Goals

To address the key issues and opportunities identified, and to reflect the community vision that has evolved during the Specific Plan process, the following six goals frame the Specific Plan’s purpose. See Section 3.5 (Goals and Guiding Policies) in the Downtown Davis Specific Plan for more details.

A memorable identity for Downtown that celebrates Davis’ unique culture
Downtown will build upon the many characteristics that make Davis unique and will strengthen its identity through strategic goals and placemaking. It will become a destination of choice for both the City and the region, and provide an experience that is authentic to its roots.

Compact development that incorporates sustainable practices and infrastructure
Downtown will model a holistic approach to sustainability, with an equal emphasis on its economic, social and environmental aspects. Further, it will aim to become carbon-neutral by 2040.

A feasible, equitable development program that builds a resilient economy and increases housing access and choice
Downtown will have a diversified development program that can adapt to match market conditions while striving towards broader community goals. Downtown will evolve from being primarily a commercial destination to a vibrant, mixed-use district.

A sense of place reinforced with appropriate character, balanced historical preservation and thoughtful transitions to context
Downtown will have a strong sense of place and a visual hierarchy. Neighborhoods within Downtown will vary in physical character and built form, creating interest while contributing to the overall Downtown identity. Form-based standards rooted in the built heritage and community character of Downtown will shape new development.

An active and inclusive public realm that promotes civic engagement and health
Downtown will strengthen its public realm in ways that support its role as an active neighborhood as well as a citywide and regional destination of choice.

A safe, connected, multimodal network that uses innovative mobility and parking solutions
Downtown will provide transportation options for all users and be designed for the future of transportation.
A Sustainable and Accessible Vision for Downtown

Downtown will further the community’s reputation as a leader in sustainability and a model of sustainable urbanism. See Chapter 3 (Vision) in the Downtown Davis Specific Plan for more details.

Sustainability Themes
Ten themes for Triple-Bottom Line sustainability have been illustrated in Section 3.3 through examples of strategies that can be applied at different scales.

- Social Equity
- Resilient Economy
- Quality of Life
- Living Landscape
- Education
- Energy
- Mobility
- Water
- Waste
- Food

Building Scale
Sustainability strategies have been illustrated in Figure 3.11 for two typical building types in Downtown.

Public Realm
The public realm is often the largest public space in a community, and offers an opportunity to integrate sustainability strategies at a district scale. Figure 3.12 shows how sustainability elements and strategies can be applied to streets, sidewalks, and adjacent buildings to benefit the public realm.

District Scale
This section highlights how sustainability strategies can be applied to a Downtown demonstration project, using the current E Street Plaza—reconfigured as “Davis Square”—as an example.

Universal Design and Visitability
A key theme to emerge during the Specific Plan process was for Downtown’s publicly accessible spaces to be inclusive and accessible for all.

This Specific Plan promotes greater access through policy direction for universal design to truly create a downtown for all. Public space standards create the opportunity to set universal design as a standard expectation, and have been incorporated into the Downtown Code in Section 40.14.100 (Specific to Civic Spaces).

Design direction for incorporating universal design features in streetscape environments is discussed in Chapter Six: Mobility and Parking.

The Public Realm
Integral to achieving the desired built environment is a coherent, well-designed network of public open spaces throughout Downtown, providing greater access for people of all ages and abilities.

A key measure of a successful walkable environment is the quality of its public realm. The public realm is the focus of one of the six Plan goals presented in Section 3.5.

The public realm in Downtown falls into two categories: thoroughfares and public open space. Thoroughfares—including streets, sidewalks, and converted alleys—are the connective tissue that is mostly experienced during passage or transport. This component of the public realm is discussed in Chapter Six: Mobility and Parking.

Public open space—including playgrounds, plazas, community gardens, and greens like Central Park—provide destinations and gathering places. When designed, located, and programmed well, these public spaces can be accessible and inviting places for all to gather.
Built Environment

Downtown Davis will be a vibrant, mixed-use environment with a clear hierarchy in its built form and open spaces, reflecting varying intensities and uses in different parts of Downtown. Downtown neighborhoods will provide more housing to enhance livability and active transportation options. See Chapter 4 (Built Environment) in the Downtown Davis Specific Plan for more details.

Design Approach: Small, Medium, Large

A variety of building scales establish a hierarchy of built form that strengthens the sense of place in Downtown. The placement and massing of buildings significantly determines the character of a place. At present, Downtown lacks a clear hierarchy of built form and scale. To establish effective character and a strong sense of place, this Specific Plan applies a strategy of “Small, Medium, and Large” in Section 4.2 (Design Approach) to establish a clear hierarchy of built environments within the Plan Area.

Designated Special Areas

Special Areas, described in Section 4.4, are sites selected for their location, size or importance to the implementation of the Plan vision. Supplemental guidelines apply for these sites. In addition, any site over 1.5 acres in area triggers supplementa civic space standards described in Section 40.14.100 of the Downtown Code.

Development Strategy and Program

A strategy of incremental growth and a series of coordinated design improvements will create a Downtown that reflects the community vision and serves as the heart of the City. See Section 4.1 (Development Strategy and Program) for details on incremental redevelopment for economic growth, special design opportunities, and development program.

Table 4A. Recommended Downtown Development Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Type</th>
<th>Total By 2030</th>
<th>Total By 2040</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>1,906 units</td>
<td>1,506 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Residential</td>
<td>1,497,000 sq ft</td>
<td>1,800,000 sq ft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend
- Small
- Medium
- Large
- Existing Public Open Space
- Specific Plan Boundary
Downtown Neighbors

Downtown is a collage of six distinct neighborhoods, each with its unique qualities and character, that contribute to Downtown's identity. See Section 4.6 (Downtown Neighborhoods) in the Downtown Davis Specific Plan for more details.

Downtown comprises multiple areas that are culturally and geographically distinct. The neighborhood approach is a response to the differences in identity and geography of these places, and enables sharper focus on their special features and needs. In the pages of Section 4.6, the vision for Downtown is presented through the lens of each neighborhood.

Heart of Downtown
Today: Downtown’s commercial core with inadequate hierarchy and public space.
Tomorrow: An active, mixed-use destination with Davis Square as a central public gathering space.

G Street
Today: Shopfronts and warehouse buildings adjacent to the freight rail corridor.
Tomorrow: A dynamic neighborhood fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.

North G Street
Today: Residential area with small businesses along an aging retail center.
Tomorrow: Vibrant node with mixed-use buildings and new neighborhood-scale public space.

South-West Downtown
Today: Active mixed-use area south of Central Park.
Tomorrow: Cohesive mixed-use neighborhood connected to surrounding neighborhoods by enhanced bicycle and pedestrian corridors.

North-West Downtown
Today: Small-scale environment with residential, office, and some retail uses, near Central Park.
Tomorrow: Sensitive infill reinforcing existing character and flexibility.

University Avenue-Rice Lane
Today: University-adjacent neighborhood with retail geared towards both residents and students.
Tomorrow: Reinforced identity anchored by Third Street improvements.
Thoroughfare Design

Streetscapes and thoroughfares are the preeminent elements of the public realm in Downtown. Accordingly, their role within the built environment is complex and varied. See Section 6.2 (Thoroughfare Design) in the Downtown Davis Specific Plan for more details.

Design Approach

- Streets for All Users
- Streets Provide for Mobility and Accessibility
- Streets are Public Spaces that Help Shape Urban Environments
- Streets Support Economic Development
- Streets are Adaptable
- Streets Designed for Safety
- Streets are Ecosystems

Thoroughfare Cross Sections

Thoroughfare design is closely linked with the development vision for the Plan Area. Design elements for individual thoroughfare segments are tailored to serve the anticipated use and form of adjacent properties, as well as the broader mobility needs for Downtown.

Above: Guidance for Universal Design in a Shared Street Environment
Image source: FHWA Accessible Shared Streets
Downtown Circulation Plan

Streetscape improvements, widened sidewalks, and green infrastructure will enhance the pedestrian environment along key Downtown activity corridors. See Section 6.3 (Downtown Circulation Plan) in the Downtown Davis Specific Plan for more details.

Pedestrian Network Improvements
Streetscape improvements, widened sidewalks, and green infrastructure will enhance the pedestrian environment along key Downtown activity corridors. See Figure 6.22 for more information.

Bicycle Network Improvements
A finely meshed bicycle network that includes a variety of facility types will accommodate cyclists of all ages and abilities. See Figure 6.25 for more information.

Transit Network Improvements
Focused investment on transit priority corridors will expedite transit operations, improve travel times, and enhance the quality of service for customers. See Figure 6.30 for more information.

Vehicular Network Improvements
The future roadway network maintains the Downtown rectilinear grid and makes circulation improvements. See Figure 6.33 for more information.
Parking management in Downtown Davis can help further the community goals. See Sections 6.5, 6.6, and 6.7 in the Downtown Davis Specific Plan for more details.

### Curb Space and Loading

A clear methodology should be adopted to guide decision-making on how to prioritize the use of scarce curb space. Topics include:

- Priorities for Use
- Curb Parking that is Well-Used but Readily Available
- Protecting Existing Residents from Spillover Parking
- Improve Enforcement and Data Collection
- Improve Parking Signage and Wayfinding
- Monitor Parking Supply and Demand
- Update the Downtown Parking Management Plan

### City-Operated Facilities

Public parking facilities are managed and operated to serve Downtown. Topics include:

- Public Parking District
- Short-Term Improvements
- Off-Street Parking Enterprise Operation
- Parking Wayfinding

### Regulating Private Development

A system of incentives and regulations for new development can improve transportation choices and reduce motor vehicle traffic, pollution, and traffic-related fatalities and injuries. Topics include:

- Districtwide Employee Mode Share Target
- Development-Level Transportation Demand Management Plans
- Traffic-Minimizing Parking Standards
- Parking Cash Out
- Free Transit for Employees and Residents
- Transportation Management Association (TMA) Membership
- Monitoring
**Historic Resources**

The built character of Downtown Davis was developed over time, and is represented through the historic resources and historic development patterns that are present and visible today. Taking measure to protect the historic resources is integral to preserving the character of Downtown Davis. See Chapter 5 (Historic Resources) in the Downtown Davis Specific Plan for more details.

**Neighborhood Character and Historic Resources**

The Specific Plan seeks to protect historic resources and preserve Downtown's neighborhood character, balancing historic preservation while encouraging adaptive use and sensitive redevelopment. See Section 5.2 for more information about the character and historic resources of each Downtown neighborhood.

**Recommendations for the Conservation Overlay District**

The performance and efficacy of the existing Conservation Overlay District should be evaluated and the following recommendations be considered:

- Eliminate district as a whole, and establish existing neighborhoods as individual conservation districts.
- Develop separate design guidelines for each district.
- “Contributing” status would not necessarily be required for individual properties.
- Additionally establish special areas of interest to encompass the transitional areas between the Downtown Commercial Core and the Old East and Old North neighborhoods.
Green Infrastructure Plan for Streetscapes

To create the Proposed Streetscapes GI Improvements Plan (Figure 7.5), the opportunity tiers were overlaid with transportation improvements and urban design priorities in the Plan Area to avoid conflicts, to take advantage of project synergies, and to realize opportunities for cost sharing. This is aligned with the City’s goal to explore districtwide or regional improvements that manage stormwater for multiple parcels. Transit corridors were considered to be unsuitable for implementing linear GI projects, such as permeable paving or linear bioretention, due to traffic volumes and competition for right-of-way. Shared streets and streets with Class II or Class IV bike lanes were considered ideal opportunities for linear GI projects with bike lanes serving as permeable pavement locations and linear GI being integrated into the landscape design of shared streets. Additionally, specific intersections have been identified as ideal locations where existing bulb-outs and catch basins could be easily retrofitted into Green Infrastructure. Other intersections identified for bicycle and pedestrian improvements are also identified as individual opportunity sites.

Green Infrastructure in the Urban Environment

Green infrastructure can be integrated into the urban fabric to manage stormwater by restoring natural processes such as evaporation and infiltration, while also providing benefits to pedestrian safety and neighborhood beautification. Through the City of Davis’ 2016 Stormwater Master Plan, there are opportunities to expand on existing initiatives with a focus on cost-performance through public realm enhancements and transportation related improvements. Additionally, GI can be viewed as our public tool to employ the City’s water resilience portfolio within the context of current and climate change.

Identifying Opportunities

GI can be implemented using a variety of technologies, depending on scale, location, and performance targets. Within the public realm, creating new green streets by introducing bioretention bulb-outs at intersections can both improve drainage and provide aesthetic and functional benefits, while additionally creating new green streets by introducing permeable paving systems makes it easier to contain and promote sustainable stormwater and heat.

Figure 7.2 summarizes potential GI project types and application criteria that are appropriate for Downtowns.

Matrix of Potential Green Infrastructure Project Types and Technologies

![Matrix of Green Infrastructure Project Types and Technologies](image)

Downtown Davis
Specific Plan

Green Infrastructure Project Types

Green Roads

A green street is a vegetated system covering a building or sidewalk that allows stormwater to enter and exit the street. Stormdrain in captured in the storm gutter and downstream. A primary water quality benefit of green streets is that they avoid the common pollutants associated with conventional street runoff, instead removing only contaminant that have been filtered through a vegetated media. These systems can be designed with directional flow to allow stormwater installation on existing drainage ditches 10-20 feet wide or with series of shrubs, trees, pathways, containers, and berms to provide a sustainable variety including pedestrian and bicycle.

![Green Roads](image)

Bioretention Bulb-Outs

Bioretention is a system that extends the rainfall infiltration directly into the ground, while also reducing peak flows and maximizing evapotranspiration. A primary water quality benefit of green roofs is that they avoid the common pollutants associated with conventional roof runoff, instead removing only contaminant that have been filtered through a vegetated media. These systems can be designed with directional flow to allow stormwater installation on existing drainage ditches 10-20 feet wide or with series of shrubs, trees, pathways, containers, and berms to provide a sustainable variety including pedestrian and bicycle.

![Bioretention Bulb-Outs](image)

Permeable Pavement

Permeable pavement refers to any porous, low-infiltration surface that allows runoff to pass through the surface layer and enter the subsurface layer. It allows for infiltration rates to be driven by infiltration rates to the subsurface. The permeable pavement system itself will provide some water quality benefits by filtering sediments and other contaminants and the system will provide a stormwater management tool and a heat management tool.

![Permeable Pavement](image)

Bioretention in Parks and Landscaping

Parks and other open space can be designed as bioretention systems at scale. These facilities can offer perform both flood control functions and also be highly effective at removing pollutants due to bioretention. These systems can be designed with a variety of vegetative landings, including shrubs and trees, that can be designed to create water quality benefits. These systems can be designed with a variety of vegetative landings, including shrubs and trees, that can be designed to create water quality benefits. These systems can be designed with a variety of vegetative landings, including shrubs and trees, that can be designed to create water quality benefits.

![Bioretention in Parks and Landscaping](image)

Green Roofs

A green roof is a vegetated system covering a building’s roof that features a living roof or manually installed vegetation system. Green roofs can be installed on new construction or existing buildings to reduce stormwater runoff and increase water infiltration. Green roofs are especially effective at the building scale using roof runoff to support rooftop response and plant evaporation and infiltration, while also reducing peak flows and maximizing evapotranspiration. A primary water quality benefit of green roofs is that they avoid the common pollutants associated with conventional roof runoff, instead removing only contaminant that have been filtered through a vegetated media. These systems can be designed with directional flow to allow stormwater installation on existing drainage ditches 10-20 feet wide or with series of shrubs, trees, pathways, containers, and berms to provide a sustainable variety including pedestrian and bicycle.

![Green Roofs](image)
Implementation Through the Form-Based Code

The primary implementing tool for the Specific Plan is the form-based Downtown Davis Code. See Chapter 8 (Implementation) in the Downtown Davis Specific Plan for more details.

Recommended Phasing

**Phase One (2020 - 2030)**

- Priority Improvement and Demonstration Projects: Table 8A, items 26
- Completion of H Street Plaza (Phase Two Phase 2)
- Implementation of E Street Plaza (Phase Two Phase 2)
- Transformation of E Street Plaza into Bike Gateway (Table 8A items 26)
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements on H Street, F Street, and Third Street (Table 8A items 8, 10)
- Circulation Improvements
  - Priority Improvement and Demonstration Projects on H Street, F Street, and Third Street (Table 8A items 26, 8, 10)
  - Incremental Development
    - Incremental improvements on E Street (Table 8A items 26)

**Phase Two (2031 - 2040)**

- Priority Improvement and Demonstration Projects: Table 8A, items 26
- Completion of E Street Plaza (Phase Two Phase 2)
- Implementation of H Street Plaza (Phase Two Phase 2)
- Transformation of H Street Plaza into Bike Gateway (Table 8A items 26)
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements on H Street, F Street, and Third Street (Table 8A items 8, 10)
- Circulation Improvements
  - Priority Improvement and Demonstration Projects on H Street, F Street, and Third Street (Table 8A items 26, 8, 10)
  - Incremental Development
    - Incremental improvements on E Street (Table 8A items 26)

Implementing Actions

The actions recommended to be carried out for the implementation of the Specific Plan are discussed in Section 8.4. These have been listed in the form of tables, categorized by subject area for easier reference:

- Table 8C: Urban Design and Placemaking
- Table 8D: Circulation
- Table 8E: Parking and Transportation Demand Management
- Table 8F: Infrastructure
- Table 8G: Historic Resources Management
- Table 8H: Sustainability
Why Consider a Form-Based Code?

Delivering the vision through a new approach to zoning

Form-Based Codes Explained

The Form-Based Codes Institute defines Form-Based Codes as follows:

Form-based codes foster predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. These codes are adopted into city or county law as regulations, not mere guidelines. Form-based codes are an alternative to conventional zoning.

The most important aspect of this definition in differentiating FBCs from Euclidean zoning is that the intended physical form replaces use as the organizing principle, or framework, for the overall code. Instead of a zone being labeled “single-family residential,” it may be called “traditional neighborhood.” The term “neighborhood” is back into the intended physical form or place, both of which may include a mix of uses and building types to create vibrant walkable urbanism.

The Natural-to-Urban Transect categorizes a spectrum of natural to urban contexts in 6 Transect zones (from the most urban T6 to the most rural T1) and is a prominent organizing principle within Form-Based Code practice. The second important aspect of this definition is that FBCs replace zoning and are not merely design guidelines.

Preparing a Form-Based Code in 3 Steps

There are three important steps in the process of creating a Form-Based Code: Documentation, Visioning, and Assembling.

Documentation

The Documentation phase has two scales: the macro-scale, which establishes a framework of existing neighborhoods, districts, and corridors, and the micro-scale, which documents blocks, lots, building placement, frontage types, and other small-scale elements that add to the character and quality of the built environment.

Visioning

The Visioning phase engages the community and allows them to participate in the creation of a detailed design vision that the Form-Based Code will implement.

Assembling

The Assembling phase is the process of compiling the code content into a usable format and structure, and then plugging it into or replacing the existing zoning code.

Why are Form-Based Codes Needed?

The current zoning system is broken. It has produced auto-dependent development patterns that compromise community character, our nation’s health, and the environment, leaving communities searching for tools to address these issues.

FBCs are an alternative to Euclidean zoning that respond to these challenges by focusing on the creation, revitalization, and preservation of vibrant, walkable urban places. Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk writes in Form-Based Codes, “As global society swings into action to reduce carbon emissions, the data ever more clearly points to the need to reduce dependence on vehicular mobility and to remake the built environment as transit- and pedestrian-friendly places of dense economic and social interaction. Only the Form-Based Code can ensure such an urbanism.”

Even developers are supporting this push for zoning reform. At the 2009 New Partners for Smart Growth Conference, developer Rob Dixon presented “Top 20 Ways to Make a Green, Smart City.” Number two on his list was “Replace your Euclidean zoning with Form-Based Codes.”

For more detail on FBCs see Form-Based Codes by Parolek or go to the Form-Based Code Institute’s website at www.formbasedcodes.org.
Downtown Davis Code

Five form-based zones articulate Downtown Davis’ intended physical form and character. See Articles 40.13 and 40.14 (Downtown Code) of the Davis Municipal Code for more details.

Downtown Code Zoning Map

The zones established in the Downtown Code are mapped in Figure 40.13.070.A (Zoning Map). In addition to identifying the zoning for each parcel, the zoning map identifies specific urban design requirements in order to implement the community vision. The requirements are specified in Articles 40.13 and 40.14.

Downtown Zones

The Downtown Davis Form-Based Zones (Downtown Zones) are described in Article 40.13, and each zone is established based on the intent of the desired physical form and character of the environment, as described in the Downtown Davis Specific Plan. These zones focus on mixed-use, walkable environments and range in function and intensity from primarily residential areas with a mix of building types of lower intensity (Neighborhood-Small), to moderate intensity neighborhoods (Neighborhood-Medium) and centers (Main Street-Medium) and higher intensity commercial, retail, and residential areas along corridors and in neighborhoods (Neighborhood-Large and Main Street-Large).

Figure 40.13.070.A (Zoning Map)

Please note the Zoning Map is the same as the Regulating Plan (Figure 4.13 of the Downtown Specific Plan). See Figure 40.13.070.B (Davis Square) and 40.13.070.C (Davis Commons) for additional standards.