



WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Community Workshop #1: Visioning
June 9, 2009



Prepared by:



I. INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Napa Specific Plan (the “Plan”) will guide the City of Napa in its planning efforts to create a more inclusive and vibrant Downtown Napa. The purpose of the Plan is to develop a community vision for the Downtown and create tools and strategies to implement the vision through recommendations for public and private development. The Plan will include detailed policies, design guidelines and development standards that work toward a holistic vision of Downtown. Building from the input gathered during a comprehensive community engagement process, the Plan will help lead the City towards a more sustainable, pedestrian-friendly and attractive Downtown.

The Downtown Napa Specific Plan is currently in the visioning phase of the planning process. This phase is focused on studying the existing assets, challenges and opportunities of the Planning Area through technical studies, as well as gathering and synthesizing input from the community through stakeholder focus group interviews, a web-based survey, and this community workshop. Additional information and materials can be found on the project website, as well as information on current and upcoming project events (www.downtownnapaspecificplan.org).

II. MEETING FORMAT

On Tuesday June 9, 2009, the City held the first of two public workshops. The workshop was held at the Westin Hotel in Downtown Napa from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., to gather the community’s vision for the Downtown Napa Specific Plan, and preliminary design strategies to achieve the community’s vision. Approximately 90 community members attended the workshop, including residents, employees, community organization leaders, business owners and property owners from Napa.

The workshop commenced with an introduction from Tambri Heyden, the Planning Director for the City of Napa. The workshop was comprised of three parts. In the first portion of the workshop, Chris Beynon and Anchi Mei, principal and project manager from the lead consultant team MIG, Inc., presented the project’s purpose, trends in Downtown planning, and an analysis of the Planning Area’s existing condition.



The presentation was followed by small interactive group discussions, facilitated by MIG and City staff in which community members identified ideas and strategies to realize the community vision for the area. These discussions were categorized by the following categories: land use, urban design, economic development, infrastructure, and circulation. Each group was asked to create a

vision statement for the Planning Area, and specific elements that compose and/or define the overall vision.

In the third segment of the workshop, the small groups reported back to the larger group, sharing main ideas and building further on the community vision. Comments made by the participants during the report back period were graphically recorded on a large "wallgraphic" which is included at the beginning of the following section.

III. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The following is a summary of comments gathered from community members based upon small group discussions and comment cards. Community members formulated vision statements as well as identified specific assets, challenges, and opportunities in the categories of land use, urban design, economic development, infrastructure, circulation.

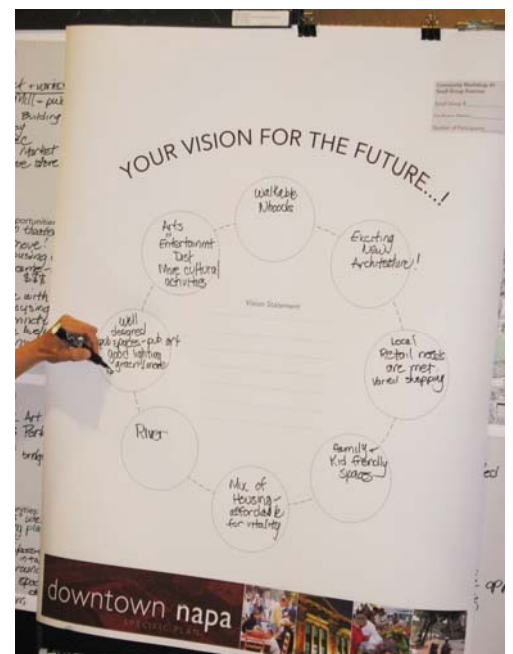
Bolded comments represent a synthesis of observations or ideas that were repeated multiple times by community participants.



A. VISION STATEMENTS

The following statements are different descriptions of a desired future for Downtown Napa created by workshop participants during the break-out group sessions. The phrases and sentences are written in the present verb tense to describe what Downtown Napa would look and feel like 10 to 15 years in the future.

- The following key words were identified as important to the future vision of Downtown Napa:
 - Authentic
 - Heart
 - Green
 - Balance
 - Destination
 - Gateway
- Downtown Napa is full of people with a sense of community.
- Downtown Napa is an economically vibrant and culturally diverse place that builds on its local geography and natural environment.
- Downtown Napa is unique and vibrant, and with a sense of place.
- Napa balances local and tourism activities while respecting our heritage for all ages with a small-town feel.
- Downtown is a livable, sustainable, active and inviting place for locals and tourists. Its walkable and accessible streets are filled with life where people live, work and play!
- Downtown is a waterway-centric, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, transit-oriented place that preserves its buildings of its past for locals and visitors to enjoy. Downtown is accessible, successful, fun, diverse, comfortable, relaxing, and friendly!



B. VISION ELEMENTS

The following statements are specific elements or components of the overall vision for the future of Downtown Napa. The statements reflect common themes and potential opportunities to improve Downtown Napa as identified by each break-out group.

- **The Napa River should be the heart of our community filled with activities and users.**
- **Have a balanced mix of commercial activities in Downtown Napa**
 - Allow a healthy mix of local and national retail to draw more people.
 - Meet the retail needs of the local population with a varied range of shopping opportunities and restaurants.
 - Ensure a viable mix of retail uses that cater to both residents and tourists.

- Encourage Downtown living by developing a robust and walkable retail core abundant in stores, coffee shops, restaurants and other commercial activity.
- **Transform Downtown Napa into an attractive tourist destination.**
 - Become a “hub” for tourists to explore the Napa Valley.
 - Be a hip destination!
 - Grow tourist economy by developing entertainment alternatives and hotels.
- **Create a locally inspired art and entertainment district where residents and tourist find cultural activities, music, dance and art.**
 - Keep the movie theater Downtown!
- **Promote a mix of housing options to support a lively and vibrant Downtown.**
 - Plan for a range of family-friendly housing types
 - Increase residential densities.
 - Create more mixed-use developments.
 - Downtown Napa should have housing for the local resident workforce.
- **Preserve and highlight an authentic sense of identity and community.**
 - Introduce public art that respects the character of the district/context.
- **Protect historic buildings and residential neighborhoods with context-sensitive new development.**
- **Promote sustainability in all aspects of Downtown planning, from architecture to street design.**
 - Encourage green building design.
 - Create a walkable, bikeable community.
 - Encourage new developments to take full advantage of Napa’s unique natural environment.
 - Create more urban forests within the Downtown area.
- **Encourage alternatives to driving to Downtown, such as rail, bus, bike, boat and walking.**
- **Create a car-free, walkable and bike-able Downtown well-connected to adjacent neighborhoods.**
 - Promote human scaled developments.
 - Strengthen First Street as an east-west linkage connecting both sides of the river.
- **Create well-designed public spaces that are attractive and engaging.**
 - Showcase public art, good lighting, abundant landscaping and large trees.
 - Redesign Soscol Avenue as a gateway to a more pedestrian-friendly, attractive Downtown environment.
- **Promote exciting new architecture.**
 - Produce elegant and sophisticated designs.
 - Create award-winning architecture.
- **Program land uses and bolster programming to have more events and activities in Downtown Napa for a wide range of people of all ages.**
 - Offer community events for all age groups.
 - Promote a 24-hour Downtown with all-day and all-night activities.

- Design multi-generational community gathering spaces and activities.
- Create family and kid-friendly gathering spaces.
- Focus efforts on empty-nesters.
- Place importance on improving safety and sense of security to encourage Downtown's liveliness.
- Maintain a small-town atmosphere while introducing sophisticated opportunities.
- Introduce modern infrastructure like wireless network and light rail transportation connecting Napa to the region.
- Move the jail out of Downtown Napa.
- Relocate county office and build new development there.
- Bring a range of education centers to Downtown to enliven the area and promote a college town atmosphere.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

The following comments are a summary of the break-out group discussions of existing assets, existing challenges and potential opportunities for new developments and public improvements in the planning area.

A. Land Use

Assets:

- **Napa River**
- Napa Creek – restore more of its natural character
- Small green spaces
- Riverfront mixed-use project
- Varied services within a short distance
- Compact Downtown core
- Locally serving retail like Safeway, hardware store
- Good balance of locally and tourist serving retail
- Range of services in Downtown area
- 1st Street and Main as a retail corridors
- Wide range of retail stores
- Mixed-use zoning district
- Accessible parking structures
- Good public spaces like Veteran's Park
- Copia Gardens
- Public events like the River Festival
- Farmer's Market
- Napa Mill
- Oxbow Market
- Exertec
- Jarvis
- Opera House
- Uptown Theater

- Goodman Library
- Public art
- Native Sons
- Borreo building
- Historic buildings
- Historical Society building
- Gordon building
- Government Offices that offer services and employment
- Fuller Park
- Encourage more activities and recreation opportunities on the river.

Challenges/Opportunities:

- **Increase uses along the Napa River.**
 - Add docks.
 - Open a kayak concession stand.
 - Create a boating facility on the Copia site.
- **Attract more locally-serving retail like a pharmacy, drug store and bookstore.**
- **Promote more nightlife by attracting more entertainment venues, nightclubs, coffee houses, and encouraging businesses to have longer hours.**
- **Re-open Uptown Theater.**
- **Redevelop Town Center connecting it to the streets and improving its security.**
- **Fill in vacant storefronts and underutilized parcels.**
- **Relocate jail to an appropriate location.**
- **Create mixed-use buildings with retail in the bottom and housing above.**
 - Design some of mixed-use prototypes for artists.
 - Encourage office use in ground floor units.
 - Increase densities and add more stories.
- **Utilize the River as an anchor for new and innovative developments.**
 - Improve and facilitate access to the River at different locations.
- **Include more gathering places, open spaces and plazas.**
- **Relocate Visitor Center to a more highly visible location!**
- **Attract more shopping venues for tourists like Williams-Sonoma.**
- **Encourage more shopping and activities for locals.**
- **Identify a unifying event for Napa.**
- **Move Chef's Market to Fridays.**
- **Create a community pool.**
- **Consolidate City Hall buildings.**
- **Use parking lots as blank slate for new developments.**
- **Define retail areas to create a good range and concentration within a short distance.**
- **Introduce a wider variety of uses and services Downtown that cater to both residents and tourists.**
- **Retain local businesses.**
- **Introduce fees for nightlife entertainment uses.**
 - Consider what is acceptable in terms of noise and disturbance.
- **Encourage private sector redevelopment.**
- **Transform the current single dominant ownership in Downtown.**
- **Explore the possibility of creating a small conference center.**
 - Create a large meeting venue.

- Avoid putting offices on the ground floor on mixed-use buildings, storefronts should be promoted.
- Utilize abandoned houses located in Downtown area.
- Provide affordable housing prototypes.
- Create a wide range of housing types like condos, apartments, rowhouses, and other.
- Build housing over parking structures.
- Build live/work units targeted for artists and professionals.
- Streamline processes for live/work units so that it is easier to get them built.
- Connect riverfront promenade with Oxbow District.
- Take full advantage of the Oxbow Commons Bypass Project to provide lively, fun and active recreating opportunities.
- Relocate Farmer's Market to a Downtown location.
- Include more family-friendly venues like a children's museum.
- Create a cultural center.
- Find appropriate re-use alternatives for Copia and gardens.
- Rezone R-O (Residential Office) back to R-I (Residential Infill) to attract more residents, more life and reduce property prices.



B. URBAN DESIGN

Assets

- Veteran's Park
- Napa River and Napa Creek
- Street grid pattern
 - Short blocks and frequent streets
 - Narrow streets
 - Good scale of streets
- Historic buildings
 - Victorian homes nearby
- Public Art
- Main Street bridge
- Community events
- Vistas to the mountain
- Oxbow District
- Avia Hotel has good design features:
 - Balances past and present architectural trends
 - Great example of a stepback that allows increased height but does not greatly affect the overall comfortable scale of the area

Challenges/Opportunities

- Transform parking lots into sites for new buildings.
- Introduce more green into our streets and parks from small landscaped areas to larger open spaces.
- Promote uses and activities on Veteran's Park.
- Create more playgrounds and play areas for young kids Downtown.
- Encourage high quality new buildings that are innovative, sustainable and that do not try to imitate styles from the past – forward moving and award winning architecture!
- Restore and maintain older buildings and historic architecture.
- Preserve a local sense of place, identity and character.
- Re-design TownCenter!
 - Include a park in any new design.
 - Cover it to protect people from the rain.
- Create a new design for Dwight Murray Plaza.
 - Turn Murray plaza into an attractive park or gathering space.
 - Add more green.
- Improve directional signage.
 - River, Creek and parks identification/signage
- Preserve vistas into the mountains since they create a beautiful background and also act as directional cues.
- Keep Safeway Downtown but renovate it.
- Beautify streetscape design.
- Create a gateway on Soscol Avenue.
- Look for additional opportunities for more public art Downtown.
- Create a town square, a main gathering space for the community.
- Generate more gathering places along the Napa River.
- Improve access and connections to the River.
- Select tree species for street trees that grow to be large shade trees.
- Seek opportunities to add more public art.
- Promote outdoor dining and sidewalk activation.
 - Include more seating along sidewalks.
 - Add a digital kiosk that provides information about upcoming events.
- Offer more activities and places for the youth like sport facilities, movies and entertainment.
- Promote the creation of more family friendly spaces.
- Ensure that new developments have open spaces, landscaped areas and trees.
- Encourage stores to be in taller structures.
- Use of ground-level parking for higher uses.
- Improve architectural character in building like Kohl's and Carithers Building.
- Allow for flexibility in building design.
- Define appropriate massing and heights for new buildings.
- New building could be up to five stories high, but further study based on location.
- Achieve high quality architectural standards by providing comprehensive design guidelines.
 - Include window and fenestration guidelines.
 - Encourage architecture that respects historical buildings but that does not try to copy them.

- Encourage environmentally-sensitive architecture and new developments.
- Follow LEED design standards.
- Look for solutions to improve the character of government offices on First Street.
- Explore relocating government offices off of First.
- Improve public facilities, such as including restrooms.
- Encourage high quality design on riverfront developments.
- Create cohesive and sensitive design guidelines to improve the overall character of Downtown.
- Improve the sense of place at the Oxbow district by adding signs and possibly a gateway element like an arch.
- Create an art district in the Oxbow area.
- Promote Christmas tree lightings Downtown.
- Encourage store owners to add more flowers and beautify their stores.
- Promote rich local history by exploring historic tourism.
- Provide historical markers.

C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Assets

- Range of entrepreneurs and investors
 - **Oxbow**
 - Hyatt
- Napa River and riverfront uses
- Main Street bustles with life!
- Locally serving retail like Safeway, Ace Hardware and Kohl's
- Opera House
- Oxbow Art School
- Wine Tasting Rooms
- Existing housing stock Downtown
- Demographic of customers
- Wide mix of ethnic groups
- Good merchants and great merchandise
- Copia
- Napa is an international tourist destination
- Napa Town Center
- Robust community of artists and musicians



Challenges/Opportunities

- **Work with property owners to achieve solutions for existing vacancies.**
 - Consider enforcing a vacant building tax and better owner maintenance regulations.
 - Look for ways to force landowners to upgrade their properties.
- Streamline new development permits and plans.
- Attract quality and competitive retail uses.

- Promote a more heterogeneous economy by encouraging different industries.
 - Break from wine monoculture.
- Foster more art, music and cultural and entertainment venues.
 - Soften strict entertainment regulation.
 - Delineate an entertainment district within the Downtown area.
- Bring a wider range of restaurants to Downtown.
- Create incentives to attract more restaurants like lower rent costs.
- Design a walking tour of all wine tasting locations within Downtown to get tourists to move around the area and discover other interesting aspects.
- Create incentives or subsidies for small businesses.
 - Increase the proportion of vibrant businesses.
 - Focus on a variety of levels of affordability depending on business types.
- Explore rent control to avoid having vacant buildings.
 - Regulate high rent costs and strict lease contracts.
 - Encourage small and affordable spaces for rent.
- Introduce a range of small shops in Town Center.
- Re-use Copia Conference Center. Re-use ideas include:
 - Commercial activities, e.g. retail
 - Cultural Center
- Place focus on local, middle-class, service-based workers.
- Create a plan that avoids Downtown's gentrification.
- Target right age group rather than a wide mix of age groups approach.
- Allow street vendors and musicians.
- Who will pay for this Vision?
 - Private developers would need more return.
 - Tax hotel rooms.
- Select a business-minded City Council.

D. INFRASTRUCTURE

Assets

- **Bridges**
- **Areas with undergrounded wires**
 - First and second streets with utilities underground
- Utilize by-pass project as a multi-purpose space
- Pedestrian friendly sidewalks with curb cuts
- Historic trees
- Flood control project
- Abundance of parking alternatives
- Wine train
- Good schools
- Cared for neighborhood, such as the Behrens Street area.

Challenges/Opportunities

- **Increase free Wi-Fi zones through Downtown.**
- **Add more green to streetscape and plant large street trees.**

- Add trees, plants, benches and picnic tables to parks and open spaces.
- Create a network of green spaces with parks as destinations and paths linking them.
- Create a truly bikeable Downtown by providing appropriate infrastructure and connecting bike lanes.
- Utilize the tracks from the Wine Train for other uses like commuter trains connecting Napa to Vallejo and other cities in the Bay Area.
- Introduce larger areas with permeable pavement and stormwater swales.
- Explore full potential and opportunities presented by the by-pass channel.
- Consolidate all City Hall functions into one building.
- Improve the style and other amenities along flood walls.
- Introduce green infrastructure to Downtown streets.
- Look for solutions to aging water pipe infrastructure as they are currently unstable.
- Explore alternative energy resources and conservation.

E. CIRCULATION

Assets

- Original grid of streets and blocks connecting the Downtown with neighborhoods.
- Good range of transit options
 - Centrally located transit center
 - Bus, trolley, smaller buses
 - Train tracks, Wine Train
- Napa River and the Rivertrail
- Bicycle trails and access
- Riverfront Promenade
- Large number of parking structures and parking areas.
 - Free parking throughout Downtown
- Wide, comfortable sidewalks



Challenges/Opportunities

- Improve safety of all users
- Improve connections through the Downtown area.
 - Reconnect streets to make them through streets again.
 - Recover original street/block pattern.
 - Coombs Street: Would through connection make it too busy?
 - Improve connection between Downtown and Oxbow district.
- Design Downtown to promote pedestrian circulation.
 - Clean, well maintained and consistent sidewalks.
 - Better signage and cues for orienting pedestrians.
 - Delineate pedestrian-only zones.

- **Create more amenities to encourage bike use like paths and racks.**
 - **Create bike lanes, paths and improve overall access**
 - Build more bike parking.
 - Create a bike share program
 - Utilize bike racks as public art opportunities.
 - Connect bike lanes to create a network from Downtown to Silverado and Main Street.
- **Redesign key arterials like Soscol Avenue and intersections to be more pedestrian friendly.**
 - Attractive crosswalk paving
 - Landscape
 - Signage
 - Lighting
 - Trees
 - Pedestrian amenities
- **Change First Street to be an entry into Town!**
- **Change the configuration of one-way streets into two-way streets.**
- **Changing one-way streets to two-way would reduce traffic speeds.**
- **Encourage car-free tourism by providing a good network of public transit options.**
- **Create a park-and-ride concept for tourists where they leave their car Downtown and they tour the valley in public transit (bus, train, shuttles).**
 - Reduce drunk driving
 - Toll for Valley drivers
 - Inexpensive
 - Eco-friendly as it reduces CO2 emissions
- **Consider adding ferry/boat service on the Napa River.**
 - Ferry connecting Napa with Vallejo and the rest of the Bay Area.
 - River taxi
- **Analyze best location for transit station.**
- **Improve multiple-way intersections that are hard to cross and disorienting for pedestrian circulation.**
- **Create visual entries and gateways to the City and Downtown**
 - From Highway 29
 - From Soscol Avenue
 - Explore using gateway elements like arches, pillars or others.
- **Reclaim space from some of the wider streets and increase pedestrian and bicycle amenities.**
- **Contemplate creating pedestrian and bike only streets.**
- **Improve sidewalks on main streets like Jefferson.**
- **Reclaim right-of-way on wide streets for pedestrian and bike use.**
- **Improve intersections with pedestrian crosswalks and better lighting.**
 - Consider raising intersections for improved visibility.
- **Design public environment keeping in mind the needs of seniors and people with reduced mobility.**
- **Look for solutions to skateboarding and enforce no skateboarding policy.**
- **Change First Street to be a two-way street to encourage pedestrian traffic like along Main Street.**

- Study impacts of reversing one-way streets to two-way in terms of economic investment and fire access.
- Include more traffic calming to slow down traffic.



- Develop better solutions for currently confusing intersections like 29th and 1st Street.
- Improve directional signage to be more clear and easy to read.
- Enforce sandwich-signage regulations so that there are more standard designs and materials.
- Place parking structures underground.
- Place parking on arterials; avoid funding to local streets.
- Allow employee/employer parking areas for the whole day.
- Create a car-share service with electric cars.
- Maintain shuttle service but create new routes that improve connectivity to and from key destinations.
- Include shuttle service from airport to transit station.
- Re-use First Street Creek Bridge.

F. OTHER

Assets

- Local residents

Challenges/Opportunities

- Foster ethnic diversity.
- Allow alcohol consumption Downtown.
- Keep people involved in the decision making process.
- The City should look for creative ways to purchase private property Downtown.
- The City should be committed to enforce sustainable and environmentally friendly policies.
- Find appropriate place to relocate homeless and homeless services.
- Downtown needs visionaries to push it forward in all aspects.