

I. OVERVIEW

VISION STATEMENT

OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS, VENTURA WILL EMPHASIZE OUR HISTORY, CULTURE AND UNIQUE CHARACTER TO SUSTAIN THE DOWNTOWN AS OUR CITY'S AUTHENTIC HEART – THE PRE-EMINENT ARENA FOR CIVIC AND ARTISTIC LIFE AND A PREFERRED LOCATION FOR RETAIL AND OFFICE COMMERCE.



Downtown Ventura street scene

"Downtown Ventura is to be a thriving and integrated district of civic, cultural, commercial, recreational and residential activities." So began the 1993 Downtown Specific Plan which guided more than a decade of successful revitalization:

- Main and California Streets have come back to life as the "central spines of activity", fulfilling the 1993 vision that the-then struggling Downtown would one day be the "logical place to go find one's friends, have a cup of coffee, buy a book or simply relax and watch the people go by."
- A new cineplex, public parking structure and streetscape improvements have served as catalytic drivers of renewed vitality, achieving the goal of "infusing the streets with activity throughout the day and evening."
- Major new housing developments are finally underway, not only living up to the aim of "insuring a diverse residential population" but also the standard of "demanding the highest quality in new development."

This 2007 Downtown Specific Plan builds on the first plan's accomplishments, assesses our new challenges, and spells out what is needed to succeed in the decade ahead. It also addresses the limitations of the 1993 plan, particularly through the new form-based code that through interim use has brought greater clarity and discipline to the goal of engendering buildings that "insure the continued liveability and vitality of the Downtown and contribute to a memorable city identity."

SPECIFIC PLAN GOALS

1. Ventura's Unique Character

Preserve Ventura's special sense of place by insisting on high standards of architecture, urban design and landscaping so that new development complements the eclectic architecture and historic richness of our Downtown.

2. California's New Art City

Weave art and culture into the fabric of everyday life in Downtown through the growth and expansion of cultural institutions and by nurturing creative and artistic expression in the public realm.

3. Animating the Public Realm

Maintain and enhance public features such as parks, streetscapes and open spaces. Provide access to our natural areas, including the hillsides and Ventura River and re-connect Downtown to the ocean. Encourage development and events that activate the public realm.

4. Economic Vitality

Establish Downtown as a preferred place to work as well as live or visit. Ensure the future economic stability of Downtown by providing an active daytime workforce in offices and studios and by promoting successful retailing, tourism and the provision of high wage, high value jobs.

5. Housing Renaissance

Provide high quality, urban housing for a diverse range of income levels. Encourage efficient utilization of Downtown's limited land resources by promoting infill development.

6. Mobility

Create an integrated transportation system that effectively serves the Downtown area, making Downtown a place where people prefer to walk, bike or ride public transit rather than drive a car.

7. "Park Once" Management Strategy

Efficiently manage supply and demand for Downtown parking to accommodate visitor, commuter and resident parking needs.

8. Sustainable Infrastructure

Safeguard public health, safety and prosperity by providing and maintaining facilities that enable the community to live in balance with natural systems. Continue to ensure public services keep pace with new development in Downtown.

Today, Downtown Ventura's revived economic vitality represents both a challenge and an opportunity. It is neither possible nor desirable to freeze the area in its current state. Longtime merchants face displacement due to rising real estate values, but the fragile charm of the area cannot be sustained on new restaurants and boutiques alone. By emphasizing the strengths that differentiate Ventura's historic downtown from made-to-order "lifestyle centers," the vision of sustaining our city's authentic heart can be achieved.

The 1993 Plan was focused mainly on hope and possibility. The 2007 Plan is focused heavily on opportunity and implementation. To address the needs identified during public outreach events and summarized in various background studies, this plan offers:

1. Goals and policies to guide decision-makers in achieving the community's desires;
2. Actions to be taken by the City to develop projects and partnerships that implement the goals and policies;
3. Catalytic projects to spur economic investment and residential and commercial development in Downtown;
4. New form-based zoning standards to provide clear direction for developers and staff; and
5. Streetscape improvements to activate the public realm, providing an inviting and engaging urban core.

The Downtown Specific Plan also fulfills the goals, policies and actions of Ventura's General Plan. Specifically, the General Plan directs the preparation of new form-based zoning regulations and the completion of specific and community plans in areas such as the Westside, Midtown, Wells, Saticoy, Pierpont, Victoria Corridor and the Downtown. However, the certified 1989 Comprehensive Plan, as amended, remains applicable to all areas within the Coastal Zone.

The Downtown Specific Plan lays out a strategy for the continued revitalization of our city's cultural and commercial core through implementation of eight planning goals that constitute the central elements of this plan (shown at left).

BUILDING ON THE VISION

DEVELOPING THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN



Ventura Pier renovation

PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY

The Downtown Specific Plan area covers approximately 514 acres and is bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the south; the foothills to the north; the Ventura River and Hwy 33 to the west; and Sanjon barranca to the east (see Figure I-1).

The first San Buenaventura Downtown Specific Plan was adopted in 1993. By 2003, after ten years of using the plan, it became apparent that it was in need of revision to reflect changing circumstances and to re-evaluate the community's shared vision for Downtown's future growth and development.

Much has been accomplished in the ten years since the first Downtown Specific Plan was adopted. A brief discussion of how the original eight goals have been accomplished and what remains to be achieved is presented in Table I-1, below:

Table I-1. 1993 Plan Accomplishments

1993 PLAN GOAL	PROGRESS
1. Downtown shall be restored and revitalized as the social and symbolic "Heart of the City."	Significant progress has been made toward achieving this goal. Construction of the Promenade Plaza, Century Theater and a new parking structure, are all significant contributions. Streetscape improvements provided on California Street and Main Street, which include textured sidewalks, street trees and other street furnishings, have helped to draw people to Downtown. A variety of new eating and entertainment establishments have also brought people Downtown, and along with the new theater, boosted the City's nightlife and entertainment draw.
2. The image and visibility of Downtown shall be enhanced, creating a distinctive identity built on the best of what is already there.	The improvements described above have also contributed to achieving this goal. Additional programs undertaken with this Specific Plan update include the Wayfinding program, siting of the Cultural Arts Village, locating a multi-modal transit facility, further streetscape improvements on major Downtown streets, implementation of a Downtown parking management program and efforts to re-connect Downtown with the beach.
3. The Downtown Core shall be revitalized as the City's central business district offering a prominent address for a variety of commercial ventures.	Downtown is home to several new restaurants and retail businesses that have opened in the past ten years. Continuing to expand the Downtown economy through commercial, office, and other employment-based development is a continuing goal of the Specific Plan. The efforts of the Downtown Ventura Organization (DVO), a newly formed group of merchants, residents and community members will further pave the way for revitalization and the promotion of Downtown's role as a key business district in Ventura. In conjunction with the Redevelopment Agency and Community Development Department, the Downtown Ventura Organization will continue to strategize economic revitalization programs and target marketing opportunities for visitor-serving businesses.
4. Main Street and California Street shall be revitalized as the central shopping streets of the Downtown Core.	The success of this goal is evident to anyone visiting Downtown during the day or on weekends when pedestrian traffic and business patronage is at its peak. The Century Theater multiplex creates a nighttime presence that complements eating and drinking establishments. New restaurants and cafes have enhanced the pedestrian environment, yet additional commercial uses are still needed to attract and engage a wide variety of customers and visitors. Commercial and retail strategies have been identified in this Specific Plan and the Downtown Ventura Organization has been formulated to take the lead on developing and implementing further revitalization efforts.

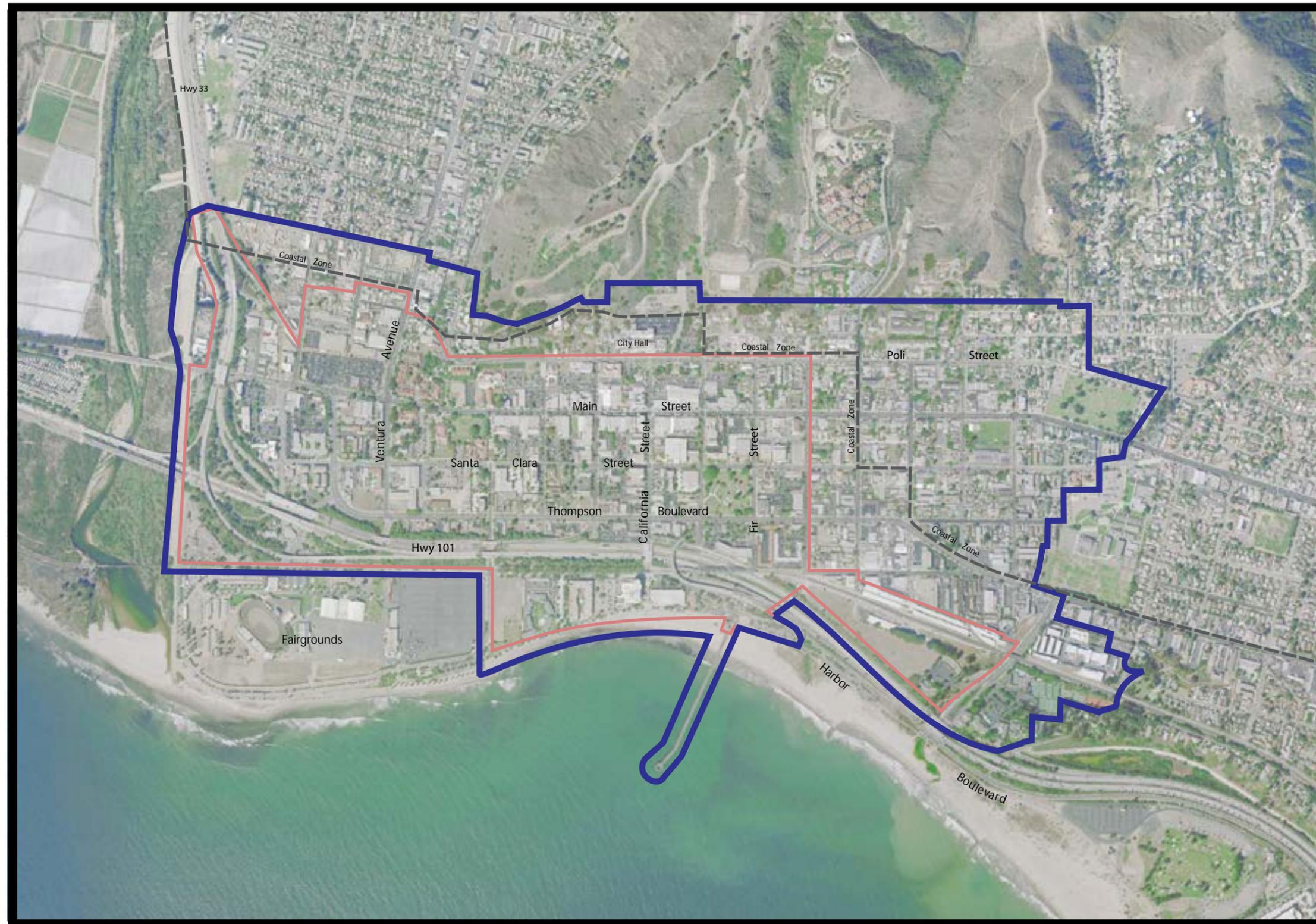
BUILDING ON THE VISION

DEVELOPING THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN

1993 PLAN GOAL	PROGRESS
5. Downtown shall be reconnected to the waterfront, re-establishing the critical link between Main Street and the oceanfront Promenade.	Improvements to California Street have greatly enhanced the pedestrian character of this important thoroughfare, helping to create a greater sense of connectivity with the beach and Promenade area. The strong connection is evident in the heavy pedestrian use of the California Street Bridge despite the lack of adequate pedestrian facilities. A main goal of this updated Specific Plan is to incorporate elements into the streetscape for Figueroa and California Streets to strengthen the connection between the Downtown core and the beach.
6. Residential development shall be encouraged to support the creation of a Downtown Core that is active throughout the day and evening, and to support the local-serving character of the Downtown Core.	A number of important projects have been constructed in the past ten years to further this goal. The Olson Company residential project, Pacifica Walk located at Garden and Santa Clara Streets, and the Mulokas mixed-use (residential and retail) project on Poli across from City Hall, are important contributions to the housing stock. Providing a range of housing options and establishing a 24-hour presence in the Downtown continues to be an important plan goal.
7. The forces of disinvestment operating in the East Side Neighborhood shall be reversed, and the historic character of the neighborhood shall be restored.	The 1993 “East Side Neighborhood” is bound on the north by homes fronting Poli Street, on the east by Cemetery Memorial Park and Cabrillo Middle School, on the south by Thompson Boulevard and on the west by Fir Street. This area today offers a mix of commercial, office, and residential uses not readily found in the Downtown core. The area is also rich in architectural character and history. With recent revitalization of the Downtown core area, the “East end” (as they are called in this 2007 plan) neighborhoods have experienced a certain amount of increased investment and pressures for development. Private investment has increased and properties have been renovated with a corresponding increase in value. Preserving and enhancing the architectural richness of the East end neighborhoods continues to be a goal of this Specific Plan update.
8. The long-term pattern of Downtown development shall be shaped to accommodate and provide public transit, generate fewer and shorter commute trips, and increase the quality of life for the community and the region.	Progress toward achieving this goal is evident from the discussions above, but it continues to be an integral goal for this plan update. Facilitating pedestrian movement, improving public transit, enhancing the public realm through streetscape improvements and providing clear standards for urban infill development via the Development Code (Chapter III) will establish a sustainable, inviting and innovative long-term pattern for Downtown’s growth.

The 1993 plan also identified a number of objectives for the near term (5-7 years) and long term (15-20 years). Progress toward achieving these objectives is summarized in Tables A-1 and A-2 of Appendix A.

FIGURE I-1. DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN BOUNDARY



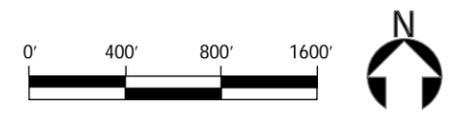
CITY OF
SAN BUENAVENTURA

Aerial View

(2002 Photography)

LEGEND

- Specific Plan Boundary
- Redevelopment Project Area Boundary
- - - Coastal Zone Boundary



PUBLIC OUTREACH

The 2007 Downtown Specific Plan is based on the community's vision. Preparation of the plan was guided by an ongoing public outreach program that included:

- Touring Downtown with key stakeholders;
- Participation in the Creative Cities exercises (December 2002);
- A 3-day coding charrette;
- A 60-day public review period for the April 2006 Draft plan;
- Approximately 20 public workshops and community meetings held in 2006 after release of the Draft plan;
- A six-week public review period for the draft local coastal program amendment, made available with release of the December 2006 Final Draft plan; and
- Discussions with the Historic Preservation Committee, Design Review Committee and Planning Commission before the plan's adoption by City Council in March 2007.

The public outreach efforts and workshops resulted in a list of planning principles used to guide the update process to develop the first Draft plan. When asked to rank the five most important principles, early workshop participants responded as follows:

1. *Re-connect Downtown to the Beach*

Highway 101 effectively isolates the Downtown from the beach. One of the primary goals of the Downtown Specific Plan should be to reconnect Downtown with the beach for all forms of circulation, but especially for pedestrians. The California Street bridge over Highway 101 should be the focal point for re-establishing this connection. Other secondary connections should be reinforced on Figueroa Street, the Ash Street pedestrian bridge and via the bike tunnel under Highway 101 at Ventura Avenue.

2. *Manage Parking Supply and Demand*

Parking is an essential component of downtown vitality, but is also land-intensive and expensive. The parking standards for the Downtown need to be re-visited with the goal of identifying an appropriate balance between parking supply and demand. One consideration is to reduce or eliminate the off-street parking requirement for Downtown businesses. Another is to re-formulate a parking district to fund consolidated parking in structures.

3. *Improve Public Transit*

The Amtrak train station is inconveniently located with respect to Downtown and connections to other forms of transit serving the city. Consideration should be given to relocate the train station, ideally in conjunction with a multi-modal transit facility. Possible locations include the block between Ash, Front, Fir and Thompson Boulevard or within the vicinity of the Crowne Plaza hotel at the southern terminus of California Street.

CONSISTENCY REFERENCE

(for final draft)

This space provides an opportunity to comment on the applicability of specific state law sections and/or policies contained within other planning documents, including:

- California Coastal Act
- 2005 General Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Redevelopment Implementation Plan
- 2005 Ventura Cultural Plan

BUILDING ON THE VISION

DEVELOPING THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN

4. *Preserve and Enhance our Historic Character*

Downtown Ventura possesses a rich architectural heritage with fine examples of Victorian-era dwellings and an eclectic mix of institutional and commercial buildings. Downtown's sense of authentic historic uniqueness should be maintained.

5. *Establish New Form-Based Development Standards*

Development standards should be updated to establish the physical form and character desired for Downtown. The new standards (i.e., "form-based" code standards) should re-visit and address the following:

- Appropriate building height: consider allowing greater building height that varies with location;
- Permitted uses;
- Allowance for exceptions;
- Consistency between new development standards and those in the existing Municipal Code;
- Provide land use designations north of Main Street and south of Park Row Avenue;
- Incorporate the city's Wayfinding program;
- Clarify sign regulations; and
- Re-visit the threshold of discretionary permit requirements for construction.

City staff have identified the following three additional principles:

6. *Facilitate Additional Housing to Generate Around-the clock Activity*

Drawing from Goal 6 of the 1993 Downtown Specific Plan that encourages additional residential development to create "around-the clock activity", several new residential projects have been entitled with others either in the development review process or nearing submittal. This important goal from the 1993 Plan will be carried forward.

7. *Improve Infrastructure to Meet Revitalization Efforts and New Development Requirements*

Along with revitalization and new development come new demands for improvements to an aging, and in some cases, outdated infrastructure system. Planning to meet these needs is imperative.

8. *Preserve and Link Surrounding Natural Areas*

Downtown is surrounded by many unique natural areas including the Ventura River, the Pacific Ocean and the hillsides. New development must be designed to account for, enhance access to, and protect these natural areas.

Where the eight (8) planning principles have been incorporated into the Downtown Specific Plan, they are identified by reference.

ASSESSING DOWNTOWN

To address these issues, the City commissioned special technical studies aimed at providing the necessary foundation for new policies, programs and actions incorporated into this 2007 update:

1. Downtown Market Opportunities Assessment
2. Conceptual Planning Study for a Multi-Modal Transportation Center
3. Downtown Parking Study
4. Historic Landmarks and Districts Report
5. Sewer Deficiency Study

Applicable recommendations from these studies have been incorporated as policies and actions, identifying opportunities for either implementation or additional strategizing. For details and background information regarding these specific studies, please refer to the actual document. Each study is published separately and listed in Appendix D, Background. All are available for review at the Community Development Department located at:

City Hall
501 Poli Street, Room 117
Ventura CA 93001.

Transportation and streetscape plans were also prepared. Recommendations included in the 2006 Downtown Ventura Mobility and Parking Plan and 2004 Streetscape Plan are also incorporated as programs and actions in Chapter II and full streetscape diagrams are presented in Chapter IV.

ACHIEVING THE VISION

IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITY



This section describes existing conditions and opportunities for improvement that drove the formation of the goals, policies and actions identified in Chapter II. By focusing on the following eight key issue areas, this plan addresses the needs and aspirations of the Downtown business and residential community.

1. ***Ventura's Unique Character***
2. ***California's New Art City***
3. ***Animating the Public Realm***
4. ***Economic Vitality***
5. ***Housing Renaissance***
6. ***Mobility***
7. ***"Park Once" Management Strategy***
8. ***Sustainable Infrastructure***



In addition to policies and actions, the Development Code in Chapter III addresses community concerns and desires related to the built environment. Through the form established in the Development Code, the Downtown Specific Plan provides further opportunity to achieve community goals. A rendering of the potential scale and massing of buildings within the urban core is shown at left.



Illustrations at left: potential growth in building height and scale in Downtown Ventura over the years to come...

ACHIEVING THE VISION

IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITY

FIGURE I-2 HISTORIC RESOURCES LEGEND*

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Ortega Adobe | 42. Sheridan house |
| 3. Father Serra statue | 43. Chaffey and McKeeby store |
| 4. County Courthouse | 45. Righetti house |
| 5. Grant Park cross | 46. Shaw house |
| 6. Mission Plaza site | 47. Jacque Roos house |
| 7. Conklin home | 48. Dacy Fazio house |
| 8. Mission Norfolk pines | 50. Bert Shaw house |
| 10. San Buenaventura Mission | 51. Blackstock house |
| 11. Plaza Morton Bay fig | 52. Sifford house |
| 12. Morton Bay fig | 53. Nellie Clover house |
| 14. Judge Ewing residence | 55. Dunning house |
| 15. Ventura Guaranty building | 56. Granger house |
| 16. San Miguel Chapel site | 57. Morrison house |
| 17. First Baptist Church | 59. David S. Blackburn house |
| 18. Shisholop Village site | 60. Alessandro Lagoon |
| 19. Bard Hospital | 61. Elwell house |
| 20. Ventura Wharf (pier) | 62. Suyter house |
| 21. Franz Home | 63. El Jardin patio |
| 22. Magnolia Tree | 64. R.E. Brakey residence |
| 23. Hobson Brothers meat packing | 66. Charles Corcoran house |
| 24. Ventura Theatre | 67. Charles Cooper house |
| 25. First Post Office building | 69. Hartman house |
| 26. Hitching Post | 70. J.A. Day house |
| 27. Apostolic Church | 71. Ventura Mutual Fire Insurance Co. |
| 28. Southern Methodist Episcopal Church | 73. McCoskey Love house |
| 29. Post Office murals | 74. Kate Duval house |
| 30. Livery Theatre/County Garage | 75. J. Hoover Love house |
| 31. Packard Garage | 77. Dr. C.L. Bard residence |
| 32. Peirano Store/Wilson Studios | 78. Carlo Hahn House |
| 33. Peirano residence | 79. Hammond/Reese house |
| 34. Theodosia Burr Shepherd Gardens | 80. Pierpont Inn |
| 35. Feraud General Merchandise Store | 81. A.D. Briggs residence |
| 36. First National Bank of Ventura | 83. Arcade building |
| 37. First National Bank | 85. Mission Lavanderia |
| 38. Bank of Italy | 86. Erle Stanley Garner office |
| 39. Dr. C.F. Miller residence | 89. Norton Ranch house |
| 40. El Nido Hotel | 90. John C. Fremont camp |
| 41. Robert Sudden house | 91. China Alley |
| | 92. Louis Rudolph house |
| | 95. Mayfair Theatre Site |
| | 96. Coast Live Oak Tree |
| | 97. 92 North Fir Street |

* Historic landmark numbers are assigned by the City; where numbers are out of sequence, those resources are located outside of the plan area and are not shown in Figure I-2.

VENTURA'S UNIQUE CHARACTER

To promote the long-term vitality of the city, this plan recognizes the value of Downtown as an authentic urban core with a rich heritage. Downtown's historic, archaeological and architectural resources contribute to an eclectic style that will continue to attract residents, business and visitors. By preserving and enhancing that unique quality through a commitment to urban design and smart growth, this plan lays the groundwork for sustaining Downtown as the city center.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

City government plays an active role in the management and protection of important archeological and historic resources through the actions of the City's Cultural Affairs Commission and the Historic Preservation Committee (HPC). The HPC advises decision makers on issues that may affect historic resources and makes recommendations on the designation of historic districts, landmarks, sites, buildings, structures and points of interest significant to the heritage and development of the city.

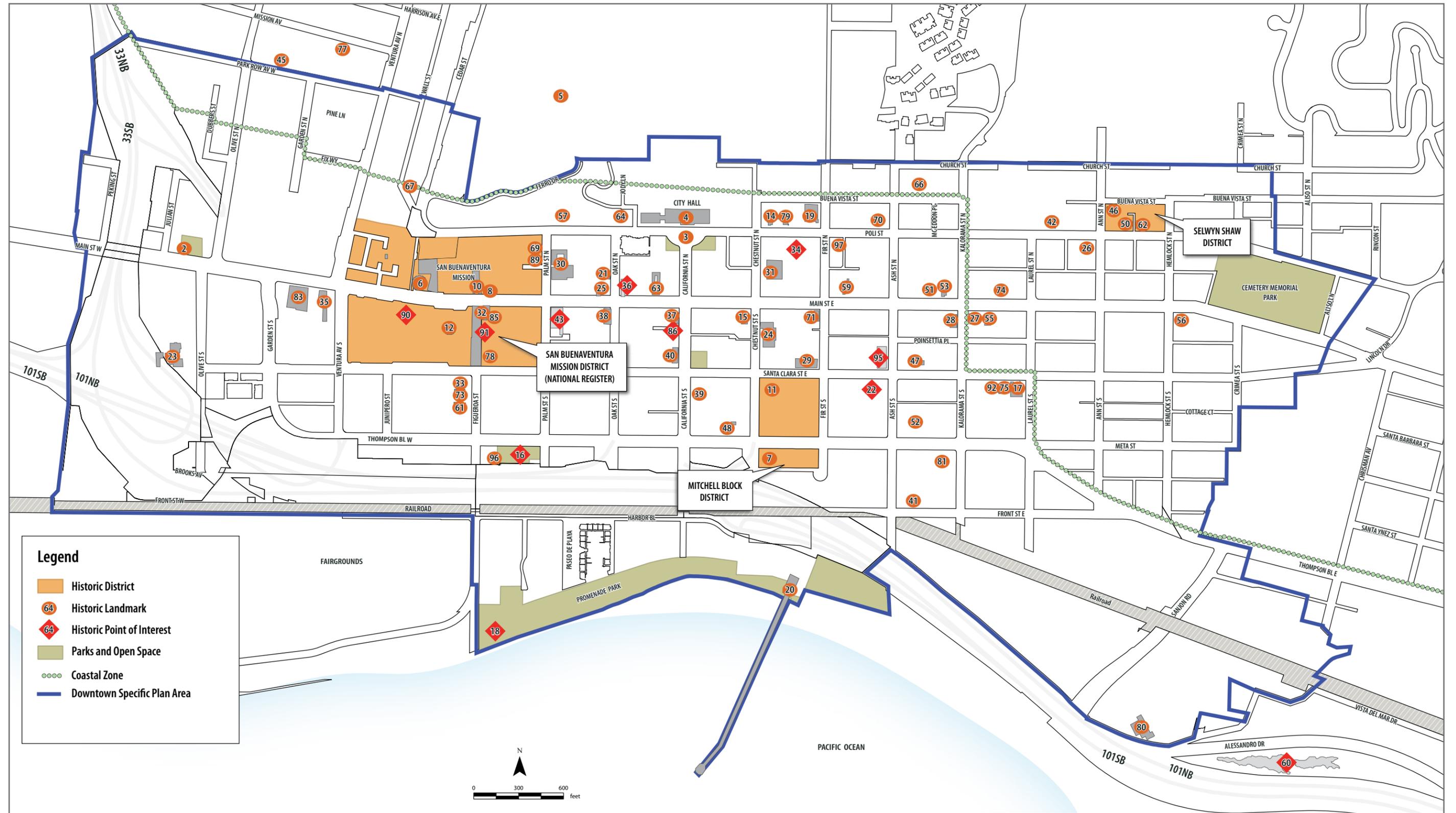
The most significant historic building in Downtown Ventura is the San Buenaventura Mission and its supporting structures and sites, such as the San Miguel Chapel site and Mission Aqueduct. The San Buenaventura Mission District is listed in the National Register.

Downtown Ventura also possesses hundreds of commercial and residential buildings that were constructed between 1870 and 1930. Many of these buildings retain their original exterior façade and have been adaptively reused over the years. Other important historic resources are the many large trees that add character to the Downtown; the Moreton Bay fig in Plaza Park is perhaps the most striking example. City-designated historic resources are identified in Figure I-2. A key to the sites is located to the left.

The City has also designated two local Historic Districts within the Downtown Specific Plan area: the Selwyn Shaw and Mitchell Block districts. Within these districts, the City regulates development in order to:

1. Protect against destruction or encroachment;
2. Encourage uses that promote the preservation, maintenance or improvement of points of interest;
3. Assure that new structures and uses in the District are in keeping with the historic character; and
4. Prevent adverse environmental influences on local historic resources (see Zoning Ordinance §24.340.010).

FIGURE I-2. HISTORIC RESOURCES



This Figure is provided for illustrative purposes and may be updated from time to time. Up-to-date source data may be found in the City's GIS database.

Design review is required for changes to exterior structural and/or architectural features, including color and materials, and for all new construction and alterations or additions to existing historic resources. The Development Code (Chapter III) provides Historic Resource Design Guidelines and other development standards for construction on or contiguous to a property that contains a city-designated historic resource.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

There is considerable evidence that indigenous peoples inhabited the Ventura area and especially the area that became Downtown. Of particular note is Shisholop Village, the site of a Chumash settlement located near the beach at the terminus of Figueroa Street, now an underground resource. Archaeological records show that the village was settled sometime around 1000 A.D. and was believed to have been a Chumash provincial capital.

Sub-surface prehistoric sites are located throughout Downtown. The policies and actions included in Chapter II mandate the preservation of archaeological deposits through the development and environmental review processes.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

Three architectural styles predominate the Downtown built environment, particularly among residential buildings: Victorian, Craftsman and Spanish. However, these stylistic categories are more like “families,” within them is a broad range of variation. For example, architecture commonly referred to as Victorian includes Italianate, Queen Anne, Eastlake, Victorian Vernacular and Greek Revival. Other styles, such as Art Deco, are also present and have achieved compatibility with the overall mix through massing, color, level of articulation and detailing.

The Development Code in Chapter III does not dictate architectural style, but addresses design on a number of broader levels to establish a matrix of standards and guidelines that will allow projects to develop over time in a familiar scale and character. In this manner, new buildings and renovation projects will support Downtown’s historic lotting pattern and existing mix of architectural styles.

CONSISTENCY REFERENCE

The goals, policies and actions derived from the city’s commitment to preserving Ventura’s unique character are consistent with the following local plans and state policies:

- California Coastal Act
 - CA Article 2, Section 30210
 - CA Article 5, Section 30244
 - CA Article 6, Section 30250 (a) and 30251
- Ventura General Plan
 - Policy 3A: Sustain and complement cherished community characteristics
 - Policy 3B: Integrate uses in building forms that increase choice and encourage community vitality
 - Policy 3C: Maximize use of land in the city before considering expansion
 - Policy 9A: Integrate local history and heritage into urban form and daily life
 - Policy 9D: Ensure proper treatment of archeological and historic resources
- Economic Development Strategy
 - Focus 5, Goal: Continue vitality through planning, organization, and achievement.
- Redevelopment Implementation Plan
 - Section 328: Rehabilitation, Conservation, and Moving of Structures
 - Section 420: Design Guidelines
 - Goal III: Invest in infrastructure and Enhance Community Facilities
- Ventura Cultural Plan
 - Policy 1: Build and preserve a city that is reflective of Ventura’s heritage and aspirations.
 - Policy 2: Support Ventura’s cultural infrastructure: people, places and organizations.

ACHIEVING THE VISION

IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITY

CONSISTENCY REFERENCE

The goals, policies and actions derived from the city's commitment to promoting California's new art city are consistent with the following local plans and state policies:

- Ventura General Plan
 - Policy 2C: Encourage niche industries
 - Policy 2D: Expand tourism opportunities
 - Policy 9A: Increase public art and cultural expression throughout the community
 - Policy 9B: Meet diverse needs for performance, exhibition, and workspace
 - Policy 9C: Integrate local history and heritage into urban form and daily life
- Economic Development Strategy
 - Focus 5, Goal: Continue vitality through planning, organization, and achievement.
- Ventura Cultural Plan
 - Policy 2: Support Ventura's cultural infrastructure: people, places and organizations
 - Policy 3: Create a broad-based public awareness of local and regional cultural offerings and amenities.
 - Policy 4: Enhance opportunities for lifelong learning in the arts.
 - Policy 5: Ensure comprehensive access to and involvement in cultural opportunities for all segments of the population.
 - Policy 6: Stabilize and expand funding and other resources that support Ventura's cultural assets.

CALIFORNIA'S NEW ART CITY

In 2005, the City Council adopted the Ventura Cultural Plan: "Creating California's New Art City". The goals of the plan are permeated with a focus on authenticity and a desire to nurture Ventura's unique identity. Part of this emphasis on authenticity includes a comprehensive approach to culture, one that weaves together the broad fabric of the community – artists, architecture, culture, history and the environment. Through implementation of policies that support the preservation of Ventura's local heritage while encouraging artistic development, the City is actively pursuing the integration of art, architecture, culture and history to restore and enhance the unique identity of Downtown.

Cultural planning documents include:

- 2005 Ventura Cultural Plan: Creating California's New Art City
- 2000 Public Art Long Range Plan
- 1998 Downtown Cultural District Plan

These plans created the framework for art and culture to flourish. Further implementing the recommendations of these planning documents will reinforce the role of Downtown as the cultural center of the city. Goals and policies that are specific to Downtown are incorporated or referenced in this plan.

MISSION PARK CULTURAL ARTS CLUSTER

The Ventura County Museum has approved plans for a major remodel and expansion of its existing facilities. This expansion will extend into Mission Park and make the museum a stronger draw for the western edge of Downtown. Mission Park and the Figueroa Street Plaza will be the center of a new cultural arts center and should be planned as such. The goal is to increase participation in the arts by providing additional cultural facilities to activate the park and plaza, creating a dynamic civic space and linkages to the rest of Downtown. A new town square across from the Mission will provide a much-needed central gathering place for community events.

In July of 2003, the City, in partnership with the San Buenaventura Foundation for the Arts, conducted a Cultural Facilities Feasibility Study to determine the optimum size of a facility that could be supported by the community. That study concluded that Ventura could support a 600-seat performing arts venue. The site of the future facility is identified on Figure I-8 as part of the future Mission Park Cultural Arts Cluster development, further discussed as Catalytic Project No. 2.

ANIMATING THE PUBLIC REALM

The City is responsible for improvements to the public realm that foster a climate conducive to private investment. The public realm includes streets, alleyways, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping and street furniture such as benches, bike racks, newsracks and fountains, as well as squares, plazas, parks, public art, open space areas and pedestrian corridors.

STREETSCAPE

To assess existing conditions and recommend improvements to California, Oak and Figueroa streets and portions of Thompson Boulevard, a “Downtown Streetscape Plan” was prepared. The actions in Chapter II direct specific improvements to these streetscapes. The improvements can be phased, but priority should be given to California and Figueroa streets to re-establish the connection between Downtown and the beach. The 2004 Streetscape Plan is published separately in its entirety. The City’s adapted recommendations, taken from the 2004 document, are depicted graphically in Chapter IV.

California Street

The recommendations for California include providing 12-foot wide sidewalks, introducing revised street tree patterns and pedestrian-oriented light fixtures and creating additional on-street parking. Additionally, California Plaza should be enhanced and connected directly to the beach by a new stairway. The California Street bridge should be renovated to provide wider sidewalks. Strong visual elements like towers or pavilions should be added to emphasize the importance of the crossing. Lighting, noise reduction, landscaping and signage improvements are also recommended.

Figueroa Street

The streetscape along Figueroa should be improved by providing greater consistency of sidewalks, intersection and crosswalks patterns, street trees and lighting along its length. On-street parking patterns can be revised to a mix of parallel and diagonal parking while maintaining bike lanes. The beachside terminus should be re-configured with a better defined visual terminus, such as a water feature or other public art piece to emphasize the importance of this connection. Access to beach parking lots would be retained or improved.

The underpass will be transformed into an attractive gateway between Downtown and the fairgrounds and beach. Improvements including a public art mural, better lighting and signage are already underway for completion in 2008.

Oak Street

Oak Street’s role as a north-south corridor in Downtown will become significantly more important when the northbound Highway 101 offramp is redirected there. Chapter IV recommends enhancing Oak Street by widening sidewalks, improving crosswalks at various intersections and introducing new lighting, street trees and signage.

CONSISTENCY REFERENCE

The goals, policies and actions derived from the city’s commitment to animating the public realm are consistent with the following local plans and state policies:

- California Coastal Act
 - Article 2: Sections 30210, 30211, 30212, 30214(4)
 - Article 3, Section 30221
 - Article 6, Section 30252
- Ventura General Plan
 - Policy 3A: Sustain and complement cherished community characteristics
 - Policy 3B: Integrate uses in building forms that increase choice and encourage community vitality
 - Policy 4D: Protect views along scenic routes
- Economic Development Strategy
 - Focus 5, Goal: Continue vitality through planning, organization and achievement.
- Redevelopment Implementation Plan
 - Goal III: Invest in infrastructure and Enhance Community Facilities
- Ventura Cultural Plan
 - Policy 3: Create a broad-based public awareness of local and regional cultural offerings and amenities.
 - Policy 5: Ensure comprehensive access to and involvement in cultural opportunities for all segments of the population.

ACHIEVING THE VISION

IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITY

Thompson Boulevard

Chapter IV also recommends a number of changes to Thompson Boulevard between Ventura Avenue and Chestnut Street. These include new street trees, lighting, signage and on-street parking. Crosswalk improvements are suggested at key locations, including a new marked crosswalk between Figueroa Street and Ventura Avenue.

PARKS AND RECREATION

There are eight developed parks in the Downtown Specific Plan area. In total, thirteen parks and recreational facilities, including three undeveloped open space areas, serve Downtown residents and visitors as summarized in Table I-2 and as shown in Figure I-3. As noted in Table 3-3 of the environmental impact report (EIR) prepared for this plan, there are currently an estimated 2,299 residences within Downtown. Based on the current citywide average household size of 2.57 persons, the estimated Downtown population is 5,908. Based on the City's 10 acres per 1,000 residents standard, such a population would demand 59 acres of parks. The current supply of parks accessible to Downtown provides about 26 acres per 1,000 residents, or more than double the City standard. The 1,600 new residences projected for Downtown would add an estimated 4,112 residents (1,600 units x 2.57 persons/unit), bringing the total Downtown population to 10,020. Such a population would need about 100 acres of parks based on the City's 10 acres per 1,000 residents standard. The 156.1 acres of parks currently available in the Downtown area would provide about 15 acres per 1,000 residents, thus continuing to exceed the City's standard.

Table I-2. City Park Facilities Serving Downtown

PARK	PARK SIZE BY USE (ACRES)				
	Neighborhood	Community	Citywide	Special Use	Total
Albinger Archaeological Museum				0.9	0.9
Cemetery Memorial Park	7.1				7.1
Chapel Site				0.3	0.3
Downtown Mini-Park	0.4				0.4
Eastwood Park				0.7	0.7
Mission Park	1.5				1.5
Plaza Park	3.7				3.7
Promenade Park	1.0				1.00
Surfers Point Park				3.4 ¹	3.4
Grant Park*			107.3		107.3
Seaside Wilderness Park*				24 ^{1,2}	24
Ventura Community Park*		100			100
Westpark*	1.5 ³	5.8			5.8 ³
Total	13.7	105.8	107.3	29.3	256.1

Source: 2005 Ventura General Plan.
¹ Acreage dependent upon mean high tide line of the Pacific Ocean.
² Acreage is variable because 65% of the area is located in the Ventura River bed.
^{*} Not located within the Downtown Specific Plan area, but still accessed and used by Downtown residents.
³ Although Westpark is adjacent to Downtown and used by Downtown residents, it is not within the DTSP boundary. Therefore, only its acreage devoted to Community use is counted and not its Neighborhood Use.

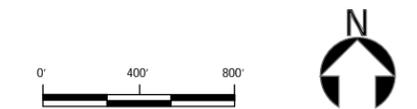
FIGURE I-3. EXISTING PARKS AND OPEN SPACE



City of San Buenaventura
Existing Parks & Open Space

LEGEND

- Specific Plan Boundary
- - - Coastal Zone Boundary
- Parks and Public Open Space
- School



Beaches & Other Special Use Recreational Facilities

In addition to City-owned parks, a number of other recreational facilities are available within the planning area. Foremost among these are the seven miles of beach that line the southern boundary of the City. The Ventura River Trail also provides walk, bike, jog and strolling opportunities. In addition, the Ventura Unified School District and Ventura College have joint-use agreements with the City so that residents have access to their sports fields, pools, and gymnasiums after school hours.

Pedestrian Linkage Opportunities

Downtown is situated between three important natural elements: the Pacific Ocean, Ventura River and the foothills. Publicly owned lands including the Omer Raines bike trail along the Pacific Ocean, the City's oceanfront promenade and the 109-acre Grant Park in the hillside area above City Hall serve as major recreational opportunities that help make Downtown a unique and special place. Very few urban centers have accessibility to such elements in close proximity.

Between these important earth forms and public areas are significant connectors, including several parks and plazas. However, a vital, aesthetically-inviting pedestrian connection to areas such as Mission Park and Figueroa Plaza, the Old Mission grounds, Albinger Museum, Ventura County Museum of History and Art, Eastwood Park, the San Miguel Chapel Site, City Hall, Foster Library, Plaza Park and Cemetery Memorial Park is lacking. Creating connections where residents and visitors can stroll and access cultural and natural areas with minimal intrusion from busy streets is an important aspect to animating the public realm.

Figure I-4 illustrates how future Downtown development can join together with the public sector to help tie these areas together and establish an experience that is Ventura's own. From the heart of Downtown, a pedestrian should be able to access the beach and beautiful vistas offered through walks along Ventura River and in Grant Park.

ACHIEVING THE VISION

IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITY

CONSISTENCY REFERENCE

The goals, policies and actions derived from the city's commitment to ensuring economic vitality are consistent with the following local plans and state policies:

- Ventura General Plan
 - Policy 2A: Establish a clear economic strategy
 - Policy 2B: Make the local economic climate more supportive of business investment
 - Policy 2C: Encourage niche industries
 - Policy 2D: Expand tourism opportunities
- Economic Development Strategy
 - Focus 5, Goal: Continue vitality through planning, organization, and achievement.
 - Focus 6: Goal: Positioning for prosperity in the New Economy.
- Redevelopment Implementation Plan
 - Goal 1: Encourage and Stimulate Private Investment
 - Goal II: Provide Affordable Housing Pursuant to Law
- Ventura Cultural Plan
 - Policy 2: support Ventura's cultural infrastructure: people, places, and organizations.
 - Policy 3: Create a broad-based public awareness of local and regional cultural offerings and amenities.
 - Policy 6: Stabilize and expand funding and other resources that support Ventura's cultural assets.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

“Critical mass is created when there is enough activity to occupy a visitor for four to six hours” according to downtown revitalization expert Christopher Leinberger¹. To sustain the restaurants and entertainment assets of Downtown in the face of emerging competition, successful retail must be actively pursued to re-establish Ventura's historic urban core as a preferred shopping location. Americans are re-asserting the importance of place in retail environments and Downtown Ventura must capitalize on this desire for marvelous venues in which we can spend our money enjoying ourselves. City and Redevelopment Agency land holdings are key to this, along with mixed-use designs that meet current retail operational requirements. But while retail and tourism are highly visible measures of economic success, the General Plan's focus on high wage, high value jobs is also an essential ingredient of economic stability for Downtown. Returning first class office, studio and live-work space that appeals to entrepreneurial endeavors is critical to balancing and diversifying Downtown's economic base.

CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT

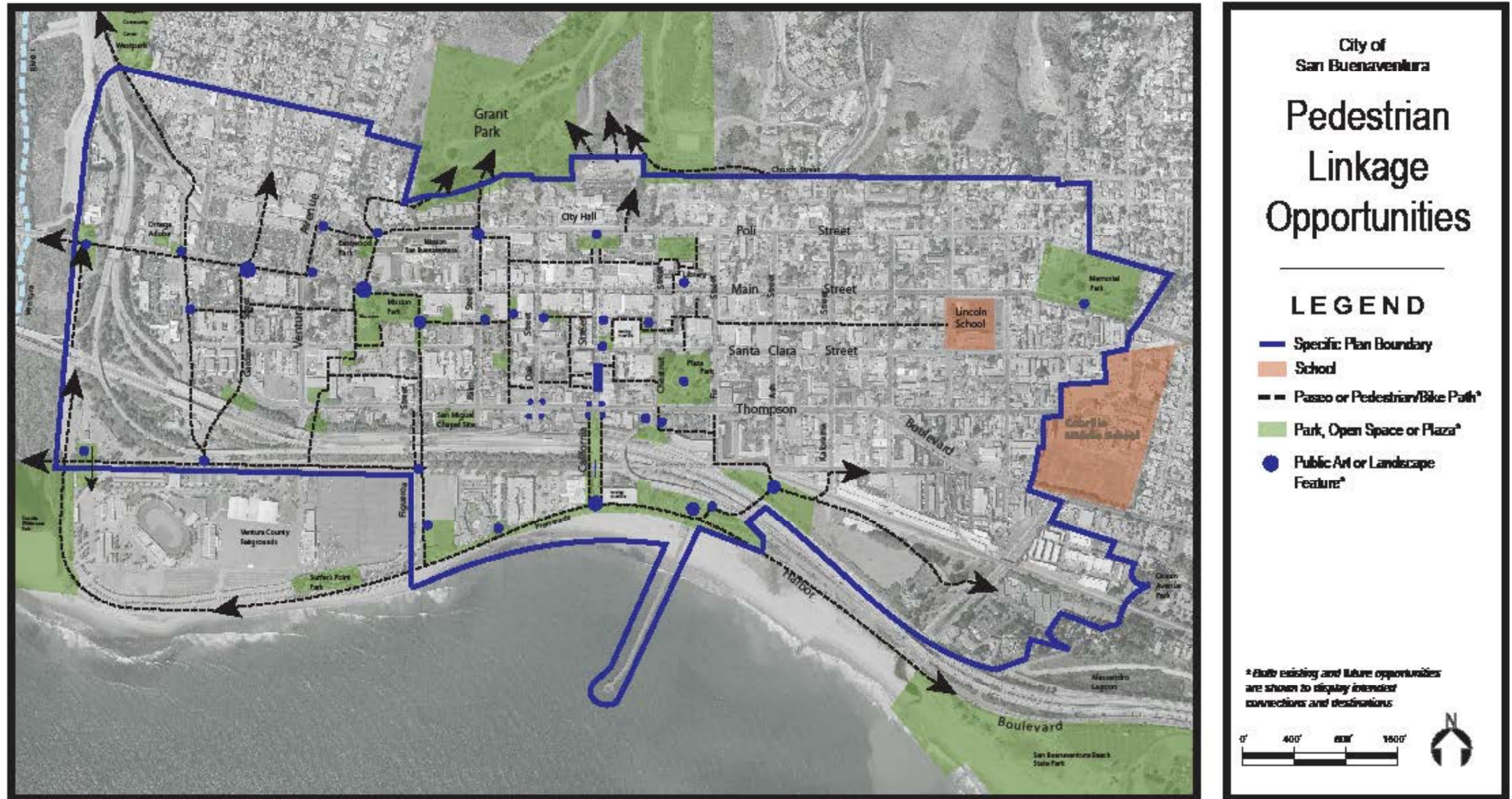
Development potential of the Downtown must be considered within the context of various physical and regulatory constraints. Such special conditions include:

- Environmental constraints such as geology and hydrology;
- Aging infrastructure; and
- Preserving historic buildings while promoting infill and revitalization.

The policies and actions included in this Specific Plan and the urban regulations provided in the Development Code are aimed at addressing these and other constraints to new development.

¹ "The Shape of Downtown", Urban Land magazine (ULI), December, 2004

FIGURE I-4. PEDESTRIAN LINKAGE OPPORTUNITIES



HOUSING RENAISSANCE

City government plays a pivotal role in promoting housing by setting policy, facilitating projects and, in some cases, by being a partner in development. Providing sufficient, quality housing in Downtown is a pivotal step toward revitalization, resulting in a lively and livable urban center that can sustain around-the-clock activity. The intent of the policies and actions in Chapter II is to stimulate the production of mixed use and residential development to create additional housing opportunities for local residents and workers while complementing the existing urban fabric, building strong neighborhoods and strengthening the local economy.

Residential development in Downtown can be complex and expensive due to multiple factors, including the difficulty of land assembly, high land costs, physical and environmental constraints and off-site infrastructure costs. The urban standards and direction provided within the Development Code in Chapter III are intended to reduce or eliminate common regulatory obstacles to development. Unlike conventional zoning ordinances, the Code was formulated to illuminate and re-define the development approval process to achieve an eclectic, yet cohesive urban fabric that provides for and meets the needs of a Downtown in concert with redevelopment. The Code provides flexibility in design to encourage the construction of affordable housing units, while elevating the standard for materials and architecture. By guiding development through implementation of the Code and by reducing regulatory and financial burdens via policies and actions, this plan provides the means for overcoming housing challenges in Downtown.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRODUCTION STRATEGY

In April of 2004, the Redevelopment Agency (RDA) adopted an inclusionary housing resolution for the Redevelopment Project area, which lies within the Downtown Specific Plan area. This resolution, now codified as Chapter 24R.250 of the city Municipal Code, requires new residential developments of 7 or more units to make 15 percent of the units affordable to low- and moderate-income households. The requirement ensures that future developments in Downtown will meet the Redevelopment Agency's legal mandate for affordable housing production. As identified in the 2005-2010 Redevelopment Agency Implementation Plan, this means that a total of 170 units may be made affordable to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households.

In October of 2004, the City and RDA released a \$3.35 million Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), of which the RDA's Housing Funds provided \$2.2 million. Circulated to qualified developers and development teams, the goal of the NOFA was to increase the housing inventory through the construction of new affordable housing units citywide. By 2015, the RDA expects to facilitate development of 769 housing units in the Downtown, including 116 affordable units. Approximately \$4.3 million in Redevelopment set aside funds will be available to qualified developers in financing the production of affordable housing in the Downtown over the next few years.

CONSISTENCY REFERENCE

The goals, policies and actions derived from the city's commitment to facilitating a housing renaissance are consistent with the following local plans and state policies:

- California Coastal Act
 - Article 6, Section 30250(a)
- Ventura General Plan
 - Policy 3C: Maximize use of land in the city before considering expansion
 - Action 2.13: Encourage the production of housing that meets the needs of all economic segments, including lower, moderate, and above moderate-income households, to achieve a balanced community
 - Action 2.14: Promote and facilitate nontraditional housing types and options, including co-housing, assisted living facilities, live-work spaces, and artist lofts
 - Action 3.9: Promote higher density housing as part of mixed-use developments along parts of Thompson Boulevard and Main Street in Midtown Ventura, as well as other areas such as Westside, Downtown, and East Ventura
- Economic Development Strategy
 - Focus 5, Goal: Continue vitality through planning, organization, and achievement.
- Redevelopment Implementation Plan
 - Section 331: Low or Moderate Income Housing
 - Section 335: Increase, Improve, and Preserve the Supply
 - Goal II: Provide Affordable Housing Pursuant to Law
- Ventura Cultural Plan
 - Policy 2: Support Ventura's cultural infrastructure: people, places, and organizations.

ACHIEVING THE VISION

IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITY

POTENTIAL FOR INFILL

Infill opportunities include vacant and under-utilized properties that are both privately and publicly owned. As an established urban core, these opportunities in Downtown are becoming increasingly limited and will require creative solutions and public/private partnerships. To balance the many goals for Downtown, larger infill projects are likely to serve multiple functions. Surface parking lots, for example, provide excellent opportunities for redevelopment.

The largest infill site is approximately 11 vacant acres commonly known as the “Triangle Site” in the southeastern corner of downtown. Due to its unique size and location, the site presents opportunities for certain uses not otherwise available in Downtown. In addition, any development project at the site must emphasize visitor-serving uses. Therefore, future development and uses must be carefully considered for this site, see Focus Area C on pg. I-47 for a more detailed discussion.

Table I-3 summarizes the acreage of vacant, public and infill opportunity properties within the Downtown Specific Plan area that have a high potential for new development or redevelopment.

Table I-3 - Summary of Vacant, Public and Infill Opportunity Properties

LAND USE CATEGORY	ACRES
Vacant ¹	16.60
Infill Opportunities ²	10.20
City Owned Properties	
Vacant	2.87
Parks	16.68
Surface Parking Lots	8.46
Parking Structures	2.58
Other ³	7.52
RDA Properties	
Vacant	1.79
Surface Parking Lots	1.02
Total	67.72
Potential for Development⁴	40.72

1. Excludes public land.

2. For purposes of this discussion, infill opportunity properties are those with deteriorating buildings and less than 50 percent of anticipated density, based on a per-parcel calculation at the time of proposed development.

3. Includes Senior Activity Center, Albinger Museum, Mission Museum, and the Ortega Adobe. Excludes City Hall and the Sanjon Road Maintenance Yard.

4. Among the acreage of the City Owned parking lots are two fully developed parking structures that total 2.58 acres. When this area is deducted, along with the Parks and Other category, the remaining development potential on vacant and other private and public properties is about 40.72 acres.

REDEVELOPMENT

The City and its Redevelopment Agency (RDA) will actively engage in helping to assemble land and intensify uses on under-utilized properties. The RDA is already working on a number of owner participation projects whereby RDA-owned land is transferred to an adjacent owner for existing business expansion or new, efficient development. A recent example is the RDA's acquisition of three run-down buildings at the west end of Thompson Boulevard. These buildings will be razed and combined with other RDA-owned parcels and a partial street abandonment to provide a one-half block development site for affordable artist live-work units, limited retail and supportive housing.

A full description of redevelopment activities is included in the 2005-2010 Redevelopment Agency Implementation Plan.

MOBILITY

Downtown is served by a wide range of circulation modes including cars and trucks, buses, rail, bicycling and walking. It is the intent of this plan to encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation to get to Downtown and to walk or bike once they reach Downtown. Downtown sidewalks, plazas and paseos will continue to be accessible to disabled persons. Providing access to and around Downtown through various transportation options will help ease traffic congestion and enhance Downtown's pedestrian ambience. However, for the foreseeable future, most people, especially visitors, will continue to arrive by automobile. Therefore, providing adequate and convenient parking is a critical element of transportation planning efforts. In this plan, the city's goals for parking management are closely tied to achieving our mobility goals.

The City commissioned special studies to explore transportation and accessibility issues and opportunities. For example, in 2003, the City analyzed multi-modal transit center options, looking specifically at the Ventura County Fairgrounds, the parking lot next to the Crowne Plaza hotel and the "Triangle Site" (late eliminated as a potential site by the City Council in 2006). Figure I-9 provides options for locating a multi-modal center in the Downtown. With regard to the public realm, Chapter IV of this plan recommends ways to better connect Downtown and the beach, including improvements to key corridors. With regard to transit and parking, the 2006 Downtown Ventura Mobility and Parking Plan (Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates) recommends a comprehensive program to meet Downtown parking needs. The strategies recommended in that plan have been adapted by the community and are included in Chapter II as policies and actions and in the Downtown Parking Management Program in Chapter V.

Each of these studies is published separately.

Figure I-5 identifies Downtown roadway classifications. These classifications will be maintained through the policies and actions in this plan to encourage formation of a pedestrian-oriented transportation network.

CONSISTENCY REFERENCE

The goals, policies and actions derived from the city's commitment to increasing mobility are consistent with the following local plans and state policies:

- California Coastal Act
 - Article 6, Section 30252
- Ventura General Plan
 - Policy 4A: Ensure that the transportation system is safe and easily accessible to all travelers
 - Policy 4B: Help reduce dependence on the automobile
 - Policy 4C: Increase transit efficiency and options

ACHIEVING THE VISION

IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITY

CONSISTENCY REFERENCE

The goals, policies and actions derived from the city's commitment to managing a "park once" strategy are consistent with the following local plans and state policies:

- California Coastal Act
 - Article 6, Section 30252
- Ventura General Plan
 - Policy 3C: Maximize use of land in the city before considering expansion.
 - Policy 4B: Help reduce dependence on the automobile.
- Redevelopment Implementation Plan
 - Goal III: Invest in Infrastructure and Enhance Community Facilities

"PARK ONCE" MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Most people visiting Downtown for work, shopping, entertainment or recreation arrive by automobile. Although the City strives to encourage alternative means of transportation, provision of adequate parking is an important practical issue for the Downtown's continued success. The "Parking Study for the DTSP Update" (Katz, Okitsu & Associates 2003) found that in Downtown, north of Highway 101, there are over 4,000 public parking spaces: about 2,500 on-street and the rest in off-street lots, including the Santa Clara Street structure. Overall, there is sufficient capacity to accommodate typical demand, with a little over half of the available spaces occupied during weekday peak times. However, various sub-areas in Downtown reach much higher levels of utilization. For example, approximately two-thirds of all available spaces are occupied in the downtown core around weekday lunchtime. On-street spaces along certain blocks of Main Street are often fully used at times of highest demand, both weekdays and weekends. A detailed breakdown of parking utilization by time and location is included in the 2006 Downtown Ventura Mobility and Parking Plan (published separately).

The 2006 Downtown Ventura Mobility and Parking Plan made recommendations that staff has further tailored to address public input received during the public draft review period for this Specific Plan update. A comprehensive implementation strategy to manage parking supply and demand is called out in the Downtown Parking Management Program (DPMP) in Chapter V. The DPMP will be implemented over time through Action 7.1 in Chapter II and as described in the DPMP itself. The DPMP is intended as a strategy to guide the transition of our Downtown to be more independent of cars over the next ten years; some components will happen within the first few years and others will be implemented over time.

As part of the DPMP, future locations for public parking will be identified and secured after analyzing existing and anticipated supply and demand for parking. Potential parking structure locations are identified in Figure I-6

FIGURE I-5. DOWNTOWN ROADWAY CLASSIFICATION PLAN

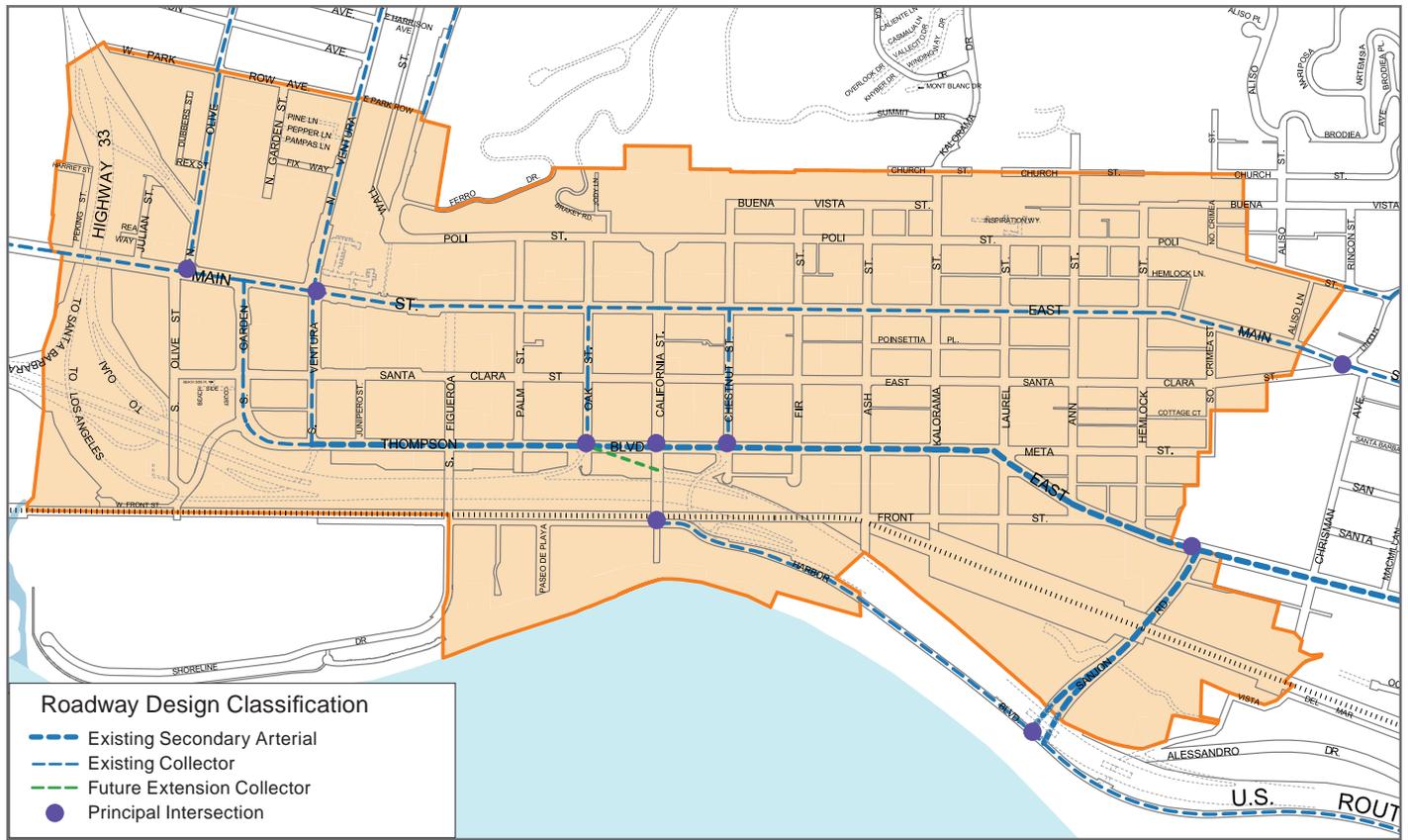
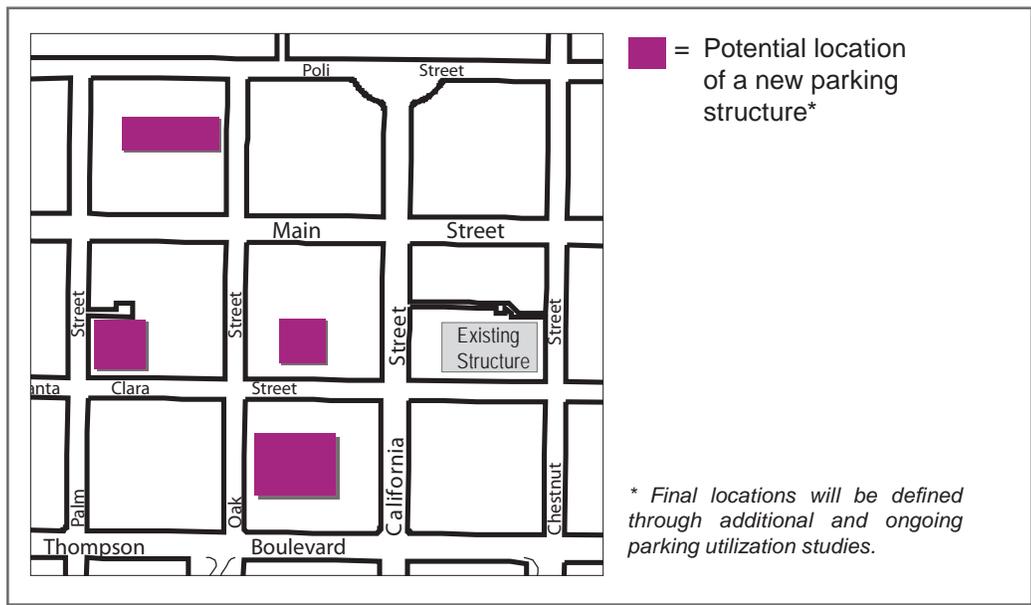


FIGURE I-6. POTENTIAL PARKING STRUCTURE LOCATIONS



ACHIEVING THE VISION

IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITY

CONSISTENCY REFERENCE

The goals, policies and actions derived from the city's commitment to maintaining and providing sustainable infrastructure are consistent with the following local plans and state policies:

- California Coastal Act
 - Article 4, Section 30231
 - Article 5, Section 30240 and 30241
 - Article 6, Section 30253
- Ventura General Plan
 - Policy 1A: Reduce beach and hillside erosion and threats to coastal ecosystem health
 - Policy 1C: Improve protection for native plants and animals
 - Policy 1D: Expand the use of green practices
 - Policy 5A: Follow an approach that contributes to resource conservation
 - Policy 5B: Improve services in ways that respect and even benefit the environment
 - Policy 8A: Reach out to institutions and educators to advance lifelong learning
 - Policy 8B: Increase the availability and diversity of learning resources.
- Economic Development Strategy
 - Focus 6, Goal: Positioning for Prosperity in the New Economy
- Redevelopment Implementation Plan
 - Goal III: Invest in Infrastructure and Enhance Community Facilities

SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

The California Government Code requires a specific plan to include text and diagrams that specify, "The proposed distribution, location, and extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan."

The development objectives of the Downtown Specific Plan can only be achieved if infrastructure capacity is available concurrently or in advance of such development.

WATER SUPPLY, DISTRIBUTION AND TREATMENT

The city water system serves residential, commercial, industrial, petroleum recovery and irrigation needs. Raw water is used only for irrigation and injected into the ground for oil recovery. All other customers receive treated potable water.

The western portion of the City, including the Downtown Specific Plan area, is normally supplied from the Casitas Municipal Water District (Lake Casitas) and the Ventura River diversion at Foster Park (in Ojai). The City also supplies water to the Downtown Specific Plan area from groundwater wells located in the eastern portion of Ventura when necessary. As development occurs and demand for water increases, our infrastructure network will respond accordingly.

WASTEWATER COLLECTION AND TREATMENT

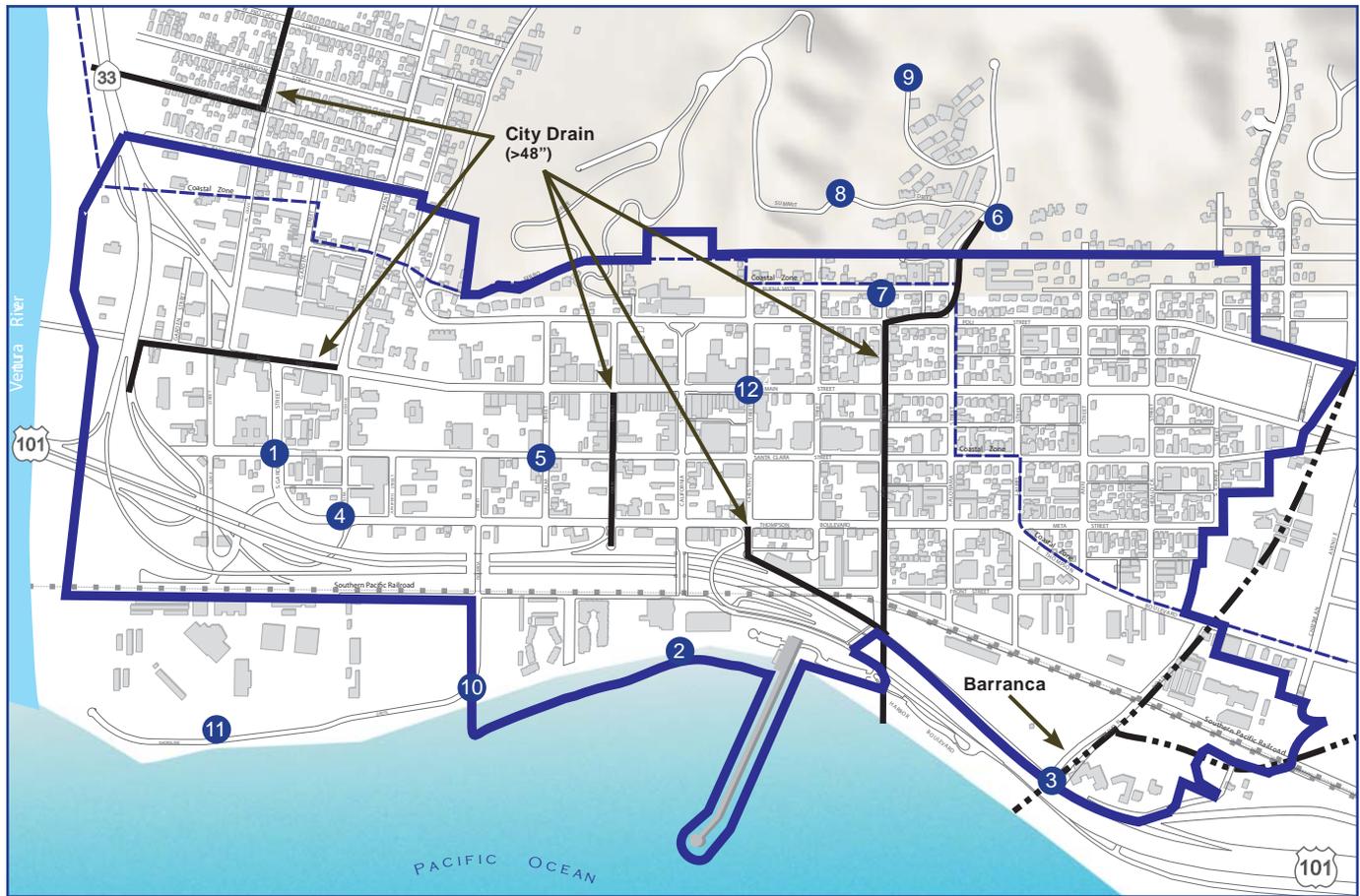
The Downtown area has sewer pipes that were installed as early as 1905. Some existing mains are currently at or above capacity. Others will reach or exceed capacity as a result of development in the Downtown Specific Plan area. Capital improvement projects are currently underway to improve sewer lines in the Downtown, however, developers and the City will need to work closely to ensure the continued availability of adequate sewer service.

STORM DRAINAGE

Downtown Ventura is served by a system of storm drains and culverts. Elsewhere in the City natural watercourses or barrancas are part of the drainage system. The Downtown does not include any natural waterways. Drainage patterns within the City generally begin in the hills north of the City and terminate in the Ventura River, Santa Clara River or the Pacific Ocean.

The City's storm drainage facilities are designed to convey the runoff generated from a 10-year storm event, while City streets convey flows above the 10-year storm, see Figure I-7. As identified in Chapter II, a Master Drainage Plan will be prepared in the next few years to address the City's drainage issues in a comprehensive approach. New development will need to comply with the Master Drainage Plan.

FIGURE I-7. STORM DRAINAGE FACILITIES AND RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS



- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Garden Street/Santa Clara Street Storm Drain Improvements 2. Surfers Point Beach Water Quality Improvements (California Street Storm Drain) 3. Sanjon Road Pump Station Improvements 4. Thompson Boulevard/Ventura Avenue Storm Drain Improvements 5. Palm Street/Santa Clara Street Storm Drain Improvements 6. Kalorama Street/Church Street Storm Drain Improvements | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Buena Vista/Ash Street Storm Drain Improvements 8. Summit Drive Storm Drain Improvements 9. Tioga Drive Slope Repair 10. Surfers Point Beach Water Quality Improvements (Figueroa Street Storm Drain) 11. Shoreline Drive Storm Drain Improvements 12. Chestnut Street/Main Street Storm Drain Improvements |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

ACHIEVING THE VISION

IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITY

SOLID WASTE

A majority of the City’s municipal solid waste is disposed of at the Toland Landfill after processing at Gold Coast Recycling. The State of California mandates that jurisdictions, including Ventura, divert at least 50% of solid waste generated in the jurisdiction from landfill disposal. To help accomplish this mandate, the Downtown Specific Plan ensures that every new development will include receptacles and enclosures to adequately service commercial, retail and residential solid waste and recyclables. Compliance with the City’s Trash and Recycling Enclosure Guidelines will be required of all new development.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Ventura has three public libraries: E.P. Foster Library, H. P. Wright Library and The [Ventura] Avenue Library. The libraries are administered and staffed through the Ventura County Library System. Residents consider the Downtown public library, a “symbol of civic pride”, serving as both a central information resource and community center. The E.P. Foster Library, located at 651 East Main Street, has recently been identified for improvements that will enhance public services by providing additional community meeting venues and educational programming. This “Library of the Future” project is supported with policies and actions in Chapter II.

SCHOOLS

Figure I-3 shows locations of school facilities operated by the Ventura Unified School District (VUSD) that serve Downtown. Additional educational facilities include private schools and institutions of higher learning. VUSD has divided the city into four geographic attendance areas to direct a student’s progression from elementary to high school: Westside, Midtown, Montalvo and East End. Table I-4 lists schools that serve Downtown residents.

Table I-4 Public Schools Serving Downtown

SCHOOL	2001 1 ST ENROLLMENT	CAPACITY	UTILIZATION
Lincoln Elementary School	266	267	100%
Pierpont	283	296	96%
Cabrillo Middle School	1,029	1,192	86%
Ventura	2,055	2,344	88%
Foothill Technology	553	550	101%

Source: Ventura Unified School District.

Despite recent school improvements, VUSD staff indicate that several deficiencies still exist and they have concerns regarding future growth and the potential need for new schools. Actions are identified in Chapter II, wherein the City will partner with VUSD to facilitate the provision of new schools and enhanced services.

POLICE PROTECTION

The City of Ventura Police Department (VPD) is budgeted (as of July 1, 2007) for 134 sworn officers. When fully staffed this results in an allocated level of service of about 1.27 officers per 1000 residents. The Department employs an additional 50 civilians as support personnel. The City is divided into four geographic beats. There are at least eight patrol officers on duty across the City at any one time. In the afternoon and evening hours there are overlapping shifts that result in a minimum of 14 officers on patrol from the hours of noon until 2 AM. The Downtown area is located within Beat 1 (of four Beats). Currently there are no specific officers assigned to the Downtown area.

Police Department Recommendations

In 2005, the Downtown Specific Plan area accounted for nearly 13,000 or 20% of total police calls for service citywide. Continued growth of residential and commercial activity in Downtown will increase calls for police service and further strain understaffed police resources. Specifically, higher density neighborhoods, increased tourism and nightlife activities will generate a need for additional police services. To meet the additional needs VPD recommends:

1. Identifying long-term funding sources for additional police personnel and services, including resource allocations for Foot and Bicycle Patrol; and
2. Implementing crime prevention measures through environmental design of public areas.

FIRE PROTECTION

The Ventura City Fire Department (VFD) provides fire protection services to areas within the City, including Downtown. The Department responds to fire, rescue, medical, and hazardous materials emergencies. VFD operates six fire stations in Ventura and is staffed by 105.5 full time employees including 73 sworn firefighters, 3 support staff and 29.5 other employees.

VFD has not officially adopted a standard for firefighter staffing levels; however, for jurisdictions of comparable size and population, staffing levels are typically 0.98 fire fighters per 1,000 residents (Chief Mike Lavery, January 2006). The VFD is currently operating at approximately 0.69 firefighters per 1,000 residents. As of 2006, staffing levels were stretched to provide fire protection services. Growth within the City and the Downtown will require additional personnel in order to meet future service demands.

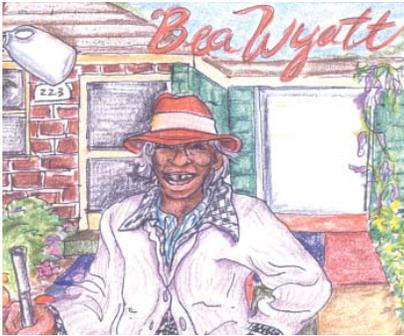
Fire protection issues associated with Downtown have to do with the age of buildings, their proximity to each other and the general absence of modern safety features. In addition, VFD staff has identified the following design elements, which correspond to fire and rescue response activities:

1. Street width;
2. Single and/or long, dead-end access/egress points for developments;
3. Streets with high percentage grades (e.g. Skyline Drive); and
4. Earthquake prone older structures.

Currently, these issues are evaluated during the development review process on a case by case basis. As new urban design techniques are introduced in Downtown it will become critical that we address the needs and concerns of Fire and Police staff. By working cooperatively with multiple City agencies to review projects for potential health and public safety issues, smart and sustainable growth can occur.

CATALYTIC PROJECTS

GETTING STARTED



*Figueroa Street underpass
preliminary mural drawing
- M.B. Hanrahan and Moses Mora*

CATALYTIC PROJECTS

A few visionary projects are required to begin the re-establishment of Downtown as the pre-eminent arena for civic and artistic life and a preferred location for retail and office commerce. Such projects create a ripple effect throughout by improving access, drawing more residents and visitors to Downtown and spurring additional investment. Due to their large scale and regional impact, these projects demand a broad spectrum of leadership and participation. A variety of government agencies and community and private investors will cooperate to accomplish and facilitate the catalytic projects.

To encourage cooperation from the private sector, including public/private partnerships and investment, public and private development projects that provide substantial public benefit will be considered for development incentives. Four such projects have been identified in the Downtown area (see Figure 1-8) and are described in this section. The four projects are:

Catalytic Project No. 1 – Multi-Modal Transit Center

Catalytic project No. 2 – Cultural Arts Cluster

Catalytic Project No. 3 – Beach Connections

Catalytic Project No. 4 – California Street Offramp Project

In addition, there are four "focus areas" that have been identified for specific types of development, generally commercial and/or mixed-use. Visionary descriptions of these areas are included in the following pages. Illustrative potential build-out patterns for the areas are shown in Figure 1-8; they include:

Focus Area A – Urban Core Retail and Office Strategy

Focus Area B – Neighborhood Centers

Focus Area C – The Triangle Site

Focus Area D – Beachfront Promenade

CATALYTIC PROJECTS

GETTING STARTED

CATALYTIC PROJECT NO. 1 – MULTI-MODAL TRANSIT CENTER

Accessibility is critical to support Downtown retail, office and cultural activities. As Ventura implements greater transit alternatives throughout the city, Downtown will become the city's hub as the site of a multi-modal transit center. The transit center would offer as many transportation alternatives as possible including rail, bus, shuttle, bicycles, taxi service and pedestrian links to Downtown shopping, cultural activities and tourist locations. As such, the transit center should be located within walking distance from the Downtown core, generally the intersection of Main and California and adjacent blocks.

The transit center will also facilitate Goals 6 and 7 of this plan related to mobility and parking management. As viable alternatives to the car become more readily available, major development projects will be able to dedicate less land and invest less capital to meet on-site parking needs. Subsequently, parking requirements will be assessed and potentially revised as transportation alternatives become available.

In 2003, the City completed a feasibility study for the multi-modal transit center. The study identified three potential sites: 1) the existing Amtrak Station at the Ventura County Fairgrounds, 2) the Crowne Plaza hotel parking lot, and 3) the undeveloped Triangle Site property. During a planning charette in 2004, a fourth site was added that would require capping Highway 101 at the south terminus of Ash Street and a potential new parking garage located in the block bound by Thompson Boulevard, Ash, Front and Fir streets. In 2006, after the public draft of this plan was released, the City Council decided to omit the Triangle Site from consideration in response to public input. The remaining three sites are identified in Figures I-8 and I-9.

Each of the initial sites is technically feasible but only at a very high cost. Estimates ranged from \$13 million to more than \$18 million. Land acquisition would more than double the cost, except at the fairgrounds site, which would utilize existing State and City property. Capping the highway is likely to be even more expensive.

Due to these prohibitive costs, a multi-modal transit center should be considered as part of a larger, mixed-use project. By including revenue-generating uses, some of the transit center costs can be off-set through shared parking and infrastructure. The ability to co-locate with complementary uses should be a primary factor in siting the multi-modal transit center.

Timeframe: Long-term (10+ years)

FIGURE I-8. CATALYTIC PROJECTS AND FOCUS AREAS

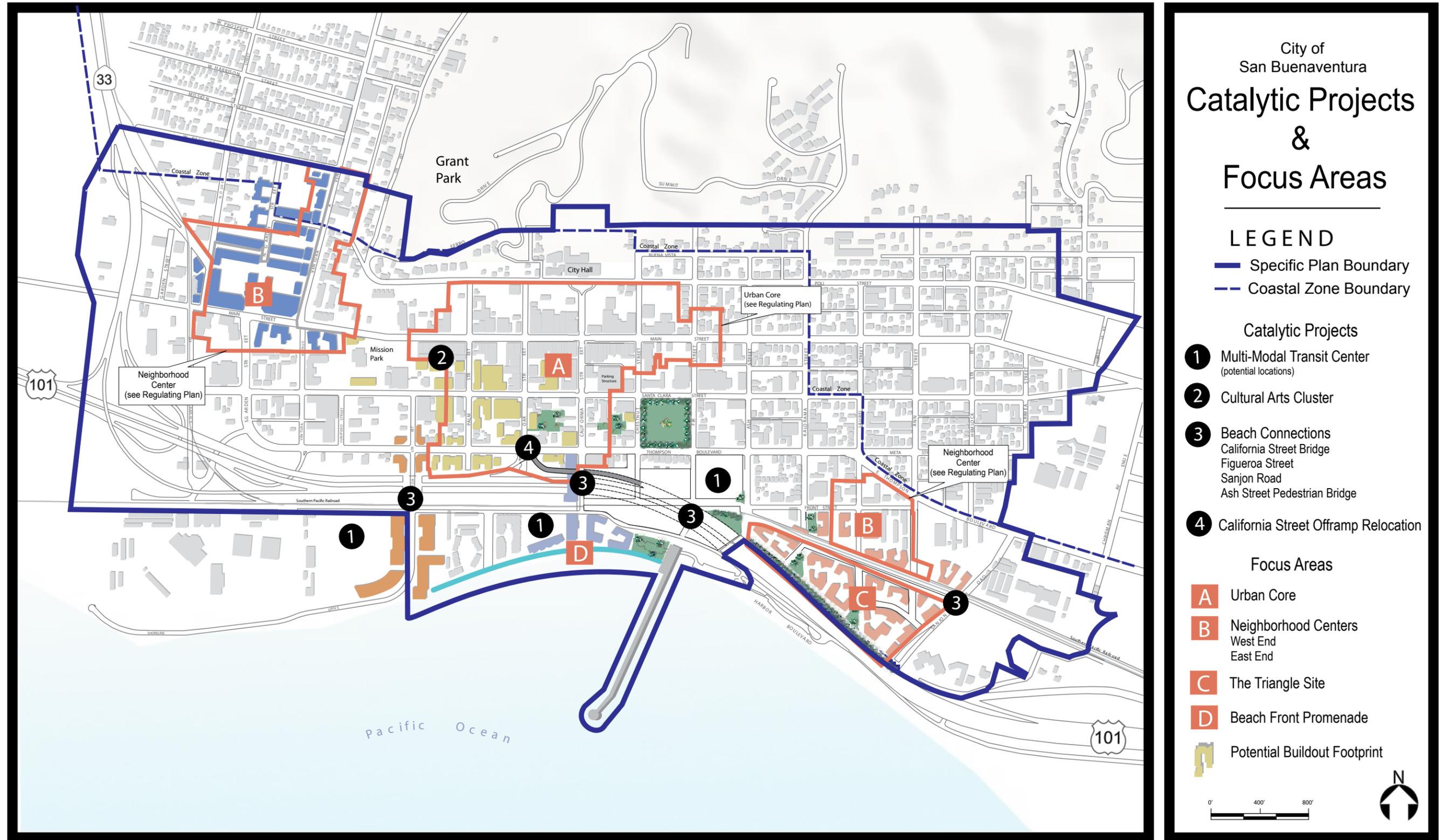


FIGURE I-9. POTENTIAL MULTI-MODAL TRANSIT CENTER SITES



CATALYTIC PROJECTS

GETTING STARTED

CATALYTIC PROJECT 2 – CULTURAL ARTS CLUSTER

The focal point for civic and cultural life in Ventura will be an expanded cluster of cultural venues located along Figueroa Plaza between Main Street and Santa Clara Street. The existing anchors are the Ventura County Museum of History and Art and Albinger Museum to the west and the San Buenaventura Mission to the north. To provide “critical mass”, a new Cultural Arts Village on the east side of Figueroa will provide an anchor with Mission Park, linking the elements. Additionally, the expansion of the Ventura County Museum of History and Art will enhance the museum facility, allowing for expanded programming and creating a major cultural destination in the region.

Cultural Arts Village

The San Buenaventura Foundation of the Arts is planning a “Cultural Arts Village.” Components include a 600-seat performing arts auditorium and a separate community hall to be used by organizations for special events, meetings and lectures with the flexibility to convert to a 200-seat studio theater. In addition, the Cultural Arts Village will act as a venue for local programming created by area arts organizations. It will provide visual arts exhibition space and arts education facilities.

The Cultural Arts Village will have an impact on the future development of the south side of the 200 block of Main Street. Private development in this block is strongly encouraged to work with the San Buenaventura Foundation for the Arts.

Timeframe: Mid-term (3-5 years)

Ventura County Museum of History and Art Expansion

The Ventura County Museum of History and Art is planning to add over 18,000 square feet of activity space for additional galleries, an expanded library and archive, classrooms for the museum’s educational programs and a pavilion for cultural, recreational and educational activities.

Expansion plans include:

- Permanent gallery for the museum’s renowned collection of over 26,000 paintings, sculpture and historical artifacts;
- Changing gallery for touring and rotating exhibits;
- Research library and archive to maintain the museum’s collection of books, photographs, maps and documents;
- Expanded museum store with distinctive books and collectables; and
- Pavilion that will seat 200 for lectures, programs and special events.

Timeframe: Mid-term (3-5 years)

CATALYTIC PROJECT 3 – BEACH CONNECTIONS

Reconnecting Downtown to the beach is, and has since 1993 been, a primary goal of the Downtown Specific Plan. There are four existing connections, all of which require improvements. Additionally, the City will explore the feasibility of capping Highway 101 to connect major North-South streets from the Downtown core to Harbor Boulevard, see Action 3.10 (Chapter II). Funding sources and implementation timelines vary.

California Street Bridge

Although this is a direct connection over Highway 101, the bridge's current design is so unfriendly to pedestrians that it often serves as an impediment to people walking between the beach and Downtown. A capital improvement (CIP) project for \$1.2 million is already appropriated to widen the sidewalks, improve safety, add streetscape improvements and install public art. Project construction is expected to start in 2008.

Figueroa Street

This project is aimed at strengthening and reinforcing the pedestrian character of Figueroa Street, from Santa Clara Street to the beach. Elements that will help achieve this objective include:

- Streetscape plans in Chapter IV;
- Strengthening 'park' aspects of Surfer's Point Park as the beach terminus of Figueroa Street; this effort will be achieved, in part, through the CIP Surfer's Point Improvements project;
- Strengthening the pedestrian connection between the beach and Grant Park by providing a network of pedestrian paths, bikeways and paseos (see Figure I-4); and
- Encouraging entertainment-type businesses such as restaurants, coffee houses, etc. along northern Figueroa Street to bring more pedestrian traffic into the corridor.

A funded CIP project is currently in progress that will add pedestrian scale lighting, street trees, sidewalk upgrades, and a public art wall under the Hwy 101 bridge between Thompson Boulevard and Harbor Boulevard (including the intersection of Thompson and Harbor). The project will be constructed in 2007-2008.

Sanjon Street

Sanjon provides the eastern connection from Downtown to the beach and has existing visitor-serving assets such as the Pierpont Inn and Racquet Club. Sanjon will be re-configured to make it pedestrian friendly, activating the street with pedestrian amenities and visitor-serving uses such as hotels, restaurants/cafes and retail. Development of the Triange Site (Focus Area C) will play an important role as well.

CATALYTIC PROJECTS

GETTING STARTED

Ash Street Pedestrian Bridge

Ash Street provides another opportunity to connect views of the mountains and the ocean. Public improvements and the design of private investment along Ash Street should enhance the visual and functional link between the neighborhood and the waterfront. A small pocket park or other civic destination should be established at the northern terminus of the Ash Street pedestrian bridge. A streetscape plan will be prepared and a funding source identified to implement the plan.

Timeframe: Near- to mid-term (1-5 years)

CATALYTIC PROJECT NO. 4 – CALIFORNIA STREET OFFRAMP RELOCATION

One of the City's key long-term goals is to relocate the Highway 101 offramp from California Street to Oak Street. Although it received State funding in the past, State budget cuts delayed the project until legislature passed in 2006 allowed the project to move forward again. However, because of the funding delays, the actual project costs are anticipated to be much higher than the original estimates. The project would improve access to Downtown, eliminate current congestion and confusion at the California Street and Thompson Boulevard intersection, and open up improved coastal pedestrian access along California Street to Harbor Boulevard. The potential offramp configuration is shown in Figure 1-10.

Timeframe: Mid-term (3-5 years)

FOCUS AREAS

Four “focus areas” have been identified to meet the goals of the Specific Plan. They represent specific commercial, mixed-use, infill, visitor serving and redevelopment opportunities that extend beyond a single-phase development and could have the same regional impact as Catalytic Projects. These areas would benefit from a focused, comprehensive planning effort. The focus areas are illustrated on Figure I-8 and described below.

FOCUS AREA A – URBAN CORE RETAIL AND OFFICE STRATEGY

The Downtown core has changed significantly since the adoption of the first Specific Plan in 1993. As private owners expand and redevelop their properties, efforts will be made to retain the unique character of Downtown. A retail and office strategy will be completed that focuses on making Downtown a destination, providing services for residents and supporting unique, independent businesses. The Downtown Ventura Organization and the Redevelopment Agency will work with property owners, merchants and residents to retain a variety of retail and office opportunities to keep the Downtown competitive in those markets. Specifically, the area generally bounded by Thompson Boulevard, Oak, Santa Clara and California, offers an opportunity for infill mixed-use development with larger, high-end retail. As retail and commercial development evolves, the need for additional parking may arise and potential sites are identified in Figure I-6.

Timeframe: 2007 to complete strategy; 5+ years for implementation

FOCUS AREA B – NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

One of this plan’s objectives is to provide a small town center at the heart of each neighborhood. These areas are zoned for high density mixed-use building types that accommodate retail, office, rowhouses and apartments. Buildings are set close to wide sidewalks within a tight network of streets.

West End

The center of the West End neighborhood is at Main and Garden Streets. The existing shopping center is currently a car-oriented suburban design with buildings set back behind a sea of surface parking that could be adapted to a more urban configuration, reconnecting Garden Street to provide a walkable street grid. A redevelopment site on the southeast corner provides another opportunity to activate this area.

East End

The intersection of Front and Kalorama Streets will be the neighborhood center for the east end. This area is just beginning to be transformed with artist galleries, niche retail and creative offices. Over the long-term, it will be important to extend the existing street grid through to the Triangle Site to the south.

Timeframe: Mid-term (3-5 years)

FOCUS AREA C – THE TRIANGLE SITE

At approximately 11 acres, the Triangle Site represents the largest undeveloped area in Downtown and its ultimate buildout provides an important opportunity to achieve the goals of this plan. The site has incredible ocean views, but constraints include adjacency to Highway 101 and the railroad and limited access from major roads. Development of the site must include provision of public access, visitor-serving uses and/or public recreational uses such as a bluff-top park and improved public amenities at the northern terminus of Ash Street pedestrian bridge, which provides coastal access over Hwy 101. Key issues to be addressed during development of this area are:

- Extending the street grid to the North across the railroad;
- Facilitating pedestrian, bike and vehicular connections between the Downtown core and the beach;
- Addressing noise impacts associated with Hwy 101 and the railroad;
- Provision of public recreational or open space; and
- Public corridor view protection.

Timeframe: Near-term (1-3 years)

FOCUS AREA D – BEACHFRONT PROMENADE

Ventura's beach area is one of its greatest attractions and offers some of the premier surfing in California. However, no shops or restaurants front on and activate the beach. Instead, the pedestrian walk is defined primarily by a parking structure and private condominiums. The Promenade itself was developed in the 1970s and is dated. The area between the newly renovated Crowne Plaza hotel and the pier, including the parking structure and parking lot should be considered for redevelopment with visitor-serving uses and provisions for public access.

The entire beachfront requires a place-making transformation. This will start with reaching out to the various groups that use the beachfront including those that may not typically participate in improvement projects. It will include an analysis of how people access and use the beach and what works best. From this effort, small-scale, do-able projects that can be implemented quickly will be formulated to bring immediate benefit and pave the way for future, large-scale redevelopment.

Timeframe: Near-term (1-3 years) for analysis, 5+ years for implementation