



DOWNTOWN DAVIS SIGN DESIGN GUIDELINES

CENTRAL COMMERCIAL & MIXED USE

REVISED 2008



GUIDELINES

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL SIGNS IN THE C-C AND MU DISTRICTS

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APPLICABILITY

The standards and guidelines set forth in this manual apply to all properties within the central commercial (CC) district and the mixed use (MU) district of Downtown Davis as indicated on the map at the end of this document.

- All new signs, replacement signs, and modifications to existing signs must comply with the guidelines stated herein.



- Signs may not be changed or installed until the Planning and Building Department has approved the design and a building permit (if applicable) has been issued.
- Many non-conforming signs will exist within the commercial core of Downtown Davis after the guidelines stated herein are implemented. The intent of the Planning Department is to improve the Downtown shopping experience for everyone. Therefore, voluntary compliance with these guidelines is highly encouraged for businesses with existing signage.

PURPOSE

The intent of the sign design guidelines is to accomplish the following:

- Establish reasonable and improved standards for business identification
- Assist property owners and business owners in understanding city expectations
- Reduce the time and fees for processing sign approvals
- Encourage creative and innovative approaches to signage within an established framework
- Promote economic vitality in the downtown



- Enhance overall property values and the visual environment in the city by discouraging signs which contribute to the visual clutter of the streetscape
- Ensure that commercial signs are designed for the purpose of identifying a business in an attractive and functional manner, rather than to serve primarily as general advertising for business.
- To ensure signs on the façade of buildings reinforce the existing character and are integrated into the architectural scheme of the building.



- To promote a quality visual environment by allowing signs that are compatible with their surroundings and which effectively communicate their message.

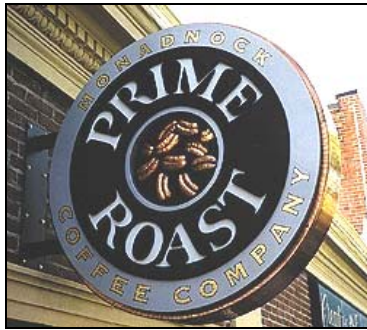
PERMITTED SIGNS

THE FOLLOWING SIGN TYPES ARE PERMITTED IN THE DOWNTOWN DAVIS COMMERCIAL CORE:

- WALL SIGNS
- AWNING & CANOPY SIGNS
- PROJECTING SIGNS
- HANGING SIGNS
- WINDOW SIGNS
- PLAQUE SIGNS
- RESTAURANT MENU SIGNS
- LOW PROFILE & MONUMENT SIGNS
- TENANT DIRECTORY SIGNS
- A-FRAME SIGNS
- PERMANENT BANNER SIGNS
- TEMPORARY SIGNS
- FRATERNITY & SORORITY SIGNS

SIGN OVERVIEW

- All signs should be architecturally integrated with their surroundings in terms of size, shape, color texture, and lighting so that they are complementary to the overall design of the buildings.
- Signs should reflect the character of the building and its use.
- Signs should respect the immediate context of the building's location and the overall character of Downtown.
- Signs should enhance the primary design elements or unique architectural features of buildings.



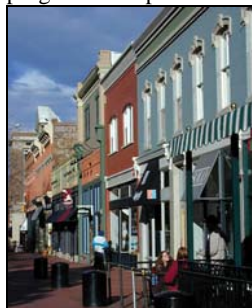
- Signs should be designed with the purpose of promoting retail and street activity while enhancing the pedestrian experience.
- The size of signs and its letters should be located in logical "signable areas" which relate to the pattern of the facade.
- The number of signs per building façade should be limited to the fewest necessary to clearly identify businesses located within.
- Signs are not permitted to cover or obscure architectural features of buildings.
- Consider the layout and shape of the architectural features of the building when determining the size and location of a sign.
- Design elements such as window patterns (vertical and horizontal rectangles, arches, squares, etc.) will help determine the sign shape that will suit the building.



- All signs are to be maintained properly such that they are always in clean, working condition and the copy is not obscured or damaged.
- Signs that encroach or project over the public-right-of-way shall be subject to approval of an encroachment permit.
- New signs proposed for existing buildings shall provide a compatible appearance with the existing signage of other tenants. Signs should attempt to unify the business with its nearest neighboring tenants.

SIGN PROGRAMS

- Sign programs shall be required for new multiple-tenant buildings and are encouraged to be developed for existing buildings.
- Sign programs serve to create a coordinated project theme of uniform design elements such as color, lettering style, and placement.
- In the event that the requirements in the sign ordinance and/or sign design guidelines conflict with an approved sign program, the requirements set forth in the sign program shall prevail.



PERMITTED SIGN AREA

The tables below apply to the following types of signs: wall, awning & canopy, window, plaque, tenant directory, permanent banner, and temporary signs. Permitted sign area for all other signage is addressed individually in the specific guidelines' section based on the type of sign.

The allowable square footage of sign area in the **Central Commercial (C-C) District** shall be computed based upon amount of frontage as indicated in the following table.

CENTRAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	
PREMISES FRONTAGE (FEET)	MAXIMUM PERMITTED SIGN AREA (SQURE FEET)
5	15
10	30
20	42
40	64
60	86
73	100
ABOVE 73	100

The allowable square footage of sign area in the **Mixed-Use (MU) District** shall be computed based upon amount of frontage as indicated in the following table:

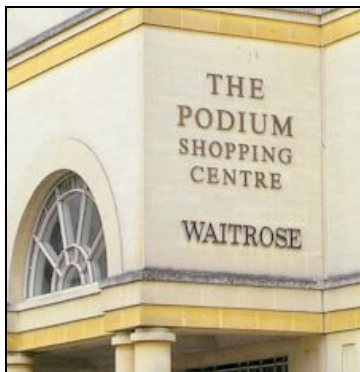
MIXED USE DISTRICT	
PREMISES FRONTAGE (FEET)	MAXIMUM PERMITTED SIGN AREA (SQURE FEET)
5	15
10	30
20	42
30	50
ABOVE 30	50

PLACEMENT

- The architecture of the building often identifies specific locations for signs, and these locations should be used.



- The size of signs shall be in proportion to the size of their location.
- Repetitious signage information on the same building frontage should be avoided, regardless of the sign area square frontage allowed in the zoning code.
- To minimize irreversible damage to masonry, all mounting and supports should be inserted into mortar joints and not into the face of the masonry. This technique does not damage the surface and allows for easy removal.
- Signs that are replaced on stucco exteriors can result in unattractive "patched" areas. These potential maintenance problems shall be addressed during the approval process for the sign replacement.



MULTI-STORIED BUILDINGS

- Ground floor tenants should place signs at the storefront level.
- Window signs and permanent banner signs are permitted on upper portions (see guidelines for qualifying signs).
- Signs on the upper façade of multistoried buildings may be permitted for ground floor tenants.
- Upper story tenant signs shall be window signs not exceeding 15% of the window area.
- Window signs for upper story tenants are permitted if the tenant has an entrance at the sidewalk and a directory sign is located at the ground floor.

DESIGN & MATERIALS

- Exterior materials, finishes, and colors should be the same or similar to those of the building or structures on site.



- Signs should be professionally constructed using high-quality materials such as metal, stone, hard wood, brass-plated, and exposed neon.
- Internally lit plastic letters or plastic box signs are prohibited.
- The colors and lettering styles should compliment the building façade and harmonize with neighboring businesses.
- Excessively bright colors or over-scaled letters shall not be used as a means to attract attention.



- Exposed neon tubing may be used in conjunction with other types of materials to artistically emphasize the business name and/or logo.



- The design and alignment of signs on multiple use buildings should compliment each other such that a unified appearance is achieved.



- Signs shall respect the zoning district its dominant characteristics. Low profile type signs are more appropriate in the MU district, whereas wall signs are more appropriately located in the CC district.

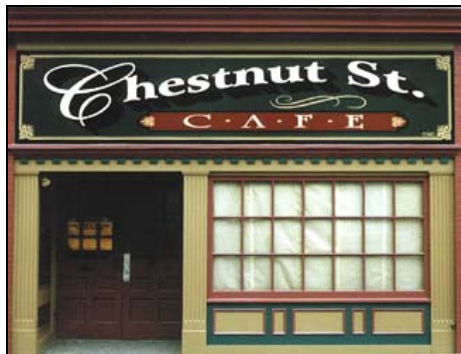
SIGN MESSAGE

- Primary signs contain only the name of the business and/or its logo. Secondary text identifies products and should be located in a secondary location.



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- Signage that contains advertising is not permitted. However, signs may include information describing the products sold or services provided.
- Sign message must be designed to fit properly into the sign location. Modifications to logos and corporate identifiers may be required to fit attractively in the space provided.
- Sign fonts shall be selected to provide both clarity and artistic integrity.



SIGN LIGHTING

- Arrange any external spot or flood lighting such that the light source is directed away from passersby. The light source must be directed against the sign such that it does not shine into adjacent property or cause glare for motorists and pedestrians.



- Back-lit, halo-lit illumination, or reverse channel letters with halo illumination are highly encouraged for lighting purposes. Such signs convey a subtle and attractive appearance and are very legible under moderate ambient lighting conditions.
- All internally-illuminated signs constructed of boxes or individual pan channel letters designed to illuminate through the face of the letter/sign shall require design review.



- Signs that use blinking or flashing lights are not permitted.
- Visible raceways and transformers for individual letters are prohibited. Sign installation details shall indicate the location of the transformer and other mechanical equipment.
- Projecting light fixtures used for externally illuminated signs should be simple and unobtrusive in appearance. They should not obscure the graphics of the sign.



- Where individual letter signs face near-by residential areas, a low level of brightness shall be maintained with the use of halo-lit letters or down lighting (i.e., gooseneck fixtures).



WALL SIGNS ARE TO BE MOUNTED FLUSH AND FIXED SECURELY TO A BUILDING WALL, PROJECTING NO MORE THAN 12 INCHES FROM THE FACE OF A BUILDING WALL, AND NOT EXTENDING SIDeways BEYOND THE BUILDING FACE OR ABOVE THE HIGHEST LINE OF THE BUILDING TO WHICH IT IS ATTACHED.

- Wall signs should be located on the upper portion of the storefront, within or just above the enframed storefront opening. The length of the sign should not exceed the width of the enframed storefront.
- Wall signs shall be placed within a clear signable area. Signable areas are defined as an architecturally continuous wall surface uninterrupted by doors, windows or architectural detail.
- Wall signs shall not exceed 15% of the building façade (the exterior walls of a building exposed to public view).



- Wall signs shall be mounted in locations that respect the design of a building, including the arrangement of bays and openings.
- Signs should not obscure windows, grillework, piers, pilasters, and ornamental features. Typically, wall signs should be centered on horizontal surfaces (i.e., over a storefront opening).



- Wall signs shall be designed to be compatible with the storefront in scale, proportions, and color.



- Signs should be designed to create a clearly defined edge, provide shadow relief, and a substantial appearance. This effect is generally difficult to achieve by painting the sign directly on the building. For this reason, painted signs are discouraged.

AWNING & CANOPY SIGNS

ARE SIGNS THAT ARE PRINTED ON, PAINTED ON, OR ATTACHED TO AN AWNING OR CANOPY ABOVE A BUSINESS DOOR OR WINDOW. THEY GENERALLY SERVE TO BRING COLOR TO THE SHOPPING ENVIRONMENT AND ARE ORIENTED TOWARD PEDESTRIANS FROM THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE STREET.

- Sign lettering and/or logo shall comprise no more than 30% of the total exterior surface of an awning or canopy.
- Awnings and canopies must be permanently attached to buildings.
- The minimum height of awnings shall be 8 feet from the lowest point to the sidewalk.
- Open-ended awnings are preferred.



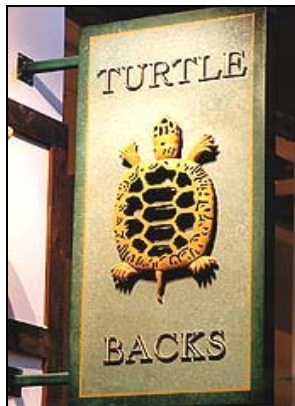
- Awnings and canopies shall be mounted on the horizontal framing element separating the storefront window from the transom (a crosspiece separating a doorway from a window).
- Awnings shall be designed to project over individual window and door openings and not project as a single continuous feature extending over masonry piers or arches.
- Awnings shall be mounted on the wood or metal framing within a door or window opening, not on the wall surrounding the opening.



- Awnings with back-lit graphics or other kinds of interior illumination are not permitted.
- Matte finish canvas, glass, or metal are appropriate materials for awnings or canopies.
- Awnings with a solid color are preferred. Striped awnings may be appropriate for some buildings without ornamental facades. Striped awnings with highly contrasting, bright colors may be visually blaring and inappropriate.

PROJECTING SIGNS ARE

AFFIXED TO THE FACE OF A BUILDING OR STRUCTURE AND PROJECT IN A PERPENDICULAR MANNER MORE THAN 12 INCHES FROM THE WALL SURFACE OF THAT PORTION OF THE BUILDING OR STRUCTURE TO WHICH IT IS MOUNTED. PROJECTING SIGNS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED AND SHOULD BE CAREFULLY DESIGNED TO REFLECT THE CHARACTER OF EACH BUILDING AND BUSINESS AS WELL AS FITTING COMFORTABLY WITH OTHER ADJACENT SIGNAGE.



- Projecting signs should not be mounted above the second floor window-sill in multi-storied buildings.
- The design of the sign should consider visually interesting elements such as square or rectangular shapes with painted or applied letters, two or three dimensional symbols or icons, irregular outlines, and/or internal cut-outs.
- Projecting signs shall be small in scale and provide a vertical clearance of 8 feet along pedestrian areas.



- Projecting signs shall be oriented to pedestrians passing on the sidewalk in front of the buildings rather than to automobiles or pedestrians on the far side of the street. This can be achieved by providing a minimum clearance of 12 inches between the building face and sign and maintaining a projection of 36 inches.
- Projecting signs should fit within an imaginary rectangle with a maximum area of 6 square feet.



- Mounting hardware should be an attractive and integral part of the sign design. Simple round pipe brackets with plugged ends or added decorative end elements are generally appropriate for signs. However, metal brackets of a more decorative and complex shape are encouraged where appropriate to add to the character of the building.



MARQUEE SIGNS

- Marquee signs are projecting signs attached to or supported by a permanent canopy often made of metal and glass. Marquee signs are to be installed only on buildings occupied by theaters, cinemas, performing arts facilities, or parking structures.
- The sign copy of marquee signs shall be limited to include only the facility's name and changeable copy related to current and future attractions.
- The facility name portion of the sign shall not exceed 40 percent of the total sign area and the changeable copy portions of the sign shall not exceed 80 percent of the total sign area.

HANGING SIGNS ARE SIMILAR TO PROJECTING SIGNS EXCEPT THAT THEY ARE SUSPENDED BELOW A MARQUEE OR UNDER A CANOPY. HANGING SIGNS ARE GENERALLY SMALLER THAN PROJECTING SIGNS DUE TO THEIR LOWER MOUNTING HEIGHT.

- Hanging signs shall be used only at ground floor locations except for upper floor businesses with covered entry porches and balconies.



- Hanging signs shall be treated similar to but smaller than projecting signs.
- Hanging signs, excluding supporting rods, chains or similar hangers, shall fit within an imaginary rectangle with a maximum area of 4 square feet.
- Signs shall be oriented toward the pedestrian and impart a sense of creativity in its design.



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WINDOW SIGNS ARE SIGNS THAT ARE PAINTED, POSTED, DISPLAYED, OR ETCHED ON AN INTERIOR TRANSLUCENT OR TRANSPARENT SURFACE, INCLUDING WINDOWS OR DOORS. THIS TYPE OF SIGNAGE GENERALLY CONTAINS ONLY TEXT BUT IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES CAN EXPRESS A SPECIAL BUSINESS PERSONALITY THROUGH GRAPHIC LOGOS OR IMAGES COMBINED WITH COLOR.

- Window signs shall not exceed 15% of the window area so that visibility into and out of the window is not obscured.
- Sign copy shall not exceed 8 inches in height.
- Window sign copy shall be applied directly to glazed area.



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- Window signs should be created from high-quality materials such as paint, gold-leaf, or neon. Appropriate techniques for window signs include sandblasting or etched glass.



- Window signs should be applied directly to the interior face of the glazing or hung inside the window thereby concealing all mounting hardware and equipment.
- Well-designed window graphics shall be used in the construction of the sign to attract attention but still allow pedestrians to view store interiors.

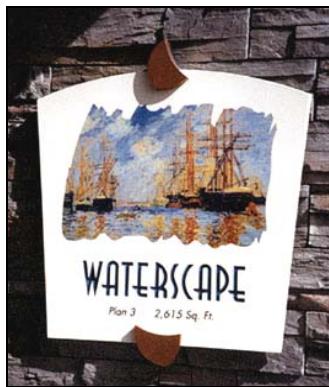


PLAQUE SIGNS ARE SMALL VERSIONS OF WALL SIGNS THAT ARE ATTACHED TO SURFACES ADJACENT TO SHOP FRONT ENTRIES.

- Plaque signs are to be located only on wall surfaces adjacent to tenant entries.
- Plaque signs are to fit within an imaginary rectangle with a maximum area of 2 square feet.



- Limit plaque sign projections from wall surfaces to a maximum of 2 inches.
- Signs are to include the business name and a business logo.
- Plaque signs are encouraged to include unique designs or other visually stimulating decorations and may be irregular in outline shape.



RESTAURANT MENU SIGNS

ARE SIGNS THAT INCORPORATE A MENU CONTAINING A LISTING OF PRODUCTS AND PRICES OFFERED BY THE BUSINESS. SUCH SIGNS FACILITATE THE CUSTOMER IN LOCATING A RESTAURANT IN WHICH TO PATRONIZE. THEREFORE, PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED MENUS WITH PRICES AND OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION CAN HELP THE CUSTOMER IN MAKING THIS DECISION.

- Restaurant menu signs should be located in a permanently mounted display box on the surface of the building adjacent to the entry. Taping a menu to a box is not an appropriate menu sign.



- For special circumstances in which restaurants occupy a considerable amount of window space, menus are to be decoratively displayed in the window adjacent to the entry.
- Restaurant menu signs shall be provided for all restaurants with table service.
- High quality materials and artistic designs shall be used in the construction of menu signs.



- Restaurant menu signs are not included in the calculation of maximum sign area.
- The allowable area for restaurant menu signs shall be a maximum of 6 square feet.
- Restaurant menu signs shall be appropriate in size, location, and design to the character and architectural detail of the building as well as to the character of the restaurant.

LOW PROFILE OR MONUMENT SIGNS ARE FREE-STANDING SIGNS WITH A LOWER HEIGHT CONFIGURATION. SUCH SIGNS ARE USUALLY USED FOR BUILDING COMPLEXES THAT ARE SEPARATED FROM ADJACENT STREETS BY SUBSTANTIAL SETBACKS.

- Low profile or monument signs do not overhang public property and are supported by two columns, uprights, or have a solid footing in or upon the ground.
- Low profile signs should be constructed out of materials that compliment the building structure and its use.

- Architectural lines which compliment that of the building shall be incorporated, especially with respect to the top of the sign.
- The design of the sign structure and the text should express high quality construction.
- Low profile or monument signs shall be composed of individual lettering that is consistent with the image of the business and the surrounding architectural style.



- Letter heights should not exceed 12 inches.
- Low profile signs must be illuminated either by external fixtures designed to complement the appearance of the sign or internally illuminated such that only text and logos illuminate. Opaque backgrounds are required and shall be of a non-reflective material.
- Sign text should be limited to the building or project name, logos, and the business address.
- The maximum sign height, including the sign base, is not to exceed 6 feet in the mixed-use (MU) district and 8 feet in the central commercial (CC) district.
- Low profile or monument signs should only be used when other alternative types of signage would not provide adequate identification.

TENANT DIRECTORY

SIGNS ARE USED TO IDENTIFY MULTI-TENANT BUILDINGS AND BUSINESSES THAT DO NOT HAVE DIRECT FRONTAGE ON A PUBLIC STREET. TENANT

DIRECTORY SIGNS SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED AND ORIENTED TO THE PEDESTRIAN.

- Tenant Directory signs shall be mounted flat against a solid wall or incorporated into a freestanding sign located on the property on which the tenants are located.
- The sign copy may include the following: building or project name, project logo, address, business tenant names, and suite numbers or letters.



- The letter size of the building name, project name, or logo shall not exceed 4 inches in height. All other copy shall not exceed 2 inches in height.
- Tenant Directory signs should be constructed out of materials that compliment both the building structure and its use.

A-FRAME SIGNS ARE DESIGNED TO STAND ON THEIR OWN EITHER ON PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROPERTY. SUCH SIGNS ARE PORTABLE AND ARE USUALLY PLACED ALONG PUBLIC SIDEWALKS

TO ATTRACT PEDESTRIANS INTO SHOPPING AREAS.

- A-Frame signs are permitted in the **C-C (Central Commercial) district** only.
- A-frame signs must be constructed using one of the following durable materials: wooden or metal signs suspended from a wire frame, wooden A-Frame signs with open bases, or shaped silhouette signs made of plywood, metal, or similar wood-like material that can withstand various weather conditions.
- Glass, breakable materials, paper, laminated paper, vinyl, plastic, PVC pipe frames, or illumination are not permitted materials for A-Frame Signs.
- A-Frame sign designs shall be uncluttered, with a minimum of text. Logos and graphics are encouraged.



- A-Frame signs must not be permanently affixed to any object, structure, or the ground.
- The maximum sign area per A-Frame sign is 8 square feet. Sign area is calculated on one side only.
- A-Frame signs may contain one area not larger than one square foot in size, with small text. The remainder of the sign lettering shall be between 2-4 inches high.
- The maximum size for rectangular A-Frame signs is 4 feet in height and 2 feet in width. Rectangular signs are required to have an open base, either through wooden cut-outs or legs.
- The maximum size for shaped silhouette A-Frame signs is 5 feet in height and 3 feet in width, provided the maximum sign area is not exceeded.

PERMANENT BANNER SIGNS

OFTEN HELP TO ADD INTEREST AND COLOR TO BLANK FACADES AND SPECIAL BUILDINGS. THEY ARE TO BE VERTICALLY ORIENTED, AND COMPATIBLE WITH THE OVERALL CHARACTER AND COLOR OF THE BUILDING.



- When permitted, permanent banner signs shall look like architectural elements of the building and shall hang from projecting metal brackets of a size and design appropriate to the banner and the architectural character of the building.



- Banner signs shall be mounted perpendicular to the face of the facade at both the top and bottom.
- Freestanding banners are not permitted. Banner signs may contain a business name and logo but they are not to contain any other written message.
- Banner projections from the face of buildings shall be limited to 36 inches at a sidewalk.

TEMPORARY SIGNS

CAN TAKE THE FORM OF BANNERS, WINDOW GRAPHICS, OR AS CARDS INTEGRATED WITH A WINDOW DISPLAY. TEMPORARY SIGNS MAY CONTAIN WRITTEN MESSAGES AND SHOULD USE A SIMPLE FONT THAT IS EASY TO READ.

- Temporary signs shall not cover more than 10% of the total window and door sign area visible from the exterior.
- Temporary signs are to be allowed on the interior of the business establishment only.
- Temporary signs are permitted to contain no more than 5 square feet of text and shall not exceed 10 square feet in size.
- Temporary signs should be made of durable materials and shall not incorporate fluorescent or intensely bright colors.
- Temporary signs should be carefully designed and constructed, as they reflect on the quality of the business.
- Temporary signs are to be displayed for no more than thirty days in a calendar year.

FRATERNITY & SORORITY SIGNS

ARE SIGNS THAT IDENTIFY A HOUSE OR DWELLING AS A FRATERNITY OR SORORITY.

- Fraternity and sorority signs should consist of a wall mounted sign using individual letters.
- The letters must be constructed using high-quality materials such as metal, stone, wood, or gold leaf.



- Fraternity and sorority signs shall not exceed a total of 6 square feet.
- The location of fraternity and sorority signs shall be in a logical signable area and consistent with the architecture of the building to which it is attached.

*Photos courtesy of Signs of the Times
<http://www.signweb.com/>

CENTRAL COMMERCIAL & MIXED USE DISTRICTS OF DOWNTOWN DAVIS

