

City of San Mateo Downtown Area Plan – Applicable Policies

Adopted May 18, 2009

Goal I: Enhance Downtown’s Role as the City Center and Maintain Its Unique Sense of Place	
I.1 Downtown Core High Density/Intensity Development.	Encourage the development of mixed-use high density residential projects and high intensity commercial projects within the Downtown Retail Core.
I.3 Entryways.	Establish the 3rd & 4th Avenue corridors as a main entry and connection to the Downtown core areas and utilize the natural landscaping of San Mateo Creek and Central Park to define the boundaries of the downtown. Create major entry features to the City at: (1) 3rd/4th Avenues from El Camino, (2) from the north and south of B Street to the retail core, and (3) from east of the railroad tracks

Goal II: Enhance the Vitality and Activity of Downtown by Incorporating an Overall Good Mix and Diversity of Uses	
II.1 Downtown Core Shopping Area.	Preserve the downtown’s core shopping area between 1st and 5th Avenues from El Camino Real to the railroad.
II.2 Required Retail Frontage.	Require the provision of ground floor retail uses with windows on properties located on the primary shopping streets as identified in the Required Retail Frontage Zone Map (see map at the end of this chapter). In addition to traditional retailing activities, permit entertainment and cultural uses, and allow fast food establishments in limited instances.
II.3 Cultural and Entertainment Facilities.	Encourage the establishment of cultural and entertainment facilities in the downtown core and allow these types of uses to fulfill retail frontage requirements.
II.5 Downtown Retail Core Support.	Provide adequate commercial uses to both support traditional downtown (CBD) uses as well as serve adjacent residential neighborhoods.
II.6 Neighborhood Commercial Uses.	Provide adequate neighborhood commercial support for existing and new residential development.
II.8 Office Development.	Encourage the establishment of offices within the Downtown Retail Core and surrounding commercially designated areas.

Goal III: Enhance the Downtown’s Pedestrian Environment and Enhance the Safety and Attractiveness of Downtown	
III.2 Pedestrian Amenities.	Enhance the sidewalk environment of primary pedestrian streets as indicated on the Pedestrian, Park and Open Space Policies map, by providing improvements to the appearance, comfort, convenience and safety of pedestrian areas. Develop a Coordinated Streetscape Plan for future sidewalk amenities and physical improvements.
III.3 Building Bulk.	Control the bulk of tall buildings to provide maximum sunlight exposure to sidewalks, streets and open space; and to allow views through and out of the Downtown in a manner consistent with the City’s Building Height and Bulk Plan.
III.7 Pedestrian Access – Pedestrian Safety is a Priority in the Pedestrian improvements should incorporate the following concepts to develop a consistent pedestrian-friendly environment:	
	a. Pedestrian access to peripheral garages should provide a safe and attractive walking environment.
	b. Sidewalks should be well maintained and be widened as opportunity becomes available to provide a pedestrian boulevard experience that might include elements such as outdoor dining.
	c. Vertical street elements should be minimized to improve pedestrian access.
	d. Continue practice of using pedestrian scale lights in the Downtown.
	e. Monitor the placement of utilities and other similar items to ensure that they do not adversely affect pedestrian movement and safety.
III.8 Street Tree Plan.	Update the Street Tree Master Plan for the downtown area that provides identity to individual streets, identifies major corridors, and acknowledges the visibility needs of retail uses, including sidewalk amenities.

Goal IV: Protect Key Landmarks and the Historic Character that Exists In Parts of Downtown	
IV.1 Building Heights.	Relate the height of new buildings to the pattern of downtown and to the character of existing and proposed development.
IV.2 Store Fronts in the Retail Core.	Maintain the traditional store front environment of the Downtown Retail Core area by requiring new buildings to be constructed to the street property line. In the retail core area, require ground floor building walls to be dominated by windows and pedestrian entrances.
IV.3 Design Guidelines.	Evaluate the Downtown Design Guidelines to ensure that it: (1) Emphasizes the public realm - streets and sidewalks and public spaces in building design, scale, detail, and pattern of new developments; (2) encourages building design to be compatible with the historic and architectural features common to many buildings in the Downtown; (3) encourages a compatibility of diverse building styles; and (4) encourages building details, surfaces, textures and materials that are interesting for the pedestrian.

Goal V: Ensure Adequate Parking to Meet Expected Needs, Enhance the Quality of the Parking Environment, and Improve Public Perceptions About Parking Availability	
V.2 Downtown Parking Funding Strategies.	Funding of additional public parking in Downtown should consider the following principles:

Goal VI: Facilitate Ease of Access Without Impacting Downtown's Character and Sense of Place	
VI.2 Existing Downtown Retail Core Two-Way Street System.	Maintain the existing two-way street system in the downtown core on 3rd and 4th Avenues between El Camino Real and Delaware Street.

Goal VII: Enhance the Fiscal Importance of Downtown to the City as a Whole Through Public and Private Investment	
VII.3 Development of Vacant, Underutilized Parcels.	Encourage development of large vacant, underutilized sites which break up the continuity of the retail core experience. Regulatory and economic incentives may be considered in encouraging significant development which maximizes use of these sites.

Goal VIII: Support Sustainable Initiatives in Downtown	
VIII.1 Transit Services. Encourage increased transit use viability to and around Downtown by:	a. Support increase to rail service, including the “Baby Bullet”.
	b. Support coordination between multi-modal agencies (bus, train, etc.).
	c. Enhance integration of mass transit into Downtown.
	d. Investigate the feasibility of a Downtown shuttle.
	e. Encourage increased transit services and increased transit use for travel downtown, particularly by employees.
VIII.3 Downtown Transportation Management Agency (TMA).	Develop a Downtown TMA to provide support and oversight of the Downtown residential and commercial transportation opportunities and enhance the use of public transit and/or bicycles while reducing the use of single-occupant vehicles.
VIII. 4 Support Sustainable Transportation Initiatives.	Implement Downtown Area Plan policies calling for use of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures, establishment of a Transportation Management Association (TMA), and other measures to reduce vehicle trips and encourage transit use and promote bicycle and pedestrian accessibility.