

CITY OF BENICIA

# Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan

September 2007



**Prepared By:**



**Opticos Design, Inc.**  
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# Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan

City of Benicia  
September 2007

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## A Vision for Benicia's Downtown

The Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan (DMUMP) presents a vision for the Downtown Mixed Use Project Area that comprises a large portion of the Downtown Historic District. It provides strategies for improvements in the First Street Historic District in the context of its existing historic fabric. The Master Plan seeks to present sensitive and place-specific design recommendations that relate closely to existing conditions, and aims to promote healthy growth and continued reinvestment in the area in the spirit of community sustainability.

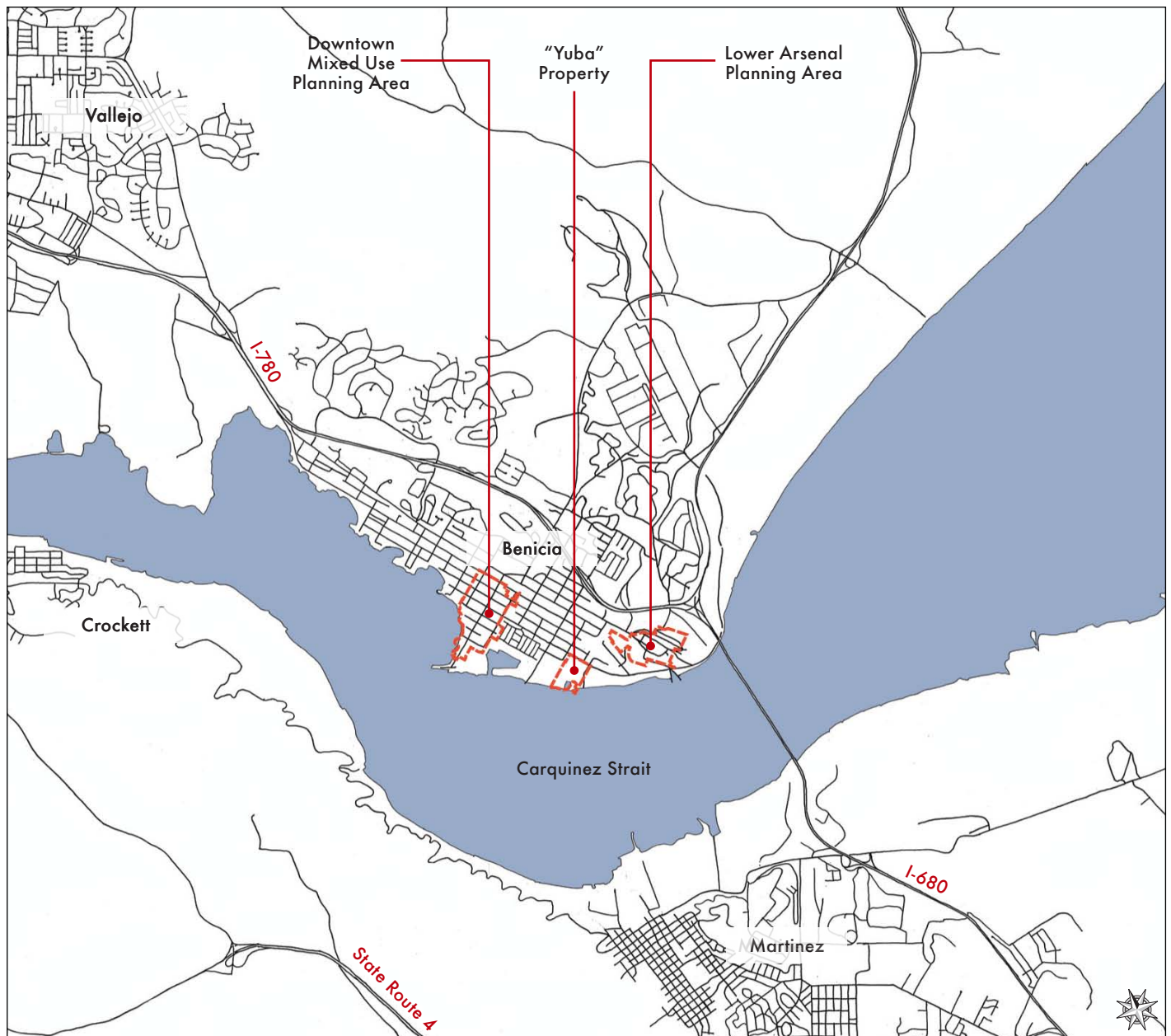
## Purpose of the Master Plan

This Master Plan seeks to implement the vision for mixed-use development as it was defined in the 1999 Benicia General Plan, which encourages “a mix of compatible uses adjacent to the Downtown, upgrading of existing buildings, preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, and introduction of new, compatible mixed-use buildings.” The General Plan directed that “design standards be developed to ensure that mixed-use development is compatible with and contributes to the character of the street, the Downtown, and adjoining neighborhoods.”

Central to this document is the Form-Based Code (Chapter 4), which provides a regulatory framework for the implementation of mixed use in the project area.

*Above left:  
Residential Fabric  
Above right:  
Commercial Shop-  
fronts along First  
Street.*





### Location and Overview

The project area is located in downtown Benicia, California, and is bounded roughly by West Second Street to the west, C Street to the south, East Second Street to the east, and K Street to the north. The project area comprises approximately 88 acres. The majority of the project area is contained within the Downtown Historic District.

*Above: The Downtown Mixed Use project area is an 88-acre portion of downtown Benicia centered along First Street and located in eastern Benicia in the northern Bay Area.*



### Summary of Process

An intense public process and extensive data collection phase was conducted for the Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan. The evolution of this plan is the result of site visits, reviews of documents, interviews, meetings, a design workshop or “charrette,” and community cooperation and input.

### Plans and Documents

The following documents were reviewed and considered during the initial data collection phase of the planning and design process: Benicia General Plan and EIR, Zoning Code, Downtown Streetscape Design Plan, Downtown Benicia Parking Study, Benicia Downtown Market Study, Downtown Historic Conservation Plan, and Benicia: Portrait of an Early California Town by Robert Brueggemann. The design team also consulted the University of California, Berkeley, Fire Insurance Map database and internet-based aerial mapping resources.

### Site Tour and Project Kickoff

The consultant team met with city staff, discussed project goals, and toured the project areas on August 3, 2006. The purpose of this visit was to gain a general understanding of context, constraints, and opportunities and to document various conditions in and around the project areas, such as traffic and circulation, building form, architecture, public realm, pedestrian access, and other conditions. As part of this process, members of Opticos Design prepared physical analysis diagrams and base maps.

### Discovery Interviews and Visioning Workshop

Initial public input was gathered over a two-day period (August 22 and 23, 2006) through a series of nearly ninety interviews with key stakeholders. This two-day session culminated in a Visioning Workshop, which was open and accessible to the public, in the evening on the second day.

The consultant team interviewed property owners, business owners, residents, and representatives of organizations, such as the Benicia Historic Society. The interviews were private, 30-minute sessions aimed at getting an in-depth understanding of community concerns and priorities.

At the Visioning Workshop on August 23, 2006, the consultant team presented initial physical and background analysis of the study area and received valuable information from community members. After the consultant’s presentation, the audience broke out into smaller groups to discuss relevant sub-topics, such as housing, appropriate land use typologies, and identification of those areas that need to be preserved or attended to. This information was used to guide the design process and to define a series of overriding design principles.



**Top:** Project kickoff walking tour with City staff; **Center:** Community member presenting design ideas at initial visioning workshop; **Bottom:** Lunchtime briefing during the community workshop.



An exercise conducted during the Visioning Workshop that focused on the First Street project area produced interesting results. Community members had strong positive feelings about the historic State Capitol building at First and G Streets, the completed section of the Bay trail along the shoreline south of F Street, the “First Street Green” open space at the end of First Street, and the City Park, among others.

Community members cited concentrations of ground-floor office uses along First, such as in buildings near the intersection of First and H Streets as negative aspects in the area. Other major negative comments addressed the overflow parking lot along E Street and the abandoned shipyard between D and C Streets along the shoreline.

Community members indicated that significant opportunities for improvement exist at the end of First Street, and in the overflow parking lot along E Street, among others.

#### Key

- Positive Aspects
- Negative Aspects
- Key Opportunities
- Downtown Historic District
- Mixed Use Project Area

The interviews and workshop produced many commonalities in perception and understanding among the participants and provided good direction for city staff and the consultant team. The following summarizes some of the major types of comments received:

- Make the Downtown more of a destination for residents, tourists, and events.
- Preserve and enhance First Street as an old-fashioned, small-scale main street.
- Move personal and professional businesses to second floors to allow more ground-floor retail.
- Provide economic incentives for historic renovation.
- Enhance Downtown with landscaping, benches, flower plantings, lighting, etc.
- Establish a greater presence of Benicia's artist colony.
- Improve wayfinding with better signage.
- Extend the Bay Trail from Downtown to the Arsenal.
- Improve pedestrian safety.
- Consider providing additional parking.

### Physical and Economic Analysis

After the Visioning Workshop the consultant team conducted four weeks of intensive physical and economic analysis. Physical analysis included the creation of maps tracing Downtown's historic development, land use patterns, transportation and circulation systems, and built fabric. Economic analysis included research on demographic and market conditions in the project area.

### Community Design Workshop

For the second workshop (September 18–22nd, 2006), members of the consultant team returned to Benicia for a five-day intensive working session to establish an illustrative vision plan and a land use “regulating” plan for the area. During this time the design team worked to produce an urban design plan for the study area that responded to interactive community input. The process was designed so that “feedback loops” were ongoing and immediate, keeping infeasible ideas from being fully developed and concentrating on the community's desired results for the Downtown planning area.

The community design workshop allowed for a variety of interaction among the consultant team and members of the community. This occurred through organized presentations, informal evening pinups, group discussions, and facilitation of stakeholder meetings. Physical improvements, infill building types, and implementation strategies, among other topics, were discussed and illustrated.

During the design workshop, the appropriate strategy for Form-Based Coding was also explored. Based on community, stakeholder, and staff input, the consultant team developed a “zone-based” code, which sets different standards of form and intensity for designated areas. However, the code also pays careful consideration to building types, focusing on the use, mass, height, and bulk of different building types and how they may be used to implement the plan.

**Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan**  
**Opticos Design, Inc.**



***Top:** Community members attend a lunchtime session during the community design workshop; **Center:** Consultant team members discuss downtown plan; **Bottom:** Community members discuss plan concepts with consultant team.*

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### Plan Organization

The Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan is organized as follows: Chapter 2 assesses the project area's existing conditions and presents findings on its key issues and opportunities. Chapter 3 provides a qualitative vision for the project area as it emerged through the community charrette process, containing information on circulation and transportation policies and programs, and suggested strategies for phasing and implementation.

Chapter 4 provides regulatory development standards for the implementation of this vision through a Form-Based Code. The Code provides form-based zoning regulations for the project area and is intended for adoption into the Benicia Zoning Ordinance.

The Appendix provides a glossary of terms used in the development code and throughout the Master Plan.





## Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of physical and demographic analyses performed in preparation for the Master Plan. It includes a discussion of downtown Benicia’s historical development and identifies a set of primary challenges and opportunities based on its physical form, geographic location, and demographic characteristics.

Downtown Benicia presents a unique case study in the Bay Area in that historically it has never experienced an economic boom that would have resulted in its wholesale change. For this reason, as the 1990 Downtown Historic Conservation Plan recognized, it presents a “rare view of the evolution of architecture from the mid-19th century to the 20th century in California,” with a rich collection of historic buildings. Extensive analysis was conducted by the design team to ensure that design recommendations would appropriately respond to Downtown Benicia’s unique historic fabric, and that the resulting implementation tools would preserve its best qualities.



### Historical Analysis

*Above, left to right: Downtown Benicia in 1847, 1886, 1942, and 2006.*

Settlement in downtown Benicia began soon after its platting by Jasper O'Farrell in the summer of 1847. Under the direction of Robert Semple and Thomas Larkin, the city was laid out in blocks measuring 600 feet on each side and divided crosswise by two east-west alleys and a minor, 60' wide east-west street, effectively creating two 250' x 600' blocks with their long side parallel to the Strait. First Street was platted well into the hills and terminated at a small promontory at its southern end.

By 1886 the City had already experienced two major stages in its development. The first stage began with the establishment of Benicia as State Capitol in 1853-54 with the subsequent construction of the State Capitol in 1853. This stage was furthered by the City's brief heyday as the "Athens of the West," which saw the establishment of a number of religious and educational institutions north of the State Capitol, including St. Catherine's in 1854 on Solano Square. The second stage began in 1879 with railroad and ferry service to Port Costa. This brought an influx of industry to lower First Street that included numerous tanneries, mills, packing companies, and canneries.

In 1929 the train and ferry service became obsolete with the construction of the Benicia railroad bridge, and many of the industrial facilities on the lower portion of First Street had closed or relocated elsewhere. By 1942 downtown Benicia was in a



period of decline. This was exacerbated by the construction of I-780 in 1955, disconnecting downtown Benicia from the regional transportation system. While the city as a whole has enjoyed better access to the region, retail services have largely shifted to locations with better freeway connections and visibility.

### Primary Challenges

Lack of freeway connections and downtown through-traffic comprise the core of Downtown Benicia's many current challenges. Additional challenges involve re-evaluating Downtown Benicia's commercial and public space needs, and providing for good parking management to make downtown Benicia viable as a strong economic and historic center.

#### Lack of Through Traffic

From a transportation and economic development perspective, one of Downtown's most important advantages is also one of its key disadvantages: All of Downtown's streets dead-end in at least one direction; most of them terminate at both sides, ending at the water, the hills, or the edge of the Arsenal. As a result, there is far more traffic capacity in the streets of Downtown Benicia than would ever be used by the scale of development contemplated by the community. Indeed, several streets are excessively wide, with half of their width unnecessary.

The lack of through traffic, however, limits the visibility of First Street's businesses. Customers do not arrive in Downtown Benicia by chance, or notice an interesting shop because they "happen to be driving by." The result is that Downtown needs to work harder than other retail districts to attract customers.

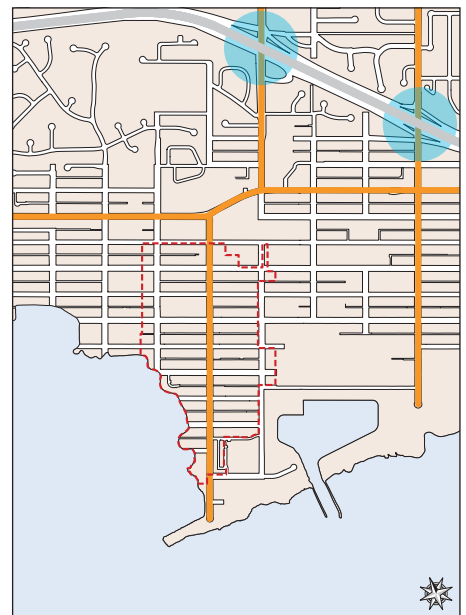
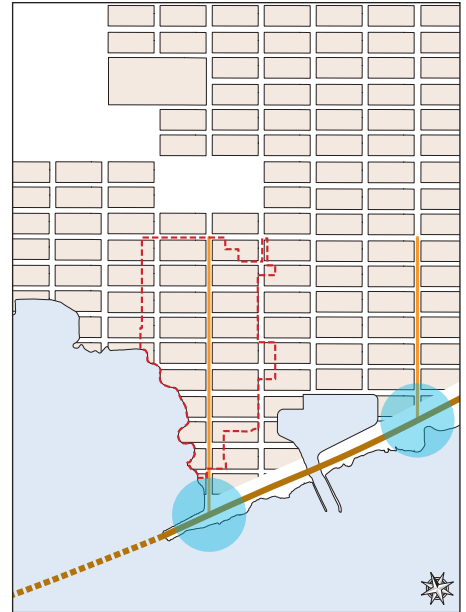
#### Lack of Direct Freeway Connections

Downtown access is hampered by the fact that First Street does not connect to the freeway, and East Second Street is discontinuous, with the public safety building blocking the street right-of-way.

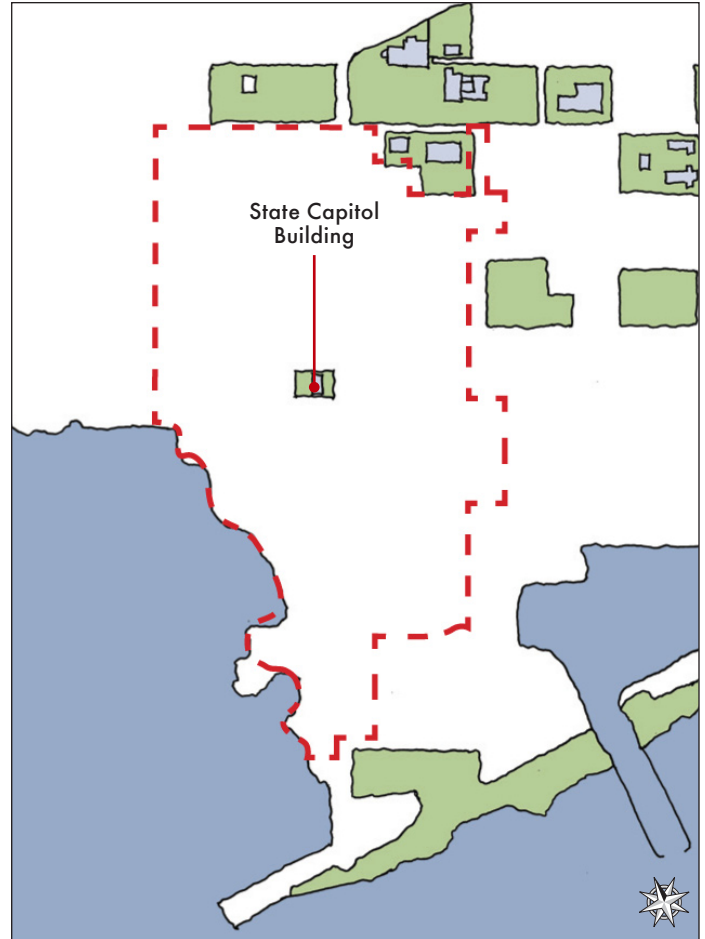
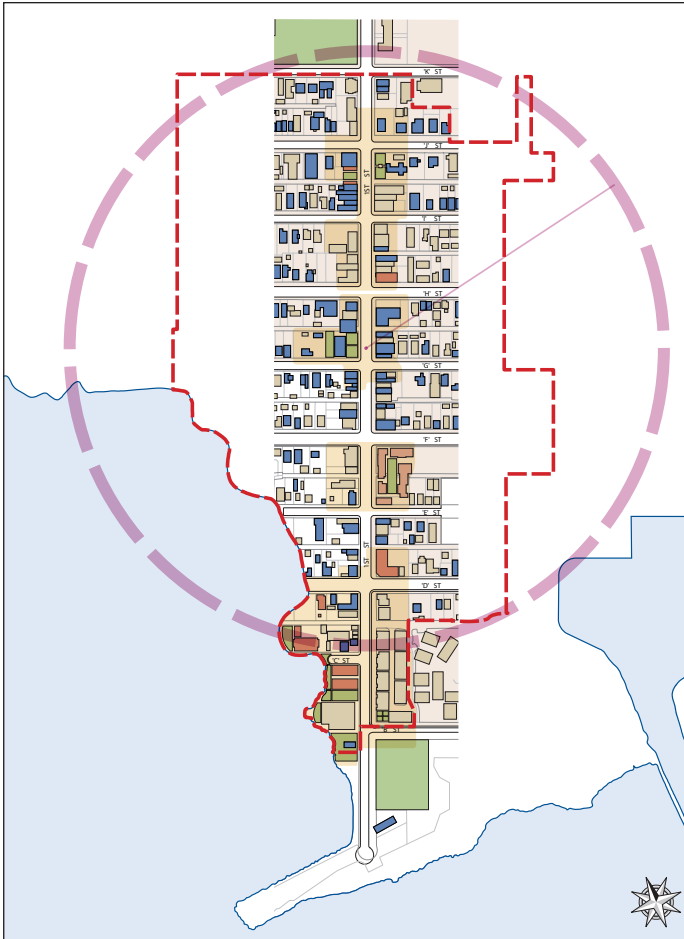
#### Oversupply of Commercial Space

The supply of commercial space on First Street exceeds the needs of retailers. First Street includes over 200,000 square feet of commercial space along eleven blocks from the Waterfront to Solano Square, a distance of over ½ mile. This configuration and scale poses several challenges for retailers in Benicia. Firstly, the linear nature of Benicia's downtown makes it difficult to create a continuous, vibrant shopping atmosphere along the length of First Street that is appealing to pedestrians. Secondly, the City of Benicia does not have a large enough customer base to support a full 200,000 square feet of retail, which is the size of a small regional shopping center.

This oversupply of retail has been potentially exacerbated by the encouragement of commercial development on the side streets east and west of First Street. Although conversions of residential or other buildings off of First Street have not been occurring at a rapid pace, some side streets in the southern part of Downtown, such as East D Street, have already reached a mass of commercial space sufficient to change their character. New mixed-use development on other side streets would not be appropriate given the historic residential character of these streets.



**Top:** Historic street grid and primary transportation network: in the late 19th and early 20th century First Street business activity was fueled by its proximity to the train-ferry service to and from Port Costa. **Bottom:** Current Street grid and primary transportation network: The removal of the train-ferry service and the introduction of the I-780 freeway has shifted principal retail visibility to the freeway interchanges. First Street has been cut off further by the closing of East Second Street between K and L Streets.



### Prevalence of Office Uses

During the Master Plan process, many community members also expressed concern over the significant presence of ground floor office users on First Street. While blocks generally south of F Street have continuous retail activity and create a vibrant shopping atmosphere, blocks further to the north have a greater mix of office and retail activity. In some areas, the presence of ground floor offices makes it difficult for retailers to establish enough of a presence to draw pedestrian activity. Further, retailers are concerned that office-related tenants are willing to pay higher rents, and this could further dilute existing concentrations of retail.

Despite these concerns, market overview analysis indicates that office users play a very significant role in Downtown Benicia, providing nearly half of all jobs and over one-third of all business opportunities. Many of these office users, such as real estate agents and accountants, benefit from the walk-in activity and visibility associated with ground floor spaces.

***Above left:** diagram illustrating First Street overlaid with a 1/4 mile radius, the typical distance pedestrians may be expected to walk; **Above right:** illustrates lack of high quality public space in the First St. planning area.*

### Lack of High-Quality Public Space

Despite a high-quality natural environment, with numerous view corridors that terminate at the water's edge, Downtown suffers from a lack of publicly-accessible open spaces. First Street's relatively narrow cross-section does not allow for generous sidewalk areas that might encourage strolling and outdoor seating. Efforts at landscaping and sidewalk design have been fragmented and uncoordinated in the past.

### Parking Management

Lack of available parking is a frequently voiced complaint about the downtown area. Yet a review of the data suggests that there is always abundant parking downtown, except during major festival days. The problem is that supply and demand are imbalanced geographically, in particular along First Street, where employees who park all day displace short-term customers.

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### Key Opportunities

Despite the primary challenges discussed above, Downtown features many opportunities for improvement. These include:

#### Strong Historic Fabric

The project area comprises much of the Downtown Historic District and includes many high-quality buildings of character and significance, including the State Capitol building and St. Paul's Church along First Street. The Downtown provides a unique physical setting as a regional tourist destination.

#### Recent New Investment

New mixed-use construction in the Downtown, such as the Harbor Walk project, has had success in attracting new tenants and demonstrating to other property owners that improved space can achieve higher rents. Several other projects currently in process may trigger significant revitalization of existing retail projects in the area.

#### Bay Trail

The almost completed Bay Trail is the only regional transportation route that serves the heart of Downtown and the Arsenal Historic District. Once the new bike path is complete on the Benicia Bridge, both the Arsenal and downtown merchants should work to attract cyclists to their businesses, much as cities like Sausalito do. Improving access for cyclists and pedestrians along the official Bay Trail route and key "spurs" along the Trail should be a high priority for the city.

#### Extra Street Width

As noted above, Downtown Benicia's unnecessarily wide streets provide many opportunities for widening sidewalks, increasing parking, implementing traffic calming programs, planting additional trees and providing other improvements on street rights-of-way.

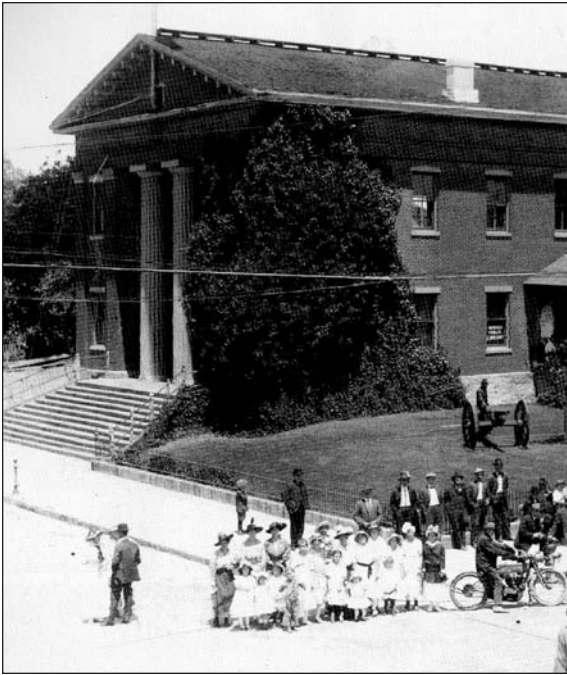


***Top:** Historic row of Canary Date palms along West J Street; **Center:** The 1853 State Capitol; **Bottom:** New development along a recently completed section of the Bay Trail.*

### **Parking**

Extra street widths throughout Downtown Benicia offer the potential to add on-street parking, generally by converting existing parallel spaces to perpendicular or diagonal spaces. Such parking changes would need to address potentially negative traffic and urban design implications of diagonal parking.

More importantly, parking management techniques can better balance parking demand throughout the downtown area, ensuring that customers can always find a space along First Street near their destination.



## Introduction

The DMUMP identifies a series of interrelated initiatives in order to respond appropriately to the primary challenges as they are outlined in Chapter 2. This chapter seeks to define a set of design and policy recommendations for each initiative, makes suggestions for long-term improvements to the project area based on these recommendations, and provides a list of potential programs for implementation.

This chapter first describes improvements to the First Street corridor that are organized in a series of initiatives focusing on individual nodes of activity. This organization seeks to provide a strategy for making incremental changes that can respond successfully to the needs of a healthy retail street as it matures over time. The physical and land use-related parameters of these recommendations are reflected in the “Town Core” Form-Based Code standards in Chapter 4 of this document.

Outside of the First Street corridor, the project area also has two distinct commercial nodes that provide a different environment for commercial activity. The DMUMP makes a series of design recommendations for these two “neighborhood centers” and suggests ways that they should be encouraged to evolve. The physical and land use-related parameters of these recommendations are reflected in the “Neighborhood Center” Form-Based Code standards.

***Above left:** The State Capitol building in the late 19th Century; **Above right:** The State Capitol building today.*



This chapter also provides design recommendations for the project area's historic neighborhoods, including appropriate techniques for the integration of mixed-use development in residential areas, and recommendations for making compatible transitions between retail-oriented mixed-use areas and neighborhoods that are largely residential in character. The physical and land use-related parameters of these recommendations are reflected in the remaining Form-Based Code zones - "Town Core-Open," "Neighborhood General-Open," and "Neighborhood General" - and their corresponding standards.

This chapter also makes recommendations for implementation strategies and programs that are not directly related to the Form-Based Code and yet may be beneficial for the City to pursue in order to support continued improvement and reinvestment in the downtown area.

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### First Street Recommendations

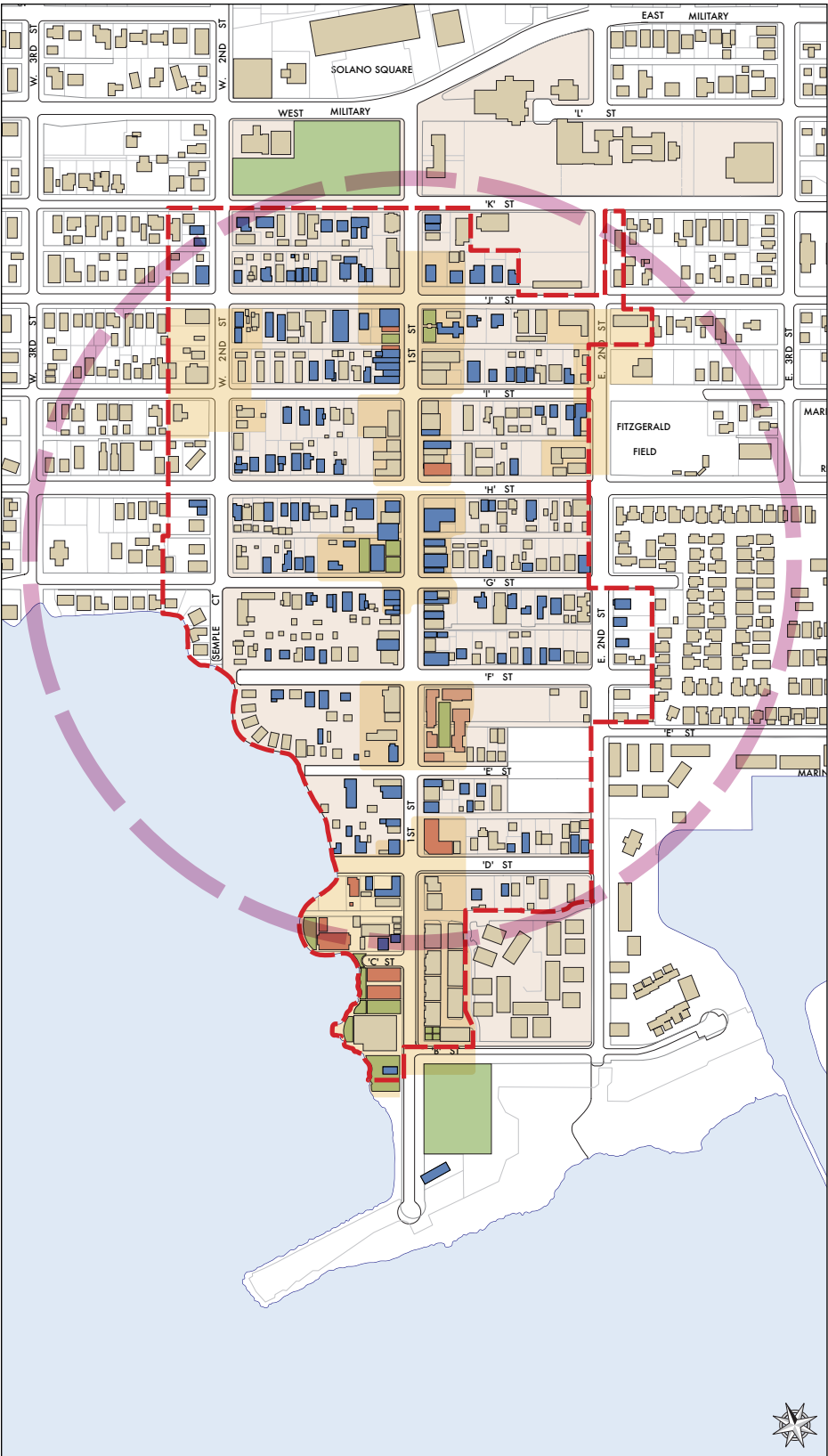
First Street currently has a supply of commercial space that exceeds the needs of retailers. Existing land use policy that encourages commercial uses in areas off of First Street tends to dilute the already extensive supply of downtown commercial space, which contributes to the difficulty in creating a consistent pedestrian-oriented retail environment along First Street. The DMUMP envisions that retail and related mixed uses can be concentrated along First Street and in existing retail nodes, and discourages intense mixed-use development on side-street areas that have not seen considerable commercial development.

By encouraging intensified ground-floor retail, the City should support the development of second and third-story office and residential uses along First Street, creating additional opportunities for office uses to transition from ground-floor spaces. The City should focus on policies and programs that intensify commercial uses at one or more "nodes" along First Street in an incremental fashion as retail demands and needs increase over time.

As new buildings along First Street are developed, the City should also ensure that ground floor retail spaces are available and suitable for retail tenants. There are currently a number of buildings along First Street with ground-floor space that is only appropriate for office tenants. The Master Plan recommends that these building types should be discouraged in the future, in order to offer increased visibility and access from First Street foot-traffic, and to allow a greater flexibility of uses that respond to changing market conditions over time.



# Illustrative Framework Plan



**Key**

- Buildings of Historical Significance
- Plan Initiative Areas
- Proposed Buildings
- Public Open Spaces
- Proposed Improvement Areas
- Existing Building Fabric
- Five Minute walking radius
- Plan Area

*Left: The Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan identifies improvements along First Street that are organized in a series of nodes that include new projects in the pipeline, suggested new building initiatives, and coordinated renovations of existing structures, as well as new and improved open spaces. These recommendations seek to respond to the project area’s historic fabric (in blue) as well as capitalize on existing amenities, including public buildings and institutions (such as the former Capitol) and access and views of the Carquinez Strait.*

### South of D and West of First

The area below D Street has seen significant commercial development in recent years with the construction of the “Harbor Walk” Project at First and B Streets. Several new projects along First Street continuing west to the water are currently in various stages of planning, approval, and construction, including a similar development at 221 First Street, newly renovated structures at 307 and 309 First Street, and a proposed Bed & Breakfast at 134 West D Street.

Many of the surrounding properties on D Street have transitioned to commercial uses. With the energy of existing projects, and new projects in the pipeline, this area represents the greatest opportunity for the City to take advantage of “critical mass,” encouraging the development of a series of high-quality, mixed-use buildings that may provide new opportunities for retail spaces that are appealing to a broad base of prospective tenants. The area is also likely to be in close proximity to a ferry terminal that would be located along the Carquinez Strait.

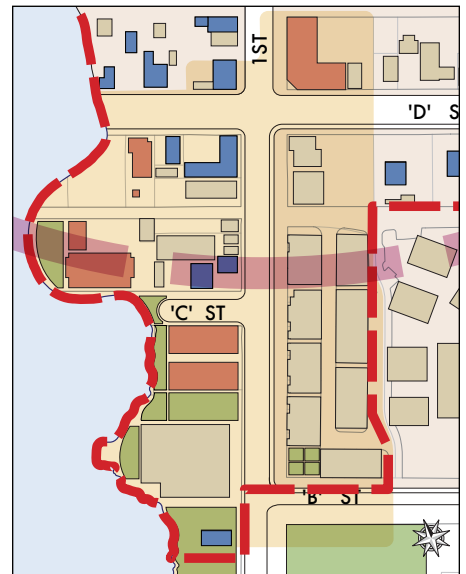
As the shipyard at the end of C Street is cleaned up and removed, and the Bay Trail is extended along the western shore, a great opportunity exists to provide a series of high-quality, interconnected open spaces along the way. The City should work to encourage this network, particularly between the redevelopment opportunity at the west end of C Street and continuing south to Captain Blyther’s Restaurant at 123 First Street.

Over time, the City should also consider encouraging the redevelopment of the existing garden nursery at the northeast corner of First and D Streets with a two to three-story mixed-use building.

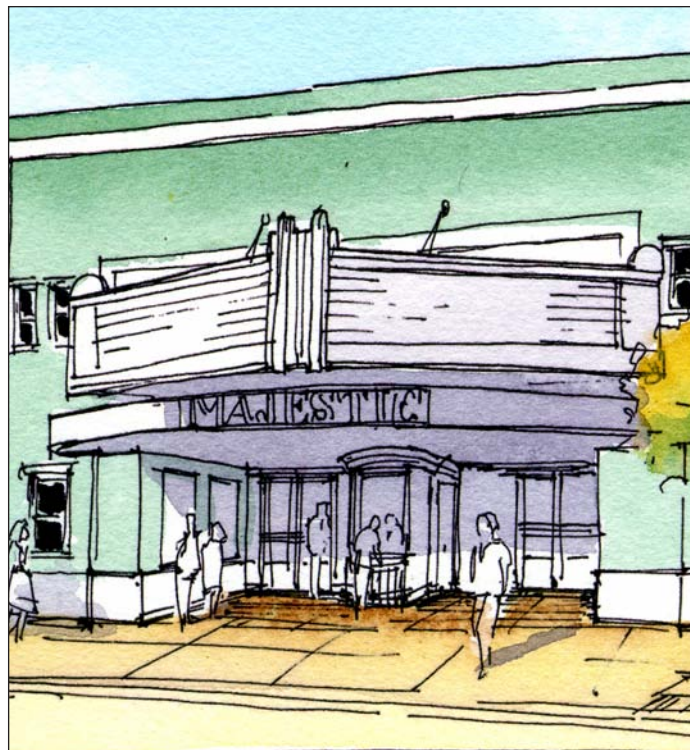
The plan recommends that the City focus on the area south of D Street and west of First Street in the short-term in order to maximize the concentration of high-quality retail in the downtown area that is accessible and pedestrian-oriented. As First Street matures, the City should work to encourage new and revitalized development in a series of nodes along First Street, ensuring a comfortable and continuous experience for pedestrians.

### First Street Between E and F Streets

The existing office/retail development along the east side of First Street between E and F Streets presents an opportunity for the encouragement of a future node. Although the building is rather new and fairly well-designed, it is currently occupied largely by office tenants and its few retail and restaurant establishments are not able to take full advantage of the rear courtyard. The City should explore the possibility of encouraging the renovation of this complex in the mid to long-term to create an appealing outdoor courtyard space that would be suitable for several eating establishments to occupy. This could be accomplished simply by a renovation of the sunken courtyard area to make it more useable and accessible, combined with a restructuring of the two-story gallery space along the western end of the courtyard.



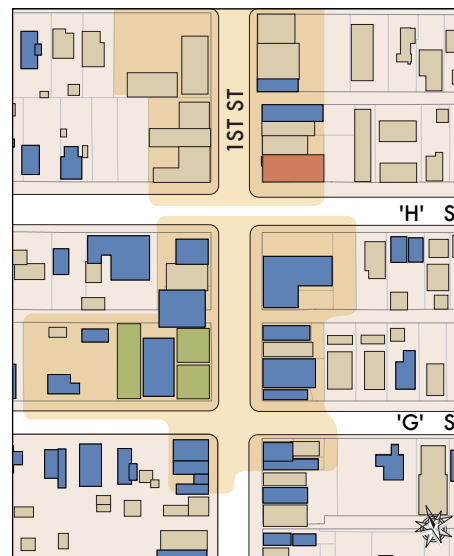
***Top:** The shoreline west of First Street provides a key opportunity for new mixed-use development that can capitalize on the existing natural setting, seen here from the end of C Street; **Center:** The nursery at the corner of First and D Streets; **Bottom:** Key plan of the area south of D and west of First.*



### State Capitol & Majestic Theater at H Street

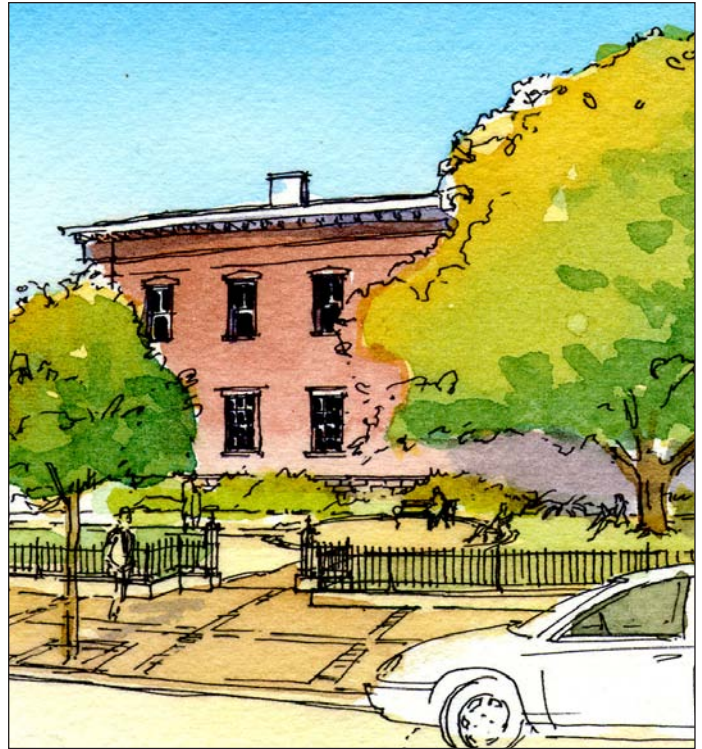
The intersection of First and G Streets, including the historic State Capitol Building complex and the nearby Majestic Theater at 710 First Street, was mentioned by many community members as the “heart” of the downtown area, and should be considered for the development of another node. The Majestic, which currently provides an entertainment venue for the community, should be renovated to create a high-quality pedestrian environment along First Street in front of the theater. The City should work with the existing property owner to explore the possibility of such a renovation.

Historic photos of the theater suggest that the ground floor was originally much more open, with a recessed outdoor forecourt and glazed ticket booth. The plan envisions that the ground floor of the theater may be restored with the removal of the wood cladding, the restoration or re-installation of a glazed ticket booth, and the introduction of decorative paving materials in the forecourt and along the sidewalk in front of the theater.



**Above Left:** View of the Majestic Theater; **Above Right:** Illustrative vision of the theater's renovated façade; **Bottom:** Key plan of the area along First between G and H Streets.





Across the street, the open space along the eastern side of the State Capitol presents a welcome respite from the consistent street wall of buildings along First Street. However, the Capitol grounds are accessible only from G Street. The plan envisions that this open space may be made more welcoming by the introduction of a pedestrian entrance through the existing stone and wrought-iron fence along the eastern side of the Capitol property. A pedestrian path could extend to a new circular plaza in the yard, ringed with benches and landscaping to encourage passing pedestrians to enter.

The existing wrought-iron fence has some interesting end-piece elements at its corners and ends. The plan envisions that similar ends could be used to flank a new break in the fence as illustrated, creating a fitting entry into the grounds that would effectively enhance the area's historic setting.

As retail demand increases over time, the City should also seek to encourage the redevelopment of the existing parking lot at the northeast corner of First and H Streets, as well as the renovation of existing properties along First Street between G and H Streets.



**Above Left:** View of the State Capitol as seen from First Street; **Above Right:** Illustrative vision of a redesigned open space along the Capitol building's eastern side; **Bottom:** Detail of the wrought-iron fence pieces that would make appropriate markers for the new First Street entrance.

### First Street Between H and J Streets

The northern portion of First Street is unique in character due to a rich ensemble of historic buildings located along J Street on either side of First Street. To the west of First these include the Masonic Hall at 110 West J Street, the Congregational Church at 135 West J, and a stately row of canary palms. To the east the ensemble includes St. Paul's Church and its adjacent rectory. This concentration of historic, civic structures, coupled with a high-quality block of historic commercial buildings on the west side of First Street between I and J Streets provides another opportunity for the development of a node and a unique experience for visitors entering the downtown shopping area from the north.

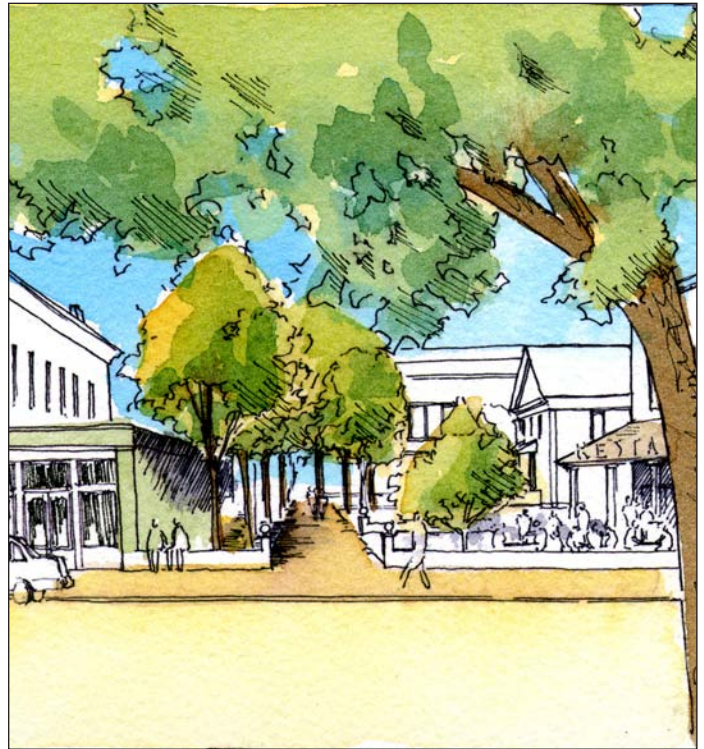
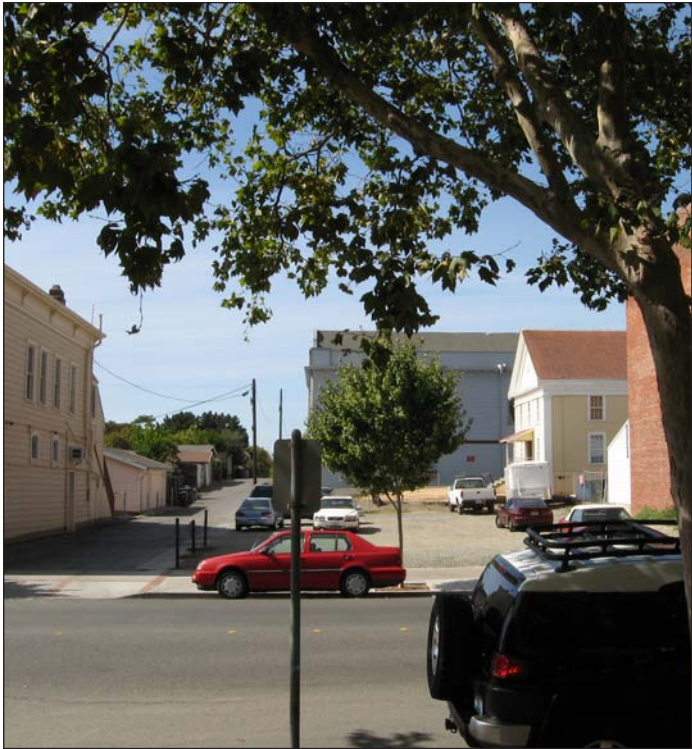
The City should work to encourage the renovation of historic structures along First Street between H and J Street, as well as the renovation or redevelopment of other buildings in the area. The existing former hardware store at 832 First Street represents a prime opportunity for such a renovation. The plan recommends the creation of a new façade along First Street, with a new formal entrance to the ground-floor commercial space and a separate entry to the south accessing residential spaces above. The upper-floor balcony could be filled in, creating additional living space upstairs with large windows for natural light. The mansard Spanish-tile roofs should be removed and replaced with a simple, classically inspired cornice.

The plan envisions that minor changes can be made to St. Paul's square to increase its viability as a public plaza. The church is currently partially hidden from view along First Street by rather heavy landscaping at the sidewalk, including tall, dense hedges. The City should work with the existing church to remove or relocate some of the street-side landscaping to provide for more open views of the church and, subsequently, a more comfortable pedestrian experience.



*Right, from top to bottom: Existing view of the former hardware store at 832 First Street; Illustrative vision for a renovated hardware store; View of St. Paul's square as seen from First Street; Illustrative vision of the square with landscape alterations to make the square more visible and appealing to pedestrians.*





Immediately to the west, the square in front of St. Paul's church and the parking lot immediately to the west provide another opportunity for a coupling of two, high-quality open spaces, similar to the Majestic Theater – Capitol Grounds node described above. The parking lot provides a unique view of the formal rear elevation of the Masonic Hall, the monumental wall of the E.D.E.S Hall, and is flanked by two grandly-scaled masonry commercial block buildings. The City should explore the possibility of creating an outdoor plaza, relocating the onsite parking elsewhere, and promoting small commercial additions to the sides of the buildings along the alley. The space would be well-activated by adjacent commercial uses such as restaurants or cafés, and would provide distinct views of the area's historic buildings. The plaza should be defined by a low, masonry wall along First Street, and may be designed to accommodate outdoor seating for adjacent commercial businesses as illustrated.



**Above Left:** View of the current parking lot on First south of West J Street; **Above Right:** Illustrative vision of a redesigned open space in this location, with new linear buildings fronting a plaza; **Bottom:** Key plan of the area along First Street between H and J Streets.





### Neighborhood Centers

The project area includes two neighborhood-serving commercial centers off of First Street. One is located along West Second Street between H and J Streets and includes an eclectic mix of buildings and uses, including a day spa in a former church at 932 West Second Street and a former Post Office branch at the northwest corner of Second and J Streets. The other commercial center is located at East Second Street and H and J Street.

Both of these neighborhood centers provide an opportunity for local services to locate in a central commercial environment off of First Street. Existing buildings in both areas are typically non-residential in character and can provide “incubator” opportunities in flexible spaces for local small businesses, and are appropriate for uses that do not require high pedestrian visibility. Zoning for the neighborhood centers will seek to encourage the continued evolution of these areas over the long term that is compatible and in character with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The closure of East Second Street between K and L Streets has limited the amount of through traffic that travels along East Second and greatly limits the potential growth and evolution of commercial uses in the area. It is thus unlikely that more intense commercial uses could be encouraged along East Second Street. However, the future establishment of a connection through the Benicia Civic Center could provide direct access from the I-780 freeway and the potential for an intensification of commercial and mixed uses along East Second Street. Such a connection would require careful study due to the historic nature of the City Hall campus.

In the future such intensification could occur not only between H and J Streets but also below D Street, providing additional opportunities for the growth of downtown retail.

***Above Left:** Key plan of neighborhood center area along West Second Street between I and J Streets. **Above Right:** Key plan of neighborhood center area along East Second Street between J and H Streets.*

### Mixed Use Strategies for Historic Neighborhoods

The DMUMP recognizes that the physical form of the project area is very diverse, and that what defines “mixed-use” should rely heavily on existing physical form and its potential to change and evolve. The form and character of many residential sections of the project area, particularly those with large concentrations of historic buildings, would be severely compromised if intense commercial uses were encouraged to develop. At the same time, Benicia’s downtown neighborhoods have historically supported a fine-grained mix of uses that are compatible with residential uses. These uses should be encouraged to continue. To this end, the selection of zoning designations for the project area has sought to respond carefully to existing conditions.

The plan envisions that intense, pedestrian-oriented retail and commercial uses will be limited to areas within the “Town Core” zone designation along First Street and concentrated in existing retail nodes. In these “Town Core” areas, ground-floor non-retail uses will be discouraged, and buildings will be urban in character, with front façades built to the front property line and at-grade entrances.

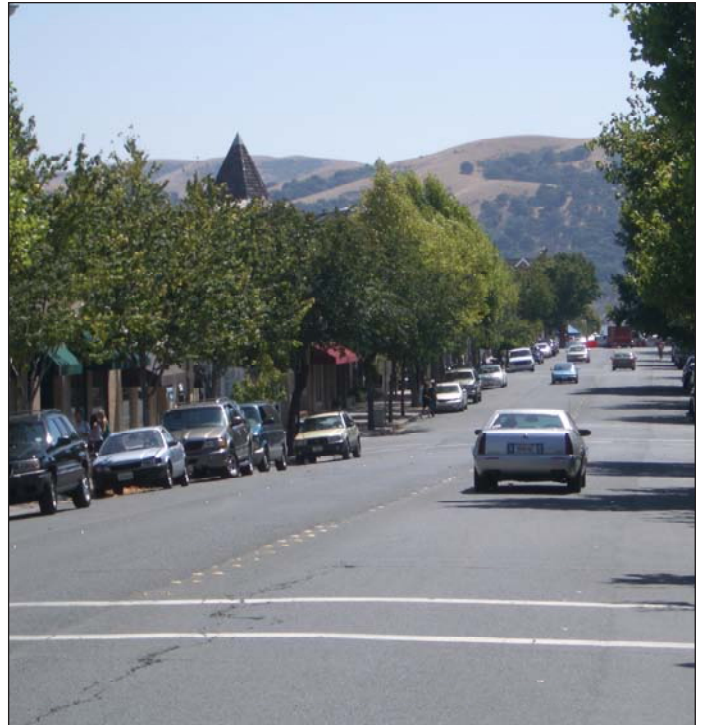
The “Town Core - Open” designation is intended for areas immediately adjacent to First Street where urban buildings exist or would be appropriate in redevelopment, but where ground floor uses may be more flexible than in the adjacent “Town Core” areas. These areas may act as a buffer zone between intense retail uses along First and quieter residential areas.

The “Neighborhood General - Open” designation is intended for areas that are residential in character, but that can support office and limited retail uses, either in main buildings fronting side streets in the project area or in workshops or office spaces oriented along the alleys in the downtown area. These locations are carefully considered to ensure compatibility with adjacent residential areas. Buildings are set back from the property line and treated with frontage that is residential in character, such as porches or stoops.

The “Neighborhood General” designation is reserved for solid residential areas that will continue to encourage high-quality residential fabric. Home offices and workshops would still be allowed in these areas but will be limited to alleys and off-street spaces.



*Right, from top to bottom: Examples of the Town Core, Town Core - Open, Neighborhood General - Open, and Neighborhood General conditions in the project area.*



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### Circulation and Transportation

Area stakeholders have expressed that they like Downtown Benicia just the way it is, for the most part. Some modest improvements are desired in order to build upon the downtown area's existing strengths. Most changes should be implemented incrementally over time.

#### Parking

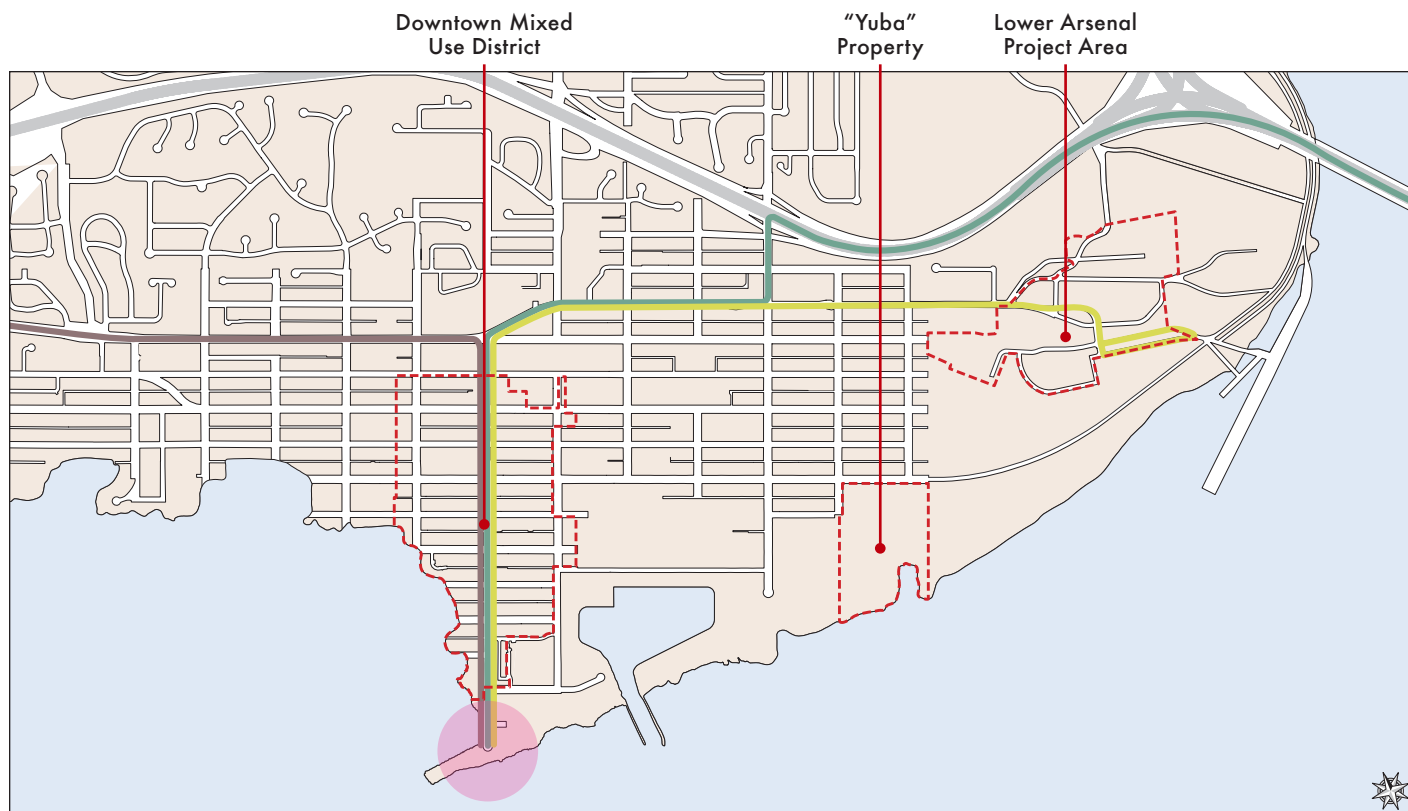
Improvements to parking should start with better management of the existing parking supply, supplemented by modest incremental expansion.

Key parking principles for Downtown include:

1. **Put customers first.** The best parking spaces in Downtown Benicia should be reserved for customers, ensuring the highest turnover and productivity all along First Street, with customers always able to find a space on their desired block throughout the day. Employee parking should be located on side streets and in available lots at the foot of First Street and along East 2nd Street.
2. **Manage parking.** The city should make most effective use of its existing supply before spending resources to build new parking facilities. This means using parking management techniques to balance supply and demand, including time limits, motorist information and, if and where appropriate, pricing. These tools should be used to maximize customer convenience and ensure 15% availability in all parking lots and along all block faces at all times. If pricing is used, the primary intent should be to ensure proper levels of availability - not revenue generation. Moreover, parking pricing programs should use modern pay station devices that accept credit cards, debit cards and other payment media.

3. **Park once.** Main Street retail environments work best when designed to assume that customers will park once and make several trips without moving their cars.
4. **Share parking.** Because office, retail, restaurant, residential and institutional uses experience peak parking at different times of day, it is important that downtown uses share parking as much as practical. The parking supply in Downtown Benicia should ideally be treated as a single, carefully managed pool.
5. **Make the walk compelling.** In order to take advantage of the “park once” concept and Main Street retail concepts, it is important that the walking environment be pleasant and interesting.
6. **Address spillover parking.** As Downtown Benicia succeeds in its growth objectives, it is important that surrounding residents are not burdened by spillover parking problems. Typically this is accomplished through the establishment of restrictive Residential Parking Permit Programs. Neighborhoods in Austin, Texas, take this concept a step further by selling their surplus daytime parking capacity to commuters, with net revenue going toward neighborhood improvements.
7. **Design parking well.** When new parking is provided, it is critical that it does not detract from the excellent pedestrian environment in Downtown Benicia. New curb cuts should not be allowed on First Street. Rather, parking should be accessed from the side streets off of First Street as well as the alleys in the area. Garage door widths should be minimized. Parking lots should be attractively landscaped.
8. **Allow for incremental expansion of parking.** While Downtown Benicia currently has sufficient total parking supply, additional parking may be desired. There are a variety of opportunities to convert side street parallel parking to diagonal or perpendicular parking, taking care to address traffic safety and urban design concerns. Similar opportunities are available on East 2nd Street.
9. **Set appropriate parking requirements.** Parking demand varies more by location than it does by land use, so it is important to tailor the parking requirements in Downtown Benicia to its unique conditions. To allow for simple changes in occupancy, there should be a single requirement for shared, non-residential parking. Typically, peak parking demand in Main Street environments varies from 1.9 to 2.4 spaces per 1,000 square feet of non-residential development. Households in mixed-use downtown areas also own fewer cars, with some households, even in Benicia, owning no vehicles. Providing for reduced and flexible parking requirements will help Benicia meet its affordable housing goals, particularly if the costs of parking are unbundled from the cost of housing.
10. **Encourage in-lieu parking.** In order to support compact and walkable development in Downtown Benicia, developers along First Street should be encouraged to provide an in-lieu fee rather than building on-site parking. These fees can be used to construct and maintain parking nearby, or support alternative transportation arrangements.





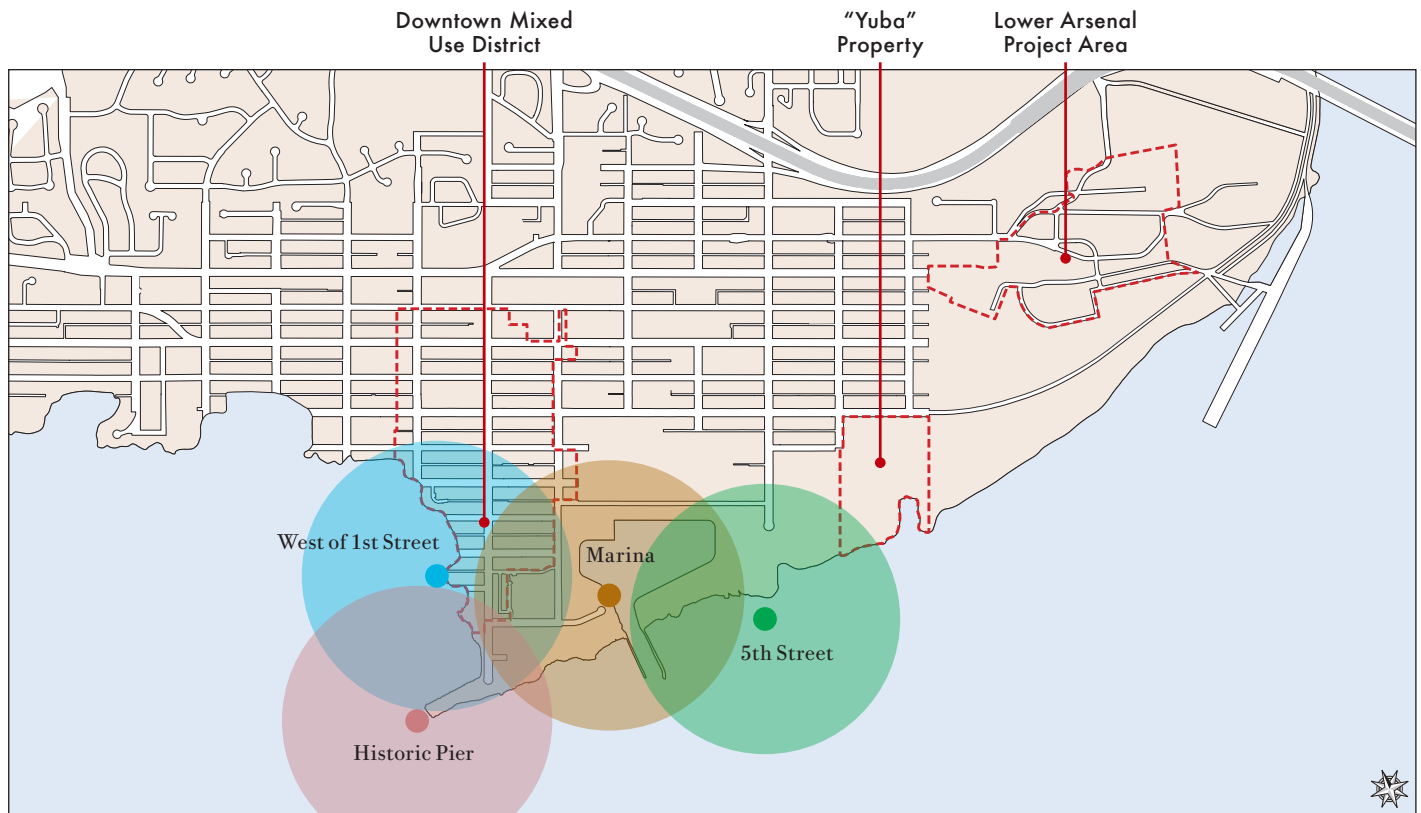
### Transit

Benicia Breeze provides excellent coverage throughout the city, but these services are designed primarily to appeal to those without other transportation options. Routes are infrequent, and most run in long one-way loops, resulting in time-consuming trips. As Downtown Benicia and the Arsenal Historic District grow, more frequent and direct service may be warranted, especially if ferry service is reestablished. Three routes merit further study:

- **West Military to the ferry**, serving the west neighborhoods of the City, the Downtown and potential future ferry terminal.
- **Arsenal to Downtown**, likely starting during special events, but possibly growing to be regular daily service.
- **Downtown Benicia to Pleasant Hill BART and Walnut Creek**, providing more frequent direct connections between Benicia and these major regional transportation and job centers.

### Key

- West Military - Ferry
- Downtown - Walnut Creek/Pleasant Hill BART
- Downtown - Arsenal
- Possible Ferry Location



### Ferry Service

Restoring ferry service to Benicia has the potential to put the city back on “the map,” but doing so will entail significant capital and operating costs. As the city considers various potential terminal locations, it should focus on sites within walking distance of Downtown Benicia. Several locations were preliminarily assessed during the Master Plan process.

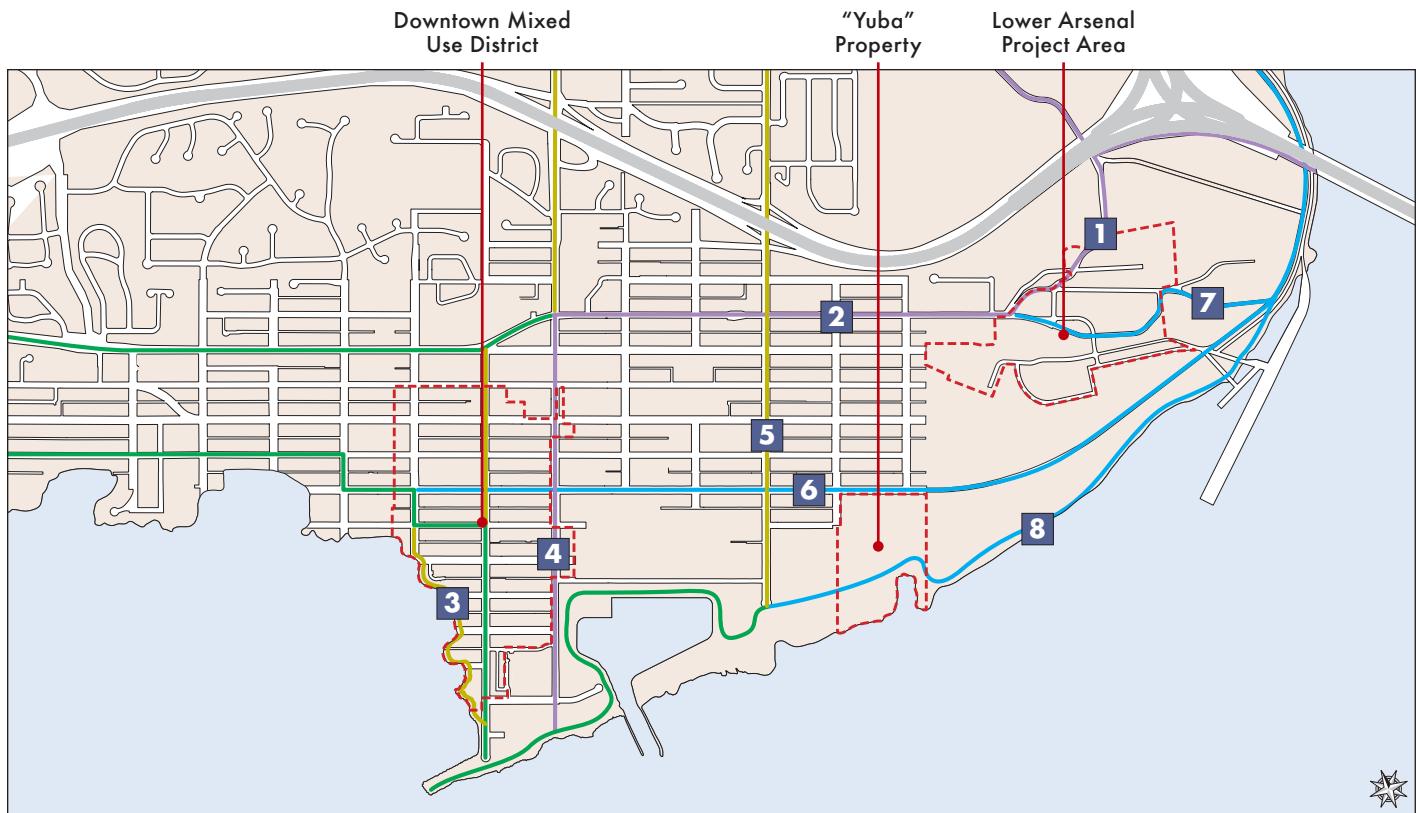
**The Historic Pier.** It does not capture a large amount of pedestrian traffic due to its distance from Downtown Benicia; however it would increase traffic along First Street and would support the historic character of the project area. It is likely the best location for a new ferry terminal.

**The Boat Yard west of First Street.** This may be another site worthy of consideration, with the greatest ability to capture pedestrians within a 1/4 mile radius. However, the water in this location may require significant dredging to provide access.

**The Marina.** This also provides good pedestrian access, but its limited size may make it difficult for ferries to maneuver.

**The 5th Street Pier.** It provides minimal advantages as a walkable area, and would not have a significant economic benefit for the project area.





### Bicycle Connections

With the impending completion of the Benicia Bridge bike path, Benicia stands to benefit greatly from increased regional bicycle access, tying into the extensive path system on the south side of the Carquinez Strait and extending west to the City of Vallejo and the Carquinez Bridge. To take advantage of these new connections, the City should prioritize the following bicycle improvements, in order:

1. **Park Road from Benicia Bridge path to East Military.** Park Road currently has no accommodations for either bicyclists or pedestrians, and improving the road is central to connecting Downtown Benicia and the Arsenal Historic District to the new bridge path.
2. **East Military.** Extending the bike lanes from West Military to the Arsenal Historic District will require eliminating some on-street parking on East Military.
3. **Shoreline Trail.** Completing the shoreline trail around the marina and west side of Downtown Benicia is important not just for through-cyclists, but for all pedestrians in the downtown area. The shoreline trail has the potential to offer significant economic benefits for Downtown Benicia.
4. **East 2nd Street.** East 2nd Street has sufficient width for striped bike lanes along most of its length, but it is also possible to rethink East 2nd Street as a bicycle boulevard, where auto traffic is slowed to be compatible with bike speed. East 2nd Street is also a key connection to neighborhoods north of I-780.
5. **East 5th Street.** East 5th Street offers similar characteristics as East 2nd Street, including a connection to the shoreline trail.

### Key

- Existing bicycle routes
- Future bicycle routes
- Short Term Proposed routes
- Long Term Proposed routes

6. **H Street to Arsenal.** H Street offers a low-volume alternative to East Military Street for connecting Downtown Benicia and the Arsenal Historic District, particularly if a path can be developed along the west edge of the Arsenal.
7. **Adams Street to Bayshore Road.** As the Arsenal Historic District is developed, care should be taken to ensure good bicycle access along Adams Street, including bicycle lanes where widths permit – particularly in the uphill direction. Where widths are inadequate, traffic calming is appropriate. This access may continue east to Bayshore Road if security and access issues with the Port can be addressed.
8. **Arsenal Historic District access.** Continuing the shoreline trail along Bayshore Road or the shoreline itself would also be desirable, if security and access issues with the Port can be addressed.

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### Implementation Strategies

The focus of the Form-Based Code in Chapter 4 is to clarify and improve zoning and design requirements in the First Street area. To this end, it focuses on land use policy and does not provide additional recommendations for signage, wayfinding, and landscape improvements to the public realm, nor does it offer a mechanism to include public implementation strategies and financing options for public investments.

The 1990 Downtown Streetscape Design Plan outlines a series of streetscaping projects that will continue to be relevant and valid from a design standpoint. However, many of the issues raised by the community throughout the public process suggest that there are a variety of implementation strategies that the City of Benicia, or the Main Street Program, could pursue in coordination with the new land use policies in order to more effectively achieve a variety of goals including:

- Drawing more business into Downtown Benicia, from both Benicia residents and visitors;
- Supporting building improvements to retain existing retail and office users, and to attract new businesses; and
- Stimulating reinvestment in historic and non-historic buildings along First Street.

In service of these goals, the City should consider pursuing the following implementation strategies:

#### Regional Tourism Strategy

A coordinated tourism strategy could further attract visitors to Downtown Benicia in a variety of ways. Steps might include the installation of wayfinding signs from I-680 and I-780, continued attraction of visitors through regional marketing and festivals, and drawing visitors by linking First Street shopping to the City's existing artist community by offering a subsidized downtown gallery. Future steps in attracting visitors should build off of the City's existing tourism strategies such as festivals, farmer's markets, and regional advertising on billboards. A more comprehensive strategy could be pursued through either the Main Street Program or through the City directly.

### **Low/No Interest Loans for Building Improvements Unreinforced Masonry (URM) Grants and Loans**

Cities have created different types of financing programs to assist property owners with the costs of rehabilitation. A loan or grant program in Downtown Benicia could alleviate the prohibitive costs of seismic upgrading, accessibility codes, and unknown structural upgrading. Likewise, a construction loan program would enable property owners to invest in rehabilitation with less equity. Sample loan and grant programs include:

- Design consultation grants and programs (Cities of Pinole, Vacaville)
- Façade Improvement Grants and Loans (Cities of Emeryville, Vacaville)
- Seismic Upgrading Grants and Loans (Cities of Pinole, San Jose, Vacaville)
- Matching Fund Loans (City of Vacaville)

### **Parking In-Lieu Fee Program**

The City should update the parking in-lieu fee that applicants may pay in lieu of meeting minimum parking requirements. The per-space fee may be calculated as not-to-exceed the following amount:

(The lowest per-acre cost of land within two blocks of the development site ÷ 100) + (typical surface parking construction costs per space, as defined by the Public Works Director) + (the annual maintenance cost of a surface parking space x 10)

The City should designate an organization to receive and allocate collected in-lieu fees. This may be the City, a downtown business association, a downtown Local Improvement District or other entity.

Collected in-lieu fees may be spent on new parking construction, parking maintenance, parking enforcement or other activities related to parking in the district. In-lieu fees may also be spent on any projects or activities that increase access or reduce parking demand in the downtown, including but not limited to transportation demand management, transit service, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

### **Residential Parking Permit District**

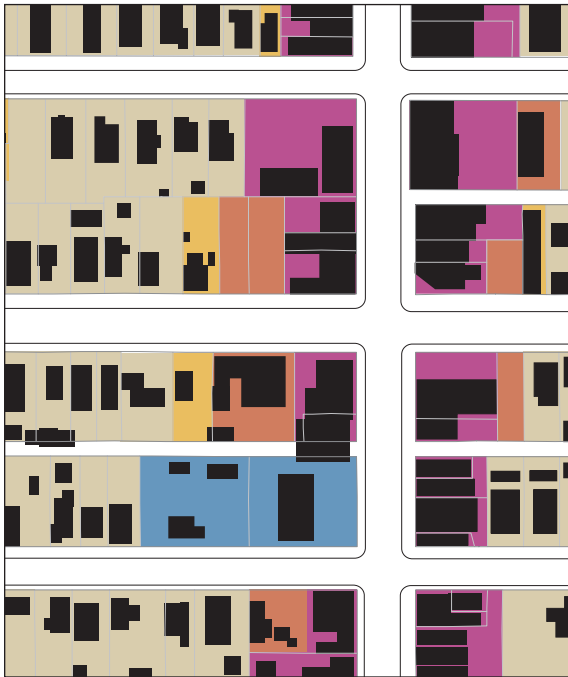
Upon the establishment of commuter ferry service in Downtown Benicia or sooner, the City should establish a Residential Parking Permit District ordinance that allows residents of certain residential streets to vote to restrict commuter parking on their street. This ordinance would apply only to residential frontages of predominantly residential streets that exceed specific parking occupancy standards (*As is the case in San Francisco, CA, for example*).

This type of ordinance allows residents the option of selling a limited number of district permits to non-residents, with net revenue allocated to neighborhood improvements (*As is done under the Austin, Texas, Neighborhood Parking Benefits District ordinance*).

### Parking Management Strategies

The City should establish a parking management ordinance that makes the following provisions:

- Parking should be managed with the goal that 15% of parking spaces on all block faces and in all off-street lots and garages are available at all times (*As is established is the Redwood City downtown parking ordinance*).
- A “parking management officer” should be identified. This may be a city official, a member of the City Traffic, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Safety (TBPS) Committee, or staff at the Downtown Local Improvement District or other entity established to manage and promote the downtown. The parking management officer can be authorized to implement restrictions on parking in the downtown district, including time limits to prevent employee and commuter parking in front of retail and professional service establishments.
- To meet the parking availability goal, parking pay stations may be established in front of retail and/or office buildings. Pay stations must accept multiple forms of payment, including, at a minimum, coins and credit cards. Net revenue from the meters shall be allocated toward improvements in the downtown district. The parking management officer shall be authorized to adjust parking meter fees to meet the 15% availability goals, within certain limits established by the parking management ordinance.
- A citation fine schedule should be established for time limit and unpaid meter violations.
- Enforcement of fees and time limits should extend to any hours necessary to meet the 15% vacancy goal, including evenings and weekends as appropriate.



## Introduction

This chapter provides regulatory standards governing land use and building form within the Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan project area. The Form-Based Code is a reflection of the community vision for Benicia's downtown area and implements the intent of the 1999 Benicia General Plan that "design standards be developed to ensure that mixed-use development is compatible with and contributes to the character of the street, the Downtown, and adjoining neighborhoods."

The Form-Based Code is organized as follows:

The Regulating Plan (page 4-3) allocates plan zones and their corresponding land uses. Building Form Standards (pages 4-5 through 4-32) provide regulations for buildable areas, required frontage conditions, and acceptable land uses for each zone of the Regulating Plan. Additional Standards (page 4-33) provide regulations for frontage types and parking requirements.

The Form-Based Code is intended for adoption in the Zoning Ordinance for the City of Benicia. Upon adoption it will supersede and replace the City Zoning Ordinance provisions regarding zoning districts, allowable land uses, permit requirements, and site development standards.

The Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan project area includes a large part, but not all, of the Downtown Historic District as it was defined through the 1990 Historic Conservation Plan. The Historic Conservation Plan will continue to provide additional design guidelines for proposals within the Historic District. In the event of a conflict between the Downtown Historic Conservation Plan and the DMUMP, the Downtown Historic Conservation Plan will apply.



### Administration

As part of the City’s Municipal Code, The Benicia City Council, the Benicia Planning Commission, the Historic Preservation Review Commission, the Community Development Director, the Planning Department, the Public Works Department, and the TPBS Committee shall administer this Form-Based Code. These are individually and collectively referred to in the Code as the “Review Authority.”

The Form-Based Code and its corresponding regulations used a combination of mapping resources and field measurements and documentation conducted by the City of Benicia and the DMUMP project team. It is the intent of this Code that the final locations of buildings, streets, and blocks will be in substantial compliance with the illustrations and regulations provided herein. Final interpretation of the Form-Based Code, in the context of verified field conditions, will be the judgment of the Review Authority.

# Regulating Plan

## Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan Area and Parcels South of B Street



### Zoning Districts

- Town Core
- Town Core-Open
- Neighborhood General
- Neighborhood General - Open
- Public & Semi-Public

## Zone Descriptions

### **Town Core (TC):**

The primary intent of this zone is to enhance the vibrant, pedestrian-oriented character of First Street. The physical form and uses are regulated to reflect the urban character of the historic shopfront buildings.

**How mixed use is defined within this zone:** Mixed use within this zone primarily refers to vertical mixed use where retail or commercial are on the ground floor and residential or commercial are above.

### **Town Core-Open (TC-O):**

The primary intent of this zone is to regulate the physical form of shopfront buildings along the side streets between First Street and Second Street in order to provide an appropriate transition from First Street into the residential neighborhoods. The physical form of a shopfront building is regulated while allowing flexibility in use.

**How mixed use is defined within this zone:** Mixed use within this zone is defined by the flexibility and compatibility in use, allowing retail, commercial, or residential live/work uses in a shopfront form.

### **Neighborhood General (NG):**

The primary intent of this zone is to protect the integrity and quality of the downtown residential neighborhoods.

**How mixed use is defined within this zone:** Appropriately-scaled ancillary buildings are allowed that can accommodate residential, home-office, or workshop uses.

### **Neighborhood General-Open (NG-O):**

The primary intent of this zone is to ensure a residential physical form to relate to adjacent residential buildings along the side streets between First Street and Second Street in order to provide an appropriate transition from First Street into the residential neighborhoods. The physical form of a residential building is regulated while allowing flexibility in use. This zone is applied to buildings with an existing residential form that has been compromised by on-site or adjacent development making pure residential use inappropriate.

**How mixed use is defined within this zone:** Commercial or residential uses are allowed in this area in a residential form both in the main buildings as well as in ancillary buildings.

## Town Core (TC) Standards



### **Town Core (TC):**

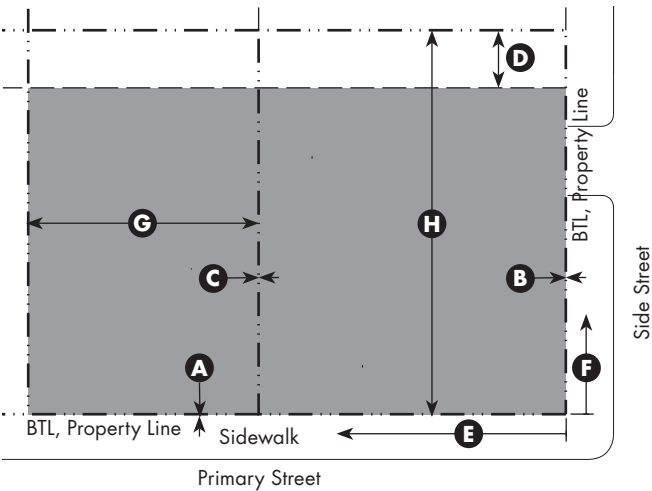
The primary intent of this zone is to enhance the vibrant, pedestrian-oriented character of First Street. The physical form and uses are regulated to reflect the urban character of the historic shopfront buildings.

**How mixed use is defined within this zone:** Mixed use within this zone primarily refers to vertical mixed use where retail or commercial are on the ground floor and residential or commercial are above.

**How “primary street” is defined within this zone:**  
The primary street is always First Street.

*Illustrative examples of buildings in a Town Core area*

# Town Core (TC) Standards



### Key

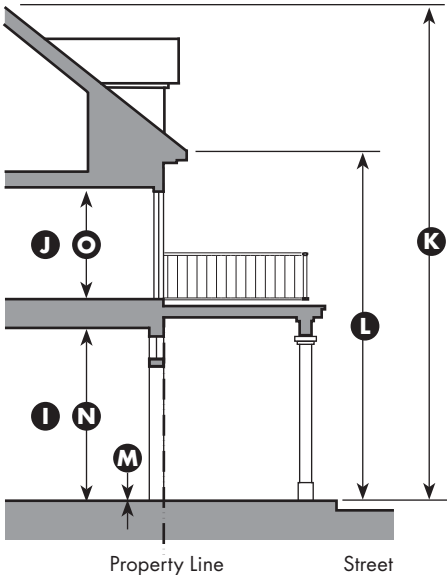
- Property Line
- Setback Line
- Build-to Line (BTL)
- Building Area

Building Placement		
Build-to Line (Distance from Property Line)		
Front	0'	<b>A</b>
Side Street	0'	<b>B</b>
Setback (Distance from Property Line)		
Side	0'	<b>C</b>
Rear		
Adjacent to NG Zone	8'	<b>D</b>
Adjacent to any other Zone	5'	<b>D</b>
Building Form		
Primary Street Façade built to BTL	80% min.*	<b>E</b>
Side Street Façade built to BTL	30% min.*	<b>F</b>
Lot Width	125' max.	<b>G</b>
Lot Depth	100' max.	<b>H</b>

\*Street façades must be built to BTL along first 30' from every corner.

### Notes

- All floors must have a primary ground-floor entrance that faces the primary or side street.
- Loading docks, overhead doors, and other service entries are prohibited on street-facing façades.
- Any building over 50' wide must be broken down to read as a series of buildings no wider than 50' each.



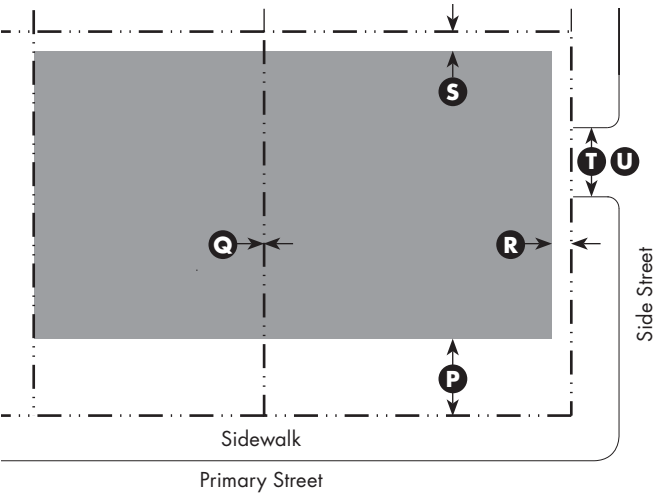
Use		
Ground Floor	Service, Retail, or Recreation, Education & Public Assembly*	<b>I</b>
Upper Floor(s)	Residential or Service*	<b>J</b>
*See Table 4.1 for specific uses. Ground floors that face the waterfront shall be nonresidential and shall not include parking, garages, or similar uses.		
Height		
Building Min.	22'	<b>K</b>
Building Max.	2.5 stories and 40'	<b>K</b>
Max. to Eave/Top of Parapet	35'	<b>L</b>
Ancillary Building Max.	2 stories and 25'	
Finish Ground Floor Level	6" max. above sidewalk	<b>M</b>
First Floor Ceiling Height	12' min. clear	<b>N</b>
Upper Floor(s) Ceiling Height	8' min. clear.	<b>O</b>

### Notes

- Mansard roof forms are not allowed.
- Any section along the BTL not defined by a building must be defined by a 2'6" to 4'6" high fence or stucco or masonry wall.



Town Core (TC) Standards



Key

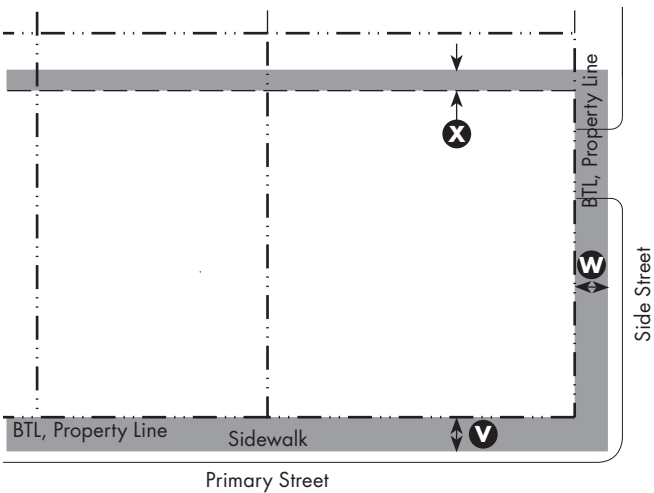
- Property Line
- Parking Area

Parking		
Location (Distance from Property Line)		
Front Setback	30'	P
Side Setback	0'	Q
Side Street Setback	5'	R
Rear Setback	5'	S

Required Spaces	
Ground Floor	
Uses <3,000 sf	No off-street parking required
Uses >3,000 sf	1 space/500 sf
Upper Floors	
Residential uses	1 space/unit; .5 space/studio
Other uses	1 space/1,000 sf

Notes		
Parking Drive Width	15' max.	T
On corner lots, parking drive shall not be located on primary street.		
		U
Parking may be provided off-site within 1,300' or as shared parking.		
Bicycle parking must be provided and in a secure environment.		
Parking drives are highly discouraged along First Street and only permitted if there is no other option for access to parking areas.		

Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan  
Opticos Design, Inc.



Key

- Property Line
- Setback Line
- Build-to Line (BTL)
- Encroachment Area

Encroachments		
Location		
Front	12' max.	V
Side Street	8' max.	W
Rear	4' max.	X

Notes	
Canopies, Awnings, and Balconies may encroach over the BTL on the street sides, as shown in the shaded areas. Balconies may encroach into the setback on the rear, as shown in the shaded areas.	
Upper-story galleries facing the street must not be used to meet primary circulation requirements.	

Allowed Frontage Types (see page 4-26)		
Gallery		
Clearance	1' min. back from curb line	
Height	9' min. clear, 2 stories max.	
Awning		
Depth	10' max.	
Forecourt		
Depth	15' min., not to exceed width	
Width	20' min., 50% of lot width max.	

# Town Core (TC) Standards

**Table 4.1: Town Core (TC) Zone Allowed Land Uses and Permit Requirements**

Land Use Type	Permit Required	Specific Use Regulations
<b>Recreation, Education &amp; Public Assembly</b>		
Commercial recreation facility: Indoor		
< 1500 sf	MUP	
> 1500 sf	UP	
Health/fitness facility		
< 1500 sf	MUP	
> 1500 sf	UP	
Library, museum	P	
Meeting facility, public or private	MUP	
Park, playground	MUP	
School, public or private	MUP	
Studio: art, dance, martial arts, music, etc.		
< 1500 sf	P	
Theater, cinema, or performing arts	P	
< 5000 sf	P	
> 5000 sf	UP	
<b>Residential</b>		
Home occupation		
< 300 sf and 2 or fewer employees	P <sup>2</sup>	
> 300 sf and 3 or fewer employees	P <sup>2</sup>	
> 300 sf and 3 or more employees	NA	
Mixed use project residential component	P <sup>2</sup>	
Dwelling: Multi-Family-Rowhouse	P <sup>2</sup>	
Dwelling: Multi-Family-Duplex	P <sup>2</sup>	
Dwelling: Multi-Family-Triplex	P <sup>2</sup>	
Dwelling: Multi-Family-Fourplex	P <sup>2</sup>	
Ancillary Building	P	
Residential Care, 7 or more clients	P <sup>2</sup>	
Residential Care, 6 or fewer clients	P <sup>2</sup>	
<b>Retail</b>		
Artisan Shop	P	
Bar, tavern, night club, except with any of the following features	P	
Operating between 9 pm and 7 am	UP	
General retail, except with any of the following features:	P	
Alcoholic beverage sales	UP	
Floor area over 8000 sf	MUP	
On-site production of items sold	MUP	
Operating between 9 pm and 7 am	MUP	
Neighborhood market < 10,000 sf	P	
Restaurant, café, coffee shop	P	

Key	
P	Permitted Use
MUP	Minor Use Permit Required - staff review only
UP	Use Permit Required
NA	Not an allowed use

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> A definition of each listed use type is in the Glossary.

<sup>2</sup> Allowed only on upper floors or behind ground floor use.

<sup>3</sup> Body art and piercing requires use permit approval and is allowed only as an ancillary use.

Land Use Type <sup>1</sup>	Permit Required	Specific Use Regulations
<b>Services: Business, Financial, Professional</b>		
ATM or bank	P	
Business support service	P	
Medical services: Doctor Office	P <sup>2</sup>	
Medical services: Extended Care	P <sup>2</sup>	
Office: Business, service	P	
Office: Professional, administrative	P	
<b>Services: General</b>		
Financial Services	P <sup>2</sup>	
Bed & breakfast		
4 guest rooms or less	P <sup>2</sup>	
Greater than 4 guest rooms	P <sup>2</sup>	
Day care center: Child or adult	P <sup>2</sup>	
Day care center: Large family	P <sup>2</sup>	
Day care center: Small family	P <sup>2</sup>	
Lodging	MUP	
Personal services	P <sup>3</sup>	
<b>Transportation, Communications, Infrastructure</b>		
Parking facility, public or commercial	UP	
Wireless telecommunications facility	MUP	

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## Town Core-Open (TC-O) Standards



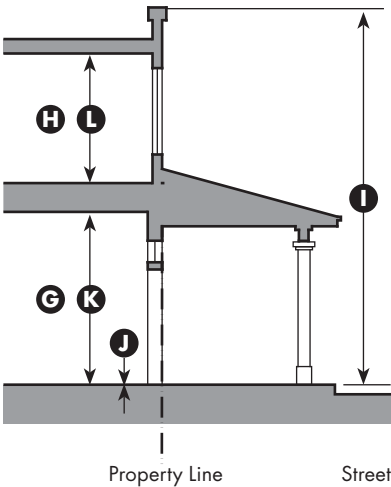
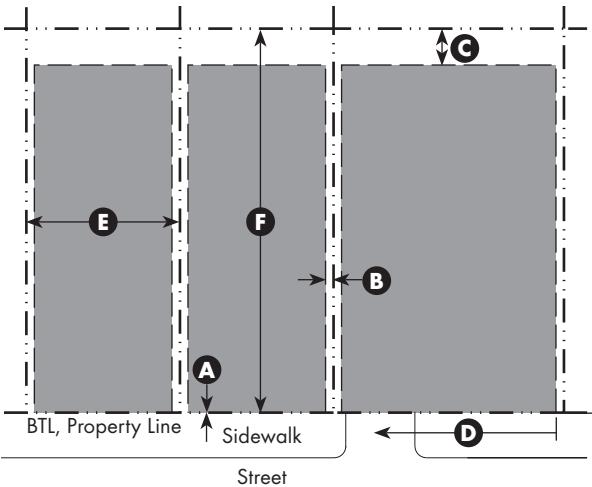
### **Town Core-Open (TC-O):**

The primary intent of this zone is to regulate the physical form of shopfront buildings along the side streets between First Street and Second Street in order to provide an appropriate transition from First Street into the residential neighborhoods. The physical form of a shopfront building is regulated while allowing flexibility in use.

**How mixed use is defined within this zone:** Mixed use within this zone is defined by the flexibility and compatibility in use, allowing retail, commercial, or residential live/work uses in a shopfront form.

*Illustrative examples of buildings in a Town Core-Open Area*

# Town Core-Open (TC-O) Standards



## Key

- Property Line
- Setback Line
- Build-to Line (BTL)
- Building Area

Building Placement		
Build-to Line (Distance from Property Line)		
Front	0'	A
Setback (Distance from Property Line)		
Side	3'	B
Rear		
Adjacent to NG Zone	8'	C
Adjacent to any other Zone	5'	C
Building Form		
Street Façade built to BTL	80% min.*	D
Lot Width	75' max.	E
Lot Depth	150' max.	F

## Notes

- All floors must have a primary ground-floor entrance which faces the street.
- Loading docks, overhead doors, and other service entries are prohibited on street façades.
- Any building over 50' wide must be broken down to read as a series of buildings no wider than 50' each.

Use		
Ground Floor	Service, Retail, or Recreation, Education & Public Assembly*	G
Upper Floor(s)	Residential or Service*	H

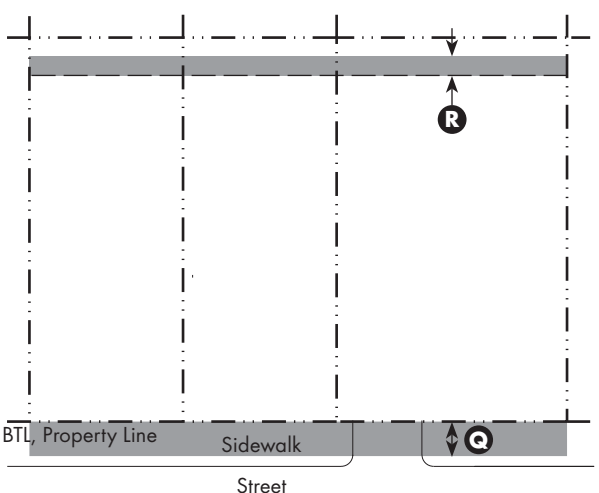
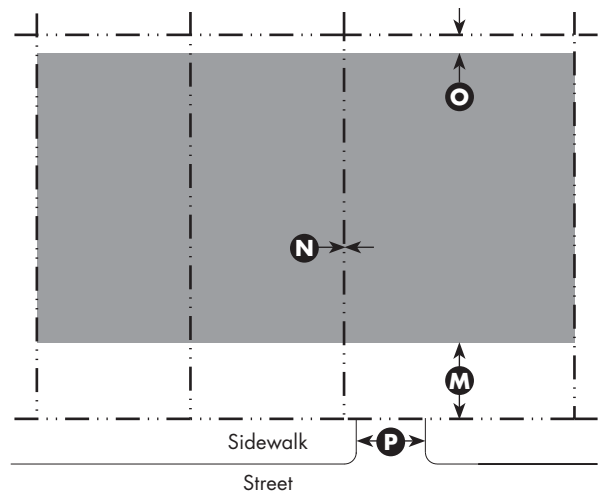
\*See Table 4.2 for specific uses.

Height		
Building Min.	16'	I
Building Max.	2 stories and 25'	I
Ancillary Building Max.	2 stories and 25'	
Finish Ground Floor Level	12" max. above sidewalk	J
First Floor Ceiling Height	12' min. clear	K
Upper Floor(s) Ceiling Height	8' min. clear	L

## Notes

- Mansard roof forms are not allowed.
- Any section along the BTL not defined by a building must be defined by a 2'6" to 4'6" high fence or stucco or masonry wall.

# Town Core-Open (TC-O) Standards



Key

- Property Line
- Parking Area

Parking		
Location (Distance from Property Line)		
Front Setback	20'	M
Side Setback	0'	N
Rear Setback	5'	O

Required Spaces

Ground Floor	
Uses < 3,000 sf	No off-street parking required
Uses > 3,000 sf	1 space/500 sf
<hr/>	
Upper Floor(s)	
Residential uses	1 space/unit; .5 space/studio
Other uses	1 space/1,000 sf

Notes

Parking Drive Width	15' max.	P
Parking may be provided off-site within 1,300' or as shared parking .		
Bicycle parking must be provided and in a secure environment.		
50% of the on-street parking spaces adjacent to lot can count toward parking requirements.		

Key

- Property Line
- Setback Line
- Build-to Line (BTL)
- Encroachment Area

Encroachments		
Location		
Front	12' max.	Q
Rear	4' max.	R

Notes

Canopies, Awnings, and Balconies may encroach over the BTL on the street sides, as shown in the shaded areas. Balconies may encroach into the setback on the rear, as shown in the shaded areas.

Upper story galleries facing the street must not be used to meet primary circulation requirements.

Allowed Frontage Types (see page 4-26)

Gallery		
Clearance	1' min. back from curb line	
Height	9' min. clear, 2 stories max.	
Awning		
Depth	10' max.	
Forecourt		
Depth	15' min., not to exceed width	
Width	20' min., 50% of lot width max.	

## Town Core-Open (TC-O) Standards

**Table 4.2: Town Core-Open (TC-O) Zone Allowed Land Uses and Permit Requirements**

Land Use Type <sup>1</sup>	Permit Required	Specific Use Regulations	Land Use Type <sup>1</sup>	Permit Required	Specific Use Regulations
<b>Recreation, Education &amp; Public Assembly</b>			<b>Retail</b>		
Commercial recreation facility: Indoor			Artisan Shop	P	
< 1500 sf	MUP		Bar, tavern, night club, except with any of the following	UP	
Library, museum	P		Operating between 9 pm and 7 am	NA	
Meeting facility, public or private	MUP		General retail, except with any of the following features:	P	
Studio: art, dance, martial arts, music, etc.			Alcoholic beverage sales	UP	
< 1500 sf	P		Floor area over 8000 sf	NA	
<b>Residential</b>			On-site production of items sold	MUP	
Home occupation			Operating between 9 pm and 7 am	NA	
< 300 sf and 2 or fewer employees	P		Neighborhood market <10,000 sf	P	
> 300 sf and 3 or fewer employees	P		Restaurant, café, coffee shop	MUP	
Live/work unit	P		<b>Services: Business, Financial, Professional</b>		
Mixed use project residential component	P		ATM or Bank	MUP	
Dwelling: Multi-Family-Rowhouse	P		Business support service	P	
Dwelling: Multi-Family-Duplex	P		Medical services: Clinic, urgent care	MUP	
Dwelling: Multi-Family-Triplex	P		Medical services: Doctor office	P	
Dwelling: Multi-Family-Fourplex	P		Medical services: Extended Care	MUP	
Ancillary Building	P		Office: Business, service	P	
Residential Care, 7 or more clients	UP		Office: Professional, administrative	P	
Residential Care, 6 or fewer clients	MUP		<b>Services: General</b>		
<b>Key</b>			Financial Services	P	
P	Permitted Use		Bed & Breakfast		
MUP	Minor Use Permit Required - staff review only		4 guest rooms or less	P	
UP	Use Permit Required		Greater than 4 guest rooms	P	
NA	Use Not Allowed		Lodging	MUP	
<b>End Notes</b>			Personal services	P	
<sup>1</sup> A definition of each listed use type is in the Glossary.			<b>Transportation, Communications, Infrastructure</b>		
			Wireless telecommunications facility	MUP	



Land Use Type <sup>1</sup>	Permit Required	Specific Use Regulations
<b>Services: Business, Financial, Professional</b>		
ATM or Bank	P	
Business support service	P	
Medical services: Clinic, urgent care	MUP	
Medical services: Doctor office	P	
Medical services: Extended Care	MUP	
Office: Business, service	P	
Office: Professional, administrative	P	
<b>Services: General</b>		
Financial Services	P	
Bed & Breakfast		
4 guest rooms or less	P	
Greater than 4 guest rooms	MUP	
Day care center: Child or adult	MUP	
Day care center: Large family	UP	
Day care center: Small family	P	
Personal services	P	
<b>Transportation, Communications, Infrastructure</b>		
Wireless telecommunications facility	MUP	

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## Neighborhood General (NG) Standards



### **Neighborhood General (NG):**

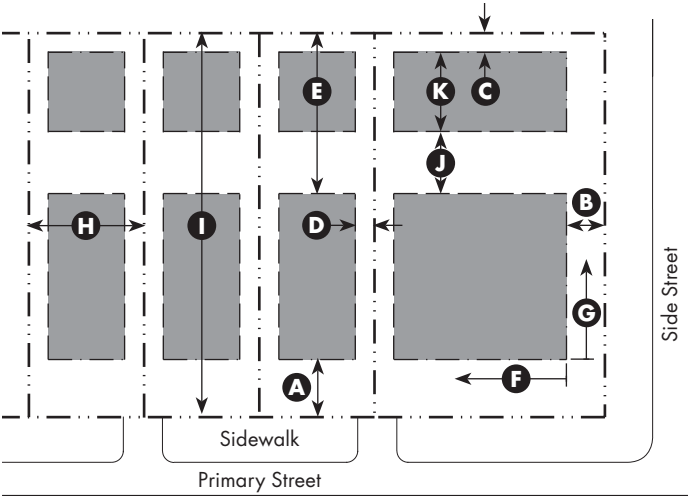
The primary intent of this zone is to protect the integrity and quality of the downtown residential neighborhoods.

**How mixed use is defined within this zone:** Appropriately-scaled ancillary buildings are allowed that can accommodate residential, home-office, or workshop uses.

**How “primary street” is defined within this zone:**  
The primary street is always the East/West running street.

*Illustrative examples of buildings  
in a Neighborhood General area*

# Neighborhood General (NG) Standards



Key

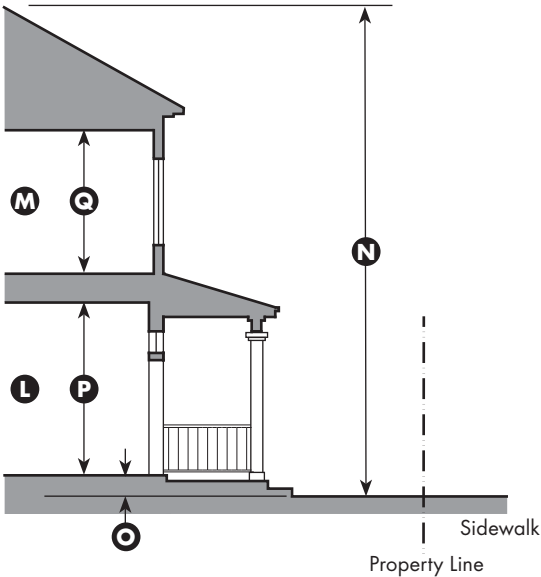
--- Property Line

--- Build-to Line (BTL)

--- Setback Line

■ Building Area

Building Placement		
Build-to Line (Distance from Property Line)		
Front	20' *	A
Side Street	10'	B
Rear, Ancillary Building	5'	C
*May be reduced to meet furthest back adjacent BTL if adjacent BTL is less than 20' from property line.		
Setback (Distance from Property Line)		
Side	4' one side, 8' other	D
Rear, Main Building	40'*	E
* Setback shall be 120' measured from front property line if no alley adjoins the property.		
Building Form		
Primary Street Façade built to BTL	50% min.	F
Side Street Façade built to BTL	30% min.	G
Lot Width	50' max.	H
Lot Depth	150' max.	I
Distance between buildings	10' min.	J
Depth of ancillary building	28' max.	K
Footprint of ancillary building	700 sf max.	



Use		
Ground Floor	Residential, or Services	L
Upper Floor(s)	Residential, or Services	M
*See Table 4.4 for specific uses.		
Height		
Building Max.	2.5 stories and 30' max.	N
Ancillary Building Max.	1.5 stories and 15' max.	
Finish Ground Floor Level	18" min. above sidewalk*	O
First Floor Ceiling Height	10' min. clear	P
Upper Floor Ceiling Height	8' min. clear	Q
*6" on downslope lots.		

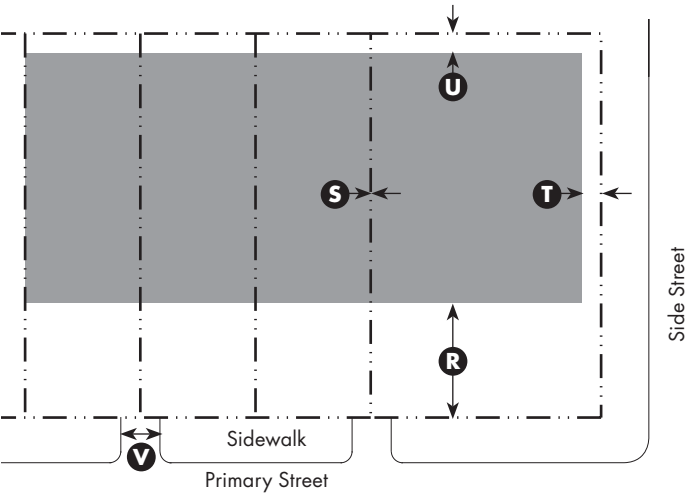
Notes

Mansard roof forms are not allowed.

The windows along any portion of a building that project beyond the rear façade of adjacent homes must be privacy windows if the façade is 10' or less from the side property line.

Any decks on the rear of homes greater than 2' above grade must have a privacy screen toward neighboring lots.

# Neighborhood General (NG) Standards



Key

- Property Line
- Parking Area

Parking

Location (Distance from Property Line)		
Front Setback	20'	R
Side Setback	0'	S
Side Street Setback	5'	T
Rear Setback	5'	U

Required Spaces

Residential Uses	
Studio unit	½ space
1-2 bedroom unit	1 space
3+ bedroom unit	1 space plus additional ½ space for every bedroom over two

Other uses	
Uses < 3,000 sf	No off-street parking required

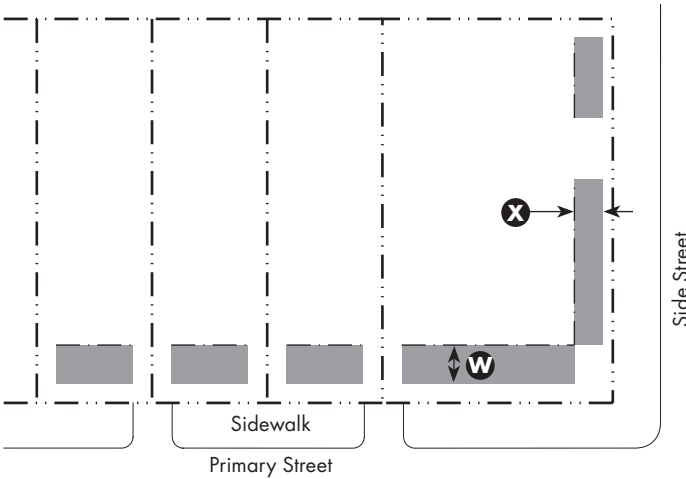
On lots without alley access, a one-unit ancillary structure up to 400 sf may be built without requiring additional parking.

Notes

Parking Drive Width	11' max.	V
---------------------	----------	---

No more than a single space of parking is allowed in front of the front façade plane.

50% of the on-street parking spaces adjacent to lot can count toward parking requirements.



Key

- Property Line
- Setback Line
- Build-to Line (BTL)
- Encroachment Area

Encroachments

Location		
Front	10' max.	W
Side Street	8' max.	X

Notes

Porches, Balconies, and Bay Windows may encroach into the setback on the street sides, as shown in the shaded areas.

Allowed Frontage Types (see page 4-26)

Stoop	
Depth	4' min., 6' max.
Forecourt	
Depth	20' min., not to exceed width
Width	20' min., 50% of lot width max.
Porch	
Depth	8' min.
Height	2 stories max.
Common Lawn	
Porch Depth	8' min.



# Neighborhood General (NG) Standards

**Table 4.4: Neighborhood General (NG) Zone Allowed Land Uses and Permit Requirements**

Land Use Type <sup>1</sup>	Permit Required	Specific Use Regulations	Land Use Type <sup>1</sup>	Permit Required	Specific Use Regulations
<b>Recreation, Education &amp; Public Assembly</b>			<b>Retail</b>		
Park, playground	MUP		General retail, except with any of the following features:	P	
School, public or private	MUP		Alcoholic beverage sales	NA	
<b>Residential</b>			Floor area over 8000 sf	NA	
Dwelling: Single family	P		On-site production of items sold	P <sup>2</sup>	
Home occupation			Operating between 9 pm and 7 am	NA	
< 300 sf, 2 or fewer employees	P		<b>Services: Business, Financial, Professional</b>		
> 300 sf, 3 or fewer employees	P		Office: Professional, administrative	P <sup>2</sup>	
Dwelling: Multi-family-Duplex	P		<b>Services: General</b>		
Ancillary Building	P		Bed & Breakfast		
			4 guest rooms or less	P	
			Greater than 4 guest rooms	MUP	
			Day care center: Child or adult	MUP	
			Day care center: Large family	UP	
			Day care center: Small family	P	
			<b>Transportation, Communications, Infrastructure</b>		
			Wireless telecommunications facility	MUP	

## Key

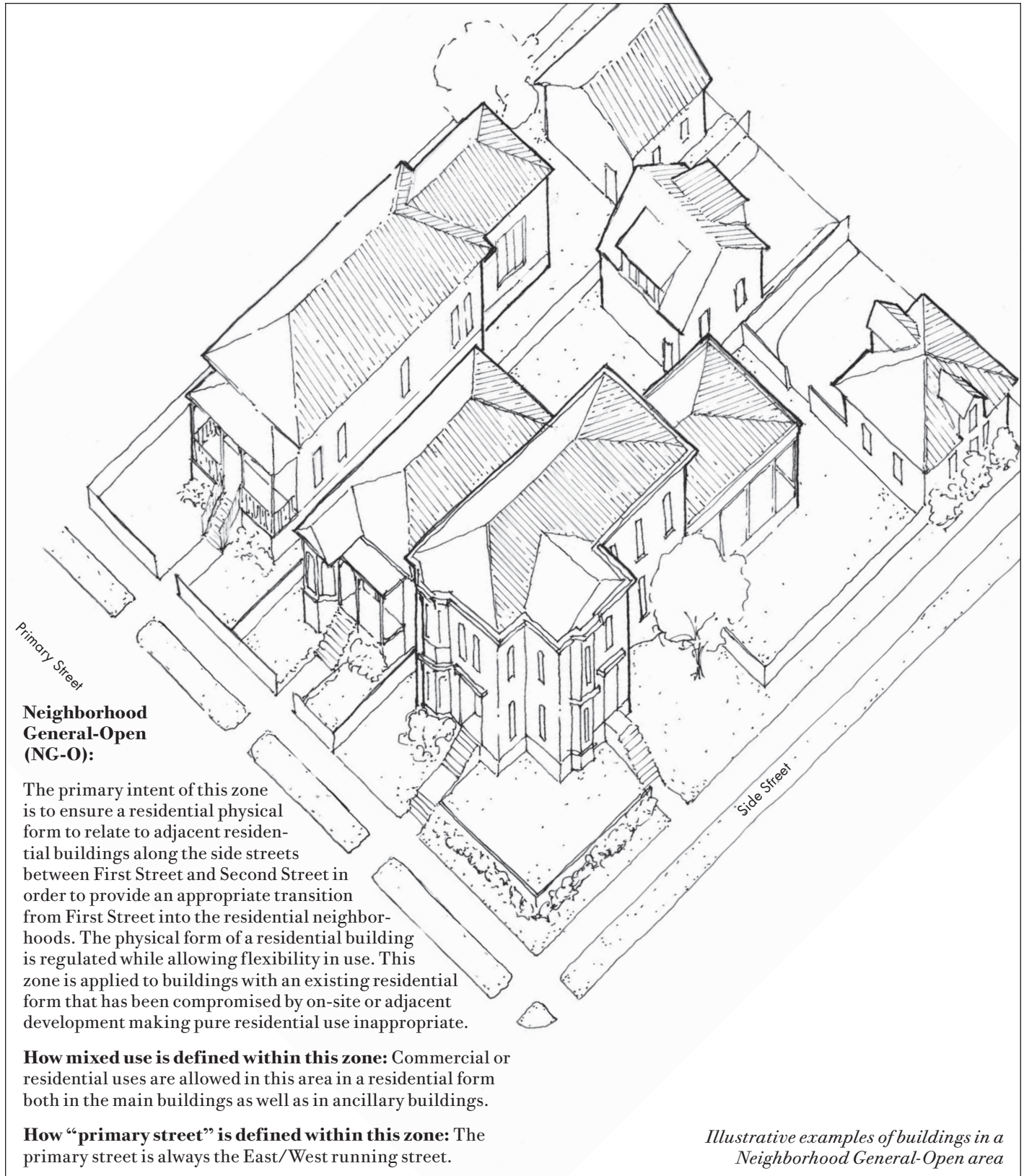
P	Permitted Use
MUP	Minor Use Permit Required - staff review only
UP	Use Permit Required
NA	Not an allowed use

## End Notes

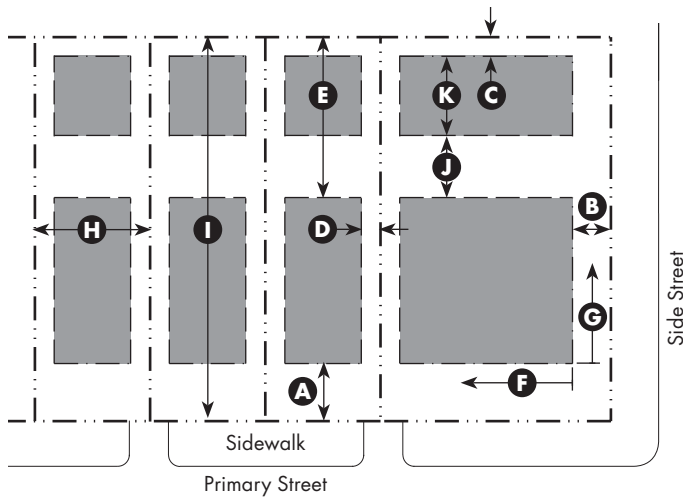
<sup>1</sup> A definition of each listed use type is in the Glossary.

<sup>2</sup> Allowed only in ancillary buildings

## Neighborhood General-Open (NG-O) Standards



# Neighborhood General-Open (NG-O) Standards



## Key

- Property Line
- Setback Line
- Build-to Line (BTL)
- Building Area

## Building Placement

### Build-to Line (Distance from Property Line)

Front	20' *	<b>A</b>
Side Street	10'	<b>B</b>
Rear, Ancillary Building	5'	<b>C</b>

\*May be reduced to meet furthest back adjacent BTL if adjacent BTL is less than 20' from property line.

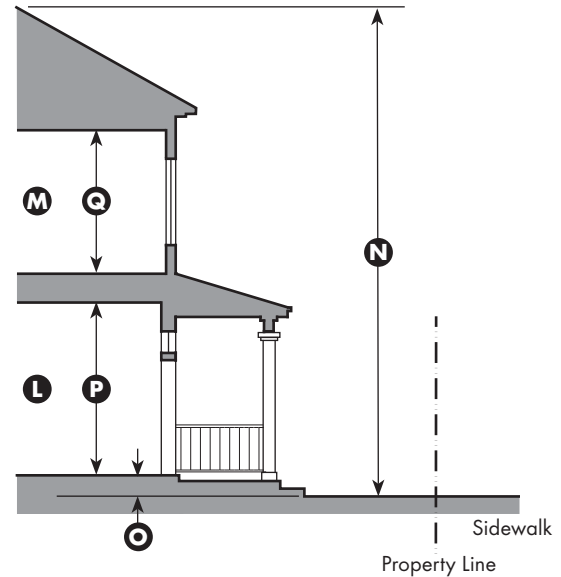
### Setback (Distance from Property Line)

Side	4' one side, 8' other	<b>D</b>
Rear, Main Building	35' *	<b>E</b>

\* Setback shall be 120' measured from front property line if no alley adjoins the property.

## Building Form

Primary Street Façade built to BTL	50% min.	<b>F</b>
Side Street Façade built to BTL	30% min.	<b>G</b>
Lot Width	50' max.	<b>H</b>
Lot Depth	150' max.	<b>I</b>
Distance between buildings	10' min.	<b>J</b>
Depth of ancillary building	28' max.	<b>K</b>
Footprint of ancillary building	1000 sf max.	



## Use

Ground Floor	Residential, Retail, or Service	<b>L</b>
Upper Floor(s)	Residential	<b>M</b>

\*See Table 4.5 for specific uses.

## Height

Building Max.	2.5 stories and 30' max.	<b>N</b>
Ancillary Building Max.	1.5 stories and 15' max.	
Finish Ground Floor Level	18" min. above sidewalk*	<b>O</b>
First Floor Ceiling Height	10' min. clear	<b>P</b>
Upper Floor Ceiling Height	8' min. clear	<b>Q</b>

\*6" on downslope lots.

## Notes

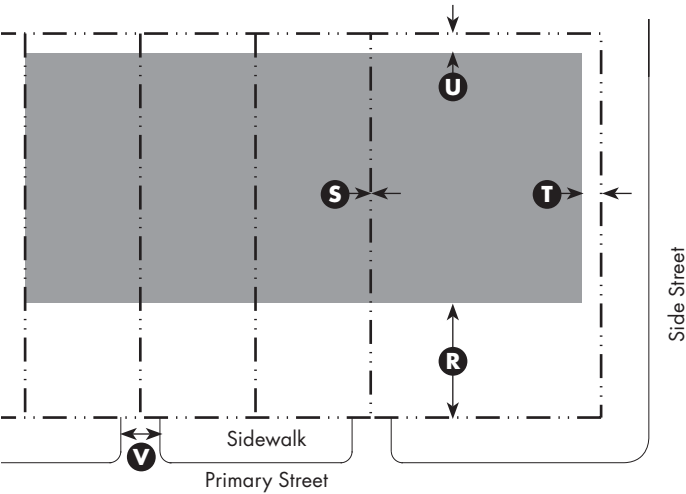
Mansard roof forms are not allowed.

The windows along any portion of a building that project beyond the rear façade of adjacent homes must be privacy windows if the façade is 10' or less from the side property line.

Any decks on the rear of homes greater than 2' above grade must have a privacy screen toward neighboring lots.

Monument and illuminated signs are prohibited.

# Neighborhood General-Open (NG-O) Standards



Key

- Property Line
- Parking Area

Parking

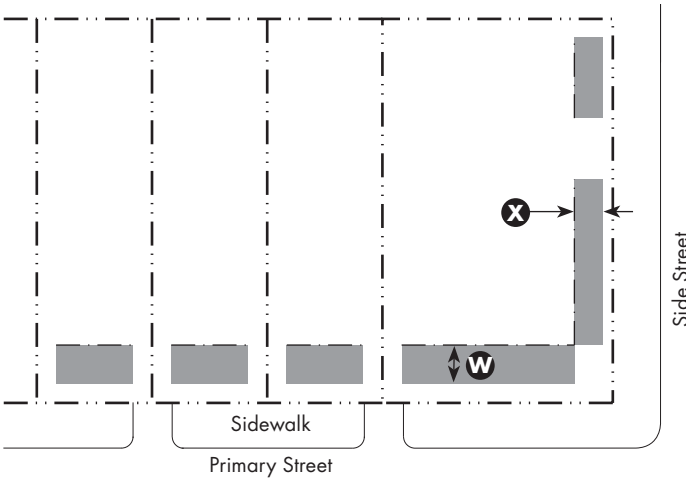
Location (Distance from Property Line)		
Front Setback	20'	R
Side Setback	0'	S
Side Street Setback	5'	T
Rear Setback	5'	U

Required Spaces

Residential Uses	
Studio unit	½ space
1-2 bedroom unit	1 space
3+ bedroom unit	1 space plus additional ½ space for every bedroom over two
Other uses	1 space/1,000 sf
On lots without alley access, a one-unit ancillary structure up to 400 sf may be built without requiring additional parking.	

Notes

Parking Drive Width	11' max.	V
No more than a single space of parking is allowed in front of the front façade plane.		
50% of the on-street parking spaces adjacent to lot can count toward parking requirements.		



Key

- Property Line
- Setback Line
- Build-to Line (BTL)
- Encroachment Area

Encroachments

Location		
Front	10' max.	W
Side Street	8' max.	X

Notes

Porches, Balconies, and Bay Windows may encroach into the setback on the street sides, as shown in the shaded areas.

Allowed Frontage Types (see page 4-26)

Stoop	
Depth	4' min., 6' max.
Forecourt	
Depth	20' min., not to exceed width
Width	20' min., 50% of lot width max.
Porch	
Depth	8' min.
Height	2 stories max.
Common Lawn	
Porch Depth	8' min.

# Neighborhood General-Open (NG-O) Standards

**Table 4.5: Neighborhood General (NG-O) Zone Allowed Land Uses and Permit Requirements**

Land Use Type <sup>1</sup>		Permit Required	Specific Use Regulations
Recreation, Education & Public Assembly			
Meeting facility, public or private		MUP	
Park, playground		P	
School, public or private		MUP	
Studio: art, dance, martial arts, music, etc.			
< 1500 sf	MUP		
> 1500 sf	NA		
Theater, cinema, or performing arts		MUP	
Residential			
Dwelling: Single family		P	
Home occupation			
< 300 sf and 2 or fewer employees	P		
> 300 sf and 3 or fewer employees	P		
> 300 sf and 3 or more employees	P		
Live/work unit		P	
Mixed use project residential component		P	
Dwelling: Multi-Family-Duplex		P	
Ancillary Building		P	
Residential Care, 7 or more clients		UP	
Residential Care, 6 or fewer clients		MUP	
Key			
P	Permitted Use		
MUP	Minor Use Permit Required - staff review only		
UP	Use Permit Required		
NA	Not an allowed use		
End Notes			
<sup>1</sup> A definition of each listed use type is in the Glossary.			

Land Use Type <sup>1</sup>		Permit Required	Specific Use Regulations
Retail			
Artisan Shop		P	
General retail, except with any of the following features:		P	
Alcoholic beverage sales	NA		
Floor area over 8000 sf	NA		
On-site production of items sold	MUP		
Operating between 9 pm and 7 am	NA		
Restaurant, café, coffee shop		MUP	
Services: Business, Financial, Professional			
Business support service		P	
Medical services: Doctor office		P	
Office: Business, service		P	
Office: Professional, administrative		P	
Services: General			
Financial Services		P	
Bed & Breakfast			
4 guest rooms or less	P		
Greater than 4 guest rooms	MUP		
Day care center: Child or adult		MUP	
Day care center: Large family		UP	
Day care center: Small family		P	
Lodging		MUP	
Personal services		P	
Transportation, Communications, Infrastructure			
Wireless telecommunications facility		MUP	



Additional Standards for all FBC Zones

Parking	
Required Space Sizes	
Off-Street Space	9'x18' min.
Compact Space	8'x16' min.*
Standard Vehicle Space Requirements	
See Table 4.6	
Notes	
Wider parking drives may be required to accommodate emergency access.	
Off-street spaces do not have to be covered.	
Tandem parking is allowed for off-street parking as long as both spaces are behind the front façade plane.	
Shared drives are encouraged between adjacent lots to minimize curb cuts along the street.	
All parking areas shall be screened by a 3'6" min. height hedge, wall or fence.	
Malibu Drives with central planting strips are encouraged.	
If required minimum space total is not a whole number, it must be rounded up to the nearest whole number.	
Drives are not allowed off of streets on lots along alleys.	

Table 4.6: Standard Vehicle Space Requirements

Angle	Space Width	Space Depth*	Space Length	One-way Aisle Width	Two-way Aisle Width
Parallel	9'	9'	20'	12'	24'
30° *	9'	18'	20'	12'	N/A
45° *	9'	20'6"	20'	14'	N/A
60° *	9'	22'	20'	18'	N/A
Perpendicular	9'	18'	18'	24'	24'

\*Measured perpendicular to aisle

Table 4.7: Compact Vehicle Space Requirements

Angle	Space Width	Space Depth*	Space Length	One-way Aisle Width	Two-way Aisle Width
Parallel	8'	8'	18'	12'	24'
30° *	8'	15'6"	16'	12'	N/A
45° *	8'	17'	16'	14'	N/A
60° *	8'	18'	16'	18'	N/A
Perpendicular	8'	16'	16'	24'	24'

\*Measured perpendicular to aisle

Max. Percentage Allowed Compact Spaces	
Zone	Max %
Town Core	75
Town Core-Open	60
Neighborhood Center	60
Neighborhood General-Open	60
Neighborhood General	50

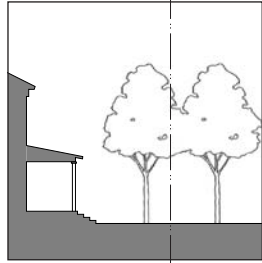
**Open Space Requirements**  
No additional private or public open space requirements shall apply to the Form-Based Code Zones.

**Other Requirements**  
**Placement of Story Poles**  
Story poles shall be placed in a manner that accurately depicts proposed structure location, mass, bulk, and height prior to action on any project application.

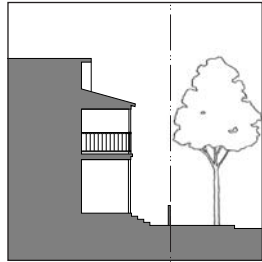
**Green Building Incentives**  
Projects shall receive priority for processing and review that include green building techniques in compliance with the U.S. Green Building Council LEED rating system or similar certification standards.

# Frontage Types

Frontage Line ◀

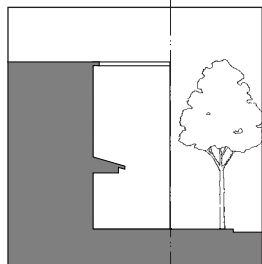


**Common Lawn:** The main façade of the building has a large setback from the frontage line. The resulting front yard can be defined or undefined at the frontage line. This edge is typically defined by a fence or hedge within a traditional neighborhood or left undefined within more rural areas or subdivisions. Large common lawns are typical for larger homes within historic neighborhoods. A front porch is optional, but if it is used, it can be one or two story.

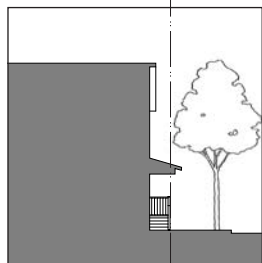


**Porch:** The main façade of the building has a small setback from the frontage line. The resulting front yard is typically very small and can be defined by a fence or hedge. The porch can encroach into the setback to the point that the porch extends to the frontage line. The porch can be one or two stories. A minimum depth of 6' clear is required within the development standards to ensure usability.

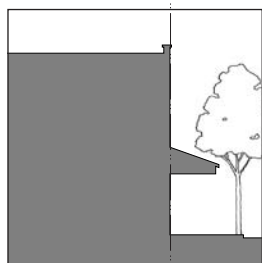
On downslope lots the setback is typically minimized to improve the development feasibility of the lot. On upslope lots it is maximized to reduce visual impact of the building on the streetscape.



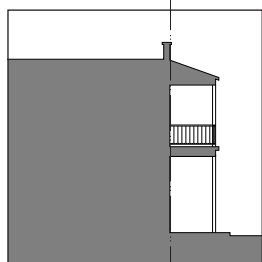
**Forecourt:** The main façade of the building is at or near the frontage line and a small percentage of it is set back, creating a small court space. The space could be used as an entry court or shared garden space for apartment buildings, or as an additional shopping or restaurant seating area within commercial zones. The proportions and orientation of these spaces should be carefully considered for solar orientation and user comfort. This frontage type should be used sparingly and should not be repeated within a block. A short wall, hedge, or fence should be placed along the undefined edge.



**Stoop:** The main façade of the building is near the frontage line and the elevated stoop engages the sidewalk. The stoop should be elevated a minimum of 24 inches above the sidewalk to ensure privacy within the building. The stairs from the stoop may lead directly to the sidewalk or may be side loaded. The minimum width and depth of the stoop should be 5 feet. This type is appropriate for residential uses with small setbacks.



**Awning :** The main façade of the building is at or near the frontage line and the canopy or awning element may overlap the sidewalk. The canopy is a structural, cantilevered, shed roof and the awning is canvas or similar material and is often retractable. The coverings should extend far enough from the building to provide adequate protection for pedestrians. This type is appropriate for retail and commercial uses only because of the lack of a raised ground story.



**Gallery:** The main façade of the building is at the frontage line and the gallery element overlaps the sidewalk. The entry should be at the same grade as the sidewalk. This type can be one or two stories and is intended for retail uses. The gallery should extend close enough to the curb so that a pedestrian cannot bypass it. Due to the overlap of the right-of-way, an easement is usually required. A minimum depth is required within the development standards to ensure usability. This type is appropriate for ground floor commercial uses.

# Glossary

**Alcoholic Beverage Sales - Off-Premise:** The retail sale of beer, wine, and/or spirits in sealed containers for off-site consumption, either as part of another retail use, or as a primary business activity.

**Ancillary Building:** A building customarily incidental to, related and clearly subordinate to the primary building on the same parcel, which does not alter the primary use nor serve property other than the parcel where the primary building is located.

**Apartment:** A dwelling unit sharing a building and a lot with other dwellings and/or uses. Apartments may be for rent or for sale as condominiums.

**Artisan Shop:** Premises available for the creation, assemblage, and/or repair of artifacts, using hand-powered and table-mounted electrical machinery, and including their retail sale.

**ATM or Bank:** An automated teller machine (computerized, self-service machine used by banking customers for financial transactions, including deposits, withdrawals and fund transfers, without face-to-face contact with financial institution personnel), located outdoors at a bank, or in another location. Does not include drive-up ATMs. Includes banks. See also “Financial Institutions” for other financial organizations. Does not include check-cashing stores.

**Bar, Tavern, Night Club:**

**Bar, Tavern:** A business where alcoholic beverages are sold for on-site consumption, which are not part of a larger restaurant. Includes bars, taverns, pubs, and similar establishments where any food service is subordinate to the sale of alcoholic beverages. May also include beer brewing as part of a microbrewery (“brew-pub”), and other beverage tasting facilities.

**Night Club:** A facility serving alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, and providing entertainment, examples of which include live music and/or dancing, comedy, etc. Does not include adult oriented businesses.

**Bed & Breakfast Inn:** A residential structure with one or more bedrooms rented for overnight lodging, where meals may be provided subject to applicable Environmental Health Department regulations.

**Building Type:** The structure defined by the combination of configuration, disposition and function.

**Build-to Line (BTL):** A line appearing graphically on the regulating plan or stated as a setback dimension, along which a building façade must be placed.

**Business Support Service:** An establishment within a building that provides services to other businesses. Examples of these services include:

computer-related services (rental, repair) (see also “Maintenance Service - Client Site Services”), copying, quick printing, and blueprinting services, film processing and photofinishing (retail), mailing and mail box services.

**Carriage Unit:** A Carriage unit is an auxiliary housing unit located above or adjacent to the garage of the primary housing unit on the lot, with the front door and access directed towards an alley. A carriage unit constitutes a residential second unit in compliance with the Government Code Section 65852.2 and, as provided by the Government Code, is not included in the maximum density limitations.

**Child Day Care:** See “Day Care Center.”

**Civic:** A term defining not-for-profit organizations, dedicated to arts, culture, education, religious activities, government, transit, municipal parking facilities and clubs.

**Commercial:** A term defining workplace, office and retail use collectively.

**Commercial Recreation Facility - Indoor:** An establishment providing indoor amusement and entertainment services for a fee or admission charge, including:

bowling alleys, coin-operated amusement arcades, electronic game arcades (video games, pinball, etc.), ice skating and roller skating, pool and billiard rooms as primary uses.

This use does not include sex oriented businesses. Four or more electronic games or amusement devices (e.g., pool or billiard tables, pinball machines, etc.) in any establishment, or a premises where 50 percent or more of the floor area is occupied by electronic games or amusement devices, are considered a commercial recreation facility; three or fewer machines or devices are not considered a land use separate from the primary use of the site.

**Day Care Center, Child or Adult:** A state-licensed facility that provides non-medical care and supervision for adult clients or minor children for periods of less than 24 hours for any client. These facilities include the following, all of which are required to be licensed by the California State Department of Social Services.

1. **Large Family Day Care Home:** As defined by Health and Safety Code Section 1596.78, a day care facility in a single dwelling where an occupant of the residence provides family day care for seven to 14 children, inclusive, including children under the age of 10 years who reside in the home.
2. **Small Family Day Care Home:** As defined by Health and Safety Code Section 1596.78, a day care facility in a single residence where an occupant of the residence provides family day care for eight or fewer children, including children under the age of 10 years who reside in the home.

**Director:** The Community Development Director of the City of Benicia, or his duly appointed representative.

**Dwelling, Dwelling Unit, or Housing Unit:** A room or group of internally connected rooms that have sleeping, cooking, eating, and sanitation facilities, but not more than one kitchen, which constitute an independent housekeeping unit, occupied by or intended for one household on a long-term basis.

**Dwelling, Multi-Family:** A residential structure containing two or more dwelling units.

1. **Duplex:** A building with two separate dwellings located either side by side or one on top of the other.
2. **Fourplex:** A building with four separate dwellings.
3. **Triplex:** A building with three separate dwellings.
4. **Rowhouse:** A building with two or more single-family dwellings located side by side, with common walls on the side lot lines, the façades reading in a continuous plan.

**Façade:** The vertical surface of a building, generally set facing a street ("front façade").

**Financial Services:** Includes banks and trust companies, credit agencies, holding (but not primarily operating) companies, lending and thrift institutions, other investment companies, securities/commodity contract brokers and dealers, secu-

rity and commodity exchanges, vehicle finance (equity) leasing agencies. Does not include check-cashing stores.

**Frontage Line:** The property lines of a lot fronting a street or other public way, or a park, green or paseo.

**Front Porch:** A roofed structure, that is not enclosed, attached to the façade of a building.

**Frontage Type:** See Chapter 4 (Frontage Type Standards).

**Gallery:** As a building frontage type, a roofed promenade extending along the façade of a building and supported by columns on the outer side.

**General Retail:** Stores and shops intended to serve the City as destination retail, rather than convenience shopping. Examples of these stores and lines of merchandise include:

art galleries, retail, art supplies, including framing services, books, magazines, and newspapers, cameras and photographic supplies, clothing, shoes, and accessories, collectibles (cards, coins, comics, stamps, etc.), drug stores and pharmacies, dry goods, fabrics and sewing supplies, furniture and appliance stores, hobby materials, home and office electronics, jewelry, luggage and leather goods, musical instruments and-carried), parts, accessories, small wares, specialty grocery store, specialty shops, sporting goods and equipment, stationery, toys and games, variety stores, videos, DVD's, records, CD's, including rental stores.

**Health/Fitness Facility:** A fitness center, gymnasium, health and athletic club, which may include any of the following:

exercise machines, weight facilities, group exercise rooms, sauna, spa or hot tub facilities; indoor tennis, handball, racquetball, archery and shooting ranges and other indoor sports activities, indoor or outdoor pools.

**Height:** A limit to the vertical extent of a building that is measured in number of stories. Height limits do not apply to masts, belfries, clock towers, chimney flues, water tanks, elevator bulkheads, and similar structures, which may be of any height approved by the Director.

**Home Occupation:** Residential premises used for the transaction of business or the supply of professional services. Home occupation shall be limited to the following: agent, architect, artist, broker, consultant, draftsman, dressmaker, engineer, interior decorator, lawyer, notary public, teacher, and other similar occupations, as determined by the Director. Such use shall not simultaneously employ more than 1 person in addition to residents of the dwelling. The total gross area of the home occupation use shall not exceed 25 percent of the gross square footage of the residential unit. The home occupation use shall not disrupt the generally residential character of the neighborhood. The Director shall review the nature of a proposed home occupation use at the time of review of a business license for such use, and may approve, approve with conditions, continue or deny the application.

**Library, Museum:** Public or quasi-public facilities, examples of which include: aquariums, arboretums, art galleries and exhibitions, botanical gardens, historic sites and exhibits, libraries, museums, planetariums, and zoos. May also include accessory retail uses such as a gift/book shop, restaurant, etc.

**Live-Work Unit:** An integrated housing unit and working space, occupied and utilized by a single household in a structure that has been designed or structurally modified to accommodate joint residential occupancy and work activity, and which



includes:

1. Complete kitchen space and sanitary facilities in compliance with the Building Code; and
2. Working space reserved for and regularly used by one or more occupants of the unit.

**Lodging:** A facility (typically a hotel or motel) with guest rooms or suites, with or without kitchen facilities, rented to the general public for transient lodging. Hotels typically include a variety of services in addition to lodging; for example, restaurants, meeting facilities, personal services, etc. Also includes accessory guest facilities such as swimming pools, tennis courts, indoor athletic facilities, accessory retail uses, etc.

**Medical Services - Clinic, Urgent Care:** A facility other than a hospital where medical, mental health, surgical and other personal health services are provided on an outpatient basis. Examples of these uses include:

medical offices with five or more licensed practitioners and/or medical specialties, out-patient care facilities, urgent care facilities, other allied health services

These facilities may also include incidental medical laboratories. Counseling services by other than medical doctors or psychiatrists are included under “Offices - Professional/Administrative.”

**Medical Services - Doctor Office:** A facility other than a hospital where medical, dental, mental health, surgical, and/or other personal health care services are provided on an outpatient basis, and that accommodates no more than four licensed primary practitioners (for example, chiropractors, medical doctors, psychiatrists, etc., other than nursing staff) within an individual office suite. A facility with five or more licensed practitioners is instead classified under “Medical Services - Clinic, Urgent Care.” Counseling services by other than medical doctors or psychiatrists are included under “Offices - Professional/Administrative.”

**Medical Services - Extended Care:** Residential facilities providing nursing and health-related care as a primary use with in-patient beds. Examples of these uses include: board and care homes; convalescent and rest homes; extended care facilities; and skilled nursing facilities. Long-term personal care facilities that do not emphasize medical treatment are included under “Residential Care.”

**Meeting Facility, Public or Private:** A facility for public or private meetings, including:

community centers, religious assembly facilities (e.g., churches, mosques, synagogues, etc.), civic and private auditoriums, Grange halls, union halls, meeting halls for clubs and other membership organizations, etc.

Also includes functionally related internal facilities such as kitchens, multi-purpose rooms, and storage. Does not include conference and meeting rooms accessory and incidental to another primary use, and which are typically used only by on-site employees and clients, and occupy less floor area on the site than the offices they support. Does not include:

cinemas, performing arts theaters, indoor commercial sports assembly or other commercial entertainment facilities.

Related on-site facilities such as day care centers and schools are separately defined, and separately regulated by this Development Code.

**Mixed-use:** Multiple functions within the same building or the same general area through superimposition or within the same area through adjacency.

Museum - See “Library, Museum.”

**Neighborhood Market:** A neighborhood serving retail store of 3,500 square feet or less in gross floor area, primarily offering food products, which may also carry a range of merchandise oriented to daily convenience shopping needs, and may be combined with food service (e.g., delicatessen).

**Office:** Business, Service, Administrative, and Professional.

**Business, Service:** Establishments providing direct services to consumers. Examples of these uses include employment agencies, insurance agent offices, real estate offices, travel agencies, utility company offices, elected official satellite offices, etc. This use does not include “Bank, Financial Services,” which are separately defined.

**Professional, Administrative:** Office-type facilities occupied by businesses that provide professional services, or are engaged in the production of intellectual property. Examples of these uses include:

accounting, auditing and bookkeeping services, advertising agencies, attorneys, business associations, chambers of commerce, commercial art and design services, construction contractors (office facilities only), counseling services, court reporting services, design services including architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, urban planning, detective agencies and similar services, doctors, educational, scientific and research organizations, financial management and investment counseling, literary and talent agencies, management and public relations services, media postproduction services, news services, photographers and photography studios, political campaign headquarters, psychologists, secretarial, stenographic, word processing, and temporary clerical employee services, security and commodity brokers, writers and artists offices.

**Park, Playground:** An outdoor recreation facility that may provide a variety of recreational opportunities including playground equipment, open space areas for passive recreation and picnicking, and sport and active recreation facilities.

**Parking Facility, Public or Private:** Parking lots or structures operated by the City, or a private entity providing parking for a fee. Does not include towing impound and storage facilities.

**Personal Services:** Establishments that provide non-medical services to individuals as a primary use. Examples of these uses include:

barber and beauty shops, clothing rental, dry cleaning pick-up stores with limited equipment, home electronics and small appliance repair, laundromats (self-service laundries), locksmiths, massage (licensed, therapeutic, non-sexual), nail salons, pet grooming with no boarding, shoe repair shops, tailors, tanning salons.

These uses may also include accessory retail sales of products related to the services provided.

**Prohibited Uses:** The following are examples of uses not permitted anywhere within the Downtown Mixed-Use Master Plan area:

animal hatcheries; boarding houses; chemical manufacturing, storage, or distribution; any commercial use in where patrons remain in their automobiles while receiving goods or services, except service stations; enameling, painting, or plating of materials, except artist’s studios; kennels; the manufacture, storage, or disposal of hazardous waste materials; mini-storage warehouses; outdoor advertising or billboards; packing houses; prisons or detention centers, except as accessory to a police station; drug and alcohol treatment and rehab

centers; thrift stores; soup kitchens and charitable food distribution centers; sand, gravel, or other mineral extraction; scrap yards; tire vulcanizing and retreading; vending machines, except within a commercial building; uses providing goods or services of a predominantly adult-only or sexual nature, such as adult book or video stores or sex shops; and other similar uses as determined by the Director.

**Residential:** Premises used primarily for human habitation. Units shall not be less than 375 square feet in net area.

**Residential Care, 6 or Fewer Clients:** A single dwelling or multi-unit facility with six or fewer clients, licensed or supervised by a Federal, State, or local health/welfare agency that provides 24-hour nonmedical care of unrelated persons who are handicapped and in need of personal services, supervision, or assistance essential for sustaining the activities of daily living or for the protection of the individual in a family-like environment. Does not include day care facilities, which are separately defined.

**Residential Care, 7 or more Clients:** A single dwelling or multi-unit facility with seven or more clients, licensed or supervised by a Federal, State, or local health/welfare agency that provides 24-hour nonmedical care of unrelated persons who are handicapped and in need of personal services, supervision, or assistance essential for sustaining the activities of daily living or for the protection of the individual in a family-like environment. Does not include day care facilities, which are separately defined.

**Restaurant, Cafe, Coffee Shop:** A retail business selling ready-to-eat food and/or beverages for on- or off-premise consumption. These include eating establishments where customers are served from a walk-up ordering counter for either on- or off-premise consumption (“counter service”); and establishments where customers are served food at their tables for on-premise consumption (“table service”), that may also provide food for take-out, but does not include drive-through services.

**School, Public or Private:** Includes the following facilities:

**Elementary, Middle, Secondary:** A public or private academic educational institution, including elementary (kindergarten through 6th grade), middle and junior high schools (7th and 8th grades), secondary and high schools (9th through 12th grades), and facilities that provide any combination of those levels. May also include any of these schools that also provide room and board.

**Specialized Education/Training:** A school that provides education and/or training, including tutoring, or vocational training, in limited subjects. Examples of these schools include:

art school, ballet and other dance school, business, secretarial, and vocational school, computers and electronics school, drama school, driver education school, establishments providing courses by mail, language school, martial arts, music school, professional school (law, medicine, etc.), seminaries/religious ministry training facility

Does not include pre-schools and child day care facilities (see “Day Care”). See also the definition of “Studio - Art, Dance, Martial Arts, Music, etc.” for smaller-scale facilities offering specialized instruction.

**Secondary Building:** A building that accommodates the secondary use of the site.

**Setback:** The mandatory distance between a property line and a building or appurtenance. This area must be left free of structures that are higher than 3 feet excluding Streetwalls, except as noted in the Urban Regulations.

**Shared Parking:** Any parking spaces assigned to more than one use, where persons utilizing the spaces are unlikely to need the spaces at the same time of day.

**Single Family Dwelling:** A residential structure containing a single dwelling unit. Includes for the purposes of this Development Code Rowhouses.

**Shopfront:** The portion of a building at the ground floor that is made available for retail or other commercial use. Shopfronts shall be directly accessible from the sidewalk.

**Story:** A habitable floor level within a building, typically 8’ to 12’ high from floor to ceiling. Individual spaces, such as lobbies and foyers may exceed one story in height. In Shopfront spaces, the ceiling height of the first story may be as high as 16’.

**Studio:** Art, Dance, Martial Arts, Music, etc: Small scale facilities, typically accommodating no more than two groups of students at a time, in no more than two instructional spaces. Examples of these facilities include:

individual and group instruction and training in the arts; production rehearsal; photography, and the processing of photographs produced only by users of the studio facilities; martial arts training studios; gymnastics instruction, and aerobics and gymnastics studios with no other fitness facilities or equipment.

Also includes production studios for individual musicians, painters, sculptors, photographers, and other artists.

**Substantial Compliance:** It occurs when physical improvements to the existing development site are completed which constitute the greatest degree of compliance with current development provisions.

**Theater, Cinema or Performing Arts:** An indoor facility for group entertainment, other than sporting events. Examples of these facilities include:

civic theaters, facilities for “live” theater and concerts, and movie theaters

**Wireless Telecommunications Facility:** Public, commercial and private electromagnetic and photoelectrical transmission, broadcast, repeater and receiving stations for radio, television, telegraph, telephone, data network, and wireless communications, including commercial earth stations for satellite-based communications. Includes antennas, commercial satellite dish antennas, and equipment buildings. Does not include telephone, telegraph and cable television transmission facilities utilizing hard-wired or direct cable connections.

**Zoning Code or Zoning Ordinance:** The City of Benicia Zoning Code, Title 17 of the City of Benicia Municipal Code.

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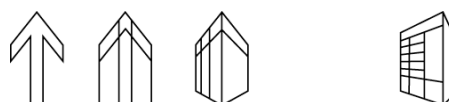


# **Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan**

## DRAFT Market Conditions and Recommendations

November 2006

*prepared for:*  
City of Benicia  
Opticos Design, Inc.



STRATEGICECONOMICS

DOWNTOWN MIXED USE MASTER PLAN

**Appendix**

chapter

**5**

## I. INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes background market conditions and offers recommendations for the Downtown Form Based Code, and the Arsenal Specific Plan in Benicia, CA. The recommendations made in this report are the culmination of several months of involvement in Benicia including background document review, stakeholder interviews, involvement in the charrette that took place from September 18 to 22, 2006, and follow up research on market conditions and potential implementation strategies for both Downtown and the Arsenal.

The preliminary goal of the Downtown Form Based Code is to clarify design and land use guidelines both on First Street and on side streets currently in a “mixed-use” designation. Community members and business owners on First Street voiced concern about a variety of other issues and desirable goals for First Street. Land use policy alone is not the appropriate mechanism for addressing all of the community’s issues. Therefore, this report offers recommendations for ways to jointly apply land use policy and other implementation strategies to improve First Street.

The goal of the Arsenal planning process is to develop a specific plan that clarifies and refines the area’s “mixed-use” designation in the General Plan, and identifies potential strategies that the City of Benicia can pursue to address particular concerns about preserving and enhancing unique characteristics of this area. This report makes recommendations for land use policy based on research about current and potential market support for a variety of uses. Further, the report describes several possible implementation strategies and identifies sources of public and private financing for each strategy.

This report includes three parts. Chapter II describes current demographic and market conditions that pertain to both First Street and the Arsenal. Chapter III summarizes key issues in the First Street area, and makes recommendations for the form-based code. Finally, Chapter IV summarizes key issues in the Arsenal area, and makes recommendations for the specific plan.

## II. DEMOGRAPHIC AND MARKET OVERVIEW

This chapter provides information on demographic and market conditions that influence, or will influence the physical and use characteristics of the Arsenal and Downtown Benicia. Strategic Economics has gathered general information on Benicia's demographics and market for housing, office, retail, and industrial space, but has targeted its research around particular issues in both the Arsenal and the Downtown. As some general market and demographic information is not relevant to planning efforts in Downtown Benicia and the Arsenal, this section focuses on a more relevant set of observations about the market for each of these types of uses. Further information about the City's demographics and market conditions can be found in the *Benicia Downtown Market Study* report prepared by Bay Area Economics in 2002, and in information collected by Main Street Benicia. These sources were used as the foundation for many of the observations made in following sections.

### DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

**Table 1** presents demographic information for Benicia, as well as Solano and Contra Costa Counties, as trends in the two-county area are expected to impact the potential for new housing, office and retail in Benicia. Key demographic trends are summarized below:

***Benicia has a small, slow growing population with higher incomes than the rest of Solano County.***

- The population of Benicia increased by 10 percent between 1990 and 2000, compared with 16 percent in Solano County and 18 percent in Contra Costa Counties. Between 2000 and 2006, the population of Benicia is estimated to have declined slightly due to declining household sizes (during the same period the estimated number of occupied housing units increased).
- While the Benicia population remains relatively stable, a significant amount of growth is occurring elsewhere in Solano County, such as Vacaville and Fairfield. Much of this growth consists of family households who are moving to the area to take advantage of lower housing costs. Meanwhile, households in Benicia tend to be older and are less likely to be first-time homebuyers.
- While in general household incomes in all three geographic areas have remained relatively flat, there likelihood that new residents in Benicia have higher incomes, as discussed in the housing market section below.
- Therefore, future demand for retail will be driven not by additional household growth, but by increases in incomes and visitor spending.

***Benicia's labor force differs from the rest of Solano County, indicating an association with areas further south in the region.***

- Benicia maintains strong connections to both Contra Costa County and Solano County. Residents work throughout the Bay Area, but primarily in Solano County, and Contra Costa County. Residents are closely tied to both the I-680 corridor in Contra Costa and Solano County for working, shopping, and entertainment.
- Relative to both counties, Benicia is a city of commuters. A quarter of the City's workforce commutes to Contra Costa County, while another quarter commutes within Solano County. The remaining half commutes to other destinations in California or works at home.
- Benicia has a concentration of professional employees- 46 percent compared with 31 percent in Solano County and 41 percent in Contra Costa County.

Table 1: Demographic and Housing Trends in Benicia, Solano County and Contra Costa County

	City of Benicia		Solano County		Contra Costa County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
<b>Population</b>						
Total Population	24,437	26,865	340,421	394,542	803,732	948,816
Households	9,208	10,328	113,429	130,403	300,288	344,129
Avg. Household Size	2.65	2.60	2.88	2.90	2.64	2.72
Median Household Income (2006 \$)	\$81,442	\$82,493	\$64,145	\$64,753	\$73,943	\$77,684
		\$78,794				\$73,313
<b>Housing Units</b>						
Total Housing Units	9,587	10,547	119,533	134,513	316,170	354,557
Occupied Housing Units	9,208	10,328	113,429	130,403	300,288	344,129
% Occupied Housing Units	96.0%	97.9%	94.9%	96.9%	95.0%	97.1%
% Owner-Occupied Units	70.1%	70.7%	62.7%	65.2%	67.6%	69.3%
% Renter-Occupied Units	29.9%	29.3%	37.3%	34.8%	32.4%	30.7%
<b>Employment</b>						
Share Working in County of Residence	42.8%	44.2%	61.4%	56.8%	59.8%	57.6%
Share Labor Force in Professional Occupations	-	45.7%	-	30.9%	-	41.0%

Source: U.S. Census: 1990, 2000, Claritas: 2006

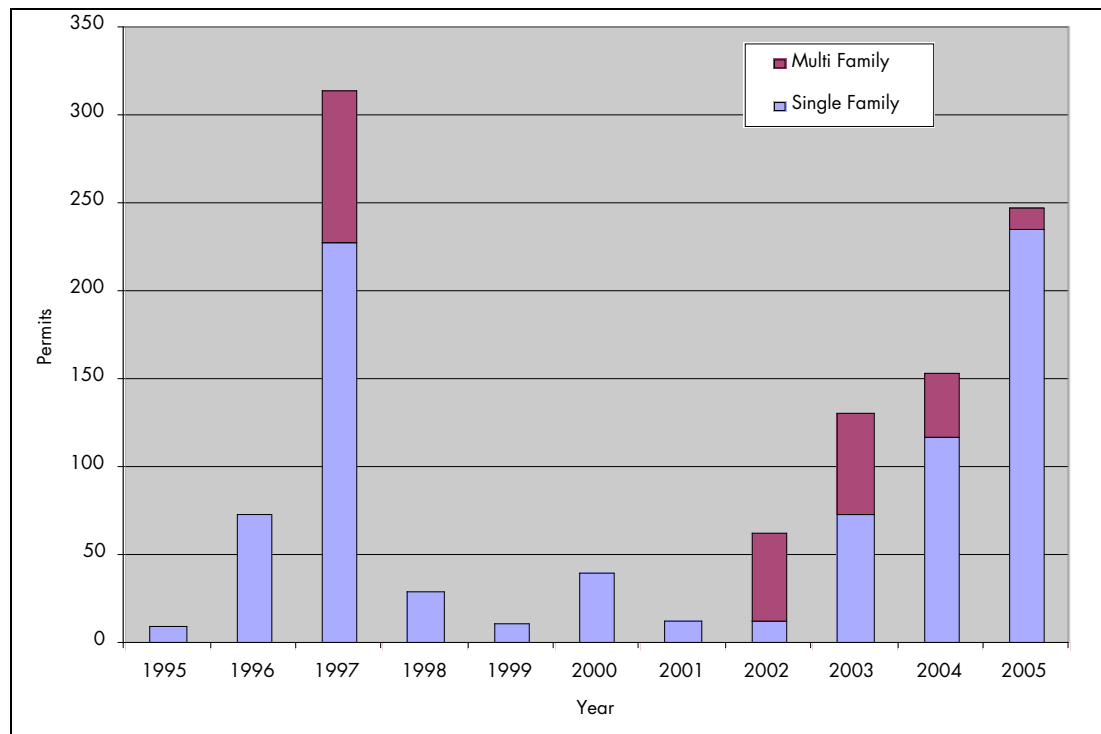
## MARKET CONDITIONS

### Housing Market

*High prices for new and existing homes in Benicia indicate that housing is in high demand and is likely to be the economic highest and best use on most land in the city.*

- The median house price in Benicia was \$579,500 as of 2005, the highest in the County (the County median was \$429,000). As in the rest of the Bay Area, the Benicia housing market has boomed over the past several years, and only began to slow during the past few months (as of September 2006, the average price of a home in Solano County had declined 2 percent from the previous year).
- Rising home prices stimulated increased interest by residential builders in building in Benicia; as shown in **Figure 1**, few residential units were permitted between 1997 and 2001, however the annual number of permits increased every year thereafter. The majority of permits since 2000 have been for single-family homes (74 percent). New single-family homes are priced between \$840,000 and \$1.1 million, which suggests that new households, or existing residents moving into new homes, have high incomes.

Figure 1: Housing Permits in City of Benicia



Source: Construction Research Industry Board

*There is a strong recent supply of both single-family detached and attached ownership units.*

- Recent housing projects in Benicia are summarized in **Table 2**. Harborwalk, the most recent addition to Downtown Benicia, offered townhouse units at a higher sales price per square foot than any other recent attached or single-family development in Benicia, due in part to increasing in home prices overall during the last year.



- Demand for new homes is coming from existing residents as well as potential buyers from outside of Benicia. According to residential brokers, more than half of the units at Harborwalk were sold to current residents in Benicia who were interested in the convenience of the location to downtown shopping and the waterfront, or who wanted to enjoy the benefits of smaller yards and minimal outdoor maintenance. The age range of buyers ranges from first time homebuyers to retirees.

Table 2: Recent Ownership Housing Development in Benicia

Type/Name	Developer	Price	Size (SF)	Price per SF
<u>Single Family</u>				
Waterfront Village	Lenox Homes	\$929,900 - \$964,900	2,123 - 2,292	\$438 - \$421
Waters End North	Shea Homes	\$942,540 - \$1,079,416	3,828 - 4,377	\$246 - \$247
Waters End South	Centex Homes	\$840,900 - \$885,900	2,758 - 3,515	\$305 - \$252
<u>Townhouse</u>				
Cambridge Highlands	Lennar Homes	\$259,900 - \$309,900	925 - 1,269	\$281 - \$244
Harbor Walk	The Olson Company	\$689,990 - \$850,990	1,520 - 1,791	\$454 - \$475

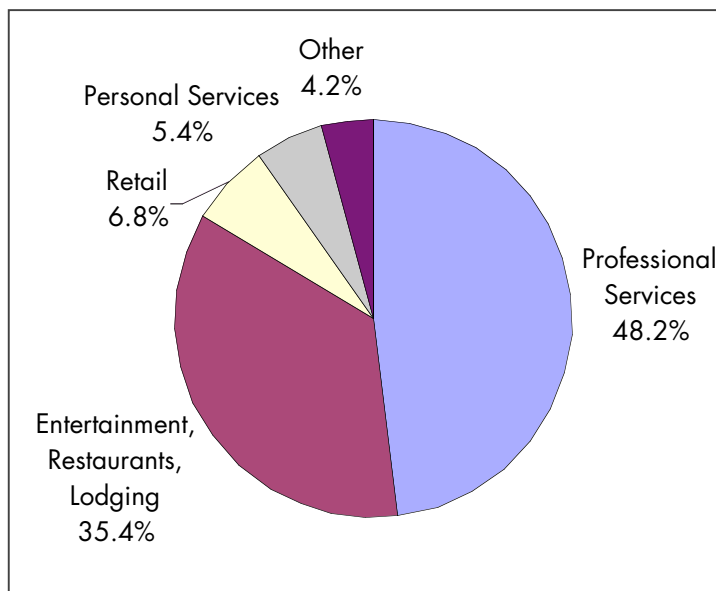
Source: Hanley Wood

## Office Market

*Professional service businesses are important to Downtown Benicia's economic health.*

- First Street captures nearly one-quarter of all businesses, or 250, in the City of Benicia. Over one-third of First Street businesses are in the finance and professional services sector, contributing nearly half of the jobs (542) on First Street.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 2: Distribution of Employment in Downtown Benicia by Sector



Source: City of Benicia Business License Data

***Many downtown office tenants, or professional services businesses, benefit from ground floor, “walk-in” locations. This accounts for the strong presence of ground floor office tenants on First Street.***

- Downtown professional tenants offer services to residents, such as real estate, law, medicine, and accounting. Many of these services have similar needs to those of retail tenants, including high visibility and good access. Others may prefer more traditional office buildings.

***There is competition for ground floor space on First Street from two user groups: office and retail tenants.***

- It appears that office tenants (who offer professional services as opposed to goods) are able to pay higher rents than retail tenants for the same space. Many believe this is eroding the strong retail presence on First Street.
- Rents in Downtown Benicia currently range from \$1.00 to \$2.00 per square foot, although there is evidence of recent increases, resulting from higher prices for new ground floor commercial space at Harborwalk (asking rents of \$2.50 to \$3.00).

***While the Downtown is the most desirable location for many of Benicia’s professional service tenants, the Arsenal contains a significant proportion of the total office space in Benicia.***

- Rents in the Arsenal are lower than First Street, with rates ranging from \$1.00 to \$1.40 per square foot. While some office tenants are drawn to the Arsenal for its unique character, brokers in the area believe that the lower rents are currently the greatest draw to leasing space in Arsenal offices.

***There is potential for future office growth in Benicia.***

- ABAG estimates that there are currently 2,460 Finance and Professional Service jobs in Benicia, and projects a growth of 620 jobs in this sector from 2005 to 2030, representing long term potential for over 100,000 square feet of new office space in Benicia. This is a significant amount space relative to the current supply of space on First Street and in the Arsenal, and will enable some increment of new office development in these areas.
- Future office growth in Benicia could be absorbed in the downtown, the Arsenal, or the current and proposed industrial parks between I-680 and I-780. The downtown is the most desirable location for future growth in professional services geared towards local residents, while businesses serving the port and other industrial activities would be drawn to the industrial parks. The Arsenal offers Benicia an opportunity to capture a small segment of the office market, including creative industries seeking alternative space configurations such as older industrial buildings.

## **Retail Market**

*Downtown Benicia has a relatively stable mix of visitor and local-serving retail.*

- Benicia has maintained a concentration of restaurants, shopping, and overnight lodging in its Downtown Area. Patrons of these businesses include both local residents and visitors to the area who are drawn by Benicia's location next to the waterfront, small-town character, periodic festivals and events, and proximity to the rest of the Bay Area. However there is room for growth in Benicia's tourist economy, and a targeted marketing strategy could help stabilize the ebb and flow of sales from this segment.

*Retail tenants in Benicia are limited by the size and quality of ground floor spaces.*

- In spite of the Downtown's vital mix of small retailers, offices, and restaurants, rents in Downtown Benicia remain relatively low at less than \$2.00 per square foot. This is in part due to the quality and size of ground floor spaces in Downtown Benicia; infrastructure is often in disrepair, spaces are too small to attract interested businesses or to allow existing businesses to grow, and property owners are sometimes unwilling to make tenant improvements.
- The process of triggering reinvestment in these properties requires an external force to start the cyclical process of reinvestment: to afford the costs of building rehabilitation, property owners have to increase rents, but tenants will only be willing to pay higher rents if spaces are improved and sales increase.

*There has been some recent momentum towards reinvestment in First Street retail buildings.*

- The retail space in Harborwalk has had a marked effect on the Downtown area. Asking rents for Harborwalk retail suites are substantially higher than the average asking rent in surrounding areas, at \$2.50 to \$3.00 per square foot. Harborwalk has had success in attracting new tenants, demonstrating to other property owners that improved space can achieve higher rents. Harborwalk, and other demonstration projects in the area, could be the trigger for significant revitalization of existing retail in the area.

*Rising incomes as a result of higher housing prices and new development could slightly increase the demand for retail in the Downtown.*

- New single-family homes are priced between \$840,000 and \$1.1 million, which suggests that new residents have high incomes. For example, assuming a 20 percent down payment, a 6 percent interest rate, and a 30-year term, a household would need to have an income in excess of \$140,000 to afford a typical unit at Water's End. Rising incomes could increase the potential buying power for new retail, and strengthen local support for downtown shopping.

*There is very limited, if any, demand for retail space in the Arsenal.*

- Limited access, low visibility, and distance from existing retail centers inhibit the future market potential for retail in the Arsenal. Some very small additional

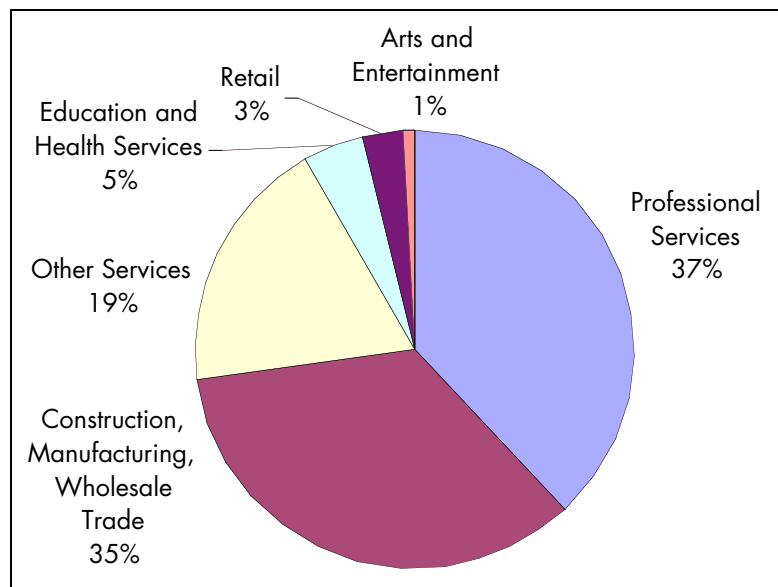
increment of retail, similar to the sandwich shop that currently occupies space on Adams Street, might be possible if the area experiences job growth or increased visitor traffic as a result of new development or marketing.

## Industrial Market

*The Arsenal supports a wide mix of nonresidential tenants, including a large share of heavy and light industrial tenants.*

- There are over 300 jobs in the Lower Arsenal, of which over a third are in the construction, manufacturing, and wholesale trade sectors, and nearly 40 percent are in the professional services sector. One-fifth of all jobs are in “other services,” which ranges from auto repair to massage and other personal services. The wide mix of business types are likely drawn to this area for a variety of reasons including low rents, proximity to residential areas, availability of flexible industrial/storage/production space, or adjacency to the port. The mix of uses is also reflective of the many identities found in the Lower Arsenal.

Figure 3: Distribution of Employment in the Arsenal by Sector



Source: City of Benicia Business License Data

*Most future large-scale industrial growth will be accommodated in Benicia’s industrial parks near I-680 and I-780.*

- The limited land supply in the Arsenal, coupled with relatively difficult truck access, limits the future industrial potential of this area to smaller businesses in the production, distribution, and repair (“PDR”) businesses. These PDR businesses offer vital services to Benicia’s residents and their presence should be considered in plans for the Arsenal and other future industrial areas.

### III. FIRST STREET RECOMMENDATIONS

First Street is the core of Benicia's downtown, offering residents and visitors alike a small town environment in which to shop and work. The main purpose of the planning process in the First Street area is to refine the land use code, incorporating design guidelines and redefining areas that are appropriate for mixed-use development. This chapter identifies ways in which the Form Based Code can help to address Downtown Benicia's economic issues and further strengthen the commercial environment found along First Street.

#### ISSUES FROM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS AND CHARRETTE

Community members and business owners expressed concern about a number of issues regarding the use and physical characteristics of buildings immediately on First Street. In particular:

- *There is a need to strengthen the demand and consumer base for existing retailers.* Business owners in the area noted that it can be difficult to stay profitable, and shopping activity fluctuates to high and low levels with no discernable pattern.
- *There is concern about the significant presence of ground floor office users on First Street.* While blocks south of F Street have continuous retail activity and create a vibrant shopping atmosphere, blocks further to the north have a greater mix of office and retail activity. In some areas, the presence of ground floor offices makes it difficult for retailers to establish enough of a presence to draw pedestrian activity. Further, retailers are concerned that office related tenants are willing to pay higher rents, and this could further dilute existing concentrations of retail.
- *Commercial uses on First Street are constrained by a variety of building characteristics.* The historic character of First Street that makes Downtown Benicia so unique also provides structural challenges for property owners and tenants. Business owners reported that the infrastructure of many spaces is quite old, and may play a role in keeping rents low. Owners of historic buildings find it difficult to upgrade space because the costs of meeting existing codes are prohibitively expensive. Further, potential retail tenants who have expressed an interest in leasing space on First Street have discovered that available spaces are not large enough to meet their needs.

#### KEY FINDINGS

- *The supply of commercial space on First Street exceeds the needs of retailers.* First Street includes over 200,000 square feet of commercial space along eleven blocks from the Waterfront to Solano Square. This configuration and scale poses several challenges for retailers in Benicia. First, the linear nature of Benicia's downtown makes it difficult to create a continuous, active shopping atmosphere along the length of First Street. Second, the City of Benicia does not have a large enough customer base to support a full 200,000 square feet of retail, which is the size of a small regional shopping center.
- *Office users play a role in Downtown Benicia as well.* As the market overview indicates, an estimated 49 percent of all jobs, and 36 percent of all businesses on First Street are office users, who provide professional services to Benicia's residents. Many of these office users benefit from the walk-in activity and visibility associated with ground floor space; such users include real estate agents, mortgage brokers, and accountants. However, some ground floor users could easily locate on First Street in second or third story buildings, if spaces met their physical needs.



- *Side street mixed-use zoning increases the already extensive supply of commercial space in the Downtown.* While conversions of residential or other buildings have not been occurring at a rapid pace, the ability of businesses to convert these spaces rather than occupying space directly on First Street further dilutes the demand for space that could help stimulate reinvestment in existing commercial properties. Some side streets in the southern part of Downtown, such as East D Street, have already reached a mass of commercial space sufficient to change their character, but new mixed-use development on other side streets would not be appropriate given the residential character of these streets.
- *Attracting additional retail to Downtown Benicia would require an increase in visitor shopping.* As Chapter II illustrated, Downtown Benicia's primary market area is small relative to less isolated communities in Contra Costa County or along the Interstate 80 corridor. While Benicia residents enjoy higher incomes than their Solano County counterparts, the lack of critical mass of residents and thru-traffic limits the types of tenants who are willing to locate in Benicia. However, Benicia does have a small but stable regional tourism economy and a strong base of visitors attracted by local festivals and the town's charming character. It is possible that Benicia could further market to this visitor crowd, thus enhancing the customer base for existing and potential retailers.

## **LAND USE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Several of the issues identified above can be addressed through changes to First Street Area land use policies. By strategically limiting development of new commercial space to First Street and a handful of side streets only, the market for retail and office space will be more concentrated. This concentration of uses has several benefits, including encouraging new development and rehabilitation of existing buildings on First Street by directing demand for commercial space to one area, and establishing commercial nodes rather than stretching Downtown Benicia along the length of First Street. Strategic Economics recommends the following land use policies in support of further reinvestment in the First Street area:

- *Intensify development in Benicia's major retail nodes, especially south of E Street. Limit ground floor uses in these areas to retail only.* Some areas of First Street have a critical mass of retailers that should be encouraged, however other areas may always be better suited to a greater mix of uses. Retail and other commercial uses can be encouraged in blocks adjacent to the waterfront portion of First Street, in order to build upon the area's existing concentration of retail and side street mixed-use space. An intensified waterfront commercial node will also benefit visitor economy by fully taking advantage of the City's great views and waterfront experience.
- *Limit the mixed-use zoning designation on side streets to key areas only, including the waterfront commercial node.* This allows for a less linear form of retail expansion in major nodes, but also enables office tenants to locate in these areas if they would benefit from walk-in traffic near Benicia's more concentrated retail areas. Side street mixed-use designations in the waterfront area could also enable property owners to develop commercial or mixed-use buildings that support larger-format retail tenants. Limiting side street mixed-use zoning in other areas concentrates the market potential for non-residential space to First Street, thus encouraging increased development intensity in the First Street corridor, and potentially increasing leasing rates to stimulate reinvestment in buildings by property owners.

- *Support the development of second and third story office or residential uses on First Street. Consider whether office rents can support the addition of second and third story spaces.* If allowing a two or three story mixed use building on First Street is not enough of an incentive to property owners to invest in upgrading or new construction, conduct analysis to determine whether construction of a building is financially feasible, and in fact profitable to the developer. Consider whether there are other barriers to new development including the permitting process, seismic upgrading costs, or historic preservation regulations, to determine whether further public involvement is necessary to encourage reinvestment.
- *Ensure design requirements for future buildings on First Street have ground floor spaces that are appropriate for retail tenants, even if retail tenants do not occupy them.* There are a number of buildings on First Street with ground floor space that is only appropriate for office tenants. These building types should be discouraged in the future, in order to offer increased visibility and access from First Street foot traffic, and to allow a greater flexibility of uses that respond to changing market conditions over time.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of the form-based code is to clarify and improve zoning and design requirements in the First Street area. Such a code is only focused on land use policy and does not offer a mechanism to include information on public implementation strategies and financing options for public investments. However, many of the issues raised by the community throughout the charrette process suggest that there are a variety of implementation strategies that the City of Benicia, or the Main Street program, could pursue in coordination with the new land use policies in order to more effectively achieve a variety of goals including:

- Drawing more business into the Downtown, both from Benicia residents and visitors;
- Supporting building improvements to retain existing retailers and office users, and to attract new businesses; and
- Stimulating reinvestment in historic and non-historic buildings along First Street.

In pursuit of these goals, the City could consider pursuing the following implementation strategies:

- *Regional tourism strategy:* A coordinated tourism strategy could further attract visitors to downtown Benicia in a variety of ways. Steps that might be included in this strategy are installing wayfinding signs from I-680 and I-780; continued attraction of visitors through regional marketing and festivals; and drawing visitors by linking First Street shopping to the City's existing artist community by offering a subsidized downtown gallery. Future steps in attracting visitors should build off of the City's existing tourism strategies such as festivals, farmer's markets, and regional advertising on billboards. A more comprehensive strategy could be pursued through either the Main Street program or through the City directly.
- *Low/no interest loans for building improvements, and Unreinforced masonry (URM) grants or loans:* Cities have created different types of financing programs to assist property owners with the costs of rehabilitation. A loan or grant program in Downtown Benicia could alleviate the prohibitive costs of seismic upgrading, accessibility codes, and unknown structural upgrading. Likewise, a construction loan program would enable property owners to invest in rehabilitation with less equity. Sample loan and grant programs include:
  - Design consultation grants and programs (Pinole, Vacaville)
  - Façade Improvement Grants and Loans (Emeryville, Vacaville)
  - Seismic Upgrading Grants and Loans (Pinole, San Jose, Vacaville)
  - Matching Fund Loans (Vacaville)