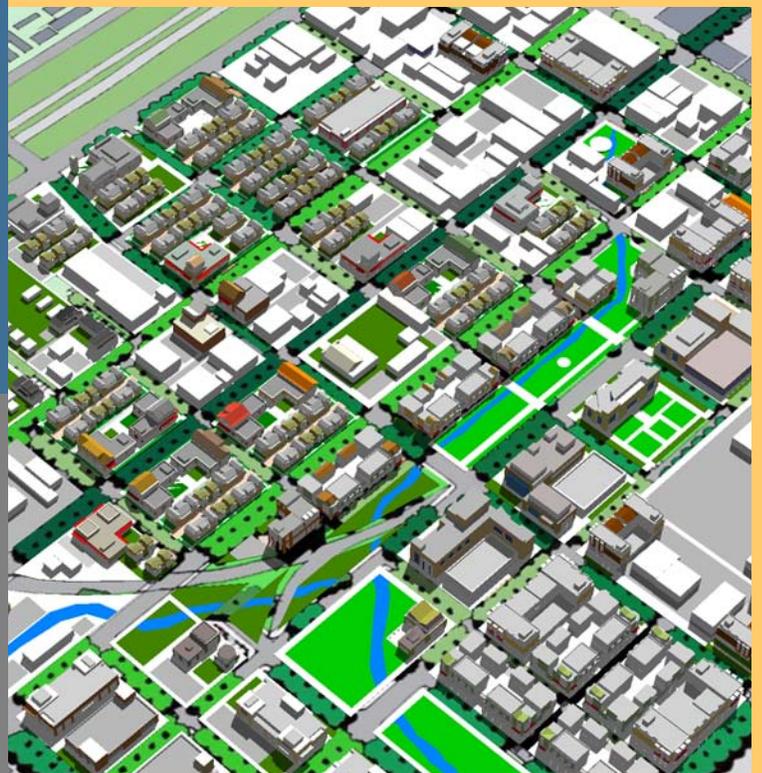
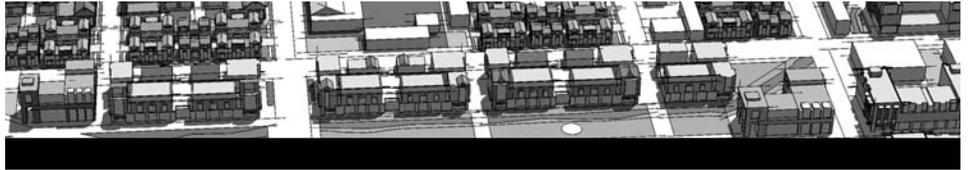


East Downtown Visalia



A Strategic Plan for 2025

October 2005



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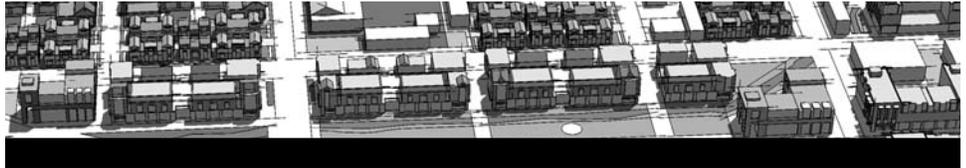
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*Above:
The East Downtown Strategic Plan
envisions investment opportunities
that result in the creation of new
places*

Executive Summary

The planning for East Downtown reinforces the community's sustained efforts to keep downtown as the physical and economic center of the city by complementing its retail and commercial function with residential, office and civic uses. Recommended planning strategies and supporting action plan provide a road map to accomplish the community's aspirations. By adopting this plan, the City puts in motion activities that build on opportunities and implement popular planning principles for East Downtown.

Opportunities

There are four key opportunities the East Downtown Strategic Plan builds upon:

Available Land—The East Downtown has over 80 acres of land and many existing buildings that can be adaptively reused over the next 20 years for new neighborhoods, business centers and civic uses. The City controls 40 acres of vacant land.

Growing Market—Visalia is growing rapidly and concentrically around the East Downtown. The price of land and rents are making downtown an increasingly competitive location for

business and an alternative neighborhood lifestyle to subdivisions.

Financial Feasibility—Economic modeling indicates that for sale residential uses, single story commercial, and multi-story office buildings with surface parking are currently financially feasible and higher density mixed-use projects will be feasible in the 20-year planning horizon for East Downtown.

Catalyst for Adjacent Areas

Investment in East Downtown will be a catalyst for downtown and adjacent areas to the north and east.

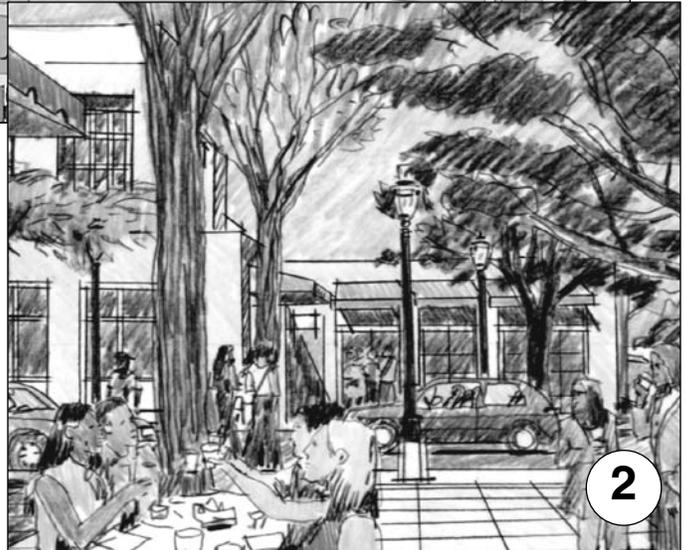
Key Strategies

There are three overall strategies or "big ideas" that the planning strives to accomplish:

Expanding Downtown—The two blocks east of Bridge Street can be fully integrating into downtown. Santa Fe, with the proposed new bridge, is to become a new connection to neighborhoods north and south for downtown. There are a variety of available sites that can be used for employment and residential uses that support downtown. Parking solutions can also be mutually supportive of downtown's needs.

Residential and Mixed-use Emphasis—There is a mixed-use emphasis for East Downtown entailing adaptive reuse of older buildings and new construction that reinforces the creation of neighborhoods and mixed-use, pedestrian friendly streets. This strategy makes a deliberate effort to implement General Plan goals and policies to grow concentrically with an emphasis on infill and revitalization of central Visalia's districts and neighborhoods.

executive summary



executive summary



- Experiencing East
Downtown:*
- 1. East Main Street
mixed-use neigh-
borhood*
 - 2. Burke Gateway*
 - 3. Mill Creek Market
Hall at East Main
and Santa Fe*
 - 4. Central Park*
 - 5. Walking on Santa
Fe*
 - 6. Mill Creek and Civic
Center Park*

executive summary

Creating an Urban Design

Framework—The third overall strategy makes a commitment to creating new places where public streets and open space become the focus for social and economic activities. To be successful, every public and private investment has to contribute towards the larger goal of creating social and safe streets and places. New projects are to shape and activate parks and streets; provide continuity and visual references; connect to contiguous development; and anticipate a future when central Visalia is the most sought after in-town residential and business address in the San Joaquin Valley.

Recommended Actions

The East Downtown Strategic Plan makes four overall actions key to successful implementation:

Update Policies and

Regulations—Update General Plan, development standards, Redevelopment Plan and other related documents and processes to support implementation of the East Downtown Plan.

Public Financing—Use public funding sources to finance public infrastructure as a catalyst for continued private sector investment.

Private Financing—Coordinate the use of private financial resources and assets to implement both private and public improvements identified in the East Downtown Strategic Plan.

Commitment of Staff Time—The City needs to commit staff to manage to implement of East Downtown. The time and continuity of a lead staff person is common part of managing revitalization of a central district project such as the East Downtown.

Below:

As shown in this computer model, East Downtown has the capacity to accommodate a significant amount of new downtown residents and employees, even at modest densities. The Strategy anticipates over 1,000 new housing units and more than 1 million SF of employment.





Introduction

The City of Visalia, Downtown Visalians, property owners, and other stakeholders have prepared this plan as a strategy for public and private investment in Visalia’s East Downtown district. The East Downtown Strategic Plan Task Force sponsored a three-step process that established overall objectives, concepts and supporting actions. The planning reinforces the community’s sustained efforts to keep downtown as the physical and economic center of the city by complementing its retail and commercial function with residential, office and civic uses.

I.2 Process

The Visalia East Downtown Strategic Plan Task Force sponsored the planning effort. It solicited community input through a three-step process that included input from property owners, Downtown Visalians, potential investors, and the community. A project website was created and maintained as a communication tool during the process.

Visalia East Downtown Strategic Plan Task Force

A 11-person task force was appointed by the Visalia City Council to act as a sounding board and assist in community outreach. The Task Force acted in an advisory capacity to the City Council and Planning Commission. Members of the Task Force represented a diversity of views and interests. The Task Force met five times in the planning process. They attended community workshops, met with interest groups, and attended Planning Commission and City Council meetings.

Community Input

The community and stakeholders had other opportunities to participate in development of objectives and concepts found in the Strategy. On July 13, 2004, over 70 people attended an interactive visioning workshop for the East Downtown. The participants mapped downtown activity centers, identified assets to build upon in the plan, defined potential new centers, and supporting connections strategies.

Parallel with the process, the staff and consultant team met with Downtown Visalians to get their input regarding how the East Downtown planning could support economic and management objectives for Downtown. Concurrent with the Strategic Plan process, the property owners dis-



Above:

The community and East Downtown Strategic Plan Task Force established the overall objectives and principles that guide the Strategic Plan for East Downtown

I.1 Purpose

The East Downtown Strategic Plan reinforces the city’s core General Plan policies that encourage concentric and centered reinvestment. It pursues a future where central Visalia expands proportionally with the rest of the city by adding new housing, commercial and civic uses. It provides physical, land use, circulation and strategies informed by economic and urban design analysis. The strategies outline City and Redevelopment Agency funding and implementation activities that can support community and private sector partners’ investments in a reinvented and vital, commercial and civic address. The Strategy identifies policy and regulatory actions necessary to transform East Downtown.

introduction

cussed the renewing and potential expansion of downtown's Property-Base Business Improvement District.

The planning team also met with property owners and developers that were interested in reinvesting in the East Downtown area. A group of local developers and members of the Task Force reviewed economic feasibility analysis of various types of projects and discussed opportunity sites.

The planning team attended four study sessions with the Planning Commission and/or City Council in the process. The first was a joint session to review and discuss objectives, concepts and principles that were developed based on the input at the community workshop. The second was to review and discuss the Draft Concept Plan. A third special City Council study session was held focusing on the opportunities created by relocating city hall and related activities to the East Downtown. Finally, the Planning Commission and City Council reviewed the Public Draft Strategic Plan in public hearings.

Three-Step Process

The Strategic Plan emerged out of a three-step process.

Step 1: Objectives—This step included preparing planning objectives based on site and market analysis and community input.

Step 2: Concepts—Overall planning principles and site plan concepts were developed and reviewed with the Task Force, Planning Commission and City Council as a basis for the Strategic Plan report.

Step 3: Action Plan—The Action Plan phase included preparation of administrative, regulatory and financial activities that support the land use, urban design and connections concepts.

I.3 Relationship to other Plans and Policies

The East Downtown Strategic Plan is to complement and inform the update of other related plans and policies. In particular, the Visalia General Plan, East Downtown Redevelopment Plan, and Civic Center Master Plan. More about these plans and policies can be found in Section One.

Visalia General Plan

The Visalia General Plan is the overall blueprint for growth and investment for the city. The East Downtown Strategic Plan builds on overall General plan policy themes prioritizing infill and concentric development of the city.

Currently, the General Plan identifies three overall roles for central Visalia. It is the:

- Central Business District (Downtown) provides for retail, medical, and professional services in Visalia's historic core;
- Commercial Service (East Downtown) area provides for a mix of wholesale and heavy commercial and services which are not suited to other commercial areas; and,
- A Conservation area (Mill Creek) for preservation and enhancement of natural resources including plant and animal life, ground water recharge, irrigation water conveyance, flood protection as well as limited recreation.

As a result of the East Downtown Strategic Plan the General Plan land use designations will be updated along with the corresponding development standards found in Visalia's Zoning Ordinance.

Redevelopment Areas

The East Downtown Strategic Plan area is roughly coterminous with the

At the July 2004 community workshop team presentations revealed seven popular planning features. By far the most popular was making Mill Creek a linear park that linked the future Civic Center to Downtown. Participants also stressed making East Main a mixed-use street with retail and residential development and renovation. A summary list of features is provided below:

Mill Creek—Open Space Feature

*Open space feature and linkage
Amenity for housing and commercial uses*

East Main Street—Mixed-use

*Commercial retail street
Storefront connection to West Main Street
New residential development adjacent to East Main Street*

Open Space—New Places

*Focus for new development
Connected to important streets and pathways
Programmed and activated*

Parking—Parking District Approach

*Hide it from view
Shared structures*

Connections—Linking Downtown and Neighborhoods

*Main Street spine
Burke and Santa Fe as north-south civic streets
Mill Creek as connector (bikes and pedestrians)*

Patterns—Balancing Development Locations

*Balancing development both north and south of East Main Street
New neighborhood(s) developed from north down to East Downtown and Main Street
Connect economic activities on south of East Main Street and west of Bridge Street*

Transit Center—Investment Catalyst

*Gateway to Sequoia arrival area
New commercial and residential uses*

introduction



Above: Over 70 people attended the community workshop for East Downtown

East Downtown Redevelopment Project Area. Established in 1986, the project area provides capabilities to provide Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and other legal tools to assist in implementation of economic development projects. The East Downtown Redevelopment Project Area has a Five-Year Implementation Plan that should be updated to be consistent with the Strategy and General Plan.

Civic Center Planning

During the preparation of the East Downtown Strategic Plan, the City embarked on an effort to master plan new city facilities within the planning area. The Strategy provides an overall urban design and implementation framework for East Downtown. The Civic Center Master Plan explores more detailed options and concepts for designing and financing city and related facilities.

Below Right:

Planning Process

The planning process included three steps that included review meetings with the Task Force, Planning Commission and City Council

tions with an executive summary, introduction and appendix (under a separate cover).

Executive Summary—Provides a brief summary of leading recommendations

Introduction—Contains a summary of the purpose, process, relationship to other plans and report organization

SECTION ONE: Opportunities—summarizes planning and economic analysis and distills it as opportunities

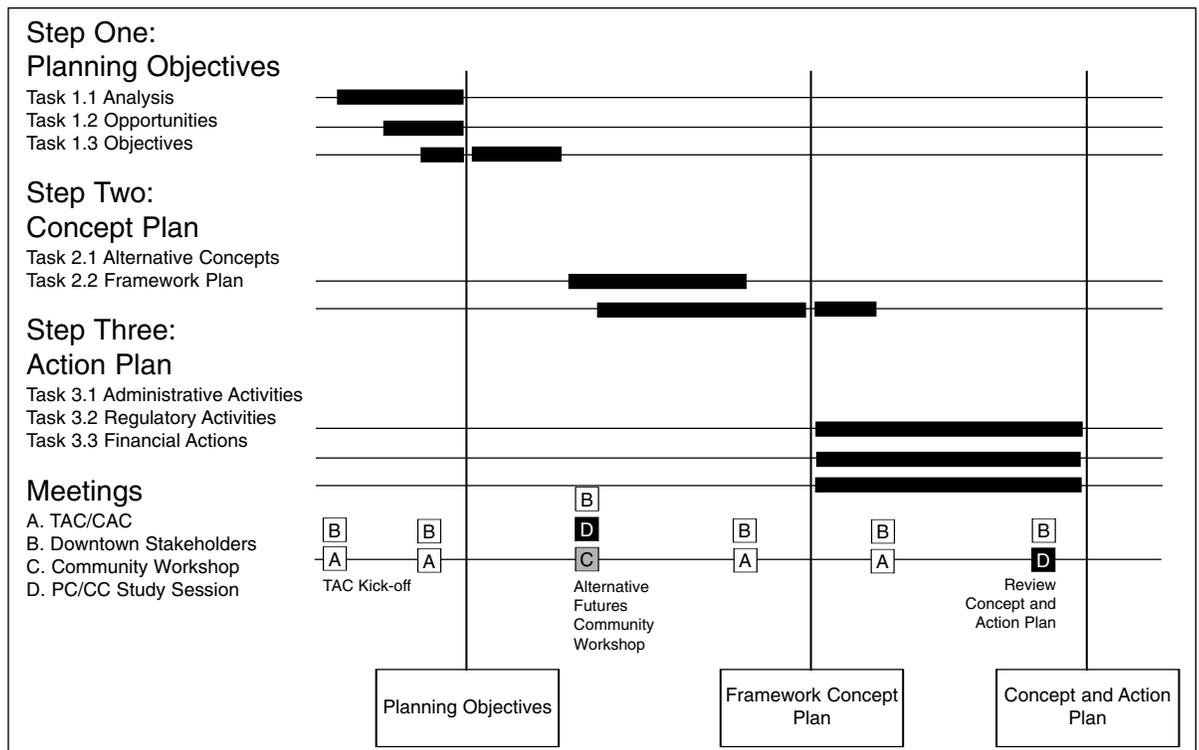
SECTION TWO: Strategies—defines overall objectives, planning principles and concepts

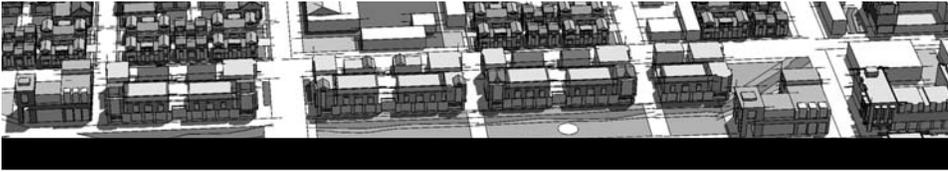
SECTION THREE: Action Plan—identifies development, administrative, regulatory and financial activities

Appendix—includes meeting notes, technical studies, slide shows, and preliminary concept summaries (under separate cover)

I.4 Organization of Report

The report is organized into three sec-





SECTION ONE: Opportunities

East Downtown provides a location in central Visalia to expand economic activities. Largely underutilized, the 175-acre area can provide expansion of commercial activities while adding residential and civic uses that can complement downtown’s traditional function. Citywide growth, escalating land prices and emerging market interest in downtown living and working make new types of projects increasingly doable on land susceptible to development in the next 20 years.

1.0 Introduction

Section One includes evaluating the investment and urban design opportunities for the East Downtown. The analysis summarized in the report includes the community planning context, urban design context, opportunity sites, and market and related financial feasibility findings.

1.1 Community Planning Context

The planning context for East Downtown includes physical, policy and regulatory dimensions. To better understand the planning area, analysis was done for the city and regional context, existing land uses, General Plan policies, development standards, and other related plans and policies.

Regional Setting

Visalia, the county’s largest city, was

established in 1852 and has the distinction of being the first community between Stockton and Los Angeles. At that time, Tulare County included the all of the area between Mariposa and Los Angeles Counties, and stretched from the Coastal Mountain Range to the State of Nevada. Through the years, the Counties of Fresno, Tulare, Kings, Kern, and Inyo have been formed out of what was once that original territory. Visalia’s downtown has been the traditional regional center.

East Downtown Study Area

Visalia is located approximately five miles east of Hwy 99 on Hwy 198. Visalia is the oldest town between San Francisco and Los Angeles. Downtown Visalia can be found 72 miles north of Bakersfield and 43 miles south of Fresno, about 6 miles east of Hwy 99 north of Hwy 198.

East Downtown covers approximately 174.6 acres east of the existing downtown core. The Study Area is bound to the north by West Murray Avenue and Goshen Avenue, in the south by East Mineral King Avenue, to the east by Ben Maddox Street, and to the west by North Bridge Street. There are 6.4 miles of streets covering approximately 38.4 acres of land and 1.14 miles of rail lines within the area. Developable lands cover the remaining 136.2 acres including Jennings Ditch to the northeast and Mill Creek running through the central portion of East Downtown.

East Downtown is comprised primarily of service commercial uses dominated by auto sales and repair. Along East Main Street is a mix of service and retail commercial uses, including a number of antique shops.

Visalia General Plan

Three general plan designations



*Above:
East Downtown has historic and natural features that can become centerpieces to the district’s future.*

section one

Below:

East Downtown Context

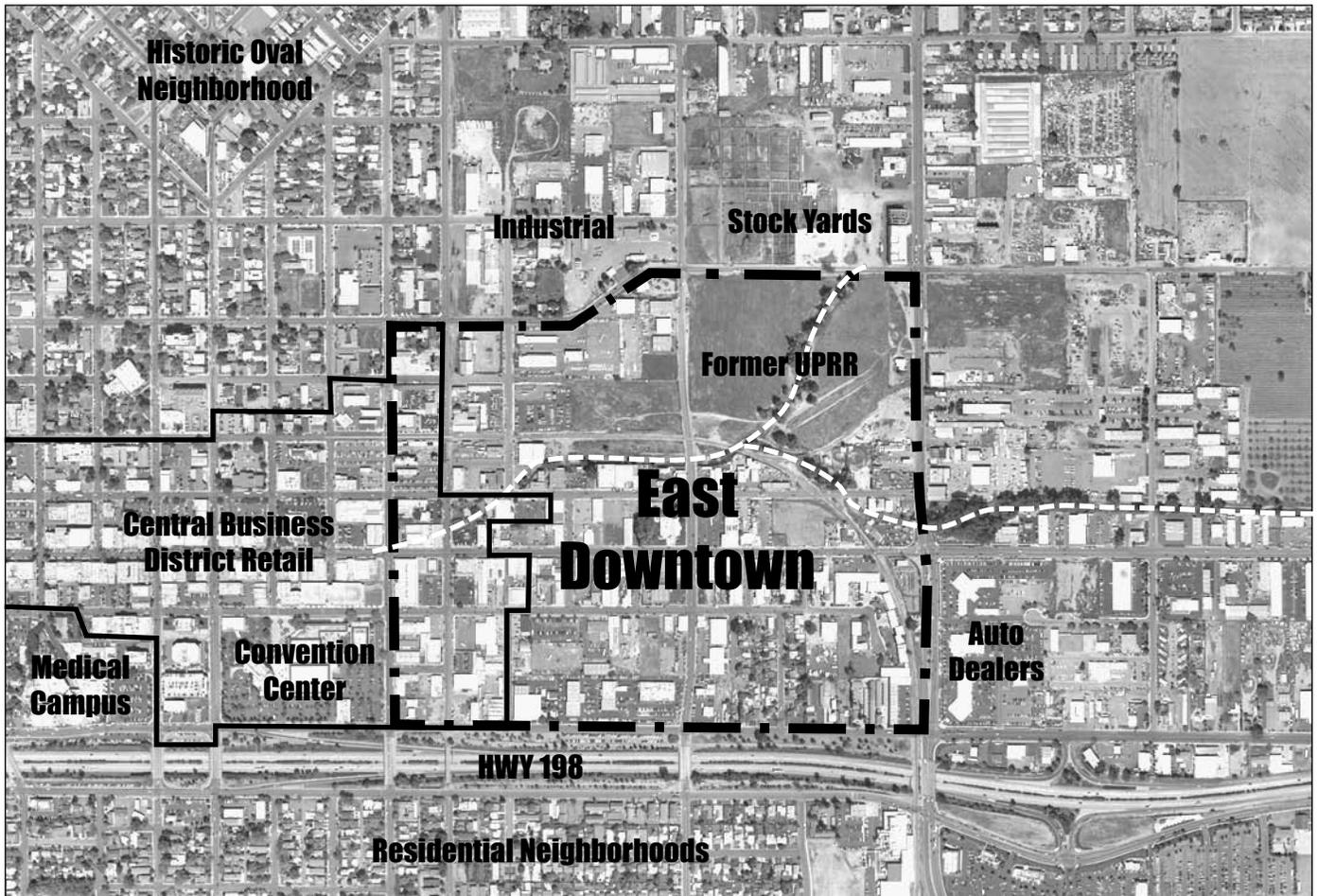
This aerial photograph of East Downtown and adjacent areas shows the the patterns of uses and improvements. To the west is downtown with its successful Main Street shops, restaurants and civic uses. On the north is largely vacant former industrial uses. To the east is commercial and automotive uses. Highway 198 is to the south with established residential neighborhoods beyond. The large vacant area in the northeast portion of the planning area is the former UPRR yards, now owned by the City of Visalia.

cover lands within East Downtown: Central Business District (CDT), Service (CS), and Conservation (C). According to the 1996 General Plan Land Use Element these designations provide for the following uses:

- Central Business District designation provides for Visalia's historic, medical, and professional services in Visalia's historic core;
- Commercial Service designation provides for areas for a mix of wholesale and heavy commercial uses and services which are not suited to other commercial areas; and,
- Conservation designation reserves land for preservation and enhance-

ment of natural resources including plant and animal life, ground water recharge, irrigation water conveyance, flood protection as well as limited recreation. Development adjacent to these areas may be permitted provided that conservation areas are not adversely impacted.

Immediately surrounding East Downtown are seven additional land use designations. These designations guide land use of surrounding properties and can have a direct influence on the type of development that may occur within East Downtown. These include:



section one

- Residential Low Density (RLD)
- Residential Medium Density (RMD)
- Light Industrial (IL)
- Commercial Shopping/Office Center (CSO)
- Professional Administrative/Office (PAO)
- Public/Institutional (PI)

1996 Visalia Zoning Ordinance

There are two base zones within East Downtown: planned Commercial Service (P-C-S) and Planned Downtown Central Business Retail District (P-C-DT). The purpose and intent of these zones is as follows:

- Planned Central Business District Retail Zone (P-C-DT): The purpose and intent of the P-C-DT district is to promote the continued vitality of the core of the community by providing for the continuing commercial development of the downtown and maintaining and enhancing its

historic character. The zone is designed to accommodate a wide mix of land uses ranging from commercial and office to residential and public spaces, both active and passive.

- Planned Service Commercial Zone (P-C-S). The purpose and intent of the P-C-S district is to provide areas that accommodate wholesale, heavy commercial uses, such as lumberyards and construction material retail uses, etc., and services such as automotive, plumbing, and sheet metal fabrication. It is intended that uses in this district be those that can be compatible with heavy truck traffic and noise.

Immediately surrounding East Downtown are six other zones, including: One Family Residential (R-1-6), Multifamily Residential (R-M-2), Planned Professional/Administrative



Above:

The East Downtown area is largely designated for commercial services uses in the General Plan.

General Plan Designations

Designation	Gross Acres	Percentage	Lot Count	Net Acres	Percentage
Conservation	10.9	6.2%	23 ¹	46.6 ²	-
Commercial Service	133.4	76.4%	177	116.5	86.0%
Downtown Business	30.3	17.4%	46	19.7	14.0%
TOTAL	174.6	100.0%	223	136.2	100.0%

¹ Includes parcels found in the Commercial Service designations. Not included in total lot count because the Conservation designation allows for development of the adjacent designation. All Conservation designated land is adjacent to Commercial Service designated land in the Study Area.

² Includes acreage found in the Commercial Service designations. Not included in total because the Conservation designation allows for development of the adjacent designation. All Conservation designated land is adjacent to Commercial Service in the Study Area.

Source: City of Visalia GIS database, 2004; City of Visalia General Plan; Mintier & Associates, 2004

General Plan

section one



Above:

The planning area was historically a mixed-use district with residential, food processing, industrial, institutional and commercial uses. East Downtown's zoning is primarily for commercial services.

Office (P-PA), Quasi-Public (QP), Planned Shopping/Office Commercial (P-C-SO), and Planned Light Industrial (I-L). The purpose and specific standards for these zones are set out in the 1996 Visalia Zoning Ordinance.

Within the boundaries of East Downtown are six modifying zones: Central Business District Parking Zone, and Design District Zones C, D, DRD, and E. The purpose of these zones is to establish special standards required in specific areas.

- Central Business District Parking Zone. The purpose of this zone is to insure that uses established within the central business district meet minimum off-street parking standards or pay an in-lieu fee for future downtown parking facilities. Specific requirements of this zone can be found in the 1996 Visalia Zoning Ordinance Section 17.30.019A.
- Design District Zones (C, D, DRD, and E). The purpose of the development standards contained in the Design Districts is to obtain a harmonious relationship of various uses, buildings, structures, lot sizes and open spaces while still main-

taining the economic viability of a parcel. Specific development standards can be found in the 1996 Visalia Zoning Ordinance Section 17.30.(130, 180, 190, 200, and 240).

Redevelopment Project Areas

East Downtown falls completely within the 650-acre East Visalia Redevelopment Area. The East Visalia Redevelopment Plan was adopted on July 16, 1986 with a projected planning horizon by 2016 and an anticipated General Fund loan repayment by 2026. The project area includes East Downtown, the Oval area, and the industrial and service commercial areas between Bridge Street and Ben Maddox Way north of SR-198.

Historic Preservation Element

The goal of the Historic Preservation Element, adopted in 1979, is to identify, establish, and protect sites and structures of architectural, historical, archeological or cultural significance in Visalia. The historical element boundary is defined by: Houston Avenue on the north, Giddings Avenue on the West, Tulare Avenue on the South, and Santa Fe Avenue on the east.

Zoning Districts			
Zoning District	Lot Count	Net Acres	Percentage
P-CD-T	46	19.7	14.5%
P-C-S	177	116.5	85.5%
TOTAL	223	136.2	100.0%
Source: City of Visalia GIS database, 2004; City of Visalia General Plan; Mintier & Associates, 2004			

Zoning Ordinance

section one

The City has identified seven historic structures in the Local Register of Historic Sites in the eastern half of the East Downtown. The table at the bottom of the page lists each site by assessors parcel number (APN), address, architectural style, and classification.

Property-Based Business Improvement District (PBID)

Two PBID zones (1 and 2) fall within the western portion of East Downtown. These special benefit assessment districts goals are to improve the downtown and were formed in 2001. As a group of property owners, the PBID, formed a coalition with Downtown Visalians and is now providing environmental and business improvements in an approximately 70 block area.

PBID operates on a budget of approximately \$1.7 million and through a contract with Downtown Visalians, the group has implemented programs to provide 24 hour security, graffiti removal, additional parking and other capital improvement projects.

1.2 Urban Design Context

East Downtown's existing physical form can be described in terms of the types of places and patterns that emerged from its historic economic role, how it is connected to the community linear connections, auto access and parking, and the image of its infrastructure.

East Downtown's Evolution

East Downtown was in agricultural use until around 1900 when the area started to transform into an agricultural processing and industrial district. Buildings and sites related to these early activities are seen in the area—railroad yards, stockyards, canning, food processing, lumberyards, public utilities, and light industry. East Downtown became the automotive district after WWII with auto sales, repair and services becoming the pre-dominant use.

The street, block and lot pattern in the original 1852 plan provides an underlying continuity for central Visalia and a logical system to integrate new investment in the East Downtown.



Above:

East Downtown was part of an extensive food processing district. Canneries and packing sheds lined the former Southern Pacific and Santa Fe railroad tracks.

Local Register of Historic Sites			
APN	Address	Style	Classification
9428508	404 East Center Street	Victorian Utilitarian Commercial	Background
0001745	445 East Oak		
9429413	401 East Center Ave	Victorian Utilitarian Commercial	Exceptional
9429414	417 East Center Ave	Victorian Utilitarian Commercial	Exceptional
9429409	400 East Main Street		
9429410	406 East Main Street	Utilitarian Commercial	Background
9429510	307 East Main Street	Spanish Colonial Revival	Exceptional
Source: City of Visalia GIS database, 2004; City of Visalia Local Register of Historic Structures, 2004.			

Historic Sites

section one



The blocks are approximately 255'x260'. Many blocks have 15' wide alleys. The grid and street pattern also reflects the location of important civic buildings and districts: Bridge Street, Court Street and Church Street and streets named for their purpose. The formal relationship between the Main Street commercial district, Court Street connections to

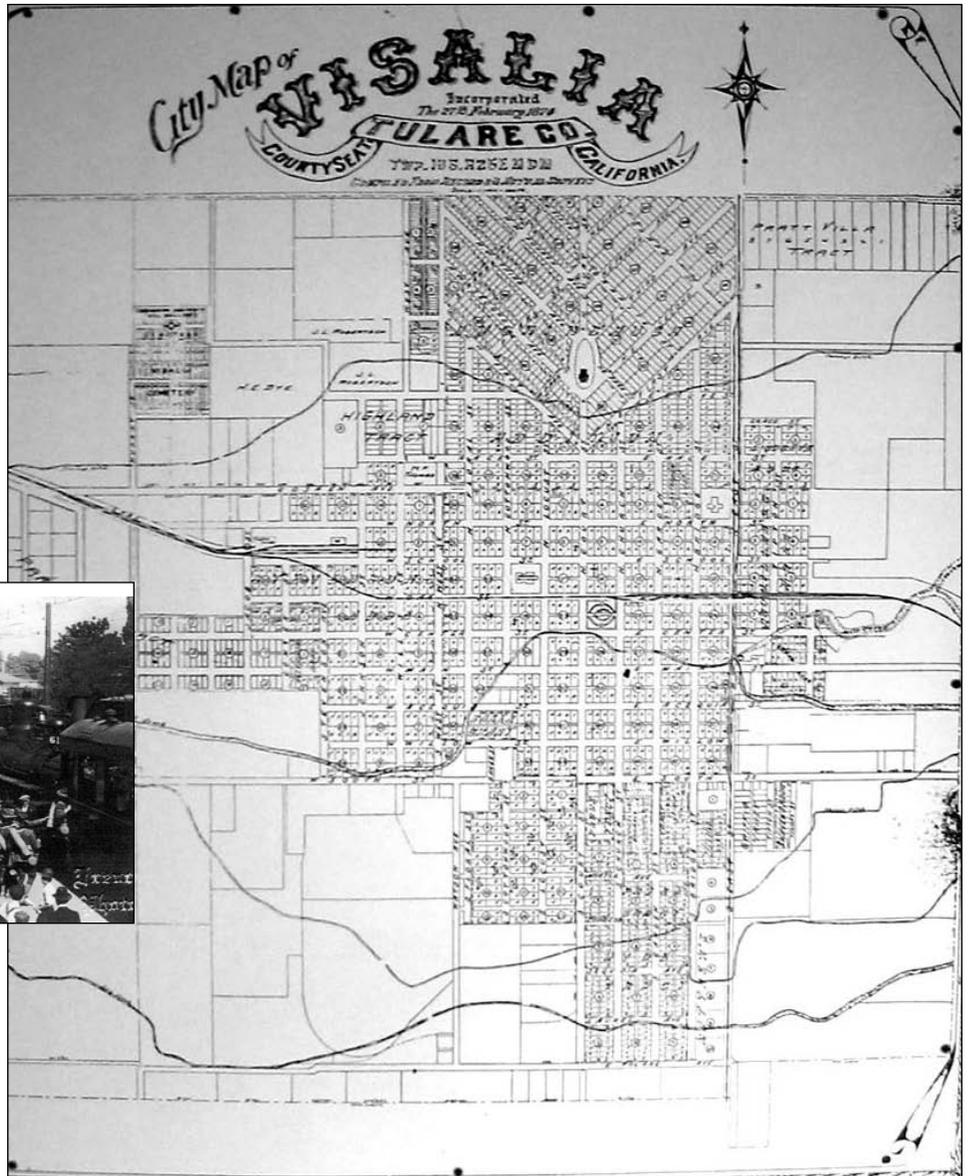
the Oval, and visual prominence of the church, library, schools, and historic courts building can be seen in the original plan. The Oval District rotates the grid 45 degrees and was originally a residential neighborhood. These patterns have been somewhat obscured by public works projects and changes in zoning but still provide an important and unique urban design

Above:

This sugar beet factory was located on Mill Creek east of downtown Visalia.

Right:

This map from 1874 shows Visalia's original street and block pattern.



Above:

Oak Street's railroad tracks and historic train stations have made it a traditional entryway to the city. This photo from WWI shows troops leaving for Europe.

section one

framework.

East Downtown has three places where uses have clustered. These include the Transit Center and Santa Fe area, once processing and industrial uses located along the railroad tracks, that is transforming into a business address; East Main Street storefront district; and a historic bungalow cottage neighborhood fronting on Oakhurst Street. There is an opportunity for new investment to add to these areas by adaptively reusing historic buildings, reinforcing the block and lot pattern, and reflecting the scale of the best buildings on the streets.

Older brick commercial and industrial buildings are scattered throughout East Downtown. These buildings contribute to the district's authenticity as an urban alternative to the suburbs. Many have interesting interior spaces that are tall and open, making them a flexible choice for restaurant, commercial and retail uses.

Linear Connectors

Mill Creek and the UPRR tracks provide opportunities for connecting East Downtown to the rest of the community. Mill Creek is a potential linear park and trailway that can connect the area to downtown. The UPRR tracks could provide a logical transit route in the future connecting East Downtown to the region. They also make Oak Street a logical extension and connection to downtown.

Auto Access and Parking

The East Downtown area has superior and increasingly improving regional access. Two nearby access ramps (Court Street and Ben Maddox) to Highway 198, Mineral King frontage, and community access via Goshen, Ben Maddox, and Burke Streets. The railroad bridge crossing Highway 198

on Santa Fe will be replaced with a new vehicular bridge making it an important cross-town route and potentially a new address.

Main Street, Acequia and Center Streets are one-way in the downtown but two-way in East Downtown. This is an advantage. Two-way streets make the area accessible for local traffic and are more pedestrian friendly.

Most parking in East Downtown is provided on public streets and private lots. The current zoning requires on-site parking, which contributes to the loss of buildings and pedestrian continuity. Most on-street parking is parallel to the curb. In downtown, most of the parking is in public facilities and on-street, much of it in angled spaces. If East Downtown is to support a pedestrian-friendly environment and make room for new buildings, a parking district of public facilities and efficient on-street parking will be required.

Infrastructure Image

The East Downtown has utilities designed to support industrial uses. Water and sewer capacity are adequate, according to the City of Visalia. However, the street and block pattern are likely to be extended in the area, requiring new roads and sidewalks. Overhead power lines have been undergrounded in the downtown. East Downtown has power lines running down Acequia and Center Streets. Power for East Main Street is provided in the alleys. Streetlights are standard auto-era "cobra head" fixtures. Some street tree planting has taken place.

1.3 Opportunity Sites

The Strategic Plan identifies future potential investment areas—areas that could be susceptible to new



Above:

East Downtown has areas with unique character. The Transit Center is the hub of a growing business address. East Main Street's storefronts have been claimed by antique shops. The old Oakhurst neighborhood is an intact block of historic Victorian and Bungalow homes.

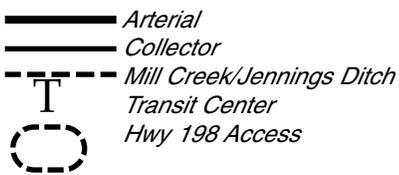
section one



Above:

Extension of Oak Street can provide direct access to East Downtown's former railyards from the Transit Center and downtown.

Connections (Current and Planned)



development over the next 20 years. The overall goal is to better coordinate the types of land uses, transportation strategies, infrastructure and design concepts that enhance the value of the district to property owners, tenants and the community.

Long Range Perspective

The Strategic Plan anticipates how East Downtown could change over the next 20 years. Site analysis and market analysis suggest there could be as much as 88 acres of urban land available for reinvestment. In addition to this land, there are many existing properties and structures that are likely to be renovated and provide opportunities for additional tenants to be located in East Downtown.

Near Term Opportunity Sites

An estimated 57 acres of land could be available in the near term (0-10 years). These sites include vacant

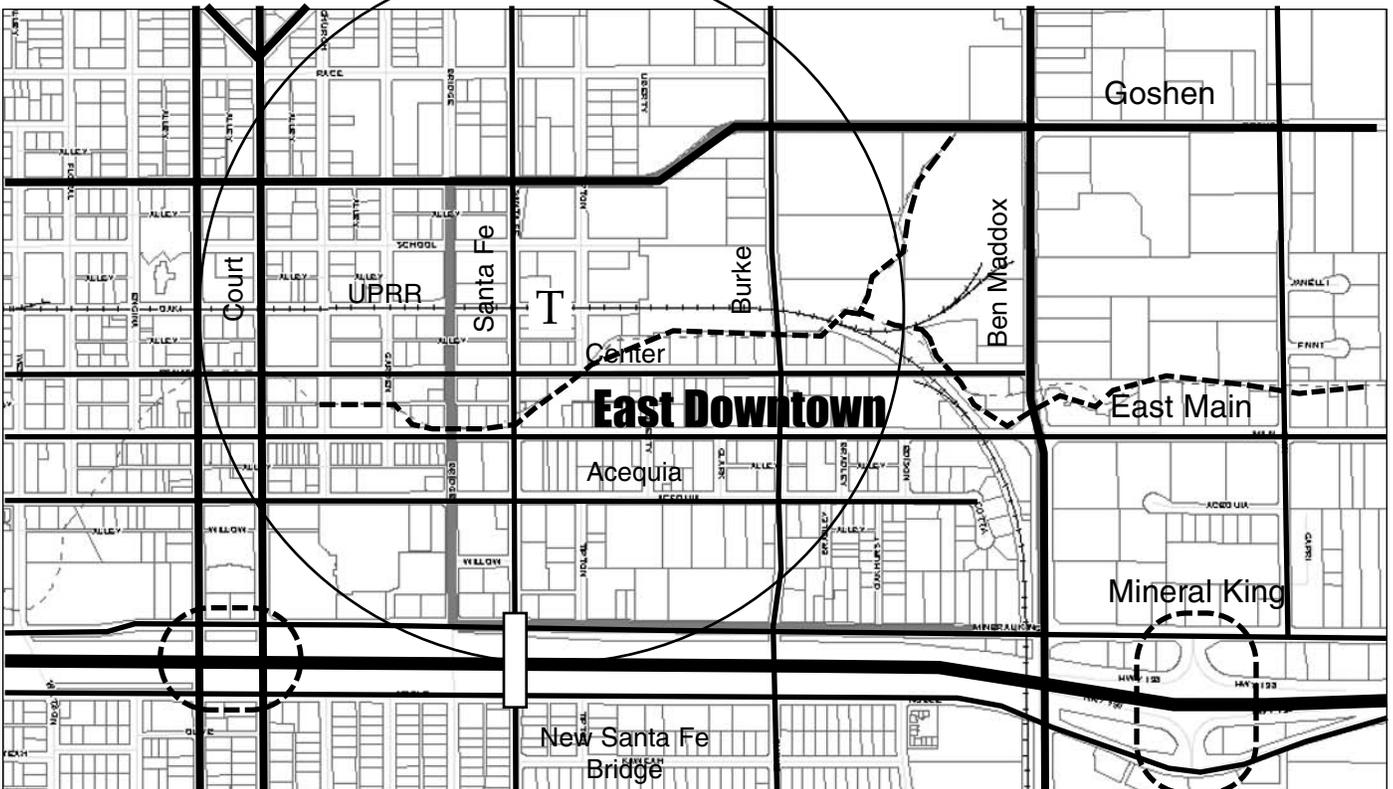
land and structures, underutilized properties, and anticipated changes in ownership or tenancy. Investment in these sites can act as a catalyst for future development.

Areas with large available sites include the former UPRR property (approximately 40 acres), blocks around the new Transit Center (approximately six and one half acres), and infill sites along East Main Street (approximately five and one half acres).

Long Term Opportunity Sites

In the 20-year planning horizon (0-20 years), there are another 31.5 acres that could be redeveloped. These could lend themselves to projects that anticipate the higher value and prestige of a 2025 central Visalia address.

Areas that could be available towards the end of the planning period include



section one

sites along East Main Street (approximately seven acres), properties between Acequia and Mineral King (approximately 14 acres), and others scattered sites along Center Street.

1.4 Market Opportunities

Visalia's economic growth has been accompanied by a significant increase in population, making it a regional trading center serving an estimated population of 500,000 within Tulare County, southern Fresno County, Kings County and northern Kern County. Historically, Visalia's economy has been based on agriculture and related industries. In recent years, however, the city has broadened its economic base to include many diversified industrial enterprises and manu-

facturers. Visalia is home to more than 150 industries and is the principal trading center for Tulare County. Over the past ten years, Visalia has averaged approximately 42% of the retail sales in Tulare County, while having approximately 27% of the county population.

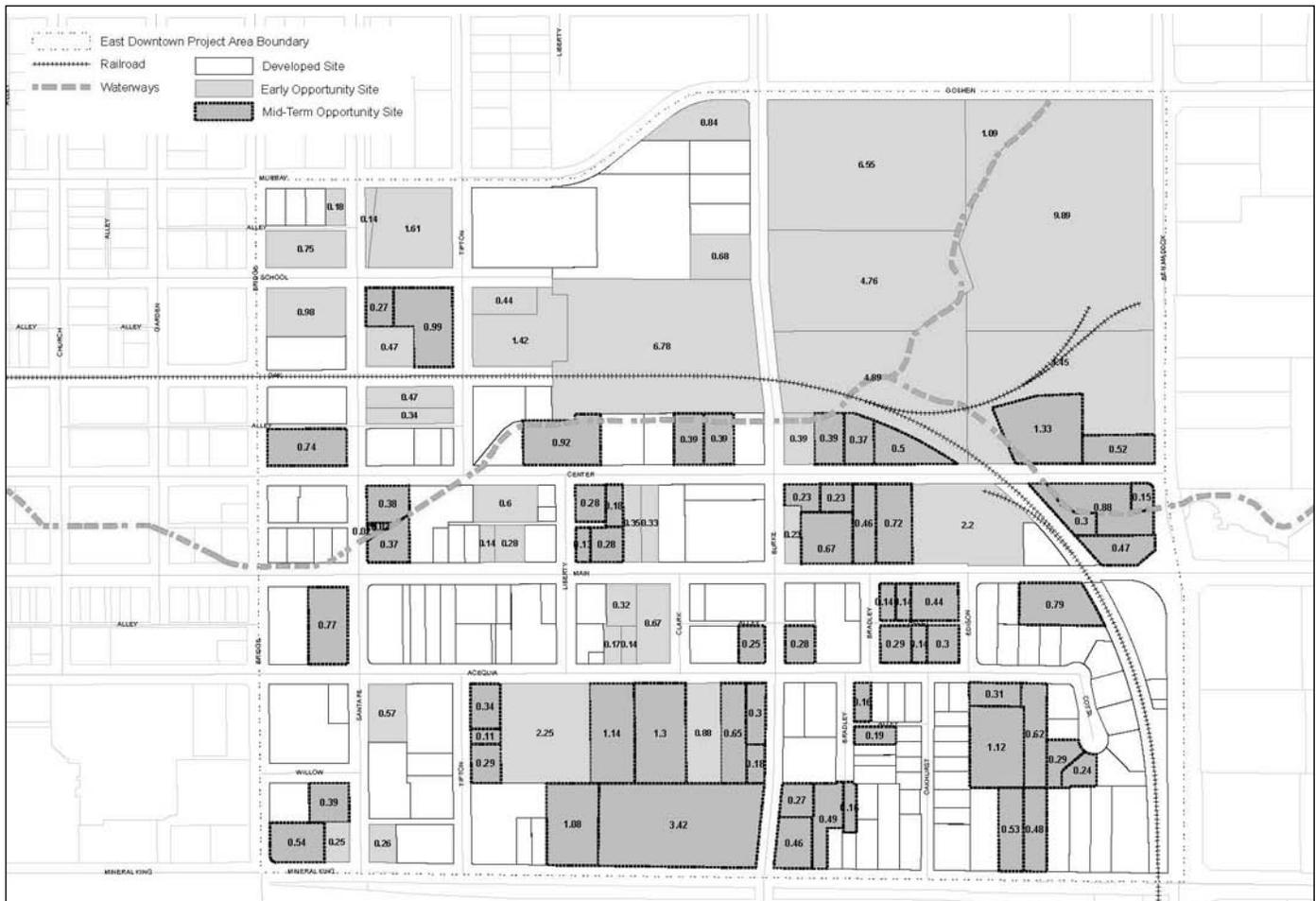
Economic Outlook

The overall economic outlook for Tulare County for the five-year period ending in 2008 is very positive, particularly in terms of employment and population growth. Overall non-farm wage and salary employment in Tulare County is projected by the California Employment Development Department to increase by 4,700 jobs during the period from 2001 to 2008,



Above:

Vacant auto dealer sites in the East Downtown provide immediate opportunities for new investment.



section one



Above:

Existing industrial and service uses will continue to face economic pressure to evolve into higher intensity uses.

Left:

Opportunity Sites

There are an estimated 88.4 acres of land in the East Downtown area that could be redeveloped in the next 20 years. The diagram at the left shows what land could be ready for reinvestment in the near term (56.9 acres) and in the mid-term (31.5 acres). The City owns about 40 acres in the East Downtown. Much of that land was owned by Union Pacific Railroad. Other large parcels are grouped south of Acequia with potential access from Mineral King.

an increase of 4.7%. The services, trade and government industries are projected to add the majority of the additional employment.

The City of Visalia has a labor force of approximately 44,630 persons with 40,990 employed persons, representing an 8.2% unemployment rate (mid-2004), according to information from the California Employment Development Department. The top public and private employers in the city of Visalia are:

<u>Employer</u>	<u>Employees</u>
Tulare County	4,320
Kaweah Delta Health Care District	2,540
Visalia Unified School District	2,481
College of Sequoias	1,106
CIGNA Healthcare	1,100
Josten's Printing & Publishing	720
Land O'Lakes	600
Monrovia Nursery	600
City of Visalia	519
Kraft	350
Visalia Medical Clinic	350
United Parcel Service	310

Source: Visalia Economic Development Corporation

Market Conditions

An analysis of real estate market conditions was prepared in mid-2004 to assist in identification of planning objectives for East Downtown. The analysis focused on the following:

- Existing real estate market conditions for office, retail and residential uses;
- Potential real estate development opportunities for office, retail and residential uses; and
- Role and capacity of the Redevelopment Agency to assist in implementation of a strategic plan.

Preparation of the analysis included meetings with various City of Visalia representatives; inspection of the East Downtown Area; collection, review and evaluation of secondary market data and information; and interviews with informed market participants, including real estate brokers and developers.

The following presents a summary of preliminary information regarding a profile of existing real estate market conditions related to office, retail and residential (new for-sale, resale, and multiple family rental) uses in the general Visalia area, downtown Visalia and East Downtown, respectively. All of the information regarding lease rates, property values, and sales prices, are in mid-2004 dollars.

Office

The overall inventory of existing office space in the general Visalia area is approximately 1.0 million square feet. The current vacancy rate as of mid-2004 was approximately 9.5%. This figure represents a slight increase in vacancy over the previous two years.

The existing inventory of office space in the downtown core is small, and consists primarily of small format office space ranging from less than 1,000 square feet to 7,000 square feet in size. Based on review of various office space listings:

- Monthly lease rates for office space

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in the downtown core ranged from \$.075 to \$1.60 square feet depending on the size, quality and location of the space; with an overall average of approximately \$1.25 per square foot;

- Monthly lease rates for smaller office space (less than 2,000 square feet) ranged from \$0.75 to \$1.20 per square; while larger office space (greater than 2,000 square feet) was in the \$1.00 to \$1.60 per square foot range; and
- Newer larger office space was being leased at rates toward the upper end of that range (\$1.40 to \$1.60 per square foot).

Some of the issues affecting the lease-up of existing vacant office space and development of additional new office space are the lack of on-site dedicated parking for employees and customers (either private or public parking); and the relatively small format size of the existing and newly developed office space in relation to potential demand for larger sized space.

There is a potential demand for additional office space near the existing downtown core and the East Downtown Area related primarily to:

- The existing/proposed future expansion of the Kaweah Delta Health District facilities in the downtown core - specifically related to additional physician and medical office space that tends to locate near such major medical facilities;
- The proposed Civic Center Project in the northwest section of the East Downtown Area; and
- Projected increase in financial, insurance and real estate employment for Visalia and Tulare County.

The demand appears to be for primarily smaller format users of 2,000 to

5,000 square feet in size (except medical office space). A potentially marketable office space product would be buildings with:

- Smaller floor plates (less than 10,000 square feet);
- One, two or three stories in height;
- 6,000 to 20,000 square feet in total size; and
- On-site dedicated parking for employees and customers of the office space.

Potential monthly lease rates for new, high quality office space development could be in the range of \$1.40 to \$1.65 per square foot (gross) depending on the size, quality and location of the space; and the availability of on-site dedicated parking. This range of monthly lease rates would probably require tenant improvement allowances of \$25 to \$35 per square foot for standard quality office space (and \$50 to \$60 per square foot for medical office space).

Retail

Retail development in the existing downtown core is primarily locally-owned businesses with very few national tenants (Starbucks, Togos/Baskin Robbins and Quiznos). Overall retail leasing in the downtown core is very sound with a very small vacancy factor.

The inventory of existing retail space in the existing downtown core consists primarily of small format space ranging in size from approximately 500 to 5,000 square feet. Based on a review of approximately various retail space listings:

- Monthly lease rates for retail space in the downtown core ranged from \$0.75 to \$1.50 per square foot (gross) depending on the size, quality and location of the space –



Above:

West Main is an established and well managed address. East Downtown can benefit from the success of downtown while supporting its traditional role as Visalia's Central Business District.



Above:

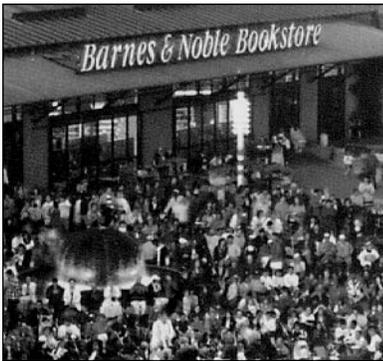
Many communities are insisting on office becoming integrated into downtowns by having pedestrian-oriented uses on the ground floor.

section one



Above:

National tenants are taking a greater interest in downtown markets.



Above:

There may be an opportunity to bring a mid-size anchor tenant to East Main Street that can act as a catalyst for reinvestment in adjacent sites and buildings.

- and proximity to parking (either on-site or on-street);
- Overall average monthly lease rates were \$1.10 per square foot; and
- Larger retail spaces (greater than 2,000 square feet) were being leased at rates toward the upper end (\$1.45 to \$1.50 per square foot) of the range indicated above.

Mooney Boulevard provides the retail-shopping hub for both Tulare and Kings Counties, offering two established regional malls (Visalia Mall and Sequoia Mall) with two additional new malls (Packwood Creek and Park Place Promenade), many “big-box” retail stores, and various businesses ranging from services to dining to professional offices. Current monthly lease rates for new retail space being developed along the Mooney Boulevard was approximately \$2.00 to \$2.50 per square feet (NNN).

There appears to be potential demand for additional new service and specialty retail generally related to:

- Potential future commercial and residential development/growth within the East Downtown Area;
- Existing/projected residential growth to the northeast and southeast of the East Downtown Area;
- Existing/future expansion of the Kaweah Delta Health District facilities in the downtown core; and
- Proposed Civic Center Project in the northwest section of the East Downtown Area.

There is an opportunity to develop additional service and specialty retail that is complimentary to the existing retail inventory in the downtown core. Additional new retail space in East Downtown could be developed to accommodate:

- Additional local and regional owned businesses;
- National tenants (franchises) that are adaptable to a smaller building/floor plate retail format; and
- Mid size “anchor” retail (i.e. small grocery) that requires floor plate/parcel sizes larger than those in existing downtown core.

Additional new retail development in East Downtown should be of a quality, charm and character consistent with the existing downtown core; should not be large format (“big box”) retail space; and should not conflict with existing City of Visalia policies, goals and objectives related to focusing community and regional retail development along Mooney Boulevard.

Potential new retail space in East Downtown could be developed as either stand alone buildings; multi-tenant retail buildings and/or mixed-use (i.e. office or residential over retail) buildings. Potential monthly lease rates for new, high quality retail space could be in the range of \$1.50 to \$2.00 per square foot depending on the size, quality and location of such space; and proximity to both on-site or on-street parking. New general retail space would probably require approximately \$30 to \$50 per square foot in tenant improvement allowances; with new table service restaurant space in the range of approximately \$80 to \$100 per square foot in tenant improvement allowances.

Residential (New For-Sale)

There is a very strong for-sale housing market in the general Visalia area. The overwhelming majority of new housing being developed in Visalia is detached single-family units with three and four bedrooms. Based on information from various new subdivisions being developed in Visalia new hous-

section one

ing products ranged in size from approximately 1,200 to slightly over 3,000 square feet.

New housing development is occurring to the northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest of the existing downtown core. New residential building permit activity has increased significantly since 1998 to 2002 as indicated below:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Building Permits</u>
1998	512
1999	633
2000	660
2001	818
2002	860

Source: Visalia City Planning Department

There appears to be potential demand for development of urban scale detached or attached single family housing units such as town homes, condominiums and/or live-work/loft housing units. This product type could be developed initially at densities of 10 to 20 units per acre; and represents a potentially marketable product type in the initial/early years of the East Downtown Strategic Plan implementation. As the urban housing market develops, there might be the opportunity to develop higher density attached housing products such as stacked flats at densities of 30 to 45 units per acre.

An initial marketable housing product for East Downtown could be one to three bedroom units under 1,800 square feet with individual garage parking. Given the existing (and projected) for-sale housing market conditions a probable building construction type initially would be wood frame construction (Type V) with buildings

that are two to three stories in height.

Sale prices of this type of urban scale housing product could be in the range of \$120 to \$140 per square foot (in mid-2004 dollars) that is approximately 10% to 20% above the sales pricing (average) for attached housing units in the Visalia area.

Sale prices for the new housing developments ranged from the low \$100,000s to mid- to upper \$300,000s. This translates into sale prices of approximately \$100 per square foot to over \$145 per square foot – depending size and quality of the units. The overall average sale price of new housing development in Visalia increased from approximately \$130,000 in 1998 to approximately \$170,000 in 2002, and over \$200,000 in 2005.

Residential (Resale)

There was a relatively low inventory of existing housing units listed for-sale in the general Visalia area based on the Multiple Listing Services (MLS). As of mid-2004 there were approximately 150 units of housing listed for sale, which is a relatively low figure given the fact that Visalia is an area with an existing population of approximately 100,000.

Based on the MLS resale units listed for sale ranged from 800 to over 4,000 square feet – a very wide range of sizes. The listing prices ranged from approximately \$100 to \$150 per square foot. This pricing was very comparable to the current sale prices of new housing development in the general Visalia area; and means that the existing housing inventory generally maintains its value in relation to new housing development.

Of the existing housing units listed for sale, there were very few “attached”



Above:

These housing projects are located in maturing suburban markets where there is increasing interest in townhouses and live-work lifestyles.

section one



Above:

The outlook for residential development in Visalia is very positive. Visalia is positioned at the center of a growing region. East Downtown can provide an alternative to subdivisions as the community grows into a community of over 200,000 people in the next 20 years.

housing product types (i.e. town homes or condominiums). Attached housing units constituted slightly less than 10% of the total number of housing units listed for sale. Listing prices for the “attached” units ranged from approximately \$86 to \$144 per square foot, with an overall average of approximately \$108 per square foot.

Multiple-Family (Rental)

The inventory of multiple family rental units (i.e. apartments) is generally older, with most of the units developed between the early 1970s to the mid-1980s. The overall average sizes of multiple family rental units in Visalia were found to be 650 square feet for one-bedroom units, 900 square feet for two-bedroom units and 1,100 square feet for three-bedroom units.

Monthly lease rates range from \$0.60 to \$0.75 per square foot. Larger sized units (two-bedroom and three-bedroom units) tend to be at the lower end of that range; while smaller sized units (i.e. one-bedroom units) tend to be at the upper end of that range.

The range of monthly lease rates for multiple family rental units by type (number of bedrooms) was \$600 to \$800 for one-bedroom units, \$775 to \$1,100 for two-bedroom units and \$1,000 to \$1,275 for three-bedroom units.

The units developed since the mid-1980s tend to be of a higher quality, larger size developments and higher monthly lease rate (on a per square foot basis).

Existing town home and condominium rental units (one to three bedrooms in size) tend to be substantially larger in size (square footage) than apartment units ranging in size from approximately 850 to 1,700 square feet. In addition town home or condominium rental units tend to have an average

higher monthly lease rates at \$0.65 to \$0.95 per square foot.

There appears to be a need for additional high quality multiple family rental units due in part to the overall increasing pricing of new and resale housing in the general Visalia area. There appears to be the potential to develop additional rental units in smaller developments that are of an urban scale and density.

Initial new developments could include two to four story buildings, either as stand alone residential or as part of mixed-use (i.e. over office or retail space) development projects, at densities of 30 to 45 units per acre. A likely unit product would contain one or two bedrooms and be in 650 to 750 square feet and 900 to 1,000 square feet, respectively, in size depending on the unit product type (i.e. stacked flats, town homes, etc.). A potential three-bedroom unit product would be approximately 1,100 to 1,200 square feet in size.

Monthly lease rates could be in the range of \$1.00 per square foot (for larger units) to \$1.20 per square foot (for smaller units) depending on the size, quality and location of such units. These potential rates are approximately 10% to 20% higher than current monthly lease rates for multiple family rental units in Visalia.

A current issue related to development of additional multiple family rental units is the availability of properly zoned property within the City of Visalia that could accommodate a minimum level of project development (at least 30 to 40 units).

1.5 Financial Feasibility

The following summarizes potential financial feasibility of infill development case studies for East

section one

Downtown. The financial information is intended to help determine if certain types of urban infill development are viable from an economic perspective. It indicates whether implementation would potentially require public financing investment in order to make the subject urban infill development financially feasible.

Development Case Studies

Four potential types of urban infill development were evaluated to help determine the preliminary financial feasibility of such case studies including:

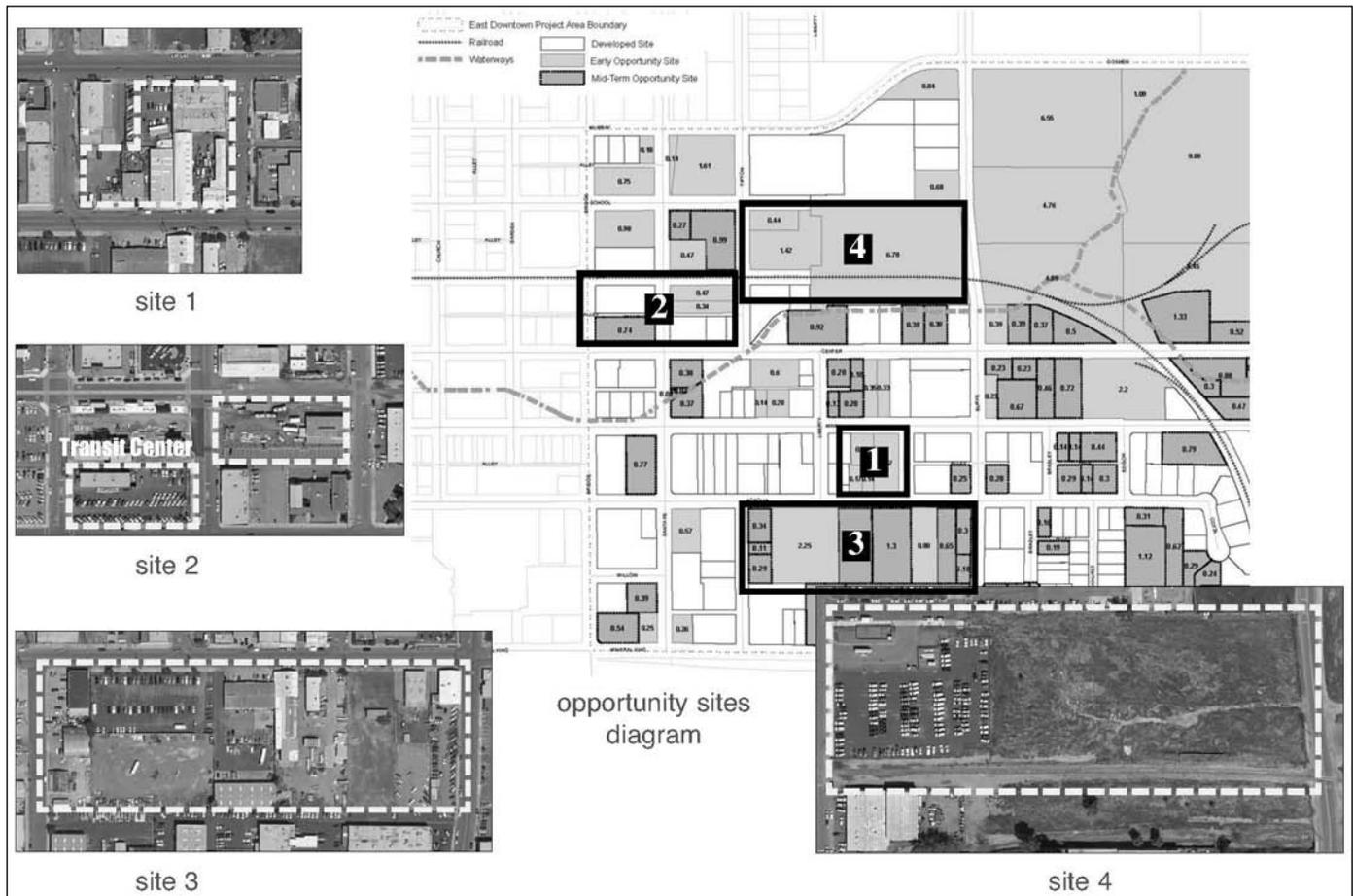
Case Study No. 1: Horizontal Mixed-Use—This case study includes mixing residential and commercial uses in blocks facing and adjacent to East

Main Street. This approach avoids the expense of stacking uses by making them discrete projects that create places by being oriented around streets and open space.

Case Study No. 2A and 2B: Vertical Mixed-Use—These case studies created a new mixed-use neighborhood around the Transit Center by stacking residential, commercial and parking uses. This approach faces retail along Santa Fe Street and live/work and corner retail along Oak Street. This “urban” mixed-use approach would result in Visalia’s first transit oriented neighborhood. Case Study No. 2A assumed a rental vertical mixed-use development. Case Study No. 2B assumed ownership townhouses over commercial uses.

Below:

Four East Downtown sites were used to test the feasibility of different types of development. These included sites an East Main Street (Case Study #1), Santa Fe Avenue (Case Study #2), Acequia Avenue (Case Study #3), and Oak Street (Case Study #4).



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Case Study #1: Horizontal Mixed-use

These photos show the type of commercial and townhouse projects that were assumed in the first case study tested for economic feasibility.

Case Study No. 3: Small-lot Single Family—This case study includes developing small-lot single family homes as a neighborhood within existing block structure in downtown Visalia. This case study includes a new three-block neighborhood of 96 detached single family homes.

Case Study No. 4: Office Development—This case study includes developing a 156,000 square foot urban commercial office campus adjacent to a new Mill Creek Park. The development would link the proposed Civic Center to the Transit Center areas and include three 52,000 square foot office buildings, two 100 space surface parking lots and a 440 space parking structure. The initial phase would be comprised of 52,000 square feet of office space and 200 surface parking spaces.

General Feasibility Findings

Based on this analysis, the following are general preliminary findings in regard to potential financial feasibility of urban infill development case stud-

ies in the East Downtown:

- Items that have the most potential effect (negative) on overall financial feasibility include: 1) land assembly costs (in particular existing buildings); 2) public right-of-way improvement costs (i.e. streets and alleys); and 3) structured parking costs.
- The detached or attached single family residential prototype (Case Studies No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3) appears to be economically feasible and could enhance the economic value of a proposed development project due to supportable development costs and strength of the Visalia for-sale housing market.
- Vertically stacked residential apartments with structured parking create a financial shortfall due to the higher costs associated with vertical development over ground floor commercial uses and the lack of sufficient market rate rents to support such costs.

Feasibility Model Assumptions

The preliminary financial information for the identified urban infill development case studies was based on the general assumptions listed below.

- *Preliminary information for value of existing vacant property or property with existing buildings was based on current commercial real estate listings and/or reported sales within or in the general vicinity of the East Downtown Area.*
- *Identified case study development sites, including any existing buildings, were assumed to be free and clear of any toxics or hazardous materials.*
- *Preliminary construction costs were*

based on information from RS: Square Foot Costs (2004) and Saylor Publications, Inc. 2004 Current construction Costs.

- *Major utilities (water, sewer, drainage, etc.) were assumed to be available to accommodate the potential urban development case studies.*
- *Preliminary development costs included responsibility for all or a portion of installation of new public street and alley right-of-way improvements.*
- *Preliminary lease rates for retail and office uses, rents for residential apartments and sale prices for for-sale residential were based on real estate market information described in Section 1.4 Market Opportunities.*

section one

- Retail development as presented in Case Studies No. 1 and No. 2 appear to be marginally feasible only if related parking could be provided on-street versus on-site and/or through in-lieu parking fees.
- Office development could be feasibly developed if the on-site parking is surface parking. The preliminary financial shortfall in for Building No. 3 in Case Study No. 4 is primarily due to the higher costs associated with structured parking, and in part for the responsibility for a portion of the adjacent new public street.
- On-site parking for the near term should be provided as tuck-under parking instead of structured parking (due to the high cost of structured parking). Market rate rents or lease rates would have to increase significantly before it would be feasible to economically support structured parking.
- Most of the preliminary developer returns are marginal due to the higher costs associated with urban scale development and the current/projected lack of market rate rents, lease rates and/or sale prices to fully support such higher costs.
- Potential financial feasibility of the subject urban development could be enhanced if higher market rate rents, lease rates and/or sale prices can be achieved that are at least 10% to 20% above the current market levels.

Conclusions

The following are the basic conclusions regarding the potential financial

feasibility of the four subject urban infill development case studies.

- Case Studies No. 1, No. 2 (Site “B”) and No. 3 appear to be potentially feasible due primarily to inclusion of for-sale residential uses; while Case Studies No. 2 (Site “A”) and No. 4 appear to be less feasible financially.
- Primary reasons for the potential financial infeasibility (and marginal developer returns on investment) appear to be related to preliminary costs associated with:
 - Land value (i.e. acquisition costs of existing buildings);
 - Public street, alley and off-site (curb, gutter, sidewalk and street lighting) improvements; and
 - Structured parking (i.e. Case Studies No. 2 (Site “A”) and Case Study No. 4 (Building 3)).
- Potential financial feasibility of the case study projects could be enhanced by mutual efforts of the Redevelopment Agency and private developers, i.e. public/private financing agreements to reduce potential development costs for:
 - Land acquisition and assembly;
 - Installation costs of public improvements; and/or
 - Construction of structured parking.
- The case studies help us understand what is feasible in today’s market. They also demonstrate how changing demand and market conditions will improve over the next 20 years making marginal projects practical in the future.



Case Study #2: Vertical Mixed-use

This photo is an example of a vertical mixed-use project tested for development feasibility



Case Study #3: Detached Single Family

Small-lot single family development was the third case study tested for economic feasibility



Case Study #4: Office

This photograph show multi-story office buildings that was tested as Case Study #4



SECTION TWO: Strategies



Above:
Participants in the community workshop identified issues facing East Downtown and assets to build on (below)

Planning Issues

Key issues identified by the Task Force and community included:

- Elimination of blight
- Development feasibility
- Keeping businesses (compatibility)
- Parking, road connections and infrastructure
- Potential for residential mixed-use
- Retail to support housing

Assets

There were assets identified in the process. Referred to as “energy sources” by workshop participants, these were strengths East Downtown could build upon:

- Its adjacency to a healthy downtown (services);
- The Transit Center (gateway to Sequoias);
- A growing medical center;
- Amount of affordable land and buildings/available land; and
- Its character (historic buildings, small town atmosphere).

The strategies in Section Two spring from understanding the opportunities in the East Downtown area and from the community’s aspirations for expanding the vitality of Downtown Visalia. The strategies embody an overall framework of land use and connections. Within the framework, there are opportunities to create new parks and plazas, employment areas, and neighborhoods.

2.0 Introduction

Section Two contains the core strategies for the East Downtown planning. The strategies build on the community’s objectives and establish planning principles, related “factors for success” and overall concepts. The planning objectives came from the Task Force and were reviewed in the community workshop and with the Planning Commission and City Council. The principles were a result of the community workshop and reviewed with the Planning Commission and City Council. Overall concepts are based on the principles and ideas from the workshop and were reviewed with the City Council as the Preliminary Concept Plan that is the basis for the East Downtown Strategic Plan.

2.1 Objectives

The community and the Task Force identified leading planning issues, assets and objectives for East Downtown. They emphasized pursu-

ing economic development that will transform East Main Street into a mixed-use and residential district that complements downtown.

There were nine leading objectives that emerged from the Task Force and community discussion. These include:

Objective 1: Encourage Infill Development

Encourage infill development in East Downtown on underutilized opportunity sites that add to the economic activities in and around the downtown.

Objective 2: Incentives

Provide incentives for infill development and reinvestment in existing buildings in East Downtown.

Objective 3: Realizing Development Potential

Realize the inherent potential for investment and development in the East Downtown area.

Objective 4: Expand Retail Base

Pursue land uses that support the expansion of retail opportunities in the downtown.

Objective 5: Explore Housing and Mixed-use

Explore East Downtown’s ability to become a new in-town mixed-use residential neighborhood.

Objective 6: Image Enhancements

Improve and enhance East Downtown’s physical image and desirability as a place to invest.

Objective 7: Parking and Circulation

Provide parking and access to the East Downtown that promotes reinvestment and a pedestrian-friendly district.

Objective 8: Preservation of Historic Buildings

section two

Encourage adaptive reuse and restoration of East Downtown's existing historic and older commercial buildings.

Objective 9: Arts and Attractions

To encourage development of an Arts Corridor leading to Downtown and creation of elements that will enhance the visitors' experience while in Visalia.

2.2 Planning Principles and Factors for Success

Building upon the issues, assets, and objectives discussion are a set of guiding principles and related "factors for success". Factors for success are actions, basic conditions, and activities required to fulfill the principles. These principles provide the basis for concepts and strategies. There are seven principles.

Principle 1: Mill Creek–Open Space Feature

Mill Creek should be developed as an open space feature and linkage element in East Downtown and downtown that becomes an amenity for housing and commercial uses.

Factors for Success—One of the most popular ideas from the community was to utilize Mill Creek as a design feature and connector in the planning for East Downtown. This principle triggers several implementation considerations. An effort to gain year-around water flow for the creek is required to make it an amenity and design feature. Once that is confirmed, the creek will require a series of improvements that may necessitate potential realignment and daylighting of portions that are underground.

Principle 2: East Main Street–Mixed-use

East Main Street should be developed

as a mixed-use street with ground floor retail and commercial uses.

Factors for Success—A popular idea in the community workshop was the transformation of East Main Street into a mixed-use street with a strong storefront connection to West Main Street's established shopping. The community emphasized including housing on and adjacent to East Main Street so that it complemented and not competed with downtown. The policy implications of including residential, retail and office on East Main will require re-examining its current role as a service commercial area and having a clear picture of the market and financial feasibility for urban housing now and in the future. Workshop participants identified other examples of Central Valley communities providing live-work (such as the Fresno Tower District) and lifestyle options in and adjacent to their downtowns. There seems to be market interest and improving financial feasibility—both for adaptive reuse of existing buildings and for new construction. Therefore, the Strategy needs to take advantage of early opportunities to add housing.

Principle 3: Open Space–New Places

A new interconnected system of open spaces should be created in the East Downtown area that become the focal point for civic, commercial and residential activities.

Factors for Success—Using public open space as a connector and the focus for creating new places in East Downtown is an important form giving principle. It will require positioning of adjacent land for active urban uses, and incremental improvements that result in an interconnected system of programmed, active and safe places.



Principle 1: Mill Creek as Open Space Feature



Principle 2: East Main Street as a Mixed-use Street



Principle 3: Open Spaces as New Places

section two



Principle 4: Parking District Approach



Principle 5: Connecting Downtown and Neighborhoods



Principle 6: Pattern of Investment Throughout East Downtown

Principle 4: Parking–Parking District Approach

Parking for East Main should be planned and implemented using a district approach where on-street and off-street parking facilities are shared by existing and future uses.

Factors for Success—As in the downtown, the planning area would benefit from a district approach for parking. The community wanted to “hide parking from view”. A systematic and phased on-street and public parking facility strategy will be central to the successful attraction of employers. It will become part of an overall transportation strategy for East Downtown where it must evolve, as many downtowns have, to a more mixed-mode district with a managed parking supply that benefits a variety of public and private objectives.

Principle 5: Connections–Linking Downtown and Neighborhoods

East Downtown planning should emphasize creating and enhancing strong economic, pedestrian and visual connections to adjacent neighborhoods and downtown.

Factors for Success—The community wanted a plan that reconnected the neighborhoods to downtown. There were several important connectors identified. These included East Main as the “central spine”, Burke and Santa Fe as north-south civic streets, and Oak Street and Mill Creek as key east-west connectors. To succeed, planning for East Downtown has to anticipate the growth and reinvestment in central Visalia where transit and walking are desirable alternatives to driving. The block system has to be designed to reflect a walking pace, in terms of scale and amenities that better connect downtown and East Downtown with the surrounding

neighborhoods.

Principle 6: Patterns–Balancing Development Locations

Planning for East Downtown should balance investment both north and south of East Main Street and east and west of Burke Street. This should build on the success of the downtown and Transit Center in the western portion of the planning area.

Factors for Success—In the community workshop, participants sought planning concepts that allocated new investment throughout the East Downtown planning area. This will require a strategy that uses new public and private investment as a catalyst with a long-term goal of transitioning from industrial and service commercial uses into a fully developed mixed-use district. And, within the context of central Visalia, how East Downtown itself is viewed as a catalyst for investment in contiguous areas such as the stockyards and along Ben Maddox.

Principle 7: Transit Center–Investment Catalyst

The Transit Center should be planned as the “Gateway to the Sequoias” and as a catalyst for civic, commercial and residential investment.

Factors for Success—The Transit Center on the corner of Oak and Santa Fe has been a popular development. The community is proud of its transit and esthetic contribution to downtown. It has also been an important catalyst for other civic, private sector investment. The community is interested on building upon the transit center’s success and its future role as a “Gateway to the Sequoia”. They want the area to evolve as a welcoming place well connected to other parts of the downtown. The communi-

section two

ty cited uses that complement larger goals for expanding regional tourism and providing a cultural gateway to the city. To accomplish this, every new project has to be designed to contribute to the arrival experience in the Transit Center area and downtown.

2.3 Overall Strategies

There are three “big ideas” that are foundation strategies for the East Downtown planning. The first is to expand the traditional downtown two blocks to the east integrating employment and higher density residential uses around the Transit Center and Santa Fe. The second is to differentiate East Downtown from the traditional commercial downtown by emphasizing the development of infill housing and mixed-use development. The third is to enhance east-west connections by building a linear park along Mill Creek and extending the pedestrian-scaled downtown block pattern into East Downtown and beyond into

adjacent areas. These overall strategies have to be viewed within the 20-year implementation timeframe.

Expanding Downtown

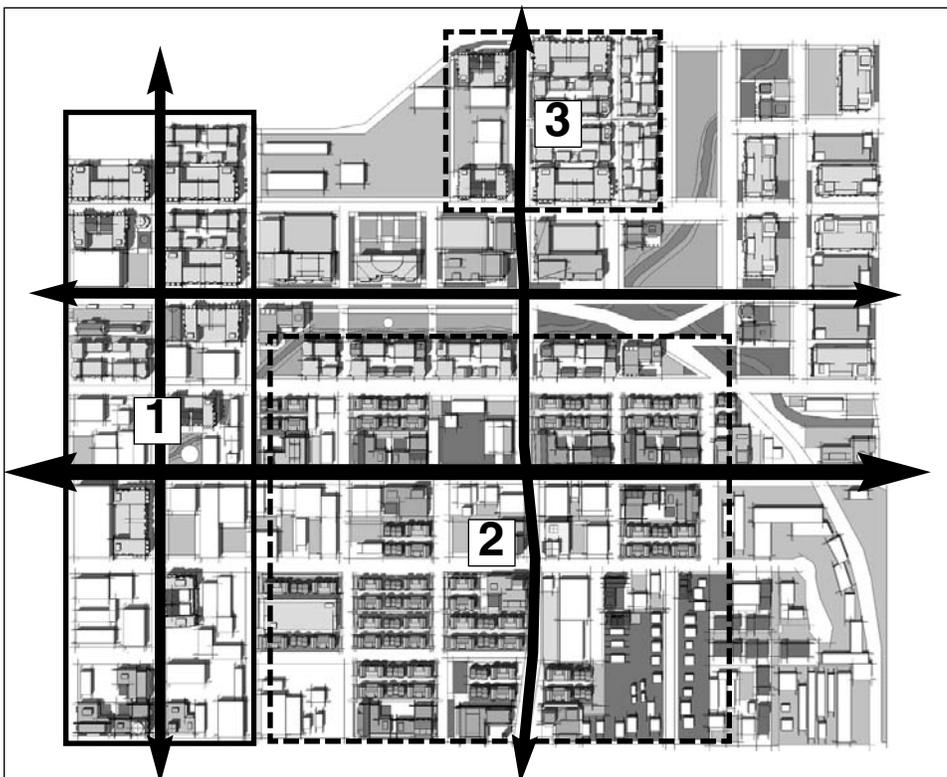
The two blocks east of Bridge Street can be seen partially developed on historic maps. This area has uses that support downtown and the strategy envisions fully integrating them. Santa Fe, with the proposed new bridge, is to become a new connection to neighborhoods north and south for downtown. New private sector interest in the Santa Fe address is anticipating this new role. There are a variety of available sites that can be used for employment and residential uses that support downtown. Parking solutions can also be mutually supportive of downtown’s needs.

Residential and Mixed-use Emphasis

The community expressed a desire to complement downtown’s commercial and retail experience with employ-



Principle 7: Transit Center as a Catalyst



Left:

Three “Big Ideas”

- *Expanding Downtown*
- *Residential Mixed-use Emphasis*
- *Creating an Urban Design Framework*

1. *Santa Fe Downtown expansion and commercial mixed-use*
2. *East Main Street residential mixed-use neighborhood*
3. *Central Park residential mixed-use neighborhood*

East Main Street

Important connection streets:

*Santa Fe
Burke
Oak*

section two

Development Program

There is over 80 acres that could be made available for new development over the next 20 years. The type of land uses, market demand, infrastructure development, and other citywide policies can have an effect on the pace of investment. There is evidence of significant investor interest in East Downtown. The following development program summary indicates the location and types of land uses in East Downtown sub-district addresses.

Right:

Estimate Development Program Summary

1. Santa Fe

*Opp. Sites 10.52 acres
Residential 250 units
Commercial 206,000 SF*

2. East Main

*Opp. Sites 19.63 acres
Residential 350 units
Commercial 106,000 SF*

3. Civic Center

*Opp. Sites 10.00 acres
Office 280,000 sf*

4. Central Park

*Opp. Sites 10.00 acres
Residential 400 units
Commercial 20,000 SF*

5. Ben Maddox Business Center

*Opp. Sites 19.00 acres
Office 500,000 SF*

6. East Acequia Service Commercial

*Opp. Sites 3.59 acres
Serv. Commercial 40,000 SF*

Open Space 15.66 acres

TOTAL

*Opp. Sites 88.4 acres
Residential 1,000 units
Employment 1,152,000 SF*

ment and residential uses. This mixed-use emphasis envisions adaptive reuse of older buildings and new construction that reinforces the creation and evolution of new in-town neighborhoods and mixed-use, pedestrian friendly streets. This strategy makes a deliberate effort to implement General Plan goals and policies to grow concentrically with an emphasis on infill and revitalization of central Visalia's districts and neighborhoods.

Creating an Urban Design Framework

The third overall strategy makes a commitment to creating new places where public streets and open space become the focus for social and economic activities. To be successful, every public and private investment has to contribute towards the larger goal of creating social and safe streets and places. New projects are to shape and activate parks and streets; provide continuity and visual references; connect to contiguous

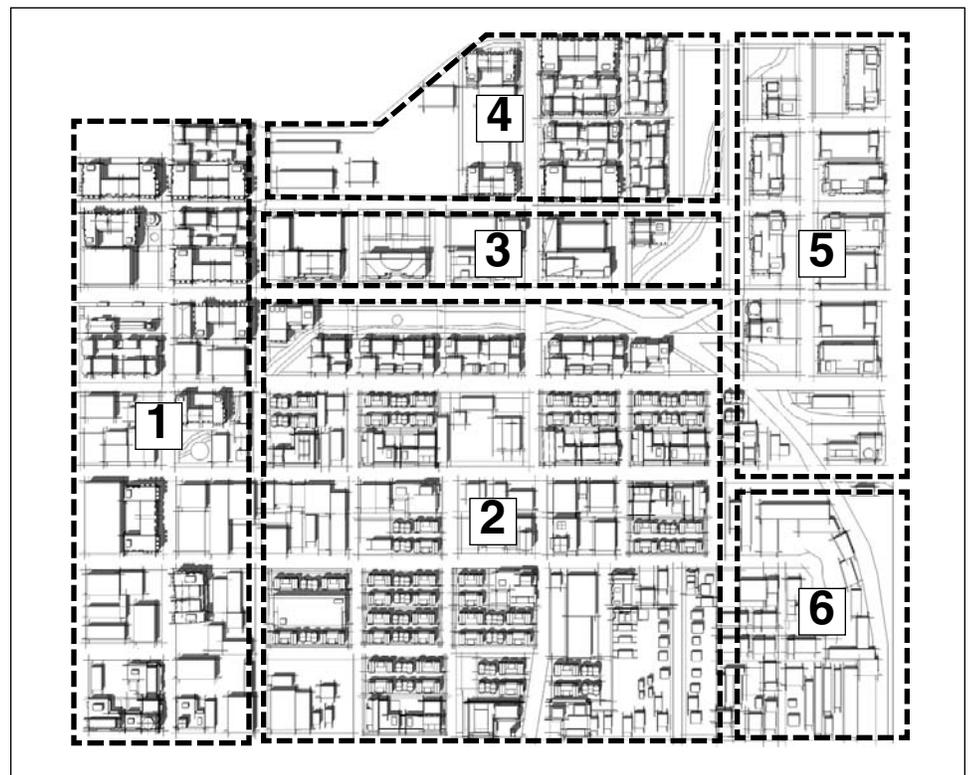
development; and anticipate a future when central Visalia is the most sought after in-town residential and business address in the San Joaquin Valley.

2.4 Land Use Concepts

The land use concepts for East Downtown anticipate a new economic role assuming public and private investment over the next 20-years. The concepts identify opportunities for increasing downtown employment, the ingredients for creating new neighborhoods, and the integration of a new civic center.

Creating the Critical Mass—New Business Addresses

The clustering and synergy between economic activities is crucial for creating competitive business and residential addresses. As a mixed-use district the ground floor uses should activate streets and provide for social interaction. The economic relationship



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between employment and housing is a proven economic development package. East Downtown offers a unique setting for each providing an alternative to auto-oriented business parks and subdivisions.

There are five clusters of employment in the plan. The Santa Fe/Transit Station area will continue to provide sites for professional office projects, some with housing and retail uses in the same building. Mineral King frontage has good traffic visibility and freeway access for commercial and office uses. Ben Maddox is to evolve into an important office and business address. A service commercial and visitor commercial (motel-type uses) area is located at the corner of Ben Maddox and Mineral King. Finally, the new civic center complex provides for governmental and institutional employment.

Grouping employment activities near

to another enhances business interaction that improves collaboration and innovation. Employment creates demand for restaurants, commercial services and housing. This will provide added support to Main Street's existing and future businesses. Therefore, encouraging early geographic focus around specific streets can result in more energetic addresses that become catalysts for continued investment in East Downtown and central Visalia.

Creating New Neighborhoods

The land use concept identifies locations for residential development. These mixed-use places provide opportunities to add over 1,000 housing units to the downtown. They are to be located in three new neighborhoods. These include Santa Fe, East Main and Central Park areas.

Santa Fe

Santa Fe is to become a mixed-use



*Above:
Office projects on Main and Santa Fe are to developed as mixed-use projects*

Left:

Employment Areas

- 1. Santa Fe Avenue*
- 2. Civic Center District*
- 3. Burke Gateway*
- 4. Ben Maddox Business Center*
- 5. East Acequia Service Commercial*



section two



*Above:
New neighborhoods with street-oriented housing are to make safe and social streets*

Right:

Neighborhoods

1. Santa Fe Avenue
2. East Main Street
3. Central Park Neighborhood
4. South Acequia Neighborhood
5. Historic Oakhurst Neighborhood
6. Central Park Neighborhood

address providing an opportunity to expand downtown's commercial activities to Tipton Street. Residential use would be a secondary in this area and complement offices in mixed-use projects. Being located adjacent to downtown's restaurants and the transit station provides amenities that are already available to those interested in a downtown lifestyle.

East Main

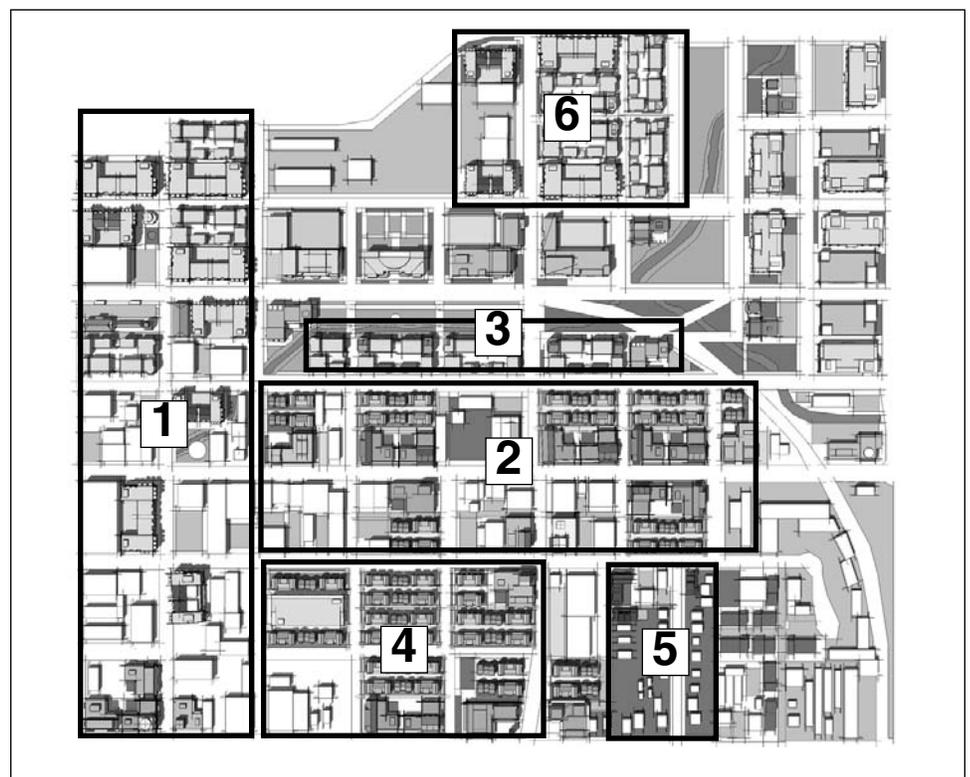
East Main is the largest neighborhood spanning from Civic Center Park on the north to Mineral King on the south and Tipton on the west to Edison on the east. There is an opportunity to develop a variety of housing types. The area has a large number of existing buildings that can be adaptively reused for commercial and residential uses. These sites lend themselves to lofts, stacked flats, and townhouse designs. The plan envisions early opportunities for ownership townhouse projects that take advantage of

a proven market and financial feasibility.

There are three clusters of opportunity sites in the East Main Neighborhood. On the south side of Civic Center Park are sites that can take advantage of overlooking Mill Creek and the Civic Center. On blocks contiguous to East Main Street are sites that can accommodate a mix of commercial and residential uses. South of Acequia are larger sites that can become a townhouse neighborhood.

Central Park

In the longer term, the new Central Park will provide a significant open space with the Jennings Ditch transformed into part of the creek walkway and trail system. It will become a signature address in central Visalia that creates value beyond East Downtown for adjacent areas. The Central Park Neighborhood is envisioned as five blocks of townhouses, stacked flats



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and apartments with ground floor commercial or live-work uses facing the park and Burke Street.

Civic Center

The Civic Center is a critical addition to the East Downtown program. It is an important symbol for the City's aspirations and commitment to downtown. It creates a place that is central to the region—as part of a transit hub, integrated into a vibrant urban center, and a catalyst for commercial and cultural investment.

The Civic Center is undergoing a master planning process that will provide a better understanding about the program, real estate and financing strategies. This effort will express these strategies as urban design concepts that respond to the overall objectives and strategies for the East Downtown.

2.5 Circulation

A primary objective expressed by the

community for East Downtown was to make sure it is a well-connected and walkable district. The circulation is organized around three important concepts for East Downtown: Streets are places—not just traffic facilities; East Downtown is to evolve as a mixed-mode district; and parking solutions are tailored to support land use concepts.

Streets as Places

The East Downtown district has a variety of transportation, economic development and image enhancement objectives that will be satisfied when streets are treated as places, not just roadways. The plan extends the traditional city block pattern found in downtown as a flexible and walkable module for shaping and accessing development. Within this block pattern, the transportation and design concepts identify five types of streets (pages 2-9 through 2-12).

Below:

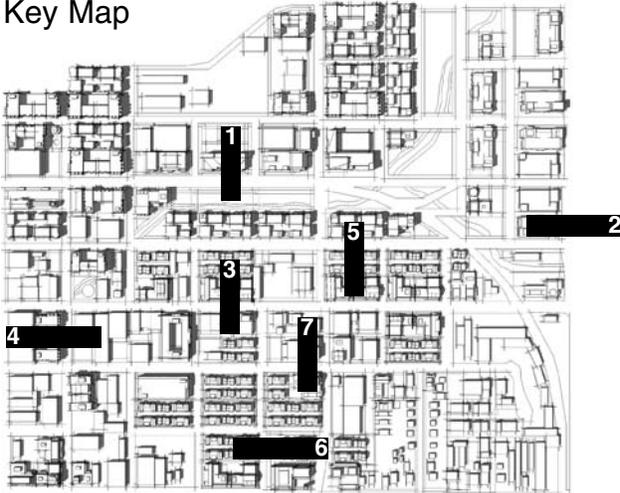
Open Space Concept

1. *Mill Creek Market Hall Plaza*
 - Plaza for programmed events and farmers' market
 - Trailhead for Mill Creek park system
2. *Civic Center Park*
 - Formal civic park
 - Mill Creek trail and mixed-use residential edge
3. *Oak Woodlands*
 - Informal woodland and creek trail
4. *Central Park*
 - Formal neighborhood park with creek trail
5. *City Hall Plaza*
 - Formal special event plaza
6. *Santa Fe Plaza*
 - Urban plaza and cafe

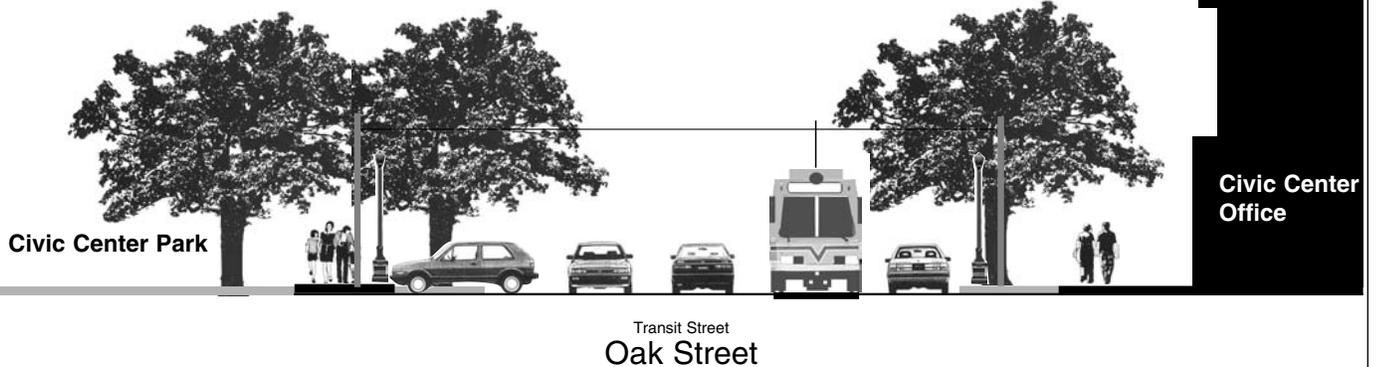


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Key Map



1. Transit Street, Oak Street
2. Thoroughfare Commercial Street, Ben Maddox
3. Mixed-use Commercial Street, East Main Street
4. Mixed-use Commercial Street, Santa Fe
5. Mixed-use Residential Street, Acequia/Center
6. Neighborhood Street, East Main Area
7. Residential Alley/Court Yard, East Main Area



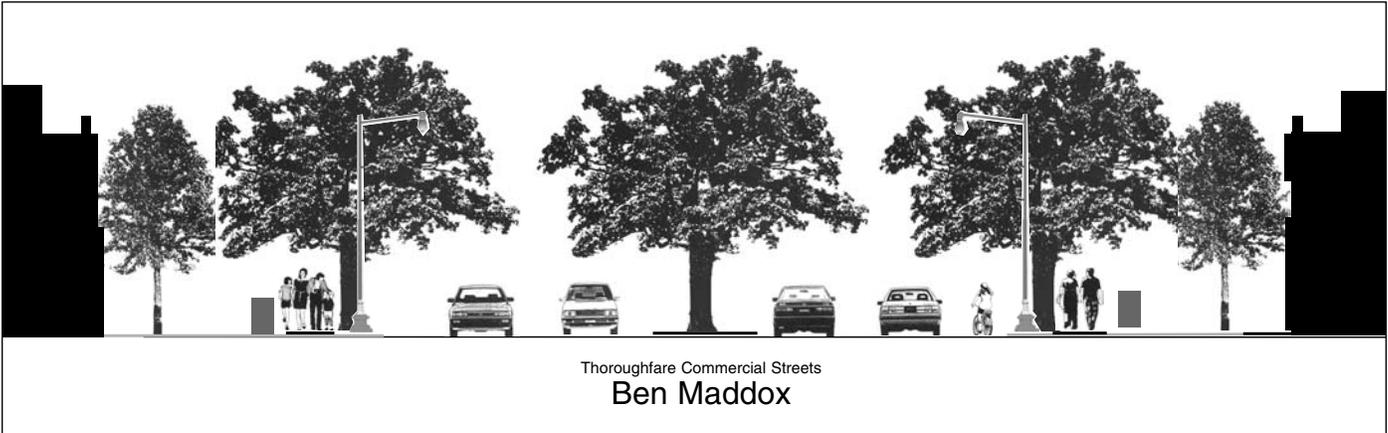
Oak Street–Transit Corridor

The circulation concept anticipates the transformation of Oak Street from a stubbed road with railroad tracks into a civic address with rail transit. The street design has to be able to transform into a lightrail street with on-street parking and pedestrian amenities. With the future Civic Center Park on one side and city hall on the other, Oak Street needs to be easy to cross and still function as transit street. To do this, the street design should provide for lightrail tracks in the travel lanes rather than have a separate median. Assuming one track as part of a one way loop system, the street should include three lanes with parallel on-street parking on the north and diagonal parking on the south facing the park.

Left:

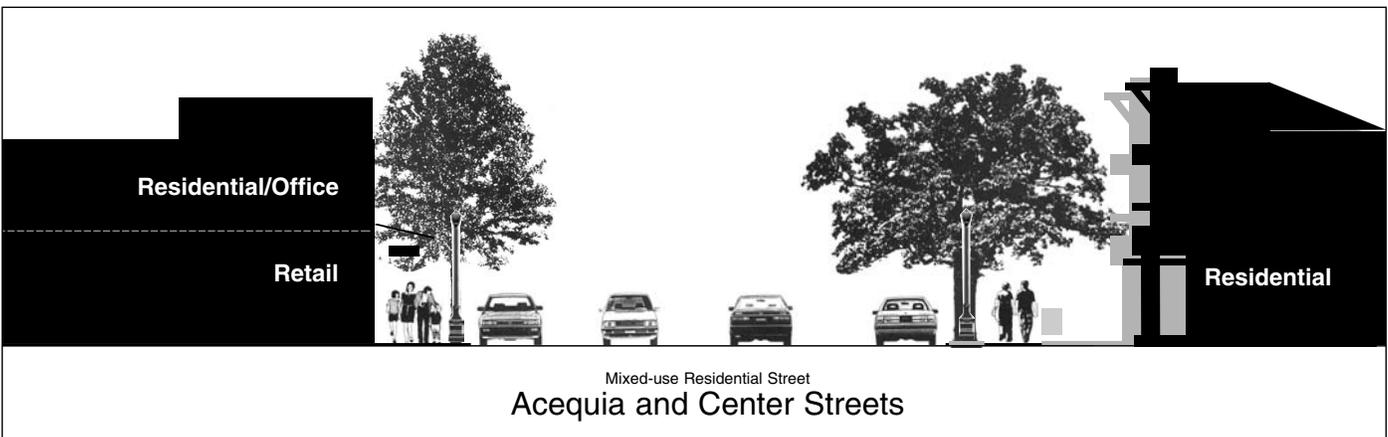
Sacramento has made K Street the center of the region by making it downtown's transit spine.

section two



Thoroughfare Commercial Streets

These are larger streets, such as Ben Maddox and Mineral King, tasked with carrying citywide traffic and to connect to Hwy 198. They require four lanes and a turn lane. Land uses along these streets are compatible with road noise and can take advantage of the drive-by market and regional access. These streets do not have on-street parking. They are four lane roads with dedicated turn lanes.

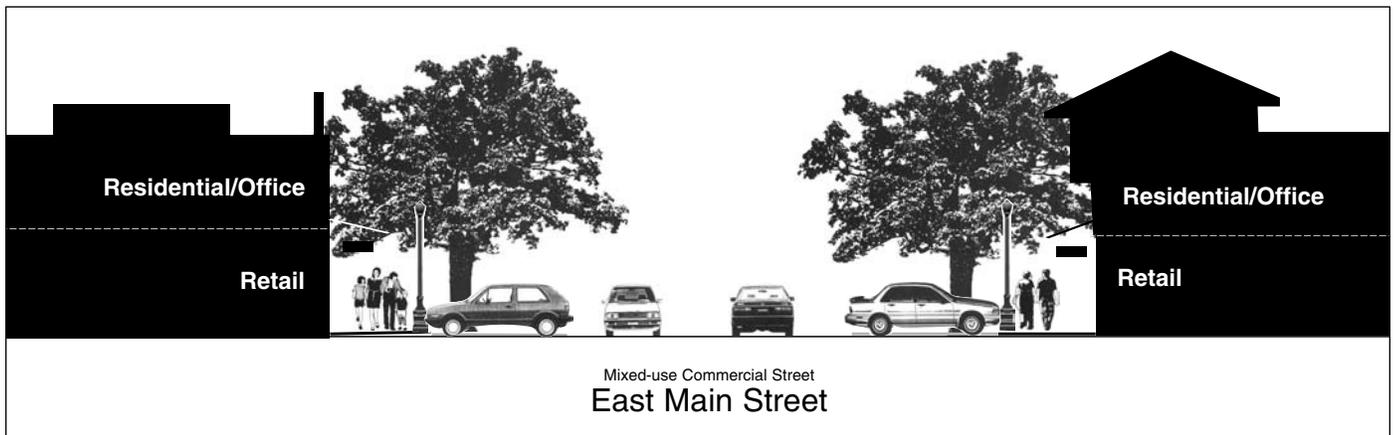
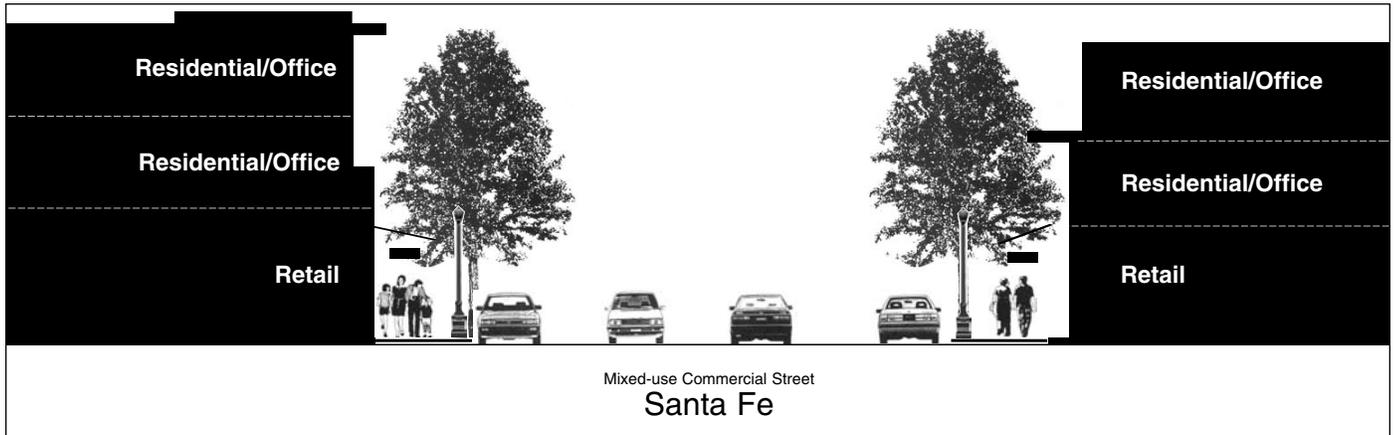


Mixed-use Residential Streets

Mixed-use residential streets have both residential and commercial uses as ground floor uses. They may have live-work units along the street with commercial uses at important corners. Buildings can be located at the property line (for commercial uses) or have a small setback for a front yard. They provide district-wide access to smaller neighborhood streets. They are also bus transit streets. The two streets in East Downtown that fulfill this role are Central and Acequia. These streets have parallel on-street parking. They are two lane roads with turn lanes at key intersections and bus pull-outs. Part of the improvements for these two streets would include undergrounding of utility poles.



section two



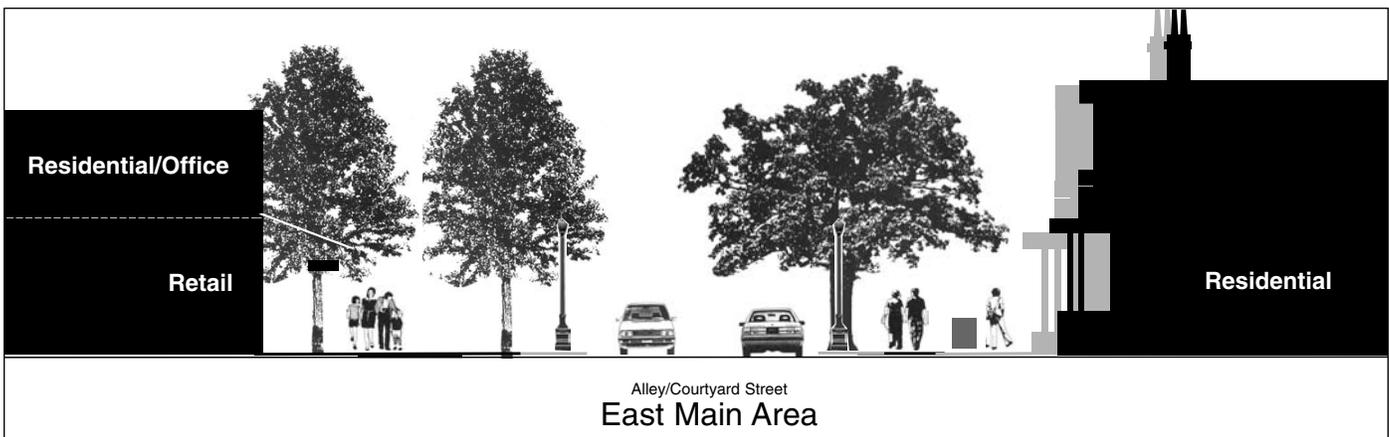
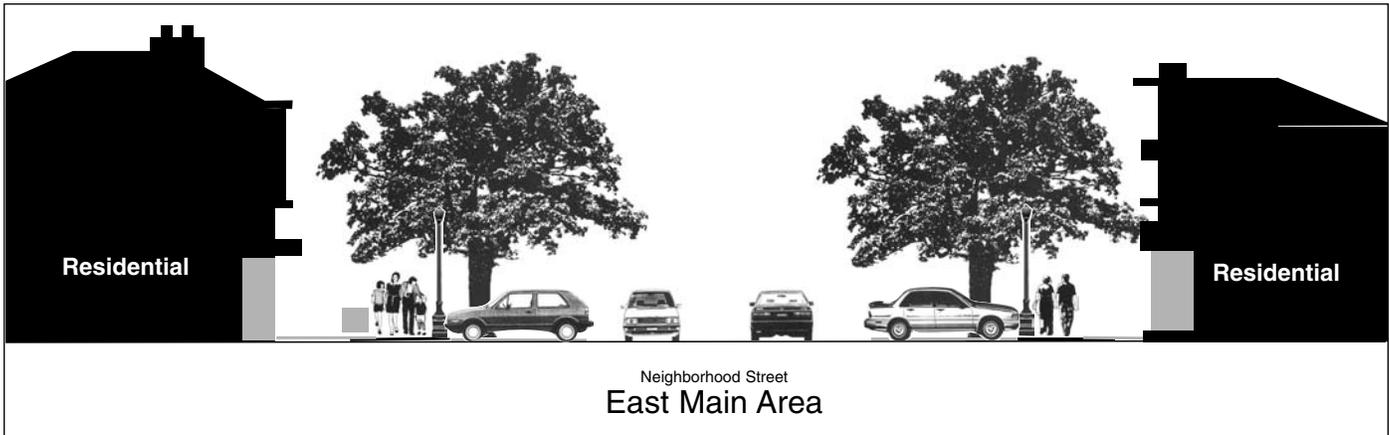
Mixed-use Commercial Streets

These streets were identified by the community as important East Downtown connections. They have ground floor uses that add pedestrian interest and comfortable sidewalks. Mixed-use commercial streets include Santa Fe, East Main Street, and Burke Street. These streets have a combination of diagonal and parallel on-street parking. They are two lane roads with turn lanes at key intersections.

Left:

Mixed-use commercial streets should increase business and living opportunities. Most importantly, they should provide ground floor uses and building design that make them pedestrian friendly. These photos show examples of two- and three-story mixed-use streets.

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Neighborhood Streets and Alleys

Neighborhood streets are smaller with primarily residential uses. They provide access to residential blocks and provide a quieter and more social setting. Houses have shallow private yard setbacks and porches. They are narrow two lane roads with parallel and diagonal parking. Many East Downtown blocks have alleys. The circulation concept maintains and expands the system of alleys as an interface between residential and commercial uses and quiet, small-scale addresses.

Right:

The East Main area will have neighborhood streets comprised of townhouse-scale neighborhoods and mixed-use commercial buildings. Residential and commercial uses are to share open spaces that use common open space requirements to create a shared social and visual amenity.



section two



*Above:
Streets are to be designed to support a pedestrian friendly and walkable environment*

Right:

Circulation Concept

Thoroughfare Streets

*4 travel lanes, turn lanes
No on-street parking*

Mixed-use Commercial Streets

*2 travel lanes, turn lane
On-street parking*

Mixed-use Residential Streets

*2 travel lanes, turn lane, bus stops
On-street parking*

Neighborhood/Local Streets

*2 travel lanes
On-street parking*

Oak Transit Street

UPRR/Future Transit Line

Creek Trail (Bike/Ped)

Mixed-Mode District

The mix of uses, central regional location, transit center, and proximity to Highway 198 make East Downtown an accessible place to live and work. Every mode of travel begins and ends as a walking experience. The circulation concept for East Downtown underscores this and focuses on making the pedestrian experience a priority. The street types all provide comfortable walking conditions with an understanding of how each connects various activity areas.

Transit service is an important feature. The Transit Center, that currently provides bus transit, is planned to become a rail transit facility in the future, making it hub for the region. Citywide transit runs along Bridge/Santa Fe. Local downtown bus service is provided along Center and Acequia.

Bike access is planned for the Mill

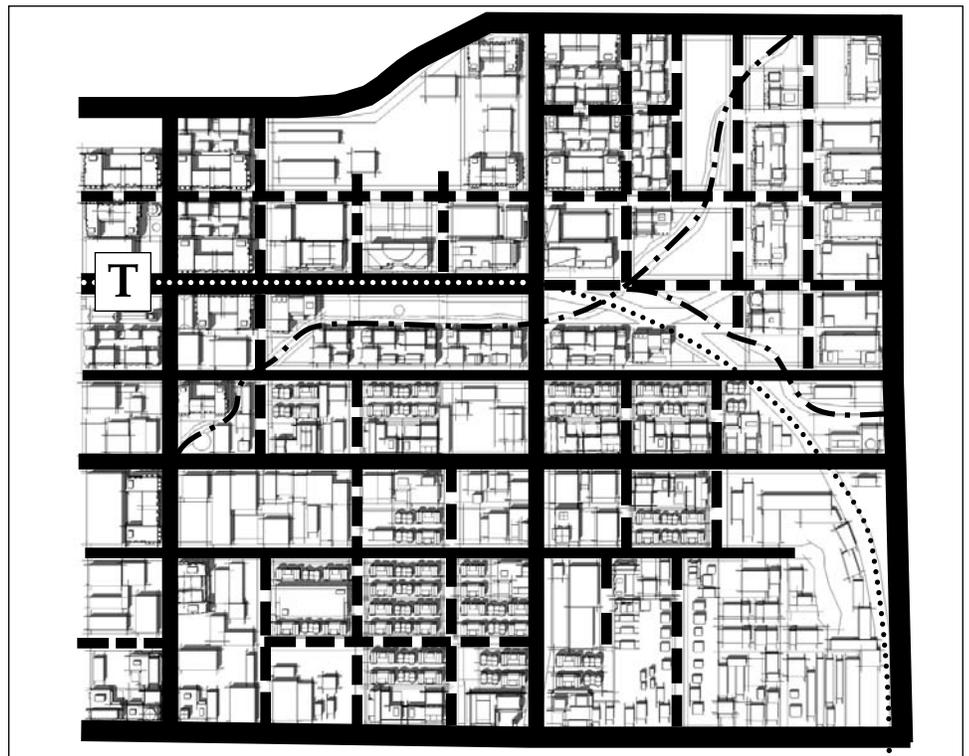
Creek trail and street system. The added bike and pedestrian facilities will provide stronger downtown-neighborhood connections.

Parking Concepts

Parking strategies for East Downtown reflect its mix of uses and anticipated demand. The concept emphasizes cost effective implementation moving from an emphasis on on-street parking and public lots towards public and private structures as employment demands it. The parking concept has linked strategies that provide for the district's evolution. These include increasing the supply of on-street parking, using City-owned land as public parking lots, and the development of public-private parking structures.

Increasing the Supply of On-street Parking

Most of East Downtown streets have on-street parallel parking with about



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32-42 on-street spaces per block. West Main has more diagonal parking with about 50-60 spaces per block. The parking concept for East Downtown is to increase the amount of diagonal on-street parking on existing streets and include it on new streets. An estimated 190 to 280 additional spaces can be added on-street just in the East Main Street area. Assuming an average parking demand of 3 spaces per 1,000 SF, this will support between 63,000 and 93,000 SF of additional commercial uses. If it were all ground floor retail, it would equal about four to six linear blocks of storefronts.

Off-Site Parking

The community and Task Force wanted cars “hidden from view”. The parking concept encourages off-site parking solutions or parking on interior of blocks with buildings facing the street.

Public Lands for Parking Lots

The City is the largest landowner in

the East Downtown with over 40 acres of property. Much of the proposed employment density is to be located in the Transit Center, Civic Center and Central Park areas. All these are contiguous or part of the City land holdings. As these areas mature, the City can use surface lots as interim uses to support office development.

Public-Private Parking Structures

The circulation concept includes three locations for parking structures. It is anticipated that these structures can be sized and financed as public-private facilities. There are two located in the Civic Center. One is shared with the Transit Station and Santa Fe area employers. The second is shared with businesses east of the Civic Center. The third structure would be south of East Main Street to support business activities in the southern portion of Santa Fe and commercial uses on East Main Street.



Above:

Parking structure are to be designed to conceal cars and provide a comfortable walking edge



Left:

Parking Concept

- *CC#1—Initial phase civic center structure, public-private structure serving civic center and Santa Fe commercial*
- *CC#2—Later phase civic center structure serving city offices*
- *CC#3—Later phase public or private structure, serving public and/or private office*
- *PUB—Public-private structure serving East Main and Santa Fe commercial*
- *PVT—Privately funded and developed structures serving office development*

Existing streets converted to diagonal parking

New streets with diagonal parking

New and existing streets with parallel parking

section two



Above:

East Main storefronts, the Oakhurst neighborhood and PPAV Hall were identified as important historic features in the East Downtown by the community

Management and Enforcement

As the facilities are developed, East Downtown's parking development, pricing and enforcement will need to be directed by an overall management plan. The goal is to maintain a supply of convenient short term parking for commercial businesses, an adequate supply of long term parking for employees, and incentives for using other modes.

2.6 Urban Design Concepts

The Task Force and community expressed ideas about the types of places and design character they would like to see in East Downtown. Urban design concepts merge land use, circulation and design into a framework of connected places imagined by the community. It describes an overall framework of valued existing places; a system of new places; and the contribution of private sector investment to the overall image and performance of East Downtown's business, residential and civic addresses.

Protecting Valued Familiar Places

The urban design concept for East Downtown creates a framework of connected places. At the same time, it includes existing places valued by the community.

East Downtown has several features the community felt were important to keep and enhance as part of the strategy. In particular, East Main Street's commercial and industrial buildings, the Oakhurst Street Bungalow neighborhood, and the Portuguese Visalia Community Center are places that can become important familiar references in East Downtown.

East Main Street Historic Buildings

East Main Street has many interesting historic storefront buildings and industrial buildings that lend themselves to

adaptive reuse and renovation. These buildings represent a cultural and physical memory while providing a pattern and scale that is comfortable for pedestrians and an alternative to suburban environments. Furthermore, the spaces and alleys between the buildings that are currently used for parking and storage can become outdoor rooms—small urban spaces that extend indoor activities and can become quiet small-scaled residential and business addresses. The strategy encourages keeping these buildings, renovating and integrating them into new projects, and expanding the alley system as small-scale addresses.

Oakhurst Neighborhood

The Oakhurst Neighborhood is a block of small historic houses in the southeast portion of the East Downtown. The small neighborhood is integrated into the plan and by boarding it with new residential and live-work uses.

PPAV

The Portuguese Visalia Community Center is located on Burke and East Main. It is a visible landmark and reminder of part of Visalia's cultural heritage. It's large trees and park provides a shady respite along East Main Street.

Regional Gateway

With the advent of the public transportation link to Sequoia National Park from the Transit Center there is a strong need and opportunity to develop interesting things to do and see in that vicinity. A park with a recreated Fort Visalia and adjacent parking, linked to an Arts Corridor leading to Downtown would enhance the visitors experience and fulfill the objective of bringing people into the downtown.

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An Interconnected System of New Places

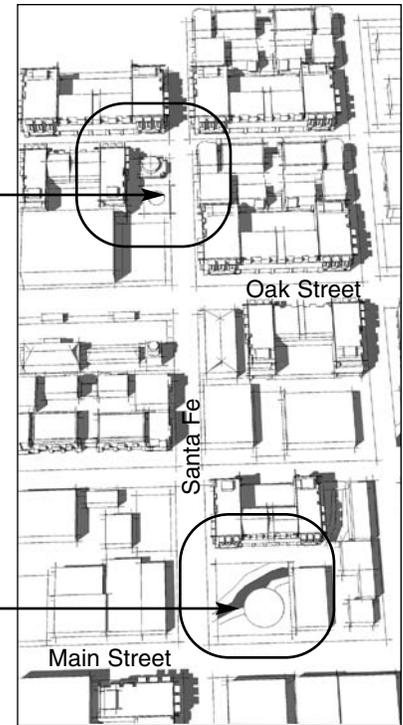
The Transit Center is a strategic investment. It has created a new focal point and a beachhead for downtown expansion. The East Downtown planning expands the number of new places in central

Visalia. The urban design framework captures the community's objectives to use open spaces as focal points for new investment. It identifies six new places (pages 2-16 through 2-21) that create value such as the Transit Center has done.



Santa Fe Plaza

Mill Creek Plaza



Santa Fe Plaza

Adjacent to the Transit Center is a small urban plaza. This is visually connected to the Transit Center and provides part of the arrival experience with ground floor retail and restaurant uses. It also acts as a social gathering place for the Santa Fe area employees and residents.



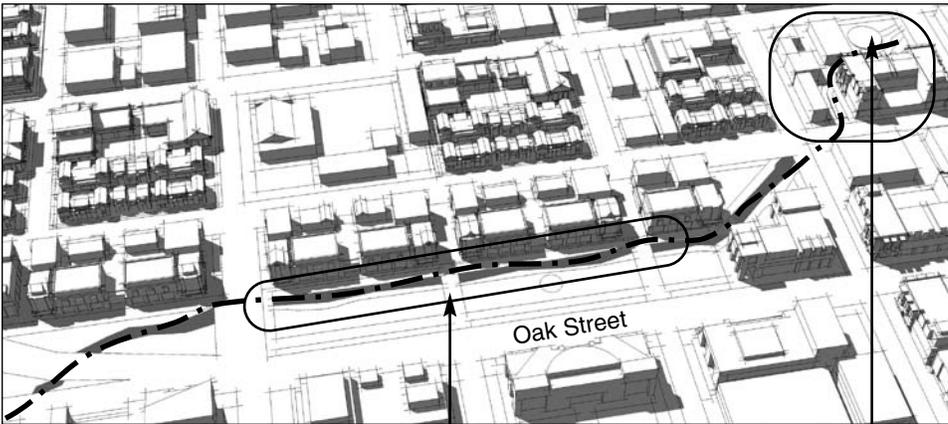
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Mill Creek Plaza

Mill Creek Plaza is located at the intersection of Santa Fe and East Main Street. It is the “trailhead” for the Mill Creek pathway system connecting downtown to Civic Center Park and Central Park. The plaza is envisioned as a combination of soft and hardscape that is programmable for special events. It can include a Mercado (market) that serves downtown residents and employees. The plaza’s backdrop is a mixed-use development.

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Civic center Park and Mixed-use Neighborhood along Mill Creek

Mill Creek Plaza



Left: View from north

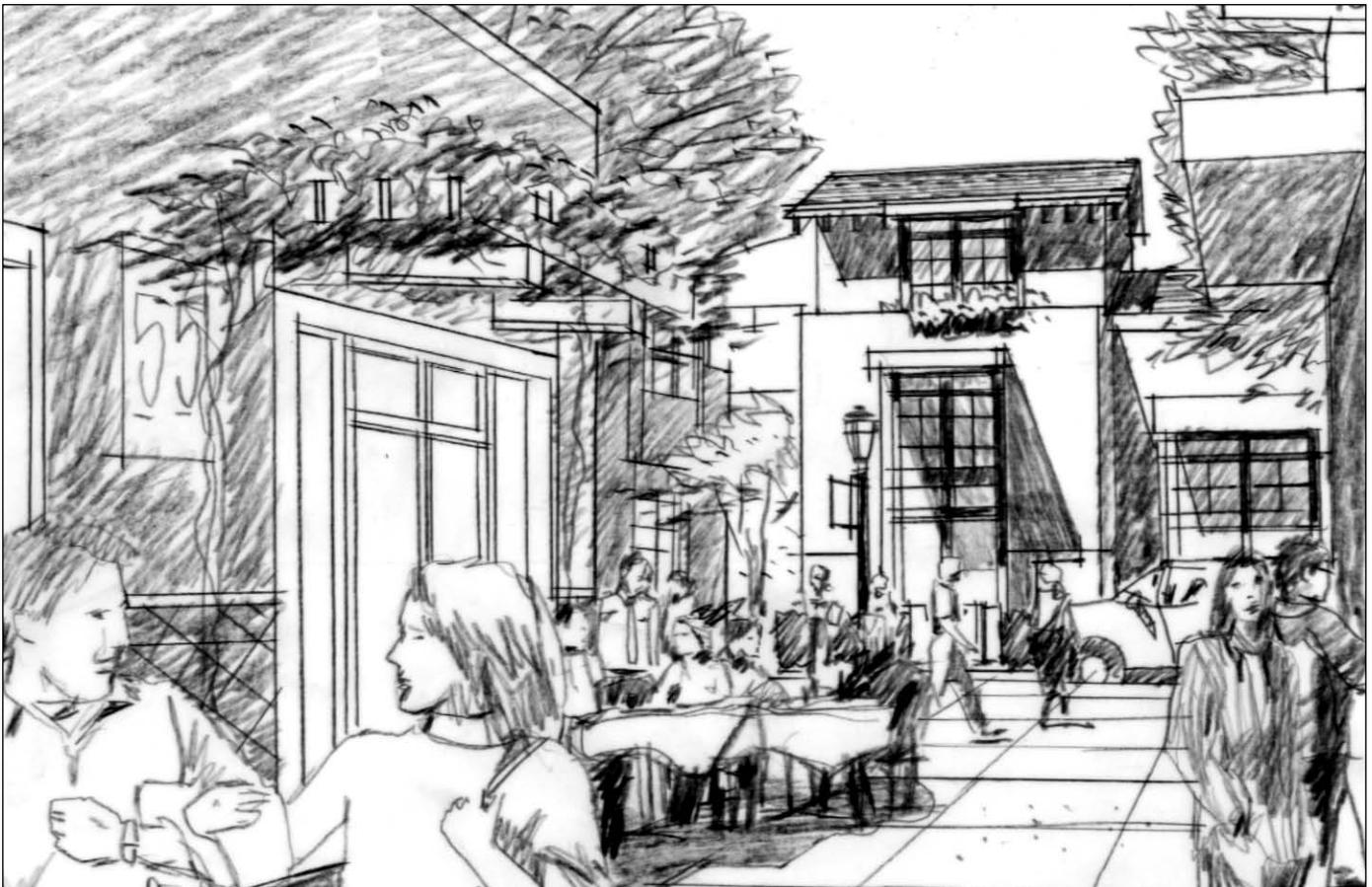
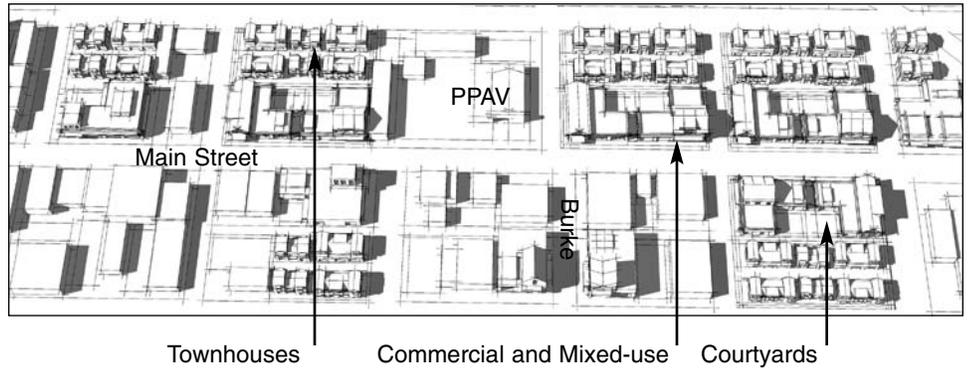


Civic Center Park and Mill Creek Trail

Civic Center Park will be one of the most important public spaces in the San Joaquin Valley. Edged with a new civic center, commercial and residential uses, it will be an active and accessible public space. Along the southern edge of the park is Mill Creek walkway. It is park-like on the north side and urban on the other. Ground floor commercial and residential uses face the creek walkway and shade trees line the park edge. It is both a setting for community activities and an address for public and private investment.



section two



East Main Courtyards

East Main Street is to become one of East Downtown’s “watering holes” for new residents—places to meet and socialize. The urban design framework incorporates a combination of adaptive reuse of existing brick buildings and new buildings to create a series of pedestrian-scaled courtyards and alleys. These spaces are accessible from East Main Street and act as a common open space amenity and interface between East Main Street commercial uses and new residential and live-work development.

section two



Burke Plaza Retail and Office Buildings

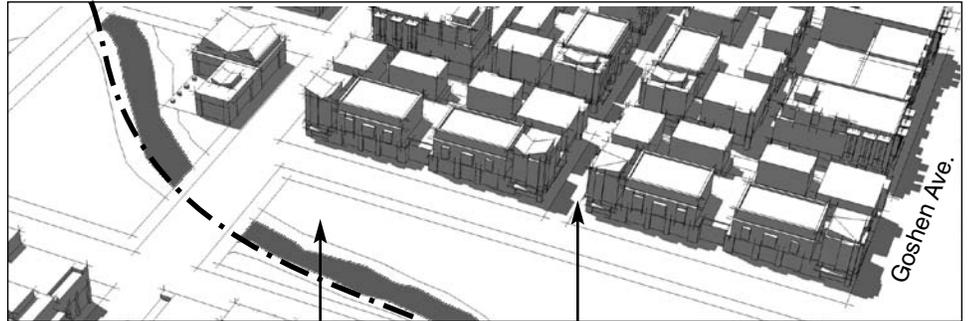


Burke Gateway

Burke Street is to become an important civic street and connection. At the intersection with Mineral King, the plan identifies a plaza gateway edge with commercial uses. The plaza signifies Burke's importance and welcomes regional travelers to the East Downtown.



section two



Central Park
and Creek
Trail

Central Park Residential
Mixed-use
Neighborhood



Central Park

Central Park is a commercial and residential address that features the transformation of Jennings Ditch into the northern leg of the Mill Creek walkway system. On the east side of the park is a new residential neighborhood. North will be another future in-town mixed-use neighborhood developed on the stockyards. To the west is Central Park Business Center. Central Park functions as both a community and neighborhood park for these future neighborhoods.

section two

Every Project Contributes to the Image and Success of East Downtown

As discussed as part of the circulation concepts, streets are considered places. The network and types of streets are the primary venue for city life. There are business streets, shopping streets, residential streets and civic or symbolic streets. Every public and private project has to contribute to the creation of successful streets and open spaces. To do this, project planning and design need to reflect current and future contexts, activate streets and open spaces, and respond to current and future market conditions while meeting the East Downtown's urban design objectives.

Current and Future Context

A primary motivation for preparing the East Downtown Strategic Plan was to provide policy direction for both private and public sector investment. To be successful, each project needs to respond to current market and design conditions with an eye towards the future. This has several dimensions.

Financial feasibility will be a constant. Projects need to demand rents that support the project initially and create a better address so rents are sustainable and grow with the value of the district. This means there has to be an emphasis on design quality that contributes to East Downtown beyond the property line of an individual project.

The design context for projects has three time frames. There is a historic street context, lot and building pattern that differentiates East Downtown from a suburban location. New projects should reflect this in their design. There is a current context. Many existing service commercial uses are being phased out, both by design and natural market forces. So, new proj-

ects may have land use and building contexts that are in transition. They have to respond to this and build towards the future. The future context is conveyed in the East Downtown Strategic Plan.

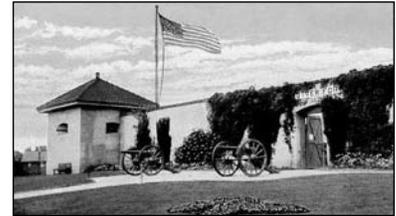
Parking and infrastructure are public investments that also need to respond to current needs and context while making the future possible. Every public sector building, roadway, streetscape, utility, park and parking project is a catalyst for creating the future. The East Downtown's urban design framework depends on this.

Activating Streets and Places

A principle difference between suburban development and city neighborhoods and districts is how projects activate streets and places at both a pedestrian and driving pace. The success of East Downtown's streets is dependent on the design of individual projects. The design of ground floor uses, transparency of storefronts, relationship to the sidewalk, streetscape, street orientation, and other elements make commercial streets successful. The design and definition of public and private spaces, "eyes-on-the-street" design, and street orientation make residential streets successful. Mixed-use streets need to do both.

Building Types

East Downtown will have a variety of types of buildings. Each has to make a design contribute to streets and public spaces. The urban design concept considers the design of commercial and residential buildings including their form, orientation, ground floor uses, and architectural features. Each of these building types need to be designed to work within their current and future context.



Above:

Sutter's Fort in Sacramento provides a historic destination in the Midtown neighborhood.

FORT VISALIA

Though it is not technically in the East Downtown, Fort Visalia stood on the site of the Brown Lumber Co. at the corner of Oak and Garden Streets. Built on the north bank of Mill Creek in 1852, the log stockade was only 60 ft. square with extensions of 4 ft. at each corner. A bridge was built over the creek and later was surveyed as Visalia's first street, Bridge St. It is an important historical site in Visalia and one of the oldest in the state.

Recreation of the structure and grounds would allow visitors and Visalians to enjoy the opportunity to tour an "old fort". The Chamber of Commerce, Convention Center and Downtown Visalia could capitalize on and market this element of tourism.

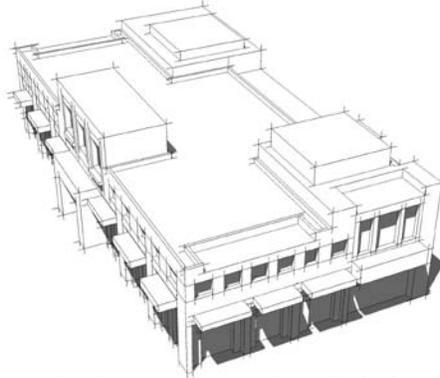
Commercial Buildings

There are likely to be three types of new commercial buildings built in the East Downtown. These include office buildings, commercial mixed-use buildings, and storefront commercial buildings.

Office Buildings (all office uses)

- Locations—Central Park Business Center, Santa Fe
- Context—Free-standing or part of block
- Massing—2 to 4 stories
- Ground Floor Treatment—Lobby entrances, storefronts on pedestrian streets

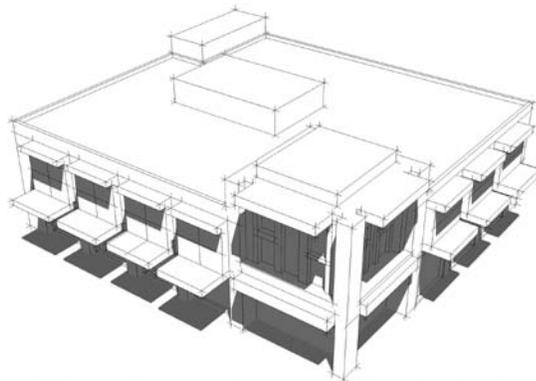
Architectural Opportunities—Lobbies, stepping upper levels to align with adjacent buildings, enhanced transparency, detail along walking edges, and signage concepts



Commercial Mixed-use (ground floor retail with office above)

- Locations—Santa Fe, East Main Street
- Context: Part of vertical mixed-use block
- Massing—2 to 4 stories
- Ground Floor Treatment—Lobby entrances, storefronts on pedestrian streets

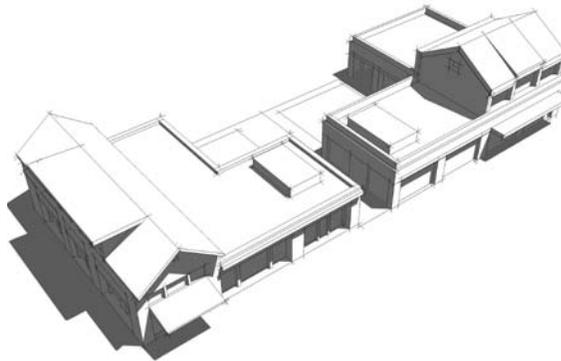
Architectural Opportunities—Lobbies, storefronts, stepping upper levels to align with adjacent buildings, enhanced transparency, signage concepts, and detail along walking edges



Storefront Commercial

- Locations—East Main Street
- Context—Part of horizontal and vertical mixed-use blocks
- Massing—1 to 4 stories
- Ground Floor Treatment—Storefronts on pedestrian streets

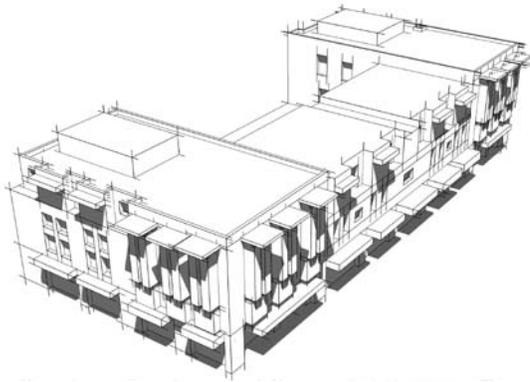
Architectural Opportunities—Storefronts, enhanced transparency, signage and detail along walking edges



section two

Residential Buildings

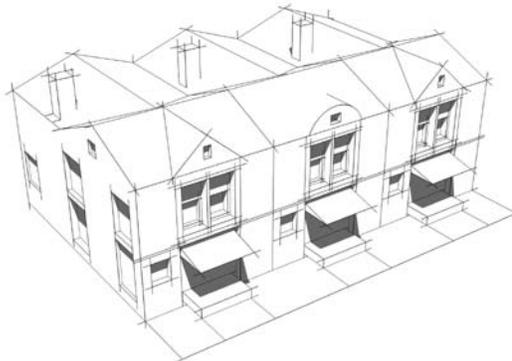
There could be as many seven types of residential buildings built in the East Downtown. These include mixed-use buildings, apartments, podium townhouses, town and rowhouses, small-lot single family, and loft and live-work.



Residential Mixed-use

- *Locations*—Santa Fe, East Main Street, Central Park
- *Context*— Part of mixed-use block
- *Massing*—2-4 stories
- *Ground Floor Treatment*— Storefronts on pedestrian streets

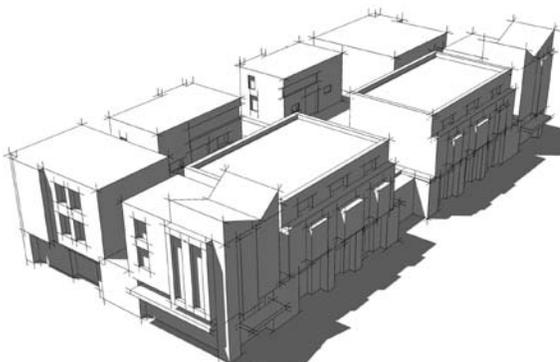
Architectural Opportunities— Storefronts, enhanced transparency, signage and detail along walking edges, balconies, roofs, and stepping upper floors to align with adjacent buildings



Flats (apartments and condos)

- *Locations*—Civic Center Park, Central Park
- *Context*— Part of mixed-use block or residential block
- *Massing*—2-4 stories
- *Ground Floor Treatment*— Stoops and shallow yards along residential streets and parks

Architectural Opportunities— Porches, balconies, roofs, corner features, bay windows, and stepping upper floors to align with adjacent buildings



Podium Townhouses

- *Locations*—Civic Center Park, Central Park
- *Context*— Part of mixed-use block or residential block
- *Massing*—3-4 stories
- *Ground Floor Treatment*— Stoops and shallow yards along residential streets and parks, commercial storefronts or live-work along mixed-use streets

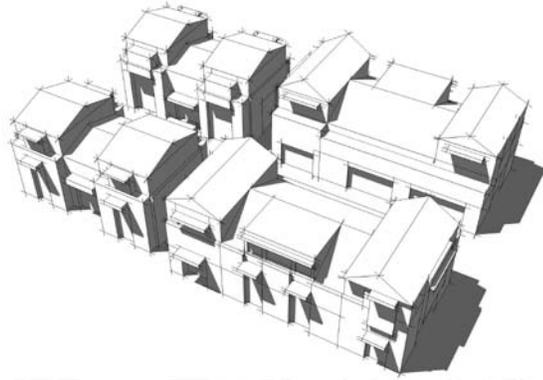
Architectural Opportunities— Porches, balconies, roofs, corner features, bay windows, and stepping upper floors to align with adjacent buildings

section two

Townhouses and Rowhouses (attached single family)

- *Locations—East Main*
- *Context— Part of horizontal mixed-use block or residential block*
- *Massing—2-3 stories*
- *Ground Floor Treatment— Stoops and shallow yards along residential streets and courtyards*

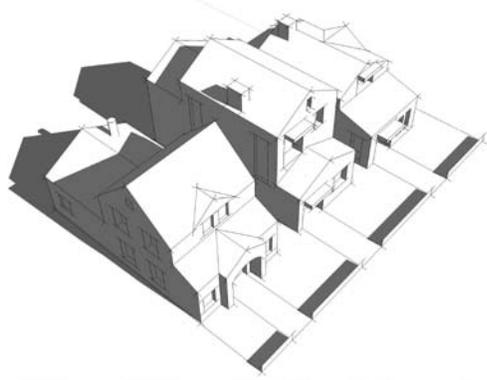
Architectural Opportunities— Porches, balconies, roofs, corner features, bay windows



Small-lot Single-family Residential

- *Locations—East Main*
- *Context— Part of horizontal mixed-use block or residential block*
- *Massing—2-3 stories*
- *Ground Floor Treatment— Stoops and shallow yards along residential streets and courtyards*

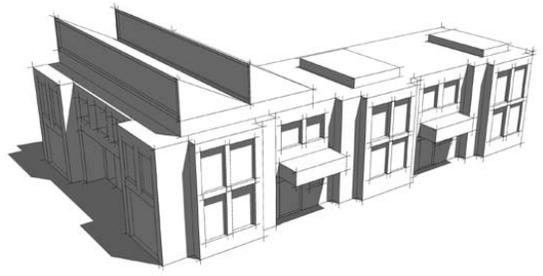
Architectural Opportunities— Porches, balconies, roofs, corner features, bay windows



Loft and Live-work

- *Locations—Santa Fe, East Main*
- *Context—Part of horizontal mixed-use block or residential block*
- *Massing—2-3 stories*
- *Ground Floor Treatment— Stoops and shallow yards along residential streets and courtyards, storefronts on mixed-use streets*

Architectural Opportunities— Porches, balconies, roofs, corner features, bay windows, storefronts



section two

Adaptive Reuse and Renovation

East Downtown has a variety of existing historic and older nonresidential buildings that will be restored or adaptively reused. The reuse of existing buildings provides a bridge between the past and the future. They have a unique character and scale that can act as reference and context for new buildings. They offer opportunities for interesting interior spaces as well as adjacent outdoor spaces. Reinvesting in older buildings provides a variety of economic and design opportunities that can contribute to public objectives for East Downtown.

Art in Public Places

Throughout the East Downtown area there is an opportunity to include publicly and privately funded art.

Roadway projects, plaza and parks, and private development can integrate the arts into their planning, funding and design. Creation of an “arts zone” that links the Transit Center area to downtown and East Downtown was suggested by Task Force members as a way to revitalize the area. Including the arts community as partners and tenants would add a cultural dimension to the area that would be attractive to other new tenants and residents.

Many communities prepare art plans for their central districts. These plans identify locations for public art, match private sector partners with artists, and identify funding sources.



Above:

Many communities have promoted the arts in their central districts as a way to celebrate local talent and contribute to their uniqueness.



Left:

This former dairy processing and distribution facility is located in a transforming industrial corridor in Sacramento. The building was adaptively reused as a club, restaurant and office development.



Left:

This is a photo of a former auto dealer building in Sacramento that has been adaptively reused as a mixed-use building. It includes ground floor restaurants, one floor of offices, and upper floor apartments.



SECTION THREE: Action Plan

The Action Plan recommends a program of various public and private activities to achieve implementation of the revitalization strategy for East Downtown. The Action Plan identifies priorities for overall development, and regulatory, administrative and financing actions. It includes potential lead projects and sites, public participation and sequence of activities.

3.0 Introduction

The East Downtown has a variety of assets and development factors that will influence the approach to implementation. The Action Plan strives to build on East Downtown's assets while addressing other development factors.

Assets

A major asset of Visalia is its downtown, which contains many specialty shops, restaurants and cafes and entertainment opportunities. The recently restored Fox Theater provides one of the four live performing arts venues in Visalia, and is home to the Tulare County Symphony. The Visalia Convention Center is also located in the downtown area and provides 114,000 square feet of convention space, supported by over 1,100 hotel rooms located either adjacent to or within close proximity to the Visalia Convention Center.

The East Downtown Area presents

some unique opportunities for new development and redevelopment of existing properties. The area has several existing assets that could potentially support revitalization, redevelopment and new development opportunities. Some of these include:

- Proximity to, and opportunity to physically connect to the existing downtown Visalia;
- Proximity/access to Highway 198 and major streets;
- Recent new major investment – transit center and health clinic;
- Mill Creek, which could be developed with creek side parks, pedestrian and bicycle trails and provide a linkage to the existing downtown core;
- Public transit service including Visalia City Coach Service Lines 5 (Santa Fe/Center Streets) and Line 8 (Ben Maddox Way/Locust Street).

The proposed Civic Center would be an asset for potentially stimulating additional private investment and development in the East Downtown Area. This proposed project would also provide for a potential linkage to the existing downtown core through automobile/pedestrian and open space connections (Mill Creek).

The City of Visalia currently employs slightly in excess of 500 persons. The proposed Civic Center would result in a significant new “day-time population” in the East Downtown Area that could support existing/proposed commercial and retail uses.

The Kaweah Delta Health Care District is the largest acute care medical facility between Fresno and Bakersfield, and is the major referral health care center in Kings and Tulare Counties. The existing Kaweah Delta Health District facilities total approximately 391,500 square feet. The pro-

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posed District facilities expansion plan includes a Phase I increase of 143,500 square feet and a Phase II increase of 387,900 square feet resulting in a potential total of 922,900 square feet on approximately 30 acres of land.

The District currently employs approximately 2,500 persons. The proposed expansions could increase employment by approximately 900 employees (Phase I) and 2,500 employees (Phase II), respectively (based on the same ratio of building/facility size to number of employees as the current District facilities). Full implementation of both phases of expansion could result in an ultimate District employment of approximately 5,500 to 6,000 persons.

Development Factors

There are a number of constraints that potentially affect the opportunity for revitalization and redevelopment of East Downtown. These factors primarily relate to land assembly, improving roadways, ground water and soil contamination, existing zoning, and utilities.

A significant amount of undeveloped and underdeveloped property exists within East Downtown with large tracts of land owned by public and quasi-public entities such as the Union Pacific Transportation Company, Southern California Gas Company and Visalia Redevelopment Agency.

There are a significant number of parcels that are smaller in size and of an irregular configuration. This could negatively affect the ability to develop any significant amount of new development on such properties without first assembling and consolidating such parcels into developable sites.

There are several arterial roadways in East Downtown that are not yet built to their ultimate right-of-way width that could impede circulation for future development in the area. In addition, a lack of traffic signals at key intersections could limit capacity of the roadways as traffic volumes increase in the future.

A large portion of East Downtown has historically been used for heavy commercial and industrial uses that have potentially contributed to the contamination of ground water and soils since the early 1900s. Such contamination factors have, in part, deterred any new on-site development most likely because of the remediation/mitigation costs involved to clean up the sites. This results in a number of potential infill development sites not being developed because of the potential costs and risks.

Development investment has been burdened by the numerous properties with environmental contamination due to the difficulty of securing private financing for purchase, clean-up and development of such properties in a manner that yields a reasonable economic return on investment.

The largest concentration of Visalia's Service Commercial (C-S) zoning is within East Downtown. C-S zoning consists primarily of automotive and repair shops on smaller parcels (average of one-half acre). The Service Commercial (C-S) zoning designation has caused a large number of existing industrial uses to become non-conforming uses impacting expansion of existing operations. This makes it harder to expand the employment base and attract commercial and other uses that would otherwise assist in commercial revitalization efforts.

Existing public facilities are located

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within East Downtown, however there would be a need to upgrade or expand such facilities in order to serve any substantial amount of new development in the area. It is likely that new development would be responsible for the costs associated with installation of new, upgraded and/or expanded utilities related to providing service to proposed development. These include:

- *Water*—The California Water Service Company currently has facilities to provide water service to the East Downtown Area and is able to provide service to the area from existing water mains and/or extended water mains. According to the California Water Service Company, the City of Visalia is not facing any critical water supply issues.
- *Sanitary Sewer*—There is available sanitary sewer service in the East Downtown Area (within existing street rights-of-way) except for 800 feet of Center Street west of Ben Maddox Way and 700 feet of Goshen Avenue west of Ben Maddox Way. Overall, sanitary sewer lines in the East Downtown Area are in acceptable condition and have capacity to serve the area. The existing City of Visalia Wastewater Treatment Plant is being expanded to increase the maximum design capacity to 22 mgd in order to accommodate future growth.
- *Electricity*—Southern California Edison currently has facilities to provide electrical service to the East Downtown Area and is able to provide service to the area from existing and/or extended facilities.
- *Natural Gas*—The Southern California Gas Company currently

provides natural gas service to East Downtown and is able to provide service to the area from existing mains and/or extended gas facilities.

3.1 Development Actions

A series of development actions need to be coordinated to support implementation of the East Downtown Strategic Plan. These include phasing, public investments, public actions, and defining development sites.

Overall Strategies

The Action Plan outlines a framework for improvements in East Downtown while remaining flexible so that the City of Visalia would have the ability to respond to changing conditions and gain the most benefit from use of its public resources. While specific actions or activities are identified, some of these might be modified as opportunities are presented. However, it is important that the fundamental concepts of the East Downtown Strategic Plan are adhered to by the City of Visalia.

In order to assist the City of Visalia to consider refinements to the recommended implementation schedule in an appropriate manner, the Action Plan recommends a series of prioritization criteria. The Redevelopment Agency and City of Visalia should pursue a program of activities focused on the following:

- Use public sector assets (land, parking, financing) to create public/private development opportunities;
- Commit sufficient staff resources to assure successful implementation of the East Downtown Revitalization Plan;
- Align City and Agency policies, regulations and development stan-

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dards with the provisions of the East Downtown Revitalization Plan; and

- Use public financing for public infrastructure and improvements to facilitate new public and private development.

The Redevelopment Agency should facilitate selective new infill development, rehabilitation of existing buildings, and adaptive reuse of certain existing buildings consistent with the East Downtown Strategic Plan.

Phasing

Implementation of the East Downtown Plan is envisioned as a long-term venture with phasing of recommended actions and activities. The priorities for implementation are arranged in the following three phases:

- *Phase One*—These activities are the highest priority and should be implemented as soon as possible. Generally these activities are to be implemented in years 1 through 5.
- *Phase Two*—These activities are also of high priority but would likely require more time to accomplish. Generally these activities are to be implemented in years 6 through 15.
- *Phase Three*—These activities are either more complex and/or would require more time and identification of future funding sources. Generally these activities are to be implemented in year 15 and later.

Public Activities

The Agency may need to be involved as a means to resolving identified physical constraints that could affect the development feasibility of certain properties, and generally facilitate new recommended private and/or public development activity. This may include land acquisition, site remediation, public infrastructure, assistance for existing businesses to relocate,

and development of parking.

Land Acquisition and Assembly

The land area related conditions that potentially affect the ability for redevelopment and/or new development in East Downtown include a substantial number of:

- Parcels that are smaller in size and of an irregular configuration;
- Underdeveloped properties; and
- Different property ownerships.

These conditions could negatively affect the ability to develop any significant amount of new development without first assembling and consolidating such parcels into developable sites. East Downtown is within an established redevelopment project area. Therefore a logical role for the Agency would be to assist in the acquisition and assembly of certain existing privately owned properties through agreements with existing property owners consistent with the provisions of the East Visalia Redevelopment Plan.

Physical Suitability of Property for Development

A substantial portion of the East Downtown area has been used historically for light industrial and service commercial purposes that may have contributed to the contamination of ground water and soils. These contamination factors could have the effect of deferring new development because of remediation/mitigation costs. This results in a number of potential infill development sites not being developed due to such potential risks.

Development investment has potentially been further burdened by the numerous properties with environmental contamination that make it difficult for private financing for pur-

Investment and Prioritization

The following principles provide a framework for the public investment and the prioritization of actions to be undertaken by the Redevelopment Agency and City of Visalia related to carrying out the East Downtown Strategic Plan. In general, a high priority should be placed on proposed improvements that support private development consistent with the vision of the East Downtown Strategic Plan.

Geographic Location

- *Initial development should be located in a manner that provides for connections and linkages to the downtown area.*
- *New development should be located near existing assets such as the Transit Center or other "key" planned development.*
- *New development should be located in "focused" areas of East Downtown consistent the Land Use Concept.*

Leverage of City Assets

- *The City should use its existing assets (land, parking, public financing, etc.) to create redevelopment opportunities.*
- *The City should use publicly-owned properties as "catalyst" redevelopment sites to help stimulate revitalization of the East Downtown area.*
- *The City should use proposed assets (i.e. structured parking) to achieve planned private development and potential joint use of public assets.*

District-Based Infrastructure

- *Public financing mechanisms should be used to assist in the financing and installation of planned public*

continued

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infrastructure/improvements to accommodate planned public and private development.

- Public infrastructure and improvements (including parking) should be installed on a district basis in areas the City is attempting to promote revitalization activities.
- Installation of public infrastructure and improvements (including parking) should be used as a tool to help stimulate private sector interest in redevelopment opportunities.

Focused Catalyst Sites

- Sites being positioned for private redevelopment activity (“catalyst sites”) should be concentrated in order to create synergy and achieve greater benefit from the potential public investment.
- Catalyst development sites should be concentrated in order to create the desired identity of an area designated for retail, residential and/or mixed-use development.
- Catalyst development sites should be concentrated in order to create the potential for greater value of development for the private sector.

Coordinating Public and Private Investment

- Financing of public investments should be used as a means to facilitate private sector investment.
- The City should partner with the private sector in coordinating the location and timing of public and private investments.
- The City should coordinate public investment with private sector investment in order to leverage the potential public benefit from its investment.

chase, clean-up and development of such properties so that there is a reasonable economic return on investment.

Therefore, a prospective role for the Agency would be to provide assistance for the remediation of properties designated for rehabilitation, adaptive reuse and/or new development as a means to make the subject properties physically suitable for the envisioned development.

Public Infrastructure

A substantial portion of East Downtown lacks basic public infrastructure and/or improvements that are needed to accommodate potential development consistent with the Strategy. Certain portions of the East Downtown area lack basic public infrastructure and/or improvements such as:

- Public streets including curbs, gutter, sidewalks, street lighting, and landscaping; and
- Underground utilities, sanitary sewers and storm drains in streets or alleys.

There is a role for the Agency to assist in the financing and installation of new and/or expansion of public infrastructure and utilities needed to serve the proposed development.

Existing Service Commercial Businesses

The City of Visalia goal to redevelop East Downtown and transform the area into an urban scale, mixed-use environment would potentially require relocation of a number of existing service commercial related businesses. Many of these existing service commercial businesses operate in a low cost environment. The Agency (and City of Visalia) will need to work with the existing business owners/ten-

ants to address appropriate physical and economic measures to relocate such uses to areas of Visalia designated for such industrial uses in a manner that does not negatively affect the business operations and overall financial conditions of such businesses.

There are two potential approaches to addressing the issue of relocation of the existing industrial and/or service commercial businesses.

First, the City of Visalia could consider relocating of some of the existing industrial and service commercial related businesses into other appropriate areas of East Downtown. The Agency (and city) could create “receiving” sites where these businesses could be relocated with assistance by the Agency. The businesses would have to be compatible with other planned new development on or near such “receiving” sites as described in the East Downtown Strategic Plan.

A second approach would be for the City of Visalia to work with the existing service commercial businesses in relocating to other potential locations in Visalia that are designated for that type of use.

Parking (District Basis)

The Agency (and City of Visalia) should pursue a parking district program versus a project-by-project approach to providing parking for the proposed private (and public) development in East Downtown. This parking district program approach should also include both the existing downtown Visalia core area.

Parking facilities need to be in safe and convenient locations close to the existing and/or planned uses. In addition, the proposed parking should be

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well integrated into a public or private development projects and be located and designed in a manner that does not disrupt the urban design, scale or character of block faces in East Downtown or downtown Visalia areas.

Parking developed on a district basis could be incorporated into:

1) New surface parking lots strategi-

cally located to serve businesses, tourists and visitors with connections to key activity points provided by a shuttle system. Eventually there is the potential need to develop parking structures in order to provide sufficient parking to serve the East Downtown and existing downtown core area.

2) New mixed-use development proj-

Below:

Phasing Diagram

This diagram illustrates the anticipated sequencing of public and private investment in East Downtown. The phasing strategy generally moves from west to east using public investments as catalyst for private sector development.



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ects consistent with the proposed East Downtown Strategic Plan, and not be developed as stand alone parking. The parking should be joint use parking or shared parking.

To be successful an urban parking program needs to be comprehensive and include other elements in addition to structured parking such as on-street parking management and enforcement and a residential permit parking in the residential neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the downtown core area.

Parking facilities are a means to assist in redevelopment and revitalization activities in urban downtown areas. The structured parking developed under a district approach could be developed with public financing or a combination of public and private sector financing. The most probable sources of public financing are redevelopment tax increment funding and/or lease revenue bond financing (issued by the City of Visalia). Private sector financing could be provided as part of the financing of a proposed parking facility, if the parking facility is intended to provide parking for private uses.

Development Sites

The Preliminary Land Use Concept and Proposed Phasing Concept identify certain proposed private development sites that could potentially be redeveloped in the first five (5) years of implementation. A description of such sites is included below:

Downtown Mixed-Use Expansion (Santa Fe)

- Site A—This represents an opportunity to develop the full block bounded by School, Oak, Santa Fe and Tipton into a mixed-use residential and commercial project with urban

residential uses on the northern portion of the site and vertical mixed-use residential or office over ground floor retail on the southern portion of the site. The Agency has acquired the site and is seeking a private development partner through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process.

- Site B—This is a currently proposed private vertical mixed-use residential (ownership) over office development on the western portion of the block bounded by Acequia, Mineral King, Santa Fe and Tipton. This represents an opportunity for the Agency to enter into an Owner Participation Agreement (OPA) with the owner/developer of the subject property to assure that the proposed project is developed consistent with the land use and design concepts of the East Downtown Revitalization Strategy.
- Site C—This represents an opportunity to coordinate the proposed private development of the Chamber of Commerce building on Santa Fe at Oak with vertical mixed-use residential or office over ground floor retail on the balance of the site. The site is privately owned and is primarily vacant with the exception of one large existing building along Tipton. This site represents an opportunity for either participation by the Agency in acquisition and assembly of the subject property or participation in an Owner Participation Agreement (OPA) with a subject owner/developer of the subject property.

Civic Center

- Site D—This represents an opportunity to redevelop the sites located on the north side of Center

Phasing Key

0-5 years



6-15 years



15+ years



New Street



Enhanced Street



Public Park (phase)

OS-2

Parking Structure (phase)

P-2

Note:

This phasing diagram is conceptual and reflects a logical sequencing of investment. Market forces, funding and the ability of the City and private sector partners can effect the phasing and timing of investment.

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between Tipton and Burke that would front on the proposed park/open space area along Mill Creek. With the proposed extension of Oak Street between Tipton and Burke and development of the proposed Civic Center (Phase One), this site represents an opportunity for the Agency to facilitate new urban scale residential uses coinciding with the timing for build-out

of the proposed Civic Center. Such coordinated development would result in new development on both sides of the proposed park/open space along Mill Creek. The two sites are privately owned and are currently vacant or occupied with existing buildings. The sites represent an opportunity for either participation by the Agency in acquisition/assembly of the sites or partici-

Below:

Initial Development Sites

The Strategic Plan identifies 10 sites that are to be developed within the first five years. These represent a combination of mutually supportive public and private investment. These early phase developments assume surface parking.



Development Sites (Year 0-5)

Site A

Site Area: 1.73 acres
Proposed Use: Commercial Mixed-use

Site B

Site Area: 0.57 acres
Proposed Use: Commercial Mixed-use

Site C

Site Area: 0.81 acres
Proposed Use: Commercial Mixed-use

Site D

Site Area: 10 acres (approx.)
Proposed Use: Civic Center Office, Surface Parking, Open Space, New Oak Street

Site E

Site Area: 0.92 acres
Proposed Use: Residential Mixed-use

Site F

Site Area: 0.78 acres
Proposed Use: Residential Mixed-use

Site G

Site Area: 1.02 acres
Proposed Use: Residential Mixed-use, New Tipton Street

Site H

Site Area: 1.55 acres
Proposed Use: Residential Mixed-use

Site I

Site Area: 1.26 acres
Proposed Use: Residential Mixed-use

Site J

Site Area: 2.25 acres
Proposed Use: Surface Parking, New Liberty Street

pation by the Agency in an Owner Participation Agreement (OPA) with the subject owner/developer.

East Main Street Mixed-Use

- Site E and Site F—These are underutilized privately owner parcels located north of Center Street between Burke and Tipton that will be facing the new civic center park and Mill Creek trail. These desirable sites are anticipated to be developed as mixed-use residential projects with ownership townhouses with an opportunity to have ground floor commercial uses facing the park and/or streets. Implementation could include participation by the Agency to assemble land or an Owner Participation Agreement (OPA) with the subject owner/developer.
- Site G—This represents an opportunity to redevelop a large portion of the block bounded by Center, Main extension of Tipton and Liberty into a mixed-use project with urban scale residential on the portion of the site that fronts on Center and vertical mixed-use residential or office over ground floor commercial retail space on the portion that fronts on Main Street with appropriate on-site parking for the residential use. The site is primarily vacant and privately owned. It would need to be assembled into a single development site. This represents an opportunity for either participation by the Agency in such acquisition and assembly or participation in an Owner Participation Agreement (OPA) with the subject owner/developer.
- Site H—This represents an opportunity redevelop the block bounded by Center, Main, Liberty and Clark into a mixed-use project with urban

scale residential on the portion of the block that fronts on Center, and vertical mixed-use residential or office over ground floor commercial retail space on the portion that fronts on Main Street with appropriate on-site parking for the residential uses. The site is currently privately owned and is underutilized with several existing commercial buildings and surface parking lots. The site would need to be assembled into a single development site. This represents an opportunity for either participation by the Agency in the acquisition and assembly of the subject property or participation in an Owner Participation Agreement (OPA) with the subject owner/developer.

- Site I—This represents an opportunity to redevelop the eastern portion of the block bounded by Main Street, Acequia, Liberty and Clark into a mixed-use project with vertical mixed-use residential or office over ground floor commercial retail space on the northern portion of the site that fronts on Main Street, and urban scale residential uses on the southern portion of the site that fronts on Acequia. The site is privately owned and is currently occupied by several existing buildings. The site would need to be assembled into a single development site. This presents an opportunity for either participation by the Agency in acquisition and assembly of the subject property or participation by the Agency in an Owner Participation Agreement (OPA) with a subject owner/developer.
- Site J—This vacant site is located at the southeast corner of Acequia and Tipton. Currently a parking lot, the site can be used as a parking facility supporting commercial projects in the East Main Street and

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southern Santa Fe areas. The Strategic Plan envisions the site being developed with a parking structure and housing in future phases. This presents an opportunity for either participation by the Agency in acquisition and assembly of the subject property or participation by the Agency in an Owner Participation Agreement (OPA) with a subject owner/developer.

3.2 Administrative Actions

There are a several administrative actions that should be considered by the City of Visalia in relation to ongoing implementation of the East Downtown Revitalization Plan. These potential actions include a proactive role for the public sector including technical studies, marketing and promotion, development assistance and incentives.

Role of Public Sector

The public sector has to play a proactive role to support private sector investors that are implementing projects consistent with the East Downtown Strategic Plan. This will take a commitment of staff, expediting development review, and coordinated review and facilitation.

As the City of Visalia embarks on implementing the East Downtown Strategic Plan, it should consider making a commitment to staffing levels to managing the overall implementation activities. This Action Plan suggests that the City of Visalia designate a full-time senior level project manager to be responsible for overall redevelopment activities in both the Downtown and East Downtown areas.

The City of Visalia should consider establishment of a process whereby review and approval of discretionary land use, planning and building entitlements is given priority and expedit-

ed in terms of timing for proposed development projects in the East Downtown area that are consistent with the East Downtown Strategic Plan.

For such projects, a stipulated period for completing such review and approval (or disapproval) would be committed to by the city. The stipulated period should be less than the current average period of time required for completing such review and approval. This approach would assure private developers of desired development projects that required planning and/or building entitlements would be completed within a reasonable period of time.

In order to assist in the expedited planning and/or building entitlement process described above, the City of Visalia should consider establishment of an internal staff team that would provide technical input and assistance for proposed development projects in East Downtown that are consistent with the Strategic Plan. The internal staff team should consist of representatives of the various city departments that are involved in review and discretionary approval of such projects including Redevelopment, Planning, Building, Public Works and Fire. This approach would provide for consistency of policy direction among the participating city departments.

A single point of contact should be established for each proposed project, so that the developer is interacting with a single representative of the city instead of the various city departments. The team should include high level representatives of each of the participating departments that are authorized to commit to an appropriate policy direction and/or decision related to a particular proposed development project.

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Predevelopment Activities

There are a number of predevelopment activities that the Agency could undertake in order to appropriately “set-the-table” for the prospective private developers in regards to the identified development opportunity sites. For example:

- Prepare preliminary title reports;
- Determine market value of the property through appraisal;
- Prepare initial Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) reports;
- Remediate any existing hazardous material conditions;
- Remove existing structures (if planned to be removed); and/or
- Assess public infrastructure capacity (water, sewer, drainage, etc.).

These activities result in a site(s) readied for development, and evidence that the Agency is serious in regard to implementing the envisioned private development. The probable source of funding for such predevelopment activities would be redevelopment tax increment revenue received by the Agency from the existing redevelopment project area.

Marketing and Promotion

The goal of a proposed marketing effort is to attract high-quality development to East Downtown consistent with the Strategic Plan. Marketing can include Agency-owned and/or City-owned sites that are being made available for private development and/or privately owned property that is being proposed for development.

In addition marketing efforts should be undertaken to promote other potentially available Agency funded programs such as commercial or residential rehabilitation loan programs and adaptive reuse loan programs to existing property/business owners.

In regard to Agency (and/or City-owned) sites written marketing information for the preliminary outreach effort should include a basic brochure that describes the site(s), the Agency development objectives, characteristics of the site(s) and East Downtown area, related market conditions and potential land use/development program.

The primary focus of the Agency’s marketing efforts should be local and regional real estate development companies that have qualifications, experience and successful track records in development and operation of:

- High quality urban residential, commercial (office) and/or mixed-use development; and
- Public/private development projects.

The most likely prospective private development teams would either be local or regional (i.e. from the greater Fresno and Southern California areas) with some experience in the general Visalia or Tulare County real estate market.

A preliminary outreach effort related to marketing of Agency-owned sites and Agency funded loan programs should include:

- Meetings with various real estate trade and business organizations;
- Distribution of written information regarding Agency/City-owned sites to identified real estate development; companies, architects, engineers, other consultants;
- Distribution of written information regarding Agency funded loan programs to existing property business owners in the East Downtown area; and
- Posting of such written information

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on the Agency's web page.

Development Assistance

The City and Agency can assist private developers selling and leasing public land as a partner, working with private landowners to form partnerships with qualified developers, and provide support for adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of existing buildings for new tenants.

For any Agency owned sites identified for redevelopment, the City and Agency could consider preparation and implementation a Request for Qualifications and Proposals (RFQ/P) process for selection of a private development team to develop residential and or mixed-use development consistent with the East Downtown Strategic Plan. The intent of the RFQ/P process would be to select the most qualified "business and development partner" for the Agency.

Subsequent to selection of a private development team the Agency should work mutually with the selected private development team to refine the design and development program; and negotiate the terms and conditions for disposition of the subject property, including any potential public financing investment. These provisions should be negotiated during an exclusive negotiation period, and would be embodied in a disposition and development agreement between the Agency and selected private development team consistent with the California Redevelopment Law (CRL).

The primary focus of the Agency's marketing efforts should be local and regional real estate development companies that have qualifications, experience and successful track records in development and operation of development similar in type, scale and character to that envisioned for

the East Downtown area.

The Agency should work with owners of the sites identified for potential new development to determine if such owners have an interest in pursuing development consistent with the proposed revitalization strategy. If so, the Agency should work with any interested owner in attempting to structure an Owner Participation Agreement (OPA) for such development in accordance with provisions of California Redevelopment Law. The OPA would set forth the terms and conditions of a proposed arrangement between the Agency and respective property owner including any potential public financing investment.

The Agency's efforts should be focused on those sites with owners who demonstrate an interest in pursuing projects consistent with the proposed revitalization strategy, and located in an area of East Downtown that contributes to the overall objective of achieving the envisioned development in a concentrated manner.

The Agency could consider implementation of a program that would be designed to provide financing assistance on a loan basis for private redevelopment activities consistent with the East Downtown Strategic Plan. Specifically, the program could be used to assistance uses that are consistent with the designated uses set forth in the Plan including:

- Rehabilitation of existing buildings;
- Expansion of existing business and commercial facilities if such expansion results in a net increase in employment; and
- Adaptive reuse (and rehabilitation) of existing buildings.

The program could be established as a low-interest loan program initially

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funded with redevelopment tax increment funds, with a required match of private funding provided by the building owner. Loan proceeds could be used to help finance real property improvements related to building code and established rehabilitation standards (i.e. facades, painting, signage, landscape, etc.).

The program could be established as a revolving loan program with repayments by borrowers used by the Agency to make subsequent loans for eligible uses within the approved guidelines of the program.

Infill Development Incentives

Some potential incentives to encourage the type, scale and density of development envisioned in the East Downtown Revitalization Plan could include measures related to existing development impact fees, parking in-lieu fees and/or building and development processing fees. The City of Visalia could consider establishing an infill development program consisting of some or all of the following components as a means to help encourage desired development (new construction, rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse) in the East Downtown area.

- Payment of required development impact fees overtime by a developer instead of upfront as part of the building permit issuance process—for example two to three years with an interest charged on the deferred amount equal to the interest rate the City of Visalia achieves on its investment portfolio.
- Reduction in the amount of parking in-lieu fees for non-residential portions of mixed-use development projects above the ground floor as a means to encourage vertical mixed-use development.

- Reduction in the amount of the planning entitlement and/or building permit processing fees for certain mixed-use development.

In considering establishment of infill development incentives the City of Visalia should evaluate the implications of such measures on the city's annual operating budget and/or capital improvements program.

Planning for Adjacent Areas

During the planning for East Downtown, adjacent property owners and members of the City Council requested additional planning be initiated for other underdeveloped areas in central Visalia. These areas generally fall between Santa Fe, Highway 198, Houston and Cain. The City should prepare an overall framework plan for land use, circulation and urban design for this area.

3.3 Regulatory Actions

The following section describes existing policy and regulatory setting and offers strategies to implement the East Downtown Strategic Plan and remove roadblocks that adopted planning documents pose to the implementation of this plan.

General Plan Policies and Programs

The 1991 Land Use Element identifies several policies and programs that specifically address the East Downtown Area.

Policy Issues:

Many of the General Plan land use policies that support the Central Business Districts do not encompass the entire area covered by the East Downtown Strategic Plan. In addition, policies that support service and wholesale commercial uses are also included in the East Downtown area. The East Downtown area does not have any policies specified in the

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General Plan that support the vision of the Strategic Plan for a majority of the Plan area. For instance, policies do not address linkages between Mill Creek and the East Downtown area.

Policy Actions:

The City will revise the General Plan goals, objectives, policies and implementation programs to include: removal/revision of policies that support the continued use of service and wholesale commercial uses as the major development strategy in favor of policies that support higher density residential uses, more intense commercial and office uses, mixed use neighborhoods, creek connectivity, design objectives, and parking.

General Plan Land Use Designations

The current General Plan land use designations in the East Downtown area include: Central Business District

(CBD), Service Commercial (SC), and Conservation (C). The Central Business District supports historic, medical, and professional service center uses located primarily along the western edge of the plan area. The Service Commercial designation supports the continued use of service and wholesale commercial development located in the eastern portion of the plan area. The Conservation land use supports the preservation of Mill Creek, which runs through the project area from the northeast and east to the west.

Land Use Issues:

The Service Commercial land use designation does not support or encourage more intense commercial, office, residential, and mixed-use developments that are envisioned in the East Downtown Strategic Plan.

Below:

Proposed General Plan Land Use Designations

This diagram illustrates the proposed new General Plan land use designations for East Downtown. The policy approach reflects the strategy by:

- Extending the CBD category over Santa Fe;
- Providing a new category called "East Downtown Mixed-use" over much of the remaining area to support mixing of residential, civic and commercial uses; and
- Keeping some service commercial land use in the southeast portion of the planning area.

Left:

General Plan Land Use Designations

CBD



East Downtown Mixed-use



Service Commercial



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Below:

Proposed Zoning Designations

This diagram illustrates the proposed zoning designations for East Downtown. The policy approach reflects the strategy by:

- *Creating a commercial mixed-use category for Santa Fe;*
- *Requiring commercial and civic uses on land with dead restrictions (former UPRR) against residential uses;*
- *Creating a new "Residential Mixed-use" designation for much of the area to permit the mixing of uses; and*
- *Maintaining commercial service zoning in the southeast portion of the area.*

Land Use Actions:

The East Downtown Strategic Plan calls for the extension of the downtown core and the development of mixed use neighborhoods that include a broad range housing densities, commercial uses, and office developments. In order to realize the goals and objectives of the East Downtown Strategic Plan, General Plan land use designation(s) will be amended to support the extension of the downtown core and the development of mixed use neighborhoods.

A new land use designation to replace the Service Commercial designation would be more appropriate for the East Downtown area. This designation should permit and encourage mixed commercial, office, and residential uses, higher densities, pedestrian oriented streetscapes, open space, and neighborhood design

guidelines throughout the East Downtown area. In addition, the existing Conservation land use should remain to preserve and enhance Mill Creek.

Proposed land use actions would extend the Central Business District designation from Santa Fe Street to run along Tipton Street between Murray Avenue and Center Avenue. The remaining project area would have a new mixed-use land use designation.

Zoning Ordinance

There are two base zoning districts for the East Downtown area as follows: Planned Downtown Central Business Retail District (P-C-DT) and Commercial Service (P-C-S). The P-C-DT zone promotes the downtown core by providing for the continuing commercial development of the down-

Right:

Zoning Designations

Commercial Mixed-use



Residential Mixed-use



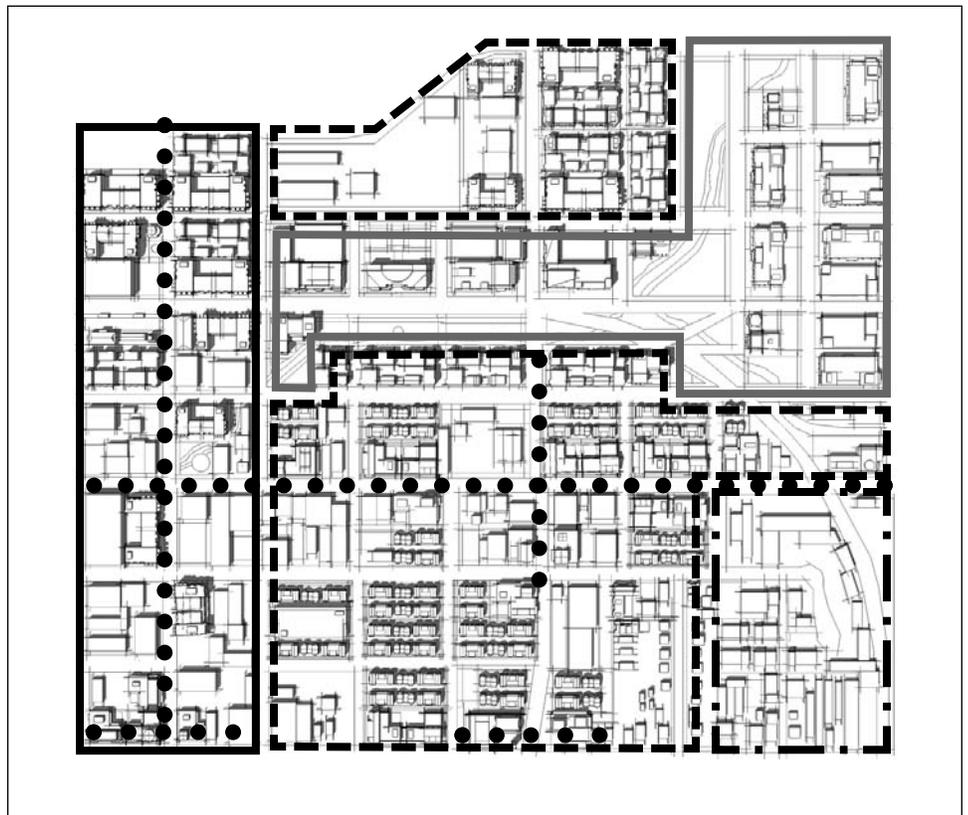
Office-Commercial/Civic



Service Commercial



Required Ground Floor Commercial



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town and maintaining and enhancing its historic character. The zone is designed to accommodate a wide mix of land uses including commercial and office to residential and public spaces, both active and passive. The standards set forth in the P-C-S district zone are intended to allow uses that accommodate wholesale, heavy commercial uses, such as lumberyards and construction material retail uses, etc., and services such as automotive, plumbing, and sheet metal fabrication. It is intended that uses in this district be those that can be compatible with heavy truck traffic and noise, service, and warehouse commercial uses.

Zoning Issues:

The uses defined for the P-C-S zone do not comply with the development standards envisioned in the Visalia East Downtown Strategic Plan. The P-C-DT zone contains standards for development that generally agree with the Central Business District designation, but do not support the full vision of the East Main plan. In addition, the current zoning does not address the Conservation designation that runs along Mill Creek.

Zoning Actions:

In order to achieve the goals and objectives of the East Downtown Strategic Plan, the zoning ordinance will be amended to support the extension of the downtown core and the development of mixed-use neighborhoods.

New zoning to replace the P-C-S zone will be more appropriate for the East Downtown area. This zone should permit mixed commercial, office, and residential uses, higher densities, pedestrian oriented streetscapes, and open space, throughout the East Downtown area. In addition, the existing Conservation designation should be addressed to

preserve and enhance Mill Creek.

Zoning actions include creating new mixed-use zoning categories for East Downtown. The purpose of a new East Downtown base zone with sub-areas addressed will allow the City to adopt standards that support the vision of the plan. This option will identify certain areas within the East Downtown Strategic Plan area where development would be in the form of mixed-use projects with ground floor space occupied by commercial, retail or office uses with residential above. This would ensure that a mixture of residential and non-residential (commercial) uses would be included when certain sites are either redeveloped or developed by a property owner or developer. Property development standards would be new for the underlying zoning district. An overlay would include additional standards for defined sub-areas within the project area.

Design Review

There are four Design District Overlays: C, D, Downtown Retail District (DRD), and E and one Parking Overlay District. These overlays combine with the two base zones to provide additional standards for development. The standards contained in the overlays offer basic development standards (i.e., building height, setbacks, etc.). The Parking Overlay insures that uses established within the central business district meet minimum off-street parking standards or pay an in-lieu fee for future downtown parking facilities.

Design Review Issues:

The existing Design District overlays do not address specific architectural, use, or neighborhood design standards envisioned in the East Downtown Strategic Plan. In addition, parking design and alternative parking

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sources are not addressed in the Design Districts. Finally, the linkage and design of development along Mill Creek is not addressed.

Design Review Actions:

A new set of Design Guidelines and Review Process for specific site development in the East Downtown area will be adopted to incorporate the vision of the East Downtown Strategic Plan. The objective of design guidelines would protect existing historic structures, ensure good design in new development, connect neighborhoods, protect open space, and promote the image of the East Downtown area.

The various types of development that could occur in the East Downtown area all have distinct standards and requirements outlined in the East Downtown plan. These uses include, but are not limited to, residential/commercial/office mixed use, higher density residential, two-to-three story structures, neighborhood serving uses, offices, open space, civic uses, parking, and open space linkages. Successful implementation of the East Downtown plan requires these different uses and structures work together in a harmonious flow from one building to another and onto the street. The City should consider design guidelines that can create mixed-use neighborhoods that interface without functional or aesthetic conflict.

The City should consider new design review guidelines that include, but are not limited to, internal compatibility of the different uses; minimized potential impacts (noise, odors, etc.) to residents; reduced potential impacts of mixed-use projects on adjacent properties; integrate a pedestrian environment with non-residential uses; compatibility with adjacent areas in terms of scale, building design, adequate

parking, and open space resource mitigation (Mill Creek), etc. The City should consider guidelines that are clearly defined and easily implemented by both the development community and the City.

The process by which plans would be reviewed could include several levels of evaluation including City staff review and review by a design review committee/commission, Planning Commission, or City Council. This process could be integrated within the existing site plan approval process or parallel the existing review structure. The overall goal of the process will provide an opportunity for applicants and City staff to respond to issues prior to incurring the time and expense of public review.

3.4 Financial Actions

Implementation of the East Downtown Plan will require development and construction of numerous public capital improvement projects that will enhance the area for businesses, residents and visitors. The Agency should consider the timing and location of planned private development to correspond with specific public improvements so that a critical mass of public and private investments and the desired catalyst effect is created in the East Downtown area.

Overall Approach

The challenge in beginning implementation of the East Downtown Strategic Plan will be the ability to secure a sufficient extent of financing to fund the potential public sector activities (i.e. land acquisition/assembly, public infrastructure, business relocation, environmental remediation, etc.) in order to facilitate proposed new private development prior to such development generating new public tax revenue to the Agency and City of Visalia.

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The financial condition of the East Redevelopment Project Area is such that there is no current or projected capacity to fund the potential public sector activities in the East Downtown area. This means that the Agency and City of Visalia is not currently nor is projected to be in a position to continue to use the “pay-as-you-go” approach that the Agency and the City of Visalia have primarily used in the past to fund public improvements. Therefore the Agency and the City of Visalia will need to prepare a financing program for the proposed public sector activities that is based on pursuing a variety of potential financing sources including:

- Financing approaches such as financing districts and assessment districts;
- Available federal and state grant and loan programs; and
- Advancement of funding through means such as City loans and private developer advances (to be repaid from future redevelopment tax increment funding generated by the new private development activity in the East Redevelopment Project area).

Potential Funding Sources

Some of the potential funding sources that might be available to the City of Visalia for implementing the recommended public and private development activities of the East Downtown Strategic Plan include, but are not limited to the following. A table summarizing these and other potential funding sources is included at the end of this section.

Redevelopment Tax Increment

The East Downtown Area is within the established East Visalia Redevelopment Project Area that was established by City Council Ordinance

8612 on July 16, 1986. The East Visalia Redevelopment Project Area totals approximately 665 acres and includes the eastern portion of downtown, the Oval area and industrial and service commercial areas between Bridge Street and Ben Maddox Way north of Highway 198. The Redevelopment Project Area has the life span as follows:

- Establishing Debt July 2006
- Plan Activity July 2017
- Repayment of Debt July 2027

In general the current financial health of the East Visalia Redevelopment Project Area is such that the project area:

- Has operated in a negative cash flow position;
- Is financially recovering; and
- Is not projected to repay the current General Fund financing advance within the life of the project area.

The area has an obligation to repay an existing General Fund financing advance with a balance of \$4,168,386 (as of FY 2004/05). Simple interest on the loan (principal only) accrues at the General Fund’s portfolio rate that began in July 1999. The General Fund interest will accumulate for several years (until 2014 when the East Visalia Redevelopment Project Area Bonds are fully repaid) and then both principal and interest will be repaid from 2014 through 2026.

It is projected by the Redevelopment Agency staff that the East Visalia Redevelopment Project Area will require approximately \$345,000 in additional General Fund assistance through fiscal year 2007/08. A part of the financial problem of the East Visalia Redevelopment Project Area is due to the recent and projected future ERAF

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shifts at the state level. From fiscal year 2002/03 through fiscal year 2005/06 the amount of ERAF funding shift for the East Visalia Redevelopment Project Area was approximately \$283,455.

Since formation of the project area in 1986, the growth rate for assessed valuation in the East Visalia Redevelopment Project Area historically has been approximately 4.5% but only 2.0% over the last five years. The Five-Year Implementation Plan indicates that the assessed valuation of the project area is projected to increase by 3% per year.

Based on the Five-Year Implementation Plan the assessed valuation of the project area is projected to increase from approximately \$1.0 million in 2000 to approximately \$2.9 million by 2026 (based on 3% annual growth in assessed valuation).

Based on projected redevelopment tax increment growth (3.0% per year) to the sunset date of the project area (2027) the area is projected to have available approximately \$2,113,463 to apply toward debt service payments for the General Fund financing advance. However, the remaining amount of the required General Fund debt service (principal and interest) at that time would be approximately \$7,416,652 – leaving a shortfall of approximately \$5,303,189. Therefore, even with the improved economic vitality of the area the East Visalia Redevelopment Project Area is not projected to be able to fully repay the current General Fund financing advance by the established sunset date for the area unless the assessed valuation of the project area increases at an average annual rate of 4.5%.

Capacity for Projects

The East Visalia Redevelopment

Project Area currently has no capacity for new projects. Currently the project area owes the City of Visalia General Fund \$4,332,000 for past funding advances and \$3,036,000 for various property purchases (Edison, Van Ness and Union Pacific). As these properties are sold by the Agency for redevelopment purposes the principal amount of the City of Visalia funding advance would be paid down.

In terms of future capacity of the area, the Redevelopment Agency should consider extending the life of the area, extending the deadline for entering into new debt agreements, and extending the deadline for paying off debt – all by ten (10) years. By extending the life of the area by ten years, the area should be able to completely pay off the current General Fund financing advance by the end of the extended life of the project area.

Other Redevelopment Project Areas

In addition the East Visalia Redevelopment Project Area there are three other redevelopment project areas in the City of Visalia including Downtown Visalia, Mooney Boulevard and Central Visalia.

The Downtown Visalia Redevelopment Project Area has some limited capacity (approximately \$594,250) for new projects after allocation of cash balance for the West Acequia parking structure, property acquisition and future debt obligations. The Mooney Boulevard Redevelopment Project Area is having difficulty meeting its current obligations and may require financial assistance from the City of Visalia General Fund over the next four years to meet its obligations (the area has an existing outstanding debt balance of approximately \$2,378,000). The Central Visalia Redevelopment Project Area is projected to have suffi-

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cient revenues to meet its obligations over the life of the area.

Legislative actions at the state level continue to impact the financial stability of redevelopment project areas. Since fiscal year 2002/03 the City of Visalia Redevelopment Agency has been subject to an overall total of approximately \$331,850 in ERAF shift in funding. Under the current state budget redevelopment agencies will be subject to additional ERAF shifts of \$250 million in both fiscal years 2004/05 and 2005/06 resulting in approximately \$331,850 per year in each of the next two fiscal years for the City of Visalia Redevelopment Agency.

Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund

The following is general information for the Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund (LMIHF) as related to all of the existing redevelopment project areas within the City of Visalia. The LMIHF has the same life span as the respective redevelopment project area:

- Downtown 2021
- East Visalia 2027
- Mooney Boulevard 2028
- Central 2040

The projected fund balance of the LMIHF as of June 30, 2004 is approximately \$2,060,158. For fiscal year 2003/04 the projected annual net cash flow is approximately \$426,031. Based on current Five-Year Implementation Plan the LMIHF should have an available balance for projects of approximately 1,000,000 to \$1,242,000. The projected types of activities include:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
Neighborhood Revitalization	\$ 4,963,370
Home Ownership	\$ 3,738,261
New Construction	<u>\$ 2,062,254</u>
	\$ 10,763,885

This proposed expenditure plan presents an opportunity to potentially have some component of housing that is proposed for the East Downtown Area to be affordable housing, in particular the specific proposal for development of a 60 unit senior housing project in downtown Visalia.

Potential Redevelopment Funded Activities

Typical mechanisms for providing redevelopment public financing assistance, if such assistance is determined by the Agency to be necessary to make certain new private development in the East Downtown area economically feasible, are:

- *Land Disposition*—Transfer of Agency owned property for a particular development project at a negotiated value (potentially below market value);
- *Building Rehabilitation/Adaptive Reuse*—Agency loan financing for rehabilitation of existing buildings, expansion of existing business and commercial uses, and/or adaptive reuse of existing buildings;
- *Public Improvements*—Agency financing for installation of public infrastructure and/or improvements such as water, sewer, drainage, streets, curb/gutter/sidewalks, landscaping, streetlights, etc. directly related to a particular development project; and
- *Parking*—Agency financing of on-site parking to serve planned pri-

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vate development(s) and/or provide public parking.

Property Based Improvement District (PBID)

In 1998 the City of Visalia approved the Downtown Visalia Business Improvement District. The District's activities include: streetscape landscaping, maintenance, security and business recruitment. The District is currently approved to operate through June 30, 2005.

The existing District is generally bounded by the alley between Murray and School on the north, Mineral King on the south, Tipton the east and Conyer on the east. These boundaries include a small area within the East Downtown Area bounded by alley between Murray and School, Mineral King, Tipton and Bridge.

The District is divided into two zones - Zone 1 and Zone 2. The difference in the two zones is the degree of benefit the parcels of property derive from the improvements and activities of the District. Overall total expense of the District is divided such that 77% of the overall District expenses are allocated to Zone 1 parcels and 23% allocated to Zone 2 parcels.

The projected total annual assessment of the District is approximately \$355,500. Annual expenses are generally allocated as follows:

Capital Improvements	77,500
Maintenance and Security	192,500
Business Development	10,000
Administration	75,500
	\$ 355,500

Over the past four years the District allocated a total of approximately \$650,000 in capital improvement funding for the construction of the proposed new 700 space parking structure on Acequia. The new parking garage will primarily serve the serve Kaweah Delta Hospital expansion and provide additional public parking near Main Street.

The proposed renewal of the District is for an additional five-year period ending on June 30, 2010. The proposal for renewal includes: 1) retention of the two zones of assessment; and 2) expansion of the District boundaries to include an area within the East Downtown Area bounded by Santa Fe, Burke, Acequia and Center. The proposed additional area is proposed to be in Zone 2 and pay a portion of the 23% annual assessment paid by other properties in Zone 2.

The proposed operating budget for the District for the period from 2005 to 2010 including the proposed expansion area described above would include:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Annual</u>	<u>5-year</u>
Revenue	355,500	1,777,500
Expenses		
- Capital Improvements	77,500	387,500
- Maintenance and Security	192,500	962,500
- Business Recruitment	10,000	50,000
- Administration	75,500	377,500
Total	\$355,500	\$1,777,500

Based on the proposed five-year operating budget for the District (as proposed to be renewed/expanded)

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there is potentially \$387,500 that might be available from the District to assist capital projects i.e. parking, public improvements, etc. within the boundaries of the District which includes a portion of the East Downtown Area.

Capital Improvements Program

The City of Visalia Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is a potential source of funding for constructing off-site public infrastructure and improvements including water, sewer, storm water, streets, curb/gutter/sidewalks, landscaping and street lights. The CIP generally includes a variety of federal, state and local funding sources designated to fund such improvements, with the priorities and criteria for allocation of CIP funding established by the City of Visalia in the context of a separate annual budget document.

CIP funding could be a means to financing certain public infrastructure and improvements that would serve the Agency or privately owned sites designated for development (rehabilitation, rehabilitation and building expansion, adaptive reuse) consistent with the East Downtown Strategic Plan. The City of Visalia should give consideration to having such public infrastructure and improvements given priority consideration in the selection criteria and process for allocation of annual CIP funding.

Assessment Districts

The City of Visalia could consider several options related to establishment of assessment districts to finance capital improvements and/or operating and maintenance costs for proposed public improvements. All of these mechanisms involve levying of a charge on properties within a specific geographical area to raise funds that directly benefit the subject area.

These different mechanisms involve varying property owner/voter approval requirements and eligible uses of funds.

- Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1989 allows a city to levy assessments against businesses to finance public improvements for specific business areas as well as promote activities in these areas (Streets and Highways Code Section 36500, et seq). Such an assessment district could be tied to the business operating in the East Downtown area, based on business licenses, rather than property ownership.
- Landscaping and Lighting Act of 1972 allows a city to place assessments against real property to pay for the installation and maintenance of landscaping, lighting and park and recreational facilities (Streets and Highway Code Section 22500 et seq). Maintenance costs that can be paid with the assessments include graffiti abatement and similar maintenance expenses. This Act does provide flexibility in that non-contiguous areas can be included in an assessment district.
- Benefit Assessment Act of 1982 allows a city to place assessments to operate and maintain street lighting and street maintenance services, as well as storm drain improvements (Government Code Section 54703 et seq). Assessments pursuant to these provisions are levied against real property.

The above listed provisions allow a city to place assessments on either real property and/or upon businesses for benefits within a defined area. State law also provides authority for a city to sell bonds to pay for such public improvements, with bonds repaid

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by assessments.

The authority for local government to form assessment districts, levy assessment and/or issue bonds for the purposes of financing construction of public improvements is embodied in several pieces of legislation includ-

ing: 1) Improvement Act of 1911 (Streets and Highways Code Section 50000 et seq); 2) Improvement Act of 1913 (Streets and Highways Code Section 10000 et seq); and 3) Improvement Act of 1915 (Streets and Highways Code Section 8500 et seq). Eligible facilities under assessment

Potential Funding Sources

	Parking	Streets	Utilities	Public Improvements	Parks	Development Projects	Civic Center
City Advanced Funding	XXX	XX				XX	
Parking In-Lieu Fee	XXX	X					
Impact Fees Transportation Parks Water Drainage	X	XXX	XXX		XXX		
Grants/Loans CDBG CIEDB EPA EDA Water Resources	XXX	X	XX	X	XXX	XX	
Capital Improvements Program (CIP)	X	XXX	XX	XX	XX		XXX
Assessment Districts	XXX	X	XXX	XXX	XX		
PBID	XXX						
Developer Advanced Funding	XX	X				XX	
Redevelopment Agency		X		X		X	

Legend

XXX = High Potential; XX = Medium Potential; X = Low Potential

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district financing include public improvements such as utilities, water, sewer, storm drainage, etc. that provide special benefit to properties within the established assessment district.

In addition the Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982 authorizes bonds to be issued by a Community Facilities District (CFD) to finance facilities necessary due to growth and development. Bonds issued by the CFD are secured by a levy of special taxes, which must be approved by a 2/3 vote of the residents or landowners within the proposed district. Eligible facilities under a CFD include public improvements with a useful life of five years or more such as streets, utilities, water, sewer, storm drainage, etc.) and specified public services (i.e. police, fire, library, etc.).

State and Federal Funding Programs

There are a number of state and federal grant programs that the Agency (or City of Visalia) could pursue to assist with funding for proposed public improvements. A brief description of some of those programs is provided below.

- *Infrastructure State Revolving Fund*—The Infrastructure State Revolving Fund (ISRF) provides low cost financing (loans) to public agencies for a wide variety of infrastructure projects and is administered by the State of California Commerce and Economic Development Program. Loan funding is available in amounts from \$250,000 to \$10,000,000, with loan terms up to thirty (30) years and interest rates at below market levels. Eligible project activities include streets, highways, parking, drainage, water supply, flood control, environmental mitigation measures, parks and recreational facilities, sewage collection and treatment, solid waste collection and disposal, water treatment and distribution, public safety facilities and power and communication facilities. Potential applications of this funding source for the East Downtown area include, streets, parking (public), streetscape improvements and utilities.
- *Brownfield Assessment and Cleanup Program*—The objective of the brownfield assessment and cleanup cooperative program administered by the US Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) is to provide funding (grants) to address properties contaminated by petroleum and hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants. Brownfield sites are real property, the expansion, redevelopment or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence of hazardous materials. Grant funding is provided through cooperative agreements with EPA, with funding levels ranging from approximately \$200,000 to \$1,000,000 depending on the applicant and specific nature of the funded activity, to: 1) inventory, characterize, assess brownfield sites; 2) capitalize a revolving loan fund to carry out cleanup activities; and 3) carry out cleanup activities. Potential applications for the East Downtown area include remediation of existing properties that might be contaminated by hazardous materials.
- *Proposition 40*—The California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 40) authorized \$2.6 billion in state bonds, administered by the State Department of Parks and Recreation. Projects to receive funding include local assistance programs for the acquisition and

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development of neighborhood, community and regional parks and recreation areas; acquisition, development and restoration of water resources including acquisition and development of river parkways and protecting urban streams; and acquisition, restoration, preservation and interpretation of California's historical and cultural resources. Potential applications of this funding source for the East Downtown area could include parks, open space and creek restoration improvements.

- *Recreation Trails Program*—The Recreation Trails Program provides funds for recreational trails and trails-related projects and is admin-

istered at the federal level by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and at the state level by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Eligible applicants include cities, counties, districts, state agencies and non-profit organizations with management responsibilities over public lands. The program is a matching program that can provide up to 80% of the project costs. Potential applications of this funding source for the East Downtown area could include pedestrian walkways along Mill Creek.

TEA-21/T3 Funding

The federal government provides funding for local transportation proj-

Estimated Cost – Phase One Public Improvements

<u>Area/Improvement</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
East Main Street Mixed-Use	
Main Street Enhancement – Tipton to Burke	\$ 425,000
Tipton Street Extension – Center to Main	\$ 945,000
<i>Subtotal:</i>	<i>\$ 1,370,000</i>
East Acequia Neighborhood	
New Street – Acequia to new east/west street	\$ 425,000
<i>Subtotal:</i>	<i>\$ 425,000</i>
Downtown Mixed-Use Expansion	
Santa Fe Street Enhancement – Goshen to Mineral King	\$ 1,865,000
Oak Street Extension – Bridge to Tipton	\$ 545,000
Main Street Enhancement – Bridge to Tipton	\$ 635,000
Park/Open Space – Main and Santa Fe	\$ 300,000
<i>Subtotal:</i>	<i>\$ 3,345,000</i>
Civic Center	
Oak Street New Section – Tipton to Burke	\$ 1,615,000
Park/Open Space – south of Oak Street (extension)	\$ 1,275,000
<i>Subtotal:</i>	<i>\$ 2,890,000</i>
Total	\$ 8,030,000

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ects through various components of the six-year program known as TEA-21. The program was reauthorized in 2004 and is called T3, designating it as the third six-year authorization for federal transportation funding. Potential applications of this funding source for the East Downtown area could include pedestrian enhancements; street, bicycle and pedestrian improvements that enhance regional connectivity and promote congestion relief and air quality enhancements.

Cost Schedule

The following presents preliminary information regarding the estimated costs of the public improvements that are proposed to be constructed/installed in first five years of implementation of the East Downtown Strategic Plan (see table on page 3-25).

The estimated total cost for construction of the subject phase one public improvements is approximately \$8.0 million. The estimates of the pro-

posed phase one public improvements are based on the following assumptions:

- Direct construction costs for new street sections are in the range of \$16.00 to \$20.00 per square foot
- Direct construction costs for new street sections do not include any utilities or intersection costs – only earthwork, paving, curb/gutter, sidewalk, landscaping, street trees and street lighting
- Direct construction costs for street enhancements are in the range of \$8.00 to \$10.00 per square foot
- Direct construction costs for parks/open space improvements do not include utilities – only basic earthwork, turf, landscaping (limited) and irrigation
- Total estimated costs include indirect (engineering, etc.) and financing costs - based on 35% of estimated direct construction costs



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Fred Brusuelas, Assistant Director of
Community Development
Jason Pausma, Associate Planner

Planning Commission

Sam Logan
Vincent Salinas
Victor Perez
Doug Thompson
Liz Wynn
Jim Armstrong, Former Planning
Commissioner

Consultants

East Downtown Strategic Plan Task Force

Victor Perez
Sam Logan
Kevin Burford
Bob Carey
Tom Gaebe
Don Groppetti
Phil Laird
Bill Main
Susan Mangini
Jane Shepard
Colby Wells
Marty Zeeb
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