

Meeting Topic: Feedback on Draft Downtown Element

DAHC members present: Cheryl King, Mike Thomas, John Merz, David Halimi, Alan Chamberlain, Nick Ambrosia, Katrina Davis-Woodcox, Mary Flynn

City staff present: Brendan Vieg, Meredith Williams, Shawn Tillman, Bob Summerville, Tom Varga

1.0 GP Update Status

Brendan Vieg provided an update on the General Plan Update schedule.

2.0 Downtown Element Introduction

Meredith Williams provided background on development of the Element, inclusion of the DAHC input, and an overview of Element highlights.

3.0 Individual Responses to the Element

John Merz

The Downtown area should be expanded to include Bidwell Presbyterian, Children's Park, and extended to Orient St. in the southeast portion of Downtown.

Downtown Land Use Diagram graphic is confusing – the labeling makes it difficult to tell the difference between several of the land use designations.

Under Policy DT-1 there should be an action to have a permanent Downtown Commission identified.

Action 6.2.2 – Don't dictate whether bike path is on the south side or the north side of Big Chico Creek.

DT 7.1 – There needs to be a better definition of what constitutes "central" parking.

DT 7.1.2 – Separate 24-hour access and employee parking into two different actions.

Nick Ambrosia

The Element does not highlight the need for open rest spots for pedestrians.

There needs to be more discussion of art opportunities.

The Element does not focus enough attention on the need for enhanced transitions between the Downtown and University. Transition to University – How do we improve that area near Laxson – “it currently looks like a back entrance”.

On the Vision Illustration, show some of the corners as empty spaces in South Downtown where people can stop and take a break – “green up” South Downtown corners.

DT 3.1 – add “open spaces”

David Halimi

Good job of capturing committee feedback.

Parking – Need to have something about parking in the Vision Statement. We shouldn't keep referencing parking “structures”, but should refer to parking “facilities”.

Concept #8 – include the option of “underground” parking.

Lack of Encouragement between Public/Private – how do we encourage public/private partnerships.

Add new Action DT-1.5.4 - Utilize incentives to support builders who invest in cultural arts.

Incorporate language that ensures we as a City investigate every way possible to promote reuse of second floors – don't limit ourselves.

DT 4.2.1 – it sounds a little heavy handed to require 2 stories.

Alan Chamberlain

We may be overlooking redevelopment opportunities because we consider buildings as “historic”.

We need a greater expansion of what constitutes Downtown. Ivy is a key entryway. The Downtown footprint should be expanded to the east and west.

We need to highlight and provide more pedestrian refuges (not just the area's adjacent to roadways). There is so much wasted and underutilized parking areas that could be transformed through incentives, partnerships, or public purchases.

Look for how to create paseos and other unique pedestrian environments.

Katrina Davis-Woodcox

DT 5.1.4 – include Downtown residents in this.

DT 6.3.1 – Don't need to recreate a brand, as the DCBA has already created one. Let's not duplicate the effort.

DT 7.1.2 – Break out employee parking or put more emphasis on this. Provide incentives and options for employees.

DT 7.1 – What does "central" parking mean?

Expand the notion under Policy DT 1.5 that "all public spaces" should be used for cultural activities and events, not just the Plaza.

Mike Thomas

Need to improve lighting for late night employees for safety.

DT 6.2.4 – Make this happen.

Mary Flynn

Likes the way it is written. Likes the distinction between north and south Downtown.

Can we mention "enhancing" the Farmer's Market so that it can be both indoor and outdoor, and so that other amenities might be included – i.e., refrigeration and bathrooms.

Cheryl King

Thanks for a good job. It is general, which is OK.

Shares the same issues that have already been raised.

Wants to really highlight pedestrian spaces.

We need to celebrate the Saturday and Thursday markets, not just continue to allow them.

Public Comment

Mike McGinnis

There are conflicts between the Downtown policy for using the creeks and other General Plan policies that call for protecting creekside greenways.

Jenny Crawford

Need to focus on wayfinding and be sure to use local experts.

4.0 Vision Illustration Discussion

Need more green on the Vision Illustration.

Add the Concepts and the Disclaimer to the Vision Illustration.

Check the Land Use Designation Map vs. the Vision Illustration – there are some inconsistencies between the OMU and RMU designations.

Get rid of shadows, trees, and cars. It makes it look like a site plan.

Add a new CONCEPT – unique pedestrian places (at corners, paseos, green areas in parking areas).

Need more inspiration for the Vision. What CAN people do, not what they can't do.

Need better pictures for the mixed use buildings. They don't look like Chico.

Call it a concept plan. Make it more rounded on the edges.

5.0 Group Discussion

Employee parking needs to be its own discussion point.

Add an ACTION - We need a permanent Downtown Committee or Commission – it will make things happen. How about a formalized group, but not a quasi-judicial group. It allows a safe place for constructive dialogue.

6.0 Business from the Floor