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City of Santa Paula

2040 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE – PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT

RECOMMENDED DOWNTOWN DISTRICT – NEW POLICY

VISION – SANTA PAULA'S TRADITIONAL DOWNTOWN

The *Downtown District* was first envisioned in the *1996 Downtown Improvement Plan – Design Development Report* (adopted by City Council) and further refined in the *2004 Downtown Improvement Plan Update* (adopted by City Council), the *2012 Downtown Improvement Plan* and the *2017 Downtown Action Plan*. All of these vision documents featured the same approximate district area boundary generally contained by 7th Street, 12th Street, Harvard Blvd and Railroad Ave. As illustrated on the following page, the boundary recommended in the 2040 General Plan Update is a refined adaptation of this general land area. Throughout the course of these past planning efforts, the Citizens of Santa Paula have repeatedly conveyed a cohesive vision for downtown – *Diversify the economic base in order to provide needed goods and services to local residents and visitors alike, as well as to expand employment and residential opportunities for all its residents. Strive to maintain and enhance its wonderful quality of life: its small town charm, a balance between jobs and housing opportunities, community members and organizations working together, friendly atmosphere, quaint neighborhoods, quality design, and historic environment.*

POLICY – PROPOSED 2040 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

In order to advance this Vision, the currently proposed *2040 General Plan Public Review Draft* contains the following policy statements that will direct future city planning efforts.

- **LU 5.c Downtown District Overlay.** Establish a Downtown District Overlay in the Development Code to provide an incentive-based tool for compatible infill development that supports affordable housing, economic development and public improvements in the Downtown. Density/intensity bonuses up to a maximum of 3.0 FAR may be granted contingent upon the provision of affordable housing or other public benefits and amenities such as public spaces, enhanced streetscaping or public art.
- **LU 5.d Downtown parking.** Consider strategies to reduce parking demand and manage supply (shared parking, in-lieu fees, commercial parking, etc.) to improve pedestrian, bicycle and transit mode share, downtown livability, safety, business vitality, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction, and air quality. Implement standards that reduce demand for new parking and private vehicle ownership, and that help maintain optimal parking occupancy and availability.
- **LU 5.e Downtown development standards.** Revise zoning regulations for the Downtown to: *1) increase the maximum floor area ratio from 2.0 to 3.0; 2) review mixed-use residential parking requirements; 3) streamline the review process for desired uses; and 4) permit housing outright.*
- **LU 5.f Design guidelines.** Consider adoption and implementation of design guidelines based upon the 2004 Downtown Improvement Plan to encourage development that enhances the historic quality and character of the Downtown area.

IMPLEMENTATION – FUTURE CITY INITIATIVES

In order to implement the visioning documents for the Downtown District, discrete City initiatives will be necessary. Over the course of the next 6-12 months, Staff will study and formulate recommendations for City Council and public review a set of action items designed to implement three overarching planning goals for the Downtown District – **(1) Incentivize Infill Affordable Housing; (2) Improve Downtown Infrastructure; and, (3) Expand and Enhance Pedestrian Safety and Security.** Those implementing action items are:

- **2040 General Plan – Downtown District Overlay.** Anticipated adoption in Q4 2019, the new policy will formally codify past legislative direction established by the four downtown vision documents cited above.
- **Design Guidelines.** Update anticipated in Q1 of 2020 to ensure compatibility with existing downtown context and architectural character.

- **Downtown District Overlay Development Code.** Commencing in Q1 2020, enhanced zoning provisions will be developed including:
 - **Preferred Use Provisions** – Staff will advise a set of permitted uses intended to prioritize affordable housing and compatible small-scale commercial (primarily office & retail) uses that reinforce the downtown vision.
 - **Development Standards** – Staff will recommend new regulations to incentivize infill while prescribing compatibility measures, particularly between abutting transitional uses (set-backs, height step-down, lot coverage, etc.)
 - **Infrastructure Improvements** – Staff will explore an in-lieu fee structure (or similar) as mandatory provisions for taking advantage of new overlay incentives. Fees will offset the costs for provisions such as:
 - **District Parking.** Strategies and programs to meet parking demand through creative means (such as joint-use agreements, district parking, shared use, etc – the downtown has over 1,500 surface parking spaces that are very underutilized).
 - **Public Right-of-Way Improvement.** Other infrastructure will be improved (paving, parks, sidewalks, trash enclosure, etc.)
 - **Pedestrian Safety and Security.** Strategies and programs to protect the pedestrian – related to lighting, signage, accessibility and ground-level transparency.
 - **Gathering Space.** Potential for enhancing and expanding small-scale public spaces (such as Green/Mill Alleys, Paseos, etc.)
- **Review Process Efficiencies.** Underway in Q4 2019 and to continue in Q1 2020, City Staff are enhancing review process:
 - **Early Assistance.** A refined fee structure making Planning Staff more available, accountable and responsive.
 - **Application Intake & Review.** Refined tools to simplify, clarify and track submittal requirements and review status.
 - **Compatible Infill Development.** More permissive land use categories in Downtown District for desired uses – more outright use provisions and fewer conditional use entitlements.
 - **Enhanced Staff-level Entitlements.** Increased ministerial discretion at Staff level including, but not limited to, prescriptive allowances and/or provisions for more streamlined approval process for affordable housing.

PROPOSED DOWNTOWN DISTRICT BOUNDARY

