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## DOWNTOWN OXNARD VISION PLAN CHARRETTE

January 29 - February 2 | ADMINISTRATIVE DRAFT

City of Oxnard, California

Prepared by the Congress for the New Urbanism California Chapter

Published May 23, 2016

*“To advance the making of great places that are walkable, sustainable, and enjoyable.”*

*-Mission of the Congress for the New Urbanism CA Chapter*

## Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the citizens, city leadership and staff of Oxnard, California. Our CNU-California Chapter appreciates being requested and invited to host our annual 'By-Design Charrette' to share our professional perspectives to improve Downtown Oxnard. Thank you to the following people for participating, leading, and for spending your time with us:

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## Acknowledgements (continued)

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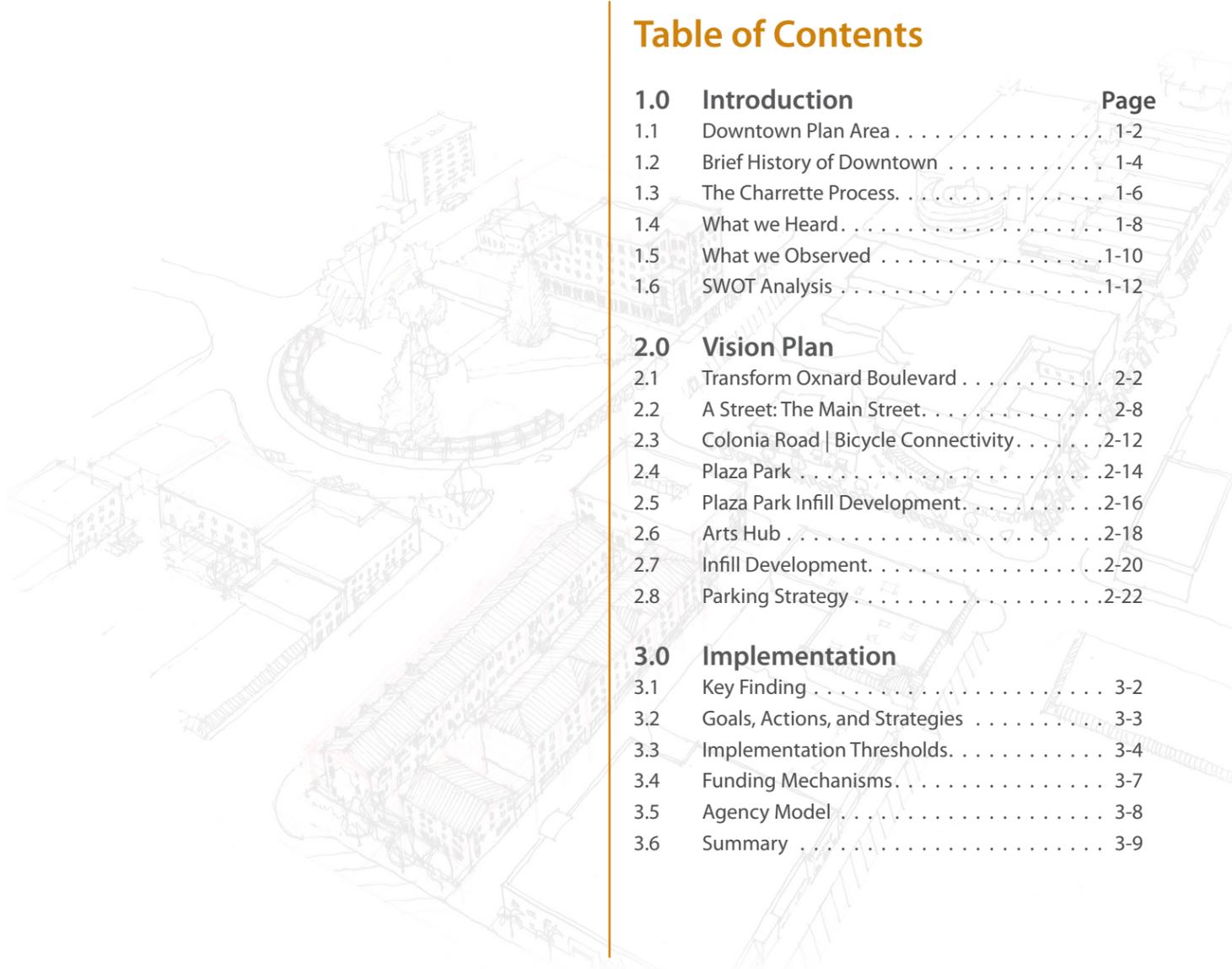


“... urban villages would incorporate private and public redevelopment, mixed land uses, affordable and workforce housing, and transit connectivity and are intended to be a key strategy for meeting GHG emission reduction targets and implementing the Southern California Association of Governments regional Sustainable Community Strategy (SB 375). The Urban Village theme replaces the 2020 General Plan Infill Area and Major Study Areas approach.”

- Vision Statement - Community Development Element

City of Oxnard General Plan 2030





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Congress for the New Urbanism Charter of the New Urbanism Principle #7:  
*“Cities and towns should bring into proximity a broad spectrum of public and private uses to support a regional economy that benefits people of all incomes. Affordable housing should be distributed throughout the region to match job opportunities and to avoid concentrations of poverty.”*

Congress for the New Urbanism Charter of the New Urbanism Principle #13:  
*“Within neighborhoods, a broad range of housing types and price levels can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal civic bonds essential to an authentic community.”*

# 1.0 Introduction



## Congress for the New Urbanism

The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) helps create vibrant and walkable cities, towns, and neighborhoods where people have diverse choices for how they live, work, shop, and get around. People want to live in well-designed places that are unique and authentic. CNU's mission is to help build those places.

With seventeen local and state chapters and offices in Chicago, IL and Washington, DC, CNU works to unite the New Urbanist movement. Our projects and campaigns serve to empower our members' efforts, identify policy opportunities, spread great ideas and innovative work to a national audience, and catalyze new strategies for implementing policy through design approaches.

Founded in 1993, our movement is united around the belief that our physical environment has a direct impact on our chances for happy, prosperous lives. New Urbanists believe that well-designed cities, towns, neighborhoods, and public places help create community: healthy places for people and businesses to thrive and prosper.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a large number of urban designers, architects, planners, developers, and engineers were frustrated with prevailing development patterns, which focused more on building dispersed housing far from traditional downtowns and Main Streets. Meanwhile, inside cities, urban renewal was destroying the fabric of historic neighborhoods and isolating once-stable communities.

As cities continued to decline, a coalition of urban designers, architects, planners, developers, and engineers coalesced to create New Urbanism—a movement for reinvestment in design, community, and place. Their values, and the core principles of their work, are articulated in the Charter of the New Urbanism opening Preamble:

"The Congress for the New Urbanism views the disinvestment in central cities, the spread of placeless sprawl, increasing separation by race and income, environmental deterioration, loss of agricultural lands and wilderness, and the erosion of society's built heritage as one interrelated community-building challenge."

### Congress for the New Urbanism Charter of the New Urbanism Principle #14:

*"Transit corridors, when properly planned and coordinated, can help organize metropolitan structure and revitalize urban centers. In contrast, highway corridors should not displace investment from existing centers."*

### Congress for the New Urbanism Charter of the New Urbanism Principle #17:

*"The economic health and harmonious evolution of neighborhoods, districts, and corridors can be improved through graphic urban design codes that serve as predictable guides for change."*

## CNU-California Chapter

CNU California is a non-profit 501(c) 3 volunteer professional organization. The Mission of the Congress for the New Urbanism California Chapter is, "to advance the making of great places that are walkable, sustainable, and enjoyable." Our diverse membership are experts in architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, historic preservation, engineering, and strategy who volunteer their time, expertise, and professional capacity to our annual 'By-Design Charrette' program. Our goals are:

1. To help maintain sustainable cities that minimize the loss of agricultural and natural areas, by offering formal and informal educational opportunities for California residents, civic leaders, and businesses.
2. To educate California residents on how to grow responsibly and to maintain sustainable cities that minimize the loss of agricultural and natural areas.
3. To encourage the adoption of principles and practices of the New Urbanism throughout California.
4. To support the restoration of existing urban centers and towns, the reconfiguration of sprawling suburbs into communities of real neighborhoods and diverse districts, the conservation of natural areas, and the preservation of our built legacy.
5. To create opportunities for citizens, and practitioners in private and public service.
6. To learn, exchange and apply knowledge of the principles and practices of the New Urbanism.
7. To provide a California presence, focus and perspective for the Congress for the New Urbanism national organization.

## 1.1 Downtown Plan Area



A Street (circa 1960) was historically the primary retail "Main Street" of the Downtown, and remains so today.



Plaza Park, originally a square, has always been the central public space of Oxnard, viewed here looking east down 5th St.

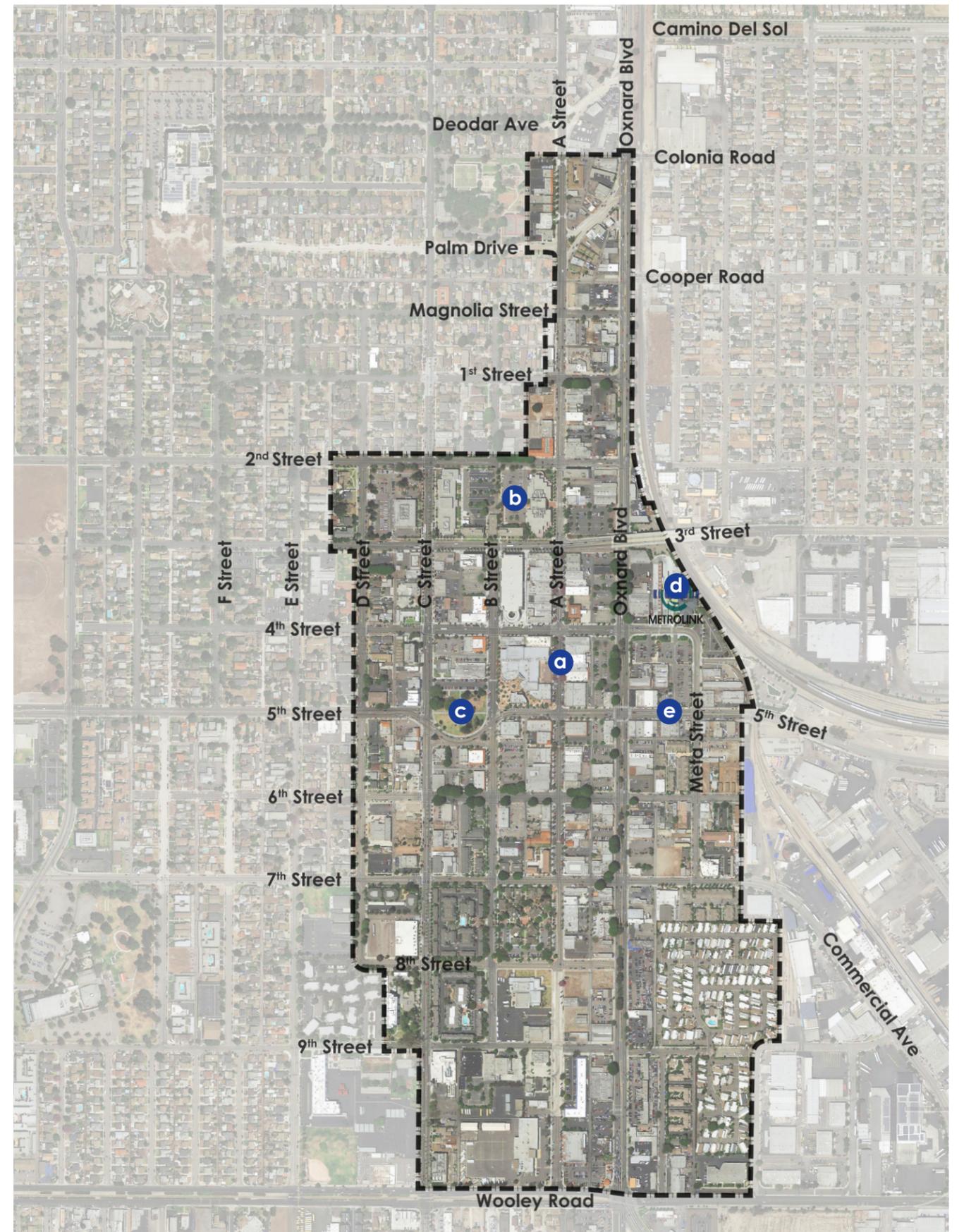
Downtown Oxnard is the historic center of the City, located mostly to the west of the Union Pacific Railroad (originally Southern Pacific Railroad) and Oxnard Boulevard (historically U.S. Route 101), laid out in a simple, well-proportioned pattern of rectangular blocks, with service alleys.

As shown on the map on the facing page, Downtown generally includes the historically commercial and mixed-use blocks along the numbered east-west streets from Second on the north through Ninth to Wooley Road on the south, and the first several lettered north-south streets from A past C. Downtown is generally centered on the Plaza Park north of Fifth Street between B and C.

To the north and east of Downtown lie the early single-family neighborhoods of Oxnard, the east-west tree-named streets to the north and the north-south lettered streets from D to H to the west. The west neighborhood is a designated historic district, F Street in particular arguably the finest residential street in Ventura County, lined with deep, raised front yards, and lovely 1920's custom homes, and stately Sycamore street trees. To the west of Oxnard Boulevard and south of 9th Street and Wooley Road that simple, beautiful neighborhood pattern breaks down for a range of historic reasons.

Primary physical development characteristics of the Downtown include:

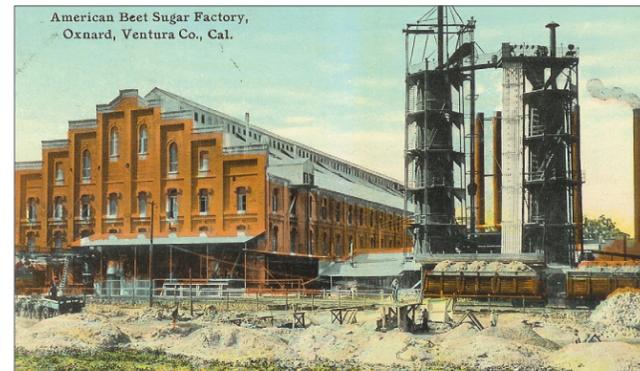
- a** A Street was historically and remains the primary retail "main street" of the Downtown.
- b** The northerly blocks are dominated by City Hall, the Oxnard Public Library, and other civic uses.
- c** The Plaza Park was historically and remains the City's primary public space for special events of many kinds.
- d** The Oxnard Transportation Center - the hub for Amtrak, Metrolink, and local and regional bus services - lies one block east of Oxnard Boulevard on 4th Street.
- e** One block of Fifth Street also carries the Downtown to the east of Oxnard Boulevard, and then follows the railroad to Camarillo to the east.
- f** Disinvestment and a range of redevelopment activities from the 1960s through the 1990s removed many historic buildings and some historic streets, but the strong historic pattern survived and is well positioned to support the resurgence of the Downtown as a vital mixed-use center of regional significance.



## 1.2 Brief History of Downtown

Like so many California towns - from San Francisco to San Diego - Oxnard began as a railhead for the export of agricultural produce to markets in the East. Recruited to Ventura County in 1898 by Albert Maullhardt, the Oxnard Brothers of Chino-based American Beet Sugar Company built a refinery just south of Rancho Colonia.

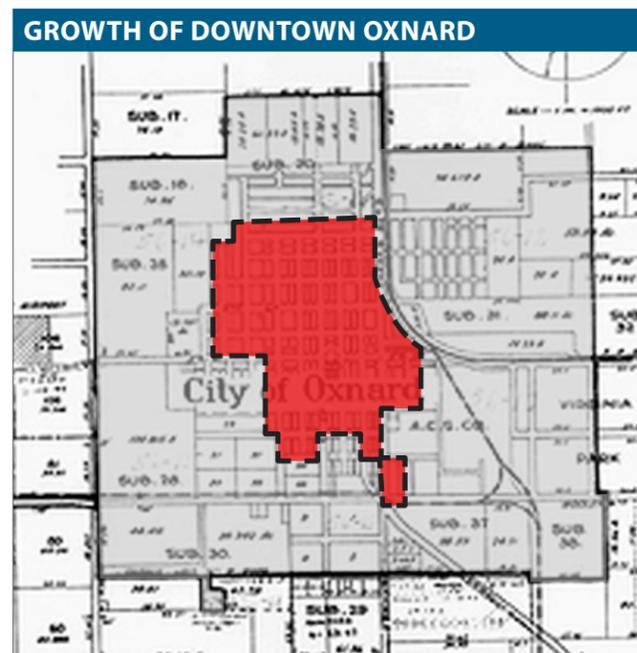
Promising large shipments of sugar and lima beans, they successfully lobbied the Southern Pacific Railroad to divert the planned alignment across the Oxnard Plain, detouring southward to their plant adjacent to the future Downtown Oxnard rather than taking a shorter route from Ventura to Camarillo and eastward to the Santa Susana Pass tunnels to the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles. Oxnard Station was established in 1897, opening the door to the rapid growth of the Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.



The original Sugar Beet Factory (circa 1898) brought the railroad to Oxnard catalyzing rapid growth of the Downtown.

The City of Oxnard was officially incorporated in 1903, with a vision of being a European town site centered on a public square – today’s Plaza Park. In 1907, the City’s regional location and economic potential compelled steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie to fund the construction of the Carnegie Art Museum (formerly the Oxnard Public Library) – it was followed by the construction of Plaza Park Pagoda in 1910. Together, the Plaza Park and Museum became cornerstones of Downtown Oxnard’s civic and commercial activity.

During the 1940s, Oxnard experienced significant expansion and economic growth in areas outside of its Downtown to accommodate growing demands in housing, retail and trade following World War II. From 1940 to 1950, the City’s population increased from approximately 8,500 to over 21,500 residents; by 1960, the population nearly doubled to more than 40,000 residents. Attracting a wide range



- Downtown Limits as Incorporated (1903)
- Downtown Limits (1940)

Sources: City of Oxnard (1903) County of Ventura (1940).

of professions, new industries included financial services, petroleum production via the Oxnard Oil Fields, communications, aerospace and defense technology.

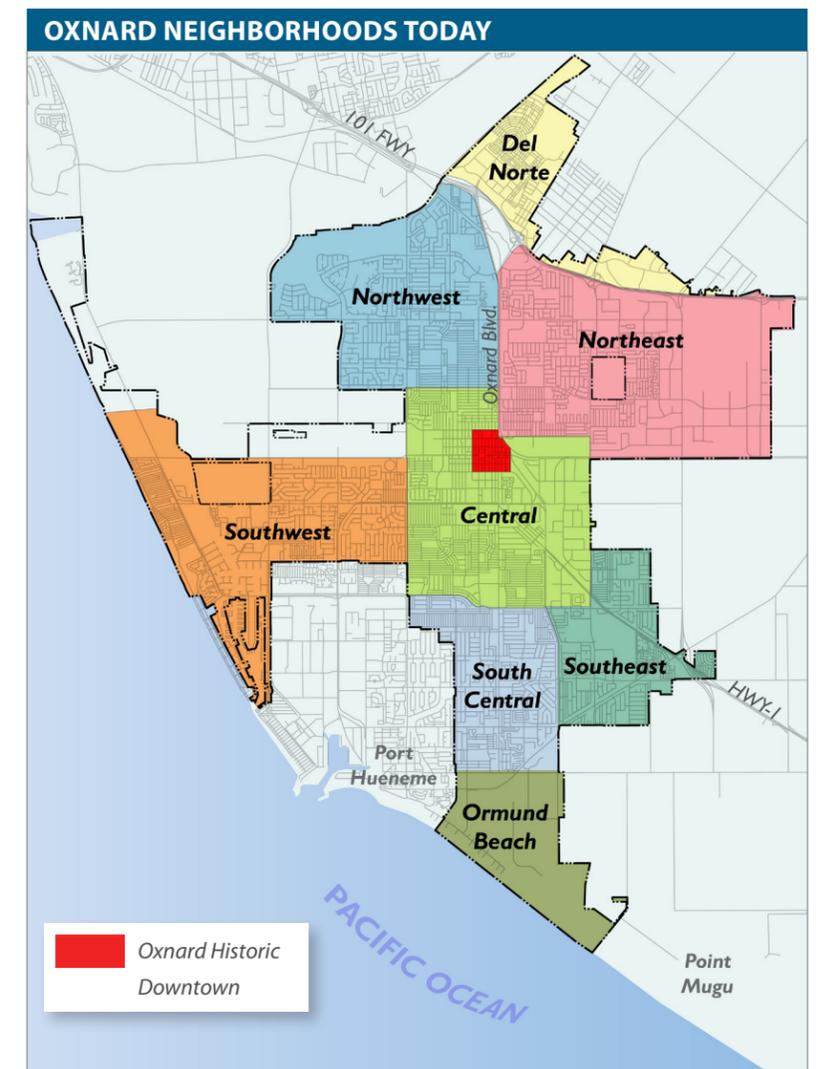
While Downtown Oxnard remained the commercial center into the 1960s, continued development and population increases gradually shifted housing and commercial activity to northern suburbs along the 101 Freeway and westward towards the coast. Much of the City’s development during this time was initiated by developer and philanthropist Martin V. Smith who got his start developing the Wagon Wheel Junction (1947), serving as a major stopover along the 101 Freeway between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara with offices, shopping, dining and a motel. Over the next several decades Smith and others continued to develop commercial, retail and entertainment centers such as the Financial Plaza Tower, the Channel Islands Harbor, Casa Sirena Resort, the Esplanade Shopping Mall, Fisherman’s Wharf, the Carriage Square Shopping Center and the Maritime Museum. Slowly, the prominence of Downtown Oxnard faded as newer suburban communities, industries, and employment centers developed.

Beginning in the 1980s, with the development of Heritage Square and adjacent new housing, the Oxnard Redevelopment Agency invested heavily in attracting new investment, residents and businesses to the Downtown. While those projects did bring a measure of much-needed activity back to the southerly area of the Downtown, the design of those projects was shaped by the pervasive suburban development standards and practices of that time, with much of the new activity focused toward the interiors of those development sites, generating very little pedestrian activity or life on the streets.

In 1991 the City commissioned a master plan for Plaza Park, and a public design Charrette was held in a large tent pitched in the park. That Master Plan provided specific recommendations for the redesign of the park and surrounding streets, as well as a vision plan for the revitalization of the Downtown as a whole. A draft form-based development code - including streetscape design recommendations - was prepared for the entire Downtown, as mapped on the previous page. In 1993 the consultant team that had prepared the Plaza Park master plan was retained to refine that form-based code and prepare implementation and economic development recommendations. That document was the Downtown District Master Plan, completed in draft form in 1996 but not adopted.

As a result of that work, a first phase of Plaza Park improvements were constructed, with simplified traffic movements along Fifth Street and the removal of the 1960 public rest rooms, fountains and pools. The recommended plaza to the south of the Carnegie Library Museum, the Fifth Street Colonnade, and semi-circular South Plaza were not constructed at that time. Additionally, A Street was reconstructed as a simple main street, removing the remaining 1960s fountains and pergolas and restoring parking for the struggling businesses.

Implementing another recommendation of the Master Plan, the City pursued development of restaurants adjacent to Plaza Park, as well as the recently built movie theater and



Source: City of Oxnard Neighborhood Map (2009).

parking structure. Like the earlier redevelopment efforts around Heritage Square, these redevelopment era project reflected many of the trends in suburban “lifestyle shopping center” design, bringing new tenants and customers to the area without generating any strong Downtown design character or street life.

The challenge now facing Oxnard is to build upon the existing assets of the Downtown and make sure that each new increment of investment is aimed at generating a lively, safe, comfortable, valuable, mixed-use city center district.

### 1.3 The Charrette Process

#### CNU-California Annual By-Design Charrette

The CNU-CA hosts an annual By-Design charrette program that provide educational and membership outreach opportunities statewide. The charrette is designed to advise a city that requests our assistance in visualizing the opportunities that CNU's principles and processes provide a sponsor city. Our board's selection of the annual charrette project is based upon the request's relevance to CNU initiatives, expertise, and potential to have a significant and positive impact. Oxnard's Downtown Vision Plan fits the following Congress for the New Urbanism national initiatives:

- Highways to Boulevards (<https://www.cnu.org/our-projects/highways-boulevards>)
- Lean Urbanism (<https://www.cnu.org/our-projects/lean-urbanism>)
- Missing Middle Housing (<https://www.cnu.org/our-projects/missing-middle-housing>)

We organize our public engagement charrette's to deliver cutting-edge professional, high-level analysis and recommendations are based on best Congress for the New Urbanism practices. Our team was tasked with the following deliverables:

1. A comprehensive 20-year Vision Plan for Downtown Oxnard.
2. A Highways-to-Boulevards retrofit of Oxnard Boulevard with a 'Complete Streets' approach to connectivity and place-making.
3. Implementation Strategies with catalytic potential.
4. Defining the Downtown Study Area by identifying, mapping, and envisioning improvements within these boundaries.
5. Public dialogue and education events for all citizens on CNU principles and case studies.

The charrette gathered 20 CNU professionals from across California with experts in architecture, design, engineering, parking management, traffic, landscape architecture, development, and economics lending their experience to shape a plan that was vetted in three feedback loops with local citizens. We meet with local experts, architects, land owners, consultants, city staff, and local business owners to discuss issues, memories and expectations.

#### Initiating a Downtown Oxnard Charrette

In December 2015, the City of Oxnard City Manager, Greg Nyhoff, and Oxnard Community Planning Group chairman Roy Prince and local CNU member Dao Doan requested our chapter's By-Design Charrette to provide a Vision Plan for Downtown. With funds available to begin transforming Oxnard Boulevard from a State Highway to a true Boulevard through Downtown, as well as the city's redevelopment obligations to sell catalytic sites this year, Oxnard requested CNU-California lead an expedited yet fully engaged public process to develop an updated Vision Plan.

The process is purposely organized as an intense consecutive-day public process to provide large open discussions, small-group focused discussions, and individual interviews, fit the city's needs perfectly. Our charrette was planned and executed on the last week of January 2016, ending on February 2nd, 2016 with a final presentation at City Council.



Ideas are vetted in public and refined over consecutive days.

#### Public Participation

Local citizens led several events. We held the first charrette New Urbanism Film Festival on Saturday night at the local Plaza Theater with over 100 attendees.

A pop-up studio space, led by Oneita Hirata, created a 'Tactical Urbanism' Art Gallery showing the works of local artist throughout the week and beyond.

Our team talked to local high school students, and local video teams documented the event to share with the community. And, we hosted over 200 visitors throughout the week learning something unique from each exchange.

**PLAN DE VISIÓN DEL CENTRO**  
viernes - martes  
29 de enero - 2 de feb

**Asamblea pública, recorrido y Festival de Cine del Nuevo Urbanismo**

Con su participación y conocimiento local, el Congreso para el Nuevo Urbanismo Delegación de California convocará a un taller de visión de cinco días para poner a prueba nuevas ideas para revitalizar el centro de Oxnard. El taller se llevará a cabo en la Plaza en las oficinas anteriores de la Administración de Seguro Social y está abierto al público durante los eventos enumerados aquí. Espacio es limitado, por lo que la participación será en orden de llegada.

El Festival de Cine se limita a 75 entradas. Favor de confirmar su asistencia a [info@cnucaifornia.org](mailto:info@cnucaifornia.org) o al (805) 385-7407 para asegurar su asiento.

**INAUGURACIÓN**  
Vie. 29 de enero 5:30pm • 315-327 N. Fifth St.

**FESTIVAL DE CINE DE NUEVO URBANISMO**  
Sáb. 30 de enero 5:30pm  
Plaza Cinemas 14  
255 W. Fifth St.

**RECORRIDO**  
Dom. 31 de enero 10:30am  
Plaza Park Pagoda  
500 S. D St.

**SALA DE EXPOSICIONES**  
Lun. 1 de feb. 5:30pm  
315-327 N. Fifth St.

**PRESENTACIÓN AL CONCEJO MUNICIPAL**  
Mar. 2 de feb. 5:00pm  
Ayuntamiento, 305 W. Third St.

**UBICACIÓN DE ASAMBLEA PÚBLICA:**  
315-327 N. Fifth St.  
Oficinas anteriores de la Administración de Seguro Social  
— Cerca de Plaza Park  
(805) 385-7407 City of Oxnard [info@cnucaifornia.org](mailto:info@cnucaifornia.org)



Charrette team members study the various intensities, nodes and key opportunities in the Downtown.

**DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN**  
JAN 29 - FEB 02  
FRIDAY - TUESDAY

**Public Charrette, Walking Tour, and New Urbanism Film Festival**

With your participation and local knowledge, the Congress for the New Urbanism California Chapter will conduct a five-day visioning charrette to test new ideas to revitalize downtown Oxnard. The charrette will be held on the Plaza at the former Social Security Admin Offices and is open to the public during the events listed here. Space is limited and participation is on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Film Festival, is limited to 75 seats, so please RSVP by emailing [info@cnucaifornia.org](mailto:info@cnucaifornia.org) or calling the City of Oxnard Economic Development Department (805) 385-7407 to ensure your seat.

Economic Development  
[www.CityOfOxnard.org](http://www.CityOfOxnard.org)

**KICK OFF EVENT**  
FRI. JAN 29 • 5:30PM  
315-327 N FIFTH STREET

**NEW URBAN FILM FESTIVAL**  
SAT. JAN 30 • 5:30 PM  
PLAZA CINEMAS 14  
255 W 5TH STREET

**WALKING TOUR**  
SUN. JAN 31 • 10:30 AM  
PLAZA PARK PAGODA  
500 SOUTH C STREET

**DESIGN PIN-UP**  
MON. FEB 1 • 5:30PM  
315-327 N. FIFTH STREET

**CHARRETTE LOCATION:**  
315-327 North 5th Street  
Former Social Security Admin Offices  
— Near Plaza Park  
(805)385-7407 City of Oxnard  
[info@cnucaifornia.org](mailto:info@cnucaifornia.org)

CNU California | CITY OF OXNARD CALIFORNIA

The Charrette flyer was produced in both English (above) and Spanish (left) to garner greater participation from community members.

## 1.4 What We Heard

The following comments and themes were collected from 30 individual interviews conducted over the course of four weeks leading up to the Vision Plan Charrette. Interviews included elected City officials, City planning and development staff, local business and property owners and residents.

### A. Public Realm Design and Function

- Oxnard Boulevard needs improvement;
- Better walkability is needed including wider sidewalks in places;
- Too dark; insufficient lighting;
- Inadequate wayfinding signage;
- Safety and security have gotten better, but still a perception of a problem;
- Parking is not distributed well;
- Which is the City's Main Street – A Street or Oxnard Boulevard (or both)?

### B. Mix of Uses

- There is not enough to do Downtown, including uses that are supposed to be there;
- The best retailers are outside of Downtown;
- Need more restaurant variety;
- Live-performance theatre groups have left;
- Children's museum closed;
- There are no business class hotels (as hotels are the living rooms of cities);
- More housing is needed Downtown;



The team held internal coordination meetings each day.



The charrette team met with city leadership to solicit input.



The charrette team met with citizens to test ideas in three feedback loops to refine recommendations.

### C. Development Feasibility

- Retail rents are below the cost of construction;
- Apartment rents are extremely high in the area, which should support multifamily residential development Downtown;
- Oxnard's median household income (\$61,000) is solid – about same as State's, and above the national average;
- Strong competition for retail, restaurants, and entertainment by The Collection and Downtown Ventura;
- Unpredictable, expensive investment environment (City regulation) is a disincentive to new investment.

### D. Doing Business in Downtown

- City's actions in past (movie theatres, painting permit fees, etc.) have created unpredictability and discouraged investment;
- Slow response from City Hall when a repair request is made;
- Condition of streets and sidewalks is lacking in places;
- Homeless presence keeps some visitors away;
- Friendly establishments are welcoming to visitors.

### E. Housing

- More housing downtown would be welcome and is needed;
- Some small units (300-500 s.f.) mixed into the fabric may be a good affordability strategy;
- Need for a better homeless solution;
- Shortage of rental apartments and resulting high rents suggest strong viability for such units Downtown.



New downtown Ventura mixed-use infill building.



New buildings integrated with historic buildings to add more housing in downtown San Diego.



New infill development and theater district on a State Highway in downtown Lancaster.

## 1.5 What We Observed

### A. Downtown Walking Tour Themes and Observations

On Sunday, January 31, at 10:30 AM, approximately twenty CNU participants conducted a walking tour of Oxnard’s historic Downtown. Led by Gary Blum, Director of the Downtown Oxnard Merchants Association, the tour began at Plaza Park across from the Carnegie Art Museum and the Downtown Management Office. The group discussed near-term opportunities to refocus high-quality infill developments around Plaza Park in order to re-establish the heart of Downtown Oxnard around Plaza Park.

Heading away from the park, the tour group continued east on 5th Street, one of the City’s original east-west crosstown corridors, towards Oxnard Boulevard. In the early 1900s, this corridor primarily consisted of housing, but it was gradually replaced by commercial uses through the 1940s and 50s as major retail anchors including J.C. Penney, the General Telephone Company and the Oxnard Savings and Loan opened shop. During this time, approximately 30 buildings were demolished by order of the City of Oxnard, in the Downtown commercial district. Many of these buildings were older, dilapidated residences hastily constructed when the town was first established in order to provide worker housing. Despite the expansion of large-scale commercial buildings, Downtown Oxnard’s urban pattern and block sizes are reminiscent of its original downtown character with a lively mix of housing, commercial and retail.



CNU participants join Downtown Oxnard Merchants Association Director, Gary Blum, for a walking tour.

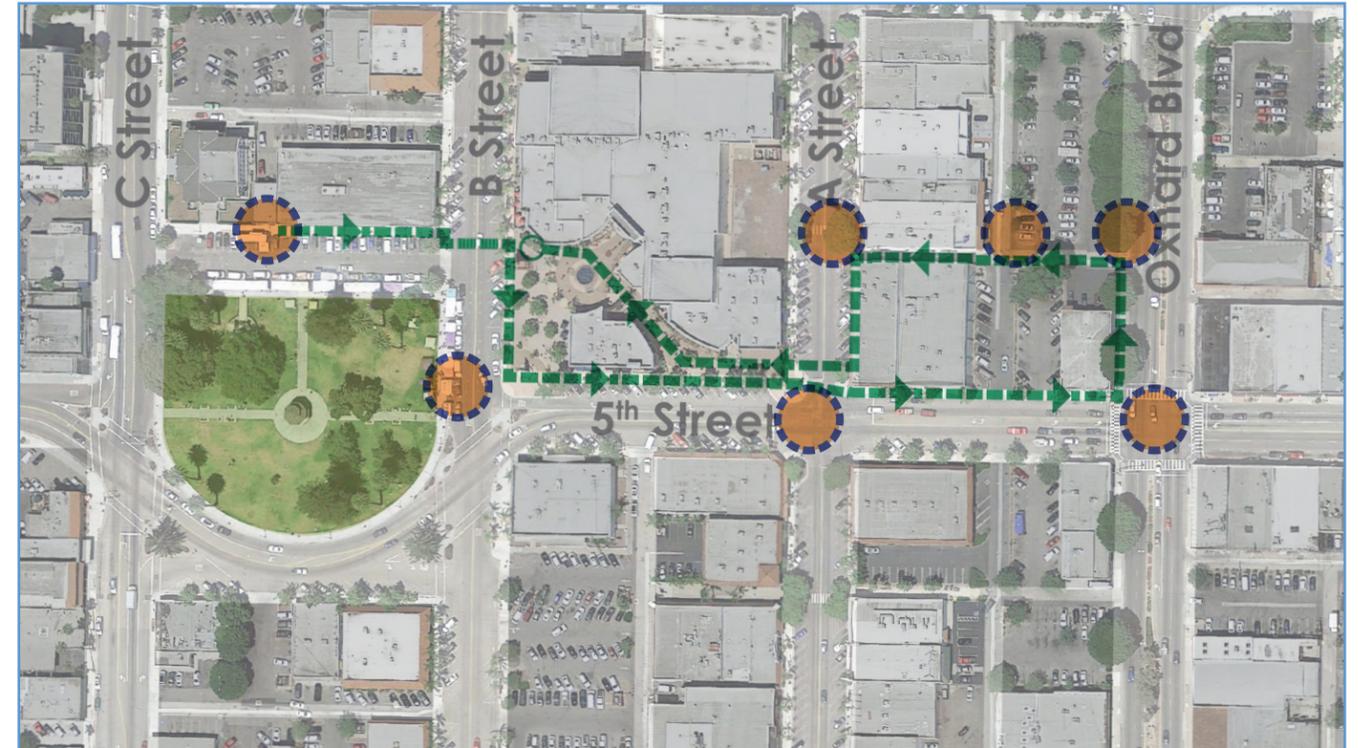


The Plaza Pagoda remains a key focal point of Plaza Park, the original center of the City of Oxnard.



Historic commercial and retail frontages at the intersection of 5th Street and Oxnard Boulevard. Despite the development of large department stores in the 1950s and 60s, some aspects of Downtown’s original block sizes and walkable environment remain.

### Walking Tour Map



In 2005, the City of Oxnard commissioned a historic survey of roughly 400 parcels in Downtown Oxnard. The survey reviewed buildings that were built before 1960 which amounted to 253 structures – many of these buildings are still standing and potentially eligible for historic preservation.

In addition to buildings, Downtown’s public realm hosts a number of elements relevant to pedestrian-oriented design – including large-canopy street trees and diagonal parking – that can be expanded upon through future planning and development efforts. Future design efforts should also explore increased signage, wayfinding and urban design schemes that announce the presence of Downtown to passers-by traveling north and south on Oxnard Boulevard, especially from 4th, 5th and 6th Streets.

At the end of the tour, the group walked through a service alley and parking lot just north of 5th street, eventually arriving at the Centennial Plaza. By carefully identifying alleys, lots and similar spaces, enhanced mid-block crossings can enhance and increase pedestrian connectivity throughout the Downtown.

### B. Walking Tour Key Recommendations

1. Transform the Boulevard from worn out highway to Downtown Avenue
2. Announce Downtown and invite people in at Palm and 3rd and Wooley
3. Show Downtown to passersby at 4th and 5th and 6th and 7th
4. Focus around the Plaza Park near-term effort for high-quality infill development

## 1.6 SWOT Analysis

Based on dozens of interviews, research and in-field studies, the following SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis highlights several the key opportunities and challenges relevant to the revitalization and design of Downtown Oxnard.

### Strengths

- The strong pattern of rectangular blocks - easily walkable in size from 8th Street north - with service alleys for utilities and deliveries, allowing the streets to be renovated as very high quality pedestrian spaces.
- Relatively high volumes of citywide traffic on Oxnard Boulevard, bringing many thousands of potential Downtown visitors, customers and residents right past the edge of Downtown on a daily basis.
- The Oxnard Transportation Center - providing good quality access to the City, the county and the region - within a five-minute walk of much of the Downtown.
- Many existing Downtown businesses and property owners - both long-time and recently established - who are ready to reinvest in the Downtown, particularly if a clear strategy and plan for systematically reinvigorating it is in place.
- Political leadership who are taking a fresh look at the Downtown and the potential for it to become an important civic, cultural and entertainment hub of Ventura County.

### Weaknesses

- The character and quality of the Downtown's public realm have been compromised over many years by a combination of disinvestment, neglect and well-intentioned changes that have eroded it as a comfortable, safe, interesting place to spend time as a pedestrian.
- Most recent infill development has missed opportunities to contribute to the public realm of the Downtown through facing the streets with lively, active uses and high-quality urban frontages and architecture.
- Most of the former retail life of the Downtown has been replaced by new retail centers outside the Downtown, and some of the potential residential population for new housing in the Downtown is being accommodated in large new apartment communities in River Park and Wagon Wheel along the 101 Freeway Corridor.

### Opportunities

- Probably the greatest near-term opportunity for Downtown is the recent decommissioning of Oxnard Boulevard as State Route 1 - with control of its design and operation being handed from the State to the City - in addition to the legal settlement that provided the City with several million dollars that might be allocated to its improvement from a highway to a Boulevard.
- With this opportunity to transform the Boulevard itself come new opportunities to develop "gateway buildings" at key intersections to make Downtown visible and attractive to its thousands of daily motorists.
- Well-designed incremental public/private improvements to the public realm of the Downtown - including making A Street a primarily bikable route and refreshing the Plaza Park - can help spur private reinvestment.
- With a clear new plan, vision-based development standards, and a comprehensive management strategy in place, the Downtown will be in a position to compete as one of the county's primary art, cultural, entertainment destinations.

### Threats

- Failing to follow through in adopting appropriate Downtown development standards for public and private improvements, and continuing to erode the original strong Downtown character with suburban development patterns.
- Failing to competently manage the development review process and downtown operations.



The Plaza Theater on Centennial Plaza is a catalytic entertainment investment to be supported by new residents.



Centennial Plaza is a new central public gathering space.



The Collection at Riverpark represents a competitor, a model, and lesson to be learned for downtown and the city.

## 2.0 Vision Plan

Congress for the New Urbanism Charter of the New Urbanism Principle #21:

*"The revitalization of urban places depends on safety and security. The design of streets and buildings should reinforce safe environments, but not at the expense of accessibility and openness."*

Congress for the New Urbanism Charter of the New Urbanism Principle #23:

*"Streets and squares should be safe, comfortable, and interesting to the pedestrian. Properly configured, they encourage walking and enable neighbors to know each other and protect their communities."*



Over the course of five days, based on community input, analysis and design studies, the Charrette Team outlined a vision for the future of the Downtown emphasizing a human-scale, pedestrian-oriented, safe, comfortable and interesting public realm, and market-driven, vision-informed infill and economic development.

As a bridge between these simply expressed objectives and appropriate Downtown development standards and action plan, the Team focused on illustrating a range of forms, scales and types of infill development and public space improvements that have the potential - if systematically pursued - to deploy available market support to build the Downtown the community hopes to have, one project at a time.

Successful revitalization of town centers always depends on focus, to ensure that each new increment of investment and improvement is connected to and building value with other nearby, coordinated improvements. Accordingly, this vision plan focuses on the 7 Big Ideas that emerged from the Charrette, listed to the right and described and illustrated in the following pages.

### Section

- 2.1 Transform Oxnard Boulevard
- 2.3 A Street
- 2.4 Colonia Rd | Bicycle Connectivity
- 2.5 Plaza Park Infill Development
- 2.6 Arts Hub
- 2.7 Infill Development
- 2.8 Parking Strategy

## 2.1 Transform Oxnard Boulevard

### A. Rethink the Boulevard as a Public Space

Oxnard Boulevard has always been much more a highway than an urban boulevard. From the beginning, Oxnard Boulevard and First Street were primary roads connecting Oxnard to the region, built parallel to the railroad as was the common pattern in California railroad towns. As State routes were established to connect California's growing communities, Oxnard Boulevard was designated as State Route 1, connecting southward toward the coast and Santa Monica.

At Five Points - originally six points - South Oxnard Boulevard curved northward into the south end of A Street, Downtown's original and enduring "main street", with the boulevard itself dedicated to through traffic and truck traffic, managed and operated by Caltrans. Accordingly, previous plans for the revitalization of the town's historic core saw little hope of its contributing much to the character and quality of Downtown.

With Caltrans' decommissioning of the Boulevard, as the Route 1 designation shifted eastward to Rice Avenue, the City for the first time has the authority to rethink its central artery, and with a multi-million dollar lawsuit settlement City has some resources to begin to implement improvements.

The OCCTIP Study commissioned by the City in 2015 has identified a range of possibilities for the Boulevard, and the Charrette team has developed the OCCTIP recommendations for its Downtown stretch - at least 3rd Street to 7th and perhaps on to 9th or Wooley - to propose:

- Narrower, more attractive medians replacing the current armored "anti-tank" medians;
- On-street parking for businesses and to provide a buffer between traffic and pedestrians;
- New street trees in parking lane planters, freeing up the entire 10 foot sidewalks for pedestrians;
- Retain the existing two vehicular lanes northbound and southbound, as vehicular volumes are too high for one lane each way;
- Yet narrowing the travel lanes to 11 feet, which should help moderate traffic speeds and allow the right-hand lane to be shared with fast, skilful bike riders, and with A Street improved for less adventurous riders.



**Existing Condition:** Two very wide, fast vehicular lanes northbound and southbound, armored raised medians with Australian Paperbark trees, no on-street parking, and sidewalks in most cases either obstructed and lifted by very large Ficus trees or lacking street trees entirely.



Key Plan

### Oxnard Boulevard Transformation



**Phase 1: Street Reconfiguration:** Narrower vehicular lanes support slower speeds and, counter-intuitively higher volumes, of traffic.



**Phase 2: Potential Mixed-Use Infill Development:** Ground floor retail has a much better chance of success, with on-street parking and wider, more comfortable pedestrian spaces on the sidewalks.



**Phase 3: Mixed-Use Infill up to 5 Stories:** New taller buildings might be set back an additional 10 feet, providing 20 foot sidewalks, as found in many of the most successful, mature downtowns in the country.

## 2.1 Transform Oxnard Boulevard (continued)

### B. Greet Visitors with New 3rd St Gateway

The Third Street bridge is perhaps Downtown's largest piece of infrastructure, providing much needed safety improvement and allowing the construction of the Oxnard Transportation Center and its train platform, but disrupts the simple downtown street pattern and does not make any particularly positive contributions to the design character of the Downtown.

Yet the bridge marks the north entry to the heart of Downtown, forming literally a "gateway" through which visitors enter. With the addition of some simple graphic devices and signage, it can provide a strong branding and identity statement that you have arrived in Downtown. An illustration of one possible design it provided on the right, with a landscaped median extended northward from the bridge, with palms in it and on both sides of the street to emphasize this important gateway.

The open space on the right, immediately north of the bridge, is the parking lot for the Oxnard Public Library, and a wide area that could be landscaped abuts the Boulevard. As travel speeds on the Boulevard are moderated, a direct entry to the library (either in-only or right-in, right-out) might be added, giving the library a new address on the Boulevard.

At the scale of the pedestrian, a stair from the bridge descends to the ground on the left (east) side of the Boulevard, and additional landscaping could make this a more pleasant route for pedestrians. Some potential for a mid-block crosswalk - with appropriate striping, lighting and signals - may also exist here, connecting the train station, the library, and the bridge.

A sidewalk might also be extended from the library along the north side of the library parking lot, so a potential outdoor dining area that could be developed if the existing auto service building were to transition to retail or restaurant use in the future. Casual observation of the library parking lot suggests that it is rarely full, particularly in the evening, and higher levels of activity here might be possible if that parking could be shared with new businesses.

Finally, simple paint and signage improvements to buildings here could add a great deal to the image of Downtown, as they could all along the Boulevard.



**a** *Connect the Library to Oxnard Blvd: This crosswalk at the main entry could be extended to the east along the north side of the library parking lot, to Oxnard Boulevard..*



Key Plan

### 3rd Street Bridge - Gateway Transformation



*Existing Condition: The 3rd St Bridge over crossing Oxnard Blvd provides a unique opportunity for gateway graphics and elements to alert and direct southbound travelers to Downtown.*



*Add Gateway Elements: New graphics, signage, and landscaping transform the 3rd St Bridge into a sculptural gateway, announcing entry to Downtown. A new driveway provides additional access to the Oxnard Library's Parking lot on the left, masked by a new landscape wall.*



*Catalyze long-term change: Over time, infill and retrofit development will transform Oxnard Blvd, extending Downtown's character outward for future growth opportunities.*

## 2.1 Transform Oxnard Boulevard (continued)

### C. Define Gateways at 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th

With Oxnard Boulevard finally under the City's control, the strategy for using it as an effective conduit to bring increasing numbers of visitors, shoppers, employees and residents to Downtown is as simple as one, two, three:

1. Bring large numbers of motorists through Downtown on the Boulevard every day: Done, they've been driving past for decades.
2. Make the Downtown boulevard look, feel and function like a Downtown boulevard, so that motorists understand that they are in Downtown, not just driving: See page 2.2, above.
3. Create a series of very clear, attractive gateways - at the north and south ends of Downtown and at each of several key cross streets - that bring Downtown buildings and activity right out to the Boulevard to greet visitors.

Although 4th Street is the first available entry to the Downtown core for southbound motorists - and the pedestrian link from the core to the Oxnard Transportation Center - its intersection with Oxnard Boulevard is surrounded by surface parking lots, conveying no sense that one has arrived in a successful city center. The colored perspective drawing on the right illustrates how high quality mixed-use buildings could be built on all or most of those corners to extend the Downtown environment out to the Boulevard.

The drawing below illustrates a potential 3-story building at the corner of the Boulevard and Fifth Street, with the existing drug store perhaps on the ground floor and new housing above.

As buildings along the Boulevard are intensified, the surface parking lots between the corner lots can be converted to parking structures, designed with high quality architecture or liners of habitable space facing the Boulevard.

Gateway signage and landmark elements can further enhance these important Downtown entry points, but are no substitute for fine buildings, businesses and residents, and an active pedestrian environment.



*Existing Gateway / Branding: Existing Downtown gateway signage and a concept to suspend a similar graphic across the street at key downtown gateways. Image by Roy Prince*

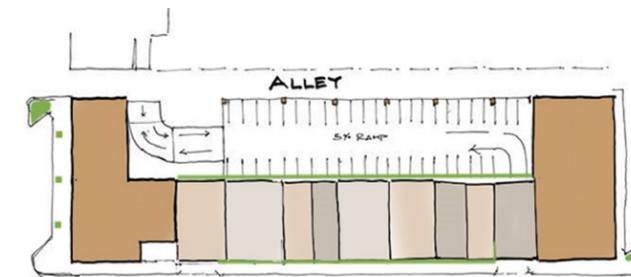


*Key Plan*

### Vision Oxnard Redevelopment



*Gateway Infill Development: New gateway buildings at the corner of Oxnard Blvd and 4th St (perspective is looking west toward Plaza Park) establish a strong presence on Oxnard Blvd, extending Downtown eastward.*



*Parking Liner (above & below): As infill development occurs, parking structures may replace the surface parking lots along Oxnard Boulevard. Such structures should be designed to present an attractive appearance to the Boulevard. One option would be an urban building facade, with retail shops on the ground floor and parking decks above.*



*Gateway Infill Development (above): New gateway buildings at the corner of Oxnard Blvd and 5th St (perspective is looking west down 5th St).*



## 2.2 A Street: The Main Street of Downtown

A Street has always been the primary retail street of Downtown and is expected to remain so. In its early days it had the advantages of direct access from Five Points, and not having to compete with dozens of newer, suburban shopping centers for Oxnard's customers.

It hit a low point when the 1960s Gruen Plan for Downtown - to turn almost the entire downtown core into a pedestrian mall - was partially implemented by closing A Street to vehicular traffic and building a variety of shade structures and pools within the right of way. Like hundreds of other "downtown malls" around the country, that experiment failed completely and over the course of two successive improvement plans it was restored to a simple commercial street with angled parking.

And as the Downtown moves to a new level of success and vitality, there are additional opportunities to bring people, activity and a cooler Downtown character to A Street. Making it the primary bike boulevard of the Downtown is such an opportunity, including the following recommendations:

1. The curbs in the angled parking blocks south of 3rd Street were designed so that parking could be either "front in" or "back in", depending on how the striping is painted. While unfamiliar to many, back-in angled parking is in many ways easier and safer to use, primarily because one does not need to back out blind into traffic upon exiting a space. This configuration widely understood to be far safer for bicyclists and simple re-striping (which could be done in one or two blocks on a test basis) could allow A Street to be designated a "bike boulevard" with "sharrow" symbols on the pavement.
2. In the blocks north of 3rd Street up to Deodar, the street is wide enough that Class 2 bike lanes could be striped, replacing the central continuous turn lane and narrowing the vehicular lanes to 10 feet. This would generate lower vehicular speeds and make A Street a safer, more comfortable bike route for residents of nearby neighborhoods - and existing and future residents of the Downtown - to use to access the Downtown.
3. "Bike corrals" for parking bikes without blocking sidewalks can be simply constructed adjacent to the existing mid-block crosswalks and planters.



Public Frontage Character: describe



Key Plan

### 'A' Street Transformation



**a** Existing Condition (north 'A' St): North of 3rd Street, A Street is a very wide two-lane roadway, generally lacking street trees and pedestrian activity.



**b** Existing Condition ('A' St Downtown): Two travel lanes and angled parking have been restored to A Street south of 3rd, but more business activity and street beautification are needed.



**a** A Street (Deodar Ave to 3rd St): New bike lanes (either colored green as shown or simply striped with white paint) along with new street trees in existing empty tree planters, new pedestrian-scale street lights, and new mid-block crosswalk with curb extensions and palm trees to mark the crossing. Such improvements could surely be made in phases, as funding allows.



**b** A Street (3rd St to 7th St): Back-in angled parking, landscape enhancements at mid-block crosswalks, bike corrals, and parklets can all add life to A Street's retail environment.

## 2.2 A Street: The Main Street of Downtown (continued)

With its traffic and parking restored, A Street once again has a chance as a successful main street, but still has a somewhat vacant character. Clearly the main solution to this challenge is more customers, more successful business, and more downtown residents. Design cannot make that happen, but it can help. Simple, feasible measures that can help to accelerate the cycle of business improvement and reinvestment in the physical environment include:

1. Replace the dead and dying geraniums in the mid-block planters with new plantings that require less water and are more striking and attractive.
2. Allow businesses the option of placing “parklets” in the parking spaces in front of their shops. These devices act essentially as “sidewalk extensions”, providing generous amounts of room for outdoor dining that the existing 10 foot sidewalks cannot support.
3. Add curb extensions (bulb-outs) at cross street intersections - particularly 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th - to shorten crossing distances for pedestrians on A Street, and provide additional opportunities for attractive landscaping. As the intersections of Oxnard Boulevard and these streets are the first clue that there’s a downtown here, these intersections are their introduction to A Street as its primarily retail and restaurant street.
4. Infill development and shopfront renovations should include large, clear glass display windows that provide pedestrians with clear views of retail displays and restaurant interiors. Shopfronts with recessed, tinted or reflective glass - of which A Street has quite a few - block pedestrian views of displays and interiors and add to the “dead look”.
5. Simple canvas awnings that project out over the sidewalk are by far the best way to shade shopfront glass from the sun, while also reducing the glare that can prevent pedestrians from being able to see inside. Stubby little awnings - particularly shine plastic ones and curved profiles with signage on them - do not perform that function well and contribute to a “cheap strip mall” aesthetic that A Street really doesn’t need.



**Existing Condition:** The landscape of A Street is minimal and not well maintained. The mid-block jacaranda trees are lovely, but the ground plants could be very easily improved. The queen palms are far less than ideal street trees.



Key Plan

### 'A' Street Infil & Transformation



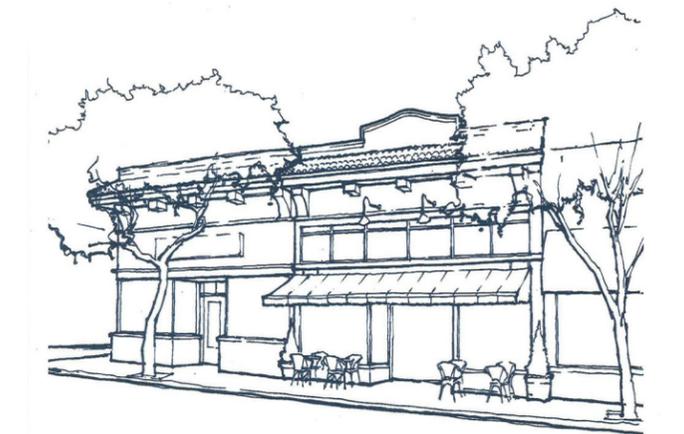
**Recommendations:** Plant the mid-block planters with snappy, drought tolerant landscaping with interesting forms, colors and textures. Re-stripe the crosswalks with high visibility “zebra” striping, and allow merchants and restaurants to install parklets in parking spaces in front of their business.



**Add parklets for enhanced sidewalk dining:** Parklets can offer very comfortable dining spaces in front of existing restaurants without blocking the pedestrian way for other businesses and strolling shoppers. They also help to slow traffic by bringing people near travel lanes in a protected environment, which in turn reduces noise levels to further improve the pedestrian and dining environment.



**Infill Vacant Parcels:** Infill development with large, simple shopfront windows and awnings to shade the glass reflect Oxnard’s heritage.



**Infill Vacant Parcels:** Shopfronts with transom windows above the awnings bring daylight into the interior.

## 2.3 Colonia Road | Bicycle Connectivity

To the north of the recommended 3rd Street bridge and library gateway, Deodar Avenue and Palm Drive offer a different type of gateway to A Street. They were originally configured as the northerly access to A Street, mirroring the South Oxnard Boulevard straight shot into A Street at Six Points (now Five Points). The 1993 Downtown District Master Plan recommended enhancing these existing assets to provide another way to entice motorists to enter the Downtown, and that is still a good idea.

And there is an additional opportunity at this location. Immediately to the north of Deodar is Colonia Road, and connecting from Oxnard Boulevard to A Street and aligned with Colonia Road is a largely unused public alley. This looks like an opportunity to address, in a small way, the long-standing perception, and reality, of a lack of connection between the La Colonia community on “the wrong side of the tracks” and Downtown Oxnard and it’s historically more advantaged neighborhoods. We recommend the following:

1. Extend the Class I bikeway on the east side of Oxnard Boulevard and the railroad from it’s present southerly terminus at the future Camino del Sol, to Colonia Road. This would require a right of way agreement with the railroad and/or owners of the adjacent packing house property.
2. Construct a two-way cycle track along the north side of Colonia Road from the Class I bikeway to Oxnard Boulevard, expand the crosswalk there to include bike lanes to the west side, and improve the unused alley as a multi-use trail from Oxnard Boulevard to A Street.
3. Modify the curb extensions and improve the crosswalk at A Street to connect the alley trail to new Class II bike lanes on A Street, connecting south to Downtown.
4. Optionally, improve the landscape and signage in the curving sections of Deodar and/or Palm, to make it plain that these are gateways to Downtown Oxnard. There are many routes to Downtown, and making them appear more promising to passersby on the Boulevard may be the most effective single strategy for revitalizing the Downtown.

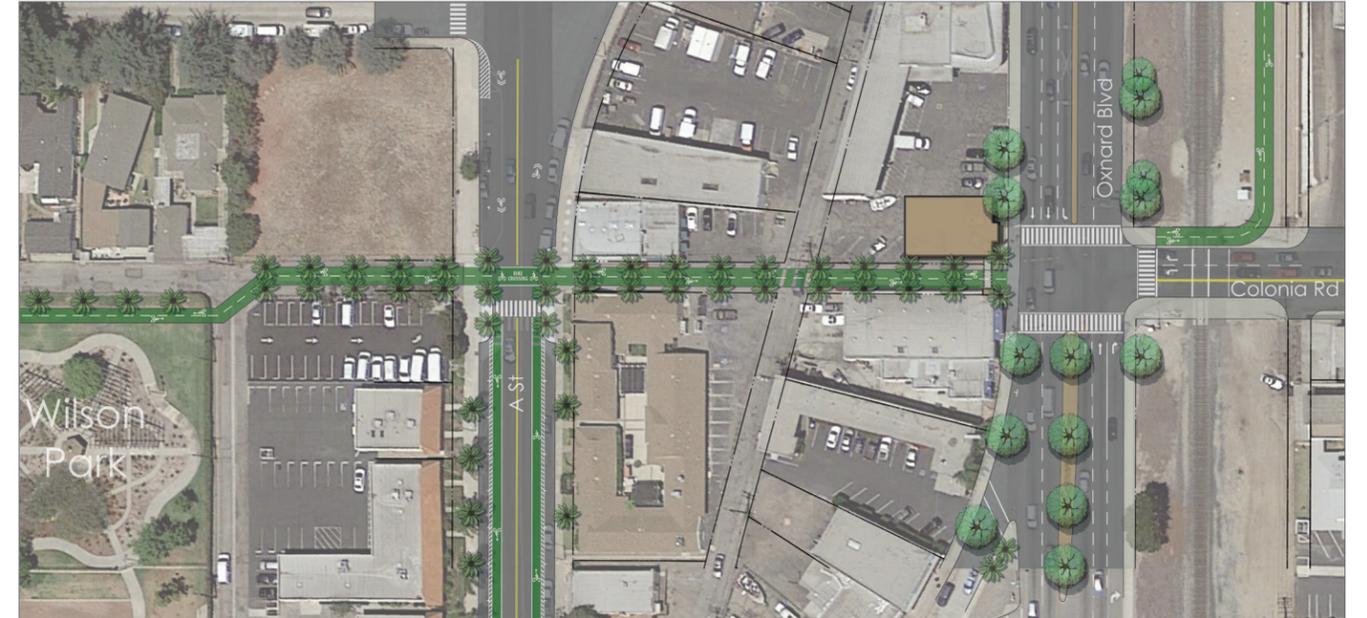


**Existing Condition:** The intersection of Oxnard Boulevard and Colonia Road look like exactly what it has historically been - a road for trucks to get to and from packinghouses and the gateway to the poorest neighborhoods of Oxnard. It can be transformed to be a beautiful pedestrian and bicycle connection from a neighborhood with many pedestrians and bicyclists to the rebounding city center.

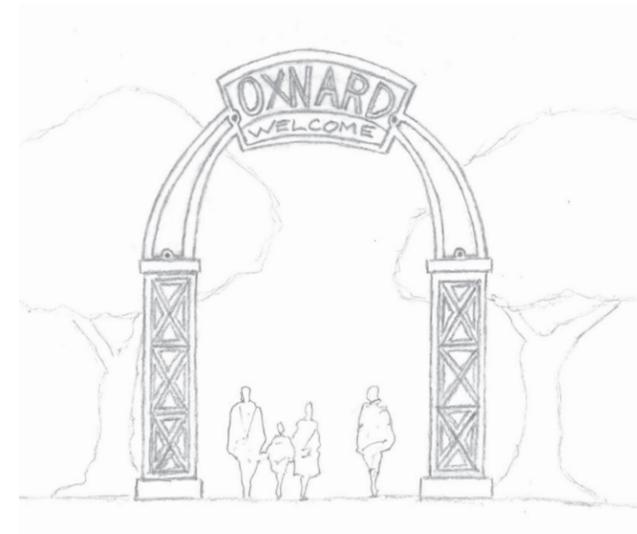


Key Plan

### Colonia Rd Bicycle Connectivity to 'A' Street



**Recommended Linkage:** The Class I bikeway on the east side of the UPRR is extended south to Colonia Road, a two-way cycle-track connects to and across Oxnard Boulevard, and the existing alley to A Street is landscaped and paved as a multi-use path for pedestrians and bikes. This connects to new Class II bike lanes on A Street, and onward south to Downtown. The alley east of A Street could also be improved as a better access to Wilson Park. And, link these recommendations with Existing and Planning City-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities.



**Gateway Elements:** A simple gateway device could transform an unused alley to a signpost for Downtown.



Figure 4



Plaza Park, Circa 1906

## 2.4 Plaza Park

The Plaza Park has unquestionably been the heart of Oxnard and the heart of its Downtown from the town's beginnings until now. The two most distinctive structures in Oxnard - the pagoda built by grateful Chinese workers, and the Carnegie Library built in 1906 with a grant from the Carnegie foundation and local fundraising - grace the park, which serves as the location for many of the city's important special events throughout the year.

In a 1993 public design Charrette - conducted in a tent in the park - a distinguished team of urban planners prepared a master plan for the park, shown on the right. A number of possibilities for the park were explored during this 2016 Charrette, but for the most part the team's recommendation for the park remains to just complete the 1993 master plan.

Recommended improvements completed in 1996 include:

1. Removing the flat roofed public restrooms and drained reflecting pools, the only other piece of the disastrous Gruen Plan for the Downtown that was built, aside from the A Street Mall, since removed;
2. Round off the south edge of the park to allow two-way Fifth Street traffic to flow smoothly around the park, relieving the intractable congestion that the original (beautiful) square shape engendered.
3. Converting the branch of Fifth Street along the north side of the park to a parking lot.

Since that time the Park has been used as the venue for the farmers market, the Strawberry Festival, Salsa Festival, food truck nights, and many other events.

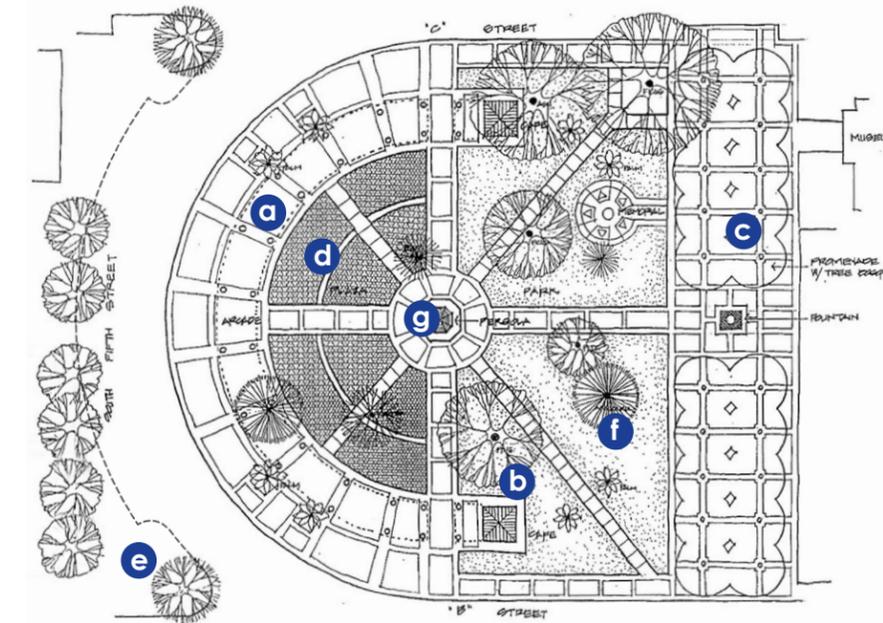


The Pagoda adds a focal point to Plaza Park.



Key Plan

## Plaza Park Enhancements



1993 Plaza Park Master Plan

**Plaza Park Enhancements:** The basic recommendation is to complete the 1993 Park Master Plan.

- a New Colonnade/Pergola
- b Small Flexible Pavilions/Kiosks
- c Repaved/Landscaped Parking Plaza
- d New Hardscaped Plaza
- e Sidewalk/Corner Plazas
- f Existing Park
- g Existing Pagoda

### Recommended improvements not yet built include:

- a. A curving colonnade around the south edge of the park, providing spatial definition of the new semi-circular form of the park, and a gracious shaded walkway that can anchor the farmers market and other public events in the park.
- b. Small, flexible kiosks at the north ends of the colonnade, providing beautiful location for sales of coffee, cold drinks, tacos, flowers, newspapers, or other merchandise. These could be either permanent or temporary uses of such kiosks, providing the opportunity for refreshment or entertainment within the park itself.
- c. Paving the parking area along the north side of the park as a "plaza", as originally recommended rather than cutting off the park from the Carnegie Library with an asphalt parking lot.
- d. Paving (perhaps with decomposed granite and/or concrete pavers) the southerly half of the park as a true "plaza", which in addition to providing a good surface for public events would recognize the increasingly urban character of the Downtown and Anglo/Hispanic traditions of California towns.
- e. The configuration of curbs and sidewalks on the south side of Fifth Street was based on traffic engineering requirements of the early 1990s,

and, in addition to being quite unattractive, unnecessarily favours vehicular traffic at the expense of pedestrians. We strongly recommend that this be corrected, as follows.

- The original, simple design, above, anticipated angled parking along the existing straight curblines. That evolved into awkward triangular "porkchops" so that large vehicles could make free-right turns from northbound C Street to eastbound Fifth Street, which we believe is completely unnecessary.
- Buses coming north on C Street can turn east onto 6th Street or 4th Street, the latter being the direct route the Oxnard Transportation Center. Large trucks can do the same. Oxnard only has one Plaza Park, and the properties to the south should have the strongest possible connection to it.
- As an alternative to the original design, a design with a curving south curblines and parallel parking could also be considered, which could provide corner plaza spaces for more landscaping and/or outdoor dining areas.

## 2.5 Plaza Park Infill Development

In its heyday in the 1920s, the Plaza Park was surrounded by fine, multi-story brick buildings and was a center of Oxnard's commercial and civic life. Some buildings were lost to fire - the iconic Oxnard Hotel on the northwest corner of Fifth and C - and others were lost to redevelopment later on.

The Charrette team and participants strongly agreed that surrounding the park once again with multi-story mixed use buildings - with ground floor shops and restaurants and housing on upper floors - would be the best way to re-center the Downtown and the City on the Plaza Park. The primary characteristics envisioned for these buildings include:

- Tall ground floors - typically 18 to 20 feet from ground to second floors - to provide tall windows and high ceilings for ground floor spaces.
- Large canvas awnings - or second floor balconies - to shade south, west and east facing shopfronts.
- Simple, elegant architecture, whether brick, Mediterranean or modern in character.
- Sidewalks as wide as possible, including the repaved north plaza at the Park, and a widened, reconfigured sidewalk and corner plazas along the south side of Fifth Street.
- Active ground floor uses fronting the Park.

The 1993 Master Plan recommended a strategy of recruiting the finest restaurants in town, representing all of Oxnard's many ethnic communities, to surround the Park with a "Downtown restaurant row". We believe this is still a good idea.

As food culture continues to gain importance in American culture, diners travel from Ventura and Santa Barbara counties to Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley in search of fine East Asian, Mexican, Indian, Pacific Island, and other cuisines. Oxnard already has many fine restaurants of these cultures, but sprinkled around town in strip malls. If they were organized around the Plaza Park as a dining event, they could have the potential to regularly draw visitors from a very wide trade area.

Such an emphasis on food would be in addition, not in lieu of, and emphasis on the arts, as described on the following pages.



*Existing Condition: Aside from the Carnegie Library Museum, the Park is for the most part surrounded by undistinguished one-story buildings. This is both a liability and an asset - the latter because the structures represent a relatively small fraction of the real estate value, making their replacement with good quality, multi-story, mixed-use urban buildings relatively feasible.*



Key Plan

### Plaza Park Infill



*Infill Development around Plaza Park: describe*



*Park-fronting development: Original pattern of development.*



*Infill of different Forms & Characters: Simple mixed-use buildings with tall ground floors*

## 2.6 Downtown Art Hubs

Successful economic revitalization models promote the role of art hubs in stimulating innovation and spearheading re-investment. Downtown Oxnard has an opportunity to attract development dependent upon an arts culture. Restaurants, art galleries, theaters, and museums promote and thrive on art hubs.

Because downtown currently has a thriving fine art, film, music and graphic art core who volunteered en masse during our charrette this is not intended to be a silver bullet. These local film makers, photographers, illustrators and patrons who participated in the charrette made the pop-up art gallery and movie night events central events in the public engagement process. Artist already inhabit downtown and are risk tolerant pioneers creating an opportunity to invite others to experience the urban vitality downtown brings a city. They will need homes, shops, and third-spaces to showcase its local talent.

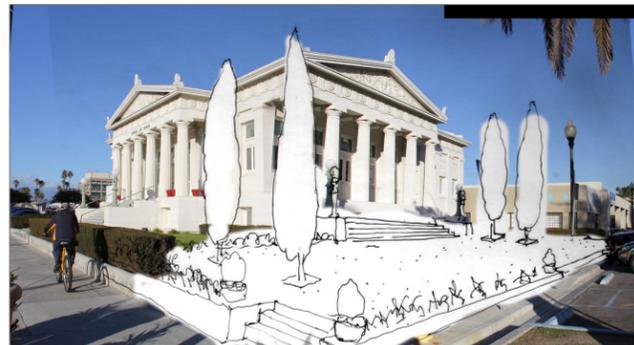
Downtown provides places, spaces and the opportunities to exhibit and display artists and artisan work. The establishment of an Art Hub should be anchored around Plaza Park, the Carnegie Art Museum and Centennial Plaza's Plaza Theater to support arts and innovation.

**Recommended policies include:**

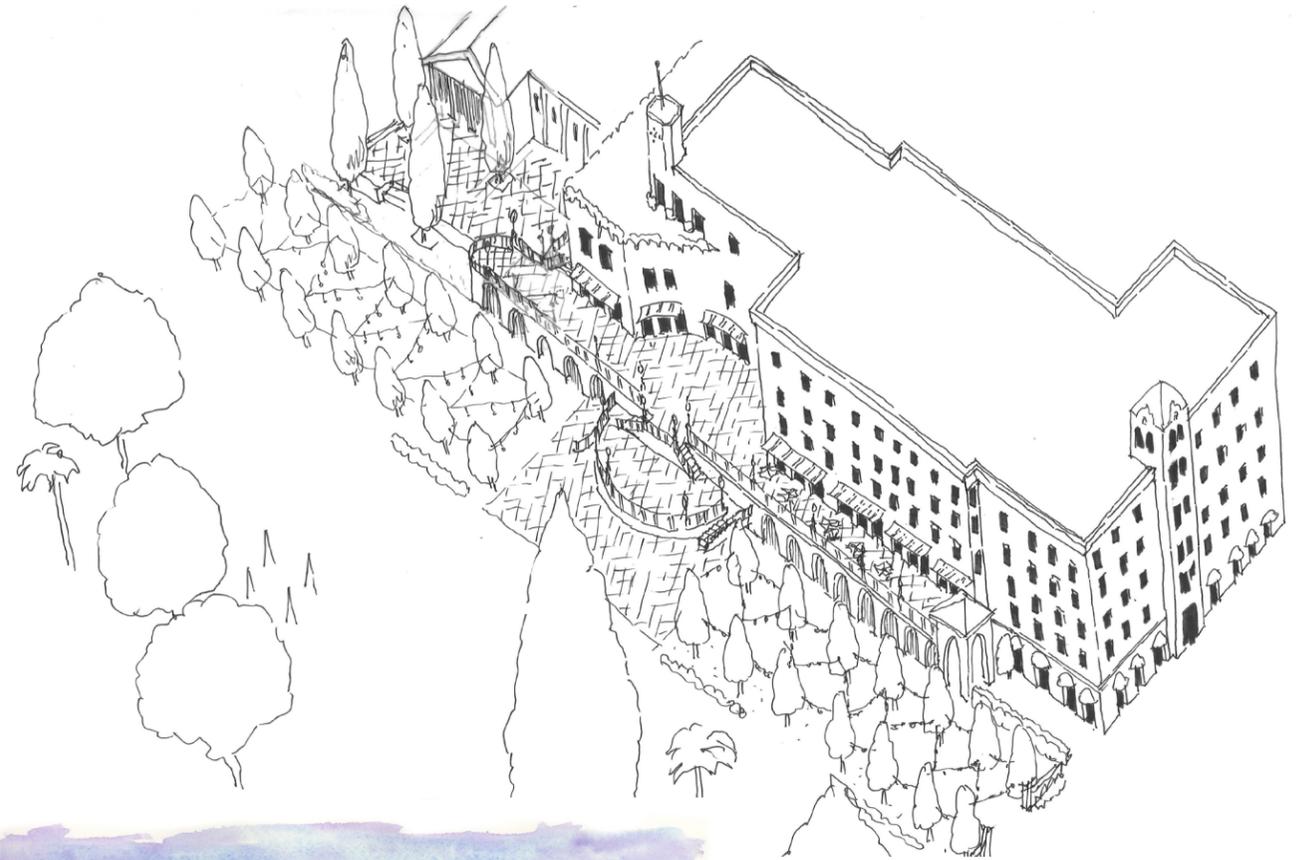
1. Formalize, fund and appoint a 'Downtown Arts Hub Liaison' to mediate, coordinate and advocate for resources dedicated to the arts between City's Cultural Arts Commission and Downtown Management District and the City of Oxnard.
2. Build upon and connect downtown's diverse collection of restaurant hubs to explore opportunities for patrons to experience and explore the arts districts in Heritage Square, Plaza Park, and Centennial Plaza.
3. With its proximity to Los Angeles' film industry, continue to coordinate and target local film and video production and education opportunities with the city's Economic Development Corporation Film Coordinator and Permits.



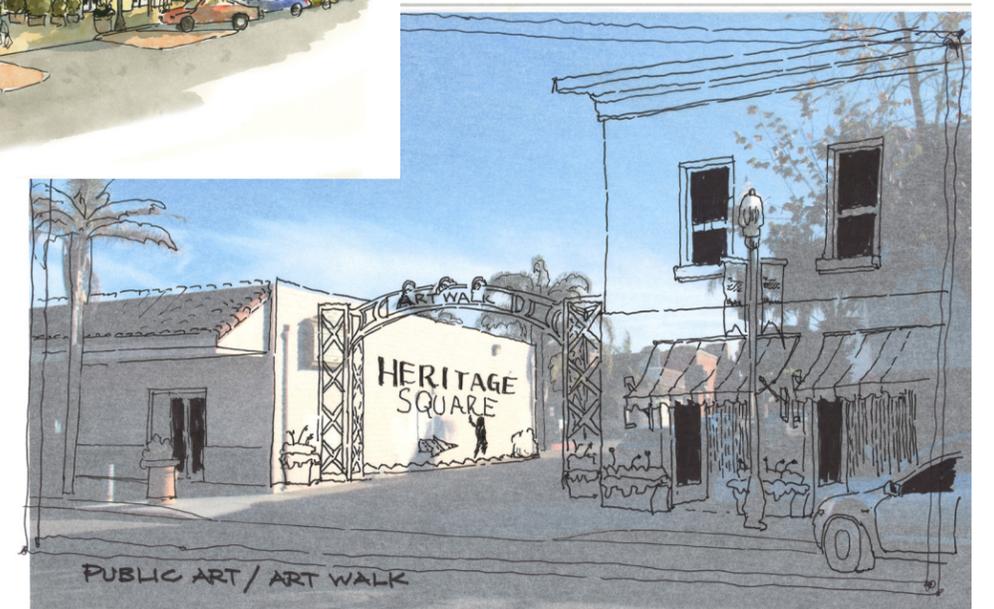
*Carnegie Museum faces C Street*



*Create new facade facing the Plaza Park..*



*Park-fronting development: Buildings that front onto public spaces adds approximately 15 - 20% of land value.*



## 2.7 Infill Development

### Building Types and Massing

As part of the 1991 Plaza Park Master Plan, a draft form-based development code was prepared for the entire Downtown area. We believe this existing code is still valuable as inexpensive and responsive tool to guide future development regulations. It recommended that infill development be based on a number of traditional urban building types and frontage types, and provided a "regulating plan" that assigned those types to each block and street.

A "shorthand" way of describing recommendations for the basic scale and massing of buildings, and the design of their frontages that connect them to and define the character of the streetscapes. The recommendations provided and illustrated in this document are for the most part the same as those included in the 1991 code and should provide a head start for preparing new development standards and design guidelines to implement the community's vision for the Downtown.

### Building Types and Massing

For most of the Downtown core area - surrounding the Plaza Park, A Street, Oxnard Boulevard, and 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Streets from Oxnard Boulevard to B Street - the recommended building type is the classic small-town mixed-use building from one to 4 stories (or more, as enabled by parking) in height, and tall (at least 15 feet) ground floors. The recommended frontage type is the shopfront, with tall, clear glass windows and awnings to shade the glass. At residential frontages stoops and shallow dooryards provide the requisite degree of privacy.

Simple and elegant would be the two words to describe the architectural design intent for these buildings. The illustrations on these pages provide examples of simply composed facades - generally emphasizing the vertical - classically proportioned door and window openings, executed with good quality materials that age gracefully, detailed thoughtfully and with restraint.

*Infill development: Small scale infill development will be in addition to the proposed Plaza Park development at Arts Hub.*



*Infill development: To maintain current values and potentially raise them, downtown redevelopment should respect historical patterns, precedents, and boundaries.*



## 2.8 Downtown Parking Strategy

### A. 2009 Downtown Oxnard Mobility and Parking Management Plan Highlights

A *Mobility and Parking Management Plan* was developed to help the City accomplish the following goals:

1. Ensure good access to the Downtown by all modes of transportation;
2. Provide circulation through and around the Downtown for longer distance travellers;
3. Maintain functional, beautiful and pedestrian-friendly streets that will support strong retail life;
4. Make best use of existing transportation assets as catalysts for economic development; and,
5. Maintain sufficient parking for downtown visitors and employees, with a realistic and effective plan for operating and managing that parking.

This plan is intended to function as a “consensus blueprint” that will allow City staff to manage parking to achieve the dynamic vision called for in the *2030 General Plan* and provide a transportation plan that will effectively manage future downtown growth.

In addition, the *Mobility and Parking Management Plan* is designed to provide an economically efficient transportation plan for Downtown Oxnard. This efficiency is important not only for the actual cost of generating and maintaining transportation resources, but also for the economic development that can be facilitated by a well-planned system. Other cities facing similar circumstances as Oxnard, have used parking policies and management to spur economic growth.

Parking supply and utilization was analyzed separately within six districts of the Downtown: Civic Center, Plaza Entertainment & Arts, A Street Retail, Transportation Center, South of Seventh Street, and Meta Street. A total of 2,833 parking stalls are located within the study zone: 962 on-street and 1,871 off-street. To evaluate parking occupancy, parking occupancy counts were taken from 7 am to 9 pm on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, October 25-27, 2007.

**Total occupancy counts show that at the busiest period (Thursday, 11 am – 1 pm), just 54% of the Downtown parking supply was occupied, with both on and off-street spaces showing roughly the same percentages of spaces occupied (54% and 55% respectively). At this peak hour, 1,297 of the 2,833 spaces in the Downtown parking supply were vacant.**



*Diagonal parking is a strategy that provides ample convenient parking for shops and restaurants on a commercial street while contributing to a pedestrian-oriented street.*

Based on the on- and off-street occupancy counts, there is more than enough parking supply overall to meet existing demand. Target occupancy rates of 85% and 90% are effective industry-standards for short-term (two hour or less) and long-term spaces, respectively, so with a current peak occupancy rate of 54%, the system has substantial excess capacity. However, because the most convenient, front-door parking spaces (the spaces that new visitors and customers see immediately upon arriving) are consistently full at peak hours, the perception may easily arise that an overall parking shortage exists.

**The key conclusion that we draw from these occupancy counts is that the most convenient on-street parking spaces are routinely filling up, often with employees’ cars, even as less convenient lots and structures sit mostly empty. The problems that this situation may cause, in terms of both a lack of convenient customer parking and the perception of an overall parking shortage, cannot be solved by building additional parking spaces. Instead, improved management is required to shift some parking demand, particularly long-term employee parking demand, from the most desirable front-door spaces to the currently under-used structure and parking lots nearby.**

### B. Policy Recommendations

By supporting economic development in Downtown Oxnard through parking management, the Plan simultaneously addresses several of the concerns raised by community stakeholders. During the stakeholder process, concerns were expressed on several fronts. Stakeholders expressed the desire to provide a safe, customer-friendly atmosphere, and specifically to:



*The Downtown Oxnard Parking Structure, at the corner of 4th and B Streets, provides 440 spaces just north of Downtown.*

- Improve Downtown’s image through the intensification of both commercial and residential uses.
- Attract additional retail to continue Downtown’s progress on revitalization and establish Downtown Oxnard as a destination.
- Reduce the length of the development process and remove obstacles to new development and reuse of existing buildings.
- Provide better signage, traffic circulation and gateway treatments to make.
- Downtown Oxnard more visible to travellers on Oxnard Boulevard, and easier to reach.
- Address perceived safety concerns for downtown customers, particularly at night.
- Provide funding for a more visible, active on-street police presence.
- Provide funding for the continuance of improved lighting, upgraded landscaping, better signage and enhanced streetscapes.

This plan recommends eight measures to help resolve these stakeholder concerns, manage downtown transportation and stimulate economic activity.

#### Recommendation 1: Pursue a “Park Once” Strategy

Adopt a “Park Once” strategy for the Downtown Plan area by (a) operating as many parking spaces as possible in a common pool of shared, publicly-available spaces and

(b) encouraging existing private commercial parking to be shared among different land uses and available to the public when not serving private commercial use. This strategy should be implemented via the following policies:

1. Prohibit or discourage private parking in new development (except for residential spaces). Instead, make public parking lots available to downtown shoppers and employees, and (when more exclusive parking arrangements are necessary) lease spaces in nearby public lots and structures to private businesses, for the particular hours and days of the week when the reserved parking is actually required.
2. Purchase or lease existing private parking lots from willing sellers, and add this parking to the shared public supply.
3. Facilitate shared and/or valet parking in existing private parking lots wherever feasible.

#### Recommendation 2: Reduce Minimum Parking Requirements and Institute an In-Lieu Fee

Oxnard should reform commercial minimum parking requirements in the Downtown by first reducing them to levels that reflect the demand of Downtown Oxnard and mandate that at least 50% of those spaces be met through an in-lieu fee to help fund a shared pool of public spaces and other alternative mode programs. Once market-rate pricing has been instituted for Downtown’s on-street parking, and residential parking benefit districts established

to protect neighborhoods from unwanted spillover parking, the next step would be to mandate that 100% of the minimum parking requirement be met through the in-lieu fee. Residential requirements should also be modified to allow developers to utilize the in-lieu fee.

Minimum parking requirements are one of the biggest obstacles to many cities' efforts to encourage new residential and commercial development in their revitalizing downtown areas. With 1,297 parking stalls currently vacant during the peak hour in Downtown, there is more than enough parking available to cope with existing demand and any demand that could be generated by future development. With a current oversupply of parking, minimum requirements are only acting as an impediment to economic development, rather than their stated goal of ensuring adequate availability.

Oxnard's current minimum parking requirements applying to the Downtown area often require more than one square foot of parking area for every square foot of building. These requirements can be particularly damaging to uses, such as eating establishments, which help create vibrancy and life in the Downtown area. By allowing commercial developments to fulfill at least a portion of their minimum parking requirements through an in-lieu fee, the City will be removing one of the largest barriers to new development downtown.

The in-lieu fee will encourage efficiently shared public parking rather than many small, inefficient private lots; and create a healthy market for downtown parking, where parking spaces are bought, sold, rented and leased like any normal commodity.

### **Recommendation 3: Install Parking Meters on Blocks Where Shortages Exist, and Return All Resulting Parking Revenues to These Blocks**

Install multi-space, pay-by-space parking meters on any block face in the Downtown that routinely exceeds an 85% occupancy rate. Set parking prices at rates that create a 15% vacancy rate on each block, and eliminate time limits during allowable parking hours. Rates can initially be set as low as \$0.10 per hour and subsequently raised or lowered based on future occupancy counts.

The installation of parking meters downtown will efficiently manage demand for downtown parking while accommodating customer, employee, resident, and commuter parking needs. By creating vacancies and

turnover of the most convenient "front door" curb, parking spaces availability for customers and visitors will be ensured. The revenue generated should be dedicated to the continuance of public improvements and public services that benefit these blocks, such as upgraded security and enhanced streetscapes.

### **Recommendation 4: Invest Meter Revenues in Priority Downtown Programs**

Meter revenues should first be invested in building an on-street security presence to improve perceptions concerning safety. Feedback from stakeholders revealed that security is a key issue for employees and customers. In order to address this issue, meter revenues can be spent on having an active on-street security presence in the form of "Mobility Ambassadors." These individuals can serve multiple purposes by escorting motorists to their vehicles at night, patrolling the Downtown, and acting as information resources to visitors who need assistance in getting directions.

Funds can then be used for infrastructure such as garbage cans, street lamps, and trees or less obvious items like sidewalk steam cleaning that keeps the Downtown's walking areas looking pristine. When the parking supply can no longer cope with demand, revenues can then be spent on a full spectrum of transportation demand management strategies for downtown employees and residents, including transit, carpool, vanpool, bicycle and pedestrian programs.

### **Recommendation 5: Provide Universal Transit Passes**

In recent years, growing numbers of transit agencies have teamed with universities, employers, or residential neighborhoods to provide universal transit passes. These passes typically provide unlimited rides on local or regional transit providers for low monthly fees, often absorbed entirely by the employer, school, or developers. Universal transit passes increase transit ridership and provide incentives for existing and new downtown residents to reduce vehicle ownership by providing free transit passes to all downtown residents and employees.

Oxnard should use revenues to provide free transit passes to all downtown employees and the existing residents once Gold Coast Transit has an operating program. For all new multifamily residential developments, require a universal transit passes program be provided to residents.

### **Recommendation 6: Require Parking Cash Out**

Many employers in Downtown Oxnard (including the City itself) provide free or reduced price parking for their employees as a fringe benefit. However, those employees using alternative modes do not currently receive transportation benefits. With the implementation of a parking cash out program, all new and existing employers that provide subsidized employee parking would also be required to offer their employees the option to "cash out" their parking subsidy. This would result in an equal subsidy between all employee commute modes and create incentives for commuters to carpool, take transit, and bike or walk to work.

Under a parking cash out requirement, employers will be able to continue to offer free or reduced parking on the condition that they offer the cash value of the parking subsidy to any employee who does not drive to work.

The cash value of the parking subsidy should be offered in one of three forms:

1. A transit/vanpool subsidy equal to the value of the parking subsidy (of which up to \$230 is tax-free for both employer and employee)
2. A bicycle subsidy equal to the value of the parking subsidy (of which up to \$20 per month is tax-free for both employer and employee)
3. A taxable carpool/walk subsidy equal to the value of the parking subsidy

Employees who opt to cash out their parking subsidies would not be eligible to receive free parking from the employer, and would be responsible for their parking charges on days when they drive to work.

### **Recommendation 7: Create a Residential Parking Benefit District**

In order to prevent "spillover" parking in downtown adjacent neighborhoods, Oxnard should implement Residential Parking Benefit Districts in adjacent residential areas, such as the Meta or South of Seventh districts, at the same time that parking meters are implemented for curb parking in the Downtown core. These Districts should be implemented as necessary once a parking evaluation has taken place.

Residential Parking Benefit Districts are similar to residential parking permit districts in that a certain number of parking permits are issued to residents usually for free or a nominal fee. These permits allow the residents to park within the district, but allow a limited number of commuters to pay

to use surplus on-street parking spaces in residential areas, and return the resulting revenues to the neighborhood to fund public improvements.

### **Recommendation 8: Construct New Parking Structure When Needed**

While costly, new public parking structures may be necessary to meet demand once substantial new development has taken place. Before constructing additional parking, Oxnard should first make use of its existing parking surplus, and then pursue implementation of cost-effective strategies to reduce parking demand. Once all of the lower-cost transportation demand management measures and shared parking strategies have been exhausted, additional parking may then be required. Good advance planning can help prepare for the eventual need to provide one or more new downtown parking structures.

Oxnard should:

- Identify present parking needs to ensure that the site chosen in the Oxnard Downtown Strategic Plan for the northwest corner of 4th Street and Oxnard Boulevard is the most promising location for a future parking structure.
- Prioritize and aggressively implement all feasible strategies for reducing parking demand, that are more cost-effective than increasing parking supply.
- Monitor the current surplus and effectiveness of new strategies to reduce parking demand and initiate the pre-development process for a new parking structure when downtown peak parking occupancy regularly and consistently exceeds 80%.

When implemented together as a coherent package, these eight recommendations provide Downtown Oxnard with a strategy that allows it to grow and thrive, makes possible the reuse of existing buildings and the construction of desired new ones, manages the existing parking supply in a way that puts customers first, and maintains sufficient parking and access for all users.

# 3.0 Implementation



Congress for the New Urbanism Charter of the New Urbanism Principle #24:

*“Architecture and landscape design should grow from local climate, topography, history, and building practice.”*

Congress for the New Urbanism Charter of the New Urbanism Principle #27:

*“Preservation and renewal of historic buildings, districts, and landscapes affirm the continuity and evolution of urban society.”*

Downtown Oxnard is the City’s historic heart and contains the highest intensity of community life in the region. Downtown is Oxnard’s traditional gathering place for festivals, events, and commercial activities, but the new edge-of-town freeway-oriented developments are a serious threat to Downtown’s long-term viability. The public charrette process that shaped these recommendations appeared to be a cathartic civic moment of which continue to build movement towards re-purposing, revitalizing, and reinvesting in Downtown. These recommendations are a series of simple yet innovative actions intended to allow bottom-up, community-led stewardship of Downtown’s revitalization.

## Section

- 3.1 Key Finding
- 5.2 Goal, Actions, and Tactics
- 5.3 Implementation Thresholds
  - Table 3-1 Thresholds Outline
- 5.4 Funding Mechanisms
- 5.5 Agency Model
- 5.6 Summary

## 3.1 Key Findings

### A. Summary of Downtown's Weaknesses

As noted in the What We've Heard section, the City has a number of challenges that need to be overcome if a successful implementation of the Oxnard Downtown Vision Plan is to take place. To recap, the biggest issues may be summarized as follows:

1. Stiff competition for the best retail, restaurants, and entertainment provided by The Collection shopping center, three miles to the north, and by Downtown Ventura, ten miles to the north west.
2. Not enough to do Downtown including insufficient restaurant and retailer variety, minimal entertainment, and a lack of cultural institutions.
3. Unappealing pedestrian experience due to the perception of crime, homelessness, too-narrow and hazardous sidewalks, insufficient lighting and wayfinding signage.
4. Poorly distributed parking: not enough in some areas; too much in others.
5. Average retail rents of \$1.00 per s.f. gross are below the \$2.25 per s.f. that is needed to support new retail development.
6. Unpredictable and even hostile investment environment partly due to past City regulations and actions.
7. Reduced street vitality and retailer viability due to lack of significant housing in the core.
8. Downtown's distance (2.5 miles) from the Ventura Freeway and regional visitors.

### B. Summary of Downtown's Strengths

Downtown also has some significant strengths on which it can capitalize, including:

1. A legacy gridded/interconnected street network forming relatively small blocks that are an ideal size for pedestrian permeability.
2. Urban-form buildings throughout much of the Downtown core that support walkability and whose inherent modularity makes compatible modest-scale redevelopments in the adjacent gaps relatively easy.
3. Regional rail access via the Metrolink Station. Downtown is a coveted TOD (Transit-Oriented District)!
4. Many local stakeholders that wish to see improvement and may be willing to pitch-in with resources.
5. \$6.1 million of "seed" money from redevelopment that can be leveraged to procure further investment from both public and private sectors.



*The Vision Plan Charrette was crafted as an opportunity for citizens to discuss, compromise, agree upon downtown's issues, needs, strengths and values of today in order to plan for its future.*

## 3.2 Goals, Actions and Tactics

### A. Intent

These recommendations are organized to iteratively build upon each other over the next 10 years. With measurable objectives, we recommend testing, planning and re-planning to reposition Downtown as a compelling destination for locals and visitors to live, work, play, shop, learn, worship and govern.

### B. Goals

The Downtown Vision Plan's primary Goals in order of importance are:

1. Rebuild trust and confidence between Oxnard's Citizens and its Government's dedication to revitalizing Downtown;
2. Make small development as easy as large developments;
3. Add a significant amount of new housing; and,
4. Propose no Silver Bullet fixes, but test small, incremental changes first and adjust towards what is working best.

### C. Actions

The Downtown Vision Plan's measurable Actions are:

1. Increase connectivity of Oxnard Boulevard within Downtown (remove median barriers, slow traffic with traffic-calming devices, improve signage and gateway elements);
2. Fill the vacant lots downtown first;
3. Add a significant amount of new housing first (up to 2,284 new Residential units and 1,024,370 sf of Commercial space is allowed by-right under the existing General Plan and Environmental Impact Report - build that amount first then re-plan Downtown again in 2025);
4. Focus new development around Park Plaza - the Plaza Park is Oxnard's crown jewel and provides the most value to newly built adjacent buildings; and,
5. Enable an ethnically diverse restaurant cluster between 7th and 8th Streets on Oxnard Boulevard (a cluster of restaurants has occurred and should be supported and increased).
6. Waive existing 39 unit per acre density limitation and control number of units by existing building height zoning limitations to promote housing.

### D. Tactics

The Downtown Vision Plan recommends the following Tactics:

1. The City Council adopt by Resolution the 2016 Oxnard Downtown Vision Plan Report in order to state its intention to follow the plan, empower a Downtown based' community-led organization to 'redevelop' Downtown, and limit its time frame for a 'testing period' for a limited duration of time (approximately 5 to 10 years).
2. Enable a community-based Downtown 'Director' administrative structure to manage implementation of the Downtown Vision Plan. The City should enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Oxnard Downtown Management District (see Civic San Diego MOU authority excerpt in Section 3.5 below). The intent of this body is to:
  - a. Add planning, design, and review capacity to the Community Development Department and staff;
  - b. Provide downtown specific expertise in making decisions and recommendations on improvements for localized issues, such as safety (Street Lights, Clean & Safe Programs, Security Services, and Management);
  - c. Primarily focus on supporting local retail, commercial, housing and vacant lot infill success;
  - d. Generate and circulate downtown administrative and discretionary decision permitting revenues within the district.
3. The 'Director' of Downtown's development should be charged with making specific administrative decisions as delegated by City Council resolution. The power to delegate such authority implies the authority of the 'Director' to adopt resolutions to be reviewed by the city council. The authority of this Director should be tasked with:
  - a. Assisting the City and its legal counsel to identify and establish the optimal support/oversight legal structure (Oxnard Planning Commission or Oxnard Downtown Partnership);
  - b. Staffing and Managing the Downtown Design Review Board; Assist the City to identify a qualified outside consultant, if needed, to conduct Design Review;

### 3.3 Implementation Thresholds

The goal is to build downtown housing in multiple locations, including micro units, to create much-needed additional residential units. Very high apartment rent rates reflect an under-supplied market and may help subsidize the retail until retail rents can be increased. A series of development thresholds are recommended in Table 3.1 to support development at the following scales:

#### A. Making Small Possible Threshold

There are the Vacant Lot Projects intended to be filled with new housing units and commercial storefronts as easily as possible. These projects should get Municipal Service Fee relief to encourage this infill development and fill blighted vacant lots in the Downtown.

#### B. Reinvesting in Downtown Threshold

We recommend that improvements to privately owned lots in Downtown be multi-story, mixed-use, urban-format buildings in a loosely coordinated sequence of investments. The Municipal Service fees should be lifted from city-wide funding mechanisms and reinvested specifically back into Downtown and its PBID area. This includes expanded, diversified restaurant offerings in two blocks bounded by 6th and 7th, A and Meta to elevate this zone's status to a regional dining destination (approximately 15 restaurants already are clustered in that zone; restaurants increase traffic to an area);

#### C. Catalytic Project Threshold

The following are recommendations for specific catalytic projects, the City's redevelopment obligation projects, that will improve the Downtown and spur additional investment. New projects will address either directly or indirectly these proposed catalytic investments and by the City's new structure for handling projects.

##### 1. Public Realm

- a. Redevelopment obligation development projects;
- b. Oxnard Boulevard improvements;
- c. Upgraded street lights, wayfinding signage, sidewalks, and possibly tree lighting throughout Downtown and along the major approach thoroughfares;
- d. Plaza Park amphitheatre and pergola;
- e. Downtown parking structure that incorporates

ground-floor retail;

- f. Mural program in alleys (committee to make approvals); and,
- g. Improvements to how homeless are handled.

##### 2. Private Realm – Large Scale Projects

- a. SSA Building redevelopment in coordination with Plaza Park amphitheatre:
  - Carnegie Art Museum expansion,
  - Children's Museum,
  - Market-rate residential units and/or office space on upper floors;
- b. Rieter Affiliated's new 3-story headquarters on A Street;
- c. Teatro and Vogue Theatres rehabilitation and reopening:
  - New homes for Elite Theatre Co. and Teatro de las Americas;
- d. Church for the Nations on B Street (up for sale):
  - Potential black box theatre or alternative Children's Museum location;
- e. JCPenney conversion to big box for small grocery, a key amenity that is needed Downtown;
- f. Downtown housing units needed to accommodate the expected demand generated by new Sakioka 422 ac. commercial/office development;
- g. UCSB, Cal State Channel Islands, or Cal Lutheran Univ. to open a Downtown Campus; and,
- h. Hotel (business class, 3.5-4 stars).

The prioritization of filling in vacant lots is illustrated below as a guide to Implementation thresholds be easily understood by local developers, decision-makers, neighbors, and land owners.



**TABLE 3.1 IMPLEMENTATION THRESHOLDS**

THRESHOLDS	MAKING SMALL POSSIBLE	RE-INVESTING IN DOWNTOWN	CATALYTIC PROJECTS
<b>Lot Size</b>	<i>&lt;= 7,000 SF per lot</i>	<i>&gt; 7,000 SF</i>	<i>Former Redevelopment</i>
<b>Building Size</b>	<i>2 stories or less</i>	<i>3 stories to 5 stories</i>	<i>Former Redevelopment</i>
<b>Entitlement Review</b>	<i>By-right</i>	<i>By-right</i>	<i>PC, CC, State</i>
<b>Parking Required</b>	<i>No minimum</i>	<i>1 per 1,000 SF</i>	<i>Yes - per Code</i>
<b>Parking Fee</b>	<i>Waived</i>	<i>Yes - Paid to PBID</i>	<i>Yes - per Code</i>
<b>Stormwater BMPS</b>	<i>Exempt</i>	<i>For surface parking only</i>	<i>Yes - per Code</i>
<b>Stormwater BMP Fees</b>	<i>Waived</i>	<i>Yes - per Code</i>	<i>Yes - per Code</i>
<b>Utility Connection Fees</b>	<i>Exempt</i>	<i>Yes - per Code</i>	<i>Yes - per Code</i>
<b>Traffic Impact Fees</b>	<i>Yes - Paid to PBID</i>	<i>Yes - Paid</i>	<i>Yes - per Code</i>
<b>Growth Development Fees</b>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes - Paid to PBID</i>	<i>Yes - per Code</i>
<b>Design Review</b>	<i>Required by PBID</i>	<i>Required by PBID + PC</i>	<i>Required per Code</i>
<b>Self-Certification of Construction Plans by Professional Architects &amp; Engineers</b>	<i>Allowed</i>	<i>Not Allowed</i>	<i>Not Allowed</i>
<b>Waivers or Variances from Zoning Code</b>	<i>Up to 3 waivers allowed</i>	<i>Up to 2 waivers allowed</i>	<i>Not Allowed</i>

### 3.4 Funding Mechanisms

Community partnerships are essential to implement this plan, and will need to pull from a number of various entities to create structures to trigger the variety of funding sources. And, the City of Oxnard will be the primary implementation arm of this plan, with assistance from the proposed Downtown Director. The City will oversee development grants, such as the Community Development Block Grants, with other City departments contributing are important partners in the implementation of this plan. Funding sources may include:

1. Taxes (Short-Term, >5 years)
2. Municipal Service Fees (Short-Term, >5 years)
3. Special Municipal Services – Sewer, Water, Garbage, Water, Trash, Parking
4. Capital Improvement Program (Short-Term, >5 years)
5. Community Development Block Grants (Long-Term, <5 years)
6. Revenue Bonds (Long-Term, <5 years)
7. General Obligation Bonds (Long-Term, <5 years)
8. Community Network Funding Sources and Partners (Long-Term, <5 years), including:  
*Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration Economic Adjustment Assistance Program; Research and National Technical Assistance Program; Global Climate Change Mitigation Incentive Fund. Environmental Protection Agency, Brownfields Program. Smart Growth America, Leadership Institute, technical assistance program. Local Governments Commission technical assistance program.*

We recommend a series of waivers and exceptions from Municipal Service Fees in order to fill Downtown’s vacant lots new housing units, founding Making Small Possible thresholds section above. These should be set in collaboration with the local development industry, city staff, and political leadership. The Reinvesting in Downtown fees should be reinvested in Downtown, and these waivers and reinvestments should be administered by the proposed Downtown Director.

There is a range of funding sources and incentives that may be brought into play to help build Catalytic Projects. The City can use one or more of the following mechanisms to assume portions of development costs, potentially to include property acquisitions and the funding of public and shared infrastructure that might include streets, alleys, civic spaces, utilities, and parking structures. Investments in the public realm also may create an environment that will support higher rents and thus make new development more feasible than previously presented.

1. Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts
2. Active Transportation Program Grants
3. Crowdfunding
4. Community Development Corporations
5. Social Impact Bonds
6. Tax Credits
7. Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program

### 3.5 Downtown Agency Model

The City of San Diego City Council has an agreement (MOU) with its Downtown consulting entity, Civic San Diego, which is a city-owned non-profit intended to be the entrepreneurial development partner for downtown. A one-stop shop with the Vision Plan toolbox to facilitate public-private development projects and programs. Civic

San Diego projects include Parking Management, Active Transportation Planning, and the Former Redevelopment Agency Recognized Obligation Payment Schedule (ROPS). Below is page one of the Agreement between the City and Civic San Diego (see: [https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/12\\_28\\_0.pdf](https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/12_28_0.pdf)).

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
AND CIVIC SAN DIEGO  
FOR CONSULTANT SERVICES**

**THIS AGREEMENT [Agreement] is made and entered into between the City of San Diego, a municipal corporation [City], and Civic San Diego [Consultant], for the Consultant to provide specific services to the City required to implement the requirements of the Downtown Community Plan, the Centre City Planned District Ordinance, the Gaslamp Planned District Ordinance, the Marina Planned District Ordinance, the Downtown Community Parking District and specified economic development activities.**

**RECITALS**

**The Consultant is a nonprofit public benefit corporation formed under California Law.**

**The Consultant has the expertise, experience and personnel necessary to provide consulting services related to implementing the requirements of the Downtown Community Plan, the Centre City Planned District Ordinance [PDO], the Gaslamp PDO, the Marina PDO, the Downtown Community Parking District and the Comprehensive Downtown Parking Plan, and economic development activities.**

**The City has determined that the interests of its inhabitants are served by an arrangement under which the Consultant will provide these services to the City, upon the terms and conditions set forth herein.**

**In consideration of the above recitals and the mutual covenants and conditions set forth, herein, and for good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the Parties hereby set forth their mutual covenants and understandings as follows:**

**ARTICLE 1**

**CONSULTANT SERVICES**

**The above-listed recitals are true and correct and are hereby incorporated by reference.**

**1.1 Scope of Services.** The Consultant shall perform services as necessary to: (1) implement the land use requirements and design and development criteria of the Downtown Community Plan and the Centre City PDO pursuant to San Diego Municipal Code [SDMC] section 156.0301 et. seq.; (2) implement the design and development criteria of the Gaslamp PDO pursuant to SDMC section 157.0101 et. seq.; (3) implement the development controls of the Marina PDO pursuant to SDMC section 1511.0101 et. seq.; (4) administer the Downtown Community Parking District and implement the Comprehensive Downtown Parking Plan pursuant to SDMC section 103.1951 et. seq. and applicable City Council Policy; and (5) provide

### 3.6 Implementation Summary

Our nation’s preeminent town planner, John Nolen, wrote in his 1912 book, *Replanning Small Cities*, “The gravest neglect is the failure to replan and replan to meet increasing demands, to readjust and readjust, to use art and skill and foresight to remodel existing conditions.” Twenty years ago, a visionary master plan by one of the country’s top urban planners was created for Downtown Oxnard, but it was not fully implemented, and many stakeholders today do not even recall its existence. This is not an unusual situation. Great plans are created for many cities, but sadly, too often they sit on a shelf and gather dust.

The key to ensuring that this does not happen again is the creation and adoption of a robust implementation strategy. We have outlined a straightforward Plan for Action, which if followed, will ensure a dramatic transformation of Downtown Oxnard over several years. The following is a summary of the four most critical steps to ensure that this Vision Plan has an impact. We recommend the following:

1. The City Council adopts the Oxnard Downtown Vision Plan by Resolution.
2. The City creates a focused and accountable implementation structure under the Oxnard Planning Commission or Oxnard Downtown Partnership to hire a Downtown Development Director. A real estate and/or urban design professional with the abilities to dedicate significant time (100% if an employee or a minimum of 50% if a consultant) to implement the Vision Plan and to ensure that there is continuous progress at the fastest possible rate.
3. Enable small infill mixed-use development to occur more easily than greenfield developments in the city’s agricultural edge by adopting the Implementation Thresholds outlined on Table 3-1 into the Municipal Zoning Code. A ‘Lean Urbanism’ approach to strip away redundant discretionary reviews and allow for new development deemed acceptable to the majority of citizens and adhering to best economic development practices. The intent is to create more attainable housing stock and local commercial opportunities necessary to revitalize downtown today.

4. Marshall the support and involvement of key Downtown stakeholders who have a vested interest in Downtown’s success to be part of the chosen structure, either the Oxnard Planning Commission or Oxnard Downtown Partnership. Many of these individuals may be willing to make investments in the Downtown if they have confidence that a smart, professionally orchestrated implementation process has been established. The structure and activities should be transparent, and members will need to recuse themselves from decision-making when there are conflicts of interest.
5. Catalytic project investments (large scale) must be identified and prioritized, with implementation strategies identified for each project. Public realm investments will be spearheaded by the City, at least initially. Private realm (small scale) projects will be spearheaded by the existing stakeholders in the private sector, and these investments should be coordinated by the new implementation structure to ensure maximum catalytic potential. These local individuals and their investments in new buildings in the Downtown will be the main trigger, in addition to other steps taken by the City to improve predictability, that will spur larger-scale investment by outside developers.
6. Once the above steps have a measurable amount of success, such as new housing added, increased commercial activity, and lower rate of auto and pedestrian conflicts, we recommend undertaking a more comprehensive ‘Place-Based,’ ‘Context-Sensitive’ or ‘Form-Based’ entitlement policy and development regulation updated to existing rules and regulations to make new development more predictable.

The Congress for the New Urbanism California Chapter appreciates this opportunity to assist the City of Oxnard with the creation of its Downtown Vision Plan. We also sincerely appreciate the citizens who participated, city leadership and staff, and especially the collaborative efforts of Dao Doan, Roy Prince, Kymberly Horner, and City Manager Greg Nyhoff for making this Vision Plan possible.

We look forward to remaining involved with this Vision Plan as it proceeds through the City’s review, refinement, and approval process.

