

## **Public Comments on Downtown Specific Plan**

**Received between 10/24/09 and 1/7/10**

**Jean,**

**My wife and I have been fortunate to travel to many places.**

**In Wellington, New Zealand we saw a facade retention where they installing steel H beams through the floors and secured the facade which was saved. Then the building behind was demolished and new constuction installed. In Washington DC we saw historic buildings but stepped back from the historic facade new construction rose above the old but visually the historic part remained the most interesting part of the street scene.**

**I am not sure how this may apply to Napa and perhaps there should be some sort of floor area ratio credit or other incentive to save historic facades. Much more inexpensive just to tear down the old but keeping some history is also good.**

**Thanks.**

**Steve**

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Ms. Heyden,

I was unable to make the downtown meeting but I have a serious question. Has anyone considered having the city taking over the Cinedom property and turning it into a culture arts center with the ability to show independant, foreign and art film much like the Realta in Snata Rosa, but also adding the ability to do live shows as well as other culture events.

If Napa is going to become a center with draw, it will be the combination of botique wine tasting, great food and entertainment that will draw the higher profile business's and people. There is already Jarvis, Ophra House, the Uptown (if George Altamira ever gets anything done, something I doubt). If one were to add the Napa High & Vintage High Theaters, the Napa College theater, Copia's Theater and a complex at the Cinedome sight we would have a gret bases for a Film Festival. I also know some heavy hitters in the film industry and I know a subject base that will draw great films.

If that is something that the city wants to explore, I will be more than happy to assist even though I am buried with my new company right at the moment. I will also be more than happy to get some great names to help out as well. I do not know

if you knew this, but I was VP at 2 major record companies in the past. I have a Rolodex full of contacts.

Sincerely  
Raymond Burch

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Telephone Call with June Beeler  
November 20, 2009

Concerned that time limits on parking in parking lots of on the street are discouraging. She parked in the parking lot at Main and Clinton streets, unaware of the 3 hour parking limit. She was given a parking citation. She spoke to the operator of the salon she had visited and was told that the limitations on parking are difficult for both her clients and her employees, however there are few all day parking options. Ms. Beeler is quite opposed to parking limits downtown. She feels it sends a signal to people that, "we don't want you here." She doesn't feel comfortable parking in parking garages.

She thinks we need more retail options to entice people to go downtown and sees the potential to have paid parking lots whereby merchants can provide validation for visiting their stores/restaurants. She feels that limits on parking is unfair to customers and that locals should be rewarded for living here, not penalized.

She also feels there should be a vacancy tax to address all of the vacancies downtown. She is opposed to one way streets and would like to see more parking on First Street in the downtown. She would like to see shops that serve locals, not just visitors.

With regard to building heights, she feels the new building on Main and Clinton (Pizza Azzuro, Neela's) is imposing. She stated that density must be considered and that we need a draw to bring people downtown and increase foot traffic.

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Hello. I live at 2281 Second St. My input on traffic as far as it concerns the city is as follows. To make it first street two way is probably to expensive and would only back up traffic I would think. (probably would benefit me, as we would have less traffic on second) The only common sense answer is to change directions between first and second. Time to do it is now while they are under construction, tie it in with the completion of street updating. Benefits are it would take tourists direct to where you want them to be and it is just the natural flow off the freeway. Does not benefit me in any way but again just makes sense. Necessary to be at meeting to get input put forth? Thank you Bob Coffin

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Hi – thank you for the notification of the meeting – is there anyway I could receive some sort of synopsis of what happens at the meeting I think 1<sup>st</sup> st. should definitely be two-way -- long overdue!  
Thanks, Kay Dunne

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Greetings, Lisa –

I am copying Julianne Ward at the City, but if you could, on the behalf of a Chamber member, please forward the following to any additional interested parties for whom this message would be of interest, with my appreciation. You and/or Julianne are welcome and encouraged to make public, and to make part of the record, the following statement on our company's behalf at this evening's meeting:

I am unavailable to attend the meeting this evening, but let it be known that Quent Cordair Fine Art unequivocally and in the strongest terms supports the return of First Street to two-way traffic as soon as possible. If the goal and concern of the City is the survival and revival of the downtown business district, this critical transition should be effected without further delay. If the powers that be so will it, the return to two-way traffic on First Street could be, and should be, pursued immediately, with the transition completed before next summer. It can be done, and should be done.

Thank you for your attention and efforts in regard to this matter.

Sincerely,

Quent Cordair, CEO  
Cordair, Inc.

Quent Cordair Fine Art  
1301 First Street  
Napa, CA 94559  
(707) 255-2242  
[www.cordair.com](http://www.cordair.com)

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Hey Julianne,

My name is Omar Salem and I'm a Police Officer for the City of Napa. I recently found out that the City of Napa had a Community Development Department. I had an idea and not sure if it's ever been discussed before. But has the City ever thought about establishing a Youth Community Center consisting of:

- Indoor Soccer Field
- Indoor Basketball
- Boxing
- Gym Mats
- Volleyball Court
- Leadership Clinic

I've always been in the opinion ever since I was little that the City of Napa is in dire need of such a center, especially for our troubled youth.

Let me know either way,

Thanks,  
Omar

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**November 3, 2009**

**To: Jean Hasser**

**From: Steve Vartan**  
**Subject: Comments on Downtown Specific Plan**

**Dear Jean,**

**I attended the steering committee workshop and would like to commend you, the Napa team and your consultants on a good start and offer the following comments:**

- 1. The plan should provide policy and specific concepts of how the Napa River can give Napa a competitive edge for economic development. One idea would be small water taxis such have been in use since 1982 in Vancouver, BC. The docks for these are very modest and one in the vicinity of Copia could serve that area. Both the Napa Yacht Club residential area and RiverPark have existing guest docks. <http://www.granvilleislandferries.bc.ca/home.html>**
- 2. While a theater/entertainment district was discussed there should be a wine center district which could include Copia, Oxbow and hotels in this area. If such a district were established perhaps a marketing co-operative effort would make sense.**
- 3. Specific programs involving outdoor entertainment, art, food & wine need to be developed to give Napa a competitive edge. I feel that every weekend during the summer there need to be activities for both local and visitors.**
- 4. A design competition with a limited number of qualified teams should be considered for one or two specific parcels controlled by the city.**

**Thank you for an opportunity to comment on the plan.**

**Steve Vartan**  
**81 N Newport Drive**  
**Napa, California 94559**

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Dear Ms. Ward,

Thank you for forwarding this summary.

An idea to help mitigate perceived narrowness of First Street as a TWO WAY Street in the context of emergency responders BEFORE the Browns Valley Fire Station is completed could be to limit parking on the north side of first street in the following ways:

1. From Jefferson St. to California parking limited to loading zones only. This area is made up of mostly businesses and apartments which have off street parking. There are only 6 residences on the north side of First Street, of which 2 are Vacation Rentals.
2. After the Browns Valley Fire Station is completed these parking places could be “restored.”
3. The Potter Residence at 1926 First Street has a driveway and the property continues through to Clay Street, where on street parking is available, as well as across the street on First Street.
4. The property at 2010 First Street is a Vacation Rental which SHOULD be providing off street parking for this use.
5. The residences at 2024 & 2040 both have driveways and are currently single family residences.
6. The residence at 2048 is a single family residence sharing a zero line lot with two other homes and has a drive way and off street parking.
7. There is an apartment complex with off street parking at 2126 1<sup>st</sup> Street, next door is a residence off of Bulson Ct.
8. From Seymour to Monroe there are only four residences which front First Street. The residence at the corner of First and Seymour fronts Seymour. All residences on First from Seymour to Monroe have driveways which would offer off street parking for the residences.
9. From Monroe to California are the Wolfe Center and another business building both with off street parking.

In summary, the temporary limiting of parking to loading zones on the NORTH side of First Street would be of minor inconvenience to the neighborhood residents and even this could be further mitigated to specific times of the day on Mondays through Fridays.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Beazley  
Co-owner  
The Beazley House

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From: Mike Potter

To whom it may concern:

This letter is in regard to the Downtown Napa Specific Plan: Neighborhood Outreach Meeting of November 12, 2009. Many things were discussed by those in attendance; unfortunately, I was not called upon to state my concerns, observations, and preferences

for how to address several options for the direction of First and Second Streets. The intention of this letter is to express my view.

First, let me address one attendee: James "Jim" Beazley. If I recall he stated that he lived on 1st Street for 28 years. He said that when he created his Bed and Breakfast (B+B) business on 1<sup>st</sup> St, he was required to put in off-street parking, and did so. He highly supports Reversing the directions or changing 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> to Two-Way traffic. He proposed that since a Fire Station is going to be built in Brown's Valley in 2012, emergency vehicles wouldn't need 1<sup>st</sup> to get out to Brown's Valley. He also proposed that 1<sup>st</sup> be changed to Two-way and on-street parking should be changed to No On-Street parking, so emergency vehicles can continue to roll down the street and traffic can easily pull over. He further stated that this would have no real impact since people could park in their driveways.

Mr. Beazley moved to Napa and onto 1<sup>st</sup> 28 years ago. He created the Beazley House Bed and Breakfast soon after arriving. However, he moved away from 1<sup>st</sup> by 1993. He doesn't live here and has held himself out more often as being a downtown businessman than a 1<sup>st</sup> St resident. He put in some off-street parking, but was given a special exemption by the city, so there is not enough off-street parking for his rental rooms when the business is at capacity. Around 2000, Jim built another B+B on 1<sup>st</sup>. This B+B also received special exemptions and does not have enough parking places when at capacity. I totally disagree with Mr. Beazley. First, both of the B+B's require on-street parking. Second, maids and other support need somewhere to park. Third, his B+B is on the corner of 1st and Warren, having on-street parking access that the rest of 1<sup>st</sup> lacks. Fourth, he has special events that can take up all of the on-street parking, so whose driveways will they park in? Fifth, the Brown's Valley Fire Station construction has been delayed for years; it is impossible to make a decision with such impact on that unreliable date. Lastly, 1<sup>st</sup> used to be mostly single family residences; now, it is mostly businesses and multi-family dwellings and the idea of one or two cars parked in each driveway per building is ludicrous..

Now, I can address other issues I have concerning the Outreach Meeting.

First: It was stated that there was a survey in which 900 respondents agreed with the Steering Committee's recommendations. I was unaware of the survey, and have found nobody else that was aware, let alone responded, to the survey. Further, I did not hear how the survey barred one person from multiple entries. 900 (individuals?) responding is only about 1% of the total population. I have little faith in the survey being a true representation of the citizens' thoughts.

Second: Signage. If the problem people have to getting downtown is with a lack of signs, then this could be much easily and cheaply corrected by putting up the proper signs than by changing street directions.

Third: It was stated that there are 13,000 trips made through this corridor per day. It is my experience that at about 5:00 pm every weekday, the traffic on 1<sup>st</sup> backs up to approximately 2040 1<sup>st</sup>. On Friday 13, 2009, at around 3:00 pm, with one lane of traffic (due to construction closing one lane), traffic backed up to 1926 1<sup>st</sup>.

There was talk of putting synchronized traffic lights on California at 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> streets. I have serious reservations about this improving anything. 1) Each time the walk button is pressed, synchronization could be lost. 2) Since other roadways are not synchronized, how diligent will the city be in keeping these intersections synchronized? 3) Since the light at Lucky Way and California turns a green arrow into a little used apartment complex and red to north bound California traffic when no vehicle is actually turning and the light at 1<sup>st</sup> and California has a green arrow off the 1<sup>st</sup> overpass and red for the most other directions for too long (many people run the various reds), what guarantee is there that the lights at California and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets will be kept synchronized?

Fourth: The primary concern is safety. The speed on 1<sup>st</sup> is usually much faster than the posted limit. The limit was reduced to 25 with good effect; however, the limit cannot be changed to 25 and still allow the police to use radar enforcement. Stop signs at the intersections and speed bumps would reduce speeding; unfortunately, they would have negative impacts on emergency vehicles as well.

Fifth: people's enjoyment of their property. Since 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street residents and businesses want others to be able to visit easily, "No On-Street Parking" is unacceptable.

Sixth: The reason for the Outreach Meeting is the Downtown Plan. This fact was only brought up to say it was not to be discussed. Unfortunately, it is the 800 pound gorilla in the room. The Steering Committee made and voted on proposals before hearing "public comments", yet downtown interests came to the neighborhood meeting and were allowed input as if they were residents (some even suggesting we were country rubes that can't make a better future for ourselves). If I recall history: The downtown interests proposed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> streets being changed to One-Way, didn't like the tourist traffic coming through town and wanted the Southern Crossing, wanted to tear down the old buildings and put up modern structures, has the Thursday (Chef's?) market and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks that are very popular and draw big crowds while complaining nobody can find downtown, wanted Combs and Randolph closed to build the mall, wanted parking garages and had say in where to put them, and want 4, 5, and even 7 story buildings that will impact traffic even more. Further, there have been over 20 traffic surveys (at one point 18 surveys in 19 years) all coming to the same conclusion – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> should be one-way streets with 1<sup>st</sup> going out toward Hwy 29. Time and again the downtown interests have gotten what they requested, then complained about the impact, then came up with another "solution", and always costing the city more money.

Last: Cost. The City of Napa does not have the money to pay for reversing or changing these streets to Two-Way. With the current revenue shortfalls, it doesn't look like Napa will have the money in the near future either.

With all of these factors in mind, the top concern is for public safety. Not just for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> streets, but for the rest of the City of Napa as well. The change to two-way, or change of directions, will have a negative effect on the emergency response time. Speed bumps and stop signs will slow the response time as well. For fire and police protection, in

downtown and Brown's Valley, 1<sup>st</sup> needs to be one way; that one-way needs to be outbound.

So, let us address the less important issues. We can add signs to help people get to their destination. Perhaps we could have the freeway exit onto 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. On 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, we can put up a couple "Your Speed Is" indicators, like we have near many of our schools now (with the solar panels) and maybe a camera like many of our intersections. The benefits seem to be: little to no negative effect upon emergency response times, people getting to and from downtown faster and safer, reduced speed, on-street parking for homes and businesses (allowing even those attending The Beazley House's special events to park near-by), less or equal traffic back-up than other plans.

What does Napa do about the downtown interests? It can't be to continue having a new traffic survey every year. My business degree from Sac.State is with concentrations in Finance and Insurance, and not in Marketing. However, it seems that the little I know suggests that the Downtown Merchant is still affected by Product, Placement, and Price. The product is, or should be, what the merchant has an interest in or thinks will sell. The placement is downtown. The Price is cost plus profit margin. The factor that the City of Napa can impact is price. The city already helps with events and keeping downtown reasonably clean and attractive. However, the city can help downtown become more profitable by encouraging more business. It can do this by (this is not my original idea, but it is a good one): enacting a vacancy tax. These vacant storefronts cost the city in unrealized tax revenue from both the lack of a business and lost impulse purchases (the customer went to one store, but also bought something seen at a neighboring store). One of the best business moves downtown was done by McCaulou's; the rent was based on what percentage of the mall was vacant – McCaulou's knew that nearby vacancy would have a negative impact on its sales. Why can't the other downtown merchants or the City of Napa see this?

Another impact the City of Napa can have on downtown is rent-control. We have all heard the horror stories of downtown business cycle. The business becomes successful only to have the rent increased to the point the business owner felt he or she was working for the building owner. The business owner closes the doors and the location remains vacant with no business at all. The City must put a stop to this predatory rental practice. It hurts the business owner and it hurts the city. The city needs to enact rent control. The biggest weapon that the City of Napa has against the perpetuation of a failing downtown is eminent domain. The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that a municipality can take property from an owner if that owner acts in ways that are not in the best interest of that government body's tax revenue. I am opposed to this action, but when the downtown land owner chases away businesses and leaves storefronts vacant for many years, it is well within the city right and responsibility to take the property and encourage business.

I do not believe it is more profitable to own a building that remains empty with no tenant, but somehow this is the downtown business model. I do not believe a city gets more tax revenue from vacant buildings, but the city of Napa seems to find this acceptable. I find it harder to get around Trancas than to get around downtown. This is due to the business

level that Trancas has achieved. Trancas is the model, not downtown. If the downtown interests think that the street is what causes the lack of business activity, it only needs to either look at Trancas because nobody shops a vacant storefront. Unfortunately, it is just too easy to blame the out-of-town traffic, the old buildings, the lack of a "downtown" mall, the distance or time it takes to get to a parking garage, the street direction, anything but the fact that business revenue is related to storefront vacancy. The City of Napa must put an end to the downtown vacant storefront. No one else seems to think it is important.

RECEIVED

DEC 29 2009

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

To: Downtown Specific Plan Committee  
From: Lance Burris  
Subject: Comments on the Last Workshop  
Date: December 22, 2009

I was unable to attend the last Downtown Specific Plan Workshop. Fortunately, the web page summary is excellent. It contains many good ideas. My comments remain the same, however:

1. At the outset, there needs to be a clear statement of Napa's economic reason for being. A "vital downtown" doesn't cut it, and tourism does not a community make. I get it. Napa is the tourist gateway to the Napa Valley, but what is going to produce the middle-income jobs needed to sustain the vitality of the community as a whole?
2. Napa needs a strategy to realize its stated goal by focusing on synergistic economic activities rather than on abstract, feel-good land uses. (For example, while the arts have a definite role to play, most Napans are not in the art market because they lack the interest and discretionary income to be a player. While art can be produced here, it has to look to the outside world for a market, a la Taos.)
3. If the Downtown is geared specifically to tourists, it will never support the kind of commercial uses desired by residents. Downtown needs a number of major employers to create sustained walk-up traffic and generate middle-income jobs. Who are these employers? Not the wineries and hotels.
4. The land use vision follows from the economic vision, and not the other way around. This has been the failing of much city planning because historically the discipline grew out of the architecture rather than the economics departments. While much lip service is given by architects to "form following function" the Napa Town Center is an example of "dysfunction following form." Too much has been invested in this development to tear it down, as some have suggested. Therefore, some non-retail use is in order that will keep the buildings occupied and provide walk-up traffic for restaurants and other businesses located along the major streets.
5. Napa needs to explore creative adaptive-reuse of existing buildings, with COPIA being a good example. COPIA should be a multi-purpose building, as many have suggested. It was erroneously conceived as a tourist-oriented, single-purpose building. Yet it had no walk-up traffic, was dependent upon grant funding (yikes!), lacked interest, and talked

*Julianne -  
Inc. in  
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down to nearly everyone in a preachy, academic manner. While basically a sound idea, it was very poorly executed and destined to fail. When a single-purpose building fails, it becomes a white elephant...making COPIA the proverbial "elephant in the room." Adaptive reuse of the building is the only recourse. Reuses might include a school, conference center/meeting rooms (for the Ritz, if it is ever built), and a wine/food/arts marketing and telecommunications center as separate, yet related, activities. The idea of limiting new hotel development in the area is also a good one. Instead, make the Oxbow District the community's focal point, as some have suggested, which includes a central open space (Zocalo) with a beautifully landscaped community recreational facility. People will come to Napa to join in and feel a part of the local festivities. (I must admit, I was dubious about the economic viability of the Oxbow Market, yet my wife and I now find ourselves going there quite frequently. Congratulations to the entrepreneurial spirit of its investors! It has the potential of becoming another "Pike's Market" of Seattle fame. The only other quality commercial attraction is the Bel Air Shopping Center, because of its mix of tenants, which needs better circulation because of its success.)

6. I would like to echo the often repeated comments of a local artist that Napa should not attempt to mimic historic architecture that never was. Rather, it should set a much higher design standard. Examples of contemporary architecture blending in with traditional buildings are plentiful in Europe. (The Hatt Building is a success story in this regard. The use of industrial materials, such as corrugated iron, in its additions works extremely well and has a legitimacy that the adjacent Riverfront lacks, in spite of the developer's well-intentioned efforts to do the right thing. While no one wants glass and steel high-rises, an appropriately-scaled contemporary building of quality design is superior to a stage set which will not age well.)
7. While I have mentioned it before, no one seems to have picked up on it. Why not construct a weir on the river below the Hatt Building? This would create a permanent community lake, as opposed to an occasional mud flat, as the focal point of downtown. The lake would accommodate small recreational boats, water fowl, and possibly an illuminated fountain for use on special events. Punting would take place upstream on the river, while larger boats arriving from downstream would be accommodated at an interesting docking facility located below the Angele restaurant. This would create yet another commercial node. This adds another dimension to the attractive flood control project. (Don't let the engineers say it is not possible.)
8. I agree, Napa should identify itself as a "town" rather than a "city," since the goal is to retain Napa's small town character, rather than

become an extension of the urbanized south. In this regard, Napa Pipe is not simply another stand-alone project. It needs to reinforce rather than dilute Napa's role within the county. Local government needs to take charge of the future and not be bullied by state government into doing things which are against the interest of local people, who have to live with the consequences.

9. As far as demolition is concerned, all of the concrete tilt-up buildings of the 1970s should be taken down after new economic uses have been determined.

In closing, while I am not a big fan of "facilitated" citizen planning, the Downtown Specific Plan process seems to be working well, although it would benefit from greater neighborhood participation and some fresh blood (as opposed to obligatory "wounded game" from Napa's past). I am hopeful that a workable plan will emerge, provided someone is thinking about the underlying economics. (No renderings of plazas and esplanades populated by balloon-holding children, please! We got those in the 1970s, and it didn't work.) The development pattern should consist of specific economic activities clustered in nodes that are rationally linked by a network of water, pedestrian, bicycle, rail, and auto ways. Napa is one of those rare places where bicycles could dominate the scene, if there was a "Bicycle Central" served by safe bicycle routes, plentiful bicycle racks located throughout the city, and a supply of stylish three-wheelers for more elderly residents. This is one of those areas where we have much to learn from Europe.

Napa is a great place with an even greater future. I consider myself privileged to live here.

cc. Juliana Inman  
Peter Mott  
Gordon Huether