

CITY OF LAFAYETTE

DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN



SEPTEMBER 10 • 2012

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6. GETTING AROUND

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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.*

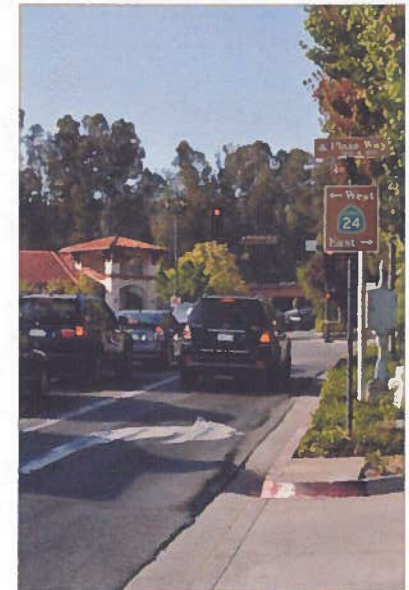
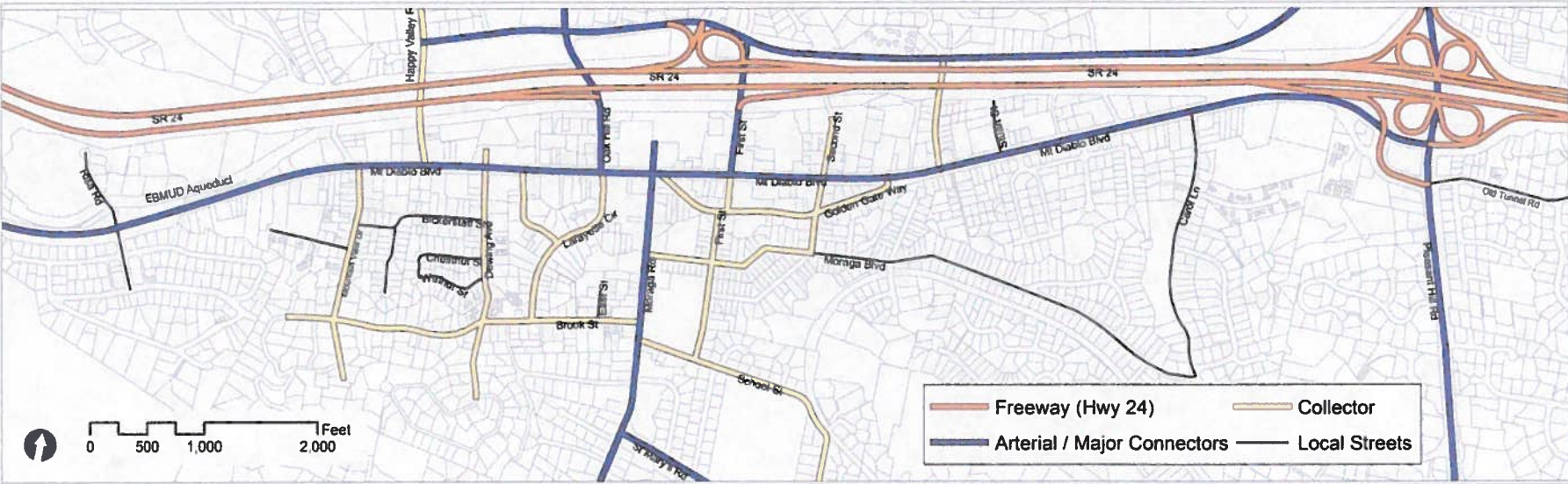


Figure 15. Roadway Network



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.
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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

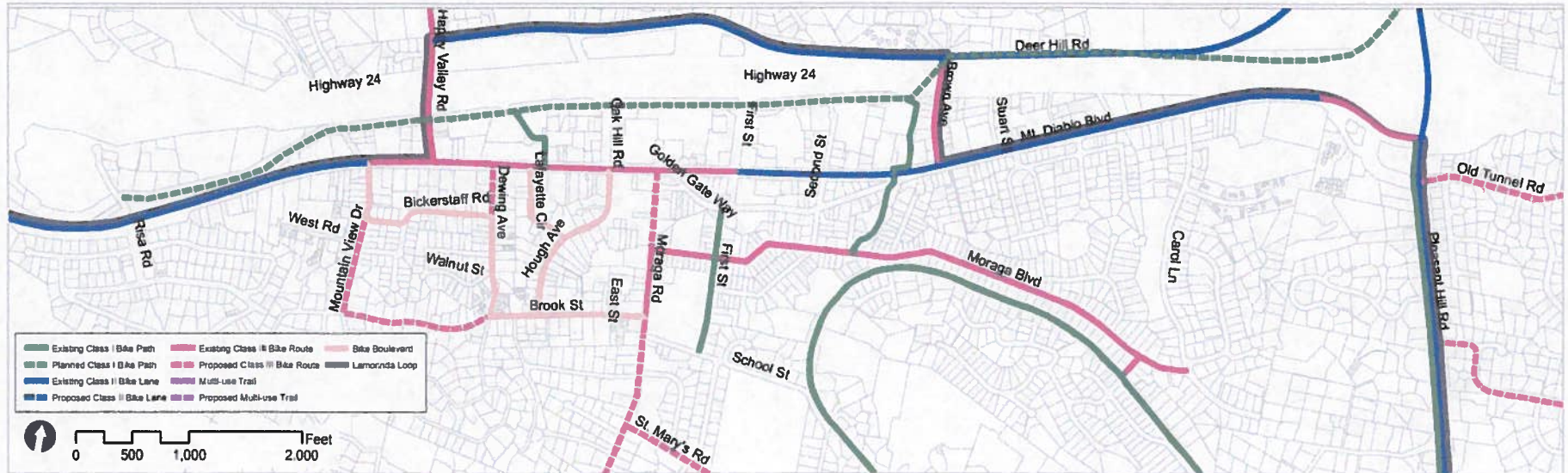
Most of the elements exist for a highly walkable downtown: desirable destinations, relatively flat terrain, and good walkway coverage. Opportunities for pedestrian connections through or between properties can shorten walking distances. Connections to regional and Lafayette trails ensure that these are 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.



Goal 7	Getting Around – Pedestrians. 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	Improve and increase north-south pedestrian crossings on Mount Diablo Boulevard using crosswalk enhancements, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special pavement materials • Enhanced striping and signage • Brighter street lighting • Pedestrian refuge islands and curb bulbs • In-pavement flashers • Provide marked crosswalks, particularly along “super-blocks”, to facilitate pedestrian circulation
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"> • Driveway / walkway intersection crossings • Entry routes from street to development • Alternatives to walkways, such as delineating a walking route with striping where a traditional walkway would limit access to a business • Improvements made as part of adjacent private development • Meandering walkways where appropriate and practical
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.

Goal 8	<u>Getting Around – Bicycles.</u> Develop a bicycle network and associated facilities to serve the downtown.
Policy 8.1	Implement the City’s Bikeways Master Plan.
Program 8.1.1	Continue to improve bicycle circulation between the downtown and residential neighborhoods.
Program 8.1.2	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.

Goal 9	Getting Around – Transit. 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 511ContraCosta.org .
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	<u>Getting Around – Transportation Demand Management.</u> 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.)

Goal 11	<u>Getting Around – Parking</u> . Support adequate parking in the downtown.
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.
<i>Short Term -</i>	
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.
<i>Long Term -</i>	
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).
<i>Short Term -</i>	
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.
<i>Long Term -</i>	
Program 11.3.4	Acquire land for public parking.

Policy 11.4	Work with businesses to address parking for the employees.
Short Term -	
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.
Long Term -	
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"> • Periodically update the parking inventory. • Monitor parking occupancy on an ongoing basis. • 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. • 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. • Review the timing of the existing on-street parking spaces to ensure they are consistent and effective. • Do not stripe parking spaces in residential areas and away from Mount Diablo Boulevard to avoid reducing the effective number of parking spaces.
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.