



## Downtown Davis Plan

January 25, 2018

# Public Workshop Summary

## The Downtown Davis Plan

Community Meeting January 25, 2018

### Introduction

The City of Davis is planning for the future of its downtown through the Downtown Davis Plan and looking to the community to participate in the conversation.

On January 25, 2018, the Downtown Davis Plan Project Team hosted the second Downtown Plan Advisory Committee (DPAC) meeting from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, located at 23 Russell Boulevard.

From 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., the DPAC commented on a downtown tour, received a summary of the project and an existing conditions analysis, and received public comments. From 8:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., the committee opened the floor for a “breakout session” where community members were invited to discuss existing condition reports with the project team. In addition, the project team presented the results from the Downtown Davis Plan Advisory Committee's "homework assignment", where committee members were asked to submit words, photos, or videos that reflect aspirations for Downtown Davis, as well as words, photos and videos that reflect challenges in Downtown Davis.

### Project Overview

Throughout this planning process, community participation will be key component in shaping Downtown Davis Plan. The goal of the project is to:

- Create a guide for long term development and infrastructure.
- Evaluate existing development policies, codes and guidelines, and address recurring challenges to the development process.
- Consider the many elements that can enhance quality of life in Davis.

Through this collaborative effort, the City of Davis will consolidate the Downtown Vision to create the kind of place the community desires.

### Meeting Purpose and Format

The purpose of the community meeting was to engage the public and the Downtown Advisory Committee in an open house discussion and gather community input on the homework responses of the Downtown Davis Advisory Committee. The community was encouraged to provide comments via comment card after viewing project exhibits displayed around the room. The project team received 13 comment cards.



## Community Feedback

*Below are the comments received through comment cards.*

- I didn't hear the need for an emphasis on affordable housing. Please incorporate housing/transportation affordability considerations so that we ensure equitable development and so that we don't further gentrify.
- Please put a greater emphasis on the need for affordable housing and the importance of a job/housing balance. Let's also question the conventional estimates of low-mid incomes which are defined by resident-income levels. These could show the levels of affordability away from some jobs represented in the city.
- I wish there was a bike rental system in Downtown so my parents could visit me at school and bike around campus and downtown.
- Does the Consultant team generally concur that the elimination of parking minimums is necessary to create a viable and resonant change downtown?
- I appreciated Catherine's attention to demographic downtown. Another underrepresented demographic on the council may be parents of young children. In looking at inflow/outflow, it would be important to consider families who stay in town/care for children and would like to go downtown.
- There needs to be green and public spaces downtown (not just Central Park or Commons, which exist on the fringe) for families- and others- to gather downtown centrally and patronize downtown retail. This would be essential to getting residents who are families to live downtown.
- Why are there 3 movie theaters in Davis? They are usually empty and take up a lot of space and energy. The few times I have gone to the movies I usually have the entire theater to myself! My hometown has a larger population than Davis, and we don't even have one movie theater. Most students watch movies on campus or stream movies online.
- Why are there so many ACE hardware stores in downtown? It's quite inconvenient honestly. Due to the lack of parking around the ACE hardware stores, it makes it difficult to transport large items from store to store in my car, which is usually parked far away. For example, I had to carry 5 bags of soil and plants down the street. A hardware store should be in a large parking lot.
- Should the Downtown study area be expanded to include the City Hall block and the school district block?
- Please keep the Co-op and strip mall in mind as contiguous with area core. It is a critical northeast anchor to the overall sense of community. Redevelopment of this area, for the role it can play is essential. To leave it out of the plan would be a mistake.
- Concerned about recent trend of demolishing buildings (usually former single-family homes dating from teens thru 40s) simply because they are not specifically considered a historic "resource"(e.g. Hunt Boyer Mansion). If nothing is sacred but a few Victorians scattered around downtown, we lose the aesthetic integrity of our oldest area of town.



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- All buildings in the town are important, though they are all often allowed to fall into disrepair as an excuse to demolish them and build modern buildings which just do not look coherent in the preexistent neighborhood. Removing any usable building is insensitive to people who grew up here. It reduces familiarity and aesthetic cohesion.
- Examples of this crime against aesthetics include: demolition of 4 structures on C Street; demolition of 3 structures on B (now Mission) and removal of awning on DeLuna jewelers. More demolition is not the answer- I have heard a lot of criticism of the 1961 plan, which demolished older building (then only 40-50 years old) to build modern structures!
- But that is continuing to happen and many people tonight proposed to tear down the 60-70s structures to build even more modern buildings. This is the identical phenomenon! Regardless if the 60s demolition was a good idea, the buildings are here now, and all buildings need to be preserved, whether from 20s or 60s.
- This includes lighting and other aesthetically coherent "details". "KEEP DAVIS BORING!"
- The goal of the Downtown Davis Plan if understood correctly, is to create a vision plan for "2040 Downtown Plan." How will this plan help Downtown Davis in the next 12 months to 3 years?
  - Q: How do we engage UCD students who are here temporarily and know that they will be gone before the new situation is built out?
  - Q: People like differentiated spaces- How about 3rd for cycling and 2nd for walking?
  - Q: Technical feasibility of a 24/7/365 self-driving electrical bus/shuttle on a fixed route, connecting peripheral parking to Downtown and Davis Depot?
- Historical preservation grew out of the mid-century plans of demolishing buildings for parking, etc. We need to ask ourselves whether the pendulum has swung too far. Historical preservation is important, but not at the expense of progress.
- To the Downtown Davis Planning Team, I have read Ashley Muir Bruhn's extremely thorough and thoughtful input regarding the future of Davis downtown. I started to draft responses of my own, then I realized that Ashley had already expressed those opinions better. In my opinion, her answers should be considered a roadmap for this issue. I have, however, added a few thoughts.
  - My family has lived in Davis for four years. I almost never venture into downtown, unless for a quick and unavoidable errand. Sadly, I find little reason to linger there; when entertaining out-of-town colleagues or family, I typically take them to dinner in Winters. I would far prefer to keep that business in Davis.
  - This opinion is echoed amongst many of my 40-50-year-old peers; Davis seems to offer more for the student population (used clothing stores, pizza joints), thanks to the many families of Davis. This is a shame, as the neglected demographic of families with school children is also a relatively affluent one.
  - In short, here is the top-four wish list for the future Davis downtown: Replace the E Street Parking Lot with an outdoor public use area, including a play space for children. Without this, families will not linger. This could be an everyday gather spot for all the Davis demographics, families and students alike. It could do what the farmers' market already does so beautifully, but every day, and linked to retail.



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- By the way, I speak not only for those with elementary age kids. I think the middle schoolers and high schoolers would spend time in the area outside Baskin Robbins if the area were more pleasant, less concrete (and less frequently smelled of urine).
- An eatery modeled after the Oxbow Market in Napa, perhaps in the space vacated by Whole Foods. Five to six restaurants offering limited menus around a central area. Large communal tables. BBQ sandwiches, sushi, craft beers, oysters on the half shell- all sharing a busy and noisy indoor/outdoor venue.
- Pedestrian-only downtown days, perhaps once a month. Live music and art events, perhaps food trucks. Park your car on the perimeter and re-acquaint yourself with Davis downtown. Even one hip, upscale restaurant.
- I am very encouraged by the leaders involved and by the thoroughness of the process- both the critique and the affirmation. The vision is progressive- future oriented yet anchored in the past.

*Below are the comments received through the project boards during the breakout session.*

### Economic and Market Analysis

- Can we normalize the dollar per acre by year-purchased (to factor out prop 13) and sq. ft.?
- It would be wonderful to pair this value per acre with a projected tax base impact of any new development and cost of services to compare.
- Financial ideas about how to think with money movement / investment in the City budget.

### Sustainability

- Keeping a big goal in mind is important, whether or not you make it.
- An ambitious vision, oriented towards the next generation of Davis-ites, is essential to our survival. We must let go of our fears, and we must embrace our potential to once again be a global leader in sustainability.
- We need to consider "embodied energy" in evaluating our carbon future.
- Other countries have cut GHG emissions in half and improved air quality is district heating. The UCD currently is designing their heating to make CO2 reduction goals. Could be a town-grown partnership.
- Microgrids – get at resilience vs. sustainability and localization.
- Model for implementation- Nishi Project stopped short of priority listing.
- Resilience – places to strengthen community relationships – resilience is undervalued.
- Make downtown an exhibition area for all these great ideas and unbundled parking and microgrids, etc.
- Rooftop gardens.
- Sacramento Green City money for grid impact and duck curve – workplace storage and coordinated demand management.
- City needs to be using smart meter data rather than monthly averages.
- Let's look at energy consumption for land use and transportation simultaneously.
- Electric vehicle pressure on power grid – old infrastructure disallows plugging into main grid.
- Reach code has a barrier from the state in that it needs to be cost-effective.



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- Make landowner value add of up zoning more transparent – only asking a little in terms of performance.
- Combine parking reform with mobility network.
- Super progressive energy code in downtown.
- Separating the cost of parking from the cost of building.
- No permeable paving actually drained, there are imperious membranes.
- Trees that help cooling canals – grow too tall so they block solar panels on a 4-story building
- Wooden buildings.
- Cost sharing with UC Davis in district energy – getting away from natural gas.
- We have not been able to adopt platinum- let's skip it altogether.
- On-call transit and mobility option.
- PHIUS as stretch code – emphasis on cartoon.

### Parking and Transportation

- Explore making several blocks bike and pedestrians only. Or at a minimum close thru-traffic by use of bollards.
- Need safe bike paths to Amtrak and within Downtown.
- Please analyze spatially resolved travel patterns, including place-type specificity (e.g. Amtrak, businesses, etc.)
- How do we reverse the trend of decreasing numbers of people who take public transportation?

### Urban Form and Map

- Pedestrian-centric and not Auto-centric.
- Downtown bathrooms, showers, and lockers.
- Signage guidelines – No backlit chain store signs like Best Western and no ugly painted windows.
- More experiential spaces- alleys, etc. and Library Branch Downtown, Shrem Art Labs, Downtown Exploit, Art Center, etc.
- Please provide a hashtag to involve the younger generations (also business cards with website and number).
- Get newspaper on board about involving public – a lot of these problems will require public perception to change.
- Let's build for future generations, not just our own and increase building heights.
- Save the old street lamps!
- Food trucks!
- Downtown needs an audible clock.
- Playground downtown and other child play structures in plazas. Lots of sidewalk seating.
- More park/family spaces. Lose the E Street surface lot and expand the square. Bring in pop-ups, food trucks, temporary things to get public on board.
- Downtown should extend until University- 2nd and 3rd Street.
- Mixed multizone, please.
- City Hall should remain a public space- multiple options.
- Can building height include basements and underground parking?
- An indoor space large enough to use for community gatherings such as school auctions.
- Surface parking could be a surface park with underground utilities or parking.



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- Now on 3rd Street, between A and B, is a "gateway". Why not convert the rest of 3rd Street up to D Street?
- 3+ and 4 story multi-use coffee shops and bakeries on ground floor.
- Create green space that feels safe.
- Outdoor dining/beer garden at edge of the plaza with Co-op.
- An urban teaching farm for education near 3rd and G Street (e.g. Vauxhall Farm in London).
- Underground parking on E and 2nd Street instead of surface parking... Surface parks?

### On the Map

- Close streets to cars for events (e.g. farmers market, etc.)
- Create hierarchy for shopping/retail area with walking malls on 2nd, 3rd, E, and F Streets.
- Remove Amtrak Train along H Street and create greenbelt.
- Third Street – Bike and pedestrian.
- Entrance to UC Davis – Third Street improvements and bike counter.
- More parking at Amtrak Station and on the corner of 1st Street.
- 4th Street needs better viewing and access during the 4th of July parade.
- Between 3rd and 4th Street along E and F Street, redevelop and include public spaces.
- On the corner of 3rd and B Street, there is a high rate of accidents.
- What is the draw to live downtown? What to walk to? Shop? There needs to be a benefit.
- Create a central plaza for social interaction.
- Bring back downtown events like the flea market with music in E Street plaza.
- Add public transportation that will accommodate big purchases from hardware store.
- Extend Arboretum connection/ corridor into downtown.
- More public lawns- small grassy areas to sit downtown.
- Preserve the older street lights (mostly on G Street).



## Notification

A total of 36 community members were in attendance for the Public Workshop on January 25, 2018. To notify attendees, an email was sent to over 475 community members, and the information was shared through the Davis Website, Davis City Council email, Davis Enterprise, and various community members' social media platforms. Below is a graph depicting how attendees heard about the meeting:

