
Appendix “A”

SmartCode[©]

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Introduction

Through a process of community workshops and Committee discussion, Petaluma has developed a clear vision of the preferred future for Central Petaluma. That vision is one of pedestrian-oriented public streets, plazas, squares and riverfront walks, lined with mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented buildings. The scale and general character of new development is based in many ways on the best elements of Petaluma's heritage – the multi-story mixed-use shopfront buildings of the historic Downtown, the iconic agricultural buildings, and the rich variety of streets, riverfront wharves, plazas and parks of Petaluma's historic center. The vision is focused around the Petaluma River - the dominant open space of Central Petaluma – which is intended to enhance, and be enhanced by, the new neighborhoods along its edges.

At its core, this vision is one of a very particular kind of *place*. A sense of place results only when the public realm – the streets and other public open spaces – and the private realm – the buildings that line the public spaces – are designed to connect to one another at the scale of the person on foot. The public spaces – in addition to providing circulation of people on foot, on bicycles and in cars – are the “living rooms”, the gathering places, of the community. The shape, scale and character of these public spaces are defined by their design and detailing, and by the way that private buildings connect to their edges. The fine-grained coordination of the design of public and private elements, to be built in large and small increments over a period of many years, does not happen automatically, and it does not happen by simply reviewing and discussing each individual project as it is proposed. An overall framework and a systematic approach to the design of the components and the connections between them is required.

The SmartCode® provides a system for ensuring that the design of the public realm and the design of private buildings are rigorously coordinated, and are focused on the pedestrian experience. It defines what is essentially a “kit of parts”, with instructions, for building an urban district – a district based directly on the preferences of the community, as expressed through workshops and meetings. The focus of this technique is on the scale and character of the parts and how they connect to each other. The focus is *not* on the architectural styling of the parts, which is very flexible. This code defines an agreement between the community (the public) and property owners (the private). The community commits itself to building and maintaining high-quality, pedestrian-oriented streets, public parking facilities, squares, plazas, and riverwalks, while the property and business owners commit themselves to building high-quality buildings that face the public realm with facades scaled to the pedestrian, and orienting on-site parking and service functions to the backs of the buildings and the interiors of the blocks.

Central Petaluma is envisioned to be a place where a wide range of residential, commercial and industrial uses can coexist in relative proximity to one another within a lively urban environment. (This is the type of place that Petaluma has over a century of experience in designing, building and managing in its historic Downtown, where the uses of individual buildings have changed many times during their long and useful life.) Livelier commercial uses can take advantage of the active environment of the ground floor street frontages, while residential and office uses can generally benefit from the quieter environment offered by upper floors. Through the appropriate design of the street frontages – where the buildings meets the street – a very wide range of use types can thrive on ground floor frontages. Accordingly, this document allows multi-story mixed-use buildings in most areas, in which residential uses are allowed on upper floors of most buildings, and a wide range of commercial enterprises are allowed on the ground floors of most buildings.

The SmartCode® is designed to be used both as a guide for property owners and their designers - to allow them to understand from the outset the parameters that the community has set for development in Central Petaluma - and also as a framework and systematic checklist for the City's use as it plans its investment in capital projects and evaluates the design of proposed building projects. This will improve the quality of design proposals that the City receives, and the speed and quality of the design review process, and the value of the City's cumulative reinvestment in the public realm.

Purpose

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This Chapter of the Central Petaluma Specific Plan provides detailed regulations for development and new land uses within the specific plan area, and describes how these regulations will be used as part of the City's development review process. These regulations are provided in the form of a "Smart Code," and are hereafter referred to as "this Code." This Code is intended to ensure that all new buildings are harmonious with each other and within the character of Petaluma. This Code is further intended to ensure that the area covered by this specific plan evolves into new, mixed use neighborhoods with the following characteristics:

- A. The size of neighborhoods reflect a five-minute walking distance from edge to center (center meaning a railroad transit stop or the existing downtown);
- B. The mixture of land uses includes shops, workplaces, residences, and civic buildings in proximity;
- C. A variety of thoroughfares that serve the needs of the pedestrian, the cyclists and the automobile equitably;
- D. Public open spaces that provide places for informal social activity and recreation; and
- E. Building frontages that define the public space of each street.