Design Charrette Opening Presentation

Downtown San Rafael Precise Plan

Design Charrette
May 8th, 2019
Process to Date
Precise Plan Study Area
Precise Plan Milestones to Date

January 30th 2019
- Project Kick-Off Meeting

March 13th 2019
- General Plan Steering Committee Meeting
- Visioning

April 10th 2019
- General Plan Steering Committee Meeting
- Downtown Profile

April 12th 2019
- Pop-Up Workshop at 2nd Friday Art Walk

May 8th – 11th 2019
- Design Charrette
What We Have Heard
Steering Committee Visioning Exercise
What are Downtown San Rafael’s Greatest Assets?

Please rank the top three phrases you agree with most:

A. Historic and cultural resources
B. Hillside views
C. Ambience: streetscape and environment makes it pleasant to walk around and be in
D. Diversity: people, businesses and activities
E. Human scale: not too big, not too small
F. Arts and events: public art, 2nd Friday Art Walk, Thursday Farmers Market, etc.
G. Accessibility to and from Downtown: close proximity to neighborhoods
H. Accessibility within Downtown: places to sit, density of businesses facilitate walking, good parking availability, etc.
I. Other
J. Downtown has no assets
Polling Results: Downtown Assets

- Historic and cultural resources: 12%
- Hillside views: 8%
- Ambience: 16%
- Walkability: 16%
- Diversity: 16%
- Human Scale: 18%
- Arts and events: public: 11%
- Accessibility to and from: 13%
- Accessibility within: 8%
- Other: 0%
- Downtown has no assets: 0%
What are Downtown San Rafael’s Greatest Constraints?

Please rank the top three phrases you agree with most:

A. Parking is difficult and expensive
B. Lack of attractive goods and services → unexciting Downtown → lack of foot traffic → (repeat)
C. Homelessness makes Downtown unattractive and uncomfortable
D. Bad traffic, especially at rush hour
E. Lack of housing and people to support businesses
F. Density and TOD can worsen congestion and parking issues if residents/ visitors still demand privately-owned cars
G. Lack of communication to the public about new economic development
H. Not pedestrian or bike friendly: cars too fast, too much through-traffic
I. Lack of public and civic space (for example a town square that is programmed well)
J. Other
Polling Results: Downtown Constraints

- Homelessness: 15%
- Lack of Housing: 17%
- Lack of Bike or Pedestrian Friendly: 18%
- Parking is difficult: 6%
- Lack of attractive goods: 13%
- Bad traffic, especially near shops: 11%
- Density and TOD can: 7%
- Other: 0%
- Lack of public and civil: 11%
What are Downtown San Rafael’s Greatest Opportunities?

Please rank the top three phrases you agree with most:

A. New east-west bike-ped. connection and bike lanes on 4th Street from San Rafael High to West End
B. New multi-modal access along SMART corridor (for example, a greenway)
C. New creek-oriented and transit-oriented urban neighborhood on the east side of Highway 101 (Montecito Plaza area)
D. Activation of the public realm for all ages and users that showcases Downtown’s unique identity
E. Repurposing of obsolete areas, such as vacant and parking lots, for infill and civic space
F. Reuse of Bettini Transit Center and Whistlestop blocks
G. New infill housing
H. New spaces for business incubation and entrepreneurship
I. Car-free public spaces
J. Improved traffic flow and less congestion
K. Other
Polling Results: Downtown Opportunities

- Underutilized + Vacant Sites: 21%
- Transit Center: 15%
- Infill Housing: 15%
- New Creek- and transit- oriented development: 12%
- Activating the public realm: 7%
- New multimodal access: 7%
- East-West bike-ped connection: 9%
- New spaces for businesses: 3%
- Improved traffic flow: 9%
- Other: 0%
Downtown Plan Visioning Pop-Up
## Visioning Pop-Up Results

### What do you think of Downtown? [35 People Polled]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What’s working?</th>
<th>Dots</th>
<th>What’s not working?</th>
<th>Dots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interesting Destinations</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Lack of attractive destinations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillside Views</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Homelessness</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic and Cultural Resources</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Parking: difficult, expensive</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something for all ages and backgrounds</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bad traffic</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Human scale: not too big, not too small</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td>Lack of housing</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts and events</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Not enough interesting things to do</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close proximity to neighborhoods</td>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>Lack of public space (such as a town square)</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Easy to get around: walking, biking, driving</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td>Not pedestrian or bike friendly</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (please write)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Other (please write)</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Charrette: What to Expect
A **collaborative and iterative process** that relies on several (minimum 3) **feedback loops**
### Many Opportunities to Participate

- Opening + Closing Presentations
- Midpoint Pinup
- Brown Bag Lunches
- Open Studio

If you have limited time to participate, come to these events

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### Charrette Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Wednesday 8th May</th>
<th>Thursday 9th May</th>
<th>Friday 10th May</th>
<th>Saturday 11th May</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 - 11 am</td>
<td></td>
<td>Open Studio</td>
<td>Open Studio</td>
<td>Closing Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 am - 12 pm</td>
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<td>12 - 1 pm</td>
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<td>6 - 7 pm</td>
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<td>7 - 8 pm</td>
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<td>Opening Presentation</td>
<td>Closed Studio</td>
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<td>8 - 9 pm</td>
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- **Open Studio**: 10.00 am - 5.00 pm
- **Midpoint Pinup**: 5.00 - 6.30 pm
- **Brown Bag Historic Resources**: 12.00 - 1.00 pm
- **Brown Bag Economics**: 12.00 - 1.00 pm
- **Closed Studio**: 10.00 am - 7.00 pm
- **Closed Studio**: 12.00 - 1.00 pm
- **Closing Presentation**: 9.30 am - 12.00 pm
  - Jackson’s Café, Whistlestop

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Downtown San Rafael Precise Plan | Design Charrette Opening Presentation | May 8th, 2019
Downtown Profile Update
Greater proportion of **block-form, larger buildings** compared to adjacent neighborhoods

**Coherent facades and frontages** along 4th Street between A and E
Parks, Civic + Historic Landmarks
Existing One-Way Streets

The primary streets within Downtown for vehicular traffic are the **Second and Third Street** One-way Couplet.
Collision Density – All Types (2012-2016)
2100 Sea Level Rise + 100 Year Storm
Downtown Demographics

Population
≈ 2,300 residents in Precise Plan Area*

Race and Ethnicity
- Hispanic/Latino: 20%
- Black or African American: 8%
- Other: 5%
- Asian: 2%
- White, Non-Hispanic: 65%

Household & Age Range Distributions
- Median Age: 42
- Non-Family*: 70%
- Families*: 30%
- Ave Household Size: 1.7
- Age Range:
  - 0-17: 10%
  - 18-24: 8%
  - 25-44: 36%
  - 45-64: 29%
  - 65+: 17%

Sources:
- American Community Survey (ACS) 2017 data
- *ESRI Business Analysts Data, 2018
Living Downtown

Multifamily Rental Trends:

- The average multifamily asking rent is **$2,499**, higher than city average of $2,144.
- New and renovated historic buildings have higher rents.
- Downtown has a low multifamily vacancy rate of **4.2%**, only slightly higher than the citywide and county.
- High rents and low vacancy indicate strong demand for multifamily rental units.

Sources: CoStar, 2019; BAE, 2019
Office Market Trends

- Downtown office inventory of $1.6 million sf (1/3 of total San Rafael inventory)
- Average rents of $2.92 per sf per month, low vacancy rate of 5.1%
- Increasing preferences for office space in mixed-use areas with transit and amenities.
- Regional and national trends show an increasing prevalence of shared workspaces and co-working spaces.

Sources: CoStar, 2019; BAE, 2019
Retail Market Trends

- Regionally and nationally, retail tenants are increasingly seeking mixed-use environments that support experiential retail.
- The rise of e-commerce has led to shifts in tenant mixes.

Sources: CoStar, 2019; BAE, 2019
Working Downtown

**Industrial + Flex Market Trends**

- San Rafael has a relatively large industrial/flex inventory citywide (4.2 million sq. ft.) with a low 1.2% vacancy rate, indicating **strong demand for industrial space elsewhere in the City**.

![Graph showing industrial + flex market trends](graph.png)

**Sources:** CoStar, 2019; BAE, 2019
Big Ideas for Downtown
What Makes a Downtown Memorable?

Rooted in Place and History

Human Scale and Walkable

Transit-Oriented and Connected

A Diverse Mix of Uses
Rooted in Place and History

A Unique Destination

• A place that people identify with, form attachments to and want to reinvest in over time
• Residents enjoy downtown living with easy access to amenities
• Visitors cherish their experience and want to come back

Authenticity

• Celebrates local history, culture and unique assets
• Evolves over time, but stays rooted in community character
Rooted in Place and History

How do we celebrate and enhance historic and cultural assets?
Rooted in Place and History

How do we encourage creative development ideas but stay true to the historic character of a place?
Small Blocks and Narrow Streets

- Designing with small blocks and fine grain to enhance walkability
- Right-sizing the scale of new development to be compatible with the existing context

Public Realm as Open Space

- Removing existing barriers to walkability and prioritizing pedestrian movement for people of all abilities
- Design streets and buildings to promote safety and active use at all hours
Human Scale and Walkable

An example from Downtown San Rafael of what to avoid
Human Scale and Walkable

An example from Downtown San Rafael of what to emulate
Transit-Oriented and Connected

Regional and Local Transit Networks

• Transit Hub as a unique opportunity to improve access and walkability
• Transit-oriented development to encourage a car-free or car-light lifestyle

Multimodal Connectivity

• Convenient access and independence for people of all abilities
• Balance the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and car users
Transit-Oriented and Connected

Can a transit plaza improve access and also be a community space?

Del Mar station, Pasadena
Transit-Oriented and Connected

Can ‘Complete Streets’ be used to balance the needs of all users?

Can streets function as public space?
A Diverse Mix of Uses

**A Balanced Mix of Uses**

- Provide housing for a variety of households and incomes
- Active, ground floor spaces to provide retail, entertainment and services
- Flexible office spaces
- Publicly accessible spaces and activities for all age groups
A Diverse Mix of Uses

What role can arts and culture play in crafting a unique identity?

Can a vacant storefront be used as an art gallery?
A Diverse Mix of Uses

How do we make Downtown safe and active at all times?
Visioning Exercise
We Need Your Input!

Share your vision for Downtown San Rafael.

• Table map exercise from 8 to 9 pm
• Work in small groups
• Sketch your ideas; write down your thoughts
• Report back: summarize ideas from each table

Please remember

• There are no bad ideas
• Differing opinions should be respected
• Everyone should have a chance to participate
Thank you for participating!