

Community Enrichment

Section

3

3.1 Culture and the Arts

Community Vision

The vision is to develop the downtown into a local and regional center for culture, arts and entertainment. Customer-intensive uses featuring music, live theater, film, and specialty stores would fuel a vital pedestrian district full of visual interest at the ground floor level.²⁸ Goals that further this include:

- Placing publicly accessible art throughout the Core Area in order to create a sense of place and district identity, and serve functional needs for benches and planters. The art will also make public spaces more congenial, stimulate the community's creativity, reflect the pride and permanence of ethnic groups, and stimulate a dialogue on the value of art in everyday life.²⁹
- Providing public art in new projects in coordination with the Civic Arts Commission, supporting public art in City design guidelines, and forming a mini-grant program for temporary displays.³⁰
- Orienting visitors to local arts and cultural events through a downtown visitors' center and a comprehensive guide to local studios, galleries, performing arts events, festivals and public art.³¹

- Fostering more cultural events by recruiting music, performance theater, an art movie house, and galleries to the downtown. Marketing assistance, technical assistance, funding and business training should be provided to artists. They should be assisted in finding low-cost studio space.³²

Issues/Challenges

- ▶ **Artists' housing.** Living and working space for artists needs to be affordable.
- ▶ **Public art is sometimes controversial.** Design, color, taste and message are subjective.

Current and Recent Actions

- ▶ **Public Art.** Demonstrating the City's dedication to art in public places, 32 pieces of publicly owned art from small murals to monumental sculptures can be seen around town. Over the years \$300,000 was spent to acquire them.
- ▶ **City Arts Funds:** All City departments include in all estimates for construction projects an amount for works of art equal to at least one percent (1%) of the total cost of the construction project. The



28 Draft General Plan and Core Area Specific Plan

29 Core Area Specific Plan

30 Specific Plan, City Resolutions 720 and 1053, Draft General Plan

31 General Plan Goal A&C 1

32 1999 Public Forum, Draft General Plan

Redevelopment Agency requests appropriations for an amount for works of art equal to two percent (2%) of the total cost of any redevelopment project. The Agency also negotiates with private developers to require an art component in appropriate private developments. Arts funding has been awarded to the DDBA, Davis Musical Theatre Co., the Pence Gallery and other downtown arts groups.

- ▶ **Art Galleries.** There are eight downtown art galleries featuring fine art, crafts, sculpture and ceramics.
- ▶ **Pence Gallery and Amphitheater.** The Pence Gallery is a non-profit art gallery operating in a City-owned facility. The Pence offers museum-quality exhibits year round. Its Bach's Lunch series features musical performances in the outdoor amphitheater from May to September.
- ▶ **Walking Tour.** The Davis Art Association publishes a *Gallery Guide & Public Art Walking Tour* that features 31 sites throughout the City and downtown.
- ▶ **Discover Davis brochure.** The DDBA publishes Discover Downtown Davis, a business directory that includes information on downtown theater, galleries, and arts events.
- ▶ **Hattie Weber Museum.** The Hattie Weber Museum in downtown's Central Park depicts the history of Davis and the surrounding area.
- ▶ **Live Theater.** The Varsity Theatre hosts music, dance, theater, film, lectures, and other entertainment by local and regional groups.

- ▶ **Fridays After 5.** Special events on Friday nights include live music, gallery openings, and children's activities.
- ▶ **Second Friday ArtAbout.** Gallery owners coordinate openings, new showings and receptions on the second Friday of each month. Galleries stay open until 8 or 9 p.m.
- ▶ **Community and Downtown Directory Kiosks.** The Community Arts program and Redevelopment Agency have partnered on a project to install artist-designed and fabricated directory kiosks downtown.
- ▶ **Pence Gallery expansion.** The city has committed \$250,000 towards a new building. A capital campaign for additional funds will begin soon.

Future Actions

HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004

- ▶ **Independent movie house.** Residents interviewed for this report, as well as attendees at the 1999 Downtown Forum, expressed a strong desire for an independent/art house movie theater. The *Economic Development Strategic Plan 1995-2000* calls for investigating the possibility of holding special film festivals downtown. The Varsity Theatre is being considered for art and second run films.
- ▶ **Restaurant promotions.** Downtown restaurants should tie their promotions to arts events and gallery showings.
- ▶ **Collaborate more with current arts programs.** Downtown arts should be tied to the arts pro-



grams offered at UCD and elsewhere in the community. The University has diverse offerings in music, drama, dance, the visual arts and design through the year.

- ▶ **Visitors Center.** Locate a visitor's center downtown.

FURTHER ACTIONS FOR 2000 AND BEYOND

- ▶ **Bicycle museum.** Community members attending the 1999 Downtown Forum expressed some interest in establishing a museum of Davis bicycle history. The old City Hall/police station was mentioned as a suitable location.
- ▶ **Incentives.** Fee incentives and density bonuses could be offered to new developments that include arts uses.

3.2 Increasing Downtown Residential Opportunities

Community Vision

Additional housing in the Core Area will vitalize the district socially and economically, while directing new residential growth inward and upward. This will protect existing Core homes and provide walkable, transit-oriented housing for various segments of the market including “empty nesters,” seniors, students, artists and merchants.³³ Specific goals include:

- Accommodating new buildings with floor area ratios that can support

transit use and providing more mixed use, higher density housing in the downtown.³⁴

- Creating incentives to make infill happen.³⁵
- Encouraging ground floor retail with residential units above in the Core retail area.³⁶

Issues/Challenges

- ▶ **Affordability.** Attendees at the 1999 Downtown Forum stressed the need to keep downtown housing affordable to residents of all income levels.



- ▶ **Student housing.** Student housing is an obvious market to study. According to the City's 1996 *General Plan*,³⁷ approximately 66 percent of U.C. Davis students live in off-campus housing within the City. They occupy nearly one-third of all housing units in Davis with an average of 2.6 students per unit. Enrollment is growing, expected to increase by 3,500 students by 2006. UCD's goal is to provide on-campus housing for 25 percent of student enrollment. This would equal 875 of the 3,500. The remaining 2,625

³³ Draft General Plan, Core Area Specific Plan, 1996 Infill Potential Study for the Davis General Plan Update, 1999 Downtown Forum

³⁴ Draft General Plan, 1996 Infill Potential Study for the Davis General Plan Update

³⁵ Draft General Plan

³⁶ Core Area Specific Plan

³⁷ 1996 City of Davis General Plan Update, Planning Context, Page 30

additional students will require off-campus housing or live at home. Demand for off-campus housing, therefore, could increase by as much as 1,009 units. Some of these students could live in new downtown housing. Statistics gathered for the City in 1999 by Bay Area Economics show a low apartment vacancy rate of approximately 2%.

- **Viable sites.** The *1996 Infill Study* found that two sites adjacent to the Core Area are economically practical, or close to being economically practical, for infill development. These are the Davis Joint Unified School District site, and the Pacific Gas & Electric Service Center site. Both would have direct links to the business district and would increase the number of downtown residents to the benefit of the district. The Infill Study found that financial feasibility would be a major obstacle to an infill development at Third and E Streets.
- **Factors that limit the economic feasibility of infill in Davis.** The *1996 Infill Study* found these to include:
 - The high cost of land (including the removal of existing buildings if required), \$20-\$25 per square foot in the downtown core vs. \$10 in outlying areas.
 - Large differences in values per square foot between detached and attached single-family homes. Attached homes are not as highly valued so sales prices are lower.
 - The lack of a difference in impact fees based on the size of the unit. A four-bedroom single-family unit is assessed the same development impact fees as a one-bedroom multi-family unit.

- The small difference between development fees for infill projects and those in peripheral growth areas.
- The small number of suitable infill sites.
- Parking requirements versus available space in infill areas.
- The high cost of structured parking that would probably be necessary for an infill project in the retail core.

Current and Recent Actions

- **Aggie Village.** The City worked collaboratively with U.C. Davis to facilitate the development of the Aggie Village residential project. The project includes 37 single-family units (21 detached/16 attached) with 21 grad flats on the detached unit parcels.
- **Zoning Incentives for infill.** To make infill developments economically feasible, the *1996 Infill Study* recommended allowing higher densities (minimum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.5), reduced fees, financing assistance, streamlined and flexible approval processes, design guidelines to clarify expectations, favoring infill projects in the City's housing allocation system, and reduced parking requirements where justified. Since that time, the City has increased FAR in the downtown Mixed-Use district, reduced parking in-lieu fees for retail ground floor and second floor residential, established an infill development fee assistance program, and initiated the design guideline process.

- ▶ **Redevelopment Agency Affordable Housing Financing Assistance.** The Agency offers fee assistance to projects constructing new affordable housing units within the Core Area. Four units at 222 D Street have been built using \$32,000 of assistance from this program.
- ▶ **Infill Fee Assistance Program.** Mixed-use infill projects in the primary commercial areas of the core that provide retail on the ground floor and residential on upper floors are eligible for up to \$50,000 in fee assistance from the Agency.

Future Actions

HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004

- ▶ **Infill Housing.** Analyze incentive options for encouraging infill housing on second and third floors within the Downtown.

