

## POLICIES 5

This chapter outlines policies for the Downtown Specific Plan with respect to land use and community design, transportation and circulation, housing, public facilities and services, recreation and cultural resources, housing, preservation, conservation and economic development. The policies evolved from the Specific Plan process, including from input from the community, City staff and the project consultant. These policies are an extension of the General Plan policies that focus on the Downtown or issues relevant to the Downtown. The policies should augment those in the General Plan and provide clear parameters by which City staff and decision-makers can review projects within the Downtown.

More specifically, the policies in this chapter are meant to support the vision, goals and concepts outlined in Chapters Three and Four and the actions recommended in Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten.

## **A. Land Use and Community Design**

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Land use and community design policies support the creation of a vibrant, economically viable and distinct downtown for Ceres. Policies focus on establishing a healthy mix of uses, as well as an appropriate and beneficial relationship between private development and the public realm.

Policy LUD 1. Market Downtown to developers interested in investing in retail, professional office, larger office centers and residential development in Ceres.

Policy LUD 2. Ensure that land uses on Fourth Street are primarily mixed use with ground-floor retail and upper-floor office or residential uses.

Policy LUD 3. Encourage office uses along Second Street and portions of Third Street not associated with the Civic Center.

Policy LUD 4. Encourage residential development that respects the historic resources of Fifth Street.

Policy LUD 5. Encourage residential development of varying types along Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Streets.

Policy LUD 6. Encourage multi-family and mixed use housing in the Plan Area as a means to bring increased vitality to Downtown and provide additional affordable housing options.

Policy LUD 7. Reinforce and enhance the pedestrian-oriented scale and character of new development and public improvement projects within the Plan Area.

Policy LUD 8. Provide adequate pedestrian amenities, such as street trees, benches, pedestrian-level lighting, newspaper racks and waste receptacles as areas are improved. These facilities and amenities should be provided so as not to conflict with pedestrian circulation or distract vehicles.

Policy LUD 9. Ensure that new development engages the street by being built to or along parcel lines when not in conflict with a Public Utility Easement and by ensuring architecture that provides visual interest and transparency. To the extent feasible, new development should provide amenities on the street that can be accessed by the public, such as small plazas, benches or landscaping.

Policy LUD 10. Create opportunities for interaction between development and public spaces, particularly along Fourth Street.

Policy LUD 11. Create or encourage significant architectural elements or gateway elements at points of entry to Downtown, both in public improvements and through architectural features and site planning related to private development. This is particularly important for gateway and catalyst projects meant to establish momentum for Downtown’s revitalization.

Policy LUD 12. Encourage development to include special architectural features at prominent corners, such as the intersections of Fourth Street and El Camino Avenue, Fourth Street and North Street, and Fourth Street and Whitmore Avenue. Special architectural features should consist of a vertical tower element including colors and finishes, a diagonal wall or “chamfer” facing the corner, a dedicated public space at the corner, or a combination of any of these.

Policy LUD 13. Encourage development with an appropriate orientation and massing to frame and provide enclosure to streets and public spaces.

Policy LUD 13. Where appropriate, encourage new development to include publicly accessible plazas and open spaces.

Policy LUD 14. Ensure that new retail and residential development respect adjacent residential development, particularly single-family homes exhibiting architectural integrity.

Policy LUD 15. Encourage development that minimizes impervious surfaces.

Policy LUD 16. Encourage cooperation between public and private entities in achievement of catalyst projects that will help to “kick-start” Downtown revitalization. All City departments should endeavor to assist in accomplishing this policy.

## **B. Transportation and Circulation**

Transportation and circulation policies support the creation of a pedestrian-oriented downtown that remains supportive of bicycle and vehicular circulation. This section also includes policies for parking that similarly support a pedestrian-oriented downtown.

Policy TRAN 1. Provide, widen and improve sidewalks on both sides of all streets within Downtown.

Policy TRAN 2. Provide Class II bicycle lanes on Whitmore Avenue and Class III bicycle routes on Central Avenue, Sixth Street, Ninth Street, Park Street, Lawrence Street and El Camino Avenue. Please refer to Chapter Eight for a map of proposed bicycle lanes and routes in the Specific Plan Area.

Policy TRAN 3. Create a system of public pedestrian paseos to connect key destinations within Downtown to Fourth Street. Consider property acquisition, development incentives and public/private partnerships to facilitate construction of paseos.

Policy TRAN 4. Reconfigure the North Street/El Camino Avenue/Second Street intersection to minimize conflicts and encourage motorists to travel Downtown.

Policy TRAN 5. Encourage development that provides publicly shared parking areas behind buildings, accessed by the existing alley system.

Policy TRAN 6. Preserve on-street parking that provides a buffer between pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

Policy TRAN 7. Ensure special landscape features in the right-of-way on Fifth Street as properties redevelop. For example, the street could shift at certain locations to accentuate key properties and to help highlight the overall historic character of the street.

Policy TRAN 8. Remove the raised traffic circle at the Fourth Street/North Street intersection to allow unobstructed travel and clear circulation for visitors, shorter crossing distances, and larger bulbouts that can provide additional public gathering and landscaping space.

Policy TRAN 9. Allow parking charges to be separated (unbundled) from the residential rent for multi-family units to provide an incentive for households to minimize their vehicle ownership.

Policy TRAN 10. Allow tandem parking opportunities that meet City standards in new commercial and residential development.

Policy TRAN 11. Encourage developers to provide parking spaces that can be reserved for car-share services.

Policy TRAN 12. Provide reductions in parking requirements for developers that provide public or shared parking. More detail about shared parking can be found in Chapter Three, Vision, Goals and Concept. Specific parking reductions are included in Chapter Seven, Land Use Regulations and Development Standards.

Policy TRAN 13. Include traffic calming measures to slow traffic in the Specific Plan Area, including expanded bulbouts at intersections, lane width reductions, and other similar streetscape improvements. Slower vehicle speeds will ensure increased safety for pedestrians and mitigate noise impacts associated with increased vehicular activity.

## C. Public Facilities and Services

Public facilities and services policies focus on the provision of adequate, sustainable utility infrastructure systems. This section also provides policies for stormwater management and safety measures in private developments

Policy PUB 1. Ensure that all utility facilities have adequate capacity to accommodate new development.

Policy PUB 2. If appropriate and after a nexus study is undertaken, develop an impact fee mechanism that allows the costs of developing utility infrastructure improvements to be borne by new developments in an equitable manner.

Policy PUB 3. Encourage on-site stormwater management and permeable surfaces to minimize the impact of new development on drainage facilities.

Policy PUB 4. In areas that do not have fire hydrants located at the standard spacing of every 300 foot, require Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems in buildings with over 5,000 square feet of floor-area.

Policy PUB 5. Encourage the replacement and renovation of infrastructure systems to employ Best Management Practices (BMPs) to ensure that no negative environmental effects occur.

Policy PUB 6. Where appropriate, encourage bioswales in street right-of-ways to help manage stormwater runoff from roadways and to provide additional landscaping. Prioritize bioswales along North Street. For public bioswale projects, City staff should fully consider cost and maintenance costs prior to proceeding.

## **D. Recreational and Cultural Resources**

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Recreational and cultural resources policies support the creation of a downtown that has adequate and meaningful public open space that is accessible to residents inside and outside the Plan Area. Additionally, this section presents policies that are supportive of the preservation and celebration of Ceres' historic and cultural resources.

Policy REC 1. Consider public/private partnerships or other mechanisms to open some portion of the Whitmore Mansion property to the public.

Policy REC 2. Consider improvements to the existing Whitmore Park to include enhanced public plaza space and community gardens. Also consider a berm or other structure at the western edge to minimize noise and visual intrusion from State Route 99. Additional potential locations for community gardens include the proposed Water Tower Park, Whitmore Mansion open space, or (on a temporary basis) vacant parcels owned by the City.

Policy REC 3. Redevelop the current water tower site as a small neighborhood park.

Policy REC 4. Develop a public plaza east of the Community Center that fronts directly onto Fourth Street. This improvement should be implemented in late phases as new development facilitates increased feasibility of new parking investments. Improvements should be coordinated with parking improvements to ensure that adequate parking is available for the Ceres Community Center.

Policy REC 5. Consider allowing or facilitating community gardens on parcels throughout Downtown, particularly on vacant, irregularly-shaped parcels that are not expected to redevelop in the short-term.

## **E. Housing**

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Housing policies focus on the preservation of existing housing units where appropriate and encourage the development of a range of new housing opportunities within the Plan Area. Housing policies also focus on providing housing affordable to families and individuals within all income levels.

Policy HOUS 1. Encourage the development of a variety of housing types, including traditional single-family homes, small-lot single-family homes, townhomes, condominiums, apartments (stand-alone and as components of mixed use buildings) and live/work units.

Policy HOUS 2. Accommodate a range of housing opportunities that are affordable to community members of all incomes.

Policy HOUS 3. Encourage the facilitation of a Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) project in Downtown.

Policy HOUS 4. Encourage the development of higher-density housing to add demand for Downtown retailers and services.

Policy HOUS 5. Encourage redevelopment in the Specific Plan Area that results in no net loss of housing units.

Policy HOUS 6. Encourage a two to one replacement of any existing housing units displaced by redevelopment efforts in Downtown, in areas where housing units are permitted.

Policy HOUS 7. Encourage the retention of high quality single-family units in areas designated for residential use.

Policy HOUS 8. Strive for balanced growth of housing and commercial uses in Downtown.

Policy HOUS 9. Where possible, provide assistance to existing residents displaced by redevelopment who wish to find new housing in Downtown.

## **F. Preservation**

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Preservation policies focus on the preservation of cultural resources within Downtown. Cultural resources include identified historic structures and significant landmarks.

Policy PRES 1. Preserve and enhance the Whitmore Home on Fifth Street by ensuring that new development does not prevent views to the structure.

Policy PRES 2. Work with owners of the Whitmore Mansion property to renovate the Mansion grounds to become a key open space in Downtown. Renovation of the grounds might include alterations or removal of surrounding fencing, creative landscaping, or the addition of intermittent entrances, all of which are intended to provide a new Downtown open space and enhance the visibility of the Whitmore Mansion.

Policy PRES 3. Enhance the Ceres Water Tower by considering the development of a small neighborhood park near the structure to celebrate this structure.

Policy PRES 4. Require architectural assessment of potentially historic structures prior to redevelopment or demolition that may impact them.

Policy PRES 5. Where appropriate, ensure that new development protects and respects important historic properties within the Specific Plan Area through design features, setbacks, and other development features, as well as through the implementation of Development Standards and design guidance in Chapter Seven and Appendix A of this Specific Plan.

Policy PRES 6. Require developers to provide an assessment of historical, geological, archaeological and paleontological resources on or adjacent to a project site prior to construction for all projects involving sub-grade disturbance or excavation.

## G. Conservation

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Conservation policies focus on preserving biological and natural resources within Downtown. Resources include plant and animal species.

Policy CON 1. Retain mature native trees in the design of new developments, as determined appropriate by an arborist. If retaining existing trees in new development proves infeasible, please see Chapter Seven, Development Standards, for replacement requirements and other Downtown landscaping standards.

Policies CON 2. Require the use of drought-tolerant plants in new developments. Refer to the Downtown Streetscape Standards and Design Guidelines in Appendix A for a list of suggested plants for private development in Downtown. Street tree recommendations are also provided in that document.

Policy CON 3. Require that prior to development, new development shall have a biologist conduct a site survey to properly identify elderberry shrubs on site that could be adversely affected by development. If necessary, the biologist shall identify appropriate mitigation. It should be noted that it is highly unlikely that these resources exist in this developed area.



## H. Economic Development

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Economic development policies focus on the commercial revitalization of Downtown Ceres, strategic recruitment of businesses and job creation.

Policy ED 1. Brand and market Downtown to facilitate new investment and attract visitors. Provide financial resources to the Redevelopment Agency in the City budgets to support this policy.

Policy ED 2. Seek destination commercial and institutional uses that increase economic activity and promote additional pedestrian activity.

Policy ED 3. Encourage appropriate businesses within Ceres and from elsewhere to relocate to or expand within Downtown.

Policy ED 4. Support and encourage the attraction of a medium-sized cinema within Downtown.

Policy ED 5. Allow for the temporary closure of Downtown streets for special events to help promote Downtown, such as farmers' markets, street fairs and other community events.

Policy ED 6. Encourage mixed use, retail and office developments that provide a range of jobs within Downtown.

Policy ED 7. Provide financial resources from the City in support of catalyst projects that will help initiate Downtown revitalization.

Policy ED 8. Seek public-private partnership opportunities that assist in supporting the revitalization efforts set forth for Downtown in this Specific Plan.

Policy ED 9. Invest public resources at a level sufficient to support successful implementation of the vision, goals and recommendations outlined in this Specific Plan.

Policy ED 10. Coordinate and work with regional economic development entities to solicit grants and to identify Ceres as a future economic development engine for the region.

# 5 POLICIES