



Downtown Update



The City is working on the next phase of Downtown revitalization. The next phase targets improvements on two City parking lots, totaling 8.2 acres in the heart of downtown (see map). Residents are excited about further enhancements to Downtown. This fall, the City conducted a multi-channel public engagement process to identify community ideas, preferred design elements, and priorities. Residents appreciated the opportunity to have their voices heard. The highest priority elements, identified by over 2,000 participants, include providing adequate parking, maintaining community character, and incorporating a public open space area.

Additional areas identified by outreach participants include: desire to maintain good traffic flow; interest in retail, restaurants, and related uses; desire for a green pedestrian pathway from South Livermore Avenue to South L Street; support for a modest amount of housing; support for a parking garage on the southwest corner of the western site; incorporation of an east/west street through the western site; and, preservation of Blacksmith Square's historic character. Participants in the process support the idea of a new downtown boutique hotel but do not agree on its location. The majority prefers the hotel on the west parcel and a minority prefers the hotel on the east parcel next to the Bankhead Theater. Based on this input, the City Council directed staff to create two concepts: one with a hotel on the west side and one with

a hotel on the east side. Both concepts include other elements identified by the participants. Revised concepts are scheduled for City Council review and design decisions in late January. At that time, Council will determine what elements will be incorporated into the final plan. To learn more about the current status and next steps, visit the City's website at www.cityoflivermore.net. Feel free to e-mail comments or suggestions to DowntownCatalystProj@cityoflivermore.net.



Outreach Results

The public engagement program started in late August and concluded in early November 2017. Public engagement opportunities included workshops, pop-up events, walking tours, presentations to community groups and a robust on-line website with a build-your-own concept creator. Community participation was strong across the various events, with residents generating over 200 land use concepts and 1,175 priority rankings of key Downtown elements. Participants in the outreach process were asked to rank the importance of various issues related to Downtown. Topic areas discussed in this newsletter are arranged in order by participants' priorities.

Priority #1: Parking



Parking is the most important issue identified by outreach participants. Participants want to ensure sufficient parking for both current and future uses. Based on this feedback, the Council directed that the concepts provide the same number of parking spaces during construction as exist today and that additional parking be provided for all new uses at each phase of development. A new parking structure located on South L Street, improvements to the existing lot behind First Street businesses, and a new surface lot on North I Street next to the existing garage were all identified as important. Participants also prioritized providing more accessible parking throughout Downtown and maintaining some parking next to the Bankhead Theater.

Priority #2: Community Character

Outreach participants noted, and the City Council directed, that any new development should reflect Livermore's historic character. Council specified new development should mirror and enhance Livermore's small town feel, incorporating materials such as red and yellow brick, wood, and design elements that are reflective of Livermore's historic character. The Council limited building heights to three or four stories, and less in locations with adjacent one-story buildings. In particular, the Council limited the height of new development next to Blacksmith Square and First Street businesses to prevent new development from looming over those existing areas.



Priority #3: Open Space

Consistent with the public outreach results, the Council directed that new development on the west parcel be focused around a public green space. The concepts will include a public open space with plaza, grass, trees, and public art celebrating Livermore's veterans and rodeo history. This is consistent with a concept supported by the Livermore Rodeo Stockmen's Association. The open space should also include an emphasis on a tree-lined pedestrian pathway from South L Street to South Livermore Avenue with pedestrian connections throughout.

Priority Ranking #4: Traffic, Roadways, and Walkways



Outreach participants noted that new development should minimize impacts to existing traffic conditions. Consistent with public feedback, the Council directed that the concepts include a new east/west street that provides traffic calming through incorporation of angled parking. If beneficial, a north/south extension of K Street may also be considered. Pedestrian and bicycle connections will be included throughout both the east and west sites, along with a green public pathway extending from South Livermore Avenue to South L Street. The concepts will consider service and delivery access and special event street closures.

Priority #5: Downtown Boutique Hotel

Most participants indicated a boutique hotel will benefit Livermore. Council directed that a boutique hotel with a maximum height of four stories and approximately 125 – 135 rooms be included in the concepts. The hotel may include meeting facilities of approximately 1,500 to 2,000 square feet, if economically viable.

Priority #6: New Retail Uses



Outreach participants thought Downtown would benefit from additional retail and restaurant uses. The concepts will encourage retail uses such as restaurants, small specialty shops, an artisans market, and businesses that cater to youth and teens, as the market demands. Based on market studies, approximately 10,000 to 20,000 square feet of new specialty retail will be included, with good visibility from the street, and connections to other existing retail. The concepts will create new flexible areas for uses (such as expanding outdoor dining) for existing businesses fronting on First Street.

Priority #7: Hotel Location

Residents were divided on hotel location. A majority supported a hotel on the west side. A minority supported an east side hotel. The Council directed that the concepts study an east location (on South Livermore Avenue next to the Bankhead Theater) and a west location (on the corner of South L Street and Railroad Avenue).

Priority #8: Cultural Facilities



The desire for cultural facilities was mixed, with some participants favoring new cultural facilities, others not wanting them at all,

or only if they did not require public funding. The concepts will include locations for cultural facilities, including a science museum and a small black box theater near open space. These facilities would be developed if they have private funding and do not require public subsidy.

Priority #9: Public Finance

Participants commenting on public finances did not want the City to subsidize new development or have taxpayers foot the bill. The City Council directed staff to minimize costs associated with the construction, operation and maintenance of the development.

Priority #10: Housing

In the tabletop exercises completed at the workshops, 75 out of 76 groups showed some housing on the Downtown sites. Some groups wanted to minimize housing and focus on other uses. However, the City's Downtown sites were purchased with Housing Funds that must be repaid. To the extent affordable housing is provided, the amount of housing funds to be repaid is reduced.

Acknowledging these facts, and taking into consideration community feedback, the Council supported an innovative idea suggested by the Livermore Rodeo Stockmen's Association during the engagement process. When the Stockmen's Association sold the current Civic Center site to the City fifty years ago, the agreement required construction of a park on the site. The Stockmen's Association proposed to move the park to the Downtown site, and in exchange, allow 75 or more housing units on the land near City Hall. As a result, the Council is able to move some of the units planned on the Downtown sites while minimizing repayment to the Housing Fund.

In response to community concerns that skyrocketing housing prices are forcing out teachers, first responders and Downtown retail workers, the Council directed approximately 130 units of workforce housing be built on the Downtown site. For the east side hotel concept the housing component would be included on the west site and for the west side hotel concept, the housing would be split between both the east and west sites. The combination of the Stockmen's Association deal and the 130 units of workforce units may substantially offset the \$14.5 million of affordable housing funds used to acquire the site.



Next Steps

The City appreciates the enthusiastic level of interest and participation throughout the Downtown public engagement process. Council incorporated community feedback in their direction to develop two concept plans. The concept plans will be available for public review in mid-to-late January, and are scheduled for City Council review and design decisions on January 29. Council will consider what elements to include in the final plan, as well as costs and phasing. To learn more about the current status and next steps, visit the City's homepage at www.cityoflivermore.net. Council continues to receive public comments. Contact the City Council directly using the information provided in the City Connections box (right column). E-mail comments or suggestions to DowntownCatalystProj@cityoflivermore.net. Thank you for your interest and ongoing support.

Mark Your Calendars



Livermore Reads Together Kickoff Event

Sunday, January 28, 2:00 p.m.

Sponsor: Livermore Public Library

Information: www.LivermoreLibrary.net, (925) 373-5500

Year-Round Sunday Farmers' Market

Every Sunday, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Sponsor: Livermore Downtown, Inc.

Information: www.livermoredowntown.com,
(925) 373-1795

33rd Citizens Police Academy – Now Accepting Applications

February 7 – May 30, 2018

Every Wednesday, 6:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Sponsor: Livermore Police Department

Information: www.cityoflivermore.net, (925) 371-4936

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City Connections

→ To learn more about updates on the Downtown and next steps, visit the City's website at www.cityoflivermore.net

→ E-mail comments or suggestions to DowntownCatalystProj@cityoflivermore.net

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