanced housing values in proximity to quality retail and employment opportunities
Pedestrians / Bikes		More opportunities for walking and riding
Parking		More parking options resulting from higher retail revenues
Transportation		Increased need for and use of local transportation
<b>PEDESTRIANS / BICYCLES</b> ■ <i>Development of linked pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure leads to:</i>		
Creeks / Parks		Easy and direct access to green spaces without the use of cars
Housing		Fewer cars when destinations are accessible by foot and bike
Retail / Office		More customers and employees than cars alone could bring
Parking		More varied options for public parking that links to retail and office
Transportation		More efficient integrated transportation system
<b>CREEKS / PARKS</b> ■ <i>Development and enhancement of creeks and parks leads to:</i>		
Housing		Amenities for downtown residents
Retail / Office		Additional retail frontage and access for adjacent properties
Pedestrians / Bikes		More pleasant, quieter, safer routes for pedestrians and bicyclists
Parking		Encourages combining shopping and relaxation in a single trip
Transportation		Additional destinations for local transportation

<b>Goal 5</b>	Sustainability will be integrated into every aspect of the downtown.
Policy 5.1	Support the City’s Environmental Strategy, Mission Statement, Guiding Principles, and Goals.
Program 5.1.1	Amend the General Plan to add the adopted Mission Statement and Guiding Principles from the City’s Environmental Strategy.
Program 5.1.2	Include policies and programs for the downtown in the City’s Environmental Action Plan to support the community’s current waste diversion and emission reduction targets and energy and water conservation goals as defined in this Action Plan.
Program 5.1.3	Require all future public and private projects in the downtown to demonstrate how they will contribute to the sustainability of the downtown. Examples could include the use of green street technologies, enhanced pedestrian access to BART, a variety of housing options, and provision of bicycle racks.

## 6. GETTING AROUND

Circulation • 69  
Parking • 82

Traffic congestion and a lack of parking have been major issues in the downtown for decades. As far back as the 1930s, there were complaints about traffic, dangers to pedestrians, and no parking. In 1961, a report to the Lafayette Design Project said: *Currently Mt. Diablo Boulevard, routed directly through the main business area of the city must accommodate this heavy volume of high speed traffic with resulting congestion, safety hazard, and disruption of convenient and pleasant, thereby profitable shopping.* These feelings – 50 years later – still exist for many people.

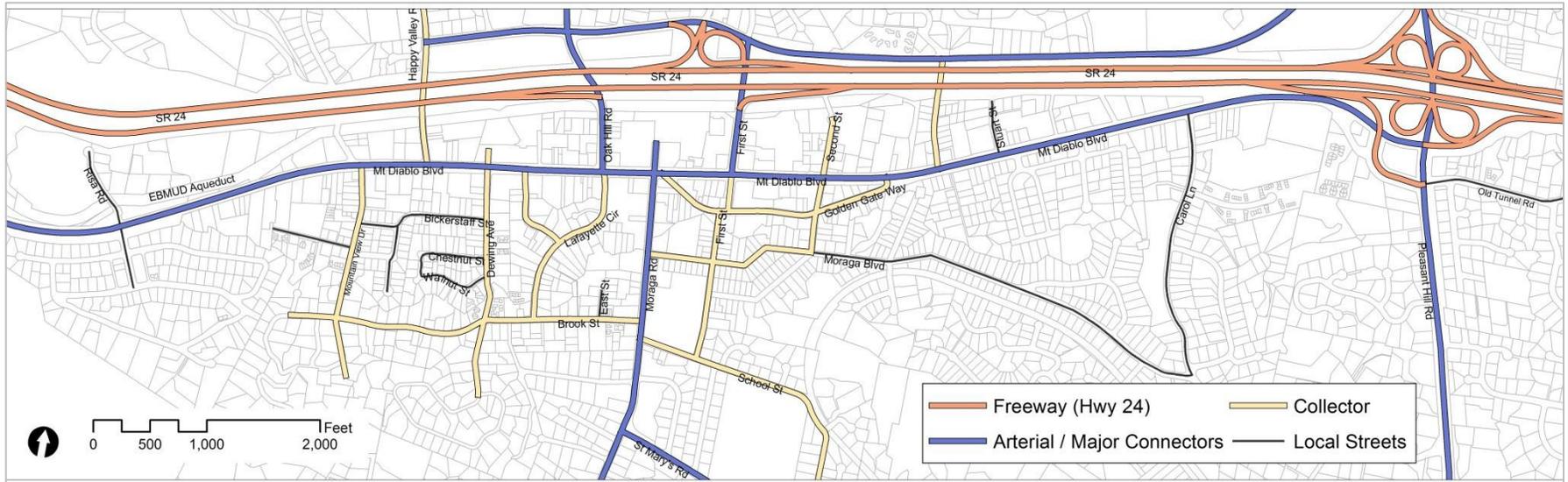
This chapter describes the context and provides the plan for each mode of travel – motor vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit – and for parking. It includes a Transportation Demand Management section that describes how to maximize alternative modes – walking, bicycling, transit – while still providing adequate vehicular capacity. The DSP’s intent is to have a downtown that is safe and convenient for getting around and provides more parking where it can be best utilized.

### CIRCULATION

The aim of the DSP in terms of circulation mirrors that of the General Plan (page II-1): *Although Lafayette experiences a significant amount of regionally-generated through traffic, it is important to achieve a balance between the potentially conflicting goals of improving traffic flow and maintaining and enhancing the City’s quality of life and sense of place, particularly in the Downtown Core.*



Figure 15. Roadway Network



## Motorized Vehicles

### The Existing Context

The downtown consists of four major arterials: Mount Diablo Boulevard (running east-west), Moraga Road (running north-south), and Oak Hill Road and First Street (running north-south) which are arterials that provide central Lafayette with access to and from SR 24. There is also freeway access at Pleasant Hill Road and to the west of the downtown at Acalanes Road. Happy Valley Road and Brown Avenue are key north-south downtown streets that provide additional links between Mount Diablo Boulevard and Deer Hill Road. Lower capacity streets carry primarily local traffic: Brook Street and Golden Gate Way provide additional east-west connections, and Mountain View Drive, Dewing Avenue, Lafayette Circle / Hough Avenue, Carol Lane and Second Street provide north-south connections.

Moraga Road not only serves southern Lafayette but the Town of Moraga. It serves as one of the Town's two routes to SR 24 and BART. Pleasant Hill Road, on the eastern edge of the planning area, serves as a regional route between Pleasant Hill, Martinez, and Walnut Creek to SR 24. CCTA designates Pleasant Hill Road north of SR 24 as a Route of Regional Significance.

The General Plan establishes the Levels of Service standards and goals to preserve Lafayette's unique identity and quality of life. These are:

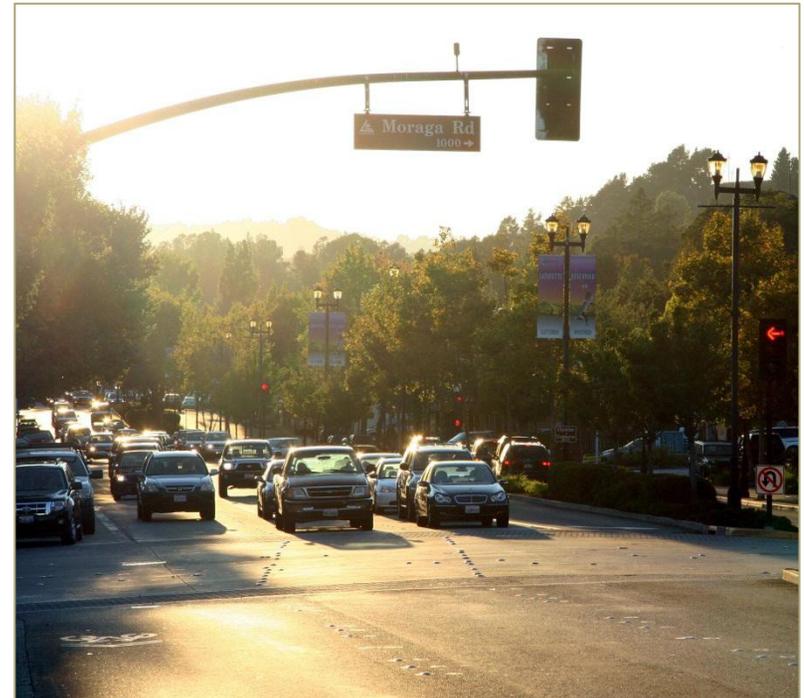
- Poor D at all signalized downtown intersections
- Good D at all signalized intersections outside the downtown
- 

The Final EIR found 22 of the 25 intersections that were studied currently operate at "good" LOS D or better. The exceptions are:

- Moraga Road / School Street operated at LOS F during the AM and mid-day peak hours, coinciding with adjacent school drop-off and pick-up activity
- Moraga Road / Brook Street operated at "poor" LOS D during the mid-day peak hour
- Deer Hill Road / SR 24 westbound ramps operated at "poor" LOS D during the AM and PM peak hours

### What the DSP Proposes

An overriding goal of the DSP is to balance downtown vehicular circulation with alternative transportation options. This will be a challenge since, as demonstrated by the Final EIR, traffic congestion will continue in the downtown into the foreseeable future. While some of this congestion will be attributable to growth in the downtown and the rest of Lafayette, much will be from growth outside Lafayette. The aim then of the DSP is to mitigate future congestion where feasible through physical improvements and, more importantly, through offering more land use options and enhancing alternative transportation options.



**Goal 6**

**Getting Around – Circulation.** Balance downtown vehicular circulation with providing a bicycle and pedestrian system.

Policy 6.1	Manage traffic congestion through mitigation and capacity management measures rather than roadway widening.
Program 6.1.1	Analyze the impacts and benefits of removing the four parking spaces on the east side Moraga Road south of Plaza Way.
Program 6.1.2	Investigate the impacts and benefits of amending the General Plan to designate Happy Valley Road between Mount Diablo Boulevard and Deer Hill Road as an “arterial”.
Program 6.1.3	Implement minor street modifications to balance the needs of vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and other alternative modes of transportation.
Program 6.1.4	Promote and require pedestrian circulation when considering applications for development.
Program 6.1.5	Amend the General Plan to include a Complete Streets Element.
Policy 6.2	Encourage the cooperative efforts with Lafayette Elementary School, Stanley Middle School, and the City to address downtown congestion associated with school drop-off and pick-up.
Program 6.2.1	Work with school administrators and parents to develop options for school commuting, including carpooling, walk and bike-pooling, employee parking, and satellite drop-off and pick-up locations.
Program 6.2.2	Investigate the interest and feasibility of reestablishing school bus service to Lafayette Elementary School and increasing service to Stanley Middle School.
Program 6.2.3	Provide connections between the schools and the Lafayette / Moraga Trail.

## Pedestrians

### The Existing Context

Though long and linear, the downtown is generally walkable, with continuous sidewalks on at least one side of most streets, signalized intersections providing protected crossings at the busiest locations, relatively level terrain, and good connections to neighborhoods. However, gaps in the walkway network, awkward business driveway crossings, missing connections between the walkway and certain developments, and lack of frequent pedestrian crossings in some locations diminish the ability, desirability, and comfort of pedestrians to walk.

Signalized pedestrian crossings at intersections are concentrated on Mount Diablo Boulevard between Happy Valley Road and Second Street, at Risa Road, Brown Avenue, Carol Lane, Lafayette Park Hotel, and Pleasant Hill Road. On Moraga Road, signalized pedestrian crossings are concentrated near Lafayette Elementary School – at Moraga Boulevard, School Street / Brook Street, and St. Mary’s Road. The fewest marked pedestrian crossings are found in the West and East Ends. Moraga Road is different; a combination of narrow walkways, sections of no on-street parking, and fast-moving traffic creates a less comfortable pedestrian environment.

The pedestrian network also includes less formal paths, trails, and walkways. Paths and trails integrated with opening up access to creeks are a very desirable amenity in linking downtown areas.

For pedestrians that are not disabled, access is relatively good throughout the downtown. However, for those that are visually impaired or have a reduced ability to walk or are in wheelchairs, access can be difficult at locations where walkways are narrow, partially obstructed, or altogether missing. Uneven surfaces along walkways and decorative paving can also create further circulation issues. On the positive side, many of the downtown traffic signals have audible and countdown pedestrian signals.

### What the DSP Proposes

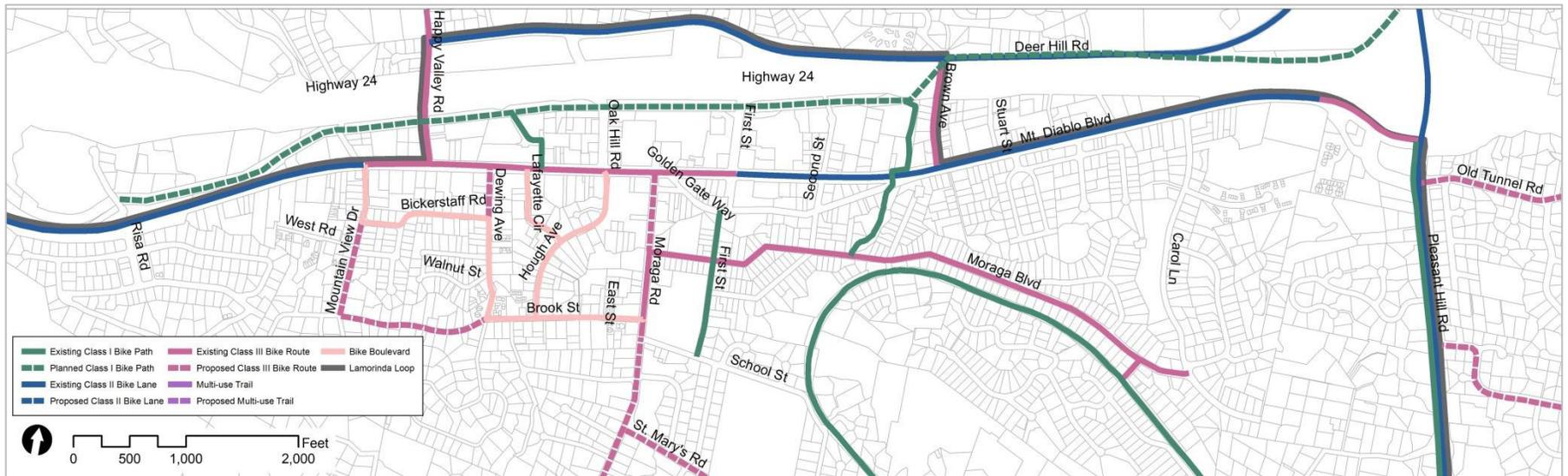
Most of the elements exist for a highly walkable downtown: desirable destinations, relatively flat terrain, and good walkway coverage. Opportunities for pedestrian connections through or between properties can shorten walking distances. Connections to regional and Lafayette trails ensure that these are a practical part of the pedestrian and bicycle opportunities. These all create the type of casual and back road atmosphere that is important to the community. That said, adjacent high speed and high volume traffic, super-blocks with few protected crossings, gaps in the walkway network, and limited enhancements, such as wide walkways, wide intersection corners, street furniture, and other amenities, often limit walkability. The aim of the DSP is to encourage walking as an alternative to vehicular travel by improving pedestrian facilities; therefore, the DSP incorporates by reference the adopted Master Walkways Plan and Trails Master Plan.



<b>Goal 7</b>	<b>Getting Around – Pedestrians.</b> Ensure a continuous and accessible pedestrian network with appropriate pedestrian infrastructure.
Policy 7.1	Implement the Master Walkways Plan and Trails Master Plan.
Program 7.1.1	Implement those sections of the Master Walkways Plan and Trails Master Plan that will improve pedestrian access to, from, and within the downtown, particularly between residential neighborhoods and the downtown.
Policy 7.2	Promote pedestrian safety and mobility for all ages.
Program 7.2.1	Eliminate walkway gaps and improve walkways so they are accessible to all people.
Program 7.2.2	<p>Improve and increase north-south pedestrian crossings on Mount Diablo Boulevard using crosswalk enhancements, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special pavement materials</li> <li>• Enhanced striping and signage</li> <li>• Brighter street lighting</li> <li>• Pedestrian refuge islands and curb bulbs</li> <li>• In-pavement flashers</li> <li>• Provide marked crosswalks, particularly along “super-blocks”, to facilitate pedestrian circulation</li> </ul>
Program 7.2.3	Identify site planning opportunities prior to and during the development review process to minimize walking distances for pedestrians.
Program 7.2.4	Identify where ADA-compliant improvements, including adequate walkway width, ramps and benches, should be made to serve nearby uses, such as senior housing.
Program 7.2.5	Improve pedestrian access to the BART Station through better signing and improvements on Happy Valley Road, such as completing walkway gaps and enhanced pedestrian crosswalks.
Program 7.2.6	Develop and utilize design guidelines for walkways and multiuse paths to accommodate all users.

Policy 7.3	Implement a walkway network with a variety of pedestrian facilities suitable to the area’s character.
Program 7.3.1	Develop guidelines for walkways addressing various types of pedestrian environments to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Driveway / walkway intersection crossings</li> <li>▪ Entry routes from street to development</li> <li>▪ Alternatives to walkways, such as delineating a walking route with striping where a traditional walkway would limit access to a business</li> <li>▪ Improvements made as part of adjacent private development</li> <li>▪ Meandering walkways where appropriate and practical</li> </ul>
Program 7.3.2	Develop off-street walkways to provide pedestrian linkages with Mount Diablo Boulevard, other downtown streets, and downtown’s natural features.
Program 7.3.3	Develop connections between properties and streets and in between properties to shorten pedestrian and bicycle travel by considering internal pathways through new development sites and connections to adjacent developments.
Program 7.3.4	Assess the feasibility of a pedestrian connection between Brook Street and the Methodist Church parking lot using the private East Street.
Program 7.3.5	Ensure connections are identified to Lafayette trails per the Trails Master Plan, and ensure that connections to regional trails are provided and marked where appropriate.
Policy 7.4	Provide public information and education about walking to, from, and within the downtown.
Program 7.4.1	Provide pedestrian route information to residents, visitors, and downtown employees and employers on a regular basis on the City’s website and in Vistas. This will include walking distance and time information, such as “BART to the Library.”
Program 7.4.2	Post pedestrian route maps to educate residents, visitors, and downtown employees and employers about walking options.
Program 7.4.3	Work with the Chamber of Commerce to develop promotional programs that encourage walking in the downtown.

**Figure 16. Pedestrian and Bicycle Network**



## Bicycles

### The Existing Context

There are a variety of existing bicycle facilities connecting the downtown with the rest of Lafayette and region. Many of the same factors that make Lafayette potentially a very walkable city also potentially make it a very bikeable city for riders of various ages and abilities and who ride for different reasons. Recreational users cover all age groups from children to adults to senior citizens. Recreational trips can range from a 50-mile weekend group rides, to a family outing along a quiet bike path, and all levels in between. Utilitarian trips include commuter cyclists, which are a primary focus of state and federal bicycle funding, as well as cyclists going to school, shopping or running other errands. Like the walkway network, gaps in the current bikeway network diminish the ability, desirability, and comfort of bicycling.

### Types of bicycle facilities:

- Class I facilities are off-street bicycle / multi-use paths. These are the Lafayette-Moraga Trail, the First Street path between Golden Gate Way and School Street, and a short path connecting Mount Diablo Boulevard at Town Center to the south side of the BART Station.

- Class II facilities are on-street striped and signed bicycle lanes. These exist on Mount Diablo Boulevard except between Dolores Drive / Mountain View Drive and First Street, where there is insufficient width for the required five-foot lane. Sharrows have been painted on the street in this area to indicate that vehicles and bicycles share the travel lanes. In the East End the eastbound bike lane ends at Diablo Court; sharrows are in place east of this point. Westbound from Pleasant Hill Road to approximately the hotel, there are sharrows, after which the bike lane begins. Outside the planning area, but important to downtown bicycle circulation, are the bicycle lanes on Deer Hill Road between Happy Valley Road and Pleasant Hill Road and on Pleasant Hill Road between Deer Hill Road and Olympic Boulevard.
- Class III facilities are generally referred to as a ‘bike route’ that allows shared use with motor vehicle traffic and is identified only by signing. Caltrans does not state minimum widths for bike routes, but recommends that designated bike routes ‘should offer a higher degree of service than alternative streets’ by providing direct connections between existing segments, by providing traffic control devices compatible with cyclists (such as bicycle detector loops), by having street parking eliminated, or by having a higher degree of maintenance than other streets. Class III bike routes are not required to, but may have striped shoulders.

The Downtown Bicycle Bypass is a critical component of the existing bikeways network. This designated route provides access to and through the downtown for less experienced riders or riders who do not feel comfortable in traffic. This route helps make bicycling to BART and downtown for errands and shopping a viable option for less experienced riders.

**What the DSP Proposes**

The downtown’s location, amenities, and terrain make it a desirable route and destination for local and regional bicycle travel. To facilitate biking, the following elements are needed: continuous designated bikeways on key streets; bicycle actuated signals; relatively level terrain; and connections to neighborhoods. Adding bicycle lanes to existing downtown streets – while desirable to improve bicycle circulation – is difficult due to the associated trade-offs requiring some combination of reduced travel lane widths, sidewalk widths, median widths, elimination of on-street parking, or landscape buffers. The DSP incorporates by reference the Master Bikeways Plan.

<b>Goal 8</b>	<u>Getting Around – Bicycles.</u> Develop a bicycle network and associated facilities to serve the downtown.
<b>Policy 8.1</b>	Implement the City’s Bikeways Master Plan.
<b>Program 8.1.1</b>	Continue to improve bicycle circulation between the downtown and residential neighborhoods.
<b>Program 8.1.2</b>	Assess the feasibility of improving the bicycle connection between the Lafayette-Moraga Trail, schools, and BART Station.

Policy 8.2	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require ample, visible, and secure bicycle parking in all public facilities and community spaces, and new development for short-term and long-term parking needs.
Program 8.2.1	Promote end-of-trip support facilities, such as lockers, changing rooms, and showers, based on the size and type of new development.
Program 8.2.2	Develop connections between properties and streets to shorten pedestrian and bicycle travel by considering internal pathways through new development sites.
Program 8.2.3	Promote easily accessible bicycle parking and support facilities and services, including a bike share program at existing and proposed multifamily developments in and near downtown.

Policy 8.3	Provide public information and education about bicycle travel to, from, and within the downtown for bicyclists and motorists.
Program 8.3.1	Provide bicycle route and parking information to residents, visitors, and downtown employees and employers on a regular basis on the City’s website and in Vistas.
Program 8.3.2	Post bicycle route and parking maps in the downtown to educate residents, visitors, and downtown employees and employers about bicycle options.
Program 8.3.3	Work with the Chamber of Commerce to develop promotional programs that encourage biking in the downtown.

## Transit

Lafayette is served currently by a limited variety of systems, making transit a possible option for reducing vehicular travel.

### The Existing Context

**BART.** The downtown is fortunate to have a regional transit system in its Core. Much of it is within a half-mile, or a 10- to 15-minute walk of the Station’s south entrance. The Station is on the Yellow Line between Pittsburg / Bay Point through Oakland and San Francisco to Millbrae and San Francisco International Airport. In 2008, the average weekday entries and exits at the Station were approximately 6,730 riders. The Station’s main parking lots are along Deer Hill Road, although they are easily accessed from Happy Valley Road and Oak Hill Road. There are 1,526 off-street parking spaces, including 380 monthly permit spaces. There is a smaller parking lot on the south side of the Station accessed from Happy Valley Road.



Bicycle accessibility is from Mount Diablo Boulevard, Happy Valley Road or Oak Hill Road; however, none of these streets have Class II bike lanes around the Station. There is the Class I path through the Town Center project. The Station has open-air racks for 80 bicycles and weatherproof lockers for another 30 bicycles. Pedestrian accessibility for people between the downtown and Station is good. Sharrows are on Happy Valley Road between Deer Hill Road and Mount Diablo Boulevard.

There is a sidewalk along the east side of Happy Valley Road between Mount Diablo Boulevard and the south parking lot, and there is the path through the Town Center project connecting Mount Diablo Boulevard at Lafayette Circle West to the Station. There is also a sidewalk from Happy Valley Road through BART's south parking lot to the south BART Station entrance, which is ADA accessible with a ramp. An enhanced striped crosswalk with curb bulbs, overhead lighting, and in-pavement flashers connects the sidewalk on the west side of Happy Valley Road to the Station.

The County Connection. The CCTA's County Connection provides bus service to the downtown by three routes; the average weekday ridership on all three routes in 2008 was 970:

- Route 6 connects the Lafayette BART Station with the Orinda BART Station by way of Moraga
- Route 25 connects Lafayette BART Station with the Walnut Creek BART Station by way of Mount Diablo Boulevard through the downtown
- Route 250 provides limited service between the Lafayette BART Station and St. Mary's College in Moraga.
- In addition to the three fixed routes, there is supplemental service along Mount Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road for area schools on school days between El Nido Ranch Road and Burton Valley School

Lamorinda School Bus Program. The communities of Lafayette, Orinda and Moraga have a cooperative program to provide school bus service. The program's goal is to mitigate traffic congestion on roadways south of SR 24 by reducing the number of family vehicle trips to and from school. The program did serve Lafayette Elementary School, but it was discontinued due to low ridership. The program does serve Stanley Middle School located immediately east of the downtown.

City of Lafayette Spirit Van. The City operates the Spirit Van program as part of its senior services.

### What the DSP Proposes

The DSP strongly supports transit to provide options for getting around the downtown and providing mobility for all ages. Better transit connections and frequency could connect residents to the downtown and BART and reduce the need to drive to, from, and within the downtown. Equally important, improved transit could offer an alternative to driving for downtown employees. Many people have suggested that, if feasible, a downtown shuttle would improve downtown transit.

A shuttle running the length of Mount Diablo Boulevard in the downtown and the section of Moraga Road north of St. Mary's Road would provide a transit option that could reduce traffic congestion. The level of reduction would depend on the levels of service and ridership. A shuttle might also ameliorate the need to make multiple car trips within the downtown. A person could park in the less-congested East End and use a shuttle to make stops in the Downtown Core. Such a program, however, would be a significant undertaking for a city the size of Lafayette with limited resources. The experience of other similarly situated suburban communities with shuttles has not been particularly encouraging.

<b>Goal 9</b>	<b>Getting Around – Transit.</b> Support a transit network to serve the downtown.
Policy 9.1	Encourage high-frequency bus service connecting key downtown destinations with the BART Station, neighborhoods, and schools outside the downtown, and neighboring cities.
Program 9.1.1	Determine the feasibility of a local shuttle service and related support facilities, such as park-and-ride lots, to serve downtown and BART.
Program 9.1.2	Work with transit providers and transportation funders to develop a strategy for providing increased headways and connections.
Policy 9.2	Support transportation options for seniors and persons with disabilities.
Program 9.2.1	Incorporate transit supportive infrastructure, such as benches, trash receptacles, and all-weather pavement at stops.
Policy 9.3	Encourage transit as an alternative to driving.
Program 9.3.1	Provide transit route and parking information to residents, visitors, and downtown employees and employers on a regular basis on the City’s website and in Vistas.
Program 9.3.2	Post transit information and maps to educate residents, visitors, and downtown employees and employers about transit options.
Program 9.3.3	Prepare and distribute current information about commute alternatives using resources such as <a href="http://511ContraCosta.org">511ContraCosta.org</a> .
Program 9.3.4	Work with the Chamber of Commerce to develop promotional programs encouraging the use of transit.

## Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management (“TDM”) refers to strategies that change travel behavior to increase efficiency. Many factors affect people’s transportation decisions: convenience and safety; cost; and land use factors (such as whether or not schools, parks, and shops are located close to residential neighborhoods). A goal of TDM is to reduce the quantity of vehicle trips to lessen the impact of traffic congestion, while increasing the use of alternative modes of travel. Increased use of alternatives to driving produces a more vibrant and connected downtown, supports public investment in pedestrian, and bicycle and transit facilities and services. TDM does not assume that all trips to the downtown can be accomplished by walking, biking, or taking transit, and it may provide incentives to encourage the use of alternative modes. The DSP supports a variety of strategies to maximize the use of non-automobile modes and manage the demand for parking:

User Information and Marketing. Motorists need convenient and accurate information on parking availability and price, including what parking facilities exist near a destination, whether spaces are available in a particular facility at a particular time, the price they will need to pay, and whether there are less expensive alternatives nearby. Good information can help improve user convenience and security and increase the functional supply of parking.

Commuter Financial Incentives. Commuters are offered financial incentives to use alternative travel modes and reduce their use of parking facilities. One type is “Parking Cash Out” where commuters are offered a free or subsidized parking space with the option of choosing the cash equivalent instead. Another example is “Transit Benefits” where employers help fund their employees’ transit and rideshare fares.

Transportation Management Associations. These are private, non-profit, member-controlled organizations offering transportation services in a particular area, such as a commercial area, and can provide a variety of services that encourage more efficient use of transportation and parking resources.

Car-Sharing. Automobile rental services, such as Carshare or Zipcar, are intended to substitute for private vehicle ownership. It makes occasional use of a vehicle affordable while providing an incentive to minimize driving and rely on alternative travel options as much as possible.

Commute Trip Reduction Programs. 511ContraCosta.org offers a variety of programs to encourage employees to utilize alternatives to driving alone.

**Goal 10** Getting Around – Transportation Demand Management. Improve downtown circulation through TDM strategies.

Policy 10.1	Encourage local and regional programs to support alternative modes of travel, recognizing that walking, biking, using transit, and parking in the right location may mitigate traffic congestion and preserve the small town character.
Program 10.1.1	Encourage and support a range of alternative transportation options.
Program 10.1.2	Work with the Chamber of Commerce to develop and promote informational materials and programs for residents, visitors, and downtown employees and employers to encourage alternatives to driving.
Program 10.1.3	Working with 511ContraCosta.org, periodically survey employers and employees to better understand commute patterns and tailor programs appropriately to discourage driving alone.

**Policy 10.2** Encourage the use of commuter financial incentives through the development review process.

**Policy 10.3** Investigate car-sharing programs and funding sources to establish a program.

## PARKING

Parking, like traffic congestion, has long been an issue for downtown Lafayette. The 1961 Lafayette Design Project said: *Among the most critical problems of the Lafayette business area and of most communities, is that of insufficient parking.*

As part of the DSP process, more information on the type, location and amount of parking in the Downtown Core was needed. The Parking Analysis for the Downtown Core (January 2011) was completed (Appendix G). It includes:

- Parking Inventory
- On-Street Parking Occupancy Survey
- Parking Demand Assessment
- Summary of the 2007 Employee and Employer Survey
- Lafayette's Parking Problems
- What Other Cities Do



### Parking Inventory

There are 5,445 on-street and off-street parking spaces in the Downtown Core and its immediate vicinity. The majority of these spaces – 81 percent are located in off-street parking lots scattered throughout the area. Only 44 spaces are in off-street, City-owned parking lots and available without restriction to the public as opposed to patron-only lots. As documented in Appendix G, this supply of public parking in the Downtown Core is extremely low when compared to other communities.

### Parking Demand Assessment

The assessment was undertaken to answer the following question: does the parking in the Downtown Core meet City codes? To calculate the parking requirements, data on the number, square footage and types of business as well as the number of employees was required. Unfortunately, the City does not maintain a listing of all its business and the list prepared for the now-defunct business registration program is outdated. Therefore, the following reports were used:

- 2007 Employee and Employer Parking and Transportation Survey
- City and County assessor's records
- Background reports prepared for the DSP

### Parking Occupancy Survey

The survey conducted for the short-term (less than two hours), on-street metered spaces in the Downtown Core reveals that these spaces are largely underutilized, with occupancy rates ranging from less than 10 percent to 77 percent. This is lower than the optimum industry standard of 85 percent occupancy. Parking occupancy is the number of spaces per block which are being utilized in a given moment in time. According to industry standards, if a block has an average occupancy equal to 85 percent, then the price of parking for that block is considered optimal. Lower occupancy rates may suggest that the price of parking is too high; higher occupancy rates may require an increase in meter rates. Occupancy rates for non-metered spaces are also relatively low.

While these reports were useful, they did not contain the data that would help answer the question. For many years, people have surmised that the downtown has a shortage of parking spaces. Downtown parking is often cited as a problem in public opinion surveys. It was important to arrive at a definitive conclusion based on actual numbers rather than perception. The assessment looked at each parcel using publicly available sources of information and estimated the parking demand for each property based on current land uses.

The Assessment made the following findings:

- There is no magic bullet to solve the City’s parking challenges. Rather, it will take a series of small actions to effectively and efficiently manage parking in the Downtown Core.
- Taking the Downtown Core as a whole, there is adequate parking to meet City parking standards. The problem is not how much parking the Downtown Core contains; it is where the parking is located, how accessible it is, and how it is regulated or restricted.
- Parking in the Downtown Core is not evenly distributed amongst the blocks. There are blocks in the Downtown Core that fall short of parking required by the City codes.
- The central portion of the Core is more under-parked than its fringes. This area includes Plaza Way, western Golden Gate Way, portions of the Shield Block (Lafayette Circle) and properties north of Mount Diablo Boulevard between South Thompson Road and Oak Hill Road. Many parcels in this area are narrow and substandard in size. They contain older buildings that were built before the City’s incorporation.



- One of the most under parked blocks is historic Plaza Way. This block contains some of the oldest and most historic buildings and properties in Lafayette: the original Lafayette Plaza that was donated by Elam and Margaret Brown in 1864; and the Wayside Inn and the Pioneer Store buildings. It may not be feasible for businesses in this block to meet the City’s parking requirements given the block’s historic value and the City’s desire to maintain its unique character.
- There are off-street private parking lots that are hardly used in blocks where there is a shortage of parking. Examples of this are the Oak Bridge lot and the lot next to the Park Theater on Golden Gate Way. Together, these two lots contain over 40 spaces which are rarely used. Another example - the parking lots located behind the businesses on Mount Diablo Boulevard between the Clocktower building and Roundup Saloon. Current access to these mostly vacant lots is through narrow alleyways from Mount Diablo Boulevard. Access could be improved, e.g., from the Clocktower lot. Signage could be installed to alert drivers to the availability of parking spaces or if the lots are full.
- The City’s parking regulations need to be updated. The parking standards (number of spaces required for different land uses) was last updated in 1989 – over twenty years ago. Also, the high parking in lieu fee may be a disincentive to development and the City may not be able to collect sufficient funds to acquire public parking lots.

- There is an acute shortage of off-street public parking. Lots offering full or limited access to the public are:
  - Lot at the northwest corner of Mount Diablo Boulevard and Oak Hill Road: 21 spaces. Half the spaces are leased to the adjacent restaurant and cannot be used by the public.
  - Library and Learning Center lot and garage: 77 spaces intended to serve library patrons.
  - The old Library lot: 40 spaces. These spaces may or may not be available to the public in the future when the property is redeveloped.
  - Lafayette Elementary School lot: 41 spaces intended to serve the school.
  - Gazebo lot located at Golden Gate Way and Mount Diablo Boulevard: 30 spaces. All spaces are leased to nearby businesses to help them meet their parking requirements, and are not available to the public.
  - Lafayette Mercantile: 130 spaces available to the public on weekday evenings and all day on weekends.
  - Moraga Road lot: 33 spaces
- Employees of downtown businesses do not have the benefit of dedicated, off-site, long term parking nor are they routinely offered incentives to use alternative modes of transport. Employees generally park: in the same lot as their place of business – which may take away parking from customers; in timed spaces on commercial streets – which requires them to move their vehicles periodically; or on residential streets – which upsets the residents.
- On-street metered parking spaces on Mount Diablo Boulevard are underutilized in many locations (less than 63 percent average occupancy weekdays and less than 77 percent weekends). Reasons could be:
  - Free parking is still available on private lots or unmetered side streets
  - People do not like paying for parking in a small town like Lafayette
  - Parking meters may be priced too high
- There is currently no way to keep track of the number and types of businesses and the number of employees in the downtown. This information is useful for many reasons:
  - Emergency contact information for Fire and Police
  - Determination of parking adequacy
  - Publicizing carpool, vanpool, rideshare and other TDM incentives
  - Identification of businesses that are lacking in the downtown (economic development)
  - Outreach to businesses, employers and employees for various City activities (surveys, studies, informational campaigns, etc.)

<b>Goal 11</b>	<b>Getting Around – Parking.</b> Support adequate parking in the downtown.
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Policy 11.1	Increase the supply of off-street public parking.
Program 11.1.1	Pursue opportunities to acquire land for public parking focusing on Plaza Way/Golden Gate Way, Shield Block, and on Mount Diablo Boulevard between Happy Valley Road and Oak Hill Road.
Program 11.1.2	Continue to explore shared parking arrangements with property owners and developers.
Program 11.1.3	Review off-street public parking proposals for on-site and off-site pedestrian and bicycle parking.

Policy 11.2	Increase the accessibility and use of existing off-street parking.
Short Term -	
Program 11.2.1	Work with owners of underutilized parking lots to allow the public and/or employees to park in those lots. As a priority, contact the owners of the parking lots on Golden Gate Way.
Program 11.2.2	Work with owners of adjacent properties to connect their parking lots. As a priority, contact the owners of properties fronting Mount Diablo Boulevard between Lafayette Circle West and Lafayette Circle East to determine their interest in connecting the lots to improve access and ease circulation.
Program 11.2.3	Provide feasible incentives to property owners who participate with the City in using underutilized parking lots.
Long Term -	
Program 11.2.4	Work with banks and similar businesses, particularly in the Core, to allow the public to use their lots after business hours to increase the supply of parking in the evenings.
Program 11.2.5	Encourage businesses and nearby residential uses to enter into agreements that would allow parking to be shared.

Policy 11.3	Focus efforts on preserving historic Plaza Way (Moraga Road to the Park Theater).
Short Term -	
Program 11.3.1	Work with the owners of the Oak Bridge lot, the lot next to the Park Theater, and others to allow public usage of those lots.
Program 11.3.2	Consider providing flexibility for businesses in the area in meeting the City's parking requirements, given the block's historic and unique character.
Program 11.3.3	Work with Plaza Way property owners to connect their parking lots.
Long Term -	
Program 11.3.4	Acquire land for public parking.

Policy 11.4	Work with businesses to address parking for the employees.
<i>Short Term -</i>	
Program 11.4.1	Develop options for allowing employees to park for longer hours. As a test case, and with the cooperation of business owners, issue permits to employees of Plaza Way businesses and identify off-site areas where they can park.
Program 11.4.2	Work with businesses to provide, educate, and promote alternative modes of transportation, such as pre-tax transit ticket purchase programs and ride share.
<i>Long Term -</i>	
Program 11.4.3	Facilitate agreements between businesses and residents of nearby neighborhoods that would allow employees with permits to park on residential streets. Funds collected pursuant to the agreements would be used to improve the neighborhood streets and provide neighborhood streetscape amenities.
Program 11.4.4	Acquire land for long-term employee parking.
Policy 11.5	Update parking regulations.
Program 11.5.1	Review the City's parking regulations for updating to current standards, including parking requirements for different uses and the parking in-lieu fee.

Policy 11.6	Continue to look at methods for improving parking supply and accessibility.
Program 11.6.1	Consider the creation of a Downtown Core Parking Improvement District.
Program 11.6.2	<p>Undertake these tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Periodically update the parking inventory.</li> <li>▪ Monitor parking occupancy on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>▪ Adopt a method to track the number and type of businesses and employees and quantity of off-street parking, such as a business license tax or registration program.</li> <li>▪ Consider establishing time limits for spaces that are not timed in commercial areas, such as: Second Street, Golden Gate Way, and west side of Dewing Avenue immediately south of Mount Diablo Boulevard.</li> <li>▪ Review the timing of the existing on-street parking spaces to ensure they are consistent and effective.</li> <li>▪ Do not stripe parking spaces in residential areas and away from Mount Diablo Boulevard to avoid reducing the effective number of parking spaces.</li> </ul>
Policy 11.7	Consider alternative approaches to parking.
Program 11.7.1	Develop an option for project proponents to demonstrate alternative ways of meeting parking demands, such as using parking reserved for alternative fuel vehicles and compact spaces.
Program 11.7.2	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include standards for charging stations in new development.



## 7. PUBLIC REALM

Public realm means the physical facilities – such as streets, walkways, and parks – and services – such as schools, government and utilities – that are accessible to the public. These facilities and services are provided to serve the needs of the community. The character and operation of the public realm is vitally important to the quality of life in the community.

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### STREETSCAPE

The quality of downtown streets is currently mixed. Comfort, safety and aesthetics can vary widely by location. Along the central portion of Mount Diablo Boulevard, in front of the Lafayette Park Hotel, and sections of Lafayette Circle, the street environment is conducive to walking and shopping. There is shade from mature trees, medians with landscaping and banners, ample walkway width, consistent quality of street lighting and street furniture, and on-street parking. In other areas, these attributes are intermittent or absent. Walkways are narrow or in poor condition, there are few street trees and other improvements, and off-street parking is often immediately adjacent to walkways. Bicycle facilities are often lacking.

The Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan established the foundation for streetscape improvements. The overall goal is to improve the long-term visual image and livability of the downtown. The Master Plan states the following objectives to achieve this goal:

- *Create a more unified visual image for the downtown by strengthening and enhancing its appearance, usefulness, safety and amenities through unified plantings of trees and other plants, special paving on sidewalks and crosswalks, pedestrian lighting, and coordinated street furniture.*
- *Reinforce the visual identity of the individual sub-districts and streets of downtown Lafayette.*
- *Distinguish the Core Area shopping district through harmonious street trees; distinctive paving in sidewalks; crosswalks and major intersections; and special pedestrian lights and street furniture.*
- *Clarify and enhance the pedestrian environment through improved safety and comfort.*



- *Improve vehicular safety through the addition of tree planted median islands and where possible the separation of vehicular and pedestrian areas.*
- *Strengthen the pattern of the most successful existing trees to achieve greater unity while maintaining diversity, richness and seasonal change.*
- *Strengthen the visual entrances to Lafayette from the various major streets and roads.*
- *Select plants and other materials suitable for Lafayette relative to climate, durability, ease of long-term maintenance, visual compatibility, and water conservation.*

<b>Goal 12</b>	<b>Public Realm – Streetscape.</b> Enhance the downtown streetscape.
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Policy 12.1	Improve streetscape functionality, safety, aesthetics, and sustainability.
Program 12.1.1	Develop standards for public improvements, when budgets allow, to include embellishments and details, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Embedded decoration in paving surfaces</li> <li>▪ Painted or decorated utility covers</li> <li>▪ Living walls</li> <li>▪ Sundials and clocks</li> <li>▪ Drinking fountains</li> <li>▪ Seating</li> <li>▪ Low walls, fences, or landscape berms around surface parking lots</li> <li>▪ Decorative and/or interactive water features</li> <li>▪ Interpretative signage</li> </ul>
Program 12.1.2	Update and implement the Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan. Enlarge the area covered by this Plan to include the commercial districts within the DSP Area.
Program 12.1.3	Consider “green street” techniques to reduce and treat stormwater close to its source in streetscape and other public improvements.

## PARKS AND OTHER SPACES

Parks and other types of outdoor public spaces that are available to the public are vitally important to a downtown. They enrich the built environment of a downtown by encouraging activity and providing pleasant spaces for sitting and gatherings. Parks provides areas for passive and active recreation activities. Other types of public spaces include plazas, gardens, courts, and squares.

The only park within the downtown is Brook Street Park, a small active neighborhood park on 0.4 acres in Downtown Residential Neighborhood II. It has a play structure, shade structure, and tables. While not within the planning area, Leigh Creekside Park provides space for recreation accessible to the downtown. It is a passive neighborhood park on 0.6 acres. It has picnic tables, benches, lawn, creekside views and informal paths. Each of these parks averages approximately 10 people per day or 3,500 visits annually. The General Plan has a goal of five acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. There is currently a shortage of 44 acres within the city.

Other public spaces in the downtown:

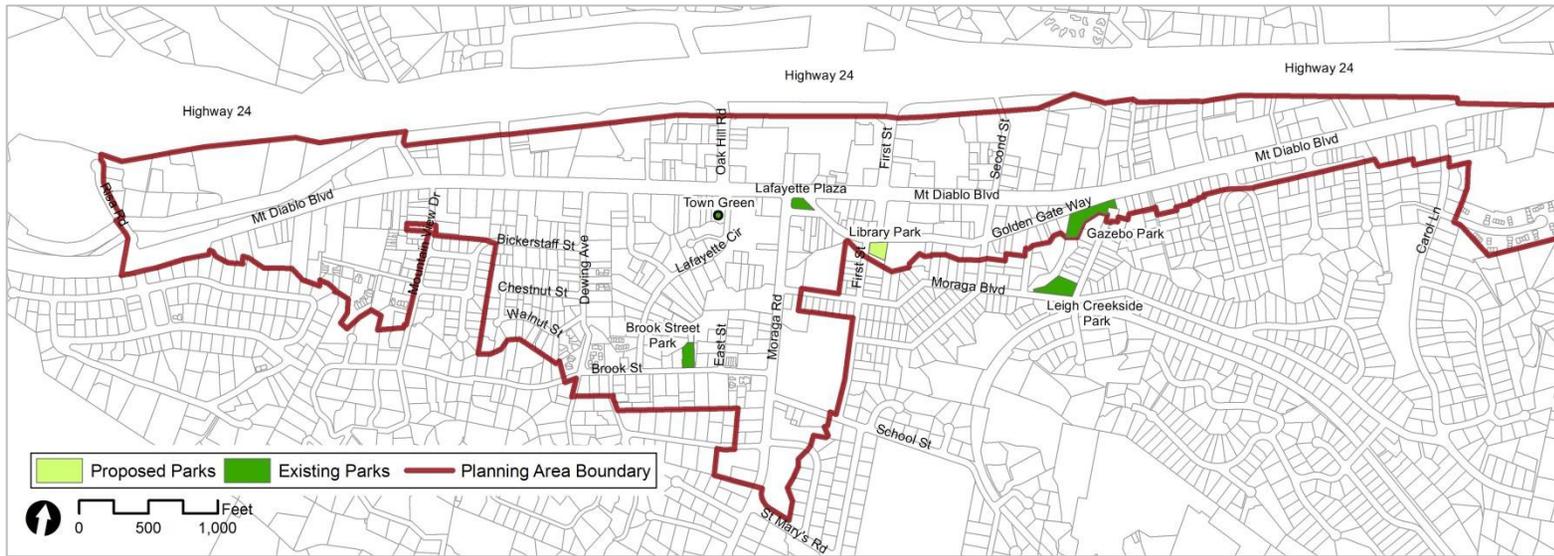
- Lafayette Elementary School provides space for active recreation uses and community gatherings.
- Lafayette Plaza is at the historic heart of the downtown. The current Plaza was redeveloped in 2001 as part of the Mount Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road improvement project. The space is used for community gatherings, concerts, and festivals, and it serves as downtown’s main “green public space”.
- The Library and Learning Center has four outdoor spaces designed for community activities: Main Plaza at the entrance; Reading Court and Amphitheater on First Street; and South Plaza at First Street and Golden Gate Way.

- The Gazebo is located at the east end of Golden Gate Way at Mount Diablo Boulevard. It is a traditional gazebo structure surrounded by landscaping. The remainder of the site is used for public permit parking. It is rarely used for community gatherings, but instead serves mainly as a point of visual interest on Mount Diablo Boulevard. A small garden is on the property that overlooks the creek, and it and Gazebo landscaping are maintained by the Lafayette Garden Club.

Given the size of the city and the level of activity in the downtown, there is a shortage of parks and public spaces. The DSP seeks to augment existing spaces that will allow and encourage the community to gather for social and cultural events and to complement retail, office and residential uses. New parks and public spaces can meet these objectives by being centrally located and complimentary to commercial and residential uses. The City does not intend to use eminent domain to acquire properties for park uses.



Figure 17. Existing and Proposed Park Sites



<p><b>Goal 13</b></p>	<p><b>Public Realm – Parks and Public Spaces.</b> Develop, preserve, promote, and enhance downtown parks and other public spaces to accommodate activities for all ages and maximize the use of other amenities and services.</p>
<p>Policy 13.1</p>	<p>Create a network of parks, public spaces, paths, and trails to provide connectivity, gathering places, and recreational opportunities in the downtown.</p>
<p>Program 13.1.1</p>	<p>Provide new parks and other public spaces to enhance the sense of community and provide amenities supporting downtown uses. Proposed parks include: “Library Park”, “Town Green”, and “Gazebo Park.”</p>
<p>Program 13.1.2</p>	<p>Include standards in the downtown design guidelines that encourage the development of public spaces and connections.</p>
<p>Program 13.1.3</p>	<p>Ensure adequate funding to maintain parks and other public spaces.</p>

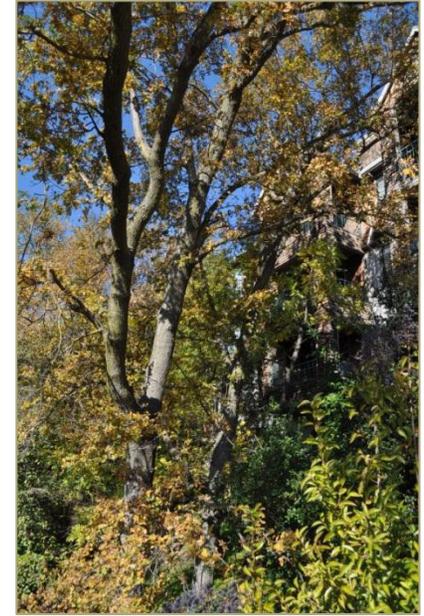
## TREES

The DSP supports the concepts described in *Trees for Lafayette* for the downtown:

*The compositional elements of the developed landscape are buildings, pavement and introduced plants. In the most densely developed areas such as the commercial center, trees stand out in sharp contrast to structures and pavement. Because of this contrast as well as their relative scarcity, trees take on important roles as design elements. They serve as landmarks, pinpointing and emphasizing locations... Street trees unify and bring harmony to a street of varied uses and architectural forms... Trees can also reinforce the importance of trees relative to their size and scale. Other trees humanize the scale of plazas and shopping centers...*

- *Trees for Lafayette*. Russell A. Beatty. 1977

Trees are a significant natural resource that significantly contributes to its character and ambience. While most are part of the developed downtown landscape, there are some examples of native species, particularly within the creek corridors. But many were part of the original native landscape and the downtown grew up around them. Oaks are particularly prevalent in the older commercial and residential areas south of Mount Diablo Boulevard between Mountain View Drive and Moraga Road. Creek corridors support riparian tree species. The Zoning Ordinance includes tree protection requirements for some native species and includes protection for all trees within the downtown.



### Goal 14

Public Realm – Trees. Preserve downtown trees.

Policy 14.1	Through the development process, preserve significant and existing trees, and require additional trees and landscaping materials which are water-conserving and suited to Lafayette’s climates.
Program 14.1.1	Implement a public information program to inform downtown property owners, businesses, and residents about tree protection.
Program 14.1.2	Update <i>Trees for Lafayette</i> as a guide to appropriate tree species for the downtown.

## CREEKS

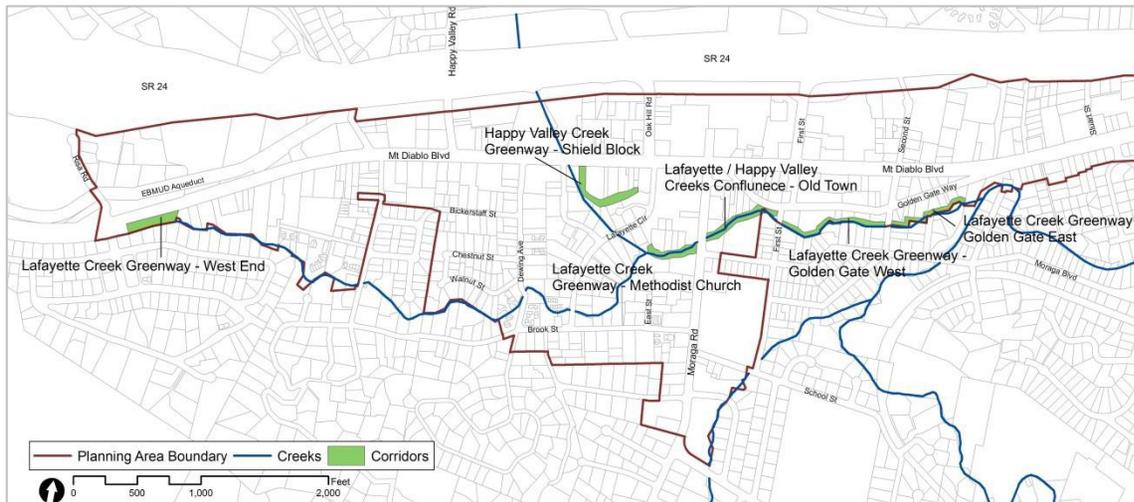
The creeks in the downtown are an asset not enjoyed by many cities. Lafayette is fortunate to have this asset. The creeks help define the downtown's character and reinforce the city's semi-rural image.

Sections of three major creeks run through downtown. The section of Lafayette Creek begins near Mount Diablo Boulevard and Village Center. It runs generally parallel with the south side of Mount Diablo Boulevard and north of Brook Street. After it crosses under Moraga Road, it runs to the south of Golden Gate Way until it meets Las Trampas Creek near the Gazebo. Las Trampas Creek runs east a short distance, and then drops south out of the planning area. Happy Valley Creek enters the planning area just east of the BART station, goes south through the Town Center project and under Mount Diablo Boulevard. It daylight in the Shield Block, is culverted under La Fiesta Square, and joins Lafayette Creek near Moraga Road.

Most of the creeks are in private ownership. The channelized section of Lafayette Creek between Moraga Road and Third Street is owned or controlled by Contra Costa County Flood Control District. The District also holds an easement at the confluence of Lafayette and Las Trampas Creeks near the Gazebo. The City owns a small section of Lafayette Creek east of Village Center and at the confluence of the two creeks at the Gazebo. All three creeks generally have flow all year, and conditions provide enough soil moisture to support riparian habitat. Riparian areas function both as wildlife corridors and drainage ways.

Development and other activities near the creeks are controlled by the City's creek setback requirements. Exceptions to the setback requirements may be approved if the property owner holds the City and other public agencies harmless. Development and other activities may also be subject to requirements from the County Flood Control District, California Department of Fish and Game, Federal Emergency Management Administration, and/or US Army, Corps of Engineers.

Figure 18. Creek Corridors



**Goal 15**

Public Realm – Creeks. Protect and enhance downtown creeks.

**Policy 15.1**

Preserve the natural resource value of the creeks.

**Program 15.1.1**

Evaluate projects within and adjacent to the creek corridors on the following priorities (in priority order):

- Flood protection
- Preservation of riparian habitat
- Visual access
- Opportunities for education about the creek’s riparian resources
- Physical access to the top of creek banks

**Policy 15.2**

Preserve creeks as a significant contributor to the downtown character.

**Program 15.2.1**

Prepare a Downtown Creeks Preservation, Restoration and Development Plan. The Plan should establish a long term vision for downtown creeks and should address the following:

- Creek setbacks
- Relationship with adjacent development
- Existing trees
- Damage prevention
- Creek preservation and restoration
- Creek stewardship
- Nuisance abatement
- Public access
- Pathways
- Other public safety and environmental concerns



## PUBLIC ART

All great downtowns, whether they are in small villages or major cities, have public art. Art unifies a public space and creates a sense of place. For this reason, the City has a program to contribute to the cultural enrichment of the community by adding public art that is of the highest quality, visually stimulating and of enduring value. This program requires the installation of public art on-site for construction or exterior alteration of a structure totaling 10,000 square feet or more. The installation may be allowed at an off-site public place, and the cost of the artwork will be not less than one percent of the construction or alteration cost. The program also provides for an in-lieu fee of one percent to be paid to the City's Public Art Fund.

Examples of public art in private development include the fountain and parking lot sculptures at Lafayette Mercantile, wall fountain and mosaic at La Fiesta Square, and mosaic at Safeway. There are three pieces of art on public property in the downtown: General Lafayette at Lafayette Plaza; Speechless in the Library's Reading Plaza; and Optical Streams in the Library's Children's Activity Deck. The Library's interior public spaces hold the remainder of the City's public art collection. More art in the downtown will enhance its character and make it an even greater downtown.



### Goal 16

Public Realm – Public Art. Contribute to the cultural enrichment of the community through public art in the downtown.

Policy 16.1	Promote the expression and expansion of the arts in the downtown.
Program 16.1.1	Adopt and implement a Public Art Master Plan for the downtown. This Master Plan will designate the downtown as the first priority for the Public Art Fund.
Program 16.1.2	Introduce interactive public art in downtown parks and other public spaces, particularly artworks that can be used by children for play.

## PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### City of Lafayette

The City of Lafayette provides most municipal services: land use planning, engineering, parks and recreation, and public works. The City Office is located in the West End at 3675 Mount Diablo Boulevard. Administrative, planning and engineering services are located there.

The City provides local parks and recreation services at five facilities: Community Center at 500 St. Mary's Road; Community Park at 480 St. Mary's Road; Buckeye Fields at 711 St. Mary's Road; Brook Street Park one block west of Moraga Road on Brook Street; and Leigh Creekside Park at the corner of Moraga Boulevard and 4th Street.

The City's Senior Services Center is at 500 St. Mary's Road. Programs offered include classes, activities, and referrals and assistance for people 55 years and older. The City provides a van service for seniors.

The City Corporation Yard is located outside the downtown at 3001 Camino Diablo. The Public Works Services division maintains the public rights-of-way, including medians and landscaping, within the downtown. Public Works also administers the Core Area Maintenance Assessment District.

Police protection services are provided through a contract between the City and Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department. The Police Services Office is located at 3675 Mount Diablo Boulevard.

### Regional Services and Facilities

#### Fire and Emergency Medical Response

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District ("CCCFPD") provides fire protection and emergency medical services. There are two open stations in Lafayette that provide services to the downtown. Station 15 is located in the East End District at 3338 Mount Diablo Boulevard, and Station 17 is at 620 St. Mary's Road. Ambulance service is contracted by CCCFPD to a private company.

### Schools

The community is served by the Lafayette School District and Acalanes Union High School District. The downtown is served by Lafayette Elementary School at 950 Moraga Road and Stanley Middle School at 3455 School Street two blocks east of Moraga Road. Acalanes High School at 1200 Pleasant Hill Road is the closest high school to the downtown.

#### Building Inspection

Contra Costa County provides building inspection services to the community through a contract with the City. The County's Lamorinda office is located at 3685 Mount Diablo Boulevard.

**Regional Parks, Trails and Recreation**

Regional parks and recreation services are provided by East Bay Municipal Utility District (“EBMUD”) and East Bay Regional Park District (“EBRPD”). EBMUD owns and maintains the Lafayette Reservoir, about one-quarter mile west of the downtown. EBRPD has the Lafayette-Moraga Trail, Briones Regional Park, and Las Trampas Regional Wilderness. The Trail is near the southern edge of the downtown, and it is part of the Lamorinda Loop Trail. There is also an EBRPD trail that links Leigh Creekside Park, Gazebo, crosses Mount Diablo Boulevard, and continues north through the EBMUD Aqueduct right-of-way to Deer Hill Road. At the time of preparation of the DSP, the EBMUD Aqueduct Pathway Study is underway.

**Library**

Library services are provided by Contra Costa County Library. The City owns the Library and Learning Center at 3491 Mount Diablo Boulevard. Other programming and services at the Library are provided through the Library and Learning Center Foundation and its Glenn Seaborg Learning Consortium.

**Solid Waste Disposal**

The City is a member agency of the Central Contra Costa County Solid Waste Authority which is responsible for franchising overall waste services. Allied Waste provides solid waste collection service. Waste is collected and taken to Contra Costa Transfer and Recovery in Martinez. Valley Waste Management provides recycling service and yard clipping collection; recyclables and clippings are taken to Walnut Creek.

**Storm Drainage and Flood Control**

To comply with the federal Clean Water Act, Contra Costa County, 19 of its incorporated cities – including Lafayette, and the Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (“District”) together formed the Contra Costa Clean Water Program to manage storm drainage and flood control. Creeks serve as the drainage channels, and they are owned and maintained by the City, District, or adjacent private property owners. Portions of the downtown adjacent to or near creeks are within the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (“FEMA”) flood insurance areas: Special Flood Hazard Area Subject to Inundation by 1% Annual Chance Flood or Other Flood Area.

**Utilities**

Potable water is supplied by EBMUD. The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District provides service and operates wastewater facilities. Electricity and natural gas is provided by Pacific Gas & Electric. AT&T and Comcast Cable Communications provide telephone, cable and internet. Various cell phone service providers have facilities in Lafayette.

**Goal 17** Public Realm – Public Facilities and Services. Strive to provide facilities and services that contribute to a sustainable quality of life for all generations.

**Policy 17.1** Consider demonstrated needs identified in assessments and other relevant studies when considering public facilities and programs and other services.

## 8. ECONOMICS

Given the 20-year time frame of the DSP, it is not feasible to estimate funding and costs for the improvements anticipated herein. It is also not the role of the DSP to serve as a budget document. Rather, the DSP establishes the priorities for public improvements and offers a snapshot of what costs and funding sources could be available at the time of the DSP preparation.

### Public Improvement Priorities

The DSP proposes priorities for capital improvements. These improvements are targeted to enhance the downtown for residents, businesses, and visitors by meeting the DSP’s goals, policies, and programs.

**Figure 19. Public Improvement Priorities**

Priority	Project	Why?
1	Public parking lots	Severe shortage of off-street public parking in the Downtown Core, especially in the Plaza Way/Golden Gate Way area.
2	East Mount Diablo Boulevard improvements (Pleasant Hill Road to Second Street) including intermittent landscaped medians	Enhance the aesthetics of the corridor and improve pedestrian and vehicular safety. Unlike in the West End and the Downtown Core, the East End has not seen public investment in infrastructure improvements in recent years.
3	Walkway and sidewalk gap closures throughout the downtown	Pedestrian safety and improved pedestrian circulation are key goals of the DSP.
4	Shield Block improvements (Town Green, pedestrian circulation improvements, street scape and creek corridor enhancements)	Protect and enhance existing character. This area is often considered the best example of Lafayette’s downtown character. The intent is to continue the character of this block by preserving the village scale and ambience, preserving the wooded landscape, enhancing the creek, and providing spaces for community gatherings and events.
5	Golden Gate Way improvements (Library and Gazebo Parks, streetscape and creek corridor enhancements)	Lafayette has a linear downtown with little opportunity to create viable pedestrian-oriented secondary streets. The roadway section starting with Plaza Way at Moraga Road and ending with Golden Gate Way at the Gazebo has the potential to become a truly unique street where retail uses, restaurants, offices, housing and other compatible uses can thrive.

## Funding Sources

A variety of funding sources could be available to finance public improvements as well as their ongoing maintenance. These include private sources, as well as public funding from local, State and federal sources. Some represent available funds that can be expended in the near term, while others depend on development activity to general new tax revenues, competitive grant awards, or the creation of new programs. Throughout the life of the DSP, funding sources must be considered fluid and subject to change.

Sustainable funding sources are necessary to construct the public improvements identified in the DSP and ensure their long-term high quality maintenance. Funding sources are also necessary so the City can target funds for public / private partnerships to enhance the downtown and maintain its economic health.

### General Fund Property and Sales Taxes

The City receives a share of additional sales tax generated by new retail development (one percent of new taxable retail sales), as well as an increment of increased property taxes. These receipts go into the General Fund, and can be spent at the City's discretion. These unrestricted funds are available to cover the increased maintenance costs for new public improvements. The City also receives revenues from a transient occupancy tax, which can be directed towards downtown public improvements.

### Parking Funds

The Parking Fund collects revenues from parking meters and parking citations. It was created to provide additional downtown parking. A portion is dedicated to maintenance. When a project cannot meet its parking requirements, the City can allow the developer to pay a parking in-lieu fee.

### Core Area Assessment District

The downtown is covered by the Core Area Landscaping & Lighting District ("District"). Its purpose is to ensure the ongoing maintenance, operation and servicing of local landscaping and street lighting improvements. The improvements may consist of all or a portion of the public landscaped areas, street lighting and appurtenant facilities within and adjacent to the District. Revenues are used for maintenance. These revenues have not been adequate historically to cover costs; the General Fund or other City funds have been used to supplement assessment revenues.

### Low-Income Housing Tax Credits

A source of affordable housing financing is the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit program available to projects providing rental units affordable to households earning 60 percent or less of the area median Income. The actual amount would depend on the projects, and whether a developer pursues larger credit amounts awarded competitively or small credits available with tax-exempt financing.

### Federal, State, and County Grants

Federal and State governments provide a wide range of competitively awarded grant funds for projects. Categories of projects funded by grants include federal transportation and congestion-related improvements that benefit transit and encourage alternative modes of travel. Federal sources often have a 20 percent local matching funds requirement. Economic development and neighborhood improvement grants are available for public facilities. State initiative funds are available for various projects, including currently available Proposition 1C funds for parks and urban green spaces. There are a range of environmental enhancement programs; some that address air quality or highway landscape may provide opportunities for the future transit corridor.

### **Development Fees**

Parkland and Park Facilities Fees. These fees are charged on new residential development to fund parkland dedication and new park facilities to ensure residents have sufficient access to parks and facilities lands. These funds could be used to finance site acquisition and improvements for new downtown park improvements, if not designated for other park uses, and a similar amount for land acquisition for those parks. The ultimate amount of available parkland impact fees depends upon the level of future housing development.

Walkways Fee. This fee was established to provide a comprehensive system of walkways, curbs, and gutters. The fee is charged on new residential development. The City adopted the Master Walkways Plan with a list of priority walkways improvements needed to support existing and future new development. Once completed, the network of walkways will connect residential areas with public transportation, schools, community amenities, parks, local and regional trail systems, and the downtown.

Drainage Fee. This fee was established to fund a Drainage Master Plan, a citywide study to identify drainage facilities needed to support existing and future new development. The fee is charged for any increase in the total impervious surface area attributable to new residential and commercial development, including expansions to existing development.

Lamorinda Sub-Regional Transportation Fee. This fee is collected on new development in the three communities to mitigate transportation impacts affecting the Lamorinda area. A percentage of the fees collected for Lafayette development stays in Lafayette for public transportation improvements.

### **Revenue Bonds**

Public activities that are revenue generating and create sufficient cash flow to cover operating costs and debt service, can potentially issue tax-free municipal debt to cover the cost of capital improvements.

### **Voluntary Dedications by Property Owners**

Examples exist where private property owners dedicate land and/or easements to public agencies for park, recreation, or other civic purposes. As an example, trails are usually established through the granting and recording of easements. Such donations are made for a variety of reasons and generally reflect support by private property owners for proposed public improvements. They are the result of individual property owners being assured that planned public improvements would benefit remaining land holdings and issues such as public safety and liability are adequately addressed. Gifts to public agencies are tax deductible.

### **Requiring Dedications as a Condition of Development**

Requiring public improvements and/or dedication of property for civic uses can be a condition for development or expansion. Such requirements must meet legal tests such as “rational nexus” (a logical connection between the type of dedication required and the type of development proposed) and “rough proportionality” (the required value of the dedication must be reasonably related to the scale of development proposed). An example of this is the Town Center project in the BART Block. The City obtained a public access easement adjacent to Happy Valley Creek, connecting downtown to the BART Station as part of the project’s Development Agreement. Dedication of parkland is the primary requirement for residential development with in-lieu fees as an option.

## Capital and Maintenance Uses

Estimating capital and maintenance costs over a 20-year time frame is not easy given the lack of project scopes of work, timing of construction, and economic conditions. As seen from the recent economy, conditions can change very quickly, and numbers that were realistic at one point in time are too conservative or too optimistic a few months later. However, it is important to look at relative costs to make decisions about improvement priorities while noting again that these costs are a snapshot in time.

### Capital Improvements

In estimating the costs, conservative assumptions were made based on current conditions. Capital improvements include soft costs (architecture and engineering) and hard costs (construction). Land acquisition costs are not included. Ultimate project costs will depend on a variety of factors, including detailed project design and engineering, current construction costs, and the extent of private investment as part of adjacent development.



**Figure 20. Public Improvement Costs**

Priority	Project	Cost
1	Public parking lots	TBD
2	East Mount Diablo Boulevard improvements (Pleasant Hill Road to Second Street) including intermittent landscaped median	\$ 12,000,000
3	Walkway and sidewalk gap closures throughout the downtown	500,000
4	Shield Block improvements (Town Green, pedestrian circulation improvements, street scape and creek corridor enhancements)	3,000,000
5	Golden Gate Way improvements (Library and Gazebo Parks, streetscape and creek corridor enhancements)	8,000,000
		\$ 23,500,000

**Maintenance Costs**

Like capital improvement and land acquisition costs, maintenance costs are only estimates at this time based on 2011 dollars. Time of implementation and project scope will affect final costs.

Parking. Based on other cities’ costs, maintenance costs range from \$50 to \$70 per year per space. The total cost for maintaining City-owned lots would depend on the number of spaces.

Streetscapes. For Mount Diablo Boulevard, streetscape improvements would involve the addition of intermittent landscaped medians adding approximately 2.0 acres of additional landscaped area. For existing landscaped areas in downtown, the Public Works Services Division reports an annual unit maintenance cost of \$1.30 per square foot. New downtown medians would cost about \$13,700 in annual maintenance.

Parks. Applying the City’s current annual unit maintenance cost of \$1.30 per square foot, the additional of 1.39 acres of park space in the downtown for the Town Green and the Library and Gazebo Parks would cost about \$9,600 in annual maintenance costs.

It is important to note that not all public improvements will generate additional maintenance costs for the City. For instance, it is the established policy of the City that sidewalk and planting strips “behind the curb” are the responsibility of adjacent property owners. Similarly, the re-striping of existing roadway surfaces to narrow vehicle lanes and add bike lanes is not assumed to generate significant new maintenance costs beyond existing roadway maintenance budgets.

<b>Goal 18</b>	Enhance the downtown with public improvements as funding is available for capital and ongoing maintenance costs.
<b>Policy 18.1</b>	Condition private investment to assist in the financing of downtown improvements.
<b>Policy 18.2</b>	Pursue multiple funding sources for improvements while phasing projects to match funding.
<b>Policy 18.3</b>	Identify and secure funding sources for maintenance of capital improvements before improvements are constructed.
<b>Program 18.3.1</b>	Consider an assessment district or other financial tool to guarantee the sustainable and efficient long-term maintenance of public improvements.
<b>Policy 18.4</b>	Pursue multiple funding sources.



## 9. IMPLEMENTATION

The following are brief summaries of the DSP programs. For the complete wording of each program, please refer to the relevant chapter. Each program is listed under the action that will be taken for the implementation of the DSP. The priority for implementation is identified for each program, with 1 being the highest. Ongoing priority ranking and timing of implementation will depend on the availability of City resources, outside sources of funding, level of development activity, other City priorities, and events or circumstances that cannot be foreseen at this time. In addition to these actions, the adopted Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program in Appendix D will be used for implementation of the DSP.

Policy 19.1	Ensure that the downtown’s character remains consistent with the City’s vision.
Program 19.1.1	If deemed necessary by a majority of the City Council, complete prior to ten years after the DSP’s adoption a comprehensive review of the DSP’s goals, policies and programs and an assessment of the way in which they have been implemented.
Program 19.1.2	The City will monitor State legislation and regulations, and, to the extent that any new legislation and regulations affected its land use capabilities, the City Council will review the DSP, and revise it to ensure it remains consistent with the City’s vision for the downtown while also complying with new legislation and regulations.

The DSP is a flexible and dynamic document. As time passes certain assumptions underlying the DSP may no longer be valid due to changing circumstances or new information. Therefore, the DSP may be amended in the future and no future development rights shall be implied by the DSP.

The Zoning Ordinance will be amended to include the following provisions. The amendment may include changes to existing zoning districts, such as MRA, MRB, MRO and MRT, and other regulations in order to implement the DSP and its vision through these new provisions.

<b>Zoning Ordinance Amendment</b>			
<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Amend the Zoning Ordinance to:</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Downtown Character	1.2.2	Allow the development of multifamily housing by right. Restrict housing to upper floors along Mount Diablo Boulevard in the Downtown Retail District.	1
Downtown Character	1.2.5	Preserve existing housing by regulating the conversion of residential uses to non-residential uses through the Zoning Ordinance.	1

<b>Zoning Ordinance Amendment - continued</b>			
<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Amend the Zoning Ordinance to:</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Downtown Character	1.3.1	Allow and encourage civic uses to make them more accessible to all segments of the community.	1
Downtown Character	2.2.1	Identify uses in the West End District allowed by right and with a land use permit.	1
Downtown Character	2.7.1	Identify uses in the Downtown Retail District allowed by right and with a land use permit.	1
Downtown Character	2.13.1	Identify uses allowed in the Plaza District allowed by right and with a land use permit.	1
Downtown Character	2.19.1	Identify uses in the East End District allowed by right and with a land use permit.	1
Downtown Character	2.25.1	Allow only the development of townhouses and single-family residences in Neighborhood I.	1
Downtown Character	2.25.2	Allow only residential uses in Neighborhood II, prohibit office uses, and retain the eclectic mix of residential types.	1
Downtown Character	2.25.3	Maintain the current zoning in Neighborhood III.	1
Downtown Character	3.1.2	Include Downtown Design Review Findings and Building Height Exception Findings.	1
Downtown Character	3.1.3	Include the process for downtown design review.	1
Downtown Character	3.2.1	Establish a three-story limit with a maximum height of 35 feet, except as per Program 3.3.2.	1
Downtown Character	3.2.2	Modify height limits and establish height limits for identified areas of the downtown with no exceptions to increased height.	1
Downtown Character	3.2.3	Allow the City Council to grant a building height exception up to 45 feet and three stories for rare and exceptional projects.	1
Getting Around	11.5.1	Review the parking regulations for updating to current standards.	1
Getting Around	11.7.2	Include standards for charging stations in new development.	1

The DSP provides the design guiding principles that form the foundation for the development of the Design Review and Building Height Exception Findings and the Design Guidelines. These Findings and Guidelines will implement the DSP’s vision and character of each district by following the Principles and incorporating the following programs:

<b>Downtown Design Guidelines</b>			
<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Adopt Downtown Design Guidelines through a public process (Program 4.1.1)</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Sustainability	5.1.3	Require all public and private projects to demonstrate how they will contribute to the sustainability of the downtown.	1
Downtown Character	2.6.1	Assess West End development proposals to determine where parking will be appropriate – in the rear, front or side.	1
Downtown Character	2.10.1	Provide a safe, attractive, and active pedestrian space in the Downtown Retail District.	1
Downtown Character	2.11.1	Parking will be located at the rear of the building or above- or below-grade. Parking on the side may be acceptable if its location does not disrupt the pedestrian experience. Location of parking will be considered on a case-by-case basis to afford flexibility.	1
Downtown Character	2.12.1	Include elements of the original Shield Block Specific Plan.	1
Downtown Character	2.16.1	Provide a safe, attractive, and active pedestrian space in the Plaza District.	1
Downtown Character	2.17.1	Parking in the Plaza District will be located at the rear of the building or above- or below-grade. Parking on the side may be acceptable if its location does not disrupt the pedestrian experience.	1
Downtown Character	2.18.1	Include elements of the original Plaza Park Specific Plan.	1
Downtown Character	2.23.2	Require each development proposal in the East End District to meet specific standards.	1
Downtown Character	2.24.1	Encourage small scale development on small lots on Brown Avenue.	1
Downtown Character	2.29.1	Use the General Plan Scenic View Corridors map as a guide in the development process. Consider views that people see when traveling by motor vehicle and bicycle and on foot.	1
Downtown Character	4.1.3	Include references to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for historic buildings, structures, and sites.	1
Downtown Character	7.3.3, 8.2.2	Develop connections to shorten pedestrian and bicycle travel by considering internal pathways through new development sites and connections to adjacent developments.	1
Downtown Character	13.1.2	Include standards in the design guidelines that encourage the development of public spaces and connections.	1
Public Realm	15.1.1	Evaluate projects within and adjacent to creek corridors on the following priorities: 1) flood protection; 2) preservation of riparian habitat; 3) visual access; 4) opportunities for education; and 5) physical access to the top of creek banks.	1

Over the life of the DSP, public improvements will be made – whether with public funding, as conditions of private project approval, or using a combination of funding sources. The following programs illustrate the elements that will be incorporated into these improvements to implement the vision of the DSP.

<b>Public Improvements</b>			
<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Public improvement plans will:</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Downtown Character	2.5.1	Eliminate walkway gaps in the West End District, and improve walkways so they are accessible to all people.	1
Downtown Character	2.22.1	Eliminate walkway gaps in the East End District, and improve walkways so they are accessible to all people.	1
Downtown Character	2.22.2	Install intermittent medians in the East End District to enhance the aesthetics, reduce traffic speeds, and improve pedestrian safety. Work with local businesses, property owners, and Chamber of Commerce.	1
Downtown Character	2.23.1	Prepare on-street parking prototypes or templates.	2
Downtown Character	2.24.2	Develop a plan for Brown Avenue public improvements.	3
Getting Around	7.2.1	Eliminate walkway gaps, and improve walkways so they are accessible to all people.	1
Getting Around	7.2.2	Improve and increase north-south pedestrian crossings on Mount Diablo Boulevard using crosswalk enhancements.	2
Getting Around	7.2.5	Improve pedestrian access to BART.	2
Getting Around	7.3.2	Develop off-street walkways to provide pedestrian linkages with Mount Diablo Boulevard, other downtown streets, and downtown’s natural features.	3
Getting Around	11.1.1	Pursue opportunities to acquire land for public parking.	2
Getting Around	11.3.4	Acquire land for public parking.	3
Getting Around	11.4.4	Acquire land for long-term employee parking.	3
Public Realm	12.1.3	Consider green street techniques in streetscape and other public improvements.	2
Public Realm	13.1.1	Provide new parks and other public spaces to enhance the sense of community and provide amenities supporting downtown uses. Proposed parks and spaces include: “Library Park”, “Town Green”, and “Gazebo Park.”	3

The following programs are individual actions that will be taken in the future as City resources permit. The goal is to complete all the programs as soon as possible, but within the DSP timeframe.

<b>Other Actions</b>			
<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>The City will:</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Sustainability	5.1.1	Amend the General Plan to add goals and guiding principles from the Environmental Strategy.	1
Sustainability	5.1.2	Include policies and programs for the downtown in the City’s Environmental Action Plan.	1
Downtown Character	2.13.2	If the City Office and /or Police Services Office were to relocate, they should be moved to central downtown.	2
Downtown Character	4.1.1	Consider adding to the list of City historic landmarks.	2
Downtown Character	4.1.2	Investigate federal tax benefits that could be available for historic buildings, structures, and sites.	2
Getting Around	6.1.1	Analyze the impacts and benefits of removing the four parking spaces on the east side of Moraga Road south of Plaza Way.	2
Getting Around	6.1.2	Investigate the impacts and benefits of amending the General Plan to designate Happy Valley Road south of Deer Hill Road as an arterial.	3
Getting Around	6.1.5	Amend the General Plan to include a Complete Streets Element.	2
Getting Around	6.2.1	Work with school administrators and parents to develop options for school commuting, walk and bike-pooling, and satellite drop-off and pick-up locations.	2
Getting Around	6.2.2	Investigate the interest and feasibility for reestablishing school bus service to Lafayette Elementary School and increasing service to Stanley Middle School.	2
Getting Around	6.2.3	Provide connections between schools and Lafayette/Moraga Trail.	2
Getting Around	7.3.1	Develop walkways guidelines addressing various types of pedestrian environments.	3
Getting Around	7.3.4	Assess the feasibility of a pedestrian connection between Brook Street and the Methodist Church parking lot using the private East Street.	3
Getting Around	8.1.2	Assess feasibility of improving the bicycle connection between the Lafayette-Moraga Trail, schools, and BART Station.	2
Getting Around	9.1.1	Determine the feasibility of a local shuttle service and related support facilities to serve downtown and BART.	3
Getting Around	9.1.2	Work with transit providers and transportation funders to develop a strategy for providing increased headways and connections.	3

<b>Other Actions - continued</b>			
<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>The City will:</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Getting Around	11.2.1	Work with owners of underutilized parking lots to allow the public and/or employees to park in those lots. As a priority, contact the owners of the lots on Golden Gate Way.	1
Getting Around	11.2.2	Work with owners of adjacent properties to connect their parking lots. As a priority, contact the property owners fronting Mount Diablo Boulevard between the Lafayette Circle ends to determine their interest in connecting the lots.	1
Getting Around	11.2.3	Provide incentives to property owners who participate with the City in using underutilized parking lots.	1
Getting Around	11.2.4	Work with banks and similar businesses, particularly in the Core, to allow the public to use their lots after business hours to increase the supply of parking in the evenings.	3
Getting Around	11.2.5	Encourage businesses and nearby residential developments to enter into agreements that would allow parking to be shared.	3
Getting Around	11.3.1	Work with the owners of the Oak Bridge lot and the lot next to the Park Theater to allow public usage of those lots.	1
Getting Around	11.3.2	Consider providing flexibility for businesses in the Plaza Way area in meeting the City's parking requirements, given the block's historic and unique character.	1
Getting Around	11.3.3	Work with Plaza Way property owners to connect their parking lots.	1
Getting Around	11.4.1	Develop options for allowing employees to park for longer hours. Issue permits to Happy Valley Center employees and identify off-site areas where they can park.	1
Getting Around	11.4.3	Facilitate agreements between businesses and residents of nearby neighborhoods to allow employees to park on residential streets. Funds collected pursuant to agreements would be used to improve the neighborhood streets and provide neighborhood streetscape amenities.	3
Getting Around	11.6.1	Consider the creation of a Downtown Core Parking Improvement District.	2
Getting Around	11.6.2	Undertake these tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Periodically update the parking inventory</li> <li>• Monitor parking occupancy on an ongoing basis</li> <li>• Adopt a method to track businesses and employees and quantity of off-street parking</li> <li>• Consider establishing time limits for spaces that are not timed in commercial areas</li> <li>• Review timing of existing on-street spaces to ensure they are consistent and effective.</li> <li>• Do not stripe parking spaces in residential areas and away from Mount Diablo Boulevard to avoid reducing the effective number of parking spaces.</li> </ul>	2

<b>Other Actions - continued</b>			
Chapter	Program	The City will:	Priority
Getting Around	11.7.1	Develop an option for project proponents to demonstrate alternative ways of meeting parking demands, such as using parking reserved for alternative fuel vehicles and compact spaces.	3
Getting Around	12.1.1	Develop standards for public improvements to include embellishments and details, when budgets allow, such as: embedded decoration in paving surfaces; painted or decorated utility covers; living walls; sundials and clocks; drinking fountains; seating; low walls, fences, or landscape berms around surface parking lots; decorative and/or interactive water features; interpretative signage.	2
Public Realm	12.1.2	Update and implement the <i>Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan</i> . Enlarge area to include commercial areas.	2
Public Realm	14.1.1	Implement a public information program to inform downtown property owners, businesses, and residents about tree protection.	2
Public Realm	14.1.2	Update <i>Trees for Lafayette</i> for appropriate downtown tree species.	3
Public Realm	15.2.1	Prepare a Downtown Creeks Preservation, Restoration and Development Plan. The Plan should establish a long term vision for downtown creeks and should address the following: creek setbacks; relationship with adjacent development; existing trees; damage prevention; creek preservation and restoration; creek stewardship; nuisance abatement; public access; pathways; other public safety and environmental concerns.	2
Public Realm	16.1.1	Adopt and implement a public art master plan for the downtown.	1
Economics	18.3.1	Consider an assessment district or other financial tool to guarantee the sustainable and efficient long-term maintenance of public improvements.	3

Over the life of the DSP, the City will implement the following programs as they are applicable to a particular policy issue, project, program, or other circumstance.

<b>Ongoing Programs</b>			
Chapter	Program	The City will, on an ongoing basis:	
Downtown Character	1.1.1	Encourage a diverse mix of well-designed retail uses, including unique and locally-owned businesses.	
Downtown Character	1.1.2	Encourage a variety of food-related uses.	

<b>Ongoing Programs - continued</b>		
<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>The City will, on an ongoing basis:</i>
Downtown Character	1.1.3	Work with the Chamber of Commerce and property owners, businesses, and developers in promoting the downtown.
Downtown Character	1.2.1	Implement the housing policies of the General Plan.
Downtown Character	1.2.3	Support residential projects that are transit-oriented, particularly within easy walking distance of BART and other transit.
Downtown Character	1.2.4	Support family and senior housing.
Downtown Character	1.3.2	Retain existing civic uses.
Downtown Character	1.3.3	Promote the expression of the arts as a civic use and downtown amenity.
Downtown Character	2.7.2	Require projects on Moraga Road to evaluate impacts on school and sub-regional traffic.
Downtown Character	2.29.2	Evaluate the impact on view corridors by consistency with design review findings and, if applicable, height exception findings.
Getting Around	6.1.3	Implement minor street modifications to balance needs of vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and alternative transportation modes.
Getting Around	6.1.4	Promote and require pedestrian circulation.
Getting Around	7.1.1	Implement those sections of the Master Walkways Plan that will improve pedestrian access to, from, and within the downtown.
Getting Around	7.2.3	Identify site planning opportunities to minimize walking distances for pedestrians.
Getting Around	7.2.4	Identify where ADA-compliant improvements should be made to serve nearby uses, such as senior housing.
Getting Around	7.2.6	Utilize design guidelines for multiuse paths to ensure they safely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.
Getting Around	7.3.5	Ensure connections are identified and marked to Lafayette trails.
Getting Around	7.4.1, 8.3.1, 9.3.1	Provide pedestrian, bicycle routes and parking, and transit information on a regular basis on the City's website and in <i>Vistas</i> .

<b>Ongoing Programs - continued</b>		
<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>The City will, on an ongoing basis:</i>
Getting Around	7.4.2, 8.3.2, 9.3.2	Post pedestrian, bicycle, and transit information and maps for alternative transportation options.
Getting Around	7.4.3, 8.3.3, 9.3.4, 10.1.2	Work with the Chamber of Commerce to encourage alternatives to driving, including programs to educate and encourage walking, biking, and using transit in the downtown.
Getting Around	8.1.1	Continue to improve bicycle circulation between the downtown and residential neighborhoods.
Getting Around	8.2.1	Promote end-of-trip facilities, such as lockers, changing rooms, and showers, based on the size and type of development.
Getting Around	8.2.3	Promote bicycle parking and support facilities and services at existing and proposed multifamily developments.
Getting Around	9.2.1	Incorporate transit supportive infrastructure, such as benches, trash receptacles, and all weather pavement at stops.
Getting Around	9.3.3	Prepare and distribute current information about commute alternatives using resources such as <a href="http://511ContraCosta.org">511ContraCosta.org</a> .
Getting Around	10.1.1	Encourage and support a range of alternative transportation options.
Getting Around	10.1.3	Periodically survey employees and employers to understand commute patterns and tailor programs to discourage driving alone.
Getting Around	11.1.2	Continue to explore shared parking arrangements with property owners and developers.
Getting Around	11.1.3	Review off-street public parking proposals for in-site and off-site pedestrian and bicycle parking.
Getting Around	11.4.2	Work with businesses to provide, educate, and promote alternative modes of transportation.
Public Realm	13.1.3	Ensure adequate funding to maintain parks and other public spaces.
Public Realm	16.1.2	Introduce interactive public art in downtown parks and other public spaces.



## APPENDIX A. PLANNING PROCESS CHRONOLOGY

<b>2006</b>	
Jun 5	City Council discussed the preparation of a downtown specific plan as part of its 2006-2007 budget.
Oct 23	City Council asked that the public be invited to a meeting to discuss the preparation of a downtown specific plan.
Dec 11	City Council hosted a public presentation to discuss the preparation of a specific plan. Invitations were sent to all commissions and committees, homeowner associations, other community organizations, and major downtown owners and businesses. Approximately 100 people attended.
<b>2007</b>	
Jan	<i>Vistas</i> (Winter 2007) had a front-page article announcing the start of the downtown planning process. This newsletter has a mail distribution of approximately 11,000 Lafayette residences and businesses.
Feb 12	The selection committee appointed by the Council interviewed consultants at all-day public meeting. The committee recommended WRT team.
May	<i>Vistas</i> (Spring 2007) had a front-page article about the Plan.
May 14	Redevelopment Agency approved the agreement with WRT.
Jun 14	Advisory Committee meeting #1
Jun 20	WRT hosted an all-day public walking tour of the downtown.
Jun 25	Project update at Redevelopment Agency meeting
Jun 28	Advisory Committee meeting #2
Aug 23	Advisory Committee meeting #3
Aug	<i>Vistas</i> (Summer 2007) had a front-page article about the Plan and invitation to participate in the city-wide survey and Community Workshop #1.
Sep 4	City-wide survey mailed to 11,000 residences and businesses. The cover letter included an invitation to Community Workshop #1 on September 27. Approximately 2,400 completed surveys (22%) were returned ultimately; the goal was a 10% return.
Sep 10	Project update at the Redevelopment Agency meeting
Sep 27	Community Workshop #1 was held. Approximately 80 people attended. There was an ad and article in the <i>Sun</i> announcing the event. Postcard and email invitations were sent to homeowners associations, community organizations, and residents who asked to be notified.
Oct 2	Project update at the Redevelopment Agency meeting
Oct 11	Advisory Committee meeting #4
Nov	<i>Vistas</i> (Fall 2007) had a summary of the community-wide survey results.
<b>2008</b>	
Jan 16	Advisory Committee meeting #5
Jan 25	WRT held individual stakeholder meetings with representatives of Town Hall Theater, Sustainable Lafayette, BPAC, Lafayette Methodist Church, downtown businesses, Acalanes High School District, Lafayette School District, and young families.

Feb 12	Community Workshop #2 was held with 70-80 people. Invitations were through: Ad in the <i>Sun</i> ; postcards and emails to homeowners associations, community organizations, and residents; letters and phone calls to 60 major downtown property owners and businesses.
Mar 10	Project discussed at the Environmental Strategy Task Force meeting.
Mar 19	WRT met with the Lafayette Homeowners Council.
Mar 21-22	WRT did intercept interviews around the downtown and at the Community Center.
Mar 21-31	Display at the former Lafayette Library about the conceptual ideas. Advertised with an item in the <i>Sun</i> , and postcards and email invitations sent to 300-400 homeowner associations, community organizations, major downtown property owners and businesses, and residents.
Apr 22	Advisory Committee meeting #6
May 12	Project discussed at the Environmental Strategy Task Force meeting.
May 21	Advisory Committee meeting #7
Jun	<i>Vistas</i> (Spring 2008) had an article about the Plan and climate change.
Jun 17	Advisory Committee meeting #8
Jul 10	Advisory Committee meeting #9
Jul 30	Advisory Committee meeting #10
Jul 31	Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission discussed park goals and policies.
Aug 5	Advisory Committee meeting #11
Aug 20	Advisory Committee meeting #12
Aug 27	Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission discussed park goals and policies.
Sep 11	Advisory Committee meeting #13
Sep 16	Advisory Committee meeting #14
Oct 8	Project update at the Planning Commission meeting
Oct 22	Project discussed at the Environmental Task Force meeting.
Nov 5	Advisory Committee meeting #15
Nov 19	Project discussed at the Environmental Task Force meeting.
Nov 24	Project update at the Redevelopment Agency meeting
Dec 8	Project update at the Redevelopment Agency meeting
Dec 4	Project update at the Planning Commission meeting
Dec 15	Advisory Committee meeting #16
Dec 17	Project discussed at the Environmental Task Force meeting.
<b>2009</b>	
Jan 12	Project update at Redevelopment Agency meeting
Jan 26	Draft Plan was released for public review.

Jan 31	Advisory Committee meeting #17 (all day meeting)
Feb	Vistas (Winter 2009 edition) had a front-page article about the Draft Plan with an invitation to Community Workshop #3.
Feb 10	Design Review Commission discussed Draft Plan.
Feb 11	Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission discussed Draft Plan.
Feb 17	Circulation Commission discussed Draft Plan.
Feb 18	Environmental Task Force discussed Draft Plan.
Feb 19	Planning Commission discussed Draft Plan
Feb 21	Advisory Committee meeting #18 (all day meeting)
Feb 24	Chamber of Commerce hosted a meeting for downtown property owners and businesses. Approximately 100 people attended.
Feb 25	Community Workshop # 3 was held with 106 people in attendance.
Mar 2	Advisory Committee meeting #19
Mar 2	Circulation Commission discussed Draft Plan.
Mar 3	Advisory Committee meeting #20
Mar 5	Planning Commission meeting discussed Draft Plan
Mar 9	Project update at Redevelopment Agency meeting
Mar 10	Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission discussed Draft Plan
Mar 10	Design Review Commission discussed Draft Plan
Mar 17	Advisory Committee meeting #21
Mar 18	Environmental Task Force discussed Draft Plan
Mar 19	Planning Commission discussed Draft Plan
Mar 26	Senior Services Commission discussed Draft Plan
Apr 1	Advisory Committee meeting #22
Apr 2	Planning Commission discussed Draft Plan
Apr 13	Joint City Council, commission and committees meeting with WRT
May 9	City Council identified revisions to Draft Plan at special meeting (all day)
May 18	City Council identified revisions to Draft Plan at special meeting
May 20	City Council identified revisions to Draft Plan at special meeting
May 28	City Council identified revisions to Draft Plan at special meeting
Jun 1	City Council identified revisions to Draft Plan and initiated environment review at special meeting
Sep 8	Revised Draft Specific Plan (DSP) released
Sep 17	Planning Commission introduced to Revised DSP

Oct 1	Planning Commission scoped the EIR
Oct 29	Planning Commission scoped the EIR
Nov 19	Planning Commission meeting
Dec 3	Planning Commission reviewed the Revised DSP - Land Use
Dec 10	Planning Commission meeting – Civic & Cultural District
<b>2010</b>	
Jan 4	Planning Commission meeting – Brown Avenue, East End, and Gateway Districts
Jan 13	Planning Commission meeting – Parking and Land Use
Jan 19	Planning Commission meeting - Parking
Mar 1	Public hearing on Draft EIR at the Planning Commission
Mar 15	Public hearing on Draft EIR at the Planning Commission
Apr 5	Planning Commission meeting – Downtown Residential District
Apr 19	Planning Commission meeting – Key Issues, Schools
May 3	Planning Commission meeting – Chapters 1 & 2
May 17	Planning Commission meeting – Circulation, Parking, Chapters 5 & 8
Jun 21	Joint meeting with Planning Commission and Design Review Commission – Commercial Design Guidelines
Jun 21	Planning Commission meeting – Parking, General Plan consistency
Jul 6	Planning Commission meeting – Land Use, Districts
Jul 19	Planning Commission meeting – Land Use, Districts
Sep 7	Planning Commission discussed Final EIR, meeting – Civic & Cultural District
Sep 20	Planning Commission meeting – East End District
Oct 4	Planning Commission meeting - Residential
Nov 1	Public Workshop on Shield Block. Approximately 80 people attended.
Nov 15	Public Workshop on Plaza Way / Golden Gate Way. Approximately 80 people attended.
Nov 29	Planning Commission reviewed results of Public Workshops
<b>2011</b>	
Jan 3	Joint meeting with Planning Commission and Design Review Commission – Design Guidelines and Findings
Jan 3	Planning Commission meeting – Parking
Jan 10	Design Review Commission meeting – Design Guidelines and Findings
Jan 18	Planning Commission meeting – Design Guidelines

Feb 7	Planning Commission meeting – Goals, Policies, and Programs, Vision Statement
Feb 21	Planning Commission meeting – Building Height, West End and Downtown Retail Districts
Mar 30	Planning Commission meeting – Building Height, Districts
Apr 4	Joint meeting with Planning Commission, Circulation Commission, and Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee - Parking
Apr 18	Planning Commission meeting – Goals, Policies, and Programs
Jun 6	Planning Commission meeting – Revised Goals, Policies, and Programs
June 20	Planning Commission meeting – Revised Goals, Policies, and Programs, DSP Format
Jul	Update on DSP process and schedule in <i>Vistas</i> (Spring 2011)
Sept	Revised version of DSP (Sept 2009) completed.
Nov 7	Planning Commission meeting – DSP and EIR schedule, response to LHC letter
Nov 16	Release of EIR Memorandum, list of GP amendments
Nov 30	Planning Commission public hearing on EIR, General Plan amendments, and DSP
<b>2012</b>	
Jan 17	Planning Commission public hearing on EIR, General Plan amendments, and DSP
Jan 30	Planning Commission public hearing on EIR, General Plan amendments, and DSP
Feb 6	Planning Commission public hearing on EIR, General Plan amendments, and DSP
Feb 21	Planning Commission public hearing on EIR, General Plan amendments, and DSP
Apr 2	Planning Commission public hearing on EIR, General Plan amendments, and DSP
Apr 30	Planning Commission public hearing on EIR, General Plan amendments, and DSP. DSP revised.
May 7	Planning Commission public hearing on EIR, General Plan amendments, and DSP. DSP revised.
May 21	Planning Commission made final revisions, and recommended certification of EIR, adoption of the General Plan amendments, and adoption of DSP.
Jun 25	City Council public hearing on EIR, General Plan amendments, and DSP.
Jul 23	City Council continued public hearing on EIR, General Plan amendments, and DSP.
Aug 30	City Council continued public hearing on EIR, General Plan amendments, and DSP.
Sep	Front page article about the DSP in <i>Vistas</i> (Summer 2012)
Sep 10	City Council made final revisions, certified EIR, adopted General Plan amendments, and adopted DSP as revised.

The Planner's Guide to Specific Plans from the Governor's Office of Planning and Research provides the best guidance on this type of land use policy document. The following are excerpts:

*A specific plan is a tool for the systematic implementation of the general plan. It effectively establishes a link between implementing policies of the general plan and the individual development proposals in a defined area. A specific plan may be as general as setting forth broad policy concepts, or as detailed as providing direction to every facet of development from the type, location and intensity of uses to the design and capacity of infrastructure; from the resources used to finance public improvements to the design guidelines for a subdivision.*

*To an extent, the range of issues that is contained in a specific plan is left to the discretion of the decision-making body. However, all specific plans... must comply with Sections 65450-65457 of the Government Code. These provisions require that a specific plan be consistent with the adopted general plan... In turn, all subsequent subdivision and development, all public works projects and zoning regulations must be consistent with this Specific Plan...*

Section 65451 of the Government Code mandates that a specific plan be structured as follows:

- a. *A specific plan shall include a text and a diagram or diagrams which specify all of the following in detail:*
  - *The distribution, location and extent of the uses of land, including open space, within the area covered by the plan.*
  - *The proposed distribution, location, and extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan.*
  - *Standards and criteria by which development will proceed, and standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, where applicable.*
  - *A program of implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to carry out paragraphs 1, 2, and 3.*
- b. *This Specific Plan shall include a statement of the relationship to the general plan.*

The Planner's Guide to Specific Plans also provides guidance on CEQA and specific plans:

*Adoption of a specific plan is a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As such, this Specific Plan normally requires the preparation and consideration of an environmental impact report (EIR) disclosing the potential significant environmental effects of the plan, plan alternatives, and the means by which possible environmental damage may be reduced or avoided....The information in the EIR provides decision makers with the insight necessary to guide policy development, thereby ensuring the plan's policies will address and provide the means by which to avoid potential impacts to the environment....*

To the extent feasible, the process of preparing this Specific Plan and the environmental analysis should proceed concurrently because both documents require many of the same studies and resulting information. As the name implies, a specific plan EIR should contain analyses specific enough to reflect the level of detail in the plan.



This glossary is included to clarify terms used in the DSP. Should inconsistencies occur between the DSP and the Glossary, the interpretation contained in the DSP will be considered the valid interpretation.

**Access/Egress.** The ability to enter a site from a roadway and exit a site onto a roadway by motorized vehicle.

**Active Recreation.** See “Recreation, Active”.

**Affordable Housing.** Housing capable of being purchased or rented by a household with very low, low, or moderate income, based on a household's ability to make monthly payments necessary to obtain housing. Housing is considered affordable when a household pays less than 30 percent of its gross monthly income (GMI) for housing including utilities.

**Apartment.**

- (1) One or more rooms of a building used as a place to live, in a building containing at least one other unit used for the same purpose.
- (2) A separate suite, not owner occupied, which includes kitchen facilities and is designed for and rented as the home, residence, or sleeping place of one or more persons living as a single housekeeping unit.

**Arterial.** Medium-speed (30-40 mph), medium-capacity (more than 20,000 average daily trips) roadway which provides intra-community travel and access to the countywide highway system. Access to community arterials should be provided at collector roads and local streets, but direct access from parcels to existing arterials is common.

**Bicycle Boulevard.** A roadway that allows all types of vehicles, but which has been modified to enhance bicycle safety and security. Roadways are designed to be places where cars and bicycles can equally share right-of-way. Bicycle Boulevards tend to be residential streets with lower traffic volumes, typically between 3,000 to 5,000 average daily vehicles, but can include secondary commercial streets.

**Bikeways.** A term that encompasses bicycle lanes, bicycle paths, and bicycle routes.

**Building Height.** The vertical distance between the average of the highest and lowest grade at the lowest foundation wall (measured at existing grade or finished grade, whichever is lower) and the (1) highest point of a flat roof or (2) deck line of a mansard roof or (3) average height of the highest gable of a pitched or hip roof.

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).** A State law requiring State and local agencies to regulate activities with consideration for environmental protection. If a proposed activity has the potential for a significant adverse environmental impact, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared and certified as to its adequacy before taking action on the proposed project. Specific Plans require the preparation of a program EIR.

**Collector.** Relatively low speed (25-30 mph), relatively-low-volume (2,000-5,000 average daily trips) street which provides circulation within and between neighborhoods. Collectors usually serve short trips and are intended for collecting trips from local streets and distributing them to the arterial network.

**Commercial.** A land use classification, which permits facilities for the buying and selling of commodities and services, including retail and office uses.

**Condominium.** A structure of two or more units, the interior spaces of which are individually owned; the balance of the property (both land and building) is owned in common by the owners of the individual units.

**Creek.**

- (1) Any natural watercourse noted on the most recent United States Geological Survey Blue Line Survey Maps.
- (2) A stream smaller than a river.

**Creek Corridor.** A narrow tract of land that is the creek channel itself, including creek banks and water course at the creek bed, together with a natural riparian buffer adjacent to a creek channel. A creek corridor may be regarded as a passageway or a kind of right-of-way for a creek, of sufficient width and character to permit satisfactory natural drainage of customary peak period flows and maintenance of a riparian ecosystem.

**Dedication.** The turning over by an owner or developer of private land for public use, and the acceptance of land for such use by the governmental agency having jurisdiction over the public function for which it will be used. Dedications for roads, parks, school sites, or other public uses often are made conditions for approval of a development by a city.

**Density, Residential.** The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land. Densities specified in the DSP are expressed in units per gross acre or per net developable acre.

**Design Review.** The comprehensive evaluation of a development and its impact on neighboring properties and the community as a whole, from the standpoint of site and landscape design, architecture, materials, colors, lighting, and signs, in accordance with a set of adopted criteria and standards. Design Review usually refers to a system set up outside of the zoning ordinance, whereby projects are reviewed against certain standards and criteria by a specially established design review board or committee.

**Development.** The physical extension and/or construction of urban land uses. Development activities include. subdivision of land; construction or alteration of structures, roads, utilities, and other facilities; installation of septic systems; grading; deposit of refuse, debris, or fill materials; and clearing of natural vegetative cover (with the exception of agricultural activities). Routine repair and maintenance activities are exempted.

**Development Fee.** A fee, also called an impact fee, levied on the developer of a project by a city, county, or other public agency as compensation for otherwise-unmitigated impacts the project will produce. California Government Code Section 66000 et seq. specifies that development fees shall not exceed the estimated reasonable cost of providing the service for which the fee is charged. To lawfully impose a development fee, the public agency must verify its method of calculation and document proper restrictions on use of the fund.

**DSP.** The Downtown Specific Plan adopted by the City Council on September 10, 2012 per Resolution 2012-31.

**Dwelling Unit.** A room or group of rooms (including sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation facilities, but not more than one kitchen), which constitutes an independent housekeeping unit, occupied or intended for occupancy by one household on a long-term basis.

**Easement, Conservation.** A tool for acquiring open space with less than full-fee purchase, whereby a public agency buys only certain specific rights from the land owner. These may be positive rights (providing the public with the opportunity to hunt, fish, hike, or ride over the land), or they may be restrictive rights (limiting the uses to which the land owner may devote the land in the future.)

**Environment.** CEQA defines environment as "the physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance."

**Environmental Impact Report (EIR).** A report required of general plans by the California Environmental Quality Act and which assesses all the environmental characteristics of an area and determines what effects or impacts will result if the area is altered or disturbed by a proposed action.

**Frontage.** The frontage of a parcel means the distance between the two points on the principal road, street, or access that are farthest apart.

**Gateway.** A point along a roadway entering the city at which a motorist gains a sense of having left the environs and of having entered the city.

**Green Building.** A green building is an outcome of a design philosophy which focuses on increasing the efficiency of resource use – energy, water, and materials – while reducing building impacts on human health and the environment during the building's lifecycle, through better siting, design, construction, operation, maintenance, and removal.

**Home Business.** A commercial activity conducted solely by the occupants of a particular dwelling unit in a manner incidental to residential occupancy.

**Household.** All those persons – related or unrelated – who occupy a single housing unit.

**Households, Number of.** The count of all year-round housing units occupied by one or more persons. The concept of household is important because the formation of new households generates the demand for housing. Each new household formed creates the need for one additional housing unit or requires that one existing housing unit be shared by two households. Thus, household formation can continue to take place even without an increase in population, thereby increasing the demand for housing.

**Housing Element.** Article 10.6 of the California Government Code requires each city and county to prepare and maintain a current Housing Element as part of the community's General Plan in order to attain a statewide goal of providing “decent housing and a suitable living environment for every California family.”

**Improvement.** The addition or installation of one or more structures or utilities on a vacant parcel of land.

**Infill Development.** Development of vacant land (usually individual lots or left-over properties) within areas which are already largely developed and have existing infrastructure.

**Infrastructure.** Public services and facilities, such as sewage-disposal systems, water-supply systems, other utility systems, and roads.

**Landmark.** Refers to a building, site, object, structure, or significant natural feature, having historical, architectural, social, or cultural significance and marked for preservation by the local, state, or federal government.

**Land Use.** The occupation or utilization of land or water area for any human activity or any purpose defined in the General Plan.

**Level of Service (LOS).**

- (1) A scale that measures the amount of traffic a roadway or intersection is or may be capable of handling. Levels range from A to F, with A representing the highest level of service, as follows.
  - Level of Service A. Indicates a relatively free flow of traffic, with little or no limitation on vehicle movement or speed.
  - Level of Service B. Describes a steady flow of traffic, with only slight delays in vehicle movement and speed. All queues clear in a single signal cycle.
  - Level of Service C. Denotes a reasonably steady, high-volume flow of traffic, with some limitations on movement and speed, and occasional backups on critical approaches.
  - Level of Service D. Denotes the level where traffic nears an unstable flow. Intersections still function, but short queues develop and cars may have to wait through one cycle during short peaks.
  - Level of Service E. Describes traffic characterized by slow movement and frequent (although momentary) stoppages. This type of congestion is considered severe, but is not uncommon at peak traffic hours, with frequent stopping, long-standing queues, and blocked intersections.
  - Level of Service F. Describes unsatisfactory stop-and-go traffic characterized by "traffic jams" and stoppages of long duration. Vehicles at signalized intersections usually have to wait through one or more signal changes, and "upstream" intersections may be blocked by the long queues.
- (2) Some communities in California are developing standards for levels of service relating to municipal functions such as police, fire, and library service. These standards are incorporated in the General Plan or in separate "Level of Service Plans."

**Mixed-Use.** Properties on which various uses, such as office, commercial, institutional, and residential, are combined in a single building or on a single site in an integrated development project with significant functional interrelationships and a coherent physical design. A "single site" may include contiguous properties.

**National Register of Historic Places.** The official list established by the National Historic Preservation Act, of sites, districts, buildings, structures, and objects significant in the nation's history or whose artistic or architectural value is unique.

**Neighborhood Park.** City-owned land intended to serve the recreation needs of people living or working within one-half mile radius of the park.

**Office Use.** The use of land by general business offices, medical and professional offices, administrative or headquarters offices for large wholesaling or manufacturing operations, and research and development.

**Parcel.** A lot, or contiguous group of lots, in single ownership or under single control, usually considered a unit for purposes of development.

**Parks.** Public space lands whose primary purpose is recreation.

**Passive Recreation.** See "Recreation, Passive".

**Personal Services.** Services of a personal convenience nature, as opposed to products which are sold to individual consumers. Personal services include barber and beauty shops, shoe and luggage repair, fortune tellers, photographers, laundry and cleaning services and pick-up stations, copying, repair and fitting of clothes, and similar services.

**Planning and Research, Office of (OPR).** A governmental division of the State of California which has among its responsibilities the preparation of a set of guidelines for use by local jurisdictions in drafting General Plans.

**Planning Area.** The Planning Area is the land area addressed by the DSP.

**Planning Commission.** A body, usually having five or seven members, created by a city or county in compliance with California law (Section 65100) which requires the assignment of the planning functions of the city or county to a planning department, planning commission, hearing officers, and/or the legislative body itself, as deemed appropriate by the legislative body.

**Professional Offices.** A use providing professional or consulting services in the fields of law, medicine, architecture, design, engineering, accounting, and similar professions, but not including financial institutions or real estate or insurance offices.

**Public Art.** Artworks of sculpture, murals, photography, and original works of graphic art, waterworks, fiberworks, neon, glass, mosaics, or any combination of forms of visual media, furnishings or fixtures permanently affixed to a structure or its grounds, or a combination thereof displayed at a public place.

**Public Spaces.** Areas open to and used by the public, whether held in public ownership or not. The degree of public accessibility and use will vary, depending on the nature and ownership of the public space.

**Recreation, Active.** A type of recreation or activity which requires the use of organized play areas including, but not limited to, softball, baseball, football and soccer fields, tennis and basketball courts and various forms of children's play equipment.

**Recreation, Passive.** Type of recreation or activity which does not require the use of organized play areas.

**Residential.** Land designated in the City's General Plan, a specific plan and zoning ordinance for buildings consisting only of dwelling units. May be vacant or unimproved.

**Rezoning.** An amendment to the map and/or text of a zoning ordinance to effect a change in the nature, density, or intensity of uses allowed in a zoning district and/or on a designated parcel or land area.

**Right-of-way.** A strip of land occupied or intended to be occupied by certain transportation and public use facilities, such as roadways, railroads, utility lines, sidewalks and walkways.

**Riparian Areas.** Riparian areas are comprised of the vegetative and wildlife areas adjacent to perennial and intermittent streams. Riparian areas are delineated by the existence of plant species normally found near freshwater.

**Second Unit.** A self-contained living unit either attached to or detached from, and in addition to, the primary residential unit on a single lot. Sometimes called "Granny Flat."

**Senior Housing.** Typically one- and two-bedroom apartments or condominiums designed to meet the needs of persons 62 years of age and older or, if more than 150 units, persons 55 years of age and older, and restricted to occupancy by them.

**Seniors.** Persons 62 years of age and older.

**Sidewalk.** A walkway constructed of concrete, brick or paving stones and separated from the street or road by a concrete curb or gutter.

**Site.** A parcel of land used or intended for one or more uses and having frontage on a public or an approved private street. A lot.

**Small Office.** An administrative, professional, financial, real estate, consulting, or medical office with ten or fewer employees.

**Solid Waste.** General category that includes organic wastes, paper products, metals, glass, plastics, cloth, brick, rock, soil, leather, rubber, yard wastes, and wood. Organic wastes and paper products comprise about 75 percent of typical urban solid waste even though most is recyclable.

**Specific Plan.** Under Article 8 of the Government Code (Section 65450 et seq), a legal tool for detailed design and implementation of a defined portion of the area covered by a General Plan. A specific plan may include all detailed regulations, conditions, programs, and/or proposed legislation which may be necessary or convenient for the systematic implementation of any General Plan element(s).

**Standards.**

- (1) A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. The State Government Code (Section 65302) requires that general plans spell out the objectives, principles, "standards," and proposals of the general plan. Examples of standards might include the number of acres of park land per 1,000 population that the community will attempt to acquire and improve, or the "traffic Level of Service" (LOS) that the plan hopes to attain or maintain.
- (2) Requirements in a specific plan or zoning ordinance that govern building and development as distinguished from use restrictions; for example, site-design regulations such as lot area, height limit, frontage, landscaping, and floor area ratio.

**Subdivision.** The division of a tract of land into defined lots, either improved or unimproved, which can be separately conveyed by sale or lease, and which can be altered or developed. "Subdivision" includes a condominium project as defined in Section 1350 of the California Civil Code and a community apartment project as defined in Section 11004 of the Business and Professions Code.

**Sustainability.** Meeting the present needs of the community without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. An environmentally sustainable community is one that improves and enhances its natural, social and economic resources in ways that allow current and future members of the community to lead healthy, productive and satisfying lives.

**Trail.** Any route, paved or unpaved, that offers recreational walking opportunities and often provides links to recreational areas. Trails may, on occasion, utilize a road or street but, unlike walkways, are not ordinarily associated with vehicular traffic.

**Transit, Public.** A system of regularly-scheduled buses and/or trains available to the public on a fee-per-ride basis. Also called "Mass Transit."

**Transportation Demand Management (TDM).** A strategy for reducing demand on the road system by reducing the number of vehicles using the roadways and/or increasing the number of persons per vehicle. TDM attempts to reduce the number of persons who drive alone on the roadway during the commute period and to increase the use of carpools, vanpools, buses and trains, walking, and biking and telecommuting.

**Trip.** A one-way journey that proceeds from an origin to a destination via a single mode of transportation; the smallest unit of movement considered in transportation studies. Each trip has one "production end," (or origin--often from home, but not always), and one "attraction end," (destination).

**Trip Generation.** The dynamics that account for people making trips in automobiles or by means of public transportation. Trip generation is the basis for estimating the level of use for a transportation system and the impact of additional development or transportation facilities on an existing, local transportation system. Trip generations of households are correlated with destinations that attract household members for specific purposes.

**Underdeveloped.** Term used to describe parcels that are not currently developed to their full potential under General Plan, DSP, and Zoning Ordinance regulations, i.e. additional dwelling units or commercial space could be constructed by addition or redevelopment.

**Unimproved.** Used to describe a lot or parcel that has no utilities, structures or roads.

**Use.** The purpose for which a lot or structure is or may be leased, occupied, maintained, arranged, designed, intended, constructed, erected, moved, altered, and/or enlarged in accordance with the General Plan and Specific Plan land use designations and zoning ordinance designations.

**Vacant.** Lands or buildings which are not actively used for any purpose.

**View Corridor.** The line of sight - identified as to height, width, and distance - of an observer looking toward an object of significance to the community (e.g., ridgeline, river, historic building, etc.); the route that directs the viewer's attention.

**Viewshed.** The area within view from a defined observation point.

**Walkway.** Any path intended primarily for pedestrian use that parallels or is directly associated with any street or road. Walkways include sidewalks and all other improved pedestrian rights-of-way. Its principal purpose is to provide suitable separation between vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Its design and construction will reflect its use and location.

**Zoning.** The division of a city by legislative regulations into areas, or zones, which specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas; a program that implements policies of the General Plan.

**Zoning District.** A designated section of the City for which prescribed land use requirements and building and development standards are uniform.

**Zoning Map.** Government Code Section 65851 permits a legislative body to divide a county, a city, or portions thereof, into zones of the number, shape, and area it deems best suited to carry out the purposes of the zoning ordinance. These zones are delineated on a map or maps, called the Zoning Map.

**Zoning Ordinance.** The Zoning Ordinance is Title 6 of the Lafayette Municipal Code.