

# Purpose of report .....

This report consolidates and formalizes the community's vision for the development, enhancement and preservation of the Downtown Core Area into one document that can be easily read and referenced by citizens, city staff, merchants, other business owners, property owners, and prospective downtown developers.

These visions are translated into specific actions that can be taken to accomplish them. The actions, in turn, are prioritized and identified in each section of each chapter, and in Appendices 1 and 2, where they are presented in a work plan format.

It was the intent of the City Council, when it decided in May of 1999 to embark on the public participation and research effort that resulted in this report, that the report establish a work plan for the future. The City and other key downtown stakeholders are encouraged to accomplish the priority actions listed here in the next five years.

The report also contains benchmarks, or indicators, that will be used to track success. Each year the city will report on the results of the benchmark measures, and the accomplishment of priority actions.

In addition, current downtown development activities are chronicled, and planned or potential activities that will contribute to the health of the Core Area are listed. Large portions of the report are dedicated to framing the issues and challenges that currently affect the Core Area and its long-term health and viability.

## Background

The City of Davis is committed to policies that strengthen the vitality and

health of the Core Area. During the 1990s the City invested considerable attention and financial resources in improving the downtown. As a result, downtown Davis is a clean, safe, active and vibrant city center where people live, work, shop, and enjoy a variety of cultural and entertainment activities.

As the City continues to grow, however, it will become increasingly difficult to maintain this healthy balance of com-



merce, employment, entertainment and livability while preserving the unique small town quality of the Core Area. To ensure the overall health and character of the downtown, the City of Davis has prepared this *Core Area Strategy Report*.

The City of Davis contracted with the Local Government Commission (LGC) to develop the *Core Area Strategy Report*. The LGC is a nonprofit organization of elected officials, city and county staff, and other leaders who want to enhance the ability of local governments to create and sustain healthy environments, healthy economies, and social equity. The LGC completed the report in partnership with California Main Street and Jeffrey Eichenfield & Associates. California Main Street, a program of the California Trade and Commerce Agency,



provides technical assistance and education services to local communities in the Main Street approach to downtown revitalization. Jeffrey Eichenfield & Associates is a downtown revitalization consulting firm based in Berkeley, CA. The project team brought with it a wealth of experience and resources on downtown issues.

### **Consolidating and Prioritizing the Vision**

Since the City had gathered extensive public input in recent years regarding the community's vision for the downtown, the consultant team began by reviewing existing planning documents. Some of the documents were months or years in the making, and involved citizen committees and regular citizen meetings. They provide a foundation for the report, and are the source of many of the action steps identified in each chapter. They include:

- *1996 City of Davis Draft General Plan Update*
- *Davis Economic Development Strategic Plan 1995-2000*
- *Davis Core Area Specific Plan*
- *1994 Implementation Plan for the Davis Redevelopment Project*
- *City of Davis Downtown Pedestrian Amenities Survey Report*
- *Infill Potential Study for the Davis Draft General Plan Update*

### **A Reality Check**

To gauge the community's opinions on current conditions and update citizen priorities for future actions, the consultant team checked in with community members through the summer and early fall in a number of ways.

They interviewed downtown business owners, property owners, residents, advocacy groups and people who frequently shop or do business downtown. In September 1999, a citywide Downtown Forum was held at the Varsity

Theatre. Roughly 85 people attended the presentation on downtown design and economic development, and many remained for a discussion that followed. During that time, Forum participants ranked the importance of several downtown issues, and identified other areas on which they wanted the city to focus its efforts. They also completed a detailed survey form that allowed them to rank potential future projects by level of importance.

In addition, the California Downtown Association held its semi-annual conference in Davis in September 1999. When the conference opened, consultants handed a questionnaire to participants asking for their impressions of the downtown. Later, in one of the conference sessions, the consultants facilitated a discussion of the results.

### **Methodology**

To establish the priority actions listed in each chapter, the consultants weighed the issues based on the testimony and survey results from the Downtown Forum, interviews conducted with downtown stakeholders over the summer, feedback from the California Downtown Association conference, and input from the City, including fundamental directions already included in city planning documents. (The results of each of the public input gathering efforts are detailed in Appendix 5.)

The Davis City Council adopted the *Core Area Strategy Report* in February of 2000, thereby endorsing the community's vision and priorities as an action plan for city departments, the Davis Downtown Business Association (DDBA) and Davis Chamber of Commerce. Implementation actions will come before the Council for its approval and citizen review during the next five years.

# Executive Summary.....

City leaders have worked for more than a decade with the downtown business community and other key stakeholders to implement a comprehensive set of development strategies that accomplish the vision of the City's guiding policies. These strategies are designed to encourage economic growth while maintaining the small town charm and quality of life that makes downtown so desirable. The strategies fall into four categories: **Economic Vitality**; **Urban Design**; **Community Enrichment**; and **Transportation, Circulation and Parking**.

In the area of **Economic Vitality**, activities have included small business training sessions, lowered development fees, and a higher level of city/business dialogue that encourages business retention. The Davis Downtown Business Association and local arts organizations have organized an aggressive program of sales promotions and special events. The Davis Redevelopment Agency has helped facilitate new commercial development including the recent Fifth and G Project. Private sector investment such as the Davis Commons project has also increased economic activity downtown. The Chamber of Commerce, DDBA, and City have developed a Visitor Attraction program. The City recently initiated a downtown retail recruitment strategy.

In the area of **Urban Design**, the City has funded extensive streetscape amenities that have improved the downtown's appearance and pedestrian-friendly character. The City's financial incentive programs encourage enhancements and historic preservation of existing commercial buildings. Design guidelines are

being developed to conserve neighborhood character and ensure that the designs of new developments capitalize on downtown's unique character while providing for individual expression.

In the area of **Community Enrichment**, the City and the business community have proactively included culture and the arts in the downtown strategies. Public art, performing arts spaces, and coordinated gallery promotions make downtown a local and regional arts center. The community has recognized the importance of a residential base in the



Core, and is continuously working toward increasing downtown housing opportunities. Thirty-seven single-family homes and 21 second units were recently built at the Aggie Village site.

In the areas of **Transportation, Circulation and Parking**, the City has improved traffic flow while actively promoting bicycle and transit use. New parking has been added in surface lots, parking structures and on the street. Parking use and enforcement is regularly monitored to ensure that the existing parking supply is being managed most efficiently.

Like a good business, downtown is constantly looking for a competitive edge that will result in regular increases in

sales and business activity. If a business' progress is slower than expected, or reversals of fortune are perceived, people want to know why and they want solutions. Davis' Core Area is no different.

As the city grows, the Core Area is changing, according to discussions with business owners, commercial property owners, residents, and community leaders for this report. Today's go-go economy, and national consumer trends play a role as well. For instance the recently-developed Davis Commons and Fifth & G projects have spurred investor confidence and increased pedestrian traffic, but they are reminders that national chains and entertainment uses are taking the place of some independent retailers. More and more office users want to locate downtown to be near the hub of activity as well. Attention has recently been focused on the conversion of ground floor retail spaces to office uses in the Downtown Core. This is a concern because retail uses attract people downtown, maintain pedestrian flow and street life, and generate important sales tax revenues for the City.

While there is renewed interest nationally in downtown shopping, Davis businesses find that the new residents moving into outlying subdivisions are difficult to reach. Many work outside the city, do not read local newspapers, and have not developed loyalty to in-town shopping. Like longer-term residents, they find it easy to drive to out-of-town shopping centers. As a result, the City loses an estimated \$144 million a year in retail sales to stores in Sacramento, Woodland and Vacaville. Davis residents are most often seeking apparel, home furnishings and general merchandise when they leave town to shop.

Architecture in the Core Area is diverse and varies in age. While there are 21 City-designated historic resources in

the Core Area, the Downtown Core is dominated by low-rise 1960s-era buildings. The Core Area is laid out in a grid pattern providing short blocks and wide sidewalks that are friendly to pedestrians. However, many residents and merchants believe the plain buildings and network of streets offers few landmarks and no central "place" that creates a sense of arrival and marks the civic and commercial heart of the city. On a street and sidewalk scale, the flat glass storefronts make window displays, store merchandise and signs difficult to see.

Pedestrian, bicycle and automobile circulation is increasingly important given that the city population and University of California, Davis, enrollment continue to rise. Parking demand in the downtown remains a complex issue that affects, and is affected by, the availability and use of other modes of transportation. Roughly half of the 2-hour parking spaces are taken up by workers who rotate their cars through the day, according to studies by the Davis Chamber of Commerce and Davis Downtown Business Association. Concerns among downtown workers and shoppers over the security of the two parking structures inhibits their full use. Traffic congestion remains a problem at the First Street and Richards Boulevard intersection during peak hours.

*What follows is a list of top priorities for the City and key downtown stakeholders to accomplish in the next five years. The priorities come from a number of sources including comments made by participants in the 1999 City of Davis Downtown Forum, feedback from attendees at the September 1999 California Downtown Association Conference held in Davis, interviews with key stakeholders, and input from the City and the consultant team. A more detailed list is included in Appendices 1 and 2. The Benchmarks for Success included in Appendix 7 provide a means to monitor progress and ensure that downtown continues to meet the clear visions set for it.*

## HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004

### Economic Vitality

- ▶ Streamline the permit process for projects in the Core Area that comply with city visions, goals, and design standards for downtown.
- ▶ Analyze alternatives for developing assistance programs and policy changes to facilitate second and third story additions on single story buildings in the Downtown Core.
- ▶ Prioritize redevelopment efforts based on analysis of project funding availability.
- ▶ Consider amending the zoning to require conditional use permits for large retail uses within the Central Commercial zone.
- ▶ Develop a customer service training program for retail employees.
- ▶ Provide incentives to encourage Davis residents to open independent retail stores downtown and to enable them to better afford retail space in the downtown.
- ▶ Recruit new cultural activities like live music, live performance theaters and art galleries.
- ▶ Attract more sit-down restaurants, family restaurants, and white tablecloth restaurants.
- ▶ Study and monitor the share of ground floor space occupied by office uses.
- ▶ Target retail recruitment efforts on independent retail businesses currently under-represented in the downtown.
- ▶ Compile and manage a GIS database with information on all Core Area commercial properties and buildings.
- ▶ Locate a visitor's center downtown.
- ▶ Under the Visitor Attraction Program, produce a web-based community calendar that promotes all activities occurring in Davis.
- ▶ Under the Visitor Attraction Program, produce guides promoting restaurants, hotel and bed & breakfast locations, shopping opportunities, meeting rooms, museums, art galleries, the Farmers Market, and other attractions and amenities.

- ▶ Publish and distribute educational information about the city's historic resources, preservation activities, architecture, and history. Sponsor history-themed events. Cooperate with civic organizations in the placement of appropriate monuments or plaques to publicize or memorialize historic sites.
- ▶ Attract visitors to bike Davis' greenbelts, green streets and open space areas and promote downtown as the hub.
- ▶ Convene focus groups with UCD students to learn how to better serve the student community.
- ▶ Seek out local and regional businesses that may be interested in co-sponsoring downtown events.

### Urban Design

- ▶ Examine the significance of and solutions for the lack of a central space and retail focal point in the Downtown Core.
- ▶ Offer free design assistance for storefront facade improvements.
- ▶ Develop sign design guidelines in order to streamline the permit process and reduce fees for new signs. Actively encourage merchants to replace signs that do not comply with the new guidelines.
- ▶ Work with the utility companies and Building Department to identify alternatives to locating utility boxes, meters, and backflow devices in the right-of-way within the Core Area.
- ▶ Fund a demonstration block to show the types of storefront improvements that can enhance business.
- ▶ Create a program to financially assist in the preservation of historic buildings.
- ▶ Encourage sensitive adaptive re-use and protect existing historic buildings from demolition or insensitive remodeling.



## HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004 (continued)

- ▶ Initiate a process to determine how the Police Station (old City Hall) should be reused. (i.e. retail, restaurant, museum, performing arts, entertainment, or art venue)
- ▶ Analyze lighting levels in parking lots/structures and street/sidewalks. Upgrade lighting to improve the perceived safety of problem areas consistent with the Lighting Control Ordinance.
- ▶ Adopt a newsrack ordinance and install consolidated newsracks at primary locations in the Downtown.
- ▶ Develop an Urban Forest Master Plan for the Core Area and take measures to monitor and ensure the health of the urban forest.
- ▶ Install elements that define key entry points to downtown.
- ▶ Enhance Third Street between A and H streets as a bicycle and pedestrian way. Consider installation of a gateway/welcoming treatment between the campus and the Core Area.
- ▶ Increase police presence and develop proactive vandalism prevention strategies.
- ▶ Improve maintenance of sidewalks, alleys, trash receptacles, and streetscape amenities.
- ▶ Install additional pedestrian intersection improvements with bulbouts, enhanced paving, trees, landscaping and street furniture.

### Community Enrichment

- ▶ Show art films at the Varsity Theatre and/or attract an art house movie theater.
- ▶ Collaborate more with current arts offered at UCD and elsewhere in the community.
- ▶ Work with local restaurants to tie promotions to arts events and gallery showings.
- ▶ Analyze incentive options for encouraging infill housing on the second and third floors of existing buildings in the downtown.

### Transportation Parking and Circulation

- ▶ Reinstate the electric vehicle shuttle from the University campus and city business parks to downtown.
- ▶ Educate customers and employees on the availability of transit, bicycle and other non-auto transportation modes.
- ▶ Analyze effectiveness of Saturday enforcement in freeing up parking for customers.
- ▶ Add additional 20 minute parking on Downtown streets.
- ▶ Educate employers and employees about long-term parking locations that are appropriate for them.
- ▶ Create more long-term parking for employees, mid-week shoppers, diners, movie-goers, and visitors.
- ▶ Continue to install additional bike parking facilities in the Core Area as needed. Develop a standard plan including policies, design, style, location, and number of bicycle racks consistent with the *Core Area Specific Plan*.
- ▶ Improve bicycle route connections to open space and natural areas and neighboring communities. Improve destination signage throughout the City on bikeways.
- ▶ Analyze the impacts of diagonal parking on bike safety in the downtown.
- ▶ Examine ways to improve bicycle circulation to and within the Core Area.

See Appendices 1 and 2 for a complete listing of action items with references to the sections in this report in which they are discussed.



# Background and Current Conditions .....

The Davis region has positive attributes that bode well for the continued health and growth of the Core Area: a well-educated work force, a strategic location with easy access to business markets, affordable real estate, a growing population, and an excellent quality of life.

Davis' current population is 56,000. Residents like the community's small town atmosphere. They feel safe. They like the fact that the Core Area is walkable and bicycle-friendly.

The University of California, Davis, is growing. Enrollment in 1999 was approximately 22,500. Employment, excluding student staff, was 9,944. By 2005 enrollment is expected to increase to 26,000; employment to 12,630. Approximately 66 percent of students and 50 percent of UCD staff live in Davis. Through its purchases and payroll, UCD stimulates an estimated \$580 million in direct and indirect spending in the local economy per year.<sup>1</sup> University students use downtown cafes and restaurants for socializing and studying, and enjoy downtown nightlife. The active downtown is a draw for prospective students and faculty.

The Core Area serves as the city's vibrant center for business, culture and entertainment. There are more than 475 retail, professional and service businesses, 11 movie screens, and more than 60 restaurants and cafes. There are 518 residential units in the downtown

Core Area. These include approximately 113 houses, 40 duplexes and 353 apartments.<sup>2</sup> The residential areas surrounding the downtown consist of well-preserved neighborhoods of cottages and bungalows. Residents and visitors interviewed for this report found the district to be very pedestrian friendly with a good business mix, and felt a high degree of personal safety and security.



The restored Varsity Theatre features live performances, and the Core Area hosts a multitude of art galleries and special events. The Amtrak rail and Greyhound bus companies operate from the historic train depot and downtown is a regular stop on Amtrak's Capitol route from San Jose to Roseville. Central Park is the social and recreational heart of the City. It includes a pedal-powered carousel, a teen center, the Hattie Weber Museum,

<sup>1</sup> 1996 City of Davis General Plan Update

<sup>2</sup> Table 1. Existing Land Uses in the Core Area, 1996 Core Area Specific Plan.

a fountain, public art, play areas and a picnic area. It is also the site twice a week of the Farmers Market.

Architecture in the Core Area is diverse and varies in age. There are 21 City-designated historic resources within the Core Area. The Southern Pacific Depot, the Davis Subway (Richards Underpass), and the Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer Home on Second Street are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Much of the downtown, however, was constructed in the 1960s in a grid pattern that extends west of the original downtown settlement (F and G Street). These modern buildings are of plain design. While the Downtown on the whole is attractive, the grid pattern and plain architecture do not offer identifiable landmarks or a central “place” that creates a special sense of arrival.

The City’s Street Tree Commission has identified 31 trees in the Core Area as “landmark” trees. These trees are designated because they are healthy and unique as outstanding specimens of a desirable species, are among the largest and oldest trees in Davis, are of historical interest, or are distinctive in form. Property owners and developers are asked to save these trees and to maintain them in good condition for the benefit of the present and future.

Pedestrian, bicycle and automobile circulation issues are increasingly important given that the permanent and University population continues to rise, while downtown parking is already considered tight and traffic backups during peak hours occur at one of the major downtown gateways, Richards Boulevard and First Street.

The Davis Downtown Business Association (DDBA) promotes business within

the Core Area. The DDBA was formed in 1988 to manage funds generated by the merchants’ Business Improvement District (BID). DDBA activities include: ensuring strong relationships between business, City Hall, U.C. Davis and other related organizations; facilitating implementation of the *Core Area Specific Plan*; building the tenant mix; providing member services; organizing downtown marketing activities; and stimulating improvements to public and private property and parking facilities. An 11-member board of directors and a full-time executive director manage the DDBA. Their activities have been very successful.

In the 1998/1999 fiscal year the Core Area generated \$770,366 in sales tax revenue to the city. As a percentage of the citywide total sales tax, the downtown generated 23% of the sales tax revenue and nearly 34% with the exclusion of sales tax from auto dealerships. In 1999 there were approximately 530,000 square feet of retail uses and 375,000 square feet of office in the Core Area.<sup>3</sup> The vacancy rate is low, estimated at less than 1% by the DDBA. The DDBA believes, however, that a business climate change could result in business vacancies. Ongoing business recruitment and marketing is a high priority.

In October 1999, the consulting firm Bay Area Economics produced an economic analysis as part of a downtown retail recruitment work plan. Their major findings and recommendations are summarized below:

- The 1999 median household income in the local trade area is \$39,959 including approximately 10,632 families with a median household income of more than

<sup>3</sup> City of Davis Planning and Building Department.

\$64,000. Although the large concentration of students in the area contributes to the lower overall household median income, national statistics indicate that with monthly discretionary income of approximately \$193 per student, the 22,500 UCD students alone represent a potential pool of up to \$50 million in local discretionary expenditures.

- ▶ Excluding the grocery and automotive sectors, Davis residents spend only about 50 percent of their shopping dollars in town. Residents spend an estimated \$144 million each year at shopping centers in Sacramento, Vacaville and Woodland buying apparel, home furnishings and general merchandise.
- ▶ Underserved retail categories targeted for business recruitment include apparel, eating and drinking places, household and home furnishings, outdoor gear, home electronics, science/educational specialty store, other specialty retail, and entertainment.

The business climate downtown is healthy according to merchants, commercial property owners, Core Area residents and community leaders interviewed for this report. The Davis Commons and Fifth & G projects have spurred investor confidence and increased pedestrian traffic. Many businesses now want to expand, but there is not enough available space. Residents are looking for more entertainment opportunities, and downtown movie theaters are doing very well. With this business growth come changes to the mix of storefront and land uses downtown that some find unsettling. For instance national chains (both within and outside of downtown) and new

downtown entertainment uses are taking the place of some independent retailers. More firms want to locate their offices in downtown. As a result, merchants are refining their operations to meet this shifting market. Some are changing their product mixes and staying open later in the evenings and on Sundays to capture the customers generated by the new anchor stores and movie theaters. Others have closed. A particular challenge is that Davis businesses find new residents are difficult to reach. Many work outside of town, do not read local newspapers, have not developed loyalty to in-town shopping, and continue to drive to other cities to shop.

These issues have led City leaders to hone the vision for the Core Area in order to implement a comprehensive set of strategies that will encourage economic growth while maintaining the small town charm and quality of life that makes Davis' Core Area so desirable.





# The Community's Vision for the Core Area.....

The community's vision is to maintain and enhance the Core Area as a vibrant, healthy downtown that serves as the city's social and cultural hub and primary, but not exclusive, shopping and business district.<sup>4</sup>

This vision is further provided for in guiding documents, including the 1996 *Draft General Plan Update*, which encourages compact development within the city that facilitates walking, transit and bicycle access to the Core. Other visions in the *General Plan* that support a healthy commercial core include:

## ▶ Small Town Character

- Reflect Davis' small town character in urban design that fosters communication and social interaction.
- Encourage carefully planned, sensitively designed, infill and new development at a scale in keeping with the existing city character.

## ▶ Arts and Culture

- Promote and support the arts, emphasizing the potential for the arts to build strong community character, and promote Davis as a regional cultural center.

## ▶ Resource Preservation

- Identify and preserve Davis' archaeological, historical and natural resources and foster understanding and appreciation of the City's heritage.

## ▶ Broad Range of Services and Businesses

- Develop a broad range of services and businesses that meet the daily needs of Davis citizens for employment, shopping, education and recreation so that residents do not need to travel outside the City to meet these needs.



To articulate a comprehensive set of policies, guidelines and strategies for implementing these *General Plan* visions, the City in 1996 developed the *Core Area Specific Plan*. The *Specific Plan* seeks to maintain a mix of uses in the Core including stores, restaurants, cultural centers, entertainment, services, upstairs offices and dwelling units. This mix promotes street life, sales tax revenues, safety, shared parking, and walking between multiple destinations within the Core Area. The *Specific Plan* also states that the "stabilization of existing residential neighborhoods and the development of new residential

<sup>4</sup> 1996 *Draft General Plan Update* (Guiding Policy ED1)



units in the Core Area is... seen as critical in maintaining a healthy and viable downtown.”

Downtown business and property owners, business leaders, residents and other downtown users interviewed for this report agreed that the Core Area should continue to be a multi-use area with a focus on small, locally owned retail stores and vibrant evening entertainment activities.

In implementing these visions, the City and the business community have cooperatively worked on downtown development strategies in the following areas:

#### ► **Economic Vitality**

- New Commercial Development
- Business Retention
- Business Recruitment
- Visitor Attraction
- Sales Promotions and Events

#### ► **Urban Design**

- Design of Existing Development
- Design of New Development

- Historic Preservation and Neighborhood Conservation
- Public Improvements/Streetscape

#### ► **Community Enrichment**

- Culture & the Arts
- Increasing Residential Opportunities in the Core Area

#### ► **Transportation, Circulation and Parking**

- Transportation and Circulation
- Parking
- Bicycles and Pedestrians

These are detailed in the remainder of this report.



## 1.1 New Commercial Development

### Community Vision

As the city grows, the core is expected to grow, but in a manner that bolsters its economic base while preserving its small city character.<sup>5</sup> Policies call for:

- Encouraging new infill development that fulfills the community's desire for restaurant and entertainment venues, and shopping. Larger retailers that can't fit downtown locate outside of it.
- Intensifying use of the Core with taller buildings as a means to enhance its lively, pedestrian-oriented character while preserving valued older homes on its periphery.<sup>6</sup>
- Focusing land use intensification in the area bounded by First and Fourth streets, and D Street and the railroad tracks (with an extension north to Fifth Street along F and G streets.) Areas to the west and north shall intensify more slowly.<sup>7</sup>

### Issues/Challenges

- ◆ **Incentives for independent retailers.** Property owners interviewed for this report said that owners of new developments want national retailers who have track records that lenders will approve, and who

can pay the higher rents often necessitated by the high costs of new construction. In order to locate independents in new developments, incentives may be necessary.

- ◆ **Clear development policies.** Property owners and business leaders interviewed for this report feel that while the City government has been a strong champion for the Core Area, the City's lack of a coordinated development policy does not encourage new projects or repeat business from developers who have worked in the Core before. They feel the City needs to be more consistent in economic policy decisions, and that zoning regulations need to be clearer. Development should be controlled through incentives as well as regulation.



- ◆ **Traffic congestion.** Traffic mitigation and circulation measures are needed to ensure new commercial developments do not create traffic congestion that frustrates downtown shoppers and degrades the ambiance and air quality.

<sup>5</sup> Community Visions drawn from the 1996 Draft General Plan and the Core Area Specific Plan.

<sup>6</sup> Core Area Specific Plan

<sup>7</sup> Specific Plan

## Current and Recent Actions

- ▶ **5th and G complex** — This \$15 million complex houses a five-screen cinema, 12,500 square feet of retail space, 60,000 square feet of offices in which the U.S. Department of Agriculture employs over 200 workers, and a five-story parking garage.
- ▶ **Davis Commons.** This new retail project borders the southern entry to the downtown at First Street and Richards Boulevard. The five-acre, 43,000 square-foot project includes a 20,000 square-foot Borders Books and Music store, specialty shops, restaurants, and 205 parking spaces at the rear.
- ▶ **Third & C Street Project.** This new, mixed-use project combines four residential units and 2,800 square-feet of retail space. The City has waived \$86,000 in parking in-lieu fees and the redevelopment agency has approved \$40,000 in fee assistance for this project.
- ▶ **Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer Pumphouse & Patio.** The City is considering a proposal for a retail/residential project at 604-B Second Street, the existing site of the Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer Pumphouse. This unique site is owned by the City and is adjacent to the Varsity Theatre and fronts one of the busiest streets downtown.
- ▶ **426 D Street Office Building.** The California Statewide Certified Development Corporation recently purchased a vacant lot at 426 D Street and built a 4,100-square-foot office for its staff of 15 to 18 people.
- ▶ **Cinema II.** Design Review plans are being reviewed for the conversion of the former theater on E Street into retail space with construction of a second floor for office use.

- ▶ **Natsoulas Gallery.** The city approved the conversion of this 3,000 square-foot residential building to an office/art gallery with a 4,500 square-foot addition on the back for an art gallery.
- ▶ **Assistance Programs.** The Redevelopment Agency offers assistance to commercial development through various programs such as: the Commercial Rehabilitation Loan Program, the Infill Fee Assistance Program, and the Facade Improvement Program.

## Future Actions

### HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004

- ▶ **Streamline permit process.** Attendees at the 1999 Downtown Forum recommended streamlining the permit process for downtown projects that comply with the City's visions, goals and design standards for the Core Area.
- ▶ **Building additions.** Analyze alternatives for developing programs and policy changes to assist in second and third story additions on single story buildings in the Downtown Core.
- ▶ **Redevelopment funding plan.** Analyze the Redevelopment Agency budget and initiate the process to determine priority redevelopment project(s).
- ▶ **Large retail uses.** Consider amending the zoning as part of the citywide review of zoning for big box retail, to require conditional use permits for large retail uses within the Central Commercial zone.



## FURTHER ACTIONS FOR 2000 AND BEYOND

- ▶ **Outreach workshops.** The City should consider holding community workshops with city officials, developers, property owners, and other interested parties to better understand each other's needs and goals for development within the Core Area and the city as a whole.

## 1.2 Business Retention

### Community Vision

Davis residents recognize the importance of keeping existing businesses healthy and promoting the city as a community where it is easy to propagate a small business. Policies call for:

- Retention of existing businesses through “business care programs” and the remedying of problems that thwart businesses.<sup>8</sup>
- Developing a more economical and service-oriented approach for all City departments,<sup>9</sup> through means such as expediting the processing of development applications.<sup>10</sup>

### Issues/Challenges

- ▶ **Balancing quality of life and with economic growth.** To protect the high quality of life Davis residents currently enjoy, while also maintaining a business-friendly atmosphere, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the Core Area development goals, and consistent policy actions that show the community is serious about achieving them. Incentives are needed to maintain the desired business growth and stability.

### Current and Recent Actions

- ▶ **City-Business communications.** The City continues to enhance communication with local businesses, property owners, the Davis Downtown Business Association, and the Davis Chamber of Commerce. Recent accomplishments include:
  - **Regular ongoing meetings** to discuss economic development goals and strategies.
  - **A real estate database** and facsimile notification system for information exchange between the City and real estate brokers looking for expansion opportunities for their clients.
  - **Simplified application forms** for development projects and signs
  - **Periodic publication** of a Business Bulletin which reports on business development activity and programs.
- ▶ **Lower development Fees.** The City in 1995 instituted a 50% reduction in Development Impact Fees for projects citywide. This reduction has been extended several times, and currently applies to office projects and projects within the Light Industrial Business Park.
- ▶ **Lower building permit fees.** The City Council recently approved reductions in building permit fees for commercial development citywide. Fees were reduced an estimated 40 percent for new construction and close to 60 percent for commercial remodels.
- ▶ **Business training programs.** The DDBA and the Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the

<sup>8</sup> Draft General Plan GOAL ED 3

<sup>9</sup> Draft General Plan IMP 4

<sup>10</sup> 1994 Implementation Plan for Davis Redevelopment Project, and, Economic Development Strategy Plan 1995-2000.

Greater Sacramento Small Business Development Center, offer training programs for free or at reduced rates on business strategies and starting a new business.

- ▶ **DDBA Member benefits.** DDBA is exploring health club memberships, credit union memberships, and health and dental plans for its members.



## Future Actions

### HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004

- ▶ **Focus on customer service.** Attendees of the California Downtown Association Conference interviewed for this report said that while overall service at restaurants was good, service at retailers was not. They recommended stressing customer service in the DDBA newsletter, offering customer service training, and using a Secret Shopper program to report back to store owners.

### FURTHER ACTIONS FOR 2000 AND BEYOND

- ▶ **Lower fees.** Reinstate lower development fees for retail expansion projects within the Core Area.
- ▶ **Student entrepreneurship program.** The Chamber, DDBA and the University could develop a joint incubation/entrepreneurship training program to train new graduates in small business management, and “incubate” them in new or existing downtown businesses with City/University/private sector support.

- ▶ **Business survey.** Conduct a survey of business needs to provide input into future business retention programs.
- ▶ **Economic summit.** Conduct an annual “Economic Summit” in partnership with U.C. Davis to provide information to, and exchange information with, the business community.
- ▶ **City staff awareness.** Coordinate efforts with all City departments to increase awareness of the city’s economic development goals. Joint work plans and staff education sessions could be developed.
- ▶ **Mentor program.** Develop a business mentor program with appropriate university faculty.

## 1.3 Business Recruitment

### Community Vision

To ensure the vitality of the Core Area, the community recognizes that a significant amount of downtown space must be occupied by retail businesses. Policies that foster this include:

- Encouraging retail use of ground floor spaces on the blocks roughly bounded by First and Third streets, and D to G streets, in order to create an interesting, enticing pedestrian environment. Offices and residences could be housed on upper floors.<sup>11</sup>
- Recruiting specialty stores to the Core Area to create a critical mass of retail downtown.<sup>12</sup>
- Marketing the city through a comprehensive and coordinated plan that draws on business and city leaders to recruit targeted businesses, and the publication of a

<sup>11</sup> Core Area Specific Plan

<sup>12</sup> General Plan Guiding Policy ED 1

data base of property available for development.<sup>13</sup>

- Focusing recruitment on independently owned businesses.<sup>14</sup>



### Issues/Challenges

- ◆ **Chain stores.** Chain stores are often better able to afford (and more accustomed to paying) the higher rents that result from new construction than are small independents. If additional new retail development occurs in the Core Area, strategies to facilitate leasing by independents will be necessary.
- ◆ **Conversion of ground floor space to office use.** Attention has recently been focused on the conversion of ground floor retail space to office uses. The loss of retail uses in the Core Area is a concern both because retail attracts people downtown, and because it generates discretionary revenues in the form of sales tax for the City. In 1996, the Specific Plan Task Force believed that an adequate share of ground floor space was given over to retail and restaurant use and that the pattern of use had not changed significantly from that of a decade ago. Thus, the Task Force judged that it was not necessary to require ground

floor retailing by ordinance at that time. Last year, in response to renewed concerns, the City Council considered an ordinance prohibiting non-retail conversions in the area bounded by First and Third streets and E and G streets. The business community and many downtown property owners opposed the ordinance. The Council tabled the issue pending further study. Since then, key vacancies within the core have been filled with retail uses. In addition, the DDBA produced a map indicating current occupancy of ground floor space within the Downtown Core. The issue of ground floor office space in the central core was a major concern of people who attended the 1999 Downtown Forum conducted for this report, indicating that additional study and/or education is necessary.

### Current and Recent Actions

- ◆ **Downtown database.** The City Planning and Building Department is in the process of creating a database of all downtown properties. The database includes information about ownership and square footage. The DDBA plans to add information on the types of businesses located in each property, thereby creating the ability to track the downtown mix of uses by percentage and square footage.
- ◆ **Retail Recruitment Work Plan.** The City recently hired a consulting firm to develop a downtown tenant recruitment effort, and to develop materials that the City and DDBA staff can use for ongoing recruitment efforts. The work plan includes identifying potential sites for tenant attraction efforts, con-

<sup>13</sup> 1995 *Economic Development Strategic Plan 1995-2000*

<sup>14</sup> Consultant interviews for this report, Davis City Council, 1999 Downtown Forum participants.

tacting property owners, compiling building profiles, developing a list of recruitment prospects, preparing a recruitment packet, and contacting prospective businesses. The focus will be on independent retailers. Business types identified as preliminary targets include a fine dining restaurant, a theme restaurant for family dining, apparel stores, a bridal shop, an outdoor gear store, a golf/tennis shop, and a home entertainment store.

- ▶ **Minimizing the impact of national fast food chains.** The City Council adopted an ordinance in the late summer of 1999 requiring a conditional use permit for restaurants that meet the criteria established for “fast food” and want to locate downtown.
- ▶ **Entrepreneurship training.** The City, DDBA and the Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Greater Sacramento Small Business Development Center, offer a nine-week entrepreneurial training program for Davis-based small businesses, home-based businesses and Davis residents who are planning to go into business on their own.



## Future Actions

### HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004

- ▶ **Incentives.** Business owners, property owners, and business organization leaders interviewed for this report recommended the City provide incentives to encourage Davis residents to open independent stores downtown and to enable them to better afford retail space. This could include grants

and loans for tenant improvements and working capital, fee reductions or waivers, and promotional assistance.

- ▶ **Recruit arts and entertainment uses.** Residents interviewed for this report wanted more evening activities like bowling, billiards, blues music, and an independent movie theater. Galleries and other arts uses should also be included in recruitment efforts.

- ▶ **Recruit sit-down restaurants.** Residents attending the 1999 Downtown Forum and those interviewed for this report wanted more sit-down restaurants, “white tablecloth” restaurants, and family dining options.

- ▶ **Study the issue of conversion of ground floor space to office use.** Further study and/or education is needed to determine if this is a problem. New maps of downtown uses should be produced and the results communicated to the community. If the maps indicate an unacceptable number of ground floor office uses in the retail core of the business district, then a four-pronged approach should be taken. First, discuss with property owners the reasons their spaces are being converted. Second, study whether the design of these storefronts is somehow undesirable to retail users. Third, study how other cities have dealt with this issue. Fourth, consider regulations and incentives only if it is clear that a problem exists and that there is no better way to solve it. *The Core Area Specific Plan* states that this type of regulation would become mandatory when less than 50% of the ground floor level uses are devoted to retail in the Plan’s Downtown Core (Retail Stores) boundary area.

- ▶ **Monitoring downtown mix.** Monitor the share of ground floor space occupied by different categories of uses, and the number of spaces converted from retail to other uses.
- ▶ **Retail Recruitment.** Target retail recruitment efforts on independent retail businesses currently under served in the Downtown.
- ▶ **Property Profile Database.** Compile and manage a GIS database with information on all Core Area commercial properties and buildings.

- Using the Chamber's new strategic plan, marketing plan and organizational model for visitor attraction. The Chamber developed these with the DDBA, Farmers Market, City, U.C. Davis, Amtrak, the arts community, and merchants.<sup>19</sup>

### Issues/Challenges

- ▶ **Traffic and circulation.** Traffic mitigation and circulation measures are needed to ensure visitor attraction activities do not create traffic congestion that frustrates residents, visitors and other downtown shoppers while degrading the small town ambiance of the downtown.

## 1.4 Visitor Attraction

### Community Vision

Attracting visitors to downtown can enhance its vitality and economic health, create jobs and increase sales tax revenues without increasing the city's permanent population. Policies to pursue this vision include:

- Developing the Core Area into a regional destination featuring arts, entertainment and specialty stores.<sup>15</sup>
- Marketing the downtown to entice people from around Northern California, and in general, increasing attractions and amenities that bring people downtown.<sup>16</sup>
- Promoting Davis as a destination for eco-tourism, university/academic events, conferences, and athletic events.<sup>17</sup>
- Creating heritage tourism offerings downtown, and promoting public awareness of Davis history.<sup>18</sup>



- ▶ **Business mix.** Care must be taken to ensure the downtown continues to meet the shopping needs of local residents.

### Current and Recent Actions

- ▶ **Visitor Attraction Program funding.** In June of 1999 the City Council approved funding for a Visitor Attraction Program, contingent upon its passage of a Hotel Business Improvement District (BID). The

<sup>15</sup> Economic Development Task Force recommendation, *General Plan Update*, General Plan Policy A&C 1.1

<sup>16</sup> Economic Development Task Force recommendation, *General Plan Update*, General Plan Policy ED 1.1

<sup>17</sup> *General Plan* Policy ED 2.1

<sup>18</sup> *General Plan* GOAL HIS 2

<sup>19</sup> *Economic Development Strategic Plan 1995-2000*



program would receive \$30,000 per year in City funds, \$10,000 from U.C. Davis the first year, and \$40,000 annually from the Hotel BID (see below). The Davis Downtown Business Association would receive \$30,000 in City funds to expand its current program of downtown events. A full-time staff person devoted to promoting visitor services and expanding visitor attractions would be hired. In addition, the DDBA would hire a part-time promotion/special event coordinator.

- ▶ **Hotel Business Improvement District.** In January 2000 the City Council approved the formation of this funding mechanism under which each of the city's hotels would be assessed an annual fee to implement the Visitor Attraction Program. Approximately \$40,000 will be raised from the assessments.
- ▶ **Discover Davis brochure.** This brochure is very popular with residents and visitors. It includes a downtown business directory, a downtown map, information about downtown events and arts, and other things to do in the community. In 1999, 30,000 copies were distributed, 25,000 more than in 1993.
- ▶ **Bicycling.** Davis is a very attractive location for visitors on bicycle. The City offers more than 40 miles of bike lanes along city streets, past parks and historic resources, to the University, and through greenbelts. Bike path maps are available at the Davis Chamber of Commerce. The Historical Resource Management Commission publishes a *Davis Historic Bike Tour*. Bicycle and in-line

skate rental are available at downtown sport stores.

- ▶ **Culture and the arts.** Many of the public art, gallery and theater programs downtown appeal to visitors as well as locals. (See Section 3.1 on *Culture and the Arts*.)

## Future Actions

### HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004

- ▶ **Community calendar.** One of the first activities of the Visitor Attraction Program will be to produce a web-based community calendar that promotes all activities occurring in Davis.
- ▶ **Guides.** The Visitor Attraction Program will produce guides promoting restaurants, hotel and bed & breakfast locations, shopping opportunities, meeting rooms, museums, art galleries, the Farmers Market, and other attractions and amenities.
- ▶ **Historical information.** Publish and distribute educational information about the city's historic resources, preservation activities, architecture, and history. Sponsor history-themed events. Cooperate with civic organizations in the placement of appropriate monuments or plaques to publicize or memorialize historic sites.
- ▶ **Streetscape improvements.** Ensure that streetscape elements, signs, kiosks, etc. contribute to visitor attraction and satisfaction goals. (See Section 2.4 on *Public Improvements/Streetscape*.)
- ▶ **Bicycling.** Attract visitors to bike Davis' greenbelts, green streets and open space areas with downtown Davis as the hub. Coordi-

nate with bike shops for rentals, maps, tours, etc.

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

### **FURTHER ACTIONS FOR 2000 AND BEYOND**

- ▶ **Special events.** The DDBA will expand some of its events that have a regional draw, such as the Duck Days Art Walk, and Cyclebration. It also plans to create new events that would draw regionally such as a blues festival, a film festival, or theater festival.
- ▶ **Advertising and public relations.** The Visitor Attraction Program will develop broad-based advertising and publicity campaigns. The Program will install an 800-number and a web site.
- ▶ **Culture and the arts.** Use of the arts as a theme in events and promotions. (See Section 3.1 on *Culture and the Arts*.)
- ▶ **Create visitor welcome signage along I-80.** Attendees of the California Downtown Association Conference interviewed for this report said that Davis looks uncharacteristically plain from the highway. They recommended having better visual markers along I-80 to guide visitors into the community. Attendees at the 1999 Downtown Forum, however, were not supportive of the idea of constructing freeway signs promoting community events.
- ▶ **History Center.** Work with the University and other partners to develop a regional history center showcasing archaeological and historic resources of the Sacramento Valley.

20 General Plan Goal ED 1

- ▶ **Vintage Double Deck Buses.** Promote the Unitrans double decker buses as a visitor attraction.

- ▶ **Tours.** Conduct community tours that could be offered through the Varsity Theatre box office. Themes could include ecology, history, architecture, art, and other topics unique to Davis.

## **1.5 Sales Promotions and Events**

### **Community Vision**

The City and the DDBA work together to promote the Core Area as the retail center of Davis with sales promotions and special events as key vehicles for attracting shoppers and new business prospects.

- Goals include generating more festivals, entertainment and other attractions that bring local residents and people from the region to the Core Area.<sup>20</sup>

### **Issues/Challenges**

- ▶ **Reaching new residents.** New residents are often difficult to market to if they do not actively seek out local news. Downtown businesses need to explore creative advertising and highly targeted marketing techniques.
- ▶ **Funding.** Special events are expensive, and sources of funding beyond merchant contributions are needed to ensure they are of the highest quality.
- ▶ **Traffic.** Traffic and circulation measures are needed to ensure events do not create traffic congestion that frustrates attendees or other downtown shoppers.

## Current and Recent Actions

- ▶ **Farmers Market.** The Farmers Market is a social institution on Wednesdays and Saturday mornings. Visitors find everything from fresh produce to sheep's wool and the latest community news. The Market is located downtown in Central Park.
- ▶ **Special events.** Special events position downtown as an active, vital area, and help to increase sales over the long-term. Events sponsored or facilitated by the DDBA include the Duck Days Wildlife Art Walk, Spring Eggstravaganza, Annual Cyclebration, Labor Day Fun Run, Halloween Trick or Treating and the Holiday Open House, parade, and tree lighting. These events draw people from all over Yolo County.
- ▶ **Group sales promotions.** Sales promotions bring people into a store, service business or restaurant to make a purchase that day. Promotions sponsored by the DDBA include the Fall Welcome (special giveaways and coupons to UCD students), sidewalk sales, a Valentine's Day promotion, newspaper supplements, senior citizen discount programs, a coupon book (10,000 distributed), cable TV commercials, and a downtown web site.
- ▶ **Business promotions.** Individual downtown businesses hold special events tailored to their customers, including beauty seminars, artists receptions, music, book signings, and children's activities.
- ▶ **Fridays After Five.** This promotion is designed to capitalize on the many people who are already downtown on Friday nights by

encouraging businesses to stay open later in the evening. Activities include live music, gallery openings, and children's programs.

- ▶ **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.
- ▶ **Professional and service businesses.** The DDBA has expanded its promotions for professional and service businesses. These include the downtown brochure, and Cable TV and newspaper advertising.
- ▶ **Discover Davis brochure.** This brochure is very popular with residents and visitors. It includes a business directory, a downtown map, information about downtown events and arts, and ideas for other things to do in the community. In 1999, 30,000 copies were distributed.

## Future Actions

### HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004

- ▶ **Student input.** DDBA goals include convening focus groups with UCD students to learn how to better serve the student community.
- ▶ **Corporate sponsorships.** Seek out local and regional businesses that may be interested in cosponsoring downtown events. This will provide additional funding for putting on the event, and provide area businesses with an effective way to promote themselves to a wide audience.



## FURTHER ACTIONS FOR 2000 AND BEYOND

- ▶ **Regional marketing.** DDBA goals include cultivating a strong regional image by marketing DDBA events to surrounding communities or holding a new regional event.
- ▶ **The arts.** Continue to capitalize on the arts as a theme in events and promotions. Market the Core Area as a regional arts district. (See Section 3.1 on *Culture and the Arts*.)
- ▶ **Non-traditional marketing vehicles.** New residents may be targeted effectively through direct mail “Welcome” packets and special advertising flyers.



## 2.1 Design of Existing Development in the Downtown

### Community Vision

Community members want to maintain the eclectic and diverse nature of the Core Area, embodied by the diversity of architecture, which includes many buildings from the 1950s and '60s, but also 22 City designated historic resources in and around the Core. Six of these resources are designated as Outstanding Historical Resources. Policies to preserve this unique mix include:

- Creating clear and reasonable design guidelines for the downtown that take into account its heritage. Guidelines should maintain pedestrian-oriented storefronts and ensure that second and third story additions are of the proper scale and proportion. The guidelines should cover the rehabilitation of historic resources, infill construction and remodeling.<sup>21</sup>

### Issues/Challenges

- ▮ **Central Plaza or Civic Space.** Citizens point to the lack of a defined retail/commercial center downtown or an urban design plan designating it. People interviewed for this report, as well as attendees at the statewide California Downtown Association conference and the 1999 Downtown Forum said

the downtown needed a central focus, or heart, to create a sense of arrival and an orientation point.


- ▮ **Storefront design.** Many downtown commercial buildings are single-story and were constructed during the 1950s and 1960s. These buildings have flat, all glass storefronts that make window displays, merchandise, and signs difficult to see. It is often difficult to determine what type of business is located within. These buildings, by virtue of their low height, often do not have the density necessary to create



a concrete sense of place. The attendees of the California Downtown Association conference interviewed for this report echoed this sentiment.

- ▮ **Signs.** Signs on most storefronts are difficult to read. Some are blocked by low-hanging trees. This creates a lack of understanding of the retail mix downtown.

21 General Plan Goal UD 5, Specific Plan

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**Size and configuration of internal building spaces.** Because inventory can be delivered via UPS and FedEx in just a matter of days, keeping large amounts of inventory is not necessary anymore. Store owners no longer need the large rear storage spaces found in many older commercial buildings. As a result, some buildings may need to be reconfigured to make them more economically viable. Back areas can be turned into separate business spaces, possibly with rear entrances. Skylights and additional windows can be added to allow light into these rear areas to improve their use as retail display areas.

#### Current and Recent Actions




- Commercial Rehabilitation Loan Program.** This City program provides low-interest loans as incentives to property owners or tenants to improve their buildings. Priority is given to projects in the downtown Core Area. Funds may be used for interior or exterior rehabilitation. Loans range from \$3,000 to \$50,000.
- Storefront facade improvements grant program.** The Redevelopment Agency offers low interest loans and/or grants for facade improvements to commercial property within the primary commercial areas of the downtown. The program offers a maximum of \$5,000 for mid-block buildings and \$7,500 for corner buildings on a 1:1 matching basis. Owners of buildings with multiple storefronts may apply for grants for each individual storefront within the building, up to a maximum of \$20,000. The program was established in January

1999. Applications have been received for approximately \$30,000 of assistance.

- Design guidelines.** In June of 1999 the City issued a *Request for Qualifications* for a consultant to prepare design guidelines for a proposed Historic/Conservation Overlay District for the 1917 Davis City Limits. (See section 2.3)

## Future Actions

### HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004

- 
**Investigate Central Focus Issue.** Examine the significance of and possible solutions for the lack of a central space and retail focal point in the downtown core. Analysis could look at the configuration of the retail building facades, number of offices in ground floor spaces, building architecture and the grid layout of the downtown.
- 
**Provide architectural assistance.** Retain the services of an architectural design consultant to advise business owners on facade improvements. Fund rehabilitation of a demonstration block of buildings to show property owners and tenants examples of storefront improvements that can improve business.
- 
**Develop sign design guidelines.** Develop sign design guidelines in order to streamline the permit process and reduce fees for new signs. Actively encourage merchants to replace signs that don't comply with the new guidelines.

## FURTHER ACTIONS FOR 2000 AND BEYOND

- ▶ **Simplify loan applications.** Applicants for rehabilitation loans have to submit an inspection report, a proposal, an appraisal, estimates, and an economic land use analysis. Some applicants do not want to make such information public. Others may be unwilling to prepare so much paperwork. Applications should be simplified to the extent possible.
- ▶ **Provide funding to the DDBA.** Consider allocating city funds to the DDBA to expand the private sector's role in fostering quality urban design. This is common among downtown programs using the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street approach to revitalization.

## 2.2 Design of New Development in the Downtown

### Community Vision

New development in the Core Area should be sensitively designed to fit cohesively into the current environment with appropriate scale, character and visual links that ensure a continuity among new and old throughout the core. Policies include:

- Formation of clear and reasonable design guidelines that speak to building size, mass, set backs, store-front treatments, second and third story commercial architecture, new residences and residential additions, amenities and site design. The

guidelines will clarify the City's expectations and reduce uncertainty for developers and property owners preparing applications.<sup>22</sup>



### Issues/Challenges

- ▶ **Good design can be subjective.** People often have different opinions about what constitutes good design. This is especially true for infill construction in an existing commercial or residential area. Even design guidelines are subject to different interpretation by those using them to develop projects and those using them to review projects.

### Current and Recent Actions

- ▶ **Design guidelines.** In June of 1999 the City issued a *Request for Qualifications* for a consultant to prepare Design Guidelines for a proposed Historic/Conservation Overlay District for the 1917 Davis City Limits. (See Section 2.3)

<sup>22</sup> General Plan Chapter 3, Specific Plan, 1999 Downtown Forum



## Future Actions

### HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004

- ▶ **Utilities in the ROW.** Work with the utility companies and Building Department to identify alternatives to locating utility boxes, meters, and backflow devices in the right-of-way within the Core Area. As infill development increases this will become more and more critical in order to preserve the appearance and functionality of the streetscape.

- Offering design assistance and incentives for property owners for maintaining and/or rehabilitating the community's historic resources.<sup>25</sup>



## 2.3 Historic Preservation and Neighborhood Conservation

### Community Vision

The community wants to capitalize on and preserve the Core Area's individuality and heritage. The Core and surrounding neighborhoods add the complexity and richness that is so important in creating a sense of place and community. Policies and directions include:

- Protecting the unique character of downtown neighborhoods, most specifically the neighborhood bordered by Russell Boulevard, A, B, and First streets. The adaptive reuse, renovation and/or rehabilitation of existing historic homes is encouraged.<sup>23</sup>
- Possibly designating the Core Area as a historic district.<sup>24</sup>

### Issues/Challenges

- ▶ **Commercial impacts on residential uses.** As the downtown continues to grow, there needs to be careful mixing of uses to provide for the needs of the community without diminishing the residential character of existing residential neighborhoods in the Core Area.
- ▶ **Preservation of historic buildings.** Preservation of historic buildings as increased commercial investment occurs in the Downtown.

### Current and Recent Actions

- ▶ **Design guidelines.** In June of 1999 the City issued a *Request for Qualifications* for a consultant to prepare Design Guidelines for a proposed Historic/Conservation Overlay District for the 1917 Davis City Limits. The consultants will develop design guidelines for the University Avenue, Old East Davis, Old North Davis, and Downtown Commercial Areas. These guidelines will aim to conserve historic character and plan for compatible new design and construction.

<sup>23</sup> Core Area Specific Plan  
<sup>24</sup> Specific Plan  
<sup>25</sup> General Plan Chapter 16

- ▶ **SP Depot Restoration.** Through Federal and State grants, the city purchased the Southern Pacific Depot building and surrounding property. In the 1990's, the Depot building has been restored and an adjacent 135-space parking lot installed. This project was designed to be compatible with the historic character of the building, and included paving and lighting details. Additional improvements to both the building and surrounding area will be completed in 2000.
- ▶ **Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer Pumphouse & Patio.** The City is considering a proposal for a retail/residential project at 604-B Second Street, the existing site of the Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer Pumphouse. The proposal calls for tearing down and building a new structure in keeping with the existing pumphouse.

## Future Actions

### HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000 AND BEYOND

- ▶ **Adaptive Reuse.** Encourage sensitive adaptive reuse and protect historic buildings from demolition or insensitive remodeling.
- ▶ **Historic preservation funding.** Create a program to financially assist in the preservation of historic buildings.
- ▶ **Police Station reuse planning.** Initiate a process to determine how the existing Police Station should be reused. (i.e. retail, restaurant, museum, performing arts, entertainment, or art venue.)

### FURTHER ACTIONS FOR 2000 AND BEYOND

- ▶ **DDBA funding.** Consider allocating city funds to the DDBA to expand the private sector's role in fostering historic preservation.

## 2.4 Public Improvements/ Streetscape

### Community Vision

The vision calls for physical improvements to the Core Area to enhance the sense of community, discovery and adventure, and to make it a pleasant pedestrian experience for people of all ages. Directions and polices include:

- Adding amenities such as mid-block pathways, public art, temporary displays and activities, more night lighting, benches, landscaping, street trees, sidewalk cafes, drinking fountains, public restrooms, kiosks, educational plaques, and preservation of the city's Landmark Trees and Trees of Significance.<sup>26</sup>



26 Specific Plan, 1996 Community Design and Planning Services (U.C. Davis) survey

- Creating a clear center to the downtown, such as a public space surrounded by civic and commercial buildings, or a plaza, to add a landmark location with a sense of place.<sup>27</sup>

### Issues/Challenges

- ▀ **Maintenance.** Streetscape elements such as sidewalks, trash cans, gutters, etc. need to be cleaned regularly and maintained in good repair. Trash needs to be picked up with enough regularity that trash cans do not overflow onto the sidewalks and planter areas. Planters need regular watering. The current level of maintenance is not good enough for the intensity of use that downtown receives. Attendees of the 1999 Downtown Forum and the California Downtown Association conference echoed these findings.
- ▀ **Vandalism.** Streetscape and sidewalk amenities (trash cans, planters) are frequently the target of vandalism and theft.
- ▀ **Encroachments into the sidewalk.** Sidewalk amenities, along with newsracks, merchandise displays and seating areas on the sidewalk, while adding to the streetscape vibrancy, can also hinder pedestrian access.
- ▀ **Placement of streetscape amenities.** Public art, landscaping and other sidewalk amenities add value to the downtown experience. However, if not carefully placed, they can distract one's eyes from storefront displays (or block them totally).

### Current and Recent Actions

- ▀ **Core Area pedestrian amenities.** Recent improvements include benches, bike racks, public art, transit stops, trash and recycling

receptacles, street lighting, signs and directories, banners, landscaping, public plazas, and traffic chokes. *The 1994 Implementation Plan for the Davis Redevelopment Project* includes funding for streetscape and pedestrian amenities. The Redevelopment Agency budgets for additional items annually, using the 1996 Streetscape Amenities Survey as a guide.

- ▀ **G Street Plaza.** Since 1996, the plaza has been renovated with new trees, benches, lighting, pavement, and landscaping. New parking spaces were added and the pedestrian crossing was improved.
- ▀ **E Street Plaza.** This 9,000 square foot landscaped plaza between Second and Third Streets features benches, public art, bike racks, a drinking fountain, new landscaping, a public art water feature, decorative metalwork, and a stage area for music and performance events.
- ▀ **Downtown directional sign improvements.** New and replacement signs recently installed include public parking lot identification signs, a directional monument sign at Fifth and G Streets, and visitor information directional signs.
- ▀ **Public use of private spaces.** The DDBA has formed a committee to study private use of public space issues including vendor kiosks, outdoor dining, and outdoor display of merchandise. They hope to bring a recommendation to the City Council by the spring of 2000.
- ▀ **Central Park improvements.** Since 1990, the City has spent more than \$1 million on improvements to Central Park. These include the construction of the Farmers Market Plaza, a shaded structure, and foun-

tains. The old library/teen center building was relocated to the park and turned into the Hattie Weber Museum.

- ▶ **Teen Center.** A new 8,000 square-foot Teen Center was constructed in 1992 on the corner of Third and B.
- ▶ **Jennie Read Walk.** The existing pedestrian alleyway was renovated with new landscaping, trees, and pavers.
- ▶ **Fourth and G Street intersection.** This project included the construction of sidewalk bulb-outs to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians, as well as curb ramps, curb and gutter improvements, brick paver crosswalks, and landscaping and irrigation.
- ▶ **Core Area drainage.** This project included the installation of drainage pipes, laterals, and inlets. It also included the repair of curb and gutter, sidewalks, access ramps, and pavement.
- ▶ **Downtown and Community Directory Kiosks.** Artist-designed directory kiosks with downtown directory and community wide maps are planned for installation. A prototype kiosk has been installed at the corner of Fourth and G Street. Five additional kiosks are to be installed throughout the downtown in the spring of 2000.
- ▶ **Pedestrian crosswalk improvements.** Install additional pedestrian intersection improvements with bulbouts, enhanced paving, trees, landscaping and street furniture.
- ▶ **Pocket park.** A “pocket park” has been conceptualized at the front of the Pacific Bell building on Third Street. The park would include public seating, art, lighting and outdoor dining tables.

- ▶ **SP Depot landscaping improvements.** As part of the Southern Pacific Depot parking lot project, pedestrian amenities are to be installed. The project includes pathways leading from the parking lot to the platform, landscaped waiting areas, shade trees, benches and drop off areas.

## Future Actions

### HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004

- ▶ **Street lighting.** Analyze lighting levels in parking lots/structures and street/sidewalks. Upgrade lighting to improve the perceived safety of problem areas consistent with the Lighting Control Ordinance.
- ▶ **Newsrack Ordinance.** The City is considering adopting an ordinance to address the negative visual impact and physical damage resulting from the proliferation of open air vending machines containing editorial and advertising publications on sidewalks downtown. Consolidated vending racks would be installed and design standards enforced to improve the appearance of the racks
- ▶ **Urban Forest.** The City, in conjunction with the U.C. Davis Department of Environmental Horticulture and the USDA Forest Service Western Center for Urban Forest Research, should consider a “Downtown Davis Urban Forest Research Demonstration Site,” and develop and adopt an “Urban Forestry Master Plan” for the Core Area.
- ▶ **Construction of entry/welcoming treatments.** The Davis Arch was built in 1916 and became a



symbol of unity between the U.C. campus and the community. The Arch was removed in the 1920's due to increasing automobile traffic. The *Core Area Specific Plan* recommends constructing a new arch as a way to bridge the past and the future. Attendees at the 1999 Downtown Forum and California Downtown Association conference suggested stronger streetscape elements could mark the southern and northern entries to downtown.

- ▶ **Third Street sidewalk and bicycle enhancements.** Third Street between A and H streets should be enhanced as a bicycle and pedestrian way. Consider installation of a gateway/welcoming treatment.
- ▶ **Vandalism prevention.** The City needs to increase the visible police presence downtown. This will become increasingly important when the Police Department moves to its new facility. A substation downtown should be considered. A more proactive approach to vandalism prevention should be considered and studies of how other cities prevent vandalism, graffiti and theft conducted.
- ▶ **Maintenance.** Discussions need to be held between the City, the DDBA and the downtown maintenance contractor to identify maintenance problems and develop solutions.
- ▶ **Pedestrian Intersection Improvements.** Install additional pedestrian intersection improvements with bulbouts, enhanced paving, trees, landscaping and street furniture.

## FURTHER ACTIONS FOR 2000 AND BEYOND

- ▶ **Mid-Block Pedestrian Passageways.** Within the downtown it is desirable to encourage the provision of pedestrian passageways/arcades at mid-block locations to provide access to parking, connections to the Discovery Walk, and connections between streets and alleys. An incentive program would encourage private developers to provide mid-block pedestrian passageways/arcades within their projects. The City's zoning ordinance requires new structures or additions to provide an easement for such passageways along specific blocks in the downtown.
- ▶ **Create a Discovery Walk.** The Discovery Walk would take people on a tour past shops, plazas, public art, historic and cultural resources, landmark trees, and other points of interest. Amenities such as benches, shade structures, drinking fountains and educational plaques would be provided along the way. The Discovery Walk would be a good complement to the existing Public Art Walking Tour, History Bicycle Tour, Downtown Map, and Old North neighborhood tour. It would also be an educational tool for children.

# 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.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup>
- 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.<sup>30</sup>
- 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.<sup>31</sup>

- 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.<sup>32</sup>

#### 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.<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup>

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

### 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*,<sup>37</sup> 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

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

<sup>34</sup> Draft General Plan, 1996 Infill Potential Study for the Davis General Plan Update

<sup>35</sup> Draft General Plan

<sup>36</sup> Core Area Specific Plan

<sup>37</sup> 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.





# Transportation, Circulation & Parking

## Section 4

### 4.1 Motor Vehicle Transportation and Circulation

#### Community Vision

The vision calls for balancing the needs of various travel modes so that motorized traffic does not replace the pedestrian and threaten the Core Area's place as the vital, community center. Too much traffic could make sidewalks and outdoor areas noisier and interfere with easy pedestrian movement. Use of public transit—which provides an important link to the downtown—is on the increase. Even better service is possible with increased funding from Propositions 108, 111 and a student referendum.<sup>38</sup> Related policies include:

- Limiting through automobile traffic to certain streets at the edge of the downtown business district (Fifth, First, B and F). The remaining inner streets would function as “Main Street” streets for destination traffic and pedestrian routes. The primary transit routes have been identified as A, B, F, First, Second, Third and Fifth streets.<sup>39</sup>
- Improving transit service to the downtown to increase activity without generating more automobile

traffic, and the need for more parking. Transit service to downtown is provided by: Unitrans (the City of



Davis/ASUCD bus system) and Yolobus (with service to Sacramento, West Sacramento, the Sacramento Airport and Woodland). Downtown is a regular stop on Amtrak's Capitol route from San Jose to Roseville.<sup>40</sup>

#### Issues/Challenges

- ▮ **Richards Boulevard Corridor.** Growth in recent years in North and South Davis has caused more cross-town traffic to be routed through the downtown, even if not bound there. The City Council approved the redesign of the Richards Boulevard underpass in the summer of 1996. The project called for two additional auto lanes, separated bike paths and pedestrian facilities. This decision was over-

<sup>38</sup> General Plan

<sup>39</sup> Specific Plan

<sup>40</sup> Specific Plan



turned, however, by voter referendum. Voters were concerned about increasing traffic on downtown streets. Interviews conducted for this report, however, indicate a perception that this traffic bottleneck is still a problem that hinders economic growth downtown.

### Current and Recent Actions

- ▶ **Richards Boulevard Corridor Alternatives.** The City is analyzing alternatives for transportation congestion relief (vehicles, bikes, pedestrians, etc.) without expanding or replacing the existing vehicle tunnel under the railroad. A free right turn lane from Richards to First Street has been approved and is scheduled for construction in the spring of 2000. Coordination of signal timing for intersections along the Richards Boulevard/First Street corridor is also being considered.
- ▶ **Improved directional signs.** Signs directing visitors and residents to significant community destinations (i.e. UCD, visitor information, train depot, parking, and major public facilities) are being added to improve traffic circulation.
- ▶ **Electric vehicles.** *General Plan Policy MOB 1.10* calls for establishing charging stations for electric vehicles in public parking lots in accordance with the future growth of electric vehicle use. Charging stations have been installed at the depot parking lot, Fifth and G garage, and E Street Plaza parking lot.

## Future Actions

### HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004

- ▶ **Downtown shuttle.** DDBA goals for 1999/2000 include working with Transportation and Parking Services at UCD to pursue a grant for bringing back the downtown shuttle. Attendees at the 1999 Downtown Forum were strongly in favor of this.
- ▶ **Alternate modes of transportation.** Educate customers and employees on the availability of transit, bicycle and other non-auto transportation modes.

## 4.2 Parking

### Community Vision

Just as the automobile must not replace the pedestrian if the Core Area is to remain the vital community center, the community has decreed that automobile parking must not interfere with pedestrian oriented stores and offices. Policies include:



- Locating large-scale parking structures on the periphery of the downtown Core Area with retail frontage along sidewalks.<sup>41</sup>
- Excluding additional large parking areas unless they are related to a specific development project and there is no viable alternative for new parking.<sup>42</sup>
- Develop a comprehensive parking plan/program that equitably accommodates long-term parking needs for the expanding downtown. Currently there are 3,727 parking spaces downtown.<sup>43</sup>

### Issues/Challenges

- ▶ **Merchant parking.** Studies by the Chamber and DDBA of parking in the two-hour restriction area concluded that employees who rotate their cars from space to space throughout the day consume half of the parking spaces.
- ▶ **Two-hour zones.** Recent parking programs include restrictions on long-term (over two-hour) parking in the downtown core coupled with a permit program for area residents. This has caused employee parking to spill over into the residential neighborhoods just east and north of the business district. In addition, downtown users wishing to shop and have lunch, or see a movie, are frustrated by a perceived lack of convenient long-term parking.
- ▶ **Perceived safety.** Overcoming perceived safety concerns is needed to convince employees and customers to use parking structures.

### Current and Recent Actions

- ▶ **Boy Scout Cabin parking lot.** In 1995 the City made improvements to the Boy Scout Cabin parking lot to accommodate overflow parking.
- ▶ **Depot parking.** In the fall of 1998 the City of Davis completed construction of a 135-space parking lot adjacent to the historic Southern Pacific Depot and Amtrak station.
- ▶ **Fifth & G complex.** This new \$15 million complex housing retail, cinema and offices has an accompanying five-story parking garage. In the garage, 217 of the 430 spaces are available to the public with a three-hour limit. The City Council recently concurred with the DDBA's recommendations to study the feasibility of allowing a limited amount of all-day downtown employee parking in this structure. Temporary permits would be issued on a monthly basis until demand increases from Fifth & G tenants and customers.
- ▶ **Davis Commons.** This new retail project at First Street and Richards Boulevard includes 205 parking spaces.
- ▶ **Angled parking.** Portions of Second Street and E Street have been converted from parallel parking to angled parking adding 23 additional spaces.
- ▶ **Saturday parking enforcement.** The City Council recently concurred with the DDBA's recommendations to enforce two-hour parking time limits in the downtown core on Saturdays as well as weekdays. This enforcement will begin in January 2000. A third parking enforcement officer has been hired to ensure that parking regulations on all streets are being enforced.

<sup>41</sup> Specific Plan

<sup>42</sup> Specific Plan

<sup>43</sup> Economic Development Strategic Plan 1995-2000



- ▶ **Perceived safety.** The City Council recently concurred with the DDBA's recommendations to improve maintenance and police patrols at the F Street parking structure to encourage use by downtown employees.
- ▶ **In-lieu parking fee reduction.** The City Council has approved a policy to reduce or eliminate in-lieu parking fees for projects in the Core Area. The City's adopted in-lieu fee is \$8,000 per space. Depending on the type of project (retail, other commercial, or residential) and zoning district, the fee is reduced to either zero or \$2,000 per space for up to 25 spaces. Larger projects may receive similar reductions upon approval by the City Council.
- ▶ **Marketing.** The DDBA has created a positive image marketing campaign about parking in the Core Area. They have redesigned the downtown parking map showing downtown parking zones, written a guide on how to obtain parking permits, and distributed these and other parking information to downtown businesses. Employees are being educated to park in long-term lots and structures, as well as outlying areas of the downtown.

## Future Actions

### HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004

- ▶ **Long-term parking.** Increase the marketing and number of long-term parking spaces for employees, mid-week shoppers, diners, movie-goers and daily visitors to downtown. Attendees at the 1999 Downtown Forum expressed strong support for this idea.
- ▶ **Saturday enforcement:** Analyze effectiveness of Saturday enforcement in freeing up parking for customers.
- ▶ **Additional 20-minute** parking on-street in the Downtown.
- ▶ **Education.** Educate employers and employees about appropriate long-term parking locations for Downtown employees.

### FURTHER ACTIONS FOR 2000 AND BEYOND

- ▶ **Employee parking.** Analyze employee parking as a whole and identify new sites to designate for employee parking. Determine the feasibility of making both levels of the parking structure located at First and F streets free long-term parking directed at downtown employees.
- ▶ **Regal Station Site.** Consider permanently paving the former Regal Station site and designate the parking for commuter and employee parking.

## 4.3 Bicycle and Pedestrian Movement

### Community Vision

The City of Davis and the UCD campus are nationally acknowledged leaders in bicycle planning and use. Bicycles probably serve the transportation needs of students, faculty, and staff better than any other mode. It is estimated that there is an average of more than one bicycle per person in Davis, and that 25 percent of person trips in Davis are made by bicycle. Policies include:

- Improving bicycle connections and bicycle parking in the downtown Core Area to further encourage this alternate form of transportation.<sup>44</sup>
- Providing separate bicycle access to U.C. Davis to lessen the interface between motorists and bicyclists in the Richards Boulevard area. The City and University agree this is a good idea.

### Issues and Challenges

- ▶ **Safety.** As development and use downtown continues to intensify, conflicts between cars and bikes/pedestrians will become increasingly prevalent.
- ▶ **Congestion at intersections.** The majority of intersections in the downtown are four way stops. As auto, bike, and pedestrian traffic intensifies, these four-way stops will become increasingly congested, affecting air quality and adding to the frustration of automobile travelers.

### Current and Recent Actions

- ▶ **Putah Creek/I-80 bicycle underpass.** The City will construct a new bicycle underpass that crosses I-80 and the Union Pacific railroad tracks along the South fork of Putah Creek. The project will connect South Davis to the downtown and the University and provide an alternative to the Richards Boulevard undercrossing for bikes and pedestrians.
- ▶ **Richards Widening Alternatives.** Alternatives are being analyzed to either construct a second bike tube at Richards underpass and/or build a bike/pedestrian bridge over Richards connecting F Street to the new Putah Creek underpass.
- ▶ **Pedestrian Crossing Enhancements.** Bulb-outs, or shortened pedestrian crossings have been installed at Fourth and G and Second and G streets, the G Street Plaza mid-block crossing, and E Street Plaza mid-block crossing. As part of the pedestrian amenities plan, additional crossings will be enhanced annually along primary pedestrian corridors throughout the Core Area.



<sup>44</sup> Specific Plan



## Future Actions

### HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2000-2004

- ▶ **Bicycle parking.** Continue to install additional bike parking facilities in the Core Area as needed. Develop a standard plan including policies, design, style, location, and number of bicycle racks consistent with the Core Area Specific Plan.
- ▶ **Diagonal Parking.** Analyze the impacts of diagonal parking on bike safety in the downtown.
- ▶ **Bike lanes.** Examine ways to improve bicycle circulation to and within the Core Area.

### FURTHER ACTIONS FOR 2000 AND BEYOND

- ▶ **Bicycling.** Improve bicycle route connections to open space and natural areas and neighboring communities. Improve destination signage throughout the City on bikeways.