

San Luis Obispo, Monterey, and Gilroy:  
An Assessment of Downtown Activity

by

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San Luis Obispo



Monterey



Gilroy

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# Introduction

There have been many downtowns across California that have fallen victim to the effects of automobile-oriented development. Fewer people are using downtowns for everyday activities and are instead visiting strip malls or big box stores. Californians are no longer frequenting the original focal points of a community where people get out of their cars and support local businesses. When destinations used to be a trolley ride away, downtowns thrived.

Automobile-oriented development has caused decentralization in many California cities. In addition, environmental and public health issues have developed because people walk less and live with poor air quality. It is no longer common to walk one half of a mile on a wide sidewalk with street trees and urban furniture to go shopping or go out to eat. It is rare to see any historic architecture or open public plazas.

Fortunately, there are some downtowns that have managed to compete with newer commercial development. They still face challenges but they have maintained the foundations that older downtowns were built on, both figuratively and structurally. Through policy, local associations, economic factors, and urban design, some downtowns are still walkable, active, and economically sound.

The purpose of this research is to provide recommendations for improving existing downtown areas throughout California. It is important to go back to livable, walkable Downtowns instead of big box stores on the outskirts of the city. Existing development should be improved instead of building new development outside of the city core.

These recommendations are based on the research of three cities of similar populations in California: San Luis Obispo, Monterey, and Gilroy. San Luis Obispo is well known for its Cal Poly campus, active Downtown and large Farmer's Market. Downtown San Luis Obispo was chosen because it is known to be a successful and active Downtown. Monterey is a well-known tourist attraction for people visiting the Monterey Peninsula for Fisherman's Wharf, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and the historic Downtown Monterey. Downtown Monterey was chosen because it is known to be a fairly active Downtown. Gilroy is well-known for its garlic production and annual Gilroy Garlic Festival. It was chosen because even with pedestrian improvements to the Downtown, it is still not very active, which could be due to outside competition.

These case studies are compared based on the activity of their Downtowns. Conclusions are made based on researching a variety of sources about the following variables:

**Basic Information**

Population

Location in California

Location of Major University

Median Age

Largest Age Group

Competing Shopping Centers Nearby

Winner of Great American Main Street Award

**Economy**

Taxable Sales of City in 2010

Taxable Sales of Downtown

Downtown Commercial Lease Rates

Estimated Existing Businesses (From Business Directories)

**Policy**

Presence of Downtown Association

Documents Specific to Downtown

Age of Documents

Encouragement of Residential Uses

Requirement of Residential Units in New Development

Presence of Mixed Use with Office or Residential Units

Specificity within Policy

Documented Incentives

**PEQI**

PEQI Street Segment Scores and Intersection Scores

Number of "Main Streets" (streets with consistent urban furniture and vegetation)

These variables are examined to explain the difference in quality and success of Downtown San

Luis Obispo, Downtown Monterey, and Downtown Gilroy.

# **Part I: Background Information**

## **Chapter 1: The Effect of Culture on the Built Environment**

The following three cultural shifts became established norms and thus severely altered the built environment.

### **The Rise of the Suburbs**

After World War II, many soldiers returned home and people were eager to live a peaceful life. There was an incredibly high demand for homes on small pieces of land so builders planned entire communities with hundreds of homes that had similar floor plans. These developments were built outside major cities and were called suburbs. They took up vast amounts of land and even replaced land used for agricultural purposes.

### **Auto-Oriented Development and Sprawl**

Larger suburbs became more isolated with the addition of shopping centers, schools, and civic uses. Eventually suburbs and city centers throughout the state were connected by freeways. People loved the freedom of having a car so improving and expanding public transportation was not a high priority. It got to the point that residents rarely left the suburbs to go to city centers unless they worked there.

### **Proposition 13**

The passage of Proposition 13 in California in 1978 decreased property taxes and restricted annual increases of retail property to 2% per year. This caused an increase in the importance of sales tax for cities to gain revenue. This factor, in addition to the popularity of



the automobile, caused many strip malls and office parks to develop. This diverted people away from older downtown areas that used to be the center of a city's economic and cultural activity.

## **Chapter 2: Consequences of Drivable Suburban Growth**

In Leinberger's book *The Option of Urbanism* (2008), drivable suburban growth is defined as suburban growth that is dominated by the automobile. Its development is usually sprawled and takes up large amounts of land. The building materials of each house are identical and inexpensive.

This type of development has had both positive and negative effects on the built environment.

### **Positive Effects of Drivable Suburban Growth**

#### **Private Land Ownership**

Owning one's own private land is considered the American Dream. It offers privacy and convenience to residents who do not want to leave the house to use public recreational activities. It provides space for children or pets to play, space for gardening and other hobbies, and space for vegetation and landscaping that can be a rarity in urban or suburban areas.

#### **Inexpensive Building Costs**

Building drivable suburban development is cheap. The farther away houses are from the focal point in an area, the less expensive it gets to build. This is why sprawl is so prevalent because it's inexpensive to build in the middle of nowhere because there is no need to adapt to the built environment surrounding the site if there is nothing built there. Adaptation means that things will cost more. The same types of suburban development are built everywhere because they are inexpensive and easy to build due to the lack of variety.

## **Perceived Safety**

Suburbs are perceived as safer than urbanized areas. This is because the mixture of commercial, office, residential and other uses can attract many more people than just residents of the area. Unfamiliar faces in suburbs cause more alarm while it is more normal to see strangers in highly populated spaces. If camaraderie exists within the rows of houses, neighbors can watch out for each other and report any suspicious behavior. Even if neighbors are not close, keeping themselves safe can also indirectly keep others safe.

## **Negative Effects of Drivable Suburban Growth**

### **Social Segregation and Exclusion**

It causes social segregation and exclusion of nondrivers from society (Leinberger 83) because it is such a great effort to get anywhere without a car. Riding a bike is an option depending on the conditions and accessibility of bike lanes but it will take longer to bike somewhere than to drive somewhere. Taking public transportation is also an option, depending on the number of stops and their location. It will take even longer to walk, and sidewalks may not be safe and pedestrian friendly. In an automobile dominated area, these other options are few and far between. Compared to the automobile, any other mode of transportation is inferior because it takes too much time and effort. Those who cannot drive are dependent on those who can, and they do not always have similar schedules. According to Leinberger (2008), “at least thirty-three percent of Americans (about 100 million) do not drive; they are too old, too young, too poor, disabled, or not interested” (p. 69).

## **Growth of Two-Class Society**

There is a growth of a two-class society. When suburbs first began to emerge, only more well-off people were able to afford to move to them. Unintentionally, there was a class division where richer people lived in suburbs and poorer people lived in the central cities. This geographical separation is still prevalent today and as a result, the people with more money move closer to each other and farther away from the core. As a result, they are less involved in the majority of core activities and programs, such as public schools and local government. They have their own park space and neighborhood programs that are separate from other neighborhoods.

## **NIMBY Groups**

In general, suburbs only have residential uses and are separated from all other uses. Separating uses leads to residents banding together to stop other uses from being near their homes. This leads to neighborhood camaraderie, and neighborhood camaraderie leads to NIMBY groups, which stands for “not in my back yard”. Most groups are against growth and change near their residences. Any uses deemed undesirable by residents will be turned away because they don’t want anything in their backyards. This becomes difficult when the land around the suburbs is proposed to be developed to decrease the amount of sprawl, or if improvements need to be made. Wanting to stay as an island of unchanged houses is impractical and increases dependence on the automobile.

## **Land Consumption**

Land consumption is another major negative affect of drivable suburban growth. Suburban development takes up enormous amounts of land depending on the size of each lot and the placement of the organically curved streets. According to Leinberger (2008), “more than 2.2 million acres of farmland, forests, and wetlands are lost to development every year in the United States. About half of that loss is farms; a majority of U.S. fruit, vegetable, and dairy farming takes place very close to urban areas, but productivity of these farms is threatened by encroaching development and new suburban neighbors who object to the smells, sights, and sounds of nearby active farms” (72). Most of the land being consumed is home to many plants and animals in danger of disappearing.

## **Heat Islands**

Heat islands are a common occurrence in automobile dominated areas because of the amount of pavement and roofs that absorb heat. Trees can cool the surrounding air, but if there are not enough trees then heat islands form, which raises temperatures, increases the use of air-conditioners, and causes more heat-related illnesses.

## **Water Quality Degradation**

Urban runoff created by the pavement and buildings of automobile-oriented development causes water quality degradation. The pavement is impervious so water is unable to soak into it, and since it covers most of the ground the water cannot soak into the soil. This causes more flooding in urban areas. The water runs onto other surfaces that are full of trash,

oil, and grease, which is picked up and flows into storm drains that are dumped directly into streams.

### **Air Quality Degradation**

According to Leinberger (2008), “The amount that Americans drive...increased by 226 percent between 1983 and 2001, despite population growth of just twenty-two percent during that time period” (73). In suburbs, residents have to drive farther distances more often because of their isolation. Air quality degradation due to pollution from automobile use is becoming more of a serious issue. The Clean Air Act is doing research and providing examples of actions to take on a local, state, and federal level to reduce air pollution.

### **Climate Change**

Climate change is a big theme in planning today; it has been scientifically confirmed that the planet is warming and this has mostly been caused by humans. According to Leinberger (2008), “transportation, primarily the burning of gasoline by cars and trucks, accounts for thirty-three percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States” (74). Also, “a study in Atlanta by Dr. Lawrence Frank, of the University of British Columbia, found that ‘the travel patterns of residents of the least walkable neighborhoods result in about twenty percent higher carbon dioxide emissions than travel by those who live in the most walkable neighborhoods’” (74). Downtowns and neighborhoods surrounding them are considered walkable neighborhoods.

### **Health Implications**

Health implications, such as obesity, respiratory diseases, asthma, and car accidents, can be attributed to the trend of living in drivable suburban development. Air pollution from cars

affects people's health and increases the chance of asthma in children. Walking is a rare occurrence when everything is so far away, so if people do not take time to exercise regularly this could lead to obesity. Obesity is also caused by other factors, such as caloric intake and a sedentary lifestyle, but driving to get everywhere encourages inactivity.

### **Automobile and Oil Dependency**

Those who live in suburbs become dependent on the automobile to get anywhere because everything is so far away. This car dependency leads to oil dependency. "the United States has two percent of the world's oil reserves, produces eight percent of the world's oil annually, has five percent of the world's population, and consumes twenty-five percent of the annual oil production" (81). Oil is also close to reaching its peak production, which is the maximum amount of oil production possible before it starts to decline permanently. When this happens, oil prices will increase profoundly, as will the price of gas. When people cannot afford the high price of gas for their cars, they will be isolated in their suburban development. "Some forecasters have suggested that peak oil, if it occurs without alternative energy sources under development, could trigger a global depression similar to the 1930s. The U.S. economy will have painted itself into a corner if peak oil arrives and the only option is drivable suburban development" (Leinberger p. 82). Since the U.S. imports almost all of its oil, foreign policy is influenced by our access to it. According to Tom Friedman of the *New York Times*, "the U.S. addiction to oil, primarily to maintain drivable suburbanism, fuels the very authoritarian regimes that support terrorism, against which U.S. foreign policy is fighting today" (Leinberger p. 82).

## **Decline in Infrastructure and Economic Competitiveness**

Declining infrastructure and economic competitiveness. The cost of roads and sewer and water systems is expensive, especially if it is built to accommodate for sprawling suburban neighborhoods. Less people would be served by water lines, sewer lines, and roads in low-density development than in high-density development because less people occupy larger lots. “For example, assume the sewer line costs \$1 million per mile to build. If one mile of sewer line serves fort low-density houses in the suburbs, it costs \$25,000 per house to install. If that mile of sewer line serves 400 high-density houses in a walkable urban place, it costs \$2,500 per house” (Leinberger p. 79).

## **Family Budget Issues**

Because it is less expensive for some families to live in suburbs far from their work because of lower housing costs, most of a family budget is spent on gas, automobile repairs, and insurance. More time and money is spent while people are on their way to make money at their job. “A recent study comparing the health of people in more and less sprawling locations found that very spread-out places had about 100 more health problems per 1,000 people than areas that were less sprawling. A number of other studies have found that places that are the opposite of drivable suburbanism—with a mix of different uses, higher density, and more connected street networks—inspire more walking and bicycling, and better health” (Leinberger p. 76).



## Chapter 3: Rising Demand for Walkable Urbanism

Just as the demand for suburb development rose, recently the demand for walkable urbanism has risen. Baby boomer retirees or empty nesters who grew up in the suburbs now want to downsize their housing and be able to walk to their destinations. Family sizes are changing, as well as the age at which couples start families. In general, people want more living options based on the life stage they are in. According to Leinberger (2008), Visual Preference Surveys conducted in Atlanta in 2002 showed a preference for “something other than drivable suburbanism and for places that were more walkable and had many uses in close proximity” (p. 93).

In addition, the type of economy in the country has changed over time, and development has catered to each one. First it was an agricultural economy, then an industrial one, and now it is transforming into a knowledge economy. According to Richard Florida, author of *Rise of the Creative Class* (2005):

Future growth depends on retention and attraction of the highly educated that start new companies, attract smaller entrepreneurs, and build a local tax base...These people want the opportunity to live in walkable urban places during some phases of their lives. (Florida, p. 48)

This poses a challenge, however. Many commercial uses and schools moved closer to the suburbs and thrived there. Some areas of pedestrian-friendly cities were abandoned. For example, according to Leinberger (2008), “About one-third of residents living in drivable suburbia [in Atlanta] would prefer walkable communities, but could not find such neighborhoods with good schools and low crime” (p. 96).

This challenge can be overcome. The transformation is already beginning. Mixed-use development is sprouting up throughout the country. Planners are stepping away from strip malls and cookie-cutter houses with large, green lawns. They are slowly drifting towards Smart Growth principles and compact, walkable, “green” development.

Although Leinberger makes many arguments against drivable suburban growth, he still does not think that this development should disappear completely; some people still want to live in suburban areas. The main concern is that people should have the option to live and thrive in whatever type of development they wish. At the moment, the most prominent option is drivable suburban growth because so much of the built environment revolves around the automobile-dependent lifestyle. People should have a wider variety of lifestyles to choose from. In order to do this, suburban development should not be the default type of development anymore.

A more walkable lifestyle should begin where it began before cars were invented. The focal point of a city should not be on the outskirts of a jurisdiction; it should be at the city’s center. It should be downtown.

## **Part II: California Case Studies: San Luis Obispo, Monterey, and Gilroy**

San Luis Obispo, Gilroy, and Monterey are three of many cities that were tempted by car-centered development and commercial strip malls. Each city had varied amounts of success at maintaining their original “downtown feel”.

### **Methodology**

San Luis Obispo, Monterey, and Gilroy were compared and contrasted based on the activity of their downtowns in terms of their planning policy and economic climate. Interviews with local planners from some case studies provided specific information on the downtowns they are familiar with. The downtowns were assessed using the Pedestrian Environmental Quality Index (PEQI) developed in San Francisco and refined in Los Angeles. The index was generated by walking along the blocks of downtown and noting certain pedestrian features on a PEQI checklist. A number of street segments and intersections that made up the most active parts of each downtown area were scored on a weighted scale of 0-100. The scores of each were shown visually on a map in order to observe the overall pedestrian-friendliness of each downtown area.

The findings from the collected data on the economy, policy, and the PEQI for each case study determine which downtowns are more successful and why.

## Chapter 4: San Luis Obispo, CA

### Introduction

San Luis Obispo is located on the Central Coast and has a population of 45,119 (U.S. Census Bureau). San Luis Obispo would also have a high “Coolness Index”, a measure that is mentioned in Richard Florida’s book, *Cities and the Creative Class* (2005). “The measure is based on the percentage of population ages 22 to 29 (with points added for diversity), nightlife (number of bars, nightclubs, and the like per capita) and culture (number of art galleries and museums per capita)” (Florida, p. 94). San Luis Obispo has an advantage here because it is the home of Cal Poly and nearby Cuesta Community College, where there are numerous 22 to 29 year olds going to school, working, and/or living in San Luis Obispo. According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census, 38% of San Luis Obispo residents are between 20 and 29 years old and the median age is 26.5 (U.S. Census Bureau). Downtown San Luis Obispo is full of nightlife to meet the needs of a younger population because they are more likely to go to bars and cultural events.

According to Florida (2005):

Highly educated, talented people—particularly younger workers who are active and those in knowledge-industry labor markets—are attracted to energetic and vibrant places...[with] visual and audio cues such as outdoor dining, active outdoor recreation, a thriving music scene, active nightlife, and bustling street scene as important attractants. (p. 99)

Downtown SLO has all of the above. It has outdoor as well as creek side dining, various small music venues such as Downtown Brew, and active nightlife including the bar scene, Farmer's Market, and Art After Dark. There are always people walking along the streets or using the outdoor seating at any time of the day or night, which creates a sense of attractiveness and safety.

Downtown San Luis Obispo has a wide variety of shopping and entertainment options. For children there are movie theaters, the Children's Theatre, the Children's Museum, numerous kid-friendly restaurants complete with kid's menus, candy shops, clothing stores, the creek, and frozen yogurt. Farmer's Market on Thursday nights has various performances, entertainers, and activities for families to enjoy together.

According to Pam Ricci, Senior Planner at the City of San Luis Obispo, another reason Downtown San Luis Obispo is unique is because of Mission Plaza (personal communication, April 24, 2012). Mission Plaza is the block on Monterey Street between the San Luis Obispo Mission and the creek that is closed off to vehicular traffic. It has a brick walkway instead of a street, green grass areas, public seating, a water fountain, and a bridge across the creek leading to the back entrances of businesses along Higuera Street. It also has a small outdoor amphitheater overlooking the creek, which is an ideal event location for small performances.

The creek walk is also a great amenity that is somewhat unique to Downtown San Luis Obispo. It can be accessed from Mission Plaza, Nipomo Street and Broad Street. There is direct access to the creek water along the Mission Plaza where visitors can put their feet in the water

or feed the ducks. There are many public art pieces in the area that relate to Creek life that adds history to this memorable space.

Another unique trait for Downtown San Luis Obispo is their street tree program. Pam Ricci mentioned that although the trees are problematic because their roots upend the sidewalks, they have great aesthetic value and contribute to a more pedestrian-scaled Downtown (personal communication, April 24, 2012).

Downtown San Luis Obispo's architecture is also unique. The City's Design Guidelines (2010) tend toward turn of the last century in architectural style. The buildings are symmetrical and the windows have an open pattern. The building details throughout Downtown enhance the pedestrian experience.

Downtown San Luis Obispo was a winner of the Great American Main Street Awards in 1999 because it was one of the communities that did not abandon their Downtown in the wake of big "box strip malls, planned 'town centers' and suburban sprawl" (National Trust for Historic Preservation, para. 2). It turned its historic Downtown into a revitalized center of activity with the help of downtown design guidelines and a Downtown Association that was formed in 1975. It is famous for hosting a Thursday night Farmer's Market where there are more than 120 vendors.

## **Economy**

There are approximately 475 businesses in Downtown San Luis Obispo (San Luis Obispo Downtown Association). The California Board of Equalization has listed San Luis Obispo's 2010 taxable sales as \$1,080,237,000 (Board of Equalization). Unfortunately, there was no available

data for the taxable sales of Downtown except for the claim that Downtown is “the largest tax revenue district in the city” (National Trust for Historic Preservation). According to the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce Economic Profile (2012), “Downtown San Luis Obispo buildings that have not gone through the retrofitting process are typically rented for under \$1.75 per square foot, while retrofitted buildings ask between \$2.00 and \$3.50 per square foot” (SLO Chamber of Commerce).

According to Claire Clark, Economic Development Manager at the City of San Luis Obispo, “Downtown has weathered the recession and its effect better than most and continues to draw new businesses at a solid place” (personal communication, May 4, 2012).

With the recent economic downturn, new development has stalled but now it is starting to return to normal. Two major developments, coined Garden Street Terraces and Chinatown Project, were put on hold in the process. These developments both have mixed uses of commercial and residential or office and residential. The residential dwelling units are for smaller households.

The recession has not hit San Luis Obispo very hard, but the City is still taking measures to improve the economy. According to Claire Clark, “the recession’s effects have been to make government more responsive to concerns from the business community about roadblocks to growth, primarily the permitting process and fees” (personal communication, May 4, 2012). Job creation is San Luis Obispo’s emphasis. Revenue is being generated from sales tax and the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) (personal communication, May 4, 2012).

## **Policy**

Specific references to a downtown area in planning documents are an important and beneficial addition to establishing urban form. A city's downtown area is usually a distinguished space in a city that is unlike other areas and thus it should be treated that way. Ways to make it distinct are to have certain design guidelines that encourage architectural uniformity, maintain a certain building scale, and in some cases, preserve the historic character that already exists. Most downtowns have the same buildings or facades as they did back when downtowns were more essential to daily living. Some downtowns choose to preserve and emphasize their historic assets more than others by designating an "Old Downtown" or a Historic District. These rules and guidelines can be found in Downtown-specific sections in a city's general plan, design guidelines, and other separate documents.

### **San Luis Obispo General Plan**

The San Luis Obispo General Plan Land Use Element (2010) has a specific section on Downtown land use policies to guide development. The Downtown section defines the boundaries of the downtown planning area and downtown core to differentiate it from the rest of the city. The section is divided into subsections of policy and program. The policy subsection lists the City's guide for Downtown and the program subsection discusses how these policies will be implemented in the City. The plan defines Downtown as "the cultural, social and political center of the City for its residents, as well as home for those who live in its historic neighborhoods" (City of San Luis Obispo, p. 1-51). It states the City's desire for an economically healthy commercial core that accommodates residents and visitors alike.



## **Residential Units**

During an interview with Pam Ricci, a Senior Planner at the City of San Luis Obispo, she emphasized the importance of a 24-hour presence in Downtown (personal communication, April 24, 2012). As stated in the Land Use Chapter of the General Plan (2006), “all new, large commercial projects should include dwellings” (City of San Luis Obispo, p. 1-51). Pam Ricci mentioned two new projects, Garden Street Terrace and China Town, that include dwellings in their plan. This policy also promotes mixed-use and higher densities that keep Downtown San Luis Obispo more compact, active and versatile.

The Downtown Residential policies include protecting existing residential dwellings and adding new ones to future development. The dwelling units should be built to accommodate any size or type of household. Residential units should be dispersed throughout the downtown area and mixed in with commercial uses. All new large developments should include housing. The City wants to preserve the current number of residential units Downtown by adopting a “no net housing loss” program through the amendment of the Downtown Housing Conversion Permit ordinance (City of San Luis Obispo, p. 1-51).

## **Entertainment and Cultural Facilities**

The general plan (2010) has a policy that encourages smaller-scale entertainment and cultural facilities to be Downtown. Entertainment facilities include nightclubs and private theaters, while cultural facilities include museums, galleries, and public theaters (City of San Luis Obispo, p. 1-51).

### **Pedestrian Scale**

The plan also promotes a comfortable walking environment for pedestrians that should include mid-block crossings, courtyards, paseos, tree canopies, planters, and public seating. The plan also restricts buildings that block sunlight on the northwest side of Downtown streets at noon on the winter solstice (City of San Luis Obispo, p. 1-52). The plan also looks to avoid widening or significantly changing streets in order to emphasize the importance of pedestrian activity in the downtown area.

### **Public Gatherings**

Downtown should provide space for public gatherings and spaces. This can be done by constructing plazas that are completely separate from vehicular traffic. These plazas can serve as places to rest and enjoy the views of the hills.

### **Natural Resources**

The plan suggests protecting, restoring, and expanding the San Luis Obispo Creek. Walkways and buildings near the creek should connect with the rest of Downtown and provide access to the creek while minimizing human impact on creek life.

### **Building Compatibility and Design Principles**

The City suggests preserving and restoring architecturally and historically significant buildings. New development should be compatible with these buildings.

The City established design principles to guide development. Uses that attract and promote pedestrian traffic, such as stores and restaurants, should be at street level while residential uses and offices that do not have frequent client visits should be above street level.

Most of the storefront along sidewalks should be “continuous”, except for areas that have public plazas or patios as part of the building. This is so pedestrians have greater access to stores.

### **Building Height**

The General Plan (2010) identifies that building heights shall stay relatively as they are now, and they shall not obstruct views or sunlight where public places are located. The maximum height is 60 feet, and taller buildings shall have its design regulated by the General Plan. Tall buildings have not been built in Downtown San Luis Obispo yet, but it is good that there is some sort of policy mentioning it in the General Plan just in case. In fact, the Garden Street Terrace project wanted to reach this maximum height stated but they ended up lowering the height of their buildings to blend in with existing building heights.

### **Building Width and Pedestrian Scale**

At the pedestrian scale, Downtown shall be inviting and visually appealing. Building width policy encourages continuing what exists today. As stated in the General Plan (2010), “new buildings should maintain the historic pattern of storefront widths” (City of SLO, p. 1-54). Facades should include windows, signage, and “architectural details which can be appreciated by people on the sidewalks” (City of SLO, p. 1-54). This policy is being implemented because it was mentioned in an interview with Pam Ricci (2012) that she likes how the architecture Downtown enhances the pedestrian experience.

## **Government Offices and Commercial Buildings**

The plan lists that the City and County government offices on Palm Street should remain at their present locations to keep civic uses Downtown. If more office space is needed it should be built nearby. Commercial buildings outside the core should mimic the building standards of the core and have a maximum building height of 45 feet.

## **Implementation**

The General Plan lists programs to implement the policies it has described. One measure is to consider the integration of some of its features in the City's Zoning Regulations, architectural review guidelines, engineering standards, and capital improvement program. Another is to seek potential locations for new public spaces with scenic views Downtown. The Community Design Guidelines shall be updated to include guidelines for tall buildings in order to be consistent with the guidelines listed in the General Plan. Lastly, the City should create strategies to incorporate parking for Downtown residents and put them in the Access and Parking Management Plan.

## **Analysis**

The General Plan provides great policies that are implemented in other documents. These policies are being followed, as can be seen while in Downtown San Luis Obispo. Encouraging public plazas, a pedestrian atmosphere, and the preservation of natural resources such as the creek, all contribute to the pleasant Downtown that exists today. Entertainment and cultural facilities, government offices, and residential uses contribute to the current Downtown's bustling activity at any hour of the day and night.

## **San Luis Obispo Downtown Design Guidelines**

According to the San Luis Obispo Design Guidelines (2010), in terms of Downtown, “nowhere in the city is design more important”. The main goal of the Downtown Design Guidelines is to provide an inviting place for people to walk instead of drive. Buildings are encouraged to be multi-story and of similar shape to create a consistent vertical scale on each street. If newer buildings are taller or shorter, they shall have “appropriate visual transitions” (City of SLO Design Guidelines, p. 41). Articulated roofs are suggested for taller buildings “to add interest” (City of SLO Design Guidelines, p. 42) and make the line of buildings less bulky. The ground floor of every building shall be more open, with large windows and doors. Upper floors shall have smaller windows or architectural details to provide interest and natural lighting. Buildings shall avoid having organic curvilinear lines or slanted rooflines. The design guidelines list appropriate and inappropriate materials for buildings within Downtown. Appropriate materials include exterior plaster, new or used face-brick, clear glass windows, and ceramic tiles for bulkheads or cornices. Inappropriate materials include mirrored glass, vinyl, aluminum siding, plywood siding, sheet metal, and fiberglass. Remodeling of buildings shall preserve existing details if possible.

### **Analysis**

The Design Guidelines document (2010) is consistent with the San Luis Obispo General Plan and the policies are listed in the guidelines so readers do not have to go back and forth between documents. Because of these design guidelines, Downtown San Luis Obispo continues to preserve its unique architecture because the City’s Design Guidelines (2010) encourage buildings from the turn of the last century in architectural style. The buildings are

symmetrical and the windows have an open pattern. The building details throughout Downtown enhance the pedestrian experience.

## **San Luis Obispo's Downtown Association's Strategic Business Plan**

### **San Luis Obispo Downtown Association**

The San Luis Obispo Downtown Association is a voluntary operation consisting of business owners, employees and the public. There is an 11-member Board of Directors that makes decisions about Downtown. They promote Downtown businesses, coordinate and manage Farmer's Market, . Only Downtown Association Members are allowed to participate in Farmer's Market unless non-members pay \$80 per night and their application is approved. Rules for Farmer's Market are on the Downtown Association website (2012). For Farmer's Market, a portion of Higuera Street in the Downtown Core is blocked off to vehicular traffic so vendors can set up booths or canopies on either side of the street to sell their product.

According to the Downtown Business Association website (2012), the purpose of Farmer's Market is to "promote business in the Downtown core" in order to:

Create a positive image of Downtown San Luis Obispo

Expose community members to retail stores and services offered Downtown

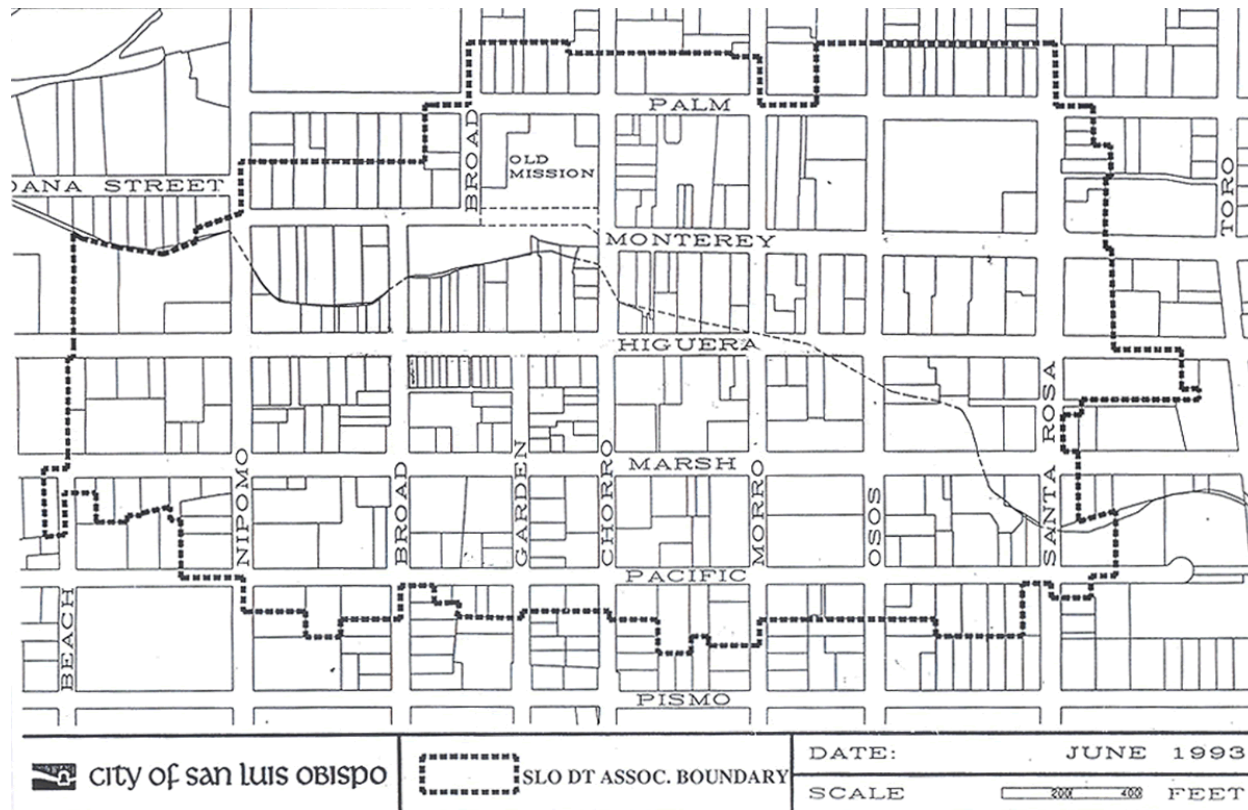
Generate foot traffic on Thursday nights

Provide a forum for community activities

Maintain the Downtown as the center of retail, social, and civic activities

Enhance the community as a whole (Strategic Business Plan website)

The Boundaries of the Downtown Association are shown below:



Source: *DowntownSLO.com, Downtown Association Website*

### **Strategic Business Plan**

The San Luis Obispo Downtown Association’s Strategic Business Plan was adopted in 2007. The first Strategic Business Plan was developed in the 1990’s in response to big-box commercial development on the periphery of San Luis Obispo. To maintain Downtown’s economic vitality, the City hired a consultant to prepare a strategic business plan for the area. The plan was received well by Association members. According to the most recent Strategic Business Plan (2007), “70% of business and property owners surveyed in 2006 believed the

Association's past marketing and promotion efforts are adequate and successful" (San Luis Obispo Downtown Association, p. 1). The plan was used by the City to draft effective policy and it was used to attract businesses that were looking to move to the area.

### ***The Four-Point Main Street Approach***

The Strategic Business Plan follows the Four-Point Main Street Approach. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation Website (2012), the four points are organization, promotion, and economic restructuring (National Trust for Historic Preservation, para. 2). Organization involves cooperation between stakeholders in the downtown area to draft documents like the Strategic Business Plan. Promotion involves the advertisement of Downtown businesses to "create a positive image that will rekindle community pride and improve consumer and investor confidence" (National Trust for Historic Preservation, para. 4). Downtown San Luis Obispo's Strategic Business Plan (2007) specifically aims to promote "heritage tourism and branded marketing campaigns" (SLO Downtown Association, p. 3). Design involves historic preservation, careful planning of new buildings and creating an inviting environment for visitors. San Luis Obispo aims to "attain a higher level of cleanliness, safety and historical preservation" (SLO Downtown Association, p. 3). Economic restructuring involves maintaining successful business activity that the market can support and finding ways to increase the vitality of underutilized commercial space (National Trust for Historic Preservation, para. 6). San Luis Obispo aims to encourage work-live units Downtown.



### ***Existing Conditions of Downtown San Luis Obispo***

When the 2001 Strategic Business Plan was adopted, Downtown was mostly a specialty retail, dining and cultural district. In recent years, “more office, residential and hotel uses are desired and proposed—bringing opportunities for businesses to serve those markets as well” (SLO Downtown Association, p. 6).

Although it is a challenge for small businesses to compete with national chain stores, Downtown San Luis Obispo encourages the competition. According to the Strategic Business Plan, (2007), “In 2000 there was fear that the increasing number of national chain stores Downtown would erode Downtown’s unique small town character. This has not proved to be the case and there is now a broad acceptance of national chain stores’ presence. Their longer store hours, sophisticated marketing practices and attention to store maintenance and design have been a model to independent store operators” (SLO Downtown Association, p. 7).

Big box stores and online retailing are two entities competing with Downtown businesses. This makes it all the more important to be strategic when thinking about new and existing Downtown development.

### ***The Market***

High-income residents and tourists are the main sources of San Luis Obispo’s economic growth. Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenues have been increasing from 2005-2007.

The Downtown’s competitive market position statement is to keep Downtown as the “social, cultural, civic, specialty retail and entertainment center of San Luis Obispo County” (City of SLO SBP, p. 9).

According to the Strategic Business Plan, Downtown's primary market target customers are "sophisticated middle and upper middle income shoppers looking for a unique shopping, social and cultural experience" (City of SLO SBP, p. 9). 65% of these customers are local residents and 35% are tourists and visiting Cal Poly parents (City of SLO SBP, p. 9). Other target customers include college students looking for shopping, entertainment, and socializing opportunities, and employees of Downtown and their customers looking for moderately priced dining options and places to run errands.

### ***Strategic Goals***

The seven strategic goals listed in the Downtown Strategic Business Plan (2007) are:

1. Maintain Downtown as the social center of the community
2. Maintain a diverse mix of uses
3. Maintain retail health
4. Encourage hotel, housing and live-work developments in Downtown
5. Retain and expand on the unique pedestrian character and small town ambiance
6. Maintain an effective Downtown Association
7. Establish a disaster response and recovery plan for the Downtown Association (City of SLO SBP, p. 10)

Under each goal are strategies to achieve them. The people and committees responsible for implementing these strategies are also identified in the plan.

## **Strategic Business Plan Update**

The most recent Strategic Business Plan was adopted in 2007 but according to Claire Clark, the Economic Development Manager at the City of San Luis Obispo, a new version of the Plan is in the works. A new document is needed because the Downtown Association changed from being an advisory body to the City to a separate non-profit organization. Clark observes that “this has changed the relationship between the DA and the City in some significant ways, including decision making by the DA, political action, and greater scrutiny by the City of the use of the BID assessment revenues/City for services provided” (personal communication, May 4, 2012).

According to an attachment in the Strategic Business Plan (2007), the transformation of the Downtown Association into a separate non-profit organization has been an idea since the 2007 Plan was updated. The attachment states as follows:

The Association has found instances where it is conflicted because it cannot represent its members’ focused concerns due to its status as a City Council advisory body...Both the City and the Downtown Association agree it’s time to restructure their relationship in a way that maintains the goals and objectives of supporting the Downtown but allows the Downtown Association to operate as a more autonomous agency on behalf of his members. (City of SLO SBP, Exhibit F, p. 1)

Because this updated Strategic Business Plan has not been completed there isn’t any way to give concrete examples of its recommendations. Claire Clark hopes that the Plan will be a

“wholesale reworking of the document” that further addresses the cleanliness and safety issues resulting from an increase in restaurants, nightlife, and “alcoholic exuberance” (personal communication, May 4, 2012).

### **Analysis**

The Strategic Business Plan is very effective in Downtown San Luis Obispo. This could be because the Downtown Association has been active for over four decades and there has been constant support to preserve Downtown’s economic vitality and historic character. Supporting Downtown businesses has been an important part of San Luis Obispo since the 1970’s. The Downtown Association does most of the behind-the-scenes work with the City to organize Farmer’s Market and other events. The Association seems very organized and its members care about their Downtown because they are a part of it.

But what will happen now that the Downtown Association is its own entity instead of part of the City? Will there be enough funding? It definitely gives more freedom to the Downtown Association, which has the potential to further improve Downtown San Luis Obispo.

### **Pedestrian Environment Quality Index (PEQI)**

The Downtown boundary used in this report was determined by referring to the Downtown Core Area and the Downtown Association Boundary to see how far their boundaries expanded. The boundary used in this report encompasses the most walkable streets in Downtown San Luis Obispo. This area is also where most pedestrian traffic occurs.

Using the Pedestrian Quality Index (PEQI), each street segment and intersection was given a score based on its pedestrian friendliness. Almost all of Downtown San Luis Obispo’s

streets within the specified boundary are rated as having reasonable pedestrian conditions. Although most street segments were rated very high, they did not get perfect scores. This is due to a number of factors. The absence of any crosswalk scrambles decreases pedestrian safety and comfort when crossing the streets. The lack of pedestrian signals and countdowns at some intersections can create a sense of uncertainty for pedestrians when crossing the street. The wide streets of Marsh Street and Higuera Street cause pedestrians to take longer to cross those streets. The lack of speed limit signs can also be dangerous for pedestrians if drivers speed up. Speed limit signs should at least be on the outskirts of Downtown where drivers can see them when they enter the area.

What the PEQI does not take into account is the permanent closure on Monterey Street in front of the Mission. The intersections adjacent to this closure score poorly on the PEQI scale but it is actually a more pedestrian friendly area. Traffic signals or stop signs are not needed in the area due to the closure, where most pedestrians do not have to cross the street.

The paseo-like, pedestrian-only walkways on Court Street are very safe and attractive to pedestrians. There are many storefronts that open into the paseo and the restaurants there provide outdoor dining as well. It contributes to an active, vibrant atmosphere Downtown.

There are also lighted, textured crosswalks on Higuera Street and Marsh Street at mid-block that are not taken into account in the PEQI. These are beneficial for pedestrians but there is not an option of this in the PEQI as a traffic calming measure.

Table 1: PEQI Score Summary

<b>San Luis Obispo</b>			
Street Segments		Intersections	
Average Score	77	Average Score	35
Lowest Score	56	Lowest Score	6
Highest Score	92	Highest Score	51



# Downtown San Luis Obispo PEQI Assessment - 2012



Source: Google Maps (2012)



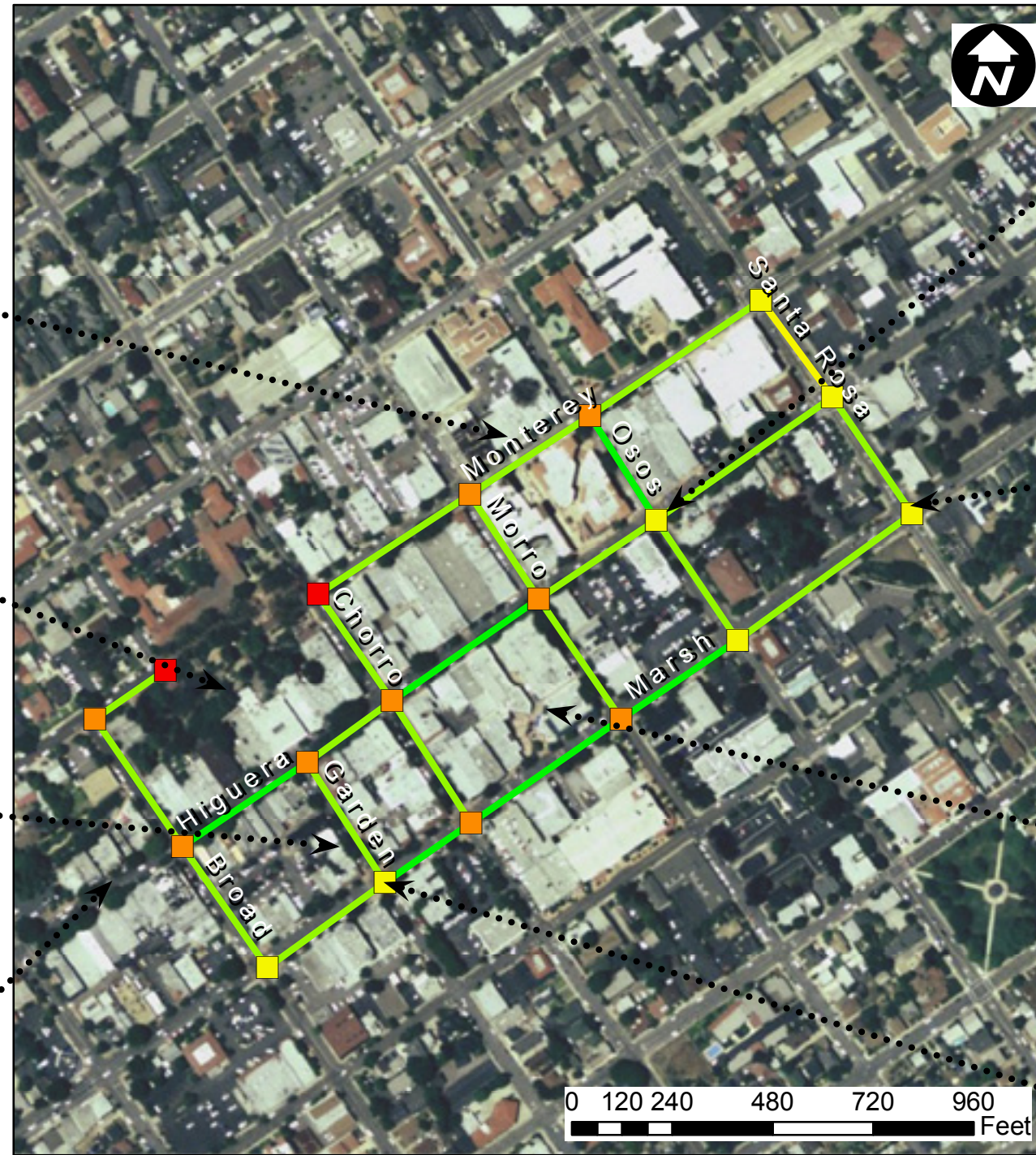
Source: IgoUgo (2005)



Source: SLO Travel Guide (2012)



Source: IgoUgo (2005)



Source: Localism.com (2008)



Source: Google Maps (2012)



Source: Google Maps (2012)

## PEQI Street Scores

- 0 - 20 Environment not suitable for pedestrians
- 21 - 40 Poor pedestrian conditions
- 41 - 60 Basic pedestrian conditions
- 61 - 80 Reasonable pedestrian conditions
- 81 - 100 Ideal pedestrian conditions exist

## PEQI Intersection Scores

- 0 - 20 Environment unsuitable for pedestrians
- 21 - 40 Poor pedestrian conditions
- 41 - 60 Basic pedestrian conditions
- 61 - 80 Reasonable pedestrian conditions
- 81 - 100 Ideal pedestrian conditions



## Chapter 5: Monterey, CA

### Introduction

Monterey's total population is 27,810 and the median age is 36.9 (U.S. Census Bureau). 28% of the population is between the ages of 20 and 34. The median household income of Monterey is \$61,258. According to the City of Monterey's website, Monterey is "one of the most historic cities in California" (Monterey.org). Its historic buildings have been preserved or have undergone adaptive reuse and house contemporary businesses.

Monterey is also an active tourist spot. According to the City of Monterey's website (2012), more than 70,000 people visit or reside in Monterey from May to October. The City is home to the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Cannery Row, and Fisherman's Wharf. Going inland, Fisherman's Wharf leads to Alvarado Plaza, where the Monterey Conference Center on the waterfront is located, and across the street is Downtown Monterey, where there are many shopping, dining, and entertainment options.

Alvarado Street is considered the Main Street of Downtown Monterey. It is recognized as a "Main Street Community" by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (OldMonterey.org). A Farmer's Market is held on Alvarado Street every Tuesday afternoon. There is fresh produce, arts and crafts, and baked goods.

Because the city has so many historical buildings Downtown, the City established a Path of History which is marked by round, yellow tiles embedded in the sidewalk throughout Downtown. They provide





directions for a self-guided tour of the historic buildings of Monterey, including Colton Hall, the Cooper Molera Adobe, and California's First Theater. Visitors can follow the tour on their own time and in their own direction.

## **Economy**

There are approximately 390 businesses located in Downtown Monterey (OMBA Business Directory). The California Board of Equalization listed Monterey's 2010 Taxable Sales as \$619,157,000. Unfortunately, there was no available taxable sales data strictly for Downtown. Based on current available listings, the average commercial lease rates in Downtown Monterey are between \$1.00 to \$2.00 per square foot (OMBA ).

As mentioned, The City of Monterey prides itself on its history. According to the General Plan (2005), "most of Monterey's economic activity takes place in historic areas or areas with a significant number of historic buildings, including Downtown" (City of Monterey GP, p. 108). According to the Retail Revitalization Plan (1989), the three main sources of demand for Downtown Monterey are employees of Downtown businesses, tourists, and local residents. In a more recent study, it was reported that the visitor industry is the primary economic base of the community (City of Monterey GP, p. 8). Local residents are the lesser demand source due to competition from the area's regional malls and shopping centers (Recht Hausrath & Associates). The potential of the Downtown Core can be maximized if there is "a key linkage to other city tourist sites such as the Wharf, Lighthouse Avenue/Cannery Row, and the Custom House Plaza areas" (City of Monterey GP, p. 8).

## **Incentives**

One program in the Downtown Area Plan (1991) seeks to “investigate incentives that support downtown development, such as fast-track permit processing, façade improvements, and assistance in meeting unreinforced masonry requirements” (City of Monterey, p. 10). According to the City of Monterey’s Managing Principal Planner Kimberly Cole, the loss of redevelopment funding and other sources in Monterey has caused some incentives, such as the façade improvement program, to be canceled (personal communication, May 17, 2012).

## **Policy**

### **City of Monterey General Plan**

#### **Land Use Designations**

The following land uses are assigned in Downtown Monterey: commercial, public/semi-public, and open space. Commercial uses include retail, office, and professional office uses, with a possibility to establish mixed-use development in this land use designation. Public/semi-public uses are publicly owned facilities, privately owned facilities that serve the general public except for parks and recreation facilities, and City-owned parking lots (City of Monterey, p. 6).

#### **Density and Mixed-Use**

The City’s General Plan calls for an increase in density in the downtown area to accommodate increased commercial activity. This increase should result in more support of local residents’ needs and more compact development. According to the General Plan (2005), the Land Use Element anticipates 456 dwelling units in Downtown (City of Monterey, p. 19) so

employees and customers of Downtown businesses can live either above their stores or near their stores, which will reduce commuting times.

### **Historic Preservation**

The General Plan encourages the implementation of the City's Historic Preservation program, which focuses on preserving historic sites and educating the public on Monterey's historic significance. Monterey not only preserves historic buildings but also historic sites if the buildings were taken down, and Downtown Monterey's Path of History takes visitors through Downtown where plaques or signs are placed, explaining the significance of each site and/or building. A policy in the General Plan (2005) encourages maintaining the Downtown Path of History.

### **Economic Opportunitites**

"Retention of existing downtown businesses is a priority and small business and uniquely local business are encouraged" (City of Monterey GP, p. 8). Also, the General Plan (2005) suggests that historic preservation policies should be highlighted as Monterey because the historic nature of Downtown is considered an economic generator for the City. This statement emphasizes the historic element in the 1991 Area Plan, which was the anchor of the plan.

### **Analysis**

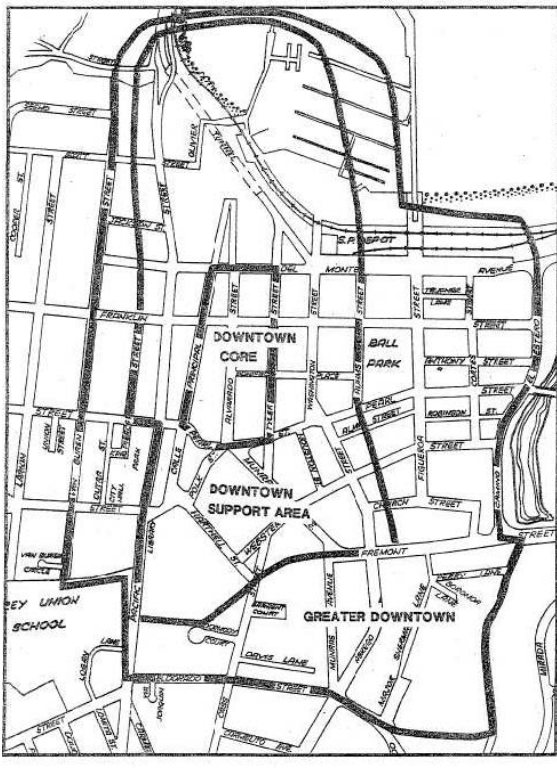
The City of Monterey's General Plan (2005) does not have a specific section on the Downtown policies, actions and programs related to Downtown Monterey. They are dispersed throughout the document based on the element they pertain to. There is a strong emphasis on completing a Plan and Downtown Design Guidelines to implement the goals for Downtown in

the General Plan. There are few specific recommendations for Downtown Monterey, so it is inferred that other plans implementing the General Plan should have more direction in dealing with the downtown area. The General Plan (2005) does have an Economic Element, which is an optional element.

### **Downtown Area Plan (1991) and Downtown Specific Plan**

The Downtown Area Plan was adopted in December of 1991. The basic elements of the plan are economics, historic preservation, design, traffic, parking, and management. Currently, the City is working on an updated Downtown Specific Plan.

The plan boundaries are seen below. The Downtown Core is the main focus of the Area Plan because it is where most activity takes place.



*Source: City of Monterey Downtown Area Plan (1991)*

## **Economics**

The plan aims to strengthen the retail base of Downtown. Strategies to achieve this goal are:

Using historic preservation as the anchor for the downtown

Developing sophisticated and other attractions to bring upscale tourists and residents into Downtown

Recruiting appropriate retail uses for the downtown

Encouraging façade improvements

Encouraging close-in residential uses to add to the Downtown customer base

Encouraging rapid development of the C-21 site with uses which will contribute to the financial health of Downtown (City of Monterey DAP, p. 9)

## **Historic Preservation**

The plan aims to encourage the efforts of the Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission has preserved historic buildings and their setting by doing the following:

Establish the “H” zoning on the most important historic buildings and “D3” zoning on properties surrounding historic buildings

To establish incentive programs for rehabilitation of historic buildings

To exempt “H”-zoned buildings from parking requirements

To develop street, sidewalk, street fixture, and entrance signage to identify the City's historic areas (City of Monterey DAP, p. 12)

### **Design**

This plan aims to:

Develop guidelines which support historic resources and maintain the character of Downtown

Encourage designs which emphasize outdoor use and activity on the street

Encourage art in Downtown

Encourage passageways between streets

Expand Alvarado Street and sidewalk improvements to Tyler Street and Calle Principal

Prepare a package of incentives for improving design in Downtown (City of Monterey DAP, p. 20)

### **Traffic**

The goals of the plan in terms of traffic are:

Improve access from the north

Develop bypass routes for nondowntown traffic

Improve access to parking

Direct visitors and residents to their desired locations with minimal disruption of local traffic

Minimize the perception to residents that it is difficult to drive to and around Downtown

Minimize impacts on historic buildings (City of Monterey DAP, p. 24)

### **Parking**

The plan's goals in terms of parking are:

Allow parking adjustments and prohibit driveway access to Alvarado Street

Encourage shared parking throughout the downtown area

Require on-site parking, unless a plan can be developed to provide and finance public parking  
(City of Monterey DAP, p. 28)

### **Management**

The goals in terms of management of the plan are:

Create an implementation committee to follow through with the programs of the Downtown  
Plan

Establish a public and private funding base for hiring a Downtown Manager (City of Monterey  
DAP, p. 31)

### **Analysis**

The Downtown Area Plan was adopted in 1991, and many changes have happened since then. For example, one of the plan's policies mentioned establishing a Farmer's Market, which has been implemented since then. An updated Downtown Specific Plan is currently being worked on, but an existing conditions report is available on the City of Monterey's website that was completed in 2008.

## **Downtown Design Guidelines**

The plan identifies the Downtown Commercial Core as the heart of the traditional downtown located along Alvarado Street, from Del Monte Avenue to Pearl Street. This is where many historic buildings are located, and it is the main pedestrian-friendly section of Downtown Monterey. The Plan recommends buildings in this area should have “display windows or other attractive features, such as display cases, wall art and landscaping to maintain visual interest and establish a sense of scale” (City of Monterey, p. 13). These guidelines support the expansion of the Downtown Commercial Core to be along Calle Principal and Tyler Street. Commercial Office or Commercial Residential mixed-use is encouraged in the area as well. The goals for this area are as follows:

Remain a vibrant place for retail uses

Respect its historic content

Encourage compatible infill and additions to existing boundaries (Winter & Company, p. 13).

### **Larger Scale Development**

A greater density in this area is expected in the future. Buildings should be a maximum of three stories high unless they are near historic buildings. Buildings should be a maximum of two stories high so as to not distract from the historic buildings.



## **Downtown Character**

The Downtown historic character should be maintained. New development should complement or be similar to “traditional development patterns, including the location, orientation, mass, and scale of the building” (City of Monterey, p. 26). Mixed-use is encouraged, with retail commercial on the ground floor and offices or residential units on upper floors. New infill development should provide pedestrian connections through the block.

## **Analysis**

Encouraging the expansion of Alvarado Street is an advantageous future endeavor, as is increasing the density Downtown. Mixed-use and infill development is one way to make Downtown Monterey more active. This could pose a challenge to the current historic buildings Downtown, but adaptive reuse can be an option.

## **Old Monterey Business Association and Downtown Retail Revitalization Plan**

### **Old Monterey Business Association**

The Old Monterey Business Association (OMBA) is a nonprofit organization that enhances and promotes the “economic vitality and community spirit” of Old Monterey. According to Kimberly Cole, Managing Principal Planner at the City of Monterey, “OMBA is a business improvement district as enabled in State Law. The City participates by attending OMBA meetings and working in partnership towards great projects like the Farmers Market” (personal communication, May 17, 2012). The OMBA also prepares local dining guides, a Business Directory, monthly Commercial Space listings, and a Path of History brochure that guides locals and visitors to each of Monterey’s historic buildings. According to Kimberly Cole,

planners attend monthly meetings with the OMBA, and the organization is involved in planning decisions. Planners let them know about pending development projects, and the OMBA will “take positions on new developments and help facilitate communication with its members” (personal communication, May 27, 2012).

### **Downtown Retail Revitalization Plan**

The plan was adopted in 1989 by Recht Hausrath & Associates and provided an economic study and recommendations to revitalize Downtown Monterey. The strategy described in this plan focuses on the sources of demand, Downtown’s idea retail niche, attractions and design improvements, and the management and implementation of these strategies.

### **Sources of Demand**

The three sources of demand in Downtown Monterey are tourists, residents, and Downtown employees. The plan (1989) suggests to “tap into abundant tourism at adjacent attractions, while retaining the downtown office employment market and encouraging affluent residents to patronize their downtown” (p. 1).

### **Retail Niche**

The revitalization plan (1989) encourages the creation of “a retail mix that will provide tourists, residents and employees with merchandise and services not offered by other Peninsula shopping areas, in particular not competing directly with the shopping centers” (Recht Hausrath & Associates, p. 2). The plan recommends increasing outdoor seating for restaurants, delicatessens, cafes, and bars, which could increase the time employees and visitors spend

Downtown. The plan states that competition with suburban malls should be avoided, and the focus of Downtown should be specialty stores that have items not commonly found elsewhere. Examples of specialty stores that could be successful are linens and household items, specialty food, art and craft galleries, hair salons, wine/liquor, restaurants, cafes, furniture, fabric, bakeries, book stores, children's clothes and toy stores, and bars, pubs, or taverns (p. 9).

### **Attractions and Design Improvements**

Attractions and design improvements help to “promote Downtown Monterey’s existing attributes, improve signage, and renovate facades while developing attractions and removing major disincentives to potential Downtown shoppers. The recommendations in this section are divided into short-term and long-term projects” (p. 2). Specific examples of short-term projects are promoting historic adobes, distributing promotional pamphlets, improving access to the Wharf and hotel from Downtown, and renovating and improving store facades. Long-term projects include establishing a Farmer’s Market in the downtown area to sell produce and advertise nearby businesses, promoting the construction of a Performing Arts Center Downtown, and supplying more parking.

### **Management and Implementation**

The plan suggests to “hire a full-time professional manager to implement the program. Recruit new retail merchants and carry out short-term projects to build confidence while lobbying for long-term urban design solutions and public attractions” (p. 2). A full-time professional manager will be in charge of creating a timeline for implementation, beginning with short-term projects. While the short-term projects are being implemented, support for long-term projects

should be gathered once the public sees results from the short-term projects. The most important and immediate implementation measure should be to recruit new retail stores and improve on the existing ones. When patrons have reasons to go Downtown, they will need other amenities, such as parking and better connections to the rest of the city.

### **Analysis**

The document is fairly dated. The Farmer's Market is being implemented, but based on looking at the Old Monterey Business Association website, there is no evidence that a full-time manager position exists today. The OMBA acts as the professional manager who advocates for Downtown Monterey and supports the implementation of the suggestions listed.

### **Pedestrian Environmental Quality Index (PEQI)**

The planning boundary used for the Pedestrian Environmental Quality Index is smaller than the planning boundaries identified in the Downtown Area Plan.

In general, Downtown Monterey is pedestrian-friendly. The Historic Walk is a unique and informative way to travel through the area. There is barely any litter on the streets. The intersections throughout Downtown are very clearly marked. There are no bike lanes on the streets of Downtown Monterey but there is a nice Class III (confirm this) bike path along a pedestrian plaza behind the Portola Hotel & Spa on Del Monte Avenue near Fisherman's Wharf. Monterey has a lot of tourism which makes its Downtown very popular on weekends. There is a bus transit hub. Alvarado Street is the only good pedestrian-friendly street with pedestrian-scale lighting, planters, lighted street trees and open storefronts. There is parallel parking on both sides of the street. There are a fair amount of mid-block crosswalks along the street to

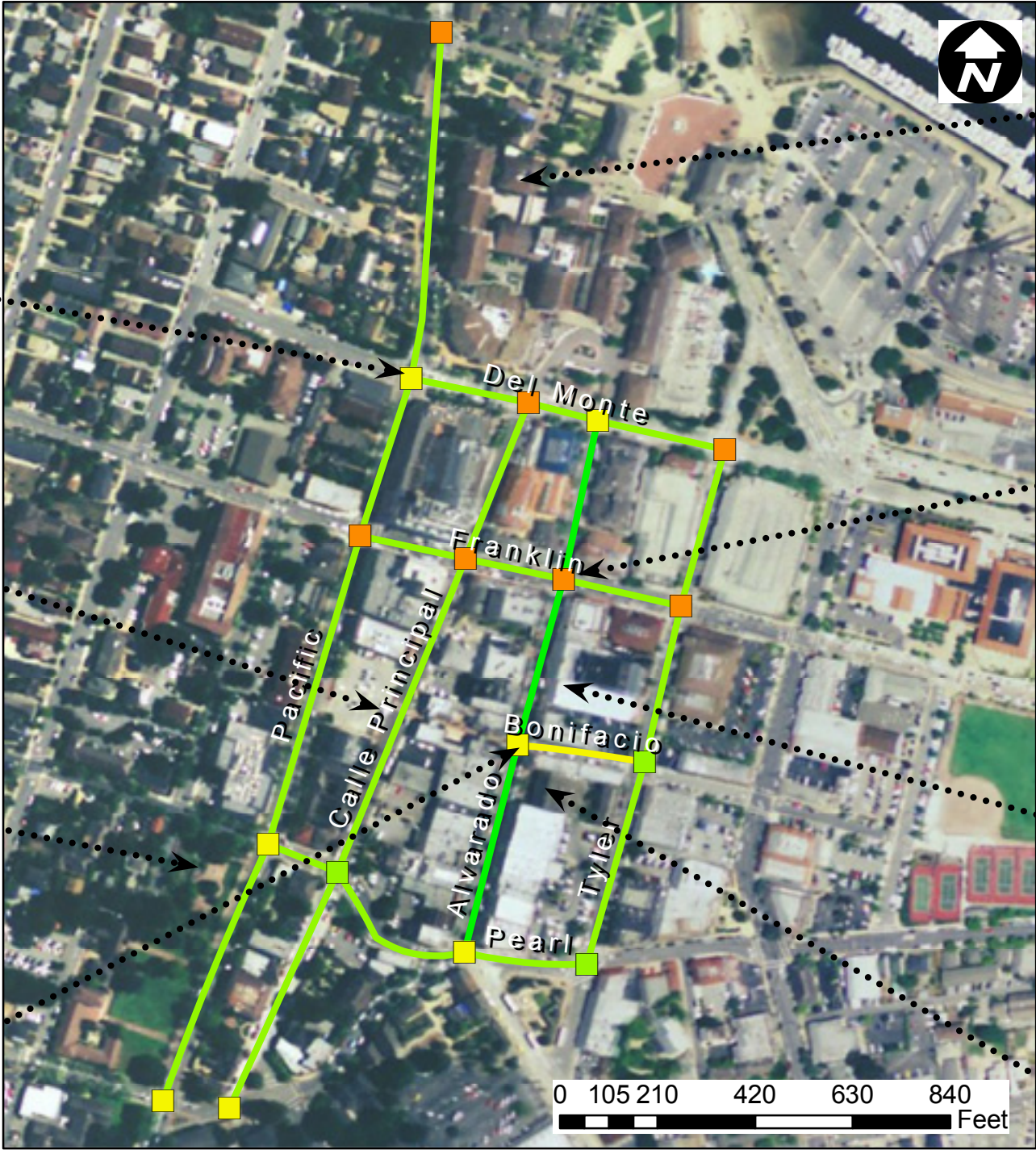
make it easier for pedestrians to access businesses on both sides of the street. The pedestrian only path near the hotel is also very cool. It complements the hotel and gives visitors more to do at a short distance. Having a hotel Downtown is an ideal location right across the street from the Downtown Core. It is less expensive to have a car there and it would be an inconvenience to have to drive everywhere.

Table 2: PEQI Score Summary

<b>Monterey</b>			
Street Segments		Intersections	
Average Score	70	Average Score	45
Lowest Score	60	Lowest Score	25
Highest Score	85	Highest Score	65



# Downtown Monterey PEQI Assessment - 2012



PEQI Street Scores		PEQI Intersection Scores	
<span style="color: red;">—</span>	0 - 20 Environment not suitable for pedestrians	<span style="color: red;">■</span>	0 - 20 Environment unsuitable for pedestrians
<span style="color: orange;">—</span>	21 - 40 Poor pedestrian conditions	<span style="color: orange;">■</span>	21 - 40 Poor pedestrian conditions
<span style="color: yellow;">—</span>	41 - 60 Basic pedestrian conditions	<span style="color: yellow;">■</span>	41 - 60 Basic pedestrian conditions
<span style="color: lightgreen;">—</span>	61 - 80 Reasonable pedestrian conditions	<span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span>	61 - 80 Reasonable pedestrian conditions
<span style="color: green;">—</span>	81 - 100 Ideal pedestrian conditions exist	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	81 - 100 Ideal pedestrian conditions



## **Chapter 6: Gilroy, CA**

### **Introduction**

Gilroy's population is 48,821, and projections have shown a potential population growth of over 10% in the next five years (City of Gilroy Website). The median age is 32.4 years old, but 25.7% of the population is between 0 and 14 years old.

According to Stan Ketchum, Senior Planner at the City of Gilroy, Downtown has a very small daytime population because Gilroy is a bedroom community (personal communication, May 8, 2012).

### **Economy**

The 2010 taxable sales for the City of Gilroy is \$1,062,813,000 (Board of Equalization). According to the Downtown Gilroy Strategic Plan (2006), "taxable sales for Downtown were \$37 million annually, which makes up around 4% of the City's total taxable sales (\$965 million)" (SBP, p. 44). This small percentage is due to the capture of larger shopping centers outside of Downtown, including the Gilroy Premium Outlets, which has over 145 factory outlet stores. This small percentage has continued into the present day. In the Fourth Quarter Tax Update document (2011), the Gilroy Outlets generated \$819,171 in sales tax revenue while the downtown area only generated \$44,155. This means that Downtown only generates 1% of the City's sales tax. Also according to the Strategic Plan, commercial lease rates range from \$.50 to \$.70 per square foot in older buildings and \$1.25 to \$1.80 per square foot in newer buildings.

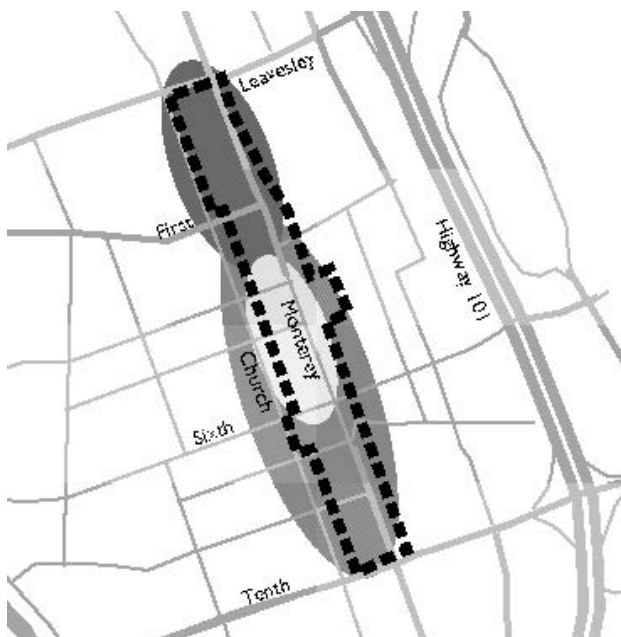
Prior to the early 1980s, Highway 101 ran along Monterey Street through Morgan Hill and Downtown Gilroy, drawing local and regional residents to what was at the time a major retail destination. The street's growing traffic problem, however, led to the construction of a 101 bypass that diverted through-traffic from the area, at around the same time that the construction of the City's outlet stores began to draw shoppers to the other side of the highway (EPS, p. 17).

## **Policy**

### **City of Gilroy General Plan**

#### **Downtown Boundary**

The Downtown Boundary in Gilroy is the section of Monterey Street between Leavesley Road and Tenth Street. Railroad Street is the boundary to the east and the alley between Egleberry Street and Church Street is the boundary to the west.



*Source: City of Gilroy General Plan (2002)*



## **Land Use Designation**

The General Plan proposes to divide Downtown into three districts: the “Downtown Office District”, the “Downtown Historic District”, and the “Downtown Mixed Use District”.

The “Downtown Office District” will act as the northern gateway into Downtown and will consist of larger scale office buildings. The buildings will still have wide sidewalks and storefronts along the street to be consistent with the rest of Downtown, but it will include more automobile-oriented uses, which include offices, hotels, theaters, restaurants, and civic facilities. High density residential uses are allowed if they are part of a mixed-use project.

The “Downtown Historic District” is located at the center of Monterey Street, bordered by Third Street from the north and Sixth Street from the south. This district will preserve the area’s historic character by encouraging adaptive reuse and restoration of historic buildings.

Pedestrian-oriented uses, such as small-scale specialty shops, cafes, small hotels, restaurants, and professional offices, are also encouraged in this district. Mixed-use is also encouraged in this district, preferably commercial uses on the ground floor and office or residential uses on the upper floors.

The “Downtown Mixed-Use District” surrounds the “Downtown Historic District” and is bordered by Loof Avenue from the north and Tenth Street from the South. It acts as the southern gateway into Downtown, where office uses similar to those in the “Downtown Office District” are encouraged. As the title of the district suggests, mixed-use development is encouraged. The upper floors will have residential units, offices, and other compatible uses. The ground floor will have pedestrian-oriented commercial uses. Public facilities such as parks,

playgrounds, cultural and arts facilities, cinemas, community centers, and day care facilities are encouraged as well.

### **Economic Development**

The following strategies listed in the General Plan (2002) aim to increase the economic vitality of Downtown Gilroy:

Improve the look and function of Downtown's physical environment

Direct office development to the Downtown

Direct cultural, arts and entertainment uses to the downtown

Promote mixed use development

Promote Transit-Oriented Development

Capitalize on development opportunity site that was formerly Garden Valley Foods

Link the Downtown and Civic Center

### **Analysis**

The General Plan provides the basic foundation of establishing various districts in the downtown area, but it is up to the Specific Plan for these districts to be implemented. The Economic Element supports the improvement of the look and function of the Downtown's physical environment. A mix of office and commercial uses will also strengthen the Downtown's economy.

## **City of Gilroy Downtown Specific Plan: Architectural Design Guidelines**

The goal of the Architectural Design Guidelines in the Downtown Specific Plan is to “create a welcoming environment that attracts shoppers and pedestrians, residents and visitors alike” and to “improve property in a way that increases foot traffic and helps create the traditional Downtown atmosphere” (RRM Design Group, p. 29).

### **Site Planning and Design**

The Architectural Design Guidelines (2005) encourage pedestrian-oriented development with adequate pedestrian paths or connections to adjacent properties. Buildings should be oriented toward the street and the sidewalks should have covered pedestrian walkways, outdoor seating, and landscaped areas. According to the Design Guidelines (2005), “focal points should be created and incorporated into sites to establish a sense of place and orientation” (p. 30). Examples of focal points are public art, fountains, plazas, and various pavement materials.

### **Project Landscape and Hardscape**

The Design Guidelines (2005) recommend providing landscape features in outdoor spaces visible from the street. Specifically, “each 200 square feet of active outdoor space should include two or more of the following features: one planter, with a minimum footprint of four square feet, one bench, two chairs, an information kiosk, or one tree” (p. 34). Trees should be spaced an adequate distance apart to allow for mature and long-term growth, and they should be evergreen and deciduous or flowering trees. Accent planting, flower boxes, and potted plants should have a variety of species to “create visual interest and a dynamic landscape” (p. 33).

## **Building Design Principles**

The Architectural Design Guidelines list the following building design elements: “architectural character, 360-degree architecture, continuity, mass, scale, and rhythm” (p. 37), all which contribute to pleasing building design. Architectural character refers to maintaining the traditional but diverse downtown image. 360-degree architecture refers to the concept that “buildings should be aesthetically pleasing from all angles” (p. 37). Continuity refers to future development complementing the form and historic character of existing buildings. Mass refers to the three-dimensional forms that buildings take and how interesting they look. Scale refers to the proportion of one object to another. In this case, Downtown should be developed at a human scale. Rhythm refers to “the relationship of building components, as well as the relationship of individual buildings, to one another (p. 37).

## **Building Elements and Articulation**

Architectural details should be created to appeal to pedestrians walking along the sidewalk. Entrances should be welcoming and incorporate one of the following methods:

A change in wall/window plane

Wall articulation around the door and projecting beyond the door

Placement of art or decorative detailing at the entry

A projecting element above the entrance

A change in material or detailing

Implementation of architectural elements such as flanked columns or decorative fixtures

Recessed doors, archways, or cased openings

A portico or formal porch projecting from or set into the surface

Changes in the roof line, a tower, or a break in the surface to the subject wall (p. 41)

### **Analysis**

The design guidelines emphasize having pedestrian features for every 200 feet of sidewalk space. This gives visitors plenty of opportunities to sit outside and enjoy the bustling activity of Downtown. This implementation measure stresses the importance of visitor comfort. If visitors are more comfortable, they are more likely to stay Downtown or visit more often. Downtown is visually interesting because of the implementation of the design guideline that recommends vegetation and trees throughout Monterey Street. It makes the air cleaner and the temperature cooler.

## **Gilroy Downtown Association and Gilroy Downtown Strategic Business Plan**

### **Gilroy Downtown Association**

The Downtown Association represents the variety of antique stores, specialty shops, dining, and other businesses that choose to operate in Downtown Gilroy. According to the Downtown Association website, “The Downtown Association works to strengthen the Downtown as a vibrant and welcoming destination for arts, culture, and commerce”. According to Stan Ketchum, Senior Planner at the City of Gilroy, the Community Development Director and other

City Management officials meet with Downtown representatives at a Government Relations Committee. They discuss development and other issues related to the business community.

### **Gilroy Downtown Strategic Business Plan**

The purpose of Gilroy's Downtown Strategic Business Plan is to recommend economic development strategies that attract desirable businesses to Downtown. According to the Plan (2006), higher-density residential development could be a successful component of Downtown. Local services have a better market outlook because of the residential neighborhoods directly adjacent to Downtown. In order to create a more vital Downtown, its businesses need to attract visitors within a half-mile radius. This poses a challenge because of the nearby "big-box" retail shopping centers in the area, including the popular Gilroy Premium Outlets.

### ***Strategies***

There is no guaranteed strategy for revitalization, but this Plan (2006) recommends attracting businesses Downtown that are different from retail stores that already exist in Gilroy. There should be a mix of locally-owned small businesses and regional or statewide chains Downtown because the current area does not have the capacity for larger chains to locate there.

According to the Plan, (2006), the following retail categories have been successful in catalyzing the revitalization of other maturing downtown areas:

Restaurants with outdoor dining, evening entertainment, and restaurant/bar combinations

Coffee shops and diners

Specialty food stores (i.e. bakeries, gourmet food stores, and candy shops)

Clothing boutiques (new and vintage)

Home décor and gift stores

Art galleries

Craft studios and cooking schools

Youth-oriented businesses (EPS, p. 3)

The Plan recommends the City focus on recruiting restaurants and other food services to locate Downtown.

A challenge for Downtown Gilroy is the “public perceptions regarding safety, access, and the appeal of area businesses [which] have contributed to decreased foot traffic and retail sales in Downtown” (EPS, p. 6).

Gilroy should emphasize the following aspects of its Downtown in order to develop a potential market strategy:

Garlic production and agricultural heritage

Gourmet shopping and dining

Historic architecture

“Main Street” atmosphere

Latino culture

Cultural arts (EPS, p. 6)

### ***Initiatives and Incentives***

In 2003, the Gilroy City Council passed an ordinance waiving all Planning Application fees, Building Permit fees, and Development Impact fees for properties in the downtown area. This meant that \$1.5 million in impact fees for street trees; water, sewer, and storm drain development; traffic impacts; and public facilities were waived (EPS, p. 65).

The City also has a current zero fee initiative, where remediation of unreinforced masonry buildings is exempt from standard development fees. An Assistant program was also adopted by City Council in 2006 (EPS, p. 66).

### ***Analysis***

Office use will not revitalize Downtown but it will complement other development and will “help fill in the gaps” (p. 56). “Planned residential development and potential nighttime uses (e.g., restaurants, cafes offering live entertainment, etc.) may also improve the perceived safety of Downtown by generating pedestrian traffic throughout the day and evening” (EPS, p. 68).

### **Pedestrian Environmental Quality Index (PEQI)**

Downtown Gilroy’s boundaries lie along Monterey Street. The most pedestrian-friendly sections of Downtown are along Monterey Street between 1<sup>st</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Street. These two streets act as gateways into the downtown area, complete with Gilroy signage and street medians with trees. The sidewalk is 14 feet along the entire Monterey Street. Monterey Street is only two lanes wide with one lane going in each direction. The intersecting streets are also only two lanes wide. This is ideal for pedestrians because it doesn’t take as long to cross the



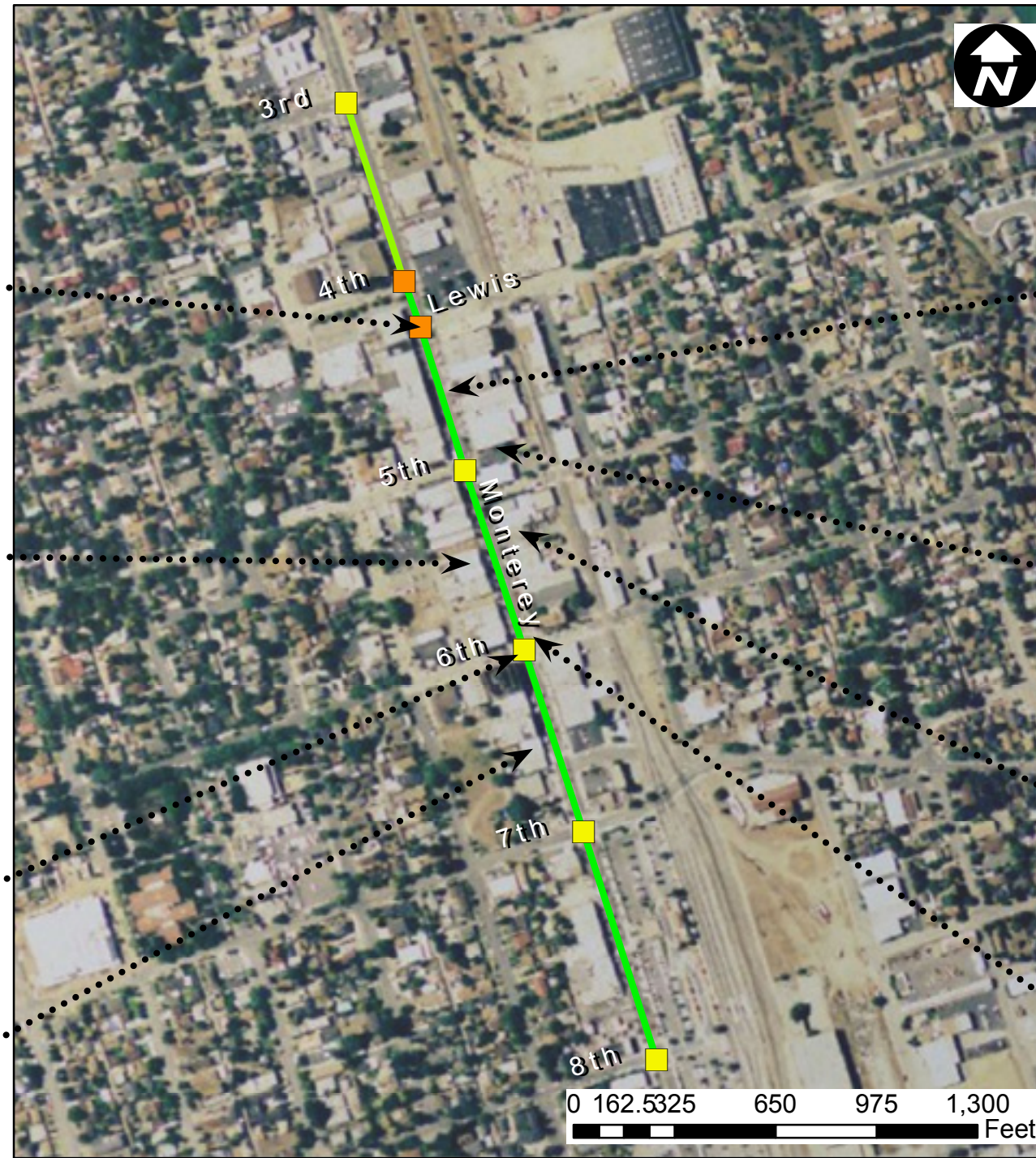
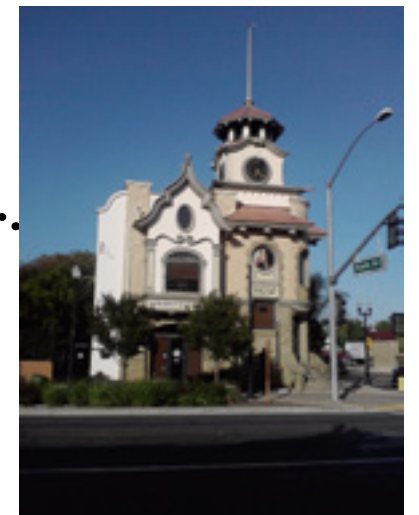
street. This increases pedestrian safety. Crosswalks are different textures, which is a traffic calming measure and alerts drivers to watch for pedestrians crossing the street. There are also bulbouts at each intersection which further shortens the distance of crossing the street for pedestrians. Where there are not traffic light intersections there are lighted crosswalks for pedestrians. There were ideal small gathering areas along the sidewalks complete with benches and planters throughout Monterey Street.

Table 3: PEQI Score Summary

<b>Gilroy</b>			
Street Segments		Intersections	
Average Score	88	Average Score	48
Lowest Score	69	Lowest Score	40
Highest Score	96	Highest Score	52



# Downtown Gilroy PEQI Assessment - 2012



## PEQI Street Scores

- 0 - 20 Environment not suitable for pedestrians
- 21 - 40 Poor pedestrian conditions
- 41 - 60 Basic pedestrian conditions
- 61 - 80 Reasonable pedestrian conditions
- 81 - 100 Ideal pedestrian conditions exist

## PEQI Intersection Scores

- 0 - 20 Environment unsuitable for pedestrians
- 21 - 40 Poor pedestrian conditions
- 41 - 60 Basic pedestrian conditions
- 61 - 80 Reasonable pedestrian conditions
- 81 - 100 Ideal pedestrian conditions



## Chapter 7: Summary of Case Study Findings

Table 4: Summary of Case Study Findings

	San Luis Obispo	Monterey	Gilroy
<b>Basic Information</b>			
Population	45,119	27,810	48,821
Location	Central Coast	Monterey Peninsula	Santa Clara County
Location of Major University	Yes	No	No
Median Age	26.5	36.9	32.4
Largest Age Group	20-29 years old	20-34 years old	0-14 years old
Competing Shopping Centers Nearby	No	No	Yes
Winner of Great American Main Street Award	Yes	No	No
<b>Economy</b>			
Taxable Sales of City in 2010	\$1,080,237,000	\$619,157,000	\$1,062,813,000
Taxable Sales of Downtown	largest tax revenue district in City	no data	\$37 million in 2006
Downtown Commercial Lease Rates	\$1.75-\$3.50 per square foot	\$1.00 -\$2.00 per square foot	\$0.50-\$1.80 per square foot
Estimated Existing Businesses (From Business Directories)	475	390	50
<b>Policy</b>			
Presence of Downtown Association	Yes	Yes	Yes
Documents Specific to Downtown	Yes	Yes	Yes
Age of Documents	Recent (up to 7 years old)	Not Recent (up to 21 years old)	Fairly Recent (up to 10 years old)
Encouragement of Residential Uses	Yes	Yes	Yes
Requirement of Residential Units in New Development	Yes	No	No
Presence of Mixed Use with Office or Residential Units	Many	Little	Some
Specificity within Policy	Very Specific	Not Specific	Somewhat Specific
Documented Incentives	No	Yes	Yes
<b>PEQI</b>			
Street Segments			

Average Score	77	70	88
Lowest Score	56	60	69
Highest Score	92	85	96
Intersections			
Average Score	35	45	48
Lowest Score	6	25	40
Highest Score	51	65	52
Number of "Main Streets" (streets with consistent urban furniture and vegetation)	3 (Monterey, Marsh, Higuera)	1 (Alvarado Street)	1 (Monterey Street)

One of the reasons Downtown San Luis Obispo is so active is because of its location and the fact that it is a college town. Because of Cal Poly and Cuesta Community College, the majority of the city is made up of college-age students or those just out of college who decided to stay in the area. They are likely to visit Downtown often for the shopping, restaurants and especially the nightlife. San Luis Obispo has students living throughout the city, and anyone living near the Downtown Core or at Cal Poly has fairly easy access to the area, either by walking, driving, biking, or using public transportation. Monterey is near a major college campus, California State University Monterey Bay, but the campus is in Seaside, approximately 8 miles away from Downtown. Monterey is home to Monterey Peninsula College, which is nearer to Downtown, but there are only approximately 4,000 full-time students there that would most likely live in Monterey and visit Downtown (MPC.edu). Gilroy has a community college, named Gavilan College, that has 3,863 full-time students enrolled that would live in Gilroy. Although Monterey and Gilroy has a younger market to capture, they are not as successful in capturing this age group. This could be because San Luis Obispo has a larger concentration of bars, cafes and other nightlife opportunities than the other two cities.

Gilroy has more competition with two large shopping centers located on either end of the Downtown Core on Monterey Street. Gilroy Premium Outlets also draws many residents and visitors away from Downtown.

Monterey has a large concentration of parking garages on Tyler Street. San Luis Obispo only has two parking garages within Downtown, with an additional one with entrances farther away on Palm Street. Gilroy does not have public parking in the downtown area; only a large parking lot for Amtrak patrons.

Both Gilroy and San Luis Obispo have train stations downtown, while Monterey and San Luis Obispo have downtown transit centers that connect many bus routes and give the option of transferring to a different route.

## **Policy**

San Luis Obispo's General Plan was much more specific in its policy than the other two cities. Some of it overlapped with the City's Downtown Design Guidelines, which proves that the two documents are consistent with each other. Monterey had the optional Economics Element in its General Plan, which is more beneficial to the City to have more of an emphasis on economics.

Each document mentions including residential uses in the downtown area. San Luis Obispo has the most residential uses downtown currently. Gilroy has recently finished mixed-use development projects that are beginning to achieve the goal of having a 24-hour presence

Downtown. Monterey is lacking in residential development directly within the downtown. This could be because of the abundance of historical buildings Downtown that are being preserved.

San Luis Obispo and Gilroy have more specific design guidelines. San Luis Obispo focuses more on collective urban form while Gilroy's guidelines focused more on architectural features and vegetation, including building design principles, which is unique to these three policy documents. Monterey's design guidelines pertained to more mixed-use oriented development and emphasized the fact that new development should complement its historic buildings.

Most of the documents published for each City's respective downtown association have said similar things. Gilroy's Strategic Plan and Monterey's Retail Revitalization Plan both listed specialty stores that could be successful in Downtown. San Luis Obispo's Strategic Business Plan was not as specific in that sense, but it was more specific in its goals. It was also the most up-to-date document out of the three, and it is currently being updated again. Monterey's plan also mentioned San Luis Obispo's Thursday Farmer's Market as "the farmer's market most relevant to Monterey". San Luis Obispo's Farmer's Market was established in the 1970s while Monterey's was established in the 1990s. Downtown Gilroy's Strategic Plan was the most specific in terms of explaining Gilroy's existing conditions. Its recommendations were specific and included incentives. Since many of these documents were adopted before redevelopment agency funding was removed from the state budget, these incentives may be more difficult to implement.

## **Economy**

All three Downtowns face challenges due to the rise of suburban development and the fact that most everyday retail centers have moved to strip malls or shopping centers. Each city has the goal of maintaining their Downtown area as the city's main economic center.

Downtown San Luis Obispo's commercial lease rates are the highest and are between \$1.75 and \$3.50. The higher prices are for newer retrofitted buildings. Downtown Monterey's are between \$1.00 and \$2.00, and Downtown Gilroy's are between \$0.50 and \$1.80.

The City of San Luis Obispo has the highest taxable sales in 2010 with \$1,080,237,000. Gilroy is close behind with \$1,062,813,000 but it has a much smaller Downtown which only generated \$37 million dollars in taxable sales in 2006. Other large shopping centers draw many retail customers away from Downtown which is why it generates only a small portion of revenue. Monterey's taxable sales in 2010 is much lower than the other two cities with \$619,157,000.

## **Pedestrian Environmental Quality Index (PEQI)**

Each Downtown has wide sidewalks, street trees, and adequate street furniture. Overall, Downtown Gilroy has more consistently pedestrian-friendly intersections. Downtown San Luis Obispo and Downtown Monterey have paseos closed off to vehicular traffic in their downtowns, which are not accounted for in the PEQI.

Downtown San Luis Obispo's PEQI scores are lower than the scores of the other two downtowns, but it is still considered a very walkable Downtown. San Luis Obispo's downtown

has more consistently pedestrian-friendly sidewalks because its downtown activity extends to Monterey Street, Higuera Street, and Marsh Street. Higuera is considered the primary main street at night due to Farmer's Market on Thursdays and its large concentration of bars, but Monterey Street and Marsh Street are equally pedestrian friendly and create a larger, more unified Downtown. Both Downtown Monterey and Downtown Gilroy only have one main street that is the most pedestrian friendly, which is Alvarado Street and Monterey Street, respectively.



## **Part III: Recommendations**

The following recommendations are directly for the three case studies and also for other downtowns. These suggestions are based on what works in Downtown San Luis Obispo, Downtown Monterey, and Downtown Gilroy.

### **Recommendations for Case Studies**

San Luis Obispo should continue to implement their policies and design guidelines. The Downtown Association's updated Strategic Business Plan is currently being drafted. It should be as effective as the previous one. The most recent document was focused on goals to make Downtown more active, but the updated document should also include more economic statistics about Downtown. Any San Luis Obispo policy documents should also include current economic incentives for businesses or new ones should be developed.

The City of Monterey should update their Retail Revitalization Plan because it was adopted in 1989. It should also make their economic profile more accessible so potential business owners can know more about Downtown Monterey's economic climate. The Downtown Specific Plan is currently in the works so that should be consistent with the General Plan. It should also address policy from the Retail Revitalization Plan and incorporate it into policy that can work in the present day. Monterey should begin to research adaptive reuse techniques to prepare for redevelopment in the future because policy documents mention an increase in density and mixed-use development. In order to preserve Downtown Monterey's historic character, new development should be incorporated into older development.

Downtown Gilroy should consider expanding their Downtown along Monterey Street or increasing the density by adding additional floors on more buildings. The Downtown Design Guidelines should continue to be implemented because it is Downtown's strongest feature. As suggested in the Downtown Strategic Plan, a new marketing campaign should be established for Downtown and more specialty stores should be located Downtown that can help the area compete with larger shopping centers by providing goods and services not available outside of Downtown.

### **Recommendations for Other Downtowns**

A general recommendation for cities is to distinguish their downtown area from other commercial retail areas. Including actual data about a downtown's economic profile is important information for business owners. Having a quantitative comparison between a walkable environment and a drivable environment will give businesses a better idea of where they want to locate.

Like San Luis Obispo, residential uses should be required within new development in Downtown areas. Because of the rising demand of walkable urbanism mentioned in Chapter 3, more people want to live in more urbanized areas, so it is likely that these residential units would be filled.

Policy should also be specific so there is more effective implementation and regulation in a downtown. Having a clear vision is very helpful when revitalizing downtown areas. Active Downtown Associations should establish a set of goals for their downtown that will provide the basic framework of their efforts.

## **Part IV: Conclusion**

San Luis Obispo is a great model for a Downtown in a smaller city. It has a scenic creek flowing through the downtown area and it also is home to a California State University campus. These two assets generate more foot traffic Downtown. It is active throughout the year during the day and night because of its mix of office, commercial, and residential uses. It has a successful and popular Farmer's Market on Thursday nights. It has maintained and enhanced its historical character and pedestrian orientation that existed when Downtown was first built. Its policy is specific and has overall been effectively implemented.

Downtown Monterey also emphasizes its historical and pedestrian-friendly assets. Its Downtown is also fairly active but it is smaller than San Luis Obispo's and usually is more popular when tourists visit during certain seasons. It has mostly commercial uses, with less office space and even less residential uses. It has the potential to attract more businesses and visitors but more of its suggested policies should be implemented.

Downtown Gilroy faces more challenges because of its small size and competing retail shopping centers. It has the lowest commercial lease rates. Its streetscape is very pedestrian-oriented and is visually attractive, but its low building height means that there are not as many businesses Downtown that people can go to. Two mixed-use projects were recently built but Gilroy still needs to be used to its fullest potential.

These three cities, especially San Luis Obispo, have the potential to adapt successfully to the current automobile-oriented built environment. With effective policy and implementation, more downtowns can lead the rest of California back to the walkable, active Main Street.

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